

# SIN AND CRIME: AN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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## Introduction

From the Islamic perspective, man's life is never morally neutral because he can be involved in either good or evil deeds. The Quran lays down the guiding principles which make man aware of this saying, "By *Nafs* (Adam or a person or a soul), and Him Who perfected him in proportion; Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him. Indeed he succeeds who purifies his ownself. And indeed he fails who corrupts his ownself".<sup>2</sup> These verses imply that man may be inspired to have the capacity to distinguish between *fujur* (the way of deviation from good) and *taqwa* (the way of protection from evil). He may be driven to one of them either by inner motives or outside influences. In fact, the educational process and the *Shari'ah* system deal with the principles of good and evil and show how people should treat one another. These Quranic verses also clearly states a sense of discrimination between right and wrong which is inspired by Allah in man. Thus, a Muslim should be able to recognise and distinguish between what is good and bad for him on the basis of his freewill. Moreover, it is necessary to develop these further, particularly to achieve the perfection of *akhlaq* and gain the pleasure of Allah. Therefore he who purifies himself with goodness will achieve a successful life, and the reverse of that could happen if he chooses to corrupt himself.

## Man's Potential to Recognise Between Good and Bad

The typical Quranic context discussed before obviously teaches every Muslim to grasp and adopt the nature of good and reject evil in his life on the basis of his freedom along with Islamic teaching. Syed Qutb has commented on the related verses that "man is just as capable of recognising the good as he is of recognising the evil in everything he encounters, and he is equally capable of directing himself one way or the other. This dual ability is deeply engrained within him. All external factors like Divine messages only serve to awaken his potential

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His theory postulated that primitive man was criminal and that modern criminals are throwbacks (*atavists*) to an earlier form on the evolutionary scale. In his study "Criminal Types" he identified a number of attributes which distinguish the criminal population such as abnormal nose, large ears, long arms, shifty eyes, strong and jutting jaws, darker skin colour and so on<sup>7</sup>. He believed that someone who had at least five of these features was born with a strong tendency to become criminal. Although his ideas are now deemed to be outdated, his scientific approach to crime paved the way for various modern studies of criminology<sup>8</sup>. Even today there are theories of criminality, which are based on biological aspects.

Since the chemical composition of genes known as Deoxyribonucleic Acid was identified in the 1950s, there has been a breakthrough in the study of genetics which has further opened the 'secrets of life'. We now know that each life form carries the Deoxyribonucleic Acid or DNA code of genetic information, which indicates that the mechanism of inheritance is the same for all creatures. In other words, common ancestry is similar in the cell structure of all living things<sup>9</sup>. According to Roman B. Romaniuk,

DNA is found in the cells of all living things, ranging from some viruses and bacteria to trees, grasses, and human beings. It is responsible for passing on hereditary characteristics from one generation of living thing to the next... All living things - whatever the species - from bacteria to humans use DNA as the blueprint for life<sup>10</sup>.

We do not deny that this scientific study is beneficial for human beings because it provides the conclusive answer to idealism. However, further developments in the some study of genetics have claimed that men are born with a given set of genes, which cannot be altered and that this decides their fate. Moreover, since their genes determine the behaviour of human beings it is impossible to remedy their behaviour by social means. This idea is discussed by Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene*<sup>11</sup>.

Another fascinating theory is psychoanalysis theory. The founder of this theory was Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) who proposed that crime is caused by unconscious forces and drives. According to him, early childhood experiences have great effects on the development of the personality, which is made up of three aspects; the id, ego and superego. The id is the mass instinctual of human mind, whose activity is largely governed by the arousal of specific needs. It is

and help it take its chosen way. In other words, these factors do not create this potential, which is innate; they only help it to develop"<sup>3</sup>. This shows that man has to strive for the achievement of purification and perfection otherwise, he will remain in corruption. Therefore, through internal effort and external guidance man may achieve success and happiness in this world and the next.

Nevertheless, the Quran often points out that a Muslim should not adopt good and reject evil on the basis of his own standard of judgement because he would probably be mistaken. Sometimes, based on his own standard of judgement, he feels some things are good for him but not others, and vice versa. In this regard Allah says, "...and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know"<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the correct way for the desire for good and dislike of evil must be on the basis of *iman*, the guidance of the *Shari'ah* and the right decision of intellect, which may be useful to him and others.

### The Criminal from the Islamic and Western Views

To elaborate on the concept of sin and crime from the Islamic perspective it is necessary to refer briefly to the relationship between human nature in Islam, and some of Western views of the criminal. From the Islamic concept of human nature in showed that human beings were created with *fitrah* and no inherent criminal tendencies. Therefore, the idea of the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso which takes the view that criminality is inherited by biological determinism could seem somewhat strange in Islam. His study in *L' Uomo Delinquente* (Criminal Man) which was published in 1876 was one of the early efforts to look at crime from a biological perspective. He popularised the notion of a "born criminal" which had great influence well into the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> According to his theory,

Criminality is in-born, being the result of an *atavistic reversion* to an earlier evolutionary stage. It is a constitutional matter, that is to say, it is an essential part of the inherited nature of the criminal and cannot be changed. Lombroso later added the idea of *degeneration*; basic flaw in heredity, giving rise, in later generations, to the deterioration of physique and behaviour which we see in the criminal.<sup>6</sup>

regarded as the unconscious element of the human psyche, which contains urges or drives that are often in conflict with the ego and superego. The ego refers specifically to the element of the human mind which represents the conscious process concerned with reality. It relates desires to behaviour. And the superego is the element of the human mind concerned with being responsible for ethics, which generally judges actions as either right or wrong.<sup>12</sup> In Freud's theory, the complicated role is played by the ego which has to satisfy the demands from reality, the demands from the desires of the id and to face the demands originating from the superego. According to him, if the ego fails to meet the demands of reality, the id or the superego created mental disorders such as *realistic anxiety*, *neurotic anxiety* or *moral anxiety*, while in the case of an ideal normality there is a nicely balanced interplay among all three agencies<sup>13</sup>. According to this theory, these agencies are among the factors which may affect the development of man's behaviour.<sup>14</sup>

The core of the foregoing arguments is very different from those held in the Islamic point of view. The Quran and the Hadith lay very clear emphasis on the fact that human nature has the potential to have good moral qualities, and, moreover, on man is conferred the best crown of creation.<sup>15</sup> To allow man to be responsible for his actions, Allah has bestowed on him the freedom of will and knowledge so that he can choose whether to do good or bad deeds. The Quranic verses precisely describe this, "Have We not made for him two eyes, And a tongue and two lips?, And shown him the two ways (good and evil)?"<sup>16</sup> These verses signify that man has been given the ability to discriminate between good and evil. By his freedom of will he can choose either one of them.<sup>17</sup> Sayyid Qutb has commented on these verses that,

Man is conceited because he feels himself powerful, but he is granted his power by Allah. He is mean with his wealth while Allah is the One Who provided him with it. He neither follows the right guidance nor shows his gratitude, although Allah has given him the means to do so. He has given him eyes which are marvellous, precise and powerful. He has granted him the faculty of speech and the means of expression, 'a tongue and two lips.' He has equipped him with the ability to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, 'and show him the two path,' so that he may choose between them; for in his make-up there exists the ability to take either way.<sup>18</sup>

The explanation above has shown that Allah has endowed man's nature with the ability of knowing how to distinguish between right and wrong. This ability may lead man either to follow the divine guidance which leads to the right way or to follow his lust with its tendencies to sinful deed and evil. Therefore, the point that crime is an inherited part of human nature is absolutely negated from the Islamic point of view.

In this connection, Ali Akram Khan Sherwani has noted, "A man is neither sin-inherited nor criminal by birth; he is born innocent with a free will and with certain endowed powers in the form of emotions, desires and instincts"<sup>19</sup>. With reference to the Quranic passages 2: 35-38; 20: 117-123 and reflection of 'original sin' in Islam, Adam's 'sins' were his own and not passed on to his progeny<sup>20</sup>. This means that man can either adopt the path of righteousness or the path of immorality, and he has the potential to elevate himself to be higher than the Angels or lower than animals<sup>21</sup>. The fact remains that, if man is inclined to the righteous path and always strives for spiritual purification this may elevate him to the way of Angels, which means he is creating a way of goodness. However, if he adopts the immoral path and elements of bestiality, eventually he may get into trouble and become a criminal.

Thus, man's acts in his life are generally the consequence of his own actions, and if he commits a crime it is by his own free will. Numerous Quranic verses clearly explain that man is held to be liable for his actions, for example, "And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, they shall not be dealt with unjustly"<sup>22</sup>. The context of this verse signifies that man is responsible for what he earns and the way in which he acts. Moreover, he will be held to account before Allah in the Hereafter on the basis of his performance according to his own acts, and not to his inheritance<sup>23</sup>. Hence, in this matter, we hold the view that it is baseless in Islam to say that men were created prone to sins, evil deeds and bad natures.

In addition, the crucial point which must be understood in the issue of crime in Islam is that no inherited tendencies bind a man to become a criminal. Man, however, through his freedom of will, may commit a crime although his *fitrah* of creation is good. In this respect, he may be able to curb his criminal tendencies through the process of education and follow the guidance and teaching of Islam, and the law as prescribed in the *Shari'ah*. He who commits sin and crime

does not rely on these principles. He voluntarily follows his lusts and this way of luring, which is schemed by *Shaitan*, is a direct cause of his involvement in sin and crimes.<sup>24</sup>

### Sins and Crimes

To understand accurately the distinction between sin and crime from the Islamic perspective, we have to clarify the nature of these terms. Obviously sin may be committed by everyone<sup>25</sup> through the violation of Allah's commandments and this is not in the interests of society. The man who commits sins may not be punishable in the *Shari'ah*, but severe punishments in the Hereafter are waiting for him if he fails to seek forgiveness from Allah. Crime, however, includes the unlawful acts which are prohibited by the *Shari'ah* that entail a *hadd* or discretionary punishment.<sup>26</sup> Crime (*Jinayah*) literally means, "the bringing to pass of an evil thing, or action; committing forbidden action, also a crime, an offence, or an injurious action, for which one should be punished".<sup>27</sup> It generally signifies, "an action that a man commits requiring punishment or retaliation to be inflicted upon him in the present world and in the world to come".<sup>28</sup> Here we can grasp the point that criminal acts actually affect individual rights or the interests of society. From an Islamic perspective, the *Shari'ah* has prescribed these criminal acts as for example, theft, highway robbery, murder, adultery or fornication, the drinking of alcoholic beverages, defamation and apostasy. Therefore, someone who commits these crimes for which there is true evidence as is prescribed in the *Shari'ah*, is punishable under the *Shari'ah*. In this point, Ali Akram Khan Sherwani has noted the different between sin and crime that,

A violation of 'Divine Rights' can be treated as 'sin' while a violation of 'human rights' a crime. A sin may also be accounted as crime when it affects the rights of an individual or the interest of the society. Sins are not punishable under penal laws, while crimes are punishable under the penal code of the country.<sup>29</sup>

So, man who remains a sinful person may later on commit crimes by violating the rights of others. According to Muhammad Iqbal Siddiqi, "...if the sin remains unattended and the society is not secured from the sinners who have indulged into the sin due to the inner urge, crime will be rampant..."<sup>30</sup> In this regard, therefore, Islam always reminds Muslims to realise and be aware of their sins by self-evaluation, and encourages them to seek forgiveness from Allah immediately when

they commit sins. Apart from this, Islam always offers and generates virtues by giving education and guiding people so that they do not commit sins and crimes. Here we attempt to discuss one aspect of profitable ways of education which may be helpful when dealing with Muslims' conduct before they commit sins and crimes.

### The Process of Islamic Education Before Committing Sins and Crimes

Islam provides its followers with methods to resist the ways, which lead to sin and crime. This is because *Din al-Islam* and morality are inseparable. In so far as the issue of crimes is concerned, a noble method in Islam is to prevent crimes through the idea that "Prevention is better than treatment".<sup>31</sup> This means that Islam always strives by various means to give the right guidance and education rather than imposing punishment. In this connection, Liaquat Ali Khan Niazi has noted, "To prevent crime, Islam really aims to eliminating the conditions that produce it. It seeks to remove the very root-cause of all crime by working a complete moral reformation in man".<sup>32</sup> The education that is designed by Allah does not shift the natural needs of human desires but lays down the direction for pleasure and the satisfaction of desires. It helps man to organise his life in a correct, productive and progressive manner. Moreover, this sphere of education will reform an individual Muslim from his sinful life and encourage him to seek beneficial values. In the domain of education, we find the Quran and the Sunnah underlying the method of advising, guiding, encouraging, persuading, admonishing and warning the particular habits of man which may lead to crime. In fact, these noble methods often begin with the inculcation and encouragement of good values, which gradually characterise an individual and eventually become embedded as a way of life, particularly when man's internal nature is higher than his instinctual nature.

### Building the Awareness of an Individual

*Din al-Islam*, explicitly cultivates in every Muslim the awareness of accountability and responsibility before Allah. In this regard the Hadith clearly indicates that the prophet (pbuh) said,

Everyone of you is a guardian and everyone of you is responsible for his (for his wards). A ruler is a guardian and is responsible (for his subjects); a man is a guardian of his family and responsible (for them); a wife is a

guardian of her husband's house and she is responsible (for it); a slave is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible (for that). Beware! All of you are guardians and are responsible (for your wards).<sup>33</sup>

Generally, this Hadith underlines the vital message of individual responsibility in Islam. The 'guardian' in the Hadith implies that a person is responsible for protecting or taking care of others whom it is his duty to safeguard. By this point, Islam holds the principle that each Muslim is a person who has to generate mutual responsibility and work interdependently with others in harmony. The existence of goodness and righteousness in society and social change can take place only through the sphere of a deep sense of individual responsibility.<sup>34</sup> In fact, this sensitivity may remove evils from society. Muhammad Asad has made a clear statement in this respect that, "Every individual Muslim has to regard himself as personally responsible for all happenings around him, and to strive for the establishment of Right and the abolition of Wrong at every time and in every direction".<sup>35</sup> From the Islamic perspective, the awareness of accountability is one of the elements of Islamic education which may form the individual responsibility. This education begins for everyone at the age of *baligh* (puberty) when he or she is supposed to shoulder responsibility as prescribed in the *Shari'ah* and bear the consequences of all his or her deeds.<sup>36</sup> If he or she is devoid or unaware of the sense of accountability and responsibility before Allah, he or she actually may get involved in sin and crime.

Accordingly, there are different categories for these responsibilities. First is the responsibility of man to his Creator (Allah), by which he establishes the *'ibadah* and obeys His commandments, and protects his organs from bad deeds. In this connection Allah says, "Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those one will be questioned (by Allah)".<sup>37</sup> He is responsible for all his or her actions before Allah on the Day of Judgement. The Quranic verses and the Hadith remind people that, in order to develop and educate their sense of responsibility, they are always being supervised by Allah, and their deeds are being recorded by the Angels. In the Quran, Allah says, "Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsel? (Yes We do) and Our messengers (appointed angels in charge of mankind) are by them, to record".<sup>38</sup> A Muslim may earn rewards for performing good deeds in his daily life and in his actions towards other people<sup>39</sup>; however, if he does evil, particularly towards other people, he has to bear the evil consequences of his action before Allah on the Day of Judgement.<sup>40</sup> He who does good deeds will enjoy Paradise and anyone who does bad deeds will burn in the Fire of Hell<sup>41</sup>.

Second is personal responsibility, through which a man organises his own personal affairs and his needs so that he has to feed his body for life, to sleep for rest, to clothe his body properly and so on. This signifies that he must take care of all his needs and instincts properly in accordance with the *Shari'ah* (stay within the permissible and keep away from what Allah has forbidden) and not to suppress them, for example, for the purpose of asceticism.<sup>42</sup> So man is responsible "to live life with full zest and vigour".<sup>43</sup>

Thirdly, every individual is responsible towards his family, and members of society and for promoting a good social system. He is responsible for developing good communication with other people such as his neighbours, poor people, orphans and so on, and should treat them with very considerate kindness, and even make them members of the family. He should create something useful and beneficial to his fellows by helping, advising, counselling and reminding them according to the Islamic code of ethics. In fact all these actions which make a contribution to the well-being of other members of society will be accounted before Allah in the Day of Judgement. In family affairs, Islam teaches every individual Muslim to be responsible towards children, parents and other relatives:

Fourthly, the rulers of the state are responsible for the affairs of their people before Allah. The ruler and the law should be able to function on the basis of justice for everyone and the basic requirements of people should be provided. This sphere of mutual responsibility may generate a harmonious interaction, a feeling of social solidarity, love and help, and an obligation to respect the rules and laws in society. Eventually, this will develop and maintain an atmosphere of peace and prosperity, maintain the supremacy of goodness and justice, and guarantee the protection of the lawful rights of all members of society. In this context, Sayyid Qutb says,

Thus Islam legislates for mutual responsibility in society in all shapes and forms...So Islam lays down a complete liberty for the individual, within limits which will not injure him and will not damage society on his behalf. It safeguards the rights of society and at the same time specifies its responsibilities on the other side of the balance. Thus it enables life to progress on a level and even path and to attain the highest ends which can be served by the individual and by society alike<sup>44</sup>.

To sum up, the beneficent education of a sense of accountability and responsibility may nourish a Muslim's relationship of complete obedience and

trust in Allah. More significantly, one who understands and realises his responsibilities and is mindful of these will act and behave in a good manner with a firm *Iman* and develop a strong relationship with Allah. This may enable a Muslim to carry out his acts and commitments in all spheres of life in an orderly way, to seek virtue by all possible means, to behave positively rather than destructively whether privately or publicly, and to correct his mistakes and repent from his sins. The awareness of responsibility encourages every act of man to come out successfully on the Day of Judgement. Hence this sphere of *tarbiyyah*, may develop goodness, righteousness and truth in every aspect of Muslim life, and reform the bad habits in society which lead to many sins and crimes.

### Conclusion

The foregoing discussions indicate the clear point that the education, which operates before the Muslim commits a crime, is crucially important. This sphere of education leads the spiritual domain of the Muslim on the right path of Divine guidance. Therefore, in this way education creates a society where every individual Muslim feels ashamed of his evil deeds, is responsible for his actions to himself and others, and is aware of the punishment in this world and in the Hereafter for the sins and crimes committed. If this attitude is embedded in every individual Muslim, then a righteous individual and society will eventually emerge.

### End Note

- 1 The use of man in this article should be understood in the technical Islamic sense of *Insan* which is not specifically gender bound. Hence, unless specifically stated very often 'man' refers to 'woman' as well.
- 2 The Quran 91: 7-10
- 3 Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, vol. 30, translated by M. Adil Salahi and A. A. Shamis, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 187
- 4 The Quran 2 : 216 see also: 3 : 180, 4 : 19
- 5 For a detailed explanation of his idea on 'criminal man' and related scientific study see: Brian Lane, *The Encyclopedia of Forensic Science*, (London, 1992), pp. 98 – 104
- 6 Cited from: Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, *Islam and Criminality*, (Lahore, 1988), p. 45
- 7 For further information about "Criminal Types" see: Brian Lane, *The Encyclopedia of Forensic Science*, (London, 1992), p. 99
- 8 For a detailed discussion on the development of Lombroso's view see: Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, *Islam and Criminality*, (Lahore, 1988), pp. 46 – 54
- 9 Florian von Schilcher and Neil Tennant, *Philosophy, Evolution & Human Nature*, (London, 1984), pp.14 – 16 and see also: Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, (Essex, 1986), pp. 111 – 137
- 10 Roman B. Romaniuk, *Roman's Notes on DNA*, (Toronto, 1995), p. 11
- 11 Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, (Oxford, 1989), p. 3
- 12 Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and The Id*, translated by Joan Riviere, (London, 1935), pp. 19 – 53, see also: Humberto Nagera, *Basic Psychoanalytic Concepts of the Theory of Instincts*, (London, 1970), pp. 46 – 49

- 13 Christopher Badcock, *Essential Freud*, (Oxford, 1988), pp. 111 – 112, for further explanation see: Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and The Id*, translated by Joan Riviere, (London, 1935), pp. 79 – 88
- 14 C Fred Alford, "Freud and Violence" in Anthony Elliott, *Freud 2000*, (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 61 – 81, and Robert Boccock, *Freud and Modern Society*, (Wokingham, 1976), pp. 120 - 144
- 15 The Quran 95 : 4 – 5
- 16 The Quran 90 : 8 – 10
- 17 Hasan Al – cAnani, *Freedom and Responsibility in Qur'anic perspective*, translated by M.S. Kayani, (Indianapolis, 1990), pp. 77 – 103
- 18 Sayyid Quth, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, vol. 30, translated by M. Adil Salahi and A. A. Shamis, (New Delhi, 1998) p. 175, see also: Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, *Islamic Penal System and its Philosophy*, (Lahore, 1998), pp. 182 – 186, Mahar Abdul Haq, *Educational Philosophy of the Holy Qur'an*, (Lahore, 1990), pp. 231 – 234
- 19 Ali Akram Khan Sherwani, *Impact of Islamic Penal Laws on the Traditional Arab Society*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 32
- 20 Ismail R. al-Faruqi, *The Hijrah: The Necessity of its Iqamat or Vergegenwartigung*, (Philadelphia: 1981), pp. 63 – 67
- 21 Muhammad Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of Al-Ghazzali A Composite Ethics in Islam*, (Petaling Jaya, 1975), pp. 50 – 52
- 22 The Quran 2 : 281 see also: 2 : 233, 286, 3 : 25, 4 : 11, 45 : 22
- 23 Hasan Al – cAnani, *Freedom and Responsibility in Qur'anic perspective*, Translated by M.S. Kayani, (Indianapolis, 1990), pp. 142 – 147
- 24 Muhammad Iqbal Siddiqi, *The Penal Law of Islam*, (Lahore, 1985), pp. 4 – 5

- 25 Muslim, *Sahih*, translated by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, vol. 4 B, no. 2748, (Lahore, 1990), p. 259
- 26 Abu 'l-Hasan al-Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam as-Sultaniyyah*, translated by Asadullah Yate, (London, 1996), p.309, see also: Abdul Qadir cAudah, *Criminal Law of Islam*, vol. I, (Karachi, 1987), p.72, Liaquat Ali Khan Niazi, *Islamic Law of Tort*, (Lahore, 1988), pp. 12 – 13 and M Aminuddin, "Crime and the Law of Islam" in *Sharicah and Legal Profession*, (Lahore, 1985), p. 223
- 27 Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, (Cambridge, 1984), p. 472
- 28 *ibid*, vol. 1, p. 473
- 29 Ali Akram Khan Sherwani, *Impact of Islamic Penal Laws on the Traditional Arab Society*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 33
- 30 Muhammad Iqbal Siddiqi, *The Penal Law of Islam*, (Lahore, 1985), p. 6
- 31 Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Introduction to know Islam*, (Cairo, 1995), p. 108
- 32 Liaquat Ali Khan Niazi, *Islamic Law of Tort*, (Lahore, 1988), p. 140
- 33 Bukhari, *Sahih*, translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, vol. 7, no. 5188, (Riyadh, 1997), pp. 81 – 82
- 34 The individual who is aware of his accountability before Allah Who is present everywhere and Whose knowledge encompasses everything and every action of His creation, will carry out his responsibility on the scale of divine justice. Moreover this sphere of awareness builds up sincerity in one's life because one's acts are actually free of external forces, and merely for Allah's pleasure. He also nourishes a life of virtues such as piety, patience, always seeks repentance, truthfulness, fear, hope and love of Allah, reliance on Allah, thankful praise and so on.
- 35 Muhammad Asad, "The Spirit of Islam" in Khurshid Ahmad (ed.), *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*, (Leicester, 1992 ), p. 54

- 36 The Quran 24 : 58 – 59  
 37 The Quran 17 : 36
- 38 The Quran 43 : 80, see also: 17 : 13 – 14 , 45 : 28 – 29, 82 : 10 – 12
- 39 The Quran 17 : 7, 41 : 46, 45 : 15
- 40 In the Quranic verse 40 : 40 Allah says, “ Whosoever does an evil deed, will not be requited except the like thereof; and whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female and is a true believer (in the oneness of Allah), such will enter Paradise, where they will be provided therein (with all things in abundance) without limit.” See also: 2 : 48, 123, 4 : 85
- 41 Afzalur Rahman, *Readings in Political Philosophy*, (London, 1987), pp. 57 –72
- 42 Muslim, *Sahih*, translated by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, vol. 2 B, no. 1401, (Lahore, 1990), p. 340
- 43 *ibid*, p. 340
- 44 Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, translated by John B. Hardie, 1953, (Kuala Lumpur, Rev. ed. 2000), p. 92

## SITUATING VIRILIO: OF SPEED, GLOBALIZATION AND RELIGION

[Hasnan Hakim]

### I

**W**ar, of late, as a global issue has taken an upsurge of interest in many continents. Visit a website, Notowar.com (<http://www.notowar.com/>), and you will know that February 15/16, 2003 goes down in the world history as the first ever event showing global demonstration (and solidarity) against the war the US wanting to wage in Iraq. Visit an addition of two websites, The Nation (<http://www.thenation.com>) and Progressive (<http://www.progressive.org>), and you will find a whole load of rhetoric against the war on Iraq in the US. In the home front, February 23<sup>rd</sup> gathering at Bukit Jalil Stadium, with a force of about 200,000 demonstrators, organized by the Malaysian for Peace movement, has been unprecedented in bringing together government supporters, oppositions and non-governmental activists alike to oppose the war. If any, this string of universal protests in multiple locations and time should strongly be construed as rather symbolic of (or evident to) globalization as a fundamental social fact in contemporary life.

This short essay attempts to review, in brief, critical issues in globalization debate and build a case for Paul Virilio's conceptualization of speed or acceleration as one of the most critical issues inherent in the impact of globalizing technoscientific way of life onto humanity in general. As we shall put forth in this essay, globalization as a project focuses on the spread of efficient, effective and networked technology and as such it devalues the human experience. Virilio extends this forward with an invocation that a technicalized world would result in a mere disconnection from religion which is central to human experience on earth. In fact, Virilio's view of globalization *vis-à-vis* as a 'technoscape' world (to use Appadurai's categorization of globalization as cited in Ritzer (2003)) is far too dark and pessimistic than any other thinkers of the contemporary world, and this demoralizing technological world is what we think (and believe in) has become of our dreary pursuit of life, e.g. gadget mania—handphones, PDAs, CD/MP3 players and laptops.