

Appendix 18:

NOTE

This appendix contains 4 articles on similar subjects. Separated by xxxx

- 1. Muhammad Umaru Ndagi.**
- 2. Attack on Taslima- love of Islam or love of power?
By Asghar Ali Engineer of India**
- 3. Hesham Hassaballa**
- 4. Onyebuchi Ezigbo**
- 5. What My Muslim Father Taught Me about Christ**

ARTICLE 1

Philosophy: Propagating By Manners

Muhammad Umaru Ndagi¹

The attitude of Muslims in their inter-personal relationships with other Muslims and even non-Muslims can greatly add to the beauty of Islam. The dislike that is sometimes expressed, especially by non-Muslims towards Islam, springs from the attitude of some Muslims. Islam is a simple, friendly and universal religion.

No matter how beautiful a thing may be, the object of beauty would lack beholders if it is uncourteous or devoid of pleasant and warmth outward qualities. In essence, the beauty of Islam would become invisible if those who practise the religion are impolite, rough, hard and violent in their words and actions. Islam does not encourage the practical expression of crude, ruffian, or inharmonious forms of behaviour. Muslims can quite captivate other people's love (including non-Muslims) towards Islam by the manners they exhibit.

During my undergraduate days at the main campus of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, there was a non-Muslim who lived in a room next to ours in Alexander Hall of residence, which was still then used as a male hostel. He was a foreign student from Cameroon. This was a student who associated with nobody. He was to himself and himself alone. He greeted no one and no one greeted him. After some time of living on the same floor, I became close to him. At times, he would come to ask me for the use of one or two domestic appliances. Thus, I became the first and only student he interacted with to such an extent on that floor. One day, he approached me and said he wanted me to tell him about the religion of Islam. I asked him about what prompted his interest to know about Islam. He observed that if Islam is what my actions represent, then, it is a good religion to embrace. He went further to observe that, for a long time I used to greet him without him responding. Yet, I continued to greet him each time I met him; that even

¹*Weekend Trust*, 29 Jan-4 Feb/2005.

when other students (on the same floor) openly showed their disapproval to some of his attitudes, I never treated him with anger or any sign of resentment. Another of his comments concerned what is obviously inherent in the practice of the rites of Islam.

He said, "I wash parts of my body once daily and that's when I take a bath in the morning. But I always see you washing your face, hands and legs up to five times daily. I like that because I cherish cleanliness. This is why I want you to teach me about Islam; perchance, I might become a Muslim."

I then gave him some pamphlets to read about the basic principles of Islam. I guess readers would want to know the result of our deliberations. Well, the completion of his course of study created a communication gap that I could not bridge for some obvious reasons. The message in this narration is understandably clear. It would have been difficult for a non-Muslim to appreciate the virtue of "cleanliness" in a nominal Muslim. Allah knows best.

In another circumstance, a non-Muslim once told me that if not for reasons he did not want to disclose to me, he cherishes Islam and would have preferred if he were a Muslim. He mentioned to me that one thing that always attracts him to Islam is the Muslim attitude to funerals and burial of the dead. He opined that it is a burden greater than many of them, under the influence of culture and religion, could bear. This makes clear the fact that some of these glaring facts about Islam may become unnoticed if our attitude (as Muslims) to others and to everything is not peaceful, harmonious and neighbourly.

Islam teaches that we should love one another. The prophet (SAW) says that no one shall enter paradise until he has faith; and faith is not complete until you love one another. He (SAW) further states that no man has believed perfectly until he wishes for his brother that which he wishes for himself. We should not say that we would do well to people only if they do good to us and that we will oppress people if they oppress us. Two wrongs do not make a right. We should be good to others even when they are not good to us. The prophet (SAW) said, "A Muslim who mixes with people and bears inconveniences is better than one who does not mix with them nor bears any inconveniences."

Islam teaches that when the bier of anyone passes by you, whether Jew, Christian or Muslim, you should rise to your feet. A bier once passed by prophet Muhammad (SAW) and he stood up; and it was said to him, "This is the bier of a Jew." He said, "Was it not the holder of a soul, from which we should take example and fear?"

We should learn to be gentle for "Whoever has been granted gentleness has been given good portion in this world and in the hereafter." We should also learn to be good in all our manners. The prophet (SAW) said, "No father has given his child anything better than good manners." The prophet (SAW) teaches that we should be kind to strangers and guests, even if they are non-Muslims. A *Sahaba* (companion of the prophet SAW), once asked the prophet (SAW) saying, "If I stop with a man and he does not entertain me, and he afterwards stops at my house, am I to entertain him?" The prophet (SAW) answered, "Yes, entertain him." It is also the tradition of the prophet (SAW) to come out with his guest to the door of his house.

Islam teaches that we should be respectful. He is not strong and powerful who throws people down, but he is strong who withholds himself from anger. We should not abuse or backbite anyone. When three persons are together, two of them must not whisper to each other without letting the third to hear because that will hurt him. We should cultivate the habit of feeding the hungry and visiting the sick. We should also strive to free a captive who is unjustly or wrongly confined. Let us be seen to be truthful and sincere in all that we do and say. The prophet (SAW) said, "When you speak, say the truth; perform when you promise; discharge your trust; commit not fornication; be chaste; have no impure desires; withhold your hands from striking and from taking that which is unlawful or evil. The best of Allah's servants are those who, when seen, remind of Allah. And the worst of Allah's servants are those who carry tales about, practise mischief, separate friends, and seek for the defects of the good."

It is unworthy of a believer to ignore the reputation of others. It is also unworthy to curse anyone or to talk vainly. The prophet (SAW) said, "It is better to sit alone than in company of the bad; and it is better to sit with the good than alone. It is better to speak good words than remain silent; and silence is better than bad words." The relationship between Muslims and between them and others grow healthier when they respect each other's feelings. This in effect creates an enabling environment for the propagation of the ideals of Islam. According to the prophet (SAW), the duties of Muslims to each other are six: "When you meet a Muslim, greet him; when he invites you to dinner, accept; when he asks you for advice, give him; when he sneezes and says 'Praise be to Allah,' say to him, 'May Allah have mercy upon you;' when he is sick, visit him; and when he dies, follow his bier." It is not possible to list all the manners enjoined upon Muslims by Islam in this medium. However, upholding the virtues enumerated here so far could go a long way to disseminate the true teachings of Islam

May Allah (SWT) grant us the ability to demonstrate manners that would build bridges of understanding among people, especially in a multi-faith society like Nigeria, *amin*.

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ARTICLE 2

From : Csss <csss@mtnl.net.in>
Sent : August 13, 2007 7:38:52 AM
To : Jan&Fran Boer <boerjf@hotmail.com>
Subject : Re: Secular Perspective

| | | **Inbox**

Dear Jan Boer,
Thanks so much for appreciating my piece. Please go ahead and use it the way you deem it fit.
Best wishes,
Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer

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ATTACK ON TASLIMA- LOVE OF ISLAM OR LOVE OF POWER?

Asghar Ali Engineer

CSSS Aug 16 2007

It was shocking that three MLAs of Ittihadul Muslimin in Hyderabad gatecrashed into the book release function of her book *Lajjai* translated into Telugu on 9th August and tried to beat up Taslima and shouted slogans using unbecoming words, even using abusing language. And all this in the name of Islam as if Islam stands for such hooliganism.

The party leadership instead of condemning such wayward behaviour, approved of it and patted them on back. They were even given hero's welcome. One MLA even said that if Taslima comes to Hyderabad again, she will be beheaded. If elected representatives take law into their own hands, there cannot be greater tragedy. If they had done it without invoking Islam, it would have been a different story, though equally condemnable.

Was this for love of Islam? No way. It was love of power, pure and simple. The Party leadership thought it is good opportunity to strengthen and widen its electoral base. Human behaviour, especially political behaviour is extremely complex. Politicians, while acting in self-interest, invoke high ideals in order to cover up their utterly selfish motives.

Someone Imam even declared from Calcutta that he would pay Rs.50,000/- if anyone blackens Taslima's face. An Imam is supposed to be very respectable and responsible person who leads people in *namaz* (prayer) but also leads them in social and political matters. An Imam's behaviour should be highly restrained and responsible. I totally disagree with Taslima's views and think she is completely ignorant about Qur'anic teachings but that does not give anyone right to violently attack her or incite people to attack her.

Apart from the fact that such hooliganism is morally reprehensible it is unwise from the viewpoint of those who are opposed to Taslima's attacks on Islam.

This gives her much more publicity that she deserves. Now this attack that took place in Hyderabad will give her worldwide publicity on one hand, and would make her celebrity in the eyes of those who are already hostile to Islam. Now reams and reams of papers will be blackened in her praise. She would also be now much more hostile to Islam than ever before. She would really hate Islam because of hooliganism of some members of Ittihadul Muslimin. If we really love Islam than we should try to win her heart and soul through love and compassion. And that is what the Prophet of Islam did. It is well known story that a Jewish woman who hated the Prophet (PBUH) used to throw garbage on him whenever he passed from below her house. Once when she did not throw garbage on him, he inquired why she did not and was told she is sick. He immediately went to inquire about her health. She was so moved that immediately accepted Islam then and there.

What a contrast! Those who claim to love Prophet and Islam are attacking a woman and making her hate Islam more than before. This is madness, not wise behaviour and must be condemned as strongly as possible. These MLAs and crowd accompanied them have brought utter shame to Islam and Muslims. It is heartening that many religious leaders of Muslims and intellectuals have condemned it. Maulana Mustaqim of Jamiat –ul-Ulama-i-Hind, Shiah leader Maulana Ather Abbas Rizvi and several others have strongly condemned attack on Taslima Nasreen.

The book which was being released in Hyderabad had nothing to do with Islam. It was Telugu translation of her book on persecution of Hindu minority in Bangla Desh. After demolition of Babri Masjid like hooligans of Hindutva attacked Muslims all over India and engineered communal violence in number of cities and killed Muslims, the hooligans of Jamat-e-Islami of Bangla Desh attacked Hindus and demolished their temples and set fire to their houses. In *Lajja* (shame) she has condemned all this. Do we Muslims not heave sigh of relief when some fair-minded Hindus stand by Muslims when Hindu communal forces attack us? Should we not stand by fair-minded Muslims of Bangla Desh if they stand by Hindu minority?

It is true Taslima has written provocative articles on Islam. We must counter it by arguing on the basis of Qur'an rather than attacking her physically, and in very dignified language befitting a true Muslim. No one can cite a single verse of Qur'an or any hadith to support violence against others, even enemies, as long as they are peaceful. On the other hand we can cite several verses from the Qur'an, to support dignified behaviour.

The Qur'an says, " Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner" (16:125). Again what a contrast –the hooligans of Ittihadul Muslimin beat

up a woman and other journalists and others present there. Also, Allah says in the Qur'an "...do not be aggressors, Allah does not love aggressors." (2:190). And even if a Muslim renounces Islam and becomes unbeliever, no one has right to punish him/her except Allah.

"Those who believe", says Qur'an, "then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allah is not referring to any punishment for those who repeatedly believe and disbelieve and increase in disbelief, let alone human beings punishing them of their own. Even if Taslima has ceased to believe and has increased in her disbelief, no one has any right among human beings to punish her. It is matter of her conscience. All one can do is to dialogue with her in dignified way and then leave it to her conscience

II

Democracies in socially backward countries like India face an acute dilemma. The entire functioning of democracy depends on rights of people and freedom of conscience and right to believe or disbelieve. Both individual and collective rights are sacred in democracy. However, politicians greedy for votes of illiterate masses, and even educated middle class people, try to incite religious feelings and get their votes. Most of the politicians find this easy way to legislative assemblies or Parliament. They emerge as champions of this or that religion and grab their votes.

This is what the Sangh Parivar did by launching an aggressive movement for Ramjanambhoomi and demolished Babri Masjid and took pride in that act of lawlessness and destruction. The Sangh leaders launched not only aggressive campaign but Sangh leaders like Uma Bharti and Sadhvi Rithambara used abusive language against Muslims and the Government did nothing. They allowed hate campaign to go on.

If the authorities had taken stiff action against Uma Bharti and Rithambara, it would have sent a strong signal to all others that they cannot get away with such aggressive campaigns against all norms of democracy. Democracy cannot succeed without following rule of law. If Uma Bharti and Rithambara had been punished, MLAs of Ittihadul Muslimin would not have dared to indulge in this hooliganism.

However, as the Swedish scholar who wrote *Asian Drama* observed India's is the soft government and refuses to act until all damage is done. Taslima Nasreen's attackers also got away with symbolic arrest and were released on bail immediately thereafter. It speaks volumes about our indifferent approach and also fear of votes.

So many communal riots take place because no guilty in the riots is ever punished. All of them know this and have nothing to care for consequences. And riots keep on taking place. Mumbai riots more than 800 persons were killed, many of them most brutally, and yet state is extremely reluctant to act lest Shiv Sena may not approve of it. Can this ever be the reason for not acting at all for a democratic government?

This is indeed bad omen for Indian democracy. The people involved in such public crimes must be severely punished to send strong message that hooliganism will not be tolerated in any case. Rule of law must be applied under any circumstances. Politicians should not be allowed to incite people publicly to indulge in mayhem and murder. This is repeatedly happening in our democracy. It is heartening sign that many religious personalities among Muslims and secular intellectuals among them have come out strongly condemning this attack on Taslima Nasreen. Still many columnists, even waiting for a day started demanding where are those Muslims and secularists who immediately condemn Hindutvawadis but keep quiet when some Muslim fanatics indulge in such extremist action. Many such columnists will come out with many such articles and further aggravate feelings in majority community.

We are not a mature democracy and should come out against any act of hooliganism and violence whosoever perpetrates it, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians. We must promote zero tolerance towards any act of violence. It should be our litmus test. If we want to enjoy fruits of secular democracy we must shed all forms of partisan feelings. Politicisation of religion in our democracy has already done enough damage. How much more damage we want to inflict?

Is any one listening?

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Article 3

Living Islam

By: Hesham Hassaballa

DAILY TRIUMPH April 19, 2005

Every year Muslim volunteers from the Coalition to Preserve Human Dignity organize a Humanitarian Day for the Homeless in Los Angeles, California.

What is Islam? The attempt to answer that question has been the subject of an almost countless number of symposia, doctoral dissertations, college classes, and books. Yet, for all the hours of lectures that have been given; for all the ink and paper that has been consumed, the answer is still not easy to come by. What is Islam? Is it the five "pillars" of worship? Is it the Ka'ba in Mecca? The

Prophet's mosque in Medina? Is it suicide bombers in Israel or Iraq? Is it Osama bin Laden? Ask most Muslims, and they will tell you Islam is none of these things.

Yet, ask that same question to most Americans, and you will likely get a different answer. I recently received an email from someone who told me that she basically disliked Muslims after being married to one for five years. She suspects that he married her to get his Green Card, because, after getting married, he subjected her to horrible abuse. She has since separated from this man. Her story reminded me of another man, a Muslim, whose non-Muslim wife had a very good opinion of Islam...until they were cheated out of their money by a "devout" Muslim.

When I mention these situations to other Muslims, many of them understandably get upset. It is not fair, they tell me, that their opinion of Islam is shaped by the conduct of a few bad apples in the Muslim community. They are absolutely correct. The whole of Islam should never be judged by the sins of a few Muslims, and I have repeatedly made this plea in my writings. Yet, the problem is many, if not most, Americans have never personally interacted with a Muslim before, and sadly, the first interaction these Americans had with Islam and Muslims was on the fateful morning of September 11, 2001. Sad, but probably true nonetheless.

Since that time, Muslims - including this one - have toiled hard to show that Islam is not what happened on September 11. Muslims are not like the 19 hijackers who killed close to 3,000 innocent Americans in New York and Washington, D.C. Yet, American Muslims have to wake up to reality, and the reality is this: many, if not most, Americans shape their opinions about Islam based upon the Muslims with whom they interact. Islam is what the Muslims are. It may not be entirely fair, but that is the way it is.

Herein lies one of the most important challenges for American Muslims today: since we are what Islam is, we have to physically embody the ideals of Islam. We have to become the eloquently written books and pristine pamphlets that we so proudly display to non-Muslims seeking to learn

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Article 4

Economic Reform: Moslems Tasked on Corruption

Ezigbo, Onyebuchi²

An Islamic scholar and Provost of the Kwara State College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies, Ilorin, Dr. Badmus 'Lanre Yusuf yesterday challenged all Muslims in the country to rise up and fight corruption and injustice as part of their contribution to the global war on socio-economic vices.

Speaking as guest lecturer at an event to mark the seventh anniversary of the Islamic Brotherhood of Nigerians (ISBON) in Abuja, Yusuf said "the tenets of Islamic religion has no place for corruption and injustice" nor does it condone violence and rascality among the faithful.

"To contribute effectively to the reformation of the country, every true Muslim must identify and imbibe the teachings of Islam and practice them religiously," he said.

He added that one of the major signs of a true believer in Allah is non-participation in crime, corruption and perpetration of injustice both in governance and private transactions.

The scholar whose lecture coincided with the celebration of Nigeria's 44th independence, regretted the state of affairs in the country, especially the hardship imposed by the introduction of a price increase on petroleum products.

He spoke against the involvement of Muslims in acts of violence and shedding of blood which is against the religious injunction of Islam: "Why should a Muslim who is aware of his progenitor be involved in any case of murder?"

In challenging Muslims not to sit on the fence on national issues, the college provost urged youths to rise up and henceforth put forward views and suggestions on any policy or programme that affects the people negatively.

As Muslims, we should discourage ostentatious living, be in the vanguard to promote the welfare of the people and avoid things that could inflict pain on the citizens.

Earlier, the national chairman of ISBON, Alhaji Mikail Ajuwon recounted some of the achievements of the group to include the establishment of 22 branches of the organisation, establishing an Islamic School at Karu, Abuja and the projection of the Islamic religion through conferences, seminars and sponsorship of some brethren on the holy pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia.

Xxxx

ARTICLE 5

²TD, 2 Oct/2004

Seeing the Face of God:

What My Muslim Father Taught Me about Christ

Shannon Jammal-Hollemans³

“In the Name of God the Merciful.”

Growing up, I cannot recall a time I got into a car with my father that he didn't recite this short prayer in Arabic before departing. It came as naturally to him as breathing.

I was blessed with two incredible parents who loved each other very much, not unlike most of my friends at my Christian elementary school. What made me different—other than my black hair, dark eyes, and olive complexion—was that my mother was a Christian and my father, a Muslim.

I grew up attending church and Sunday school weekly with my mother and four siblings. My father did not object but paid tuition so his children could receive a Christian education as well. I didn't fully realize my Dad wasn't a Christian until I was about 10 years old.

I attended a vacation Bible school with a friend that summer, where I learned about letting my light shine for Jesus. The teachers asked our class to go around the circle and name someone we knew whom we could tell about Jesus' love. Most of the kids couldn't think of anyone who didn't already know Jesus, so I was quite proud when I could say, “My dad.”

I don't think my prepubescent teachers knew what to do. They were mortified. They prayed. They considered my family lost souls—my father for rejecting Jesus as his Savior, and my mother for sinfully marrying and having children with an unbeliever. I hadn't thought it was a big deal until then. I left with a sinking feeling. The message to me was clear: My parents made a mistake. I never should have been born.

I won't argue about the biblical teaching against marrying an unbeliever. The marriage happened, and that's between my parents and God. I do know that my Muslim father has been a gift to me. I'm sure there are lots of things Christians can learn from Muslims about devotion to God, the practice of spiritual disciplines, prayer, tithing, and reverence. My dad has taught me lessons in all those areas. But what I've learned about most from loving and living with him is Christ.

³*The Banner*, Oct/2006, pp. 20-21.

Living Like Jesus

My father was born in a village in southern Lebanon, not far geographically or culturally from where Christ walked the earth. His father died before he reached adulthood, and he grew up without a country. He spent his formative years in Lebanon, Kuwait, and West Africa, moving among family members. This gave him incredible insight into what Jesus' life was like.

There's a quote in one of my favorite books that says, "The gold of the Gospel carries with it the sand and dust of its original home." My dad carries with him some of that dust, and throughout my life I've been discovering it.

If you know anything about Middle Eastern culture, you likely know about its hospitality. Whenever guests came to our home, the visit usually went something like this: My parents would greet the guests—whether expected or not—as if they had been waiting all week for them to arrive, even if they had just seen each other the day before. My father would sit them down, ask about their well-being, and entertain them with stories. He'd ask if they wanted anything to eat or drink. Regardless of their response, food and drink would be placed in front of them with every expectation that they would enjoy it.

I've been told many times how blessed I was to have a godly Christian mother. And I was. But I was also blessed with a father who gave me incredible insight into the culture and personhood of Christ, the generous spirit of God's grace.

My father has always wanted to give me so much, offering the opportunity to grasp at everything he never had the opportunity to hold. He sees his children's failures and mourns our mistakes. It's not hard for me to imagine a God who loves me enough to die for me because my father has laid himself down many times for his children over the years. Unbeknownst to him, he has emulated Christ.

Embracing Imperfection

It's not easy to find good things written about Muslim fathers these days. In our post-9/11 world, the usual reports tend to focus on "honor killings," arranged marriages, and children kidnapped and taken to the Middle East. Just try Googling "Muslim father" and you'll see what I mean. These ideas are contradictory to the Muslim dad I grew up with. Like most fathers, mine wanted me to dress modestly when I hit the teen years. He didn't demand that I wear a burqa or hijab, just a shirt that covered my belly button and a one-piece swimsuit instead of a bikini.

Like all dads, other than the heavenly Father we all share, mine isn't perfect. He isn't a perfect father or a perfect Muslim. That's another important lesson I've learned from him—how to live as an imperfect person.

We Calvinists tend to spend a great deal of time and effort shrouding ourselves in guilt for who we should be and how we should live in Christ. My father has shown me consistently how to live life—love life—free from feeling overwhelmed by my inability to do everything right.

We recently had a conversation about tithing. I shared with my father how challenging it can be for my husband and me to give 10 percent to the church each month. I asked my dad, "How do you live knowing that you're falling short, that no matter how much you try to improve, there will always be something?"

"You just do what you can. God understands."

Opening the Curtains

First thing in the morning, my father likes to start his pot of water for coffee on the stove, then, before sitting down on the sofa, to open the curtains and say, “Let’s see God’s face this morning.”

For me, God’s face has been reflected in the face of my Muslim father. My dad taught me that God is all around us, not only in the natural world but in the hearts and minds of those we encounter daily. He taught me how to love people—unconditionally, radically, faithfully, and generously. From him I’ve learned how to talk to God wherever I am, to see and reflect God’s love to others, and when I fall short, to rely on the understanding of a God who is higher than I am (Isa. 55:8-9).

I find my rest in the arms of Christ. I pray that someday my father will open the curtains and do the same.

discussion

1. Do you know any Muslim people? How are they received in your family or neighborhood?
2. Shannon says there are lots of things Christians can learn from Muslims. Do you agree? Discuss Shannon’s examples if you do not have any personal experience with Muslim culture.
3. Shannon describes the hospitality traditions of Middle Eastern culture. What impresses you about her description?
4. Is it possible not to believe in Christ and yet be a witness to him? Discuss.
5. Shannon talks about Calvinist guilt. Do you experience this? What do you think of Mohammed’s advice to “do what you can do. God understands”?
6. What impact does Mohammed’s morning ritual of opening the curtains and saying, “Let’s see God’s face this morning” have on Shannon. What saying or practice do you use in your home that influences the faith of your family?