

The World of Islam in Turmoil

The World of Islam in Turmoil

***THE WORLD
OF
ISLAM IN TURMOIL***



LATEEF OLUFEMI OKUNNU

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN NO: 978 – 37372 – 0 – 1

LATEEF OLUFEMI OKUNNU

N1001 Inventions. Muslim Heritage in our World. 2nd edition, 2007.

Kadiri, Sadakat. *Heaven on Earth, A Journey through Shari'ah Law.* (The Bodley Head, London. 2011).

Kagan, Kimberly. Website of the Institute for the Study of War, a United States based think tank, founded in 2007.

Picktall Muhammad Marmaduke. *The Glorious Qur'an. Text and Explanatory Translation.* Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an (November 19, 2001)

Roy, Arundhati. *Review of Leading British Writers' Views.* The Guardian, (Saturday 12th September, 2015).

Saudi Arabia Stance on Terrorism (c) Al-Qimam Multimedia 2004, King Fahd National Library Cataloging –m-publication Data.

The Glories of Islam. (Perozons, Lahore 1958).

Watt, W. Montgomery. *Islamic Philosophy and Theology.* (Edinburgh University Press 1962. Reprinted 1964, 1967, 1972 and 1979.)

DEDICATION

All praise is due to Allah,
The Beneficent,
The Merciful.

I dedicate this work to
all true believers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When in January, 2013 the turmoil in the Middle East among the Islamic nations intensified, I took a special interest in the origin of **sects** and its continued existence in the world of Islam. The warfare is not only between the Sunnis and the Shiites, but also among sub-sects within the same mainstream as illustrated by the fierce battle between the Wahhabi and Daeshi, or between the anti Bashar al Assad in Syria and Daeshi - all Sunnis.

Suicide bombing, with its origin in Sri Lanka, and hitherto unknown in the Islamic world until recently, has now become an important weapon in the hands of militants, killing innocent people in different parts of the world. Even fellow Muslims praying to Allah in mosques are ready targets of suicide bombers.

I was very much troubled by this turmoil in the Islamic world. I then sought solace in The Holy Qur'an and the Hadith. I found much comfort in both. I discovered that both forbid "**sects**", and both state that a person who kills himself-destroying **life**, Allah's precious creation – will not be admitted into paradise.

I have offered some solution to this never ending sectarian warfare among Muslims, urging all Muslims,

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al – Bukhari, Sahih*. Arabic – English. By Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Islamic University – Al – Medina Al – Munauwara. (Sethi Board Mills (conversion) Ltd. March, 1972.
- Abu Hamid Alghazali, *Ihya' ulumud Din* of. Translated by Fazlul Karim (vol.1, 1982 edition. Nusrat Ali Nasri for kitab Bhavan, India)
- Ali, A. Yusuf. *The Holy Qur'an* (Text, Translation and Commentary). The Islamic Foundation. 1975.
- Ali, Maulana Muhammad. *A Manual of Hadith*. (first published in 1944 and reprinted in 1983 by Curzon Press Ltd).
- Balogun, Prof. Ismail A. B. *The Twin Disciplines of Arabic and Islamic Studies Revisited*. Lecture delivered at the Conference Centre University of Ibadan on Saturday, 28th February, 1987 and printed by Lagos State University Press, Lagos, 2016.
- Binyon, Michael. The Times, (Saturday 21st March, 2015).
- Crocker, Ryan. *American Fading Foot Print*. (Wall Street Journal Review,. Monday, October 12th 2015).
- Gibb, HAR. *Arabic Literature* (Oxford, 1963).
- Husain, S. Athar. *The Glorious Caliphate* (2nd reprint 1977).

The World of Islam in Turmoil

Both the Shiites and the Sunnis should now resolve never again to be used as pawn by the world powers in their economic and political power game.

Prof. Hamilton Gibb divided the period when Islam spread knowledge and light across Europe into two: the Golden Age (750 to 1055) and the Silver Age (1055 to 1258).⁴⁹ Islam has more yet to offer the entire world.

Allah knows best.

In the words of Surah 37, vv 180 to 182:

Glory to thy Lord, The Lord of Honour and Power!
(He is free) from what they ascribe (to Him)! And
Peace on the Apostles! And Praise to God, The
Lord and Cherisher of the World.⁵⁰

1st March, 2016.

By:
Femi Okunnu, SAN, CON
(Amirul Haj of the Federal Republic
of Nigeria, 1973).

⁴⁹ Gibb, H.A.R Arabic Literature Oxford, 1963.

⁵⁰ The Holy Qur'ān (ib Translation, etc by A. Yusuf Ali (op cit).

The World of Islam in Turmoil

especially the combatants, to return to The Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

I have also offered some advice on how to establish permanent peace and economic prosperity in the Middle East.

It has taken me over three years to gather materials for this booklet. It has been fulfilling and very exciting.

I have over the past months distributed copies of my drafts – over thirty new drafts – to some leading Muslim scholars in Nigeria. Some of them offered useful advice. I must however single out three scholars for their invaluable contribution to this study: Prof. Dawud Noibi, Head of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan (1986-1988) and now Executive Secretary of Muslim **Ummah** of South West Nigeria. The other two are Dr. Abdullah Jibril Oyekan, a well known petrochemical engineer and Islamic scholar of the Islamic Education Trust, Lagos and Prof. Misbahud-din Olawale Raheemson of the Department of Religions and Peace Studies at the Lagos State University.

I however take full responsibility for any error in the text.

May Allah increase our knowledge.

May He establish peace and prosperity in this world of turbulence.

Femi Okunnu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Introduction	1
The Problem	1
Islam as a Religion	3
The Schism: Sunni and Shiite	6
The Origin and Growth of Salafism/ Wahabi Subsect	11
Bloody Conflicts	13
Suicide Forbidden by the Holy Qur'ān	15
A Word about Jihad	20
Search for Knowledge	21
The Palestinian Question	24
Sustained Foreign Interference	26
Renewed Sectarian Violence	32
Saudi Arabia and Iran: Their role in the Muslim Ummah	34
Terrorism outside the Middle East	36
The Golden Age of the Ummah	39
The New Christian Approach to Schism	42
Permanent Solution to the Schism in Islam	42
Economic and Political Union of the Muslim World in the Middle East	44
Unity in Islam /Unity of Islam	46
Bibliography	51

“Ash hadu an la ilaha ilallah,
Wahdahu la sharika lahu,
Wa ash adu anna
Muhammadan Rasulullah”.

Translation (English)

I certify that there is no God
save (beside) Allah (And
nothing is to be worshipped
along with Him. And I certify
that Muhammad is Allah's
Apostle.

This is the affirmation of the Shahadah:
Oneness of Allah, and Muhammad Rasulullah
(SAW) as His messenger.

The Shiites and the Sunnis firmly believe in other
four Fundamental Principles of Islam.

- (i) Five times daily prayers (Salat)
- (ii) Fasting during the month of Ramadan
(Sawm)
- (iii) Zakat – giving alms to the poor.
- (iv) Haj - Pilgrimage to Makkah once in one's
life time if one can afford it.

the Pit of Fire and He save you from it. Thus doth God make His signs clear to you that ye may be guided.

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good. Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.

They are the ones to attain felicity. Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs: For them is a dreadful penalty.⁴⁸

It is now the time for Muslims around the world over to also in their various ways sit down, think and reflect on all these matters, and say:

“No more sects and no more wars among Muslims”.

The Arabs and the Persians, the Sunnis and the Shiites should sheathe their swords, embrace Islam in its purest form.

⁴⁸ Holy Qur’ān, (Text, Translation and Commentary) by A. Yusuf Ali (op. cit)

INTRODUCTION

This work aims at drawing attention of the world to the age long suicidal warfare among the adherents of Islam which disturbs the peace of the world, especially the Middle East, Europe, Africa and the United States of America. Terror strikes anywhere and at any time, through the barrel of the gun, or the knife or the human bomb. The method is becoming very sophisticated by the hour, resulting into deaths of adherents and non adherents of Islam alike.

What are the real causes of this terror? And what is the solution to end this NEW TERROR of our age?

THE PROBLEM

The Muslim World is in great turmoil. It is at war with itself as never before, fueled largely by adherents of Islam and in part by non adherents.

In her contribution to *The Guardian* Review of leading British writers’ views on the underlying causes of the Syrian (and Middle East) refugee crisis which has gripped the world recently, and the British Government’s look- warm response to the crisis,

Arundhati Roy¹ had this to say:

At the end of the Second World War, Britain redrew the map of what is superciliously called the Middle East. When the British Empire waned, the United States took over the imperial mandate. Its constant political meddling – toppling democracies, installing tyrants, tiring of them and installing others, its invasion of Iraq in 2003, *its covert military and financial support to vicious sectarian militias in various countries* has unleashed ancient antagonisms, recent hostilities and mayhem².

That sums up succinctly the role of the Western powers, including Britain and France, in the Middle East.

¹ Arundhati Roy is an Indian born writer, essayist and activist who won the Booker prize for fiction (big-selling in 1997)

² The Guardian, Saturday 12th September 2015.

The Holy Qur'ān says:

Say O God Lord of Power (and Rule) Thou givest Power to whom Thou pleases, and Thou strippest off Power from whom Thou pleases, Thou endures with honour whom Thou pleases, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleases, in Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power.⁴⁷

Allah says in Surah 3, vv 103-105

And hold fast, all together by the rope which God (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude God's favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of

⁴⁷ Surah 3, v. 26 of the Holy Qur'ān, (Text, Translation and Commentary) by A. Yusuf Ali (op cit) at page 129.

UNITY IN ISLAM /UNITY OF ISLAM

Alongside the plans to forge Middle East Economic Union by the nations in the region, the Saudi King and Ayatollah Khomeini should begin some preliminary talks between them and other leaders in the **Ummah** with a view to summon a meeting of all leaders of Muslim Nations in the world, and all leading Muslim Imams in the **Ummah**, to discuss the problem of unity among Muslims the world over in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'ān and the Hadith.

Several Surahs in the Holy Qur'ān ask the faithful, all Muslims, this question: *afa lā ya'lamūn*. (Can't you ponder, or (Can't you think?) *afa lā Yatafakkarun*. (Can't you reflect?), *afa lā yatadhakkarun*. (Can't you meditate?) and similar expressions.

It is high time for the Arabs and the Persians to think and reflect on the endless and fratricidal wars of attrition and violence, this internecine struggle for naked political power between them under the guise of religion, and to remember always that it is only Allah who giveth power to whom He pleases. And it is Allah who takes power away from whom He pleases.

ISLAM AS A RELIGION

The religion of Islam, in its purest form as espoused in the Holy Qur'ān, is based on peace and justice to all, and tolerance of all other people, especially of the Christians and the Jews.

Our God and your God
is One, and it is to Him
we bow (In Islam)³.

There is no compulsion in religion⁴. It enjoins mankind to believe in Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. It teaches us the Power and Goodness of God and His Attributes⁵. The Holy Qur'ān also contains warnings of dire consequences for those who do not adhere to its message. Several passages in the Holy Qur'ān describe life hereafter, and the Day of Judgment⁶. Islam teaches us compassion and the spirit of forgiveness.

³ Surah 29, v 46. The Holy Qur'ān (Text, Translation and Commentary) by A. Yusuf Ali, 1975 edition at p. 1041. See also Surah 20; v.17

⁴ Surah 2, v. 256. The Holy Qur'ān (Text, Translation and Commentary) by A. Yusuf Ali, 1975 edition at p. 103.

⁵ Surah 24, v. 35; Surah 2, vv. 26 – 27; Surah 57 vv 4 – 6, Surah 59 vv 22 – 24 . The Glorious Qur'ān, Text and Explanatory Translation by Muhammad Marmaduke Picktall.

⁶ Surah 56 (Wāq'ah). The Holy Qur'ān (Text, Translation and Commentary) edited by A. Yusuf Ali, 1975 edition at pp. 1483 – 1495

The World of Islam in Turmoil

The Shari'ah is the law which binds Muslim Communities and individuals together, just as the Common Law of England which is the foundation of the laws in a large part of the English speaking world, or the Code Civile of the French.

The Shari'ah is contained in the Holy Qur'an as its primary source, and the Hadith – the sayings and the practices of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) – as its secondary source. It embraces all aspects of life, and guide the way we conduct our lives.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) was reported to have said before his death:

I leave two things for you, and if you hold fast to both of them, you will not go astray: the Book of Allah, and the practice (Sunnah) of His messenger.⁷

⁷ See, *The Twin Disciplines of Arabic and Islamic Studies Revisited*, by Prof. Ismail A.B., Balogun at the First in the series of Prof. Musa Abdul Memorial Lectures. Prof. Balogun also cited Chejne A.G, *The Arabic Language: Its Role in History*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1969.

The World of Islam in Turmoil

economic union of the nations in the region. Europe has its European Union, Africa has its African Union, Latin America and the Caribbean Islands have their own. South East Asia, including Japan and Australasia and New Zealand have their own Economic Union. Other global powers like Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) have forged an economic union.

Only the Middle East has none, and there are no plans in the foreseeable future for any. The Arab League is not the answer. It is a mere “talking shop”, with no firm rules binding them together or to enforce its decisions.

It is now time for the Middle East, including Pakistan to look inward and forge an economic union for the benefit of all their people, instead of the never – ending sectarian wars, and suicide bombings by misguided men and women, boys and girls.

One of the conditions for peace is that all existing national political boundaries must be respected, as defined under the United Nations Charter. There must be no interference in the affairs of other Nations in the Region or any other part of the world as stipulated under the Charter.

In order to put an end to all sectarian wars between the Sunni and the Shiite throughout the Muslim **Ummah**, and also for all Muslims to put an end to all divisions and to *all sects as enjoined in the Holy Qur'ān*, the King of Saudi Arabia and Ayatollah Khomeini, the Spiritual Leader of Iran, together with a few leading Imams of both sects in the Muslim world should meet for talks to work out modalities for the unity of the entire Muslim **Ummah**. And the basis for unity and peace is the abolition or renunciation of *sects* in the Muslim **Ummah** as enjoined in The Holy Qur'ān. The modalities for the meeting can be organized through diplomatic channels. The modalities must include cessation of hostilities and wars, sectarian or political in the Muslim world and beyond.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL UNION OF THE MUSLIM WORLD IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Secondly, the two sides should also create conditions for economic and political unity of all the countries in the Middle East. They should first of all sheath their swords and renounce their political rivalry in the Middle East in the overall interest of the Arabs and the Persians who constitute the population of that part of the world. The Middle East is the only region in the world where there is no

Other major articles of faith held by all Muslims of whichever sect are: the observance of daily obligatory prayers (Salat), fasting during the month of Ramadan Sawm, the care of the poor and the needy through the institution of Zakat, and performing Haj - the holy pilgrimage to Makkah once in one's lifetime if one can afford it. Above all, the Muslim **Ummah** believes in the Oneness of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful and the Prophethood of Rasulullah (SAW).

But the Muslim World was split asunder into two main streams *after* the death of the Holy Prophet – the **Sunni** and the **Shia**. They both accept Allah who gave the Holy Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet (SAW). They both accept Muhammad Rasulullah as the seal of the Prophets beginning from Adam.

What then divides the Muslim World after the death of the Holy Prophet? What splits the **Ummah** asunder? The struggle for Succession to the Prophet created the chasm. But today, it is power, naked, earthly power that divides the Muslim world community.

On the death of the Holy Prophet (SAW), Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, who was appointed by the Prophet during his illness to lead the Muslims in prayers, was unanimously chosen by the Muhajirun and the Ansars (companions of the Prophet) to take over as Khalifah. He was referred to as *Khalifatur Rasulillah* - the successor of the Prophet (SAW).

When Abu Bakr died in 634 A.D, Umar succeeded him and assumed the title “Amirul Muminin” – the leader of the faithfuls. He had earlier been nominated as his successor by Abu Bakr.

On assuming the office of Caliph, he asked his daughter Ayesa to take stock of his private patrimony so that it could be determined later on whether he had been enriched or impoverished in the service of the state⁸.

THE SCHISM: SUNNI AND SHIITE

Before Umar died in 644 A.D, he appointed a Council of Six, made up of Ali, Uthman, Zubair, Sa’ad, Talha and Abdul Rahman, to choose his successor among themselves. The six men chose Uthman (644-656 A.D) and pledged allegiance to him. Disquiet about

⁸ The Glorious Caliphate by S. Athar Husain, 2nd Reprint 1977 at p 41.

my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your Religion.⁴⁴

As stated earlier, both Sunni and Shiite are united in the fundamental beliefs in Islam. They believe in the Majesty, the Supremacy and Oneness of Allah, and that Muhammad Rasulullah (SAW) is the seal of the Prophets. They share the same beliefs in the Holy Qur’ān and the Hadith. They differed only in the matter of succession to the Caliphate some 14 centuries ago. But that was in the past. That is now history. It should no longer cause division in Islam. There should be no more *sects in Islam* as Allah admonishes us in Surah 6, verse 159.⁴⁵ There must be public renunciation of sect as proclaimed in the Holy Qur’ān.

If the Holy Qur’ān enjoins all Muslims to show tolerance to the Jews and the Christians as in Surah 24, verse 46,⁴⁶ the Sunni and the Shiite must be tolerant of each other as members of the ***Ummah***.

⁴⁴ The Holy Qur’ān (Text, Translated and Commentary) by A Yusuf Alli, 1975 edition at page 240.

⁴⁵ Yusuf Alli : See also Surah 30, v. 32; Surah 8, vv 13 – 14; Surah 9, vv 64 – 65, Surah 14, vv. 17 and 28 in The Glorious Qur’ān (op cit).

⁴⁶ Yusuf Alli : See also Surah 30, v. 32; Surah 8, vv 13 – 14; Surah 9, vv 64 – 65, Surah 14, vv. 17 and 28 in The Glorious Qur’ān (op cit).

THE NEW CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO SCHISM

Led by their King, Henry VIII of England, the English in the 16th century broke away from the Catholic Church to establish the Church of England. He was soon followed by John Calvin who led the establishment of the Dutch Reform Church. John Wellesley founded the Methodist Church in the 18th century – another break – away from the Church of Rome. Some 40 years ago however, after several meetings, the Christian churches set up an Ecumenical Council for the unity of the Christian churches.

The Muslim ***Ummah*** can borrow a leaf from our Christian brethren by forging unity among all Muslims worldwide, and tolerance of one and another in our different or varying observances of our religion as enjoined in the Holy Qur’ān.

PERMANENT SOLUTION TO THE SCHISM IN ISLAM

In Surah 5, v. 4, the Holy Qur’ān in what is reported to be the last verse revealed to the Holy Prophet (SAW), Allah said to the faithful:

This day have I perfected your
Religion for you, completed

succession to the Caliphate which had been brewing for some time led to open revolt by those who opposed Uthman’s election. Upon his violent death in 656 A.D, Ali was elected by the Muhajirun and the Ansars to head the Caliphate⁹.

What a turbulent time he had! War broke out between forces loyal to Mu’awiya, Governor of Syria and a cousin of Uthman, and the forces loyal to Ali. The Battle of Siffin led to a truce which did not hold. The agreed arbitration one from each side, recommended that “both Ali and Mu’awiya be deposed and a new Caliph be appointed. In the midst of the confusion which ensued, a body of 1,200 men known as Kharijites out of Ali’s side, emerged.¹⁰ The truce led to the emergence of the two sects: Kharijites (the Sunni) and “Shi’a Ali” (the party of Ali or the Shiite).

Both the Sunni and the Shiite accept the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the Holy Qur’ān, but the Shiites differ only in certain respects from the Sunnis in the practice of Islam and some religious observances. But the two main streams do

⁹ On the succession of the first four Caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali), see Sahih Bukhari hadith, vol. 4. See also the Glorious Caliphate, by S. Athar Husain, 2nd Reprint, 1977 at pages 1-8, especially pages 7-8 and 79.

¹⁰ See the Glorious Caliphate, by S. Athar Husain, (op.cit) at pp. 146-150.

not embrace tolerance of each other as enjoined in the Holy Qur'ān and the Hadith. It has been conflicts, armed conflicts over the centuries between them.

Allah in Surah 2, verse 256 says:

There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. And he who rejecteth false deities and believeth in Allah hath grasped a firm handle which will never break. Allah is Hearer, Knower¹¹.

In its ordinary dictionary meaning, “compulsion” implies that a person put pressure or inflicts irresistible urge on another person to do something which that person does not wish to do. Islam forbids such an act.

In another Surah in the Holy Qur'ān, Allah says:

Say: O disbelievers! I worship not what ye worship. Nor ye worship that which I worship.

¹¹ Muhammad Mammaduke Picktall, *ibid* at page 40

Prof. Balogun went on, quoting Nur Ahmad:

In his famous book ‘The Making of Humanity’ the Frenchman Monsieur Briffault says: For although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the permanent distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme mark of victory – natural science and the scientific spirit.⁴³

That was the Golden Age of the ***Ummah***.

Until the Crusade, Islam with its civilization held sway from Spain in the West to the border with China in the Far East. Decline set in after 1258.

⁴³ The Glories of Islam. Perozons, Lahore 1958

The World of Islam in Turmoil

the natural sciences, medicine,
law, and jurisprudence,...
mysticism and astrology.⁴⁰

In that age, Muslims also excelled, according to Prof. Balogun,⁴¹ in alchemy, astronomy, geography, meteorology, mechanics, navigation, cartography, botany, natural history, industrial arts, agriculture, painting and architecture. Prof. Balogun's paper also includes a long list of Muslim scholars in various fields of human endeavours. The foremost philosopher of the Age who reconciled philosophy with religion and introduced and interpreted Aristotle to the western world was Ibn Rushd or Averroes (1126 – 98). He had a profound knowledge of Aristotelian thought, and in the commentaries he wrote on many of the works he was able to remove some of the Neo-platonic interpretation which had hitherto been current in Arabic. His superlative merits were recognised by the Christian and Jewish scholars then in Spain, and his commentaries were translated into Hebrew and Latin.⁴²

⁴⁰ Islamic Philosophy and Theology, by W. Montgomery Watt, published by Edinburgh University Press 1962 Reprinted 1964, 1967, 1972 and 1979.

⁴¹ "The Twin Disciplines of Arabic and Islamic Studies Revisited" Lecture delivered at the Conference Centre, University of Ibadan on Saturday, 28 February 1987, and Printed by Lagos State University Press, 2016.

⁴² Prof. Ismail A.B. Balogun (op. cit) at pages 18-29

The World of Islam in Turmoil

And I shall not worship that which ye worship. Nor will ye worship that which I worship. Unto you your religion, and to me my religion¹².

In a sense, these two passages of the Qur'ān sum up what we now know as fundamental rights to freedom of religion, of conscience and of belief.

The words of Allah as enjoined in the Holy Qur'ān are very clear and unambiguous. Unfortunately, these freedoms through which the Holy Qur'ān invite all men and women, Muslims and non Muslims alike – to respect and tolerate each other's views and beliefs, are subsumed in the conflict between the emergent Sunni and the Shiite with reckless abandon.

The **Sunnis** are in the majority among Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Africa, Syria, Yemen, Kuwait, United Arab Republic, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and several other parts of the Muslim world.

The **Shiites** constitute the overwhelming majority of the population in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Azerbaijan, but they are minorities in the rest of the Muslim world.

¹² See, Surah 109, Muhammad Mammaduke Picktall, ibid at page 735

Among the Sunnis, perhaps 90% of the Muslim world, are sub sects like the **Salafi**, (Wahhabi) the **Surfi** (or ISIS), otherwise known as Daesh. *The Islamic State* of Iraq and Syria also constitutes a sub sect of the Sunni, in the same way as the Al Qaeda. The Shiites on their part also have their sub-sects: the **Zaydis**, a section of whom are the **Houthi** who today are in occupation of part of Yemen, and the **Nizari Ismailis** under the leadership of the Aga Khan family since 1818.

But the Holy Qur'ān, as revealed to the Holy Prophet (SAW), forbids creation or establishment of **SECTS** in religion. See, Surah 6, verse 159; Surah 30, verse 32.

Surah 6, verse 159 says:

As for those who divide their Religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least, their affair is with God; He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did.¹³

¹³ Holy Qur'ān (Text, Translation and Commentary) by Ali Yusuf, Ali 1975 edition at p. 338

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE UMMAH

The **Ummah** must go back to the glorious period when in the 9th century al – Kindi wrote his two treaties on geometrical and physiological optics, or in the 10th century when Al – Hasan ibn al – Haitham, the greatest Muslim physicist, according to George Saton, exerted “a great influence on European thought from Bacon to Kepler.”

It was the **Ummah** who perfected or invented carpets, architecture, mathematics, algebra, trigonometry, geometry, chemistry, paper, coins, and astrology.³⁹

For almost three hundred years from the Abdul Rahman b. Mu'awiyah in the 18th century, Arabic was:

The official language from Spain to Persia and the instrument of intellectual and scholarly expression which resulted in an intellectual efflorescence that covered such fields of knowledge as literature, philosophy, historio-graphy, mathematics,

³⁹ See generally, 1001 Inventions. Muslim Heritage in Our World second edition, 2007.

The Europeans learned much from these universities....

After the Crusades the Europeans started to stand against Islam and to build up modern technology and industries...

In the meantime, the Muslims began to desert Allah's Book and the traditions of the Prophet gradually ...³⁸

The position of the Muslim in the ***Ummah*** today is worse than it was when Dr. Khan wrote his Introduction.

It can change. It must change for the better. We must go back to the days of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Muslims must renounce *sect*, and go back to the Holy Qur'ān and Hadith.

³⁸ The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al – Bukhari, (Arabic – English) Vol. 1 by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. 1971.

And Surah 30, verse 32:

Those who split up their Religion, and become (mere) Sects – each party rejoicing in that which is with itself¹⁴.

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF SALAFISM/WAHABI SUB SECT

The origin and growth of Wahhabi – Salafi brand of Islam is attributed to two men: Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad Bin Abd – al – Wahhab of Najd.

In the chapter on the Reinvention of Tradition: Salafism in Heaven on Earth, Sadakat Kadiri said of Ahmad, Ibn Taymiyyah (1263 – 1328) and his approach to the Sharī'ah:

Sunni jurists were all agreed by the thirteenth century that God's law had to be ascertained by reference to four sources of knowledge – The Qur'ān, hadith, analogical argument and a scholarly

¹⁴ Holy Qur'ān (Text, Translation and Commentary) by Ali Yusuf, 1975 edition at p. 1061.

consensus – but Ibn Taymiyyah now took it on himself to add a crucial gloss to that formula. An old approach towards tradition known as Salafism held that the most reliable way of understanding Islam was to look at the reported practices of the first three generations of Muslims – the Ancestors, or Salafs. Ibn Taymiyyah turned that into a legal theory. The Salafs collective view point, he argued, was far more valuable than a scholarly consensus could ever be.¹⁵

In other words, **consensus of scholars** as the fourth source of knowledge of Shari'ah was replaced by the **practices of the Ancestors**, the first three generations of Muslims. The Salafi or Wahhabi sub sect of the Sunni hold ultra conservative (and extremist) views of Islam. Al Qaeda, Taliban (Pakistan and Afghanistan), Daesh, Al Shabab

¹⁵ Heaven on Earth, A journey through Shari'ah Law by Sadakat Kadiri, cap. 7: The Reinvention of Tradition: Salafism, pp 107-125 at page 112.

Islam is a religion of peace, of tolerance, of respect of other faiths and the human beings. The care of the poor is a sacred act, and goodwill to all men and women.

The terrorists of all colours and in different parts of the world are no Muslims. They violate the basic rules in the Qur'an and the Hadith. They are beyond the pale. Muslims all over the world should rise and condemn this new terrorism of our age with one voice at any time it rears its ugly head in any land. And we will find unity in Islam as enshrined in the Holy Qur'an.

In his *Introduction to The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al – Bukhari*, the learned editor recalled the early period of Islam when the believers:

...heeded and believed the Prophet's teachings and followed him. They were able to establish their supremacy over the nations of the east and west ... (establishing) justice, honesty and equality.... and educational centres and opened a university in Cordova in Spain.

Middle East, not even Saudi Arabia, enjoys a fraction of the protection of “Pax Americana” which is almost the exclusive preserve of Israel.

TERRORISM OUTSIDE THE MIDDLE EAST

Besides the sectarian killings amongst the Muslim population, El Qaeda and Daesh in particular and other deadly groups continue to unleash terrorism on innocent people around the world. We recall, with sadness the 9/11 in the United States, the 7/7 in London. We recall also the mayhem at the railway station in Madrid a few years ago, the Tunisian beach massacre and the recent killing of 130 innocent lives in a concert hall, football stadium and a restaurant in Paris – all in the name of a false *jihād*.

The terrorists behead journalists, aid workers, Muslims and Christians and people of other faith. But their God is Satan, and not Allah who bestows Qur’ān to all mankind to guide us in our daily lives. Their God is not Allah whom I worship. The terrorists, by their words and deeds, have violated the teachings of the Holy Qur’ān and the Sunnah. (Hadith).

(Somalia), Boko Haram (Nigeria, Cameroun, Chad) Ansar – Dine (Mali), and other terrorist groups in Libya, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Yemen – all belong to Salafi/Wahhabi sub sect.

They regard other Muslims as apostates or Takfir (Kafir)

Emir Muhammad Bin Saud, founder of the Saudi Dynasty, “in 1744, made the historic pact to start what they termed a Jihad to spread the Wahhabi faith and Saudi political rule all over Arabia. The pact was that all religious affairs will be dealt with by Muhammad Bin Abd-al-Wahhab and his descendants and all political matters will be dealt with by Muhammad Bin Saud and his descendants. This arrangement is maintained till today in Saudi Arabia.

BLOODY CONFLICTS

In recent years, hardly does a day pass without news media reports of one atrocity committed in one part of the Muslim world or another by the Sunni against the Shiite community, or by Shiites against the Sunnis. Innocent victims are easy targets by either side. These atrocities are committed not against military targets, but against men and women in public places, in mosques

mostly and in churches, indiscriminately. All these atrocities, these acts of terrorism against innocent people –Muslims, Christians, or people of other faith– are wholly forbidden in the Holy Qur’ān.

In March 2015, Daesh claimed responsibility for mass murder of twenty foreign tourists who visited the Bardo Museum in Tunisia, describing the two gunmen *Knights* for their “blessed invasion of one of the dens of infidels and vice in Muslim Tunisia”.¹⁶

A correspondent of The Times recently observed:

*The Koran, like the Bible outlines a vision of Hell in which sinners are consumed by eternal fire. It is clear throughout the Koran that such punishment is divine retribution and is not to be inflicted by human*¹⁷

¹⁶ The Times, Saturday March 21st, 2015.

¹⁷ Micheal Binyon, in the Times, Thursday 5th February, 2015. Mr. Binyon, a Christian, also cited Surah 4, vv 55 – 56 of the Holy Qur’ān in support of his assertion.

Saudi Arabia is under the rule of the tightly knit Royal Family belonging to the Wahabi sub-sect of the Sunni. In Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini is the Supreme Spiritual and Political Leader. They both in different ways promote sectarian wars between the Shiite and the Sunni.

Iran, unlike Saudi Arabia, is a nuclear power. After years of economic sanctions imposed by the United States and arms embargo by the United Nations, the world nuclear powers (United States, Russia, China, Britain and France) together with Germany on the one hand, and Iran on the other, recently signed a Nuclear Arms Treaty to limit Iran’s nuclear’s capability for the next 10 years.

Iran has all along claimed that her development of nuclear energy is for peaceful purposes to generate electric power. The treaty, with stringent restrictions and inspections, will limit Iran to develop nuclear power for peaceful purpose only. In due course under the treaty, economic and arms embargoes on Iran would be lifted.

Israel and Saudi Arabia are however strange bedfellows in their opposition to the treaty. Israel, may it be noted, developed nuclear bomb some years ago when the Western Powers played a dump game: “*see nothing, hear nothing and say nothing*”. No other country in the

United Arab Republic, Bahrain and Qatari armed forces, backed by air bombardment, to drive the Shia Houthi out of Yemen – a tall order.

The Middle East, peopled largely by Muslims, is a huge battlefield of wars – wars between the Arabs and the Iranians (Persians), sectarian wars between the Sunni and the Shiite, and war among the Sunni themselves. Wars without end!

SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN: THEIR ROLE IN THE MUSLIM UMMAH

Saudi Arabia, with the two leading mosques in the Muslim world (Makkah and Madinah) and the world's largest oil reserves, and Iran with almost equally large oil wealth as the Saudis, are the leaders of the Sunni and the Shiite respectively. And they are the leading political powers in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia created as a nation state only in 1932 is pro-America, but second only to Israel under the United States "Pax Americana" umbrella. To Iran, the United States of America is, since the Iranian revolution in 1979, "Satan incarnate". The Nuclear Peace Treaty with the leading world powers has created a thaw in Iran's relationship with the United States.

The Holy Qur'ān forbids killing of innocent people. Surah 6, verse 151 states:

....Take not life, which God hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law; thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom¹⁸.

Surah 5, v. 35 of the Holy Qur'ān also states:

..If anyone slew person – unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land – it would be as if he slew a whole people¹⁹

SUICIDE FORBIDDEN BY THE HOLY QUR'ĀN

We read of suicide bombers, male and female, detonating bombs in mosques, even in the holy month of Ramadan, and in churches or other public places, killing innocent people deliberately in the process. Suicide bombers killed a number of Shiite worshippers in their mosques in Yemen in March 2015, and another set of worshipers were similarly killed during the month of Ramadan. On the day of Mount Arafat not too long ago, suicide bombers killed innocent worshippers in a mosque in Yemen.

¹⁸ Holy Qur'ān (Text, Translation and Commentary by A. Yusuf Ali, 1975 edition at p.1061

¹⁹ The Holy Qur'ān. (Text, Translation and Commentary) by A. Yusuf Ali (op cit) page. 252

These misguided people (suicide bombers), who take their own lives without Allah's leave even commit the sacrilege of invoking Allah's name before the commission of their despicable and criminal acts, despite Allah's injunction forbidding men and women not to take their own lives or another person's life "which God hath made sacred". The innocent victims are not combatants in war, neither have they committed offences carrying death penalty. El Qaeda, the Taliban, Daesh, Houthis, Al Shabab (in Somalia), Boko Haram (Nigeria) Al Qaeda In Magreb (AQIM) in Mali and Burkina Faso and the lot are always quick to claim responsibility for these dastardly and inhuman acts.

At the close of 2015, Boko Haram forces were driven out of Sanbisa forest on Lake Chad in the North – East of Nigeria which they had occupied in the past few years. Boko Haram have now resorted to guerrilla tactics, attacking soft targets.

On Sunday, 14th December 2015, as reported by the Nigerian Army,²⁰ the terrorists unleashed 14 female suicide bombers, aged between 12 and 18 years on Maiduguri, the Capital of Bornu State, and neighbouring villages.

²⁰ This Day, Tuesday 29th December, 2015

Afghanistan shares a long border with Tajikistan.³⁷

A time there was when Colonel Ghaddafi of Libya was the bogeyman of the West. He was accused of exporting terrorism to other countries and production of nuclear weapon. Spurred on by one of his sons, he made amends on the charge of terrorism. And he also abandoned the development of nuclear weapon. He even entertained a British Prime Minister under a tent in one of the resorts.

Then the Arab spring, blowing from Tunisia. Suddenly, it was discovered that his people were no longer in love with him! The United States and Britain mounted a sustained aerial raid on Libya, and Colonel Ghaddafi's body was recovered from a tunnel.

Libya has had no peace since the Gaddafi's regime was toppled. It has been civil and sectarian wars since, with two governments – one in Tripoli, the other in oil rich Benghazi, supported by the U.N and Egypt respectively. Daesh have installed a third.

Another theatre of sectarian violence is Yemen where Iran – backed Houthi (Shiite) forces have occupied a large part of the country on the border with Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has assembled ground troops consisting of Saudi,

³⁷ See The Sunday Times of London, Sunday December 27th, 2015 @ page 21.

RENEWED SECTARIAN VIOLENCE

Alas, Daesh has now established a bridgehead in Afghanistan, fighting hard to replace Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The Islamic State has recently been accused of massacring Shiites in Afghanistan, thus bringing about sectarian violence to the country in place of ethnic conflict which has plagued that country over the years.

And the Taliban have since renewed fighting to overthrow the newly elected Afghanistan government under President Gani.

The Taliban are doing more. They are also at war with Daesh in the east of Afghanistan. And with Tajik, Uzbek and other Central Asian fighters under Daesh command in Syria, the fear is that Daesh could establish a foothold in Central Asia, and so threaten not only that region under Russian influence but also Chechnya State in the Republic of Russia.

That gives credence to the story that President Putin was reported to have held secret talks with the Talibans to provide arms and financial support to wage war on Daesh who are threatening Tajikistan, formerly one of the autonomous republics in the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Seven of them were killed by the Army, three escaped and one was arrested. The remainder succeeded in their mission, killing twenty six innocent people, some of them while saying their *Subhi* (morning) prayers in a mosque.

Surah 4 v. 93 of the Holy Qur'ān²¹ says of those who like Boko Haram, Daesh and their fellow terrorists kill intentionally their fellow Muslims:

If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell, to abide therein forever; and the wrath and the curse of God are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him.

As Sadakat Kadiri, a Barrister – at – Law and student of history, said in a well researched book, *Heaven on Earth*:

In an age when Muslim suicide bombers have become frighteningly unremarkable, Rabin's words offer a useful reality check. They did not exist before 1983 and for more than a decade after that suicidal attack remained the speciality of certain Lebanese Shi'ah factions – most notoriously,

²¹ The Holy Qur'ān (Text, Translation and Commentary) by A. Yusuf Ali (op cit) page 210.

the organization known as Hezbollah (Party of God). The tactic's only other practitioners during that period were Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers – a secular guerilla group that was Hindu by background – who invented the explosives – parked vest to assassinate the one – time Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991. And the death of suicidal Muslims was not a coincidence, but the consequence of centuries – old doctrines.

The timing of a person's death had always been for God alone to know and several passages of the Qur'an made clear that suicide was a sin. Hadiths presented even greater theological obstacles: not only was punishment by fire reserved to God alone, but those who took their lives were warned to expect torture with the instrument of their death on the day of resurrection²².

²² HEAVEN ON EARTH - A Journey Through Shari'ah Law by Sadakat Kadiri at pages 149 – 150. Note 65 at pages 285-286 of Sadakat Kadiri book makes the following references especially to the Qur'an and Sahih Al-Buhari.

On suicide, see Qur'an Surah 4: 29; Surah 2 : 195; Surah 16 : 61. See also Sahih Al - Bukhari 8.73.74; 4.56.669

On the prohibition of fiery punishments, see Sahih Al – Bukhari, 4.52. 260, 9.84.57

The demand by the United States and the West for immediate removal of Assad from power is no longer feasible. He has been given a new lease of life. Russia has become a major player in the “real politik” of the Middle East. The exodus of Syrian immigrants into Europe has gained new momentum.³⁶

The war in Afghanistan tells a similar story. The Russians withdrew their forces on the brink of defeat by the Taliban, with the support of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Pakistan. The Americans later moved in to overthrow the Taliban government in Kabul, with the aid of the Pakistani army across the border. There was also ranging at the same time the war of attrition between the United States and Al Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, following the grave and unwarranted 9/11 air attack on New York by Al Qaeda. Osama bin Laden later took shelter under the protection of the Pakistani security forces until he was found out by the American Special Forces and killed at Abbotville in Pakistan.

Today, the regime in Afghanistan, plagued by the Taliban, is marginally more stable than the regime in Baghdad, plagued by Daesh.

³⁶ In 2015, there were over 1,005,000 in Europe, including some Iraqis, Afghanistan and Africans about 800,000 of whom settle in Germany. There were also 2 million in Turkey, one million each in Jordan and Lebanon.

intelligence sharing to enable Russia to continue her air strikes over Daesh position in Iraq. Daesh, as widely reported, occupies one – third of Iraq and fifty percent of Syria.³⁴

To Syria and Russia, it is a war against “terrorists” – Daesh and all other groups opposed to the Assad regime. Russia a few months ago, violated Turkey’s air space, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) issued a robust warning to Russia. There is on – going negotiation between Russia and the United States on how to avoid air collision between the two countries in Syrian and Iraqi air space.

Let us share together the lament of the United States:

If you look at the heart of the Middle East where the United States once was, we are now gone – and in our place, we have Iran, Iran’s Shiite proxies, Islamic State and the Russians.³⁵

³⁴ See the website of the Institute for the Study of War. A United States based think tank, founded in 2007 by Kimberly Kagan

³⁵ Ryan Crocker who served at various times as United States Ambassador to Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Pakistan in an article entitled *American Fading Foot Print* in the Wall Street Journal Review, Monday October 12th, 2015.

In Surah 2, verse 195 of the Holy Qur’ān²³, Allah says: “And make not your own hands contribute to your destruction”.

And again in Surah 4, verse 29 of the Holy Qur’ān²⁴, Allah forbids believers to “kill or destroy yourselves”.

And Sahih Al – Bukhari records in his Hadith the story of a slave who killed himself with a knife: “My slave hurried to bring death upon himself”. So I have forbidden him (to enter) Paradise²⁵.

It is clear therefore on the authority of the Qur’ān (the primary source of Sharī’ah) and the Hadith (the secondary source) that all suicide bombers will not be admitted into Aljannat (Paradise) because they have committed sin.

²³ Translation of The Holy Qur’ān by A. Yusuf Ali (op cit) at page 77.

²⁴ Translation of The Holy Qur’ān by A. Yusuf Ali at page 189

²⁵ Translation of the Meaning of Sahih Al – Bukhari by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Vol. IV. The book of The Prophets, 669 at pages 442 – 443.

A WORD ABOUT JIHAD

The word “Jihad” to many Islamic scholars has different meanings under the Shari’ah. Al-Rawdh Al-Murabbaa described Jihad as “fighting the unbelievers”. The overwhelming majority of Syrians are Muslims, and not “unbelievers”. Daesh have waged war against them. Daesh and their affiliates are also waging wars against fellow Sunni in Iraq and Africa. Sahih Al-Bukhari defines Jihad as “holy fighting in the cause of Allah”.²⁶

“Jihad” to the Saudis is a way “to spread the religion (of Islam), uphold right, oppose injustice and establish justice, peace, security and mercy”.²⁷

What Daesh and the like have inflicted on the world, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, is terrorism pure and simple - crime against humanity. It is not Jihad.

²⁶ Sahih Al-Bukhan, Glossary pg 6.

²⁷ Saudi Arabia’s Stance on Terrorism (c) Al-Qimam Multimedia. 2004, King Fahd National Library cataloging-m-publication Data. It discusses various interpretations of Jihad by Islamic scholars.

anti Assad Coalition groups in Syria but are also poised to overthrow the Syrian regime.

Turkey, arch enemy of Syria, has joined the fray with air strikes against the position of Daesh as well as those of the Kurds in Syria. Incidentally, the Syrian Kurds are also waging war against the Assad regime.

And to complete the picture in Syria, an Arab coalition of Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, United Arab Emirate, Bahrain and others, led by Saudi Arabia, is collaborating with the United States (and with Turkey, Britain and France) in air raids on the positions of Daesh in Syria.

That was the picture a few weeks ago – jigsaw puzzle!

There has been a dramatic change in the theatre of war in Syria in recent times. Russia has foot faulted the United States in Syria. At the invitation of President Assad, Russia has launched air attacks on the positions of Daesh and the client pro – United States dissidents in Syria in an effort to prevent the total collapse of the Assad regime.

And to complete the jigsaw puzzle or the spider’s web, Iraq with its close military alliance with the United States and under the American “dominion”, has entered into an agreement **with Syria, Russia and Iran to facilitate**

A more extremist Sunni force, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) better known as Daesh, under Abu Bakri Al Baghdadi soon proclaimed the establishment of a Caliphate, occupying a large part of Iraq and Syria by force. Daesh is resolved to topple by force the Shiite regime in Iraq and the Alawite in Syria led by Bashar al Assad. It has been widely reported by the world media that Daesh now occupies two – fifths of Syria.

In Syria, the scenario runs thus: President Assad's regime is supported by Russia, China, Iran and Hezbollah of Lebanon. Russian armoured vehicles and personnel carriers have over the years been stationed in her military base in Syria, posed to assist the Assad army in its war against Daesh and other dissidents. Ranged against the Assad regime trying to topple it by force are the United States and the European Union. They have no land troops in Syria, unlike Russia whose land forces are active in Syria.

But the United States of America equips and supplies arms and logistics to a ragged coalition of anti Assad groups, led by Syrian National Coalition.

The armed forces of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or the Daesh are not only at war against fellow Sunni

SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE

In 2012, a 15 year old girl, Malala Yousafzal, was almost fatally shot in the head inside her school bus in Pakistan because she is a symbol of girl education and women's human rights. In December 2014, about 130 school children were massacred by the Taliban in Peshawar in Pakistan simply because they were school children.²⁸

And in Nigeria, about 219 school girls abducted by Boko Haram at Chibok in 2014 are yet to be found. *Boko Haram* means "book is forbidden" or "western education is forbidden". It means "knowledge is forbidden". Boko Haram is now an affiliate of Daesh, with the aim to create an Islamic State in North-East of Nigeria.

²⁸ See **comment** by Peter Papham in *The Independent* newspaper of London, Friday, 19th December 2014.

The World of Islam in Turmoil

But Allah said in Surah 96, verses 1-5 through Angel Jibril (Gabriel) to the Prophet Rasulullah (SAW) who could not read or write:

Read, in the name of thy Lord
and Cherisher.

Who created man out of a
(mere) clot of congealed
blood.

Read and your Lord the most
Generous.

He who taught (the use of
pen).

Taught man which he knew
not²⁹.

By Allah's command, Rasulullah (SAW) acquired the knowledge of the Qur'an and of the world.

The Prophet was reported as saying to the faithful: "Seek knowledge even if it takes you to Shin (China)".³⁰

The premium which Allah puts on the search for knowledge is very high, and He makes no discrimination between male and female.

²⁹ The Holy Qur'an translated by A. Yusuf Ali 1975 edition at p. 1761

³⁰ See, *Ihya'ulumud-Din* of Abu Hamid Alghazali. Translated by Fazlul Karim, volume 1, 1982 edition at page 20. Nusrat Ali Nasri for Kitab Bhavan, India.

The World of Islam in Turmoil

to the teeth by the Western powers, led by the United States to wage war on Iran. That war was inconclusive. When Saddam Hussein later attacked Kuwait, his army was forced out of that country by the United States which led Western powers in the conflict. President George Bush decided that because his father, President George W. H. Bush (Snr.), merely chased Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait to the international border between the two countries, his father did not complete the project. President George Bush then embarked on a policy of "regime change".

On the unfounded excuse that Saddam Hussein possessed "*weapons of mass destruction*", the United States and Britain attacked Iraq and killed Saddam Hussein. The United States forces left no administrative structure behind in Baghdad, but handed over power to the majority Shiite population under President Nouri Al-Maliki whose administration unleashed terror against the Sunni. The communal Shiite – Sunni conflict is still as bitter as ever before, the end of which is not yet in sight. Al Qaeda, a Sunni extremist group founded by Abu Musab al-Zarawi is fighting extremist Shiite forces, one group killing adherents of the other sect in droves. The United States and her allied forces meanwhile had disengaged from Iraq.

The key to permanent peace is in the hands of the United States of America. Whilst the Palestinians can be cajoled to accept peace settlement, only the United States under her *Pax Americana* can prevail on Israel to accept and embrace permanent peace in the Middle East.

SUSTAINED FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

As stated earlier, the chasm created in the Muslim ***Ummah*** after the death of the Holy Prophet (SAW) was partly due to self inflicted wounds, and partly due to frequent direct plunges of the knife to the body of the ***Ummah*** by non adherents with the aid of one or the other sect.

The first direct American and European interference in recent years in Sunni – Shiite conflict was during the Iraq – Iranian War in 1980s. The minority Sunni – led government of Iraq under Saddam Hussein was armed

For Allah says in Surah 58, verse 11 in part:

...God will raise up, to suitable ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted Knowledge and God is well acquainted with all ye do.³¹

And in Surah 20, v 114, Allah says to mankind to pray:

“My Lord, increase me in knowledge”³²

All these despicable acts by men of low understanding of Islam run counter completely to Allah’s injunctions in the Holy Qur’ān and the Hadith of Muhammad Rasulullah (SAW).

One of the Hadiths in *A Manual of Hadith as reported in the Manual*, reads:

³¹ Translation by the Holy Qur’ān A. Yusuf Ali, at page 1514/5. See also Surah 2 v. 269 at page 109.

³² Translation by the Holy Qur’ān A Yusuf Ali (op cit) Surah 20, v. 114 at page 814.

Anas said, The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), said: “The seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim.”³³

The learned author went further that: the words “every Muslim” include both men and women.

THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

The most dominant issue uniting the Muslim *Ummah* in the last hundred years from the end of the First World War and the fall of the Othoman Empire was the Palestinian cause against Israel. Under the League of Nations mandate, the British Government by and under its 1917 Balfour Declaration permitted gradual Jewish occupation of the Arab territory of Palestine and later ceded power in the occupied

³³ A Manual of Hadith, edited by *Maulana Muhammad Ali* first published in 1944 and reprinted in 1983 by Curzon Press Ltd at page 39. See generally chapter III of the Manual on “Knowledge” and the hadith at page 37 to 39.

territory to the Jews. The 1948 war apart, the Palestinians would appear to have been left to their fate by the Muslim world in face of frequent attacks by the Israelis.

The military and economic blockade of the Gaza Strip by sea, land and air since 2007 is of no great concern to most countries in the Middle East, save the Pedestrians themselves under the Israeli siege. The Palestinian cause has been consigned to long distant past, whilst Jewish settlement in Palestine goes on undisturbed, under the protection of the United States.

There can be no permanent or lasting peace in the Middle East unless and until the Israeli/Palestinian war is finally put to rest.