

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN MODERNITY AND THE  
JA'ALIYIN MUSLIM FAMILIES OF KHARTOUM;  
Implications for Christian Witness

BY  
BERNARD MWEU PETER

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master  
of Theology in Inter-Cultural Studies

JULY 2007

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Approved:

First Reader

  
Dr. Caleb Chul-Soo Kim

Second Reader

  
Dr. Stephen Mutuku Sesi

External Reader

  
Prof. Julius Muthengi

July, 2007

## Student's Declaration

### THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN MODERNITY AND THE JA'ALIYIN MUSLIM FAMILIES OF KHARTOUM: IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN WITNESS

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit

The views presented therein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed):



BERNARD MWEU PETER

July, 2007

## ABSTRACT

Family is regarded as a cornerstone of a healthy and balanced Muslim society. This study explored the encounter between modernity and Ja'aliyin Muslim families in Khartoum – Sudan. Participant observation was used to collect data. The study was motivated by Voll's thesis: The growing significance of the modern and contemporary Islamic world to the global community requires that we understand the broad continuities, commonalities, new elements and local particulars of Muslim experience. Voll's findings informed the three-pronged approach: 1) impact of non-Muslim factors, 2) particularity of local factors, and 3) Islamic root faith. These elements, interacting with each other, form what it means to be a “Muslim” today. The investigation utilized Voll's Islamic models of how change is experienced: 1) Conservatism, 2) Adaptationism, 3) Fundamentalist and 4) Individualism. This study revealed the following:

Firstly, Ja'aliyin Muslims believe that family is the basic institution in society, and harmonious gender relations are a prerequisite in the establishment of peaceful societies. They contend that family in the West lacks foundation, is weak and may not be followed as an example. For them, family preserves religious tradition and contributes to the development of religious law. Together with Christians and humanists, they affirm that family is essential to the welfare of society. Secondly, Ja'aliyin Muslims believe that rules of Islamic family life regarding inheritance, the rights of orphans, the mixing of the sexes, and the extended family network are calculated to foster the integrity of the family in every way. Third, they believe that the Islamic way of family life is largely misunderstood, arguing that some values of the Islamic family code are close to Christian values. They assert that the Hijab, attitudes to polygamy and divorce can be understood as alternative ways of reaching a secure interdependence and a caring community of love.

Fourth, they believe an objective of marriage is psychological, emotional and spiritual companionship between husband and wife. But, Islamic law has specified irretrievable marital breakdown as ground for divorce wherever attempts at reconciliation fail. Polygamy is defended by pointing to “concealed polygamy” in Western society. Fifth, they claim a stronger position in the world today because they possess stable systems of domestic relationships such as the West is trying to do without. Sixth, The Ja'aliyin, mostly Sunni Muslims, rely on the example of Prophet Muhammad for their faith and family practices. From observation, most contemporary Ja'aliyin families in Khartoum are largely adaptationist in tone. They are willing to integrate Islamic values and ideals with Western technology. Modern ideas are borrowed and integrated to Islamic faith to form expressions that are contemporary in flavor, Ja'aliyin in culture, and Islamic in their root faith. Traces of fundamentalism (not exactly Voll's categorization) and individualism are evidenced among them. The findings of this inquiry raised several implications for Christian mission among Muslim Ja'aliyin families based in Khartoum. Appropriate recommendations and suggestions for further study have been stated in the concluding chapter of this research.

## TO

My wife Melody Mutheu Mweu,

and our children:

Jesse Mumo Mweu

Victor Ndongoi Mweu

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Motivation and Objectives of the Study .....	6
Significance of the Study .....	6
Research Problem Statement .....	9
Research Questions.....	9
Methodology to be Employed for this Research.....	10
<i>Emic and Etic Perspectives</i> .....	10
Delimitations of the Present Work.....	13
The Concept of Modernism/Modernity .....	14
Sudan: Facts and Figures .....	16
<i>The Sudan: Past and Present</i> .....	17
<i>The Sudan: Complex Political Twists and Turns</i> .....	18
<i>Crisis in Human Rights</i> .....	19
Khartoum: Capital of the Sudan .....	21
The People of Sudan .....	21
The Ja'aliyin People-Group.....	24
<i>Ja'aliyin Lifestyle</i> .....	25
<i>Ja'aliyin Beliefs and Needs</i> .....	25
Religious Demography .....	26
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>28</b>
An Introduction.....	28
Family in Islam: Emic Perspectives.....	29
Family Life in Islam: Where it all Begins .....	30
Family in Islam: Reflections and Concerns .....	31
Family in Islam: Approaches and Foundations .....	33
<i>Tawhid: The Oneness of God</i> .....	34
<i>Man's Vicegerency</i> .....	34
<i>A Complete Way of Life</i> .....	37
<i>Faith as the Basis of Society</i> .....	38

Family in Islam: Basic Principles .....	40	<i>Summary Guidelines for Interviewing</i> .....	107
<i>Family as a Divinely-Inspired Institution</i> .....	40	<i>Site Documents</i> .....	109
<i>Faith and the Family</i> .....	40	<i>Ethics in Ethnographic Research</i> .....	110
<i>Family as Social Contract</i> .....	41	<i>Analyzing, Interpreting and Reporting Findings</i> .....	111
<i>Marriage and the Family</i> .....	41	<i>Qualitative Description</i> .....	111
<i>Equality of the Sexes</i> .....	42	<i>Reporting Findings</i> .....	112
		<i>Balance between Description and Analysis</i> .....	112
Family in Islam: Objectives and Functions .....	43	<b>CHAPTER 4</b> .....	<b>114</b>
<i>Preservation and Continuation of the Human Race</i> .....	43	<b>FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>114</b>
<i>Protection of Morals</i> .....	44	Findings of the Research.....	114
<i>Psycho-Emotional Stability, Love and Kindness</i> .....	45	Identity of the Ja'aliyin.....	115
<i>Socialization and Value-Orientaion</i> .....	46	<i>Identity of Ja'aliyin: An Insider's Account</i> .....	118
<i>Social and Economic Security</i> .....	48	The Family Unit and its Significance .....	123
<i>Family: Widening Horizons and Producing Social Cohesion in Society</i> .....	50	<i>Finding a Spouse</i> .....	123
<i>Motivation for Effort and Sacrifice</i> .....	51	<i>Issues Regarding Dowry</i> .....	124
Family in Islam: Structure, Principles and Rules.....	51	<i>Issues Regarding Engagement</i> .....	125
<i>Marriage and Divorce</i> .....	51	<i>Issues Regarding Arranged Marriages</i> .....	126
<i>The Basis of Family</i> .....	53	<i>Issues Regarding Marriage</i> .....	127
<i>Courtship in Islam</i> .....	55	<i>Composition of the Family</i> .....	128
<i>The Way Marriage is Contracted</i> .....	56	<i>The Extended Family System</i> .....	128
<i>Marriage in Islam</i> .....	57	<i>Authority and Decision-making in the Family</i> .....	129
The Structure of the Muslim Family.....	61	<i>The Status of Women</i> .....	129
<i>The Position of Man and Woman</i> .....	62	<i>Fertility and Contraception</i> .....	130
<i>Family and its Roles: Islamic Teachings</i> .....	63	<i>Polygamy and Re-Marriage</i> .....	130
<i>The Role of Mothers</i> .....	66	<i>Measures to Promote and Protect Morality</i> .....	132
<i>The Family and Society</i> .....	68	<i>Issues Regarding Divorce</i> .....	133
<i>Polygamy in Islam</i> .....	70	<i>Care for the Elderly</i> .....	134
Modernity and Modernism: Major Characteristics.....	75	The Family: Aspects that have Remained Traditional.....	135
<i>Islam and the West in a Transmodern World</i> .....	77	<i>Female Genital Cutting</i> .....	135
<i>Dealing with the Modern World: Suggestions by Islamists</i> .....	85	<i>The Hijab</i> .....	136
<i>The Islamic Resurgence in Sudan</i> .....	85	The Family: Aspects that have been Modernized.....	137
Modernity and the Muslim Family: The Encounter .....	86	Voll's Model: A Synthesis .....	138
The Muslim Family and Church Planting: A Christian-Etic Perspective.....	92	The Contemporary Ja'aliyin Muslim Family: .....	142
<i>Why Witness to Muslims?</i> .....	94	Implications for Christian Witness .....	142
<i>Building Passable Bridges</i> .....	95	<i>The Ja'aliyin: An Unreached People-Group</i> .....	142
<i>Christian Witness and the Concept of Family</i> .....	96	<i>The Past in Light of the Present</i> .....	143
<i>Regarding the Role of Women</i> .....	97	<i>It All Begins with Prayer</i> .....	144
Reaching Muslim Families: A Proposal .....	98	<i>Reaching out to Whole Families</i> .....	145
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> .....	<b>99</b>	<i>Meeting Felt Needs</i> .....	146
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>99</b>	<i>Building Meaningful Relationships</i> .....	147
A Synthesis of Ethnographic Research.....	100	Lessons from Voll.....	147
<i>Variations in Observational Methods</i> .....	101	Contextualized Approaches among the Ja'aliyin .....	148
<i>Variations in Observer Involvement: Participant or Onlooker?</i> .....	102	<b>CHAPTER 5</b> .....	<b>151</b>
<i>Methodological Principles</i> .....	103	<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>151</b>
<i>Ethnography as Method</i> .....	106		
<i>Summary Guidelines for Fieldwork</i> .....	106		

Summary Statements and Conclusions.....	151
Ja'aliyin: A Concrete Identity .....	151
Importance of this Present Study .....	152
Theoretical Approaches .....	152
The Muslim Family: Summary Statements .....	153
Some Conclusive Statements.....	154
The Contemporary Ja'aliyin Muslim Family: Implications for Christian Witness	156
Contextualized Approaches among the Ja'aliyin .....	157
Some Missiological Implications.....	157
Some Recommendations.....	159
Suggestion for Further Study .....	160
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDELINES.....</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: MAP SHOWING GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF THE JA'ALIYIN.....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM... </b>	<b>175</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN'S LEGAL TABLE AND TEXT</b>	<b>176</b>

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure.....	Pages
1. Map of Sudan and its location in the African Continent.....	16
2. Map of Khartoum, capital of Sudan.....	21
3. The Muslim concept of family indicating the relationship between political and religious authority .....	97
4. Concentration of Sudanese Arabs.....	121
5. The Nubian region today.....	122
6. A map illustrating the 10-40 window.....	143

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Islam is a dynamic force in the contemporary world. The growing significance of the modern and contemporary Islamic world to the global community requires that we understand not only the broad continuities and commonalities but also the new elements and local particulars of Muslim experience... The Islamic world, like other societies in the world, is in the process of major transformation... The Islamic community is entering a new phase... Part of the visible Muslim resurgence is putting modern sentiments into Islamic garb, but the Islamic resurgence also involves the creation of new and effective forms for the continuing vitality of the Islamic message<sup>1</sup> And, in the past, a Muslim household – a Muslim mother or father – could come home and be cut off from the rest of the world... This was true only till two decades or three decades ago. Today, wherever they are living, whether in the deserts of Saudi Arabia or the deserts of Baluchistan in Pakistan or indeed in Australia in some remote outpost, Muslims cannot do this because there is the television set, there is the VCR, the fax, there are all these new developments which ensure that media images are

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<sup>1</sup>John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, 2nd Ed (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), ix, xi, 3, 4. Voll is professor of Islamic history and associate director of the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. He taught Middle Eastern, Islamic, and world history at the University of New Hampshire for thirty years before moving to Georgetown in 1995. He has lived in Cairo, Beirut, and Sudan and has traveled widely in the Muslim world. He is co-author, with John L. Esposito, of *Islam and Democracy and Makers of Contemporary Islam* and is editor, author, or co-author of six additional books. He is a past president of the Middle East Studies Association. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Sudan Studies Association. In 1991 he received a Presidential Medal in recognition for scholarship on Islam from President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. He has published numerous articles and book chapters on modern Islamic and Sudanese history.

being bombarded in to the household... these images are disturbing traditional Muslim ideas and values and in turn will certainly affect behavior...so we are seeing a kind of internal pressure, challenge to Muslim family life coming from outside, which is alien, which is foreign, which is distant and which is very often threatening.<sup>2</sup>

Islam is currently the second-largest religion in the world, with an estimated 1.4 billion adherents. Muslims believe that the one true God worshiped by Jews and Christians revealed his words to Prophet Muhammad, who lived in the historic land of Arabia. They believe that Muhammad was the final prophet sent by God, having received revelations from Allah (God) through the angel Gabriel. The Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (the words and deeds of Muhammad) are regarded as the fundamental sources of Islam. Muslims consider the Qur'an as their guide in life. It is the basis of all their principles and values. Likewise, all that Muhammad said, did, or allowed to happen is considered by Muslims to have been inspired by God. Thus, both his actions and the Qur'an are the basis of Islamic law.

In this Muslim world, one of the most striking features of society is the importance attached to the family. The family unit is regarded as the cornerstone of a healthy and balanced society.<sup>3</sup> Family life plays a vital role. Family concerns aspects that go beyond husband, wife and children, and incorporates all relatives too. Muslims assert that Islam is a complete way of life. Muhammad Al Alkhuli notes, "Islam organizes your relations with God, with yourself, with your children, with your

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<sup>2</sup>Akbar Ahmed. Interviewed in *Encounter* by Margaret Coffey on Sunday 21/03/9 (emphasis mine). Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/enc/stories/s20112.htm>, on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2005. The *Encounter* explores some of the contemporary religious and political issues within Islam. It addresses the contemporary rediscovery of a pluralist tradition within Islam.

<sup>3</sup>A.R. Doi. *Shar'iah: The Islamic Law*. (London: Ta Ha; 1984)

relatives, with your neighbor, with your guest, and with other brethren. Islam establishes your duties and rights in all those relationships.”<sup>4</sup>

The scholar continues to argue that Islam establishes a clear system of worship, civil rights, laws of marriage and divorce, laws of inheritance, code of behavior, what not to drink, what to wear, and what not to wear, how to worship God, how to govern, the laws of war and peace, when to go to war, when to make peace, the law of economics, and the laws of buying and selling. Islam is a complete code of life... Islam is not practiced in the mosque only, it is for daily life, a guide to life in all its aspects: socially, economically, and politically... Islam is complete constitution. Thus Islam keeps the Muslim away from confusion, because Islam is logical and rational.<sup>5</sup>

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, an anthropologist-author who has done fieldwork on Arab-Islamic society and culture in the Sudan, focused her studies on Islam, as lived and practiced in everyday life and society. In addressing “family, community, and gender relations,” the writer indicates that *'ayla, ahl*, (or *usra*), family is everything in Islamic society and culture.<sup>6</sup> Muslims believe that Islam places the highest

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<sup>4</sup> Al Alkhuli, “A Complete Way of Life.” In <http://www.beconvinced.com/en/article.php>. Dr Alkhuli asserts that Islam is a religion that organizes all aspects of life on both the individual and national levels. The Qur’an and Sunnah claim Islam’s supremacy over the world in all of its affairs. This includes government, economics, religion, dietary laws, and social norms. Since Muslims believe the prophethood of Muhammad is universal, the objective of Islam is to have the entire world live in submission to *Shariah* law.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, *Islamic Society in Practice*. (Florida, Gainesville University Press 1994), P 61. Fluehr-Lobban’s formal research and informal observations span the years 1970 to 1990, a time of dynamic change for the Arab and Muslim worlds. She conveys richness of her family experiences in their adopted communities, their deepening understanding of both Western and Islamic culture, and their growing appreciation for the Muslim “other” as fellow human beings. Her volume is a primer on Islamic society, providing a good historical overview with a focus on Islamic practice in Sudan. After her research in Sudan, the anthropologist’s descriptions of Islamic values and social practice, gender relations and the tensions within the *Ummah*, (Muslim community) are filtered through her experiences. The Western term, Islamic fundamentalism, is inappropriate, she says, because among Muslims there is no disagreement about the fundamentals of the religion, and the Arabic translation of

significance in life to the family as an institution, towards its different members, and to the duty of care and responsibility in those that have the worldly ability to provide assistance and help to others in the family that need such aid.<sup>7</sup>

Family life in the Muslim world is firmly established by tradition, as well as by religious law, such that it may not be affected seriously. The family ties which must be maintained are general and specific. The general one is the relations of Islam. It is obligatory to maintain connections with them with friendly relations, advice, justice, fairness and fulfilling one’s obligations to them in the obligatory and the commendable. The specific includes financially supporting family members, checking on their condition and overlooking their mistakes.<sup>8</sup> According to Muslim scholars, it is the firm structure of Islamic family life based on unambiguous fundamentals that makes moral values so enduring, and enables them to outlive Western practices.<sup>9</sup> This researcher found it significant to note, from these article, that the term *Jihad* is used to suggest and include the struggle against all forces working against Muslims and Islamic traditions or heritage. It is likewise enlightening to note belief that *Jihad* here is used to mean the struggle for the sake of Islamic faith, and may be fought with many “talents”, such as the sword, the pen, the shovel, the scalpel, a sowing machine or even a pot-ladle!

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fundamentalism (*usullyya*) conveys little of the meaning and context in English. She suggests the term Islamic revival, which closely matches the Arabic translation.

<sup>7</sup>Prof. Farooq Hassan, “Islam’s Contributions in Support of the Family.” Internet [http://www.islamonline.net/English/In\\_Depth/Doha\\_Conference/views/05.shtml](http://www.islamonline.net/English/In_Depth/Doha_Conference/views/05.shtml), Retrieved on 17th August 2005. The writer is the Special UN Ambassador for Family.

<sup>8</sup>“Family Ties in Islam.” This article by an unnamed writer in <http://www.islamonline>, expresses the challenge of modernity on the Muslim family unit. Retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> September: Al Jazeera Publishing Limited, 2005

<sup>9</sup>“Family Life in Islam,” Available from <http://www.jamaat.org/islam/FamilyCradle.html>.

They believe that the following four fundamentals are based on Qur'anic regulations and the traditions from the life of Prophet Muhammad, handed down from generation to generation: 1) Family life as a cradle of human society providing a secure, healthy and encouraging home for all its members, 2) Family life as guardian of the natural erotic desires of men and women, leading this powerful urge into wholesome channels, 3) Family life as the very breeding-place for human virtues like love, kindness, mercy, and 4) Family life as the most secure refuge against inward and outward troubles. These Muslim thinkers suggest further, "an ever valid and never outgrowing aspect of Islamic family life is, however, that the strength of all the four pillars is made up by the system. And it must not be forgotten, that the benefits of family life are extended not only to blood relations but encompass also the worldwide family of Muslims, the Islamic brotherhood."<sup>10</sup>

This inquiry notes the significance of traditional family life to Muslim people-groups, and seeks to understand aspects of its encounter with modern thought. It addresses the question: How is modernity impacting upon various aspects of the Muslim family life? Aspects that are examined here include: finding a spouse, marriage, composition of the family unit, and polygamy. Other aspects of family life that are investigated are: decision-making in the family, fertility and contraception, status of women and children, dowry, divorce, remarriage after divorce and matters relating to authority. The study focuses on how the Muslim family unit integrates with modernism to produce localized, modern and Islamic approaches to family life.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## Motivation and Objectives of the Study

There is a widespread misunderstanding and fear of anything Islamic in the world today. This study is motivated by the idea that "the average church attendee knows little to nothing about Islam and may actually be scared of Muslims. Yet it is into this confusion that an informed discussion regarding the nature of Islam must take place – not for the sake of dispensing information, but so that Christians might be motivated to engage Muslims with the gospel in an informed manner."<sup>11</sup> Islam, as noted earlier, places the highest significance in life to the family as an institution. Hence, preparation towards such an "informed manner" for a "genuine engagement" with the gospel needs to start with a study of the contemporary Muslim family unit.

This investigation seeks to contribute towards this preparation by describing the modern-day Muslim family unit in Khartoum, Sudan. Special reference will be given to the Ja'aliyin as a predominantly Muslim people-group. Ja'aliyin family units will be examined, noting specifically the manner in which they integrate with non-Muslim factors or Westernization, local factors such as prevailing worldview assumptions, and the teachings of the Qur'an (Islam as a root faith). It is hoped that a description of the encounter between the contemporary Ja'aliyin Muslim family unit and modernity might reveal passable "bridges" for the gospel of Christ.

## Significance of the Study

The family unit is an important aspect to understanding Muslim society. Islam argues that the family is a divinely inspired institution, with marriage at its core. Nevertheless, the contemporary Muslim society is itself undergoing profound social transformation in the wake of modernity. The nature, function, and structure of the

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<sup>11</sup> Scott Yakimow, "Bridging the Gap: Sharing the Gospel with Muslims." *Concordia Journal* 28, no. 3 (July, 2002): 270-290.

family have been thrown into question in the modern world. Immense spiritual and intellectual ferment is taking place today among the world's nearly one billion Muslims. Modernity, as a set of social phenomena understood within particular theoretical frameworks, is shaping the contemporary Muslim society in both hidden and overt ways. Modernism is impacting upon beliefs and values hitherto held to be self-evidently true. Two things characterize this encounter.

First, the Islamic response is crucial towards an understanding of the nature of the struggle Muslims are facing. Hassan Hanafi, addressing the nature and scope of the challenge, suggests: "The difference between theoretical apparatus and hard realities is still too big, in spite of all efforts of religious reform, socio-political liberalism, and secular scientific thought. The weapon used is much weaker than the enemy faced."<sup>12</sup> One hard reality that is still unresponsive to modern Islamic thought concerns the West. Westernization continues to overwhelm most of the Muslim world. As noted earlier, a crisis of identity is observable in many of its parts, including the family unit which plays a significant part. There is a split between religious conservatism, on the one part, and Western secularism on the other. With regard to this crisis, some Muslims respond with fanatical rejection of everything modern, liberal, or progressive (Dewesternization as some call it). Others, however, are more willing to incorporate aspects of "progress" in their lives. Secondly, Christians must re-examine their own attitudes towards Muslim society, and seek to understand the manner with which Islamic communities are interacting with contemporaneity. Contemporary trends in Islamic thought provide a valuable window towards missiological inquiry.

<sup>12</sup> Hassan Hanafi, *Islam in the Modern World Vol. 1: Religion, Ideology and Development* (Heliopolis: Dar Kebaa Bookshop, 2000) 539.

To better understand the Muslim mind today, it is useful to reflect upon some of the major trends or features of Islamic resurgence. John Obert Voll's seminal work, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, lays a significant groundwork for in-depth study within particular Islamic cultures. Relying upon meticulous research, he attempts to chart the trends of Islamic thought over the last three hundred years noting both the areas of continuity and the patterns of change. He argues that the current Muslim resurgence is not the last gasp of a dying religion, but is simply a new phase in an already rich and variegated history. Regarding continuity with the tradition, Voll states: "The oneness of God, the Qur'an, the significance of Muhammad, and the community are basic elements in the continuity and unity of the Islamic dimension."<sup>13</sup> These elements interact with each other depending upon the specific local conditions but still form the bedrock of what it means to be a "Muslim." To get a handle on change, Voll devises four Islamic models or types of how change is experienced: *adoptions*, *fundamentalism*, *conservatism* and *individualism*. These broad models are helpful in drawing the broad strokes necessary to begin to understand the vast diversity that exists within Islam.<sup>14</sup>

Voll's thesis provokes many avenues for Christian missiological reflection. One is recognizing what it is that makes Islam an adaptable religion yet still internally consistent. This lies in the four aspects of continuity: *Tawhid*, the Qur'an, the Prophet and the *Ummah*. Understanding the depth of feeling Muslims associate with these items will allow Christian missionaries to begin to figure out the heart-questions of Muslims. Without clear understanding of heart-issues our message becomes irrelevant.

<sup>13</sup>John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 16.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid

Additionally, Voll's emphasis on local conditions and their interaction with the general styles of Islam is important. One must understand the particular local history of an area and even the local history of an individual to be able to proclaim the Gospel with any effectiveness. Voll reminds Christians that Islam is a dynamic religion that is not going to die anytime soon. It will continue to act and react according to the styles that have been observed in the past. It embodies the hopes and aspirations of millions of people and must be addressed on its own terms. Christianity must be shown to be at least equally relevant to Muslims within their own cultural context. Christianity must likewise be shown to be a religion that functions within the culture of the hearers and is not a foreign imposition. Having this objective in full view, this research paper will seek to look into the Ja'aliyin Muslim family unit, and will attempt to utilize Voll's categorizations as an analytical tool.

#### Research Problem Statement

The problem to be addressed in this research paper is to describe the contemporary Islamic conceptions relating to family, with special reference to the Ja'aliyin Muslim families of Khartoum, Sudan. The encounter between the Ja'aliyin Muslim family and 1) non-Muslim factors, 2) the local factors, and 3) Islam as a faith, will be described and implications for Christian witness will be brought to light.

#### Research Questions

##### 1. What is Islam's message on the family?

- 1.1. What are the Islamic conceptions relating to family?
- 1.2. How can we describe the structure of the Muslim family unit?
- 1.3. What are the fundamental responsibilities of family as reflected in Islamic principles of faith?

##### 2. How can we describe the encounter between modernity and the Muslim family?

- 2.1. How do non-Muslim factors impact upon the contemporary Ja'aliyin family?
- 2.2. How do local factors contribute to this encounter?
- 2.3. How does Islamic faith inform this encounter?

##### 3. What implications for Christian witness exist for the church-in-mission amongst the Ja'aliyin Muslim families in Khartoum?

- 3.1. How might we become an effective witness to the Ja'aliyin Muslim family?
- 3.2. What specific issues have created a barrier to Ja'aliyin Muslim families' awareness of Christianity and the good news?
- 3.3. How can we develop opportunities to communicate the gospel amongst Ja'aliyin Muslim families?

#### Methodology to be Employed for this Research

The detached observer's view is one window on the world. The view of the local scene through the eyes of a native participant in that scene is a different window. Either view by itself is restricted in scope and leads to a kind of distortion--the first, since it ignores the concept of relevance, or purpose, or meaning, and the second because it distorts or molds vision or experience so that one interprets what one sees, or hears, or understands, only through the rose-colored glasses of one's own experiential structure... both views must be brought to the fore if any event is to be well understood. Similarly, behavior studied simultaneously through these two approaches is seen in a much more exciting depth of understanding<sup>15</sup>.

#### *Etic and Emic Perspectives*

The neologisms "emic" and "etic," derived from an analogy with the terms "phonemic" and "phonetic," were coined by the linguistic anthropologist Kenneth Pike.<sup>16</sup> He suggests two functional perspectives in the study of a society's cultural system. The emic perspective focuses on the intrinsic cultural distinctions that are meaningful to the members of a given society. It refers to the insider's or

<sup>15</sup>Kenneth L. Pike, "A Stereoscopic Window on the World," online, retrieved on 10th May 2007 from <http://personalwebs.oakland.edu/~kitchens/150d/pike.html>.

<sup>16</sup>Kenneth Pike made his groundbreaking contribution in anthropology in an article entitled "Etic and Emic Standpoints for the Description of Behavior" (reprinted in A.G. Smith, Ed, 1966, *Communication and Culture*, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston).

native's interpretation of or reasons for his or her customs/beliefs. It is indicative of what things mean to the members of a society.

Etic constructs are accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories that are regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the members of the culture under study. An etic construct is correctly termed "etic" if, and only if, it is in accord with the perceptions and understandings deemed appropriate by the insider's culture. We do well to recognize that the Islamic world is an enormous, fragmented, diverse, and fascinating place. Hence, local perceptions must be gleaned and understood.

The native members of a culture (contemporary Ja'aliyin Muslim families based in Khartoum in this case) will be the sole judges of the validity of the inquiry's etic description. The discussion about modernity and its impact on family, as expressed by Muslim thinkers in response to practical, political, social, religious and economic realities, is significant to this study. Muslim self-reflection on the contemporary Islamic condition holds crucial missiological implications. We need to empathize with Muslims as they attempt to understand where they stand, and above all, how they got here. It is essential to listen in to the Muslim dialog on family piety, reactionism, and victimization. We need to understand how Muslims practice criticism-based self-consciousness. This exercise is described as:

Seeking and discovering one's inwardness and spiritual depth, and exerting the necessary spiritual and intellectual efforts to acquire true human values and develop the sentiments that encourage them. It is by means of such efforts that a man distinguishes between what is good and bad and what is beneficial or harmful to him throughout his life and maintains the uprightness of his heart.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Fethullah Gulen, as cited by Shaikh Abdal-Hakim Murad. Retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2005, from <http://www.islamonline.net/english/Contemporary/2005/02/Article01.shtml>.

The etic perspective relies upon the extrinsic concepts and categories that have meaning for analysts. Etic perspectives refer to the external researcher's interpretation of the same customs/beliefs, indicating what things mean from an analytical perspective. Etic constructs are accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories that are regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the community of observers. They need to be precise, logical, comprehensive, replicable, and observer independent. Cultural anthropologists, ethnographers, analysts or observers are the sole judges of the validity of an etic account.

Understood in that manner, the usefulness of the etic/etic distinction is evident. The etic approach is useful for penetrating, discovering, and elucidating etic systems. The goal of this research is the acquisition of both etic and etic knowledge on perceptions, experiences and responses to modernity within the Muslim family. The context of study: family units living in Khartoum, Sudan. Etic knowledge is essential for an intuitive and empathic understanding of the Muslim position. It is essential for conducting unbiased inquiries and cross-cultural comparison, especially when such comparison necessarily demands standard units and categories. In order to apply comparative concepts appropriately, it is necessary to do research first from an etic perspective.

This Research used the basic anthropological method of participant observation and process observation, a type of qualitative research. Ethnographic interviews were intended initially. But, in a context where problems posed by cultural differences, inter-religious tensions and issues pertaining to trust exist, the most practical approach was sought after. Participant observation overcomes misunderstandings or risks on the part of the researcher. It provides a set of strategies

to learn culture. As a point of departure, the inquiry agrees with the theory that observation, as a process of learning, is the best route to knowledge. The theory of observation has been utilized successfully in the study of human behavior.<sup>18</sup>

Participant observation involves “hanging out” with informants, and interacting with them to observe actions, and participate in activities. Observation combined with consultation, where possible, is a powerful combination that not only lets one observe people, but also solicits their ideas about what their behavior means. Both participant and process observation proved helpful towards a description of the Muslim families among the Ja'aliyin people of Khartoum, Sudan.

#### Delimitations of the Present Work

The primary focus of this study is a description of the encounter between the Ja'aliyin Muslim family units in the context of Khartoum. The scope of the research will include the impact of modernity upon this family units in three specific ways: 1) Their encounter with non-Muslim (Western) factors, 2) Their interaction with local factors (culture-specific worldview assumptions), and 3) The manner in which Islam as a faith informs both the constitution and subsequent function of the Ja'aliyin family.

This study does not purport to be a complete ethnography of the culture of the Ja'aliyin people. Similarly, it will not be a full analysis of all the parts that make their culture. It intends to be an analysis of the general domain of family (*Usra*) and its subsidiary domains. Since the concepts of modernity and modernism are important to

this study, we shall briefly discuss them before we proceed to locate Khartoum and the Ja'aliyin people.

#### The Concept of Modernism/Modernity

The modern movement emerged in the late 19th century, and was rooted in the idea that traditional forms of art, literature, social organization and daily life had become outdated, and that it was therefore essential to sweep them aside and reinvent culture. It encouraged the idea of re-examination of every aspect of existence, from commerce to philosophy. The movement sought to find that which was holding back progress, and aimed at replacing it with new, better ways of reaching the same end. The Modern Movement argued that the new realities of the 20th century were permanent and immanent, and that people should adapt to their worldview an acceptance that the newness was good and beautiful. Consequently, it sought to interpret the teachings of the Church in the light of philosophic and scientific conceptions prevalent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Modernism primarily relies on reason rather than revelation. It gained currency since the separation of the church and the state in the West.

The question can be asked: What is the relationship between Islam and modernity? Few subjects arouse more passion and debate among Muslims today than the encounter between Islam and modern thought. Nor is this debate that consumes so much of the energies of Muslims and students of Islam helped by the lack of clear definition of the terms of the debate and an insight into the actual forces involved. Whereas it is true that Islamic groups continue to speak of religious conversion as the

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<sup>18</sup>H. Russell Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1995), 11.

means of disseminating their respective faiths, the contemporary scene has made a significant impact. Woodberry explains:

Modernity brought values that have clashed with traditional Islamic values and have led to a fundamentalist backlash in each case. First is a focus on the future where Islam focuses on authority in the past – the Qur’an, the practice of Muhammad, and *Shariah* law. Second is secularization in contrast to Islam being an all-inclusive way of life. Third is liberation from societal constraints, which has affected the attitudes of women, as compound walls have let through the lifestyles evident on television and VCRs.<sup>19</sup>

Citing suggestions from two prominent scholars, Heather Deegan writes,

One important aspects of Islam in contemporary life is the appearance of movements standing for the re-establishment of the full and complete reign of the *Shariah* over the every day life of Muslims. The basis for this trend rests on the strong desire among many people for a moral revivification and renewal. Yet, despite assertions that the return to religion and the resurgence of Islam are the result of the pursuit for ethical and moral restoration, theological research and ethical reflection have practically disappeared from the Muslim intellectual domain. Contemporary Islam is characterized by a flight from ethical concern. Islam as a faith, a personal experience or a code of morality, has been replaced by a simplifying doctrine which ignores the individual struggle to interpret the text of the Qur’an, and restricts itself to the condemnation of other regimes as unholy. These developments represent an impoverishment of the contemplative and religious in favor of an enhancement of the political and social.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup>J. Dudley Woodberry, “Missiologiical Issues in the Encounter with Emerging Islam.” In *Missiology: An International Review*, 28 (2000), 19-34.

<sup>20</sup>Heather Deegan, “Contemporary Islamic influences in sub-Saharan Africa: An alternative development agenda” In the electronic version of *The Middle Eastern Environment*. Eric Watkins, ed. (Cambridge, England: John Adamson Publishing Consultants, 1995)



Figure 1: Map of Sudan and its location in the African continent. Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/sudan.pdf>

### Sudan: Facts and Figures

The Republic of Sudan is the largest country in Africa. It borders on Egypt in the north, on the Red Sea in the northeast, on Eritrea and Ethiopia in the east, on Kenya, Uganda, and Congo (Kinshasa) in the south, on the Central African Republic and Chad in the west, and on Libya in the northwest. The Sudan is a country that is influenced by Arab-Muslim culture in the North and diverse African cultures in the South. Khartoum is the capital and Omdurman is the largest city.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup>“Sudan,” Cullled on 1st September from web-based version of *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition, Copyright © 2001-05 Columbia University Press.

*The Sudan: Past and Present*<sup>22</sup>

Sudan is often viewed as being peripheral to both the 'Arab' Middle East and non-Arab Africa. As a dominantly Muslim country it is often included in regional Middle Eastern political geography, while its important role in Islamic Africa is often ignored. The non-Muslim Nilotic and other minority peoples in the Sudan are usually forgotten except as they are referenced in terms of the “Southern problem” in the country's chronic and protracted civil war, unbroken since 1955 except for about a decade of negotiated peace, between 1972 to 1983. Afterwards, the civil war unleashed a period of political developments resulting in unprecedented loss of life, human rights violations, displacement of Sudanese citizens, and ecological destruction.

On the political front this period witnessed the toppling of the military dictator Ja'afar Nimeiri in 1985, followed by a period of civilian democracy in which Sadiq al-Mahdi (great grandson of Muhammad Ahmed the 19th century Mahdi) was elected and ruled as Prime Minister until the nascent, fragile democracy was overthrown in an Islamist military coup d'etat in 1989 led by General Omar Hasan al-Bashir and politically backed by Muslim Brother leader Hasan al-Turabi. The Bashir-Turabi regime was built upon the relatively narrow political base of the National Islamic Front (NIF), a party that was the direct descendant of the Muslim Brotherhood and created by Turabi in 1985 after the overthrow of Nimeiri with whom he had been closely associated.

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<sup>22</sup>Adapted from Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban *The Sudan Since 1989: National Islamic Front Rule*. This article is available from [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2501/is\\_2\\_23/ai\\_77384487](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2501/is_2_23/ai_77384487) culled on 04/16/07. Regarding humanitarian concerns, United Nations estimates that 180,000 people have died in Darfur, Sudan. But other estimates indicate 300,000 casualties, more than 2.4 million are homeless, and at least 2.6 million people are affected by the humanitarian emergency. The World Health Organization estimates that 10,000 more are dying each month. Malnutrition, malaria and cholera are among the greatest health risks. Equally dangerous is the vast insecurity of the region, with continued attacks on civilians and humanitarian aid operations.

*The Sudan: Complex Political Twists and Turns*

The turbulent decade of the 1990s begun with the 1989 coup which launched the decade and saw the entrenchment of an extremist Islamist regime that isolated the Sudan as a pariah nation on a number of fronts, including its African neighbors whose borders were affected by its civil war causing the displacement (or death) of over two million Southern Sudanese, and most recently the disruption caused by the Ethiopian-Eritrean war. The alienation of much of the Arab-Islamic Middle East for its Islamist extremism (with the exception of Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan), and in particular it's key rival-ally Egypt has also been witnessed.

The Bashir-Turabi regime has drawn the wrath of the American-led West in reaction to its alleged support of terrorism. America's frustration with the Sudan grew over the decade during which it alleged that Sudan was involved in the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the attempted assassination of Hosni Mubarak in 1995, and saw the Sudan as the chief source of aid and support to Osama Bin Laden. Its frustration culminated in the U.S. bombing of the al-Shifa factory in Khartoum North in the wake of the bombing of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar As-Salaam in 1998. The improbability of the Sudan as a hotbed for terrorism began to gain some credibility.

At the same time Hasan al-Turabi became an international figure presented as a cosmopolitan, multilingual, 'modern' Islamist whose theories about the nature and future of the Islamic state became highly regarded in Islamist circles and feared by military and monarchical regimes in the Arab-Islamic world and were rejected in the West as undemocratic and not in conformity with the Western notion of 'civil society'.

The intense political rift between Bashir and Turabi during 2000, in which the ultimate power of Bashir's guns over Turabi's words was proven, leaves open a

number of questions about the long-term viability of the regime. Since the political break, Bashir has been trying to recast himself as a “democrat” with the promise of elections, while Turabi has been left to try to mobilize his supporters in a new National Congress Party which he has thrown against the “deviationist” regime, no longer committed to pure Islamist goals. The Bashir regime moved to make peace with the opposition traditional Ummah Party and Khatmiya sect leaving the united front National Democratic Alliance opposition group floundering.

### ***Crisis in Human Rights***

The past 12 years in the Sudan under the NIF has also drawn the world's attention to the human rights abuses involving allegations of war crimes, ethnic cleansing (especially in Darfur), a revival of slavery, torture of the regime's opponents, and an unprecedented number of refugees fleeing across Sudan's immense borders into Uganda, Kenya, Eritrea, Egypt, as well as Europe and North America. Large and politically active communities of Sudanese refugees now exist in such disparate locales as Nairobi, Kampala, Cairo, Toronto, and Washington, D.C., and many are active on a number of Sudan-related websites where free dialog about Sudanese affairs is underway.

This out-migration has resulted in a generation of Sudanese growing up in exile communities. An unprecedented number of Sudanese women are said to have emigrated to the West. The war in the south has spread to other military fronts on the east, south central, and Western regions of the Sudan and liberation of the South from the North remains an option. In short, the decade of the 1990s was one of unprecedented crises, out of which multiple transformations and political

opportunities have arisen. Next, we shall closely discuss the particular context addressed in this present study: Khartoum, 'center' of the Sudan

Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, is a port at the confluence of the Blue Nile and White Nile rivers. It is Sudan's second largest city and its administrative center. Food, beverages, cotton, gum, and oilseeds are processed in the city. Manufactured goods include cotton textiles, knitwear, glass, and tiles. Construction of an oil pipeline between Khartoum and Port Sudan was completed in 1977. Khartoum is a railroad hub and is connected by road to the heart of the adjacent cotton-growing region. The city also has an international airport.

Founded in 1821 as an Egyptian army camp, Khartoum developed as a trade center and slave market. In the war between Great Britain and the forces of the Mahdi, Gen. Charles Gordon was killed there (1885) after resisting a long siege, during which the city was severely damaged. Khartoum was retaken by H. H. Kitchener in 1898 and rebuilt. During the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, thousands of refugees from other African nations (especially Chad, Ethiopia, and Uganda) settled in Khartoum. Foreign aid packages to feed and shelter the refugees were inadequate, resulting in the growth of slums in the city. An educational center, Khartoum is the site of the University of Khartoum (founded 1903 as Gordon Memorial College), a branch of the University of Cairo, and Khartoum Polytechnic. The city's Sudan National Museum has important archaeological holdings. Bridges link Khartoum with Khartoum North (*Bakhri*) and Omdurman.

## Khartoum: Capital of the Sudan



Figure 2: Map of Khartoum, Capital of the Sudan.  
Source: <http://www.maps.com/map.aspx?pid=10935>

## The People of Sudan

The Sudan, in the variety of its peoples, languages and regions, is virtually a microcosm of the African continent.<sup>23</sup> Voll and Voll further state,

Various estimates indicate that more than one hundred different languages are spoken in the Sudan by at least fifty major ethnic or tribal groupings, with almost six hundred significant subgroups. Sudan is an ethnic and religious mosaic. In a nutshell, the country is multicultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-ethnic political culture. This staggering cultural diversity is a very important factor in Sudanese life. It underlies, in many ways, the characteristic Sudanese moods of compromise and conflict, of balance and tension.<sup>24</sup>

The authors' analytical introduction to the modern Sudan provides the dynamics of the country's political, social, cultural, and economic Sudanese

<sup>23</sup>John Obert Voll and Sarah Potts Voll, *The Sudan: Unity and Diversity in a Multicultural State* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press Inc, 1985), 6

<sup>24</sup>Ibid

experience in modern-day times. The writers present a clear picture of the Sudan as a distinctive entity with an identity all its own. The book reveals, paradoxically, that one of the most significant aspects of this identity is the place of the Sudan as a special link between different cultural patterns and socio political styles. The Sudan is both a bridge and a melting pot, and this provides the foundation of its unique character. We note:

The identities of people living in the Sudan are complex and often overlap in confusing ways. How someone is identified depends upon the social and cultural context of a given situation. Thus, for example, a person from the northern Sudan might be identified as an Arab when in the southern Sudan or Egypt, but at home, a specific tribal identity might be more important... Local and personalized group identities are integrated into broader identities. In the process, this integration, characteristic of the Sudanese unity in diversity, usually preserves the autonomy of the small-scale identity while making it a part of a larger unit. As a result, it is necessary to think of the diversity of the peoples and cultures of the Sudan as overlapping levels or layers of cultural and historical experiences. The major components of this multidimensional picture are ethnic and tribal identities, language, and religion. Sudanese remain proud of their special tribal or ethnic identity.<sup>25</sup>

The Sudanese experience is one that contains a great fluidity of identity.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the question of religion and its linkage to identity, Francis Deng adds, "It is very difficult today for people to generally forget religion and say, let us talk about power sharing, let us talk about resource sharing, because somehow religion has become symbolic of identity, of power sharing, even of the management control of our resources, and certainly of the culture that gives us our sense of who we are and to whom we relate to in the world. While religion may not, if taken seriously to be a

<sup>25</sup>Ibid. pg 6, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Francis Mading Deng, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan* (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 1973) p, 11.

factor, we have to recognize the fact that it has been made a factor; it has become the symbolic embodiment of all these other issues that we talk about.<sup>27</sup>

However, inhabitants of Sudan may be divided into three main groups. The northerners, who inhabit the country roughly north of 12°N latitude and mainly near the Nile, consist of Arab and Nubian groups. They are Muslim (mostly of the Sunni branch), speak Arabic (the country's official language), and follow Arab cultural patterns (although only relatively few are descended from the Arabs who immigrated into the region during the 13th–19th century. The Westerners, so called because they immigrated (primarily in the 20th century) from West Africa, are also Muslim, live mostly in the central part of Sudan, and work as farmers or agricultural laborers. The southerners, consisting of Nilotic and Sudanic peoples, largely follow traditional religious beliefs, although some are Christian; they practice shifting cultivation or are pastoralists, and most speak Nilotic languages. The leading ethnic groups in the south are the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Bari, and the non-Nilotic Azande.

The great majority of the country's population lives in villages or small towns; the only sizable cities are Port Sudan, Wad Medani, Al Ubayyid, and the conurbation of Khartoum, Omdurman, and Khartoum North. The desert and semi-desert of the north are largely uninhabited. Since the late 1970s, there have been waves of refugees from neighboring countries, a result of political, environmental, and economic problems in the region. Many have settled in the area around Khartoum. However, since the 1980s there has also been out-migration due to the civil war in the south. Let us now turn to our focus people-group, the Ja'aliyin.

<sup>27</sup>Comments by Francis Deng, *Management of the Crisis in the Sudan: Proceedings of the Bergen Forum 23 – 24 February 1989* Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed and Gunnar Sørbo, eds (University of Bergen, 1996)

## The Ja'aliyin People-Group

Voll and Voll provide an interesting development to the description and significance of the Ja'aliyin when they write:

The tribes that emerged in the northern part of the Nile valley within the Sudan are grouped together under the name of Ja'aliyin. It needs to be noted, in order to avoid confusion, that one of the tribes in this group, as well as the group as a whole, is called the Ja'aliyin. These tribes are historically important in establishing small principalities and have been a significant force in political systems and governmental structures in the Sudan since medieval times. They tend to be associated with settled agricultural and urban life in the river valley, from which they developed countrywide networks of trade and political influence.<sup>28</sup>

The Ja'aliyin people claim to be direct descendants of the prophet Muhammad, the founder of the Islamic faith.<sup>29</sup> It seems more likely, however, that their original ancestors are the Nubians and that the Ja'aliyin gradually adopted the Arab culture. They speak Ja'ali, a dialect of Sudanese Arabic, which is not intelligible with modern Arabic. This group of two million people lives in small villages and cities along the banks of the Nile River. The area is very hot and dry, with an average yearly rainfall of about three inches. In the summer, which lasts from April through November, daytime temperatures can reach as high as 120 or 130 degrees Fahrenheit. Their facial scars, many of which are in the form of a T or H, easily identify the

<sup>28</sup>John Obert Voll and Sarah Potts Voll, *The Sudan: Unity and Diversity in a Multicultural State* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press Inc, 1985), 8 and 9.

<sup>29</sup>The following text is adapted from the article, "The Ja'aliyin of Sudan." Available from [www.sudan101.com/Jaaliyn.htm](http://www.sudan101.com/Jaaliyn.htm) on 19th September 2005 (emphasis mine). On the web page <http://archives.tonline.org/news/lastfrontier/archive/Ja'aliyin.html> the Ja'aliyin people-group are likewise featured. Here, it is stated unequivocally that "God is moving among many Last Frontier peoples such as the Ja'aliyin", and that "most of the Ja'aliyin do not know the saving grace of Jesus Christ". The idea that there are *no churches among the Ja'aliyin* is noteworthy. The idea that there are few, if any, Christians among this predominantly Muslim people-group should be a source of concern to mission-minded people. These are some aspects that make investigative study into their culture worthwhile. For missionaries who are interested to reach out to the Ja'aliyin, it might be helpful to know that they speak Arabic, but they have no exposure to either the Bible or the *JESUS* film.

Ja'aliyin. The scars are a sign of tribal pride and are even more common on the women than on the men, for they are considered a sign of beauty. The Ja'aliyin are a very close tribe and quickly identify with each other, coming to another's aid in the event of trouble or during times of celebration.

### *Ja'aliyin Lifestyle*

Some Ja'aliyin still farm and raise livestock along the banks of the Nile River, but today they more commonly consist of the bulk of the Sudanese urban population, forming a large part of the merchant class. Although many have moved to cities, such as the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, they still maintain their tribal identity and solidarity. In some cities they live in quarters inhabited solely by Ja'aliyin, and they oppose marriages to people outside their tribe. Famous for maintaining ties with their homeland, they keep in contact with their original home and return for frequent visits, especially for marriages, funerals and Muslim festivals. The Ja'aliyin men regularly practice polygamy, although, as declared by Muslim law, they never have more than four wives at one time. The man has complete authority over his wife (or wives) and children. He likewise arranges and controls the marriages of his sons and daughters.

### *Ja'aliyin Beliefs and Needs*

The Ja'aliyin are 98 percent Muslim. Like so many other Sudanese people groups, the Ja'aliyin follow the Islamic faith, and are generally very committed Sunni Muslims. Only a small percentage of the Ja'aliyin have been exposed to the Gospel in a positive way. This has mainly been accomplished through penetrations by Sudanese believers into the Ja'aliyin areas. Churches comprised of Southern Sudanese members and evangelistic outreaches led by national Christian groups have helped reach them.

They Ja'aliyin are critical in reaching the whole of Sudan, for they are the pulse of the cities and a keystone in breaking through the Islamic grip that holds the nation of Sudan.

### Religious Demography

Sudan has a total area of 1,556,108 square miles, and its population is 35,079,814. It is a religiously mixed country, although Muslims have dominated national government institutions since independence. There are no accurate figures on the sizes of the country's religious populations. More than 75 percent of the population are Muslim, and adherents include numerous Arabic and non-Arabic groups. Muslims predominate in the north. There are sizable minorities of Christians and practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. Most citizens in the south adhere to either Christianity or traditional indigenous religions. There are reliable reports that Christianity is growing rapidly in the south, particularly in areas outside of government control. There also is evidence that many new converts to Christianity continue to adhere to elements of traditional indigenous practices.

The influx of 1 to 2 million southerners displaced by the war has brought sizable communities of practitioners of traditional indigenous religions and Christians to the north. There also are small but influential and long established populations of Greek Orthodox and Coptic Rite Christians centered on Khartoum. Approximately 500,000 Coptic Christians live in the north. There are a few atheists and agnostics in the country, but exact figures are not available. The Muslim population is almost entirely Sunni but is divided into many different groups. The most significant divisions occur along the lines of the Sufi brotherhood. Two popular brotherhoods, the *Ansar* and the *Khatimia*, are associated closely with the *Ummah* Party and the

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), respectively. Northern Muslims form a majority of the population, and they dominate government institutions.

## CHAPTER 2

### A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### An Introduction

The nature, function, and structure of the family have been thrown into question in contemporary times. Unmarried couples, single mothers, and homosexual couples are considered by some as equally legitimate expressions of the family unit. Still, questions regarding approaches and foundations, basic principles, objectives and functions, structure and regulations of the family are of immense value to religious organizations and humanists. Yet, their sources, validity, form and constitution often inspire argumentation and controversy. This chapter examines: 1) Family in Islam from an emic perspective. Hearing from Muslims helps better understandings of the Islamic family, 2) Characteristics of modernity and modernism, noting how contemporary Muslims communities are responding in the face of a trans modern world, and 3) The contemporary Muslim family, noting implications for Christian witness and Church-planting.

This present study takes advantage of numerous, available and relevant electronic materials that have inundated Muslim websites especially after 9/11. Continued acts of global terrorism have challenged the understanding of academic experts, policymakers, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Critical questions have been raised about Islam and Muslim politics in the modern world: Are Islam and modernity compatible? Is Islam in need of and capable of reform? What does Islam and what do

Muslims have to say about globalization, democracy, human rights, women, jihad, violence, terrorism, and suicide bombing?

The researcher makes frequent recourse to these materials because: 1) of scarcity of relevant material on the subject (most materials are in Arabic, and are not understandable to the researcher, 2) they are in English, report on emic perceptions that are generalizable to great degree, and 3) the Ja'aliyin are Sudanese Arabs who regard themselves to be more Arab than African. They share Worldview assumptions with an international Muslim brotherhood they feel a part of. Most importantly, much of these electronic material regarding family addresses significant matters relating to their encounter with modernity (the West), and advances both informed and Islamic responses to challenges relating to this encounter. Similarly, suggestions in John Obert Voll's *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* are kept in full view. The idea is to note those broad continuities and commonalities characteristic of the Muslim experience in the contemporary dynamic world of Islam

#### Family in Islam: Emic Perspectives

Islam, claims its scholars, takes a more conservative stance with regard to family ideas and values. These Islamic ideas and values adequately form a solid basis aimed at producing a unique personality in the individual and a distinct culture for the community. They are concerned that we live in a period of cultural crisis as exemplified in the West. It seems to them that, in modern life, values have turned upside down. Family life, always the very heart of society, is attacked just as much as many other handed-down traditions. Islamic faithful argue that the family should be regarded as a divinely inspired institution, with marriage at the core. In the world of

Islam, consequently, the institutions of marriage and the family are perceived to occupy very important positions in the scheme of life.

#### Family Life in Islam: Where it all Begins<sup>30</sup>

The Qur'an<sup>31</sup> Surah 7:189 states, "It is He who has created you all from a single soul, and out of it brought into being its mate, so that he might incline with love towards her." According to Sayyid Qutb's understanding of this Qur'anic view of family, it is a single soul and a single nature, although it has different functions for the male and the female. These differences also serve as a means to make a man incline with love towards his wife and find comfort with her. This is the Islamic outlook on the nature of man and the role of marriage. Qutb infers that it is a complete, integrated and honest outlook stated by Islam over fourteen centuries ago when other religions that had deviated from the right path used to consider the woman as the root of human misery. She was looked on as a curse, an impurity and a tool for seduction that man should guard against as much as he could.

The original purpose of the meeting of a human couple, writes Qutb, is to provide love, comfort, and a settled happy life. This in turn provides an ideal setting for the rearing of young children. It is in such a happy and loving environment that a new human generation is prepared to take over the task of promoting and adding to

<sup>30</sup>Sayyid Qutb, "All Created from One Soul." Culled from <http://www.beconvinced.com/en/article.php> on 2nd September 2005. Sayyid Qutb (October 1906 – 29 August 1966) was an Egyptian intellectual author, and Islamist associated with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. He is best known for his theoretical work on redefining the role of Islamic fundamentalism in social and political change, particularly in his books *Social Justice* and *Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq (Milestones)*. His extensive Qur'anic commentary *Fi zilal al-Qur'an (In the shades of the Qur'an)* has contributed significantly to modern perceptions of Islamic concepts such as *Jihad*, *Jahiliyyah*, and *Ummah*.

<sup>31</sup>I have used the following English translations of the Qur'an: Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Glorious Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Leicester, 1978), Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali, & Muhsin Khan *The Noble Qur'an: Interpretation of the meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language* (Madinah, K.S.A: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, 1994) and Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, New York, 1963).

human civilization. The meeting of a human couple is not meant only to satisfy a fleeting desire or give a temporary pleasure. Nor is it made the basis of a quarrel, or a stage for a conflict between rules and specializations, or for a duplication of such rules and specializations. According to this Muslim academic, lack of such an approach to family issues amounts to ignorance. He concludes: Ignorant communities, past and contemporary, have often fallen into such traps.

#### Family in Islam: Reflections and Concerns

Akbar Ahmed makes an important contradistinction when he maintains, “The central institution of Muslim society is the family...In the West, the Muslim family structure is often seen as oppressive and backward, an obstacle to modernity...For their part, many Muslims are concerned about the frequent breakdown of marriages in the West, and worry that their own societies may be heading along a similar route.”<sup>32</sup> Khurshid Ahmad paints a picture of the contemporary Islamic family unit when he states, “We are living in a period of cultural crisis. It seems as if the very foundations of contemporary society are being threatened from within and without. The family, as a basic and most sensitive institution of culture, is being undermined by powerful and destructive forces...the Islamic institution of the family should be studied and examined in the perspective of the Islamic outlook on life and the ethos of the Islamic culture.”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Akbar S. Ahmed, “Reflections on Family Issues.” In *Reflections on Family Issues: From Samarkand to Stornoway* (London, U.K.: BBC Books Limited, Woodlands, 1993), p 1. This book’s excerpts accompanied the BBC television series “*Living Islam*” which was first broadcast in 1993. Akbar S. Ahmed is an anthropologist. He holds the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies and is a professor of international relations at the American University. He has a PhD. from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London.

<sup>33</sup> Khurshid Ahmad, *Family Life in Islam* (Leicester, UK: The Islamic Foundation 1977). Khurshid Ahmad is Chairman of the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, the Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, and the International Institute of Islamic Economics, Islam University, Islamabad. He has written, translated and edited over fifty books on Islam, Islamic Economics, Education and Law, both

Akbar Ahmed further notes:

Muslim families today have to cope with the problems of rapid urbanization, and the pressures of living in cities and in cramped accommodation. Although there has been an alarming increase in the divorce rate among Muslims, none the less Muslim marriages tend to be far more stable than Western ones, because they are based on an entirely different set of assumptions. These assumptions are founded in the Muslim notion of the cosmos. As there is order and balance in the universe, there is a similar natural pattern in society which is reflected in the Muslim household. In a conceptual sense, one mirrors the other. Thus each individual member plays an equally significant role in his or her own capacity which is related to the other members of the family. Each person is special and yet different. It is the difference that ensures the balance and harmony.<sup>34</sup>

We note further,

For Muslims, the family is the central institution; it is at the center both of theology and sociology: The family is a divinely-inspired institution that came into existence with the creation of man. The human race is a product of this institution and not the other way round. Not surprisingly, the most intricate rules and regulations guide family life. About a third of the legal injunctions in the Qur’an deal with family matters. These aim to produce the attitudes and behavior patterns that Islam wants to foster in society. And they cover different generations: a Muslim family is an extended family, normally with three or four generations within its circle.<sup>35</sup>

Khurshid Ahmad<sup>36</sup> asserts, “The family is a divinely inspired and ordained institution. It was not evolved through human experimentation involving a process of trial and error spread over time. It was an institution that came into existence with the creation of man. The human race is a product of this institution and not the other way round.” Ahmad, among other Muslim scholars, think the disintegration of the family in the West is, in part, a result of confusion about the place and the role of the family

in English and Urdu. In recognition of his contributions to Islamic learning and *da’wah*, the University of Malaysia conferred honorary doctorate on him in 1984.

<sup>34</sup> Akbar S. Ahmed, “Reflections on Family Issues.” In *Reflections on Family Issues: From Samarkand to Stornoway* (London, U.K.: BBC Books Limited, Woodlands, 1993) p 1.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Khurshid Ahmad, *Family Life in Islam* (Leicester, UK: The Islamic Foundation 1977)

in society and about the purpose of life itself. They emphasize certain points deemed to be of great importance among Islamic faithful: 1) Muslims believe that proper behavior of all the members of the family is constantly emphasized in the Qur'an and *Hadith*, 2) Ideal behavior encourages dignity and modesty in the family, 3) The father, the mother, the children and the elders all have a positive and defined role to play, 4) In each case the model of ideal behavior comes from early Islam, and 5) The Prophet was both the ideal son and later the ideal husband and father. The women of his household - like Khadijah and Fatimah - provide the ideal for Muslim women.

#### Family in Islam: Approaches and Foundations<sup>37</sup>

Islam is perceived by its adherents as a complete way of life. For them, Islam has a distinct outlook on life. It aims at producing a unique personality in the individual and a distinct culture for the community based on Islamic ideas and values. Specifically, Muslims believe that the institutions of marriage and the family occupy a very important position in the healthy functioning of community life. The questions can be asked: What is the concept of family in Islam? What are the foundations on which family life is built in the Islamic world? We shall be in a better position to understand the institution of the family in Islam if we start by a brief statement about

<sup>37</sup>The following discussions, unless otherwise cited, are derived from postulations, suggestions, and arguments in Khurshid Ahmad, *Family Life in Islam*, and Akbar S. Ahmed, *Living Islam*. Ahmad's writings were largely inspired from his participation in a conference dubbed, "The Standing Conference on Christian-Muslim Dialogue" which took place at Wood Hall, Wetherby, Yorks, in the early 1980s. The theme of the conference was "The Family in Christianity and Islam." Ahmad's motivation was basically to present the Islamic viewpoint on the subject. According to him, "The talk produced immense interest and sparked off very useful discussions in the following days. As the talk was given before a predominantly Christian audience I had to begin with the Islamic approach to life and gradually explain the institution of the family and the principles on which family relations are built in a Muslim society." The volume cited here by this researcher is an outgrowth of that talk. In its present electronic form, the writer aims to reach a much wider audience. He hopes that the material therein will be helpful in developing a better understanding of the Islamic family.

1) Basic Qur'anic teachings believed by Muslim faithful and 2) The Islamic approach to life, religion and culture – as stated from an emic perspective.

#### ***Tawhid: The Oneness of God***

Islam affirms the oneness of God and His indivisible sovereignty of the Universe. God is the Creator, the Master and the Sustainer of all that exists. Everything is operating according to His plan. He has revealed, through His Prophets, the Right Path for the guidance of mankind. All Prophets have preached the same message – that of acceptance of God's sovereignty. They invited men and women to a life of virtue, purity, justice and peace, and to act according to the guidance He has revealed. All Prophets, from Adam, Noah and Ibrahim (Abraham) to Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus) and Muhammad taught the same religion of acceptance and submission to God and commitment to peace, i.e. Islam. Man's failure lies in not protecting and preserving the teachings of the earlier Prophets. As such, the Prophet Muhammad was raised to restate the original message, to present it in its perfect form and to preserve it in such a way that the word of God would no longer be confused with the word of man.

#### ***Man's Vicegerency***

If *Tawhid* (Oneness of God) constitutes the ideological foundation of Islam, the concept of man's *Khilafah* (vicegerency/caliphate) provides the operational framework for the Islamic scheme of life. The story of Adam and Eve is found in almost all religious and major cultural traditions. But in these narrations, fact and fancy are found intermingled. The way the Qur'an narrates this event is crucial to the understanding of the Islamic world-view.

The main outline of the Qur'anic narration is as follows. God declared His intention to send a vicegerent (*khalifah*) to the earth. He created Adam and Eve from the same substance. They were destined to play this role of vicegerency and were endowed with the 'knowledge of the things' to do the job well. Then they were put to a test and were asked not to approach a certain tree. They fell victim to the evil persuasions of Satan and committed sin. But immediately after sinning they repented their mistakes, sought God's forgiveness and were forgiven. It was after they were forgiven and redeemed that they were sent down to the earth to play their role as vicegerents of God. They were promised Divine Guidance and were assured that those who followed that guidance would be successful. Adam was the first man to receive this guidance and convey it to his progeny.

According to Ahmad, some very important inferences follow from this:

1. Islam does not contribute to any theory of the 'fall of Adam' symbolizing the fall of man. There was no 'fall' at all in that sense. Man was created for the purpose of acting as vicegerent on the earth and he came to the world to fulfill this mission. It represents the rise of man to a new assignment, his tryst with destiny, and not a fall.
2. The role and status of vicegerency is conferred upon the human being as such, and it is shared by man and woman alike. This lays the foundations of their essential equality as human beings, as vicegerents of God on the earth, whatever their different roles in society may be.
3. Islam does not subscribe to the view that woman led man (Eve leading Adam) to sin and disobedience. According to the Qur'an Satan caused them both to deflect there from. Both were held responsible for the act, both repented their transgression and both were forgiven. They entered the world without any stigma of original sin on their soul.
4. Human nature is pure and good. Man has been created in the best of all forms as stated in Surah 95:4. Man and woman are made from the same substance. Every one is born in a state of purity and innocence. Success or failure depends entirely on one's own beliefs and behavior stated in Surah 95:5-6; 103:2-3. No one is to be responsible for the shortcomings of others, in Surah 6:195.
5. Man has been given freedom of choice. He is free to accept or deny reality. He is responsible for his actions, but is not to be deprived of this freedom, even if

he makes mistakes and abuses it. The uniqueness of the human situation lies in the man's psychosocial volition. This is the mainspring of human potential – this is what enables him to rise to the highest pinnacle or to fall into the deepest abyss.

6. The dangers of misuse of freedom continue to confront man throughout his life on the earth. The challenge from Satan is unceasing. To safeguard man against this, Divine Guidance is provided. The trial of Adam and Eve reveals, on the one hand, the essential goodness of their nature and on the other, their susceptibility to error. This demonstrates man's need for divine guidance.
7. Man has not been totally protected against error. This would involve negation of the freedom of choice. He may commit errors; his redemption lies in his realization of those errors, in seeking repentance and in turning back to the right path

The Qur'anic theory of vicegerency affirms that God's Creation is deliberate and not fortuitous. Man has been created with a purpose. Everything else in Creation has been harnessed to his service. His life on the earth begins with the consciousness of a mission, not through groping in darkness. The ideal was set before him through divine revelation. The criterion for success has been laid down in clear terms. The signposts of the Right Path have been made manifest. Man's life on earth is in the nature of a trial. It is time bound. This life will be followed by an eternal life wherein man shall reap the rewards of his actions in this life. And in this lifelong trial, men and women are equal participants and will be judged as such. Neither is a mere shadow of the other, but both are active co-partners.

Muslims believe, that the Qur'an explicitly states that man and woman will get what they strive for and that the same standard is set for them both as the ultimate criterion for their success. They likewise believe that the Qur'an describes the ideal and the model for men and women and the criterion for the Day of Judgment. We note the following Qur'anic texts:

And the believers, the men and the women, are friends protecting each other; they command what is proper and forbid what is improper, keep up prayer and pay the *Zakat* (welfare due); and they obey God

and His Messenger. It is these on whom God will have mercy. Surely, God is All-Mighty, All-Wise. God has promised to the believers, men and women, Gardens beneath which rivers flow, forever therein to dwell, and goodly dwelling-places in the Gardens of Eden, and greater than anything else, God's good pleasure (and acceptance from Him). According to Surah 9:71-72, that is the supreme triumph

And whosoever does a righteous deed, be they male or female, and is a believer, We shall assuredly give them a goodly life to live; and We shall certainly reward them according to the best of what they did (Surah 16:97).

Men who surrender to God and women who surrender to God, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give aims and women who give aims, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard their modesty, and men who remember God much and women who remember – God has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward (Surah 33:35)

According to Muslims, such Qur'anic texts define what is expected of men and women as God's vicegerents, and lays the foundation of their equality in their human roles in the world. For them, Islam is a complete way of life, and faith is the basis of society.

### ***A Complete Way of Life***

Islam affirms God's sovereignty over the entire gamut of man's life. It is opposed to asceticism, monasticism and creeds of life-denial and annihilation. It stands for life-affirmation and life-fulfillment. It refuses to divide life into watertight compartments of the sacred and the secular, of the holy and the profane. It invites man to 'enter wholly the fold of Islam' and regards the division of life into religious and secular as deviations from the Right Path (Surah 2:208). It gives an integrated view of life and reality. The teachings of Islam cover all fields of human activity, spiritual and material, individual and social, educational and cultural, economic and political,

national and international. They cater for the aspirations of the soul as well as for the demands of the law and social institutions.

Islam's uniqueness lies in spiritualizing the whole matrix of life. Every activity, whether related to things like prayer and fasting, or to economic transactions, sexual relationships, diplomatic dealings or scientific experimentations, is religious if it is undertaken with God-consciousness and accords with the values and principles revealed by Him; and it is irreligious if it is in opposition to them. Activities related to matters of economy, politics and law, or sex and social manners, are part of man's religious behavior and do not fall outside its scope. Life is an organic whole and the same principles should guide and govern it in all its ramifications.

The *Shariah* is the Islamic code which guides life in its entirety. The example of the Prophet Muhammad is the model which a Muslim tries to follow, and in his example one can seek guidance in all aspects of human life, from the highly personal to the purely social – as a man, a son, a husband, a father, a preacher, a teacher, a trader, a statesman, a commander, a peace-negotiator, a judge or a head of the state. The Islamic outlook on life is revolutionary as it gives a new dynamism to what has been traditionally regarded as religious. What makes an activity religious is the attitude with which it is undertaken and its conformity or otherwise with the values enunciated by God and His Prophet. With this revolutionary outlook, the entire realm of life is won over to God and Godliness. Nothing is left for Caesar.

### ***Faith as the Basis of Society***

Islam makes faith and religion the basis of the entire human society and the mainspring for the network of its relationships. Other social groups and communities, Muslims maintain, have been founded on race, blood, tribe, geography, etc., but in

Islam all these differences have been subordinated to a new form of organization emanating from the faith. Commitment to Islam integrates man not only with God but also with the community of believers. These two relationships branch out from the single act of faith. The Islamic concept of nationhood is not based on race, language, colour, territory or politico-economic affinity. The Islamic community is a fraternity of faith – anyone who believes in the Islamic religion and ideology is an inalienable part of this nation – whatever his race, colour, language or place of birth.

Muslims affirm a principle of human organization that is both rational and ideological in nature, and which is capable of embracing the entire human race. They believe that this concept of an ideological community is not a mere moral precept; it has its social, political and legal dimensions. It produces a new infrastructure for human relations. Faith is the decisive force in the system. It gives birth to social institutions, from the family to the state. Islamic culture grows from this faith in the same way as a tree grows from a seed. To some extent it is affected by external forces, but ultimately it is the potential of the seed which is fulfilled. This is unique principle of organization. The Islamic society and culture are ideological and universal in their origin and orientation. Muslims believe that the Islamic culture cannot be understood if some of its parts are studied in isolation, or in the perspective of cultures based on foundations diametrically different from its own. According to them, the Islamic institution of the family should ideally be studied and examined in the perspective of the Islamic outlook on life and the ethos of the Islamic cult.

## Family in Islam: Basic Principles

We ask: 1) what principles determine the nature of the institution of the family unit in Islam? And 2) what defines its place in the overall framework of Islamic society?

### ***Family as a Divinely-Inspired Institution***

The family is a divinely inspired and ordained institution. It was not evolved through human experimentation involving a process of trial and error spread over time. It was an institution that came into existence with the creation of man. The human race is a product of this institution and not the other way round. The Qur'an says: O Mankind, be conscious of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul, created of like Nature, his mate, and from the two created and Spread many men and women; and be mindful of your duty to God whose name you appeal to one another and to (the ties of) the womb. Verily God watches over you (Surah 4:1)

In another chapter the creation of man and woman and the marriage relationship permeated with tranquility, love and mercy have been described as “signs of God” (Surah 30:21). The institutions of marriage and the family have been commended as the ‘way of the Prophets’ (Surah 13:38); and the Prophet Muhammad has said: “Marriage is a part of my *Sunnah*. Whoever runs away from my path is not from amongst us” (*Ibn Majah, Book of Marriage*).

### ***Faith and the Family***

Faith constitutes the bedrock for the institution of the family. A Muslim is not permitted to marry a non-Muslim (Surah 2:221). Marriage should be among partners who share a common outlook on life and morality, and who participate in this co-venture to fulfill their destiny as God's vicegerents. Muslims believe it to be a fact, emphasized in the Qur'an as a guiding principle in matrimony, that “corrupt women

for corrupt men, and corrupt men for corrupt women; good women for good men and good men for good women” (Surah 24:26), and that “the fornicator shall marry none but a woman who fornicates” (Surah 24:3). According to Islam, faith continues to play a decisive role in the entire system of family relationships. A father or a son is not to inherit or make a bequest to a non-Muslim son or father. Similarly, if one of the spouses changes his or her faith, the marriage contract is broken. Thus, marriage is not simply a sexual relationship for Muslims. It is a basic religious and social institution.

### ***Family as Social Contract***

Although marriage is a Divinely-ordained institution, each marriage as such is in the nature of a contract. The word *nikah*, used for marriage in the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*, means ‘*aqd*’, that is, contract. In the Qur’an, marriage has been specifically referred to as *Mithaqan ghalizah*, a strong covenant (Surah 4:21). The pre-Islamic practice of inheriting women was forbidden. The consent of both spouses is an explicit condition for a valid marriage in Islam. For Muslims, this means that the marriage is a social contract, a noble and sacred contract, but a contract nonetheless. It leads to a number of relationships and engenders a set of mutual rights and obligations. Each contract, however, is not a sacrament; it is not irrevocable. Divorce is permitted in cases where marriage has failed. Remarriage is allowed, even encouraged. There is no stigma attached to remarriage or to marrying a divorced woman or a widower.

### ***Marriage and the Family***

Islam forbids all forms of sexual relationships outside marriage (i.e. premarital or extra matrimonial relations). It prescribes that the sexual relationship must not exist simply in the pursuit of momentary and ephemeral pleasure, ‘just to have a good

time,’ but should be had via marriage and should proceed in a responsible, well planned and stable manner. It has to be institutionalized, in the form of marriage and a stable family life. This relationship is not a temporary relationship; it is a permanent and enduring one and both partners are expected to make a serious and sustained effort to live together and play their role in society.

The institution of the family plays a very important part in Muslim society. It is a basic unit of that society and is organized in such a way that it operates as society in miniature. Muslims believe that about one third of the *ahkam* (legal injunctions of the Qur’an) relate to the family and its proper regulation. The network of rights and obligations that provides the basis of family life aims at producing those attitudes and behavior patterns that Islam wants to foster in the individual and in society. As a consequence, Muslims affirm that a new balance has been established in the roles and relationships that exist between: 1) men and women, between young and old, between near-relatives and distant kith and kin, 2) between freedom and discipline, and 3) between individual discretion and social control.

The Muslim family is an extended family, different relations occupying different positions. It is not a nuclear, atomistic family consisting of the parents and children only; it normally has three or four generations under its umbrella. According adherents of Islam, a careful look at the Islamic law of inheritance shows that all these relations are an integral part of the basic family structure and not just peripheral to it.

### ***Equality of the Sexes***

Islam affirms the equality of men and women as human beings. This, however, does not entail non-differentiation of their respective roles and functions in society. Islam disapproves of the free mixing of the sexes and regards this as conflicting with the role it assigns to the family in society. The primary responsibility

of woman is to concentrate on the home and the family, and all that is required to operate and develop these institutions. She, too, has certain social responsibilities, rights and duties, but her primary concern is the family. This is a functional distribution of roles and activities and is regarded as essential for the proper functioning of the different institutions of society and for its moral and social health and well-being. The responsibility for earning a living rests with the husband, while that of proper education, training and upbringing of the children and the optimal functioning of the home and wider family relationships rests with the wife.

#### Family in Islam: Objectives and Functions

What are the functions which Islam wants the institution of the family to perform in the lives of the individual and society? The family, according to Muslims, is not just a factory for the procreation of the human species, although the preservation and continuation of the race is one of its objectives. It is the basis of the entire socio-cultural structure and a self-sustaining mechanism to ensure social, ideological and cultural stability over the entire span of society. Following is an outline of the objectives and functions of the family as enunciated in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and believed as truth by Muslim faithful.

#### ***Preservation and Continuation of the Human Race***

Islam teaches that the survival of the human race and culture, and continuity in the functioning of man's *Khilafah* depends on the effective operations of the mechanism for procreation and reproduction. Nature has provided for this in that the psychological and physiological differences between the sexes are complementary to each other. All the facts of procreation demands that the process needs a stable structure to come into operation. Muslims believe that Men, women and children are

all in need of a permanent and lasting institution in order to fulfill this role. They maintain that the family is the institution which can take care of the entire process, from the initial phases to its function. Their basis is found in some Qur'anic texts: 1) "O Mankind, be conscious of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul, created of like Nature, his mate, and from the two created and Spread many men and women" (Surah 4:1), and 2) "Your wives are for you to cultivate; so go to your cultivation whenever you wish; and take care of what is for you, and heed God and know that you will meet Him" (Surah 2:223).

#### ***Protection of Morals***

Muslims believe that the sexual urge is a natural and creative urge. Although common to all living beings, in the case of men and women there are some unique aspects. In other animals, it is primarily for procreation and is regulated through instinct and the processes of nature. The mating urge is not effective at all times; it is bound by its own seasons and cycles. With man, this is not so. The urge is always there and lacks any built-in physiological control mechanism. But control and regulation are essential for a healthy existence, even at a biological level. They become more important at the social and cultural levels. Islam suggests that neither total abstinence nor unceasing promiscuity can lead to a stable and healthy existence.

Muslims believe that Islam forbids non-marital sex in all its forms. But, marriage exists to enable men and women to fulfill their natural urges, to enjoy this aspect of life in such a way that pleasure and responsibility goes hand in hand. Sex through marriage and marriage alone provides the control mechanism for the sexual urge. It also acts as a safety valve for sexual morality. Through it, fulfillment and sublimation are achieved in a balanced way and equilibrium is attained in inter-sex relations. Muslims believe in the Qur'anic message, referring to marriage as a

protection against a life debauchery when it says: 1) “So many them with their guardian’s permission and give them their marriage portions as wives, they being chaste, not committing fornication or having illicit friendships”(Surah 4:25), and 2) “And respectable, believing women (are lawful) as well as respectable women from among those who are given the Book before you, once you have given them their marriage portion and taken them in wedlock, not fornicating or having illicit friendships” (Surah 5:5).

### ***Psycho-Emotional Stability, Love and Kindness***

Another objective of marriage is to attain psychological, emotional and spiritual companionship. The relationship in the family, between all its members, and most important of all, between the husband and wife, is not merely a utilitarian relationship. Muslims believe that marriage is a spiritual relationship that sustains and generates love, kindness, mercy, compassion, mutual confidence, self-sacrifice, solace and succor. For them, the best in human nature expresses itself in the flowering of these relationships. It is only in the context of the family that what is spiritually potential in men and women becomes real and sets the pace of the blossoming of goodness and virtue within the family and outside it.

In marriage companionship, each partner seeks ever-increasing fulfillment. With children in the family, the values of companionship, of love and compassion, of sacrifice for others, of tolerance and kindness are translated into reality and implanted in character. It is the family that provides the most congenial climate for the development and fulfillment of human personality. According to Muslims, that is why Prophet Muhammad has said that home is the best place in the world.

Muslims likewise believe that the function of marriage and family is emphasized in the Qur’an in a number of ways, when it says: 1) “And (one) of His

signs is that He created for you, of yourselves, spouses so that you may console yourselves with them (and find rest and tranquility in them). He has set between you love and mercy” (Surah 30:21), and the relationship between the spouses has been described as that between “the body and the garment” in 2) “They are garments for you and you are garments for them” (Surah 2:187). This emphasizes their sameness, their oneness, something much more sublime than legal equality. The husband and the wife both are described as each other’s raiment, not one as the garment and the other the body. A garment is something nearest to the human body; it is that part of the external world, which becomes a part of our being. Such is the closeness of the relationship between the spouses. Dress is something that covers the body and protects it. The spouses are protectors and guardians of each other. The dress beautifies the wearer. One feels oneself incomplete without it. Husband and wife complement each other; one completes and perfects and beautifies the other. This relationship also protects the morals – without this shield one is exposed to the dangers of illicit carnality. All these aspects have been captured in the single but succinct phrase: ‘you are like a garment for each other.’

### ***Socialization and Value-Oriented***

The function of childbearing remains incomplete without its more crucial part of child rearing and upbringing – their education, orientation, character-building and gradual initiation into religion and culture. It is because of this aspect that family care becomes a full-time job. No other institution or even a number of institutions can take care of this function. Muslims believe this is the message in the Qur’an, when it states, “. . . and be mindful of your duty to God in whose Name you appeal to one another and to (the ties of) the womb” (Surah 4:1), and “O you who believe, strive to protect yourselves and your wives and children from the Fire” (Surah 44:6).

Muslims believe that this objective is set forth in the form of prayer in a number of texts. They are encouraged to be conscious of duty to the ties of the womb as an all-embracing demand. This demand includes obligations towards the wife, the children and other relations. “And take care of what is for you” in Surah *al-Baqarah* also refers to the same function (Surah 2:223). One is called to take care of one’s self and the members of the family. Other Qur’anic texts of significance include: “Our Lord! Grant us in our spouses and our offspring the comfort of our eyes and make us a model for the heedful” ( Surah 25:74), and “My Lord! Make me keep up prayer and (also) let my offspring (do so). Our Lord, accept my appeal! Our Lord, forgive me and my parents . . .” (Surah 14:40-41).

The family’s role as a basic organ of socialization is referred to by the Prophet in a number of *hadiths* (traditional sayings) where he has said that every child is born in the nature of Islam and it is his parents who transform him into a Christian, Jew etc. For instance, Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad has said: 1) “Of all that a father can give to his children, the best is their good education and training” and 2) “And whosoever has cared for his three daughters or three sisters and given them a good education and training, treating them with kindness till God makes them stand on their own feet, by God’s grace he has earned for himself a place in paradise.”

Muslims believe that, although one’s first responsibility is to one’s children and younger brothers and sisters, the institution of family covers a number of relations, near and distant, according to the circumstances. They maintain that the care of one’s parents, and of the weaker or poorer members of the family, is aspects that have been encouraged again and again by the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*.

### *Social and Economic Security*

Muslims believe that the institution of the family is an important part of the Islamic system of socio-economic security. The rights do not relate merely to moral, cultural and ideological aspects; they include the economic and social rights of the family members. It is believed that Prophet has said: “When God endows you with prosperity, spend first on yourself and your family”. For Muslims, maintenance of the family is a legal duty of the husband, even if the wife is rich. Spending on the “relations of the womb” has been specifically encouraged. Poor relatives have a prior claim upon one’s *Zakat* and other social contributions. The law of inheritance also reveals the nature of economic obligations within the family structure. This responsibility extends to a number of relations. One’s parents and grandparents and paternal and maternal relations have a claim upon one’s wealth and resources. It is believed that someone once said to the Prophet, “I have property and my father is in need of it”. The Prophet then replied, “You and your property belong to your father. Your children are among the finest things you acquire. Eat of what your children acquire.”

Furthermore, Muslims cite *hadith* emphasizing the rights of aunts, uncles and other relatives. Orphans in the family are to be absorbed and treated like one’s children. Other members are to be looked after and treated with honour, kindness and respect, and in the same way these responsibilities extend to one’s grand-children and great-grandchildren. Even the needy relatives of any of the spouses have claims upon the well to-do members. One of the functions of marriage and the family is to extend the ties with relatives and to weld them all into a system of socio-economic cohesion and mutual support. This is not merely a system of economic security, although

economic inter-dependence and support are its important elements. Islam, as its adherents suggest, has an established system of psycho-social security.

The members of the family remain integrated within it; the aged do not go to old people's homes. For Muslims, orphans must be not thrown into orphanages. The poor and unemployed are not made to survive on public assistance. Instead, all of these problems are, in the first instance, solved within the framework of the family in a way that is more humane and is in keeping with the honor and needs of everyone. It is not economic deprivation alone that is catered for; emotional needs are also taken care of.

The social role of the family becomes very clear in the context of the Qur'anic injunction about polygamy. Limited polygamy is permitted in Islam, as Islam is a practical religion and is meant for the guidance of human beings made of flesh and blood. There may be situations wherein forced monogamy may lead to moral or social incongruities with disastrous consequences. The sexual urge is not uniform in all human beings, nor is their capacity to control themselves. For a number of reasons, a man may be exposed to a situation where the choice before him could be between a second marriage and a drift towards sin. In such situations, polygamy is permitted within Islam.

Similarly there may be more pronounced family or social situations. To take only one social instance, there are periods, particularly after wars, when the number of women in a society exceeds that of men. In such a situation, either some women must remain perpetual spinsters and/or live in sin or they may be absorbed into the family system through polygamy. Islam prefers their absorption into the family. This points to the social function of marriage as a corrective of certain social imbalances.

Likewise, there may be orphans in the family or society and the family alone can

provide them with the love, care and dignity they need. Muslims believe that the verse in the Qur'an which gives permission for polygamy was revealed after the war of Uhud, wherein about ten per cent of the Muslim army was killed, creating a problem of widows and orphans in the society. Although the permission is general, the historical context provides important clues to the function of the institution. The Qur'an puts it thus: "And if you fear that you will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry such women as may seem good to you, two or three or four (at a time). If you fear that you will not act justly, then (marry) one woman (only) or someone your right hand controls. That is more likely to keep you from injustice." (Surah 4:3).

Marriage has also been encouraged to extend protection for the weak within the family. The Prophet is said to have commended the behavior of a bright young man who married an older widow because he had younger sisters, and as their mother had died, he wanted to marry a woman who could take care of them and bring them up properly. The family, in the Islamic scheme of life, provides for economic security as it provides for moral, social and emotional security and also leads to integration and cohesion among the relations. Thus, it establishes a very wide and much more humane system of socio-economic security.

***Family: Widening Horizons and Producing Social Cohesion in Society***

Marriage is also a means of widening the area of one's relations and developing affinities between different groups of the various societies – between families, tribes and nationalities. Prophet Muhammad is believed to have said: "Matrimonial alliances (between two families or tribes) increases friendship more than anything else". Muslims maintain that marriage acts as a bridge between different families, tribes and communities and has been instrumental in the absorption of diverse people into a wider affinity. In practice, marriage is thought to have played

this role in the early Islamic period as well as throughout Islamic history and in all parts of the world.

### ***Motivation for Effort and Sacrifice***

It has also been indirectly suggested that marriage increases one's sense of responsibility and induces one to make greater efforts towards earning a living and improving one's economic lot. Muslims believe that this aspect is referred to by the Qur'an when it tells people to marry: "Marry those among you who are single and (marry) your slaves, male and female, that are righteous; if they are poor, God will enrich them out of His bounty; God is All-Embracing, All-Knowing" (Surah 24:32).

### Family in Islam: Structure, Principles and Rules

We have discussed the salient features of the Islamic outlook on life, the foundations of the family in Islam and its objectives and functions. This section will explain briefly the actual working of the institution of the family in Islam, its structure, principles and rules.

### ***Marriage and Divorce***

Marriage, as a social institution, is essentially a civil contract. And as a civil contract it rests on the same footing as other contracts. Its validity depends on the capacity of the contracting parties, which according to Islamic law; consist in having maturity (*bulugh*) and discretion. Mutual consent and public declaration of the marriage contract are its essentials. The law does not insist on any particular form in which this contract is entered into or on any specific religious ceremony, although there are different traditional forms prevalent amongst the Muslims in different parts of the world and it is regarded advisable to conform to them. As far as the *Shariah* is concerned, the validity of the marriage depends on proposition on one side (*ijab*) and

acceptance (*qubul*) on the other. This offer and the acceptance can take place directly between the parties, or through an agent (*wakil*).

In a traditional Muslim marriage, the bride's consent is procured through her representative. Normally there are at least two witnesses to this matrimonial contract, entered into at a family ceremony. There is also a dower (*mahr*) which the husband pays to the wife and which is for her sole and exclusive use and benefit. This dower is an important part of the scheme, but it is not essential for the legality of the marriage for its amount to be pre-fixed. As such its absence would not render the marriage invalid, although the husband is expected to pay it according to custom. Being a civil contract, the parties retain their personal rights as against each other as well as against others. The power to dissolve the marriage-tie rests with both parties and specified forms have been laid down for it.

Marriage in Islam is not a temporary union and is meant for the entire span of life. Dissolution of marriage is, however, permitted if it fails to serve its objectives and has irretrievably broken down. Family arbitration is resorted to before final dissolution. This has been laid down in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. If this fails, then steps are taken for dissolution of the marriage. There are three forms of dissolution: 1) divorce by the husband (*talaq*), 2) separation sought by the wife (*Khul*), and 3) dissolution of the marriage by a court of an arbiter. Detailed laws and by-laws have been laid down by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in respect of these and have been codified in the *fiqh* literature to regulate different aspects of marriage and family life.

Muslim marriage is usually a contracted marriage. Although marriage is primarily a relationship between the spouses, it, in fact, builds relationship between families, and even more. That is why other members of the family, particularly the parents of the spouses play a much more positive role in it. Consent of the bride and

bridegroom is essential; in fact, indispensable. Despite the fact that free mixing of the sexes is forbidden, it is permitted for the intending partners in marriage to see each other before the marriage. What, however, stands out prominently is that marriage in Muslim society is not merely a private arrangement between the husband and the wife. That is why the whole family contributes effectively towards its arrangements, materialization and fulfillment.

### *The Basis of Family*<sup>38</sup>

Unlike some other religions that consider celibacy a great virtue and a means of salvation, Islam considers marriage to be one of the most virtuous and approved of institutions. There is no monasticism in Islam. Further, the Prophet urged all those who can afford to provide for a wife to marry, as marriage is the legal means by which to avoid lewdness and immorality. Since family is the basic unit of society, Islam lays great emphasis on the family system and its values. The basis of family is marriage. Islam prescribes rules to regulate family life so that both the spouses can live in tranquility, security and love. Marriage in Islam has aspects of *`ibadah* (worship) of Allah in the sense that it is in accordance with His commandments that a husband and wife should love and help each other and rear their children to become true servants of Allah.

Marriage in Islam is a social contract that requires the consent of both parties. Neither the bride nor groom can be forced into a marriage. The man must give the bride a dower or gift called *mahr*. This is usually money, but it can be any gift according to his means. The Prophet even allowed one of his poor companions to marry a woman with his *mahr* being a promise to teach her some verses of the Qur'an. The dower goes to the bride, not her family, and she has the total right to

<sup>38</sup>“The Basis of Family” The source of this article is *Islamonline*, but was retrieved from <http://www.beconvinced.com/en/article.php> on 10th October 2005.

decide what to do with it. Thus it is not, as some critics have said, a “bride price”. The man also has the total responsibility to pay the household expenses. Even if a woman is wealthy, she does not have to spend any of her money on the maintenance of herself or the couple’s children. In fact, many Muslim women do work outside the home. They can contribute to the household budget if they choose, and they receive the Heavenly reward for giving charity, but they are not required to do so.

Every group needs a leader, and Islam gives that responsibility to the husband because he is the breadwinner. He should consult his wife on family matters, but the final decisions are his. The wife should lovingly obey her husband, even when she disagrees, to keep peace in the family and to win the pleasure of Allah (God). That does not mean that she is his slave and must wait on him hand and foot. The Prophet himself helped his wives with housework. Furthermore, if a woman had a servant before marriage, she has the right to have a servant at her husband’s expense. A man and woman should enter into marriage with the intention of it being permanent, and Islam has many teachings on how husbands and wives should deal with each other lovingly.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, the woman has the right to choose her husband; Islamic law does not permit her to be forced into any marriage. The wife also has the right to retain her family name and to keep and manage her own money from her work, inheritance, investments, gifts or other sources. It is her right to keep her money separate from her husband’s, and he has no right to it. While men and women should enter into marriages with the intention of it being permanent, Islam recognizes that people do sometimes make poor decisions or change. Thus, divorce and remarriage are allowed as a last resort after estranged couples have attempted to reconcile their differences with the help of family or other counselors.

### *Courtship in Islam*<sup>39</sup>

The most common questions from young people are: 1) Do Muslims date? and 2) if they do not date, how do they decide whom to marry? In much of the world today, young men and women engage in a one-on-one intimate relationship, spending time together alone, getting to know each other in a very deep way before deciding whether that's the person they will marry. This kind of dating does not exist among Muslims, including the Ja'aliyin. Pre-marital relationships of any kind between members of the opposite sex are forbidden. The choice of a marriage partner is seen to be one of the most important decisions a person will make in his or her lifetime. Hence, it should not be taken lightly, nor left to chance or to unpredictable hormonal swings. It should be taken as seriously as any other major decision in life - with prayer to God, careful investigation, and family involvement. So in today's world, how do young Muslim people manage? When a young person decides to get married, certain steps often take place. Observation indicates that these steps take place, with minor adjustment based on individual family preferences. We note:

1. The young person makes *du'a* (prayer) for *Allah* (God) to help him or her find the right person.
2. The family enquires, discusses, and suggests candidates. They consult with each other to narrow down potential prospects. Usually the father or mother approaches the other family to suggest a meeting.
3. The couple then agrees to meet in a chaperoned, group environment. This is done because that the Prophet Muhammad (as related by Umar) indicated that no one of should meet a woman alone unless she is accompanied by a relative. According to another hadith by Sahih Bukhari, The Prophet also said that whenever a man is alone with a woman, Satan (*Shaytan*) would be the third among them. When young people are getting to know each other, being alone together is a temptation toward wrongdoing. At all times, Muslims should follow the commands of the Qur'an (24:30-31), their holy book, to "lower their gaze and guard their modesty...." Islam recognizes that people are humans and are given to human weaknesses, so this rule provides safeguards for our own sakes.

<sup>39</sup>Huda Dodge, "Courtship in Islam." Available from <http://www.beconvinced.com/en/article.php>, accessed on 2nd September 2005.

4. Next, the family investigates the candidate further by talking with his/her friends, family, Islamic leaders, co-workers, etc. to learn about his or her character. The couple prays *Salat-l-istikhara* (a certain prayer for guidance) to seek Allah's help in making a decision.
5. After that, the couple agrees to either pursue marriage or part ways. Islam has given this freedom of choice to both young men and women – they cannot be forced into a marriage that they do not want.

This type of focused courtship helps ensure the strength of the marriage, by drawing upon family elders' wisdom and guidance in this important life decision. Family involvement in the choice of a marriage partner helps assure that the choice is based not on romantic notions, but rather on a careful, objective evaluation of the compatibility of the couple. That is why these marriages often prove successful.

### *The Way Marriage is Contracted*

No specific ceremony is prescribed for marriage. In principle, however, it has been stressed that marriage should take place publicly. Other members of the society should know of this development, preferably in a way that has been adopted by the society as its usage (*urf*). Normally, the *nikah* (contract of marriage) takes place at a social gathering where members of both the families and other friends and relatives gather. Usually in Muslim society there are persons known as *Qadi* who discharge this responsibility. In the *nikah*-sermon they recite from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and invite the spouses to a life of God-consciousness, purity, mutual love and loyalty and social responsibility. Then the marriage is contracted where in *ijab* (proposal) and *qubul* (acceptance) are made before the witnesses. After the *nikah*, the bride moves to the bridegroom's house and both begin this new chapter of their life. After the consummation of the marriage, the bridegroom holds a feast for the relatives and friends. The real purpose of these gatherings and feasts is to make the events a social function and to let the society know of it and participate in it. Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad has recommended the people to hold these celebrations with

simplicity and to share each other's joy. He is cited as having said that the best wedding is that upon which the least trouble and expense is bestowed, and that the worst of feasts are those marriage-feasts to which the rich are invited and the poor left out. Likewise, those who refuse to accept invitations to marriage feasts are perceived to disobey God and His Prophet.

### ***Marriage in Islam***<sup>40</sup>

Shahina Siddiqui explains two Qur'anic verses regarding marriage: 1) "And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in peace and tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): Verily in that are signs for those who reflect" (Surah 30:21), and 2) "O Humans revere your Guardian Lord, Who created you from a single person created of like nature its mate, and from this scattered (like seeds) countless men and women. Reverence Allah through whom you claim your mutual rights" (Surah 4:1)

The above verses of the Qur'an lay out the framework as to what are the *basis*, the *objectives* and the *goal* of marriage in Islam. In the ultimate Wisdom of Allah, Muslims are first told that both partners – man and woman – are created from the same source. This should be paid attention to as it is one of Allah's signs. The fact that people come from the same soul signifies their equality as humans. When the essence of our creation is the same; the argument of who is better or greater is redundant. Muslims, especially when they talk about marriage in the field of marital counseling stress on the significance of this fact.

The shift in this attitude of equality of genders as human beings causes an imbalance in marital relationship that leads to dysfunctional marriage. Whenever one

<sup>40</sup>Shahina Siddiqui, "Marriage in Islam." In <http://www.soundvision.com/Info/marriage/inislam.asp> (emphasis mine) Retrieved on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2005.

party considers themselves superior or above the law there is a shift in the balance of power that may lead to misuse or abuse of power as the less valuable partner is seen as an easy prey. Many marital difficulties are based on or caused by control and rule stratagem.

Muslims believe that Allah has put emphasis on the equality of all humans – men or women – and made it the basis of marriage. According to them, this comes from Allah's infinite wisdom, as he lays the ground rules for establishing peace. Likewise, Allah has assigned different roles to husband and wife, as a functional strategy rather than a question of competence as humans. Prophet Muhammad has stated that: "men and women are twin halves of each other" (Bukhari). This Hadith also brings home the fact that men and women are created from a single source. Furthermore, by using the analogy of twin half the Prophet has underlined the reciprocal nature and the interdependent nature of the relationship between men and women.

The objective and the goal of marriage in Islam according to the above Qur'anic verse is to enable people to dwell in peace and tranquility. Muslims consider it important for people to reflect on these words and their significance in the Islamic frame of reference. In order to have peace, certain conditions must be met. These prerequisites to peace are Justice, Fairness, Equity, Equality, and fulfillment of mutual rights. Therefore any injustice whether it is oppression, or persecution, cannot be tolerated if there is to be peace in Muslim homes. In the domestic realm, oppression is manifested when the process of *Shura* (consultation) is compromised, neglected or ignored. When one partner (in most cases the husband) makes unilateral decisions and applies dictatorial style of leadership, peace is compromised. Persecution is present when there is any form of domestic abuse being perpetrated.

Tranquility on the other hand is a state of being which is achieved when peace has been established. Tranquility is compromised when there is tension, stress and anger. It is a mistake to take tranquility to mean perpetual state of bliss. Since being Muslims does not make people immune to tragedies and catastrophes. In fact, Muslims believe that Allah tells them in the Qur'an that people will be tried (Surah 2:155, 57). What a state of tranquility does is to empower people to handle life's difficult moments with their spouses as obedient servants of Allah. Muslims believe that Allah, in his infinite mercy, also provides people with the tools by which they can achieve this state of peace and tranquility.

The second principle besides *Shura* on which the Islamic family life is based is Mercy (*Rehman*), and in this verse Allah is telling people that he has placed mercy between spouses. Muslims believe that people are, therefore, inclined by our very nature to have mercy for our spouses. Mercy is manifested through compassion, forgiveness, caring and humility.

It is obvious that these are all ingredients that make for a successful partnership. Marriage in Islam is above all a partnership based on equality of partners and specification of roles. Lack of mercy in a marriage or a family renders it in Islamic terms dysfunctional. Allah further states that He has also placed in addition to mercy, love between spouses. It should, however, be noted that the Islamic concept of love is different from the more commonly understood romantic love so valued in the Western cultures. The basic difference is that love between man and woman in the Islamic context can only be realized and expressed in a legal marriage. In order to develop a healthy avenue for the expression of love between man and woman and to provide security so that such a loving relationship can flourish, it is necessary to give it the protection of *Shariah* (Islamic law).

Marital love in Islam inculcates the following:

- 1) Faith: The love Muslim spouses have for each other is for the sake of Allah, which is to gain his pleasure. It is from Allah that people claim their mutual rights (Qur'an 4:1) and it is to Allah that people are accountable for with regard to their behavior as husbands and wives.
- 2) It sustains: Love is not to consume but to sustain. Muslims believe that Allah expresses his love for people by providing sustenance. To love in Islam is to sustain loved ones physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually, to the best of one's ability. To sustain materially is the husband's duty, however if the wife wishes she can also contribute.
- 3) It Accepts: To love someone is to accept them for who they are. It is selfishness to try and mould someone as one wishes them to be. True love does not attempt to crush individuality or control personal differences, but is magnanimous and secure to accommodate differences.
- 4) Challenges: Love challenges people to be all they can; it encourages them to tap into their talents and takes pride in their achievements. To enable loved ones to realize their potential is the most rewarding experience.
- 5) Merciful: Mercy compels people to love and love compels people to have mercy. In the Islamic context the two are synonymous. The attribute Allah chose to be the supreme for himself is that he is the most Merciful. This attribute of *Rehman* (the Merciful) is mentioned 170 times in the Qur'an, bringing home the significance for believers to be merciful. Mercy in practical application means to have and show compassion and to be charitable.
- 6) Forgiving: Love is never too proud to seek forgiveness or too stingy to forgive. It is willing to let go of hurt and letdowns. Forgiveness allows people the opportunity to improve and correct themselves.
- 7) Respect: To love is to respect and value the person their contributions and their opinions. Respect does not allow people to take for granted their loved ones, or to ignore their input. How people interact with their spouses reflects whether they respect them or not.
- 8) Confidentiality: Trust is the most essential ingredient of love. When trust is betrayed and confidentiality compromised, love loses its soul.
- 9) Caring: Love fosters a deep fondness that dictates caring and sharing in all that people do. The needs of their loved ones take precedence over their own.
- 10) Kindness: The *Seerah* (biography) of the Prophet is rich with examples of acts of kindness he showed towards his family, and particularly his wives. Even when his patience was tried, he was never unkind in word or deed. To love is to be kind.

- 11) Grows: Marital love is not static; it grows and flourishes with each day of marital life. It requires work and commitment, and is nourished through faith when people are thankful and appreciative of Allah blessings.
- 12) Enhances: Love enhances peoples' image and beautifies their world. It provides emotional security and physical well-being.
- 13) Selflessness: Love gives unconditionally and protects dutifully.
- 14) Truthful: Love is honesty without cruelty and loyalty without compromise.

#### The Structure of the Muslim Family

The structure of the family is threefold. The first and the closest consist of the husband, the wife, their children, their parents who live with them, and servants, if any. The next group, the central fold of the family, consist of a number of close relatives, whether they live together or not, who have special claims upon each other, who move freely inside the family with whom marriage is forbidden and between whom there is no *hijab (purdah)*. These are the people who also have prior claim on the wealth and resources of a person, in life as well as in death (as beneficiaries, known in the matter of inheritance as 'shares', the first line of inheritors). The crucial thing in this respect is that they are regarded as *mahram*, those with whom marriage is prohibited. This constitutes the real core of the family, sharing each other joys, sorrow, hopes and fears. This relationship emerges from consanguinity, affinity and foster-nursing.

Relations based on consanguinity, include 1) father, mother, grandfather, grandmother and other direct forbears; 2) direct descendants, that is sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, etc. 3) relations of the second degree (such as brothers, sisters and their descendants), 4) father's or mother's a sister (not their daughter or other descendants). Those based on affinity include 1) mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandmother-in-law, grandfather-in-law; (2) wife's daughters, husband's sons or their

grand- or great-granddaughters or great-grandsons respectively; 3) son's wife, son's wife, daughter's husband, and 4) stepmothers and stepfathers. With some exceptions the same relations are forbidden through foster-nursing (*al-rida'ah*). This is the real extended family and the nucleus of relationship. All those relations who are outside this fold constitute the outer periphery of the family. They, too, have their own rights and obligations, as is borne out by the fact that a number of them have included in the second and third lines of inheritors.

#### ***The Position of Man and Woman***

In the internal organization of the family, a man is in the position of the head and the overall supervisor. In fact, it is the eldest member of the extended family who occupies the position of the head. A man's major responsibilities lie outside the family. He is to support the family economically and materially; he has to look after the relations of the family with the rest of the society, its economy and policy and he has to take care of the demands of internal discipline within the family. A woman's major responsibilities lie within the family. The eldest woman is regarded as the center of the family organization. But, within each circle, the relative central position is enjoyed by that woman who constitutes its core. A spectrum of mutual rights and responsibilities has been evolved in such a way that balanced relationships are developed between all. Some Qur'anic teaching supporting this: "Men are those who support women, since God has given some persons advantages over others, and because they spend their wealth (on them)" (Surah 4:34); "Women have the same rights (in relation to their husbands) as is expected in all decency from them; while men stand a step above them. God is mighty, wise" (Surah 2:228).

According to Islam, this is in the interests of proper organization and management within the family. There is equality in rights, there is demarcation of

responsibilities. Man has been made head of the family so that order and discipline are maintained. Both are ordered to discharge their respective functions with justice and equity. Muslims are aware that the question of equality or inequality of the sexes has often been raised. This issue, for them, is the product of a certain cultural and legal context, and is really not relevant to the Islamic context where the equality of men and women as human beings has been divinely affirmed and legally safeguarded. There is differentiation of roles and responsibilities and certain arrangements have been made to meet the demands of organizations and institutions not on the basis of superiority or inferiority of the sexes but in the light of the basic facts of life and the needs of society. Every role is important in its own right and each person is to be judged according to the responsibilities assigned to him or her. Their roles are not competitive but complimentary.

#### ***Family and its Roles: Islamic Teachings***<sup>41</sup>

Before discussing the role of Islam in organizing and protecting the family, it is necessary, first, to find out what the situation of the family was before Islam, and what it is in the West in modern times. Before Islam, the family was based on mistreatment and oppression. Only the males controlled all affairs, and women and girls were oppressed and humiliated. An example: if a man died and left behind a wife, his son by another wife had the right to marry her and control her life, or to prevent her from getting married. Men were the only ones who could inherit; women and children had no share. They viewed women, whether they were mothers, daughters or sisters, as a source of shame, because they could be taken as prisoners, thus bringing shame upon the family. Hence a man would bury his infant daughter alive, as is referred to in the Qur'an, where Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

<sup>41</sup> Gleaned from the web-based article "What Islam Teaches about the Family and its Roles." Source: <http://sisters.islamway.com>. Retrieved from <http://www.beconvinced.com/en/article.php> on 15 October 2005.

"And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonor or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision" (al-Nahl 16:58).

The family in the broader sense, i.e., the tribe, was based on supporting one another in all things, even in wrongdoing. When Islam came, it did away with all that and established justice, giving each person his or her rights, even nursing infants, and even the miscarried fetus who was to be respected and prayed for (i.e., given a proper funeral).

When one examines the family in the West today, one will find that families are disintegrating and the parents cannot control their children, whether intellectually or morally. The son has the right to go wherever he wants and do whatever he wants; the daughter has the right to sit with whoever she wants and sleep with whoever she wants, all in the name of freedom and rights. And what is the result? Broken families, children born outside marriage, (elderly) mothers and fathers who are not looked after. As some wise men have said, if you want to know the true nature of these people, go to the prisons and the hospitals and seniors' homes, for children do not remember their parents except on holidays and special occasions. The point is that among non-Muslims the institution of family is destroyed.

When Islam came it paid a great deal of attention to the establishment of strong families and protecting them from things that could harm them, and preserving family ties whilst giving each member of the family an important role in life. Islam honored women, whether as mothers, daughters or sisters. First, Islam honors women as mothers: It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: A man came to the Messenger of

Allah and said, “O Messenger of Allah, who among people is most deserving of my good company?” He said, “Your mother.” He asked, “Then who?” He said, “Your mother.” He asked, “Then who?” He said, “Your mother.” He asked, “Then who?” He said, “Your mother.” He asked, “Then who?” He said, “Then your father.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 5626; Muslim, 2548).

Second, Islam honors women as daughters: “It was narrated from Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah said: ‘Whoever has three daughters or three sisters, or two daughters or two sisters, and takes good care of them and fears Allah with regard to them, will enter Paradise’” (Narrated by Ibn Hibbaan in his *Saheeh*, 2/190). And thirdly, Islam honors women as wives: “It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah said: the Messenger of Allah said: ‘The best of you are those who are best to their wives, and I am the best of you to my wives.’” (Narrated and classed as Hassan by al-Tirmidhi, 3895).

Islam gives women their rights of inheritance and other rights. It gives women rights like those of men in many spheres. This comes from the idea that the Prophet said, “Women are the twin halves of men.” (Narrated by Abu Dawood in his *Sunan*, 236, from the *Hadith* of ‘Aa’ishah; classed as *Saheeh* by al-Albaani in *Saheeh* Abi Dawood, 216). Islam encourages men to treat their wives well, and it gives women much of the responsibility for raising the children. Islam gives fathers and mothers a great deal of responsibility for raising their children. “It was narrated that ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar heard the Messenger of Allah say, ‘Each of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The leader is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The man is the shepherd of his family and he is responsible for his flock. The woman is the shepherd of her husband’s household and is responsible for her flock. The servant is a shepherd of his master’s wealth and is responsible for his flock.’ He said, ‘I heard this from the Messenger of Allah’” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 853; Muslim, 1829).

Islam pays a great deal of attention to implanting the principle of respect for fathers and mothers, taking care of them and obeying their commands until death. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): “And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor” (Al-Isra’ 17:23). In conclusion, Islam protects the honor, chastity, purity and lineage of the family. So, it encourages marriage and forbids free mixing of men and women. Islam gives each family member an important role to play. Fathers and mothers are to take care of the children and give them an Islamic upbringing; children are to listen and obey, and respect the rights of fathers and mothers, on a basis of love and respect. Some Muslims believe that those considered enemies of Islam bear witness to the strength of family ties among the Muslims.

### ***The Role of Mothers***<sup>42</sup>

In one tradition, the Prophet advised a believer not to join the war against the Quraish in defense of Islam, but to look after his mother, saying that his service to his mother would be a cause of his salvation. Mu’awiyah, the son of Jahimah, reported that Jahimah came to the Prophet and said, “Messenger of Allah! I want to join the fighting (in the path of Allah) and I have come to seek your advice.” He said, “Then remain in your mother’s service, because Paradise is under her feet.”

This is variously interpreted to mean that the mother is responsible for teaching her children their religious obligations and good behavior that will win them Paradise; or it may mean that people earn Paradise by serving their mother throughout

<sup>42</sup> Flfwine Mischler, “Paradise at her Feet.” In <http://www.beconvinced.com/en/article.php> retrieved on 5th September 2005.

her life. Either way, it shows the great esteem, honor and respect that Islam has for mothers. While the fourth Commandment in the Bible is Honor thy father and thy mother, the Bible does not mention the mother separately as deserving good treatment. The Qur'an, in contrast, gives special recognition to the mother's suffering in bearing and nursing her child: "And we have enjoined on man to be good to his parents: In travail upon travail did his mother bear him and in two years was his weaning. Show gratitude to me and to your parents" (Surah 31:14). Women are more psychologically fitted to nurturing, more compassionate and patient.

Today in the Muslim world, even where many of the precepts of Islam are ignored, Westerners are often amazed at the gentle, loving treatment that parents receive. An Arab proverb says if you want to know how a man will treat his wife, look how he treats his mother. Becoming a mother is one of the greatest joys of a Muslim woman. She knows that her child is both a gift and a trust from God. She carries a great responsibility in raising a family, not only in caring for their physical needs, but also in educating them in their religion and morals. For this and other reasons, Islam calls upon all Muslims, male and female, to be educated, for how can a woman teach her children when she herself is ignorant?

Islam also recognizes that, compared to the man, the woman is by nature more psychologically fitted to nurturing, more compassionate and patient. For that reason, Islam decrees that husbands must maintain their wives and children, and it encourages mothers with young children to remain at home with their children rather than work outside the house. And, in case of divorce, custody of young children goes to the mother. All this respect and honor goes to the mother, even if she is a non-Muslim, and also to maternal aunts. Thus the woman does not cut from her own family when she marries, but her children continue to honor the kin relationships of both their

mother and father. To the non-Muslim reader (Jewish, Christian, or otherwise), Dr. Sherif Abdel Azeem wishes to dedicate these words:

It is bewildering why the religion that had revolutionized the status of women is being singled out and denigrated as so repressive of women. This perception about Islam is one of the most widespread myths in our world today. This myth is being perpetuated by a ceaseless barrage of sensational books, articles, media images, and Hollywood movies. The inevitable outcome of these incessant misleading images has been total misunderstanding and fear of anything related to Islam...Islam should be viewed as a religion that had immensely improved the status of women and had granted them many rights that the modern world has recognized only this century. Islam still has so much to offer today's woman: dignity, respect, and protection in all aspects and all stages of her life from birth until death in addition to the recognition, the balance, and means for the fulfillment of all her spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional needs.<sup>43</sup>

### ***The Family and Society***

The family is a part of the Islamic social order. The society that Islam wishes to establish is not a sex-ridden society. It hopes to establish an ideological society, with a high level of moral awareness, strong commitment to the ideal of *Khilafah* and purposive orientation of all human behaviors. Its discipline is not an imposed discipline, but one that flows out of every individual's commitment to the values and ideal of Islam. In this society a high degree of social responsibility prevails. The entire system operates in a way that strengthens and fortifies the family and not otherwise.

The family is protected by prohibiting sex outside marriage. Fornication (*zina*) has been forbidden and made a punishable offense. All roads that lead to this evil are blocked and whatever paves the way towards it is checked and eliminated. That is why promiscuity in any form is forbidden. The Islamic system of *hijab* is a wide-ranging system which protects the family and closes those avenues that lead towards illicit sex or even indiscriminate contact between the sexes in society. It prescribes

<sup>43</sup> Sherif Abdel Azeem, "Women in Islam versus Women in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition." Available in <http://www.twf.org/Library/WomenICJ.html>, retrieved on 30 April 2006. This manuscript was first published by the World Assembly of Muslim Youth in 1995.

essential rules and regulations about dress, modes of behavior, rules of contract between the sexes and a number of other questions that are central or ancillary to it. The finer qualities of life have been given every encouragement, but they have been torn from their carnal or sensual context and oriented towards what is noble and good in human life. A number of preventive measures have been taken to protect the family from influences that may corrupt or weaken its moral and social climate. Some of these measures are in the nature of moral persuasions, others take the form of social rules and sanctions, and some take the form of law whose violation entails exemplary punishments. All these protect the institution of the family and enable it to play its positive role in the making of the Islamic society.

Muslims encourage marriage and the family in Islam to be studied and understood in the context of the scheme of life that Islam wishes to establish. For them, they cannot be understood in isolation. According to Muslim scholars, the concept of man and the family which Islam gives is in conflict with the concept of man and the family that is prevalent in the West today. Some writers have no apologies for this opinion; they refuse to accept the allegedly value-neutral approach that wily-nilly fashions the life and perspective of man in the secular culture of the West today. They think the disintegration of the family in the West is, in part, a result of confusion about the place and the role of the family in society, and about the purpose of life itself. If the objectives and values of life are not set right, they postulate, further disintegration of this and other institutions cannot be prevented.

Muslims consider it a tragedy of our times when they observe changes that are being imposed upon man under the stress of technological and other external developments. For them, the entire process of change is becoming somewhat non-discretionary and involuntary. They consider this present age one in which freedom is

worshiped like a god. Yet, man is being deprived of the most important freedom – the freedom to choose his ideals, values, institutions and patterns of life. Accordingly, they cite one of the greatest tasks that lie ahead as the restoration and rehabilitation of this freedom of choice, and its judicious and informed use to set the house of humanity in order. For them, non-human and moral forces, be they of history or technology, must not be allowed to decide for man. Man should decide for himself as vicegerent of God on the earth. Otherwise, they suggest, whatever has been achieved in the fields of science and technology shall drift towards a new form of slavery. It is tantamount to man's forced abdication of his real role in the world.

Ahmad, one of the academics cited here for his relevant emic perspectives, captures the sentiments inherent in the works of Muslim scholars like Siddiqui, Mischler, and Azeem. With regard to unbridled freedom originating from the West and seen as counterproductive to the society, he calls on all people who believe in God and in the existence of a moral order in the Universe to stand their ground and resist.

### ***Polygamy in Islam***

Does the Qur'an support or condone polygamy? "Islam has allowed a man to marry more than one wife. This has been done for the purpose of solving many social and domestic problems, which a family is confronted with from time to time. Many are the times when the general welfare of both man and woman depends upon the husband marrying another wife."<sup>44</sup> In an apparent attempt to challenge anti-Islamists, the writer in <http://www.answering-christianity.com/polygamy.htm> states, "Islam does not allow marriage of multiple wives for males' sexual privileges and desires as

<sup>44</sup> Seyyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, "Submission to the Commission on the Law of Marriage and Divorce and Matrimonial Status of Women." Retrieved from <http://www.ezsoftech.com/omm/polygamy.asp> on 6th September 2005

Anti-Islamic claim. A normal man who makes enough money to keep him surviving in life cannot provide a fair quality of life to all his wives... he will only make his society worse."<sup>45</sup> Drawing from the Qur'an, he notes:

Noble Verse 4:3 came to solve social problems. Unfortunately today, some Muslims intensify the Muslim's social problems in the Islamic poor countries by marrying multiple wives and bringing more and more illiterate and poor kids into the society which on the long run will only keep their entire society below the level of poverty. Therefore, Noble Verse 4:3 doesn't allow polygamy just for anyone or any reason and Noble Verse 4:129 certainly nullifies the excuse Allah Almighty gave to Muslim men to practice polygamy. Therefore, unless we have social or personal dilemmas where too many Muslim men were lost, or there is a problem with the wife toward her husband, then polygamy should not be allowed nor justified in my Islamic view.<sup>46</sup>

Muslims believe that it is no secret that polygamy of a sort is widely carried on in Europe and America. According to them, the difference is that while the Western man has no legal obligations to his second, third or fourth mistresses and their children, the Muslim husband has complete legal obligations towards his second, third or fourth wife and their children.

Referring to cases where women have lost their husbands to war or illness, Muslim women, in particular, ask: what options are left to the millions of other women who have no hope of getting a husband? Their choice bluntly stated, is between a chaste and childless old maidenhood, and becoming somebody's mistress, that is an unofficial second wife with no legal rights for herself or for her children. Most women would not welcome either of these since they have always wanted and still do want the security of a legal husband and family. Mary Ali, out to challenge the Western position generally, and the Christian position in particular, notes:

<sup>45</sup> "When is Polygamy Allowed in Islam," Online in <http://www.answering-christianity.com/polygamy.htm>, retrieved on 15th October 2006.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

In the American society many times when relations are strained, the husband simply deserts his wife. Then he cohabits with another woman immorally, without marriage. Actually there are three kinds of polygamy practiced in Western societies: (1) serial polygamy, that is, marriage, divorce, marriage, divorce, and so on – any number of times; (2) a man married to one woman but having and supporting one or more mistresses and (3) an unmarried man having a number of mistresses. Islam condones but discourages the first and forbids the other two.<sup>47</sup>

The Institute of Islamic Information and Education (III&E) is dedicated to the cause of Islam in North America through striving to elevate the image of Islam and Muslims by providing the correct information about Islamic beliefs, history and civilizations from the authentic sources. In this article polygamy has been used to mean having two or more wives. Islam forbids polyandry meaning having two or more husbands. Mary Ali continues to suggest, "Wars cause the number of women to greatly exceed the number of men. In a monogamous society these women, left without husbands or support, resort to prostitution, illicit relationships with married men resulting in illegitimate children with no responsibility on the part of the father, or lonely sisterhood or widowhood." As far as she is concerned, the truth of the matter is that monogamy protects men, allowing them to "play around" without responsibility. Likewise, easy birth control and easy legal abortion opens the door of illicit sex to women and, as they are lured into the so-called sexual revolution. But women are still the ones who suffer the trauma of abortion and the side effects of the birth control methods. Taking aside the plagues of venereal disease, herpes and AIDS, the male continues to enjoy himself free of worry. Men are the ones protected by monogamy while women continue to be victims of men's desires.

<sup>47</sup>Mary Ali, "Who Practices Polygamy?" In III&E Brochure Series; No. 13 (The Institute of Islamic Information and Education (III&E). Reprinted with the permission of World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY). Retrieved from <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/humanrelations/womeninislam/polygamy.html> on September 5th 2005.

In Islam, the regulations concerning polygamy limit the number of wives a man can have, while making him responsible for all of the women involved. "Marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one or one that your right hands possess. That will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice" (Qur'an 4:3). This verse from the Qur'an allows a man to marry more than one woman, but only if he can deal justly with them. Karen Armstrong, in *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*, makes this point abundantly clear when she states:

Unless a man is confident that he can be scrupulously fair to all his wives, he must remain monogamous. Muslim law has built on this: a man must spend absolutely the same amount of time with each of his wives; besides treating each wife equally financially and legally, a man must not have the slightest preference for one but must esteem and love them all equally. It has been widely agreed in the Islamic world that mere human beings cannot fulfill this Qur'anic requirement: it is impossible to show such impartiality and as a result Muhammad's qualification, which he need not have made, means no Muslim should really have more than one wife. In countries where polygamy has been forbidden, the authorities have justified this innovation not on secular but on religious grounds.<sup>48</sup>

Muslims believe that, while the provision for polygamy makes the social system flexible enough to deal with all kinds of conditions, it is not necessarily recommended or preferred by Islam. Taking the example of the Prophet Muhammad is instructive. He was married to one woman, Khadijah, for twenty-five years. It was only after her death when he had reached the age of fifty that he entered into other marriages to promote friendships, create alliances or to be an example of some lesson to the community; also to show the Muslims how to treat their spouses under different conditions of life. The Prophet was given inspiration from Allah about how to deal with multiple marriages and the difficulties encountered therein. It is not an easy matter for a man to handle two wives, two families, and two households and still be

just between the two. No man of reasonable intelligence would enter into this situation without a great deal of thought and very compelling reasons (other than sexual).

The bottom line in the marriage relationship is good morality and happiness, creating a just and cohesive society where the needs of men and women are well taken care of. The present Western society, which permits free sex between consenting adults, has given rise to an abundance of irresponsible sexual relationships, an abundance of "fatherless" children, many unmarried teenage mothers; all becoming a burden on the country's welfare system. In part, such an undesirable welfare burden has given rise to bloated budget deficits, which even an economically powerful country like the United States cannot accommodate. As some Muslims have observed, this bloated budget deficits have become a political football, which is affecting the political system of the United States. In short, artificially created monogamy has become a factor in ruining the family structure, and the social, economic and political systems of countries. Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad directed Muslims to get married or observe patience until one gets married. Islam wants people to be married and to develop a good family structure. Also Islam realizes the requirements of the society and the individual in special circumstances where polygamy can be the solution to problems. Therefore, it has allowed polygamy, limiting the number of wives to four, but does not require or even recommend polygamy. This is Islam's way of dealing with situations where there are statistically more women than men, or situations where women live longer than men.

In conclusion, Muslims perceive that the Western male is not only very polygamous, but also that he gets away with absconding responsibility for the families he should be responsible for. Muslims likewise perceive that majority of Westerners

<sup>48</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A Biography of the Prophet* (Harper Collins Paperback, 1993), 191.

think of polygamy in the context of a harem of glamorous young girls, not as a possible solution to some of the problems of Western society itself. According to the Qur'anic message, however, marital problems and discord need to be tackled by proper consultation and conciliation – involving the spouses and their families. According to some Muslim thinkers, the Qur'an does not subscribe polygamy for any other reason than what is in verses 4:2-3: Give unto orphans their wealth, exchange not the good for the bad (in your management thereof) nor absorb their wealth. Lo! That would be a great sin. And if ye fear that ye will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry of the women who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if ye fear that ye cannot do justice (to so many) then one (only) or (the captives) that your right hand possess. Thus it is more likely that ye will not do injustice. From these verses, Muslims emphasise that the Qur'anic position is that – unless one is able to treat his wives with just equality – one must not consider taking more than one wife. In practice, this condition is most difficult to fulfil and so it must be understood that the general recommendation is towards monogamy.

#### Modernity and Modernism: Major Characteristics

Modernity has been characterized by the attempt to build a universally valid explanation of existence from the basis of human reason alone, an intellectually satisfying theory that encompasses everything. It proposes a verifiable view of reality that is not historically contingent, culturally loaded or socially prejudiced, but acceptable to every right-minded thinker. It is a grand scheme to bring unity to human discourse and community out of the conflict of sectarian interpretations. It adheres to W.K. Clifford's<sup>49</sup> famous aphorism: “it is wrong always, everywhere and for

<sup>49</sup> W.K. Clifford, *Lectures and Essays* (London: MacMillan, 1879), 185.

everyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence” where evidence means experimental data that is intrinsically open to being falsified.

The experience of modernity encompasses myriad cognitive and social transformations. Among social transformations one may enumerate the emergence and institutionalization of market-driven industrial economies, bureaucratically administered states, modes of popular government, rule of law, mass media, and increased mobility, literacy, urbanization, etc. The moral question is at the heart of the matter. The fundamental question is not how we justify our beliefs or how we know that we can rely on our perceptions, memory or the witness of others, but how we justify our actions. To know *what* is right to do is more important than either knowing *how* the world works or *which* beliefs seem the most valid to hold.

“The main alternatives in contention within the modern period have been *ethical intuitionism, (Kantian) rationalism, utilitarian empiricism* and *non-cognitivism (expressivism)*.”<sup>50</sup> Each of these perceptions attempts to give both an account of moral notions and reasons for acting in particular ways. However, given an explicit rejection of any idea that goodness and truth are given realities within the human horizon, each of these positions builds its theory from an assumption of human autonomy and from within human experience rationally or empirically mediated.

Fazlur Rahman, a notable Muslim academic, stated the Muslim position precisely: Islam needs some first-class minds that can interpret the old in terms of the new as regards substance and turn the new into the service of the old as regards ideals.<sup>51</sup> One deep element of modernism has been alienation, either of the individual

<sup>50</sup>J. Andrew Kirk, “Following Modernism and Postmodernism” (Italics are his). Culled from [http://www.missionstudies.org/6publ/Mission Studies Articles/modernity and postmodernity.htm](http://www.missionstudies.org/6publ/Mission%20Studies%20Articles/modernity%20and%20postmodernity.htm). Accessed on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982), 139.

from self, or from society, or from the “natural” basis of existence. For this reason there have been repeated “anti-modern” or “counter-modern” movements, which seek to emphasize holism, connection and spirituality as being remedies or antidotes to modernism. Such movements see Modernism as reductionist, and therefore subject to the failure to see systematic and emergent effects.<sup>52</sup>

### ***Islam and the West in a Transmodern World***<sup>53</sup>

Muslim societies everywhere are caught in a pincer movement: they are being squeezed, on the one hand, by forces of modernity and postmodernism, and on the other, by an emergent traditionalism that often takes a militant form. In the late forties and fifties, when most Muslim countries obtained their independence, modernization - or more specifically development along Western patterns - was seen as an answer for all social and economic ills. Indeed, many Muslim countries whole-heartedly embarked on a rapid course of modernization.

However, the strategies for modernization were, on the whole, out of step with traditional societies they were attempting to change. Thus, rifts often develop between those who back modernization (Westernization) and those who are concerned about preserving traditional culture, lifestyle and outlook of the Muslim society. On the one hand, the traditionalists see modernization and the associated policies of development’ as an onslaught on their history, life-style and worldview. On the other hand, modernists see Westernization as the primary means of survival for Muslim

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<sup>52</sup>“Modernism.” Retrieved on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2005, from *Wikipedia*, the free electronic net-based encyclopedia. Available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/modernism>.

<sup>53</sup>Adapted from Ziauddin Sardar, “Islam and the West in a Transmodern World” available in <http://www.islamonline.net/english/contemporary/2002/05/article20.shtml>. Retrieved on 20th March, 2005. The intention here is to obtain an emic perspective from a Muslim scholar. Ziauddin Sardar is Professor of Postcolonial Studies, London cultural critic, Muslim scholar, author of many books, and editor of *Futures: The Journal of Planning, Policy, and Futures Studies*. His newest book is *Ziauddin Sardar's A-Z of Postmodern Life* (Visions Publications, Feb 2002). He is based in London.

countries. Furthermore, modernity is loosing ground both in the West and the non-West. Postmodernism and its accompanying globalization are being projected as the new theory of salvation. Traditionalists are reacting against postmodernism just as vehemently, if not more so, as they did against modernity.

Modernist leaders who took over from the departing colonial powers maintained their hold on Muslim societies with excessive use of force and by ruthlessly persecuting the traditional leadership and abusing and ridiculing traditional thought and everything associated with it. The economic and development policies they pursued often ended in spectacular failure and accumulated national wealth in fewer and fewer hands. Moreover, Postmodernism has further marginalized tradition and traditional cultures creating a siege mentality in historic communities.

These factors have contributed to the emergence, throughout the Muslim world, of a new form of militant traditionalism. To a very large extent, all Muslims are ‘fundamentalist’ in that they believe the Qur’an to be the literal Word of God. But the fundamentalism of militant traditionalism is of a special variety in that it insists on a single interpretation of Islam which can only be manifested in terms of an ‘Islamic state’. In this framework, the integrated, holistic and God-centered worldview of Islam is transformed into a totalitarian, theocratic world order and a persuasive moral God is replaced by a coercive, political one.

The Muslim world thus finds itself caught between an intense struggle between the combined forces of an aggressively secular modernity and a relativistic postmodernism pitted against an equally aggressive traditionalism. This struggle is quite evident in countries like Pakistan, Egypt and the Sudan. But it is also present in states which are not currently attracting media attention: Afghanistan, Iraq, Indonesia,

Saudi Arabia, etc. These forces are pulling Muslim societies in two different directions and are thus threatening them with fragmentation.

Modernity sees traditional societies as backward, 'living in the past'. The essential principles of tradition are seen as the cause of 'backwardness', just as it is in their nature to be incapable of change. Therefore the tradition of Muslim societies is a major hurdle towards development and 'modernization.' Classic texts of development argue that tradition must be abandoned, indeed suppressed where necessary, if 'backward' societies of the Muslim World are to develop and 'catch up with the West'. And, in the name of development and progress, traditional cultures have been uprooted, displaced, suppressed and annihilated. Postmodernism likewise considers tradition to be dangerous. It is often associated with 'essentialism,' harking back to some puritan notion of good society that may or may not have existed in history.

It is important to appreciate that traditional communities do not see tradition in this way. They do not view tradition as something fixed in history. They see it as a dynamic aspect. In consequence, they reinvent and "innovate" tradition constantly. Indeed, a tradition that does not change ceases to be a tradition. Nevertheless, traditions change in a specific way. They change within their own parameters, at their own speed, and towards their chosen direction. There is good reason for this. If traditions were to vacate the space they occupy, they would cease to be meaningful. When tradition is cherished and celebrated, the entire content of what is lauded can be changed. Such change is then meaningful because it is integrated and enveloped by the continuing sense of identity that tradition provides. Furthermore change can be an evaluated process, a sifting of good, better, best as well as under no circumstances, an adaptation that operates according to the values the veneration of tradition has maintained intact. Thus, Sardar maintains, non-Western traditional communities do

not think of tradition as something that will take them to pre-modern times. On the contrary, he suggests, tradition will take them forward – with their identity intact – to a Transmodern future.

This researcher regards it as significant, that Ziauddin Sardar, a noteworthy Muslim academic, lays singular blame not on the Muslim camp, but on the West, when she says, "the West must accept certain responsibility for this state of affairs." This attitude, pervasive among contemporary Muslims in Sudan, needs illumine the minds and hearts of missionaries when they serve in this context.

What would be a transmodernism future? To appreciate what is at issue here, it is necessary to distinguish between postmodernism and transmodernism. Even though the term "postmodernism" is frequently used in literature and conversation, some confusion exists concerning the meaning of the term. The question is, "What is 'post' about postmodernism?" Scholars are divided regarding a full and satisfactory definition of 'postmodernism.' This is due, in part, to the fact that ideas and concepts associated with 'postmodernism' are often complex and multi-faceted in nature. Some associate postmodernism with obscure writers who are really talking about nothing at all. Others associate postmodernism with false assertions that there is no objective truth or meaning, that we are free to create our own truth as long as we understand that it's nothing more than an illusion. Although a difficult term to pin down, "postmodern" generally refers to the criticism of absolute truths or identities and "grand narratives." Perhaps the best way to think about postmodernism is to look at modernism, because postmodernism is generally characterized as either emerging from, or in reaction to it. Postmodernism has had large implications in philosophy, art, critical theory, architecture, literature, history, culture and media. The adjective 'postmodern' can refer to aspects of either postmodernism or postmodernity.

Postmodernism, therefore, is what comes after modernity; it is post in terms of time; it is a natural conclusion of modernity. This is why it is sometimes described as 'the logic of late capitalism'. It represents a linear trajectory that starts with colonialism, continues with modernity and ends with postmodernity, or postmodernism. It is not surprising then, that postmodernism and tradition are like two fuming bulls in a ring that are inimically antagonistic to each other.

Postmodernism states that all big ideas that have shaped our society, like religion, reason, science, tradition, history, morality, marxism, do not stand up to philosophical scrutiny. There is no such thing as truth. Anything that claims to provide us with absolute truth is a sham. It must be abandoned.

Moreover, postmodernism suggests that there is no ultimate reality. We see what we want to see, what our position in time and place allows us to see, what our cultural and historic perceptions focus on. Instead of reality, what we have is an ocean of images; a world where all distinction between image and material reality has been lost. Postmodernism posits the world as a video game: persuaded by the allure of the spectacle, in which all become "characters in the global video game, zapping our way from here to there, fighting wars in cyberspace. We float on an endless sea of images and stories that shape our perception and our individual reality."

In contrast, transmodernism goes beyond modernity; it transcends modernity in that it takes us through modernity into another state of being. Unlike postmodernism, transmodernism is not a linear projection; it is best understood from the viewpoint of the chaos theory, that complex systems have the ability to create order out of chaos. Transmodernism is the transfer of modernity from the edge of chaos into a new order of society. As such, transmodernism and tradition are not two

opposing worldviews but a new synthesis of both. Traditional societies use their ability to change and become transmodern while remaining the same.

Both sides of the equation are important here: change has to be made and accommodated; but the fundamental tenets of tradition, the source of its identity and sacredness, remain the same. So we may define a transmodern future as a synthesis between life enhancing tradition - that is amenable to change and transition - and a new form of modernity that respects the values and lifestyles of traditional cultures. It is in this sense that traditional communities are not pre-modern but transmodern. Given that vast majority of the Muslim world consists of traditional communities that see their tradition as a life-enhancing force, the vast majority of Muslims worldwide are thus more transmodern than pre-modern.

Most politicians, bureaucrats and decision-makers do not appreciate this point. The reason for this that when traditions change, the change is often invisible to the outsiders. Therefore, observers can go on maintaining their modern or postmodern distaste for tradition irrespective of the counter evidence before their very eyes. The contemporary world does provide opportunity for tradition to go on being what tradition has always been, an adaptive force. The problem is that no amount of adaptation, however much it strengthens traditional societies, actually frees them from the yoke of being marginal, misunderstood and misrepresented. It does nothing to dethrone the concept 'tradition' as an *Idée fixe*<sup>54</sup> of Western society.

The West has always seen Islam through the lens of modernity and concluded that it is a negative, closed system. Nothing could be further from the truth. Islam is a dynamic, open system with a very large common ground with the West. But to appreciate this, Islam has to be seen from the perspective of transmodernism and

<sup>54</sup> *Idée fixe* is a term that refers to a recurring theme that appears in many movements of the same composition. Origin: French, a fixed idea; an obsession.

understood with its own concepts and categories. Consensual politics and modalities for adjusting to change are there at the very heart of Islam. Fundamental concepts and values of Islam which shape the goals of a Muslim society help to illustrate this.

These concepts generate the basic values of an Islamic culture and form a parameter within which an ideal Islamic society develops and progresses. The concepts include such notions as *tawheed* (unity), *khilafah* (trusteeship), *ijtihad* (sustained reasoning), *ijma* (consensus), *shura* (consultation) and *istislah* (public interest).

The concept of *Tawheed* is translated as unity of God. It becomes an all-embracing value when this unity is asserted in the unity of humanity, unity of man and nature, and the unity of knowledge and values. From *Tawheed* emerges the concept of *Khilafah*: that people are not independent of God but are responsible and accountable to God for all their thoughts and actions. The trusteeship implies that people have no exclusive right to anything and that they are responsible for maintaining and preserving the integrity of the abode of their terrestrial journey. *Khilafa* also makes political leaders accountable not just to God but also to other trustees – the community as a whole. Political change in state and society is brought about by the use of *Ijtihad* which has been used throughout Muslim history to adjust to change, innovate tradition and introduce progressive ideas in the community. And the community has to be consulted on the basis of the notion of *Shura* and its consensus – *Ijma* – is needed to give legitimacy to change and innovation. At all times, change has to reflect public interest – *Istislah*. Given such a matrix of fundamental concepts and values, Sardar asserts, it is difficult to perceive Islam as a closed system or a negative, backward looking worldview.

Sardar contends: The brutal force with which modernity was introduced in the Muslim world, and the savage way in which tradition was suppressed, has meant that

Muslim societies have not been able to practice these fundamental values of Islam. Muslims perennially desire to go forward to the practice of these values and take a quantum leap from instrumental modernity to enlightened transmodernism. Such fundamental concepts of Islam as *Ijtihad* (sustained reasoning), *Ijma* (consensus) and *Shura* (consultation) have to be used to develop contemporary models of governance and social change that are based on needs and aspirations of ordinary Muslims. A transmodern framework for discussion would enhance the possibility of positive change and usher democracy, consensual and accountable politics, and enlightened modes of governance in the Muslim world.

A transmodern framework sees the Muslim world beyond the straight jackets of governments. Why? Sardar suggests: Most Muslim countries are governed by ultra modernists or ultra traditionalists – neither of whom have any understanding of transmodernism. One needs to go beyond decision makers and involve ordinary people – scholars, writers, activists, academics, journalists – in this dialogue. One will discover that “most people have a critical but positive attitude towards the West; and women will be as willing, if not more so, to participate in such discussions and the transformations they may initiate, as men. Particularly, if the West shifts towards transmodernism, involvement of the public will open up massive new possibilities for positive change and fruitful synthesis. However, this does mean that European analysis of Islam must rise above such one-dimensional thesis as the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ or ‘the end of history’. Transmodernism is not about conflict, or a false sense of aggrandizement, but about symbiosis between Islam and the West. Its aim must be to replace homogenizing globalization with what Anwar Ibrahim has called “global convivencia” – that is, a more harmonious and enriching experience of living together.

### *Dealing with the Modern World: Suggestions by Islamists*

Yusuf Al-Khabbaz offers this suggestion: “One way to deal with that is to exterminate diversity; the other way is to live with it...it is safe to say that most people are against extermination as an option for dealing with diversity. That leaves co-existence... to find common interests, across cultures, and create an identity that is first and foremost human.”<sup>55</sup> Then he adds:

This sounds strange, but one does not have to look far today to find many examples of utterly inhuman behavior, on battlefields, in corporate boardrooms, and in many other situations. So perhaps it can be useful to concentrate first on a common sense of humanity, which at any rate seems more pronounced in recent years with the rise of globalist thinking, but also to reflect on how people are in some sense even losing their humanity through addictions to various forms of technology and bureaucracy. In other words, without human survival, cultural survival becomes meaningless. This may not be easy to comprehend, but the key to cultural survival today, beyond putting on shows and programs, or setting up clubs to “protect” specific identities, is to find our common humanity and then go into the Islamic tradition and interrogate that tradition for what it has to offer this common sense of humanity.<sup>56</sup>

This paper will seek to describe how contemporary Ja'aliyin families are encountering modernism. It will seek to understand Ja'aliyin efforts towards holism and spirituality. But first, we examine some views from contemporary Sudanese academics.

### *The Islamic Resurgence in Sudan*<sup>57</sup>

The only country outside of Iran in which an Islamist movement came to power was Sudan. The Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood<sup>58</sup> had been organized in the

<sup>55</sup>Yusuf Al-Khabbaz, “Islam, Culture and Identity: Towards an Understanding of Culture.” Available in <http://www.muslimmedia.com/archives/features03/undsculture.htm>, retrieved on May 3, 2006. Yusuf Al-Khabbaz discusses modern and traditional Islamic ways of understanding culture, with particular reference to the challenges facing Muslims in today’s global, multicultural and West-dominated society.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>John O. Voll, “Islam.” *In Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion* Robert Wuthnow, ed. 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1998), 383-393.

early 1950s and had participated actively in the politics of the parliamentary periods in 1956-1958 and 1964-1969 but had never had much electoral success. As an active political party in the third era of multiparty politics (1985-1989), the Brotherhood, reorganized as the National Islamic Front, was an important but minority force, winning about 20 percent of the votes.

The military coup in 1989 was led by islamically oriented officers who soon became closely identified with the front and its leader, Hassan al-Turabi. Turabi had an international reputation as an imaginative advocate of renewal and rethinking the foundations of Islamic law. He helped the regime establish a system of elective consultative councils and application of Islamic law, but the suppression of minorities and opposition in a brutal civil war raised doubts about the long-term Islamic significance of the Sudanese experience.

Sudanese thinker Mahmoud Muhammad Taha presented a dramatic reinterpretation of the Islamic experience, distinguishing between the general principles presented in the revelations, which are universally applicable, and the specific rules that in his view were meant to be applied only in particular circumstances. After his execution for apostasy by Jafar Numayri in 1985, a growing number of Muslims have been influenced by at least some aspects of his thought.

### Modernity and the Muslim Family: The Encounter

Many Muslims believe that they must choose between Islam and modernity, or Islam and democracy...this is a false choice. When faced with this decision, most Muslims would choose Islam and reject anything that they regarded as alien or contrary to the principles of

<sup>58</sup>The Muslim Brotherhood was an organization founded in Egypt in 1928 by a school teacher called Hasan al-Banna'. His program, which has been in essence the program of all Islamic revivalists after him, was to banish foreign domination and establish an Islamic order based on observance of the Shariah and the establishment of Islamic social justice. This was to be accomplished, if necessary, by force, and since his day-he died in 1949-groups claiming his mantle have become increasingly violent in their opposition to what they see as godless government.

their faith. For this reason there is a crisis in the Muslim world today. There is no way out of this predicament without renewing the concept of *ijtihad* and using the process to develop modern interpretations of Islamic principles compatible with both the word of God and the situations, ideas, and values that have emerged over the past several centuries... the principles of interpretation are well established and the need for contemporary interpretation is compelling... New interpretations of the texts are particularly important in relation to the status of women, relations between Sunnis and Shiites, relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, the role of Muslims in non-Muslim societies, and Islamic economic theories.<sup>59</sup>

In today's modern life, values have turned upside down. Family life, an aspect that has always been the very heart of society, is attacked just as much as many other handed-down traditions. For instance, in the last half of the twentieth century, modernizing forces have increasingly impacted upon Muslim communities in Africa. Islamic organizations opposed to the increasing secularism and Westernization of Muslim societies adopted methods of education and mission to transform and Islamize societies. These 'encounters' with modernization have been multidimensional, and consist of a diverse set of experiences.

This research paper will explore three dimensions through which Muslims families have interacted with modernity: 1) their encounter with non-Muslim (mostly Western) factors; 2) their encounter with culture-specific local factors in contemporary times; and 3) their encounter with teachings of Islam as a faith. It is vital to find out how non-Muslim factors might be changing the manner with which family life is being perceived. It is crucial to understand the role played by local, culture-specific factors. And, it is important to know what the Islamic faith proposes.

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<sup>59</sup>David Smock, *Ijtihad: Reinterpreting Islamic Principles for the Twenty-first Century* (Washington, United States Institute of Peace Special Report 125 August 2004), p 1, 3. On March 19, 2004, the United States Institute of Peace and the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy cosponsored the workshop entitled *Ijtihad: Reinterpreting Islamic Principles for the Twenty-first Century*." The discussion focused on how the sacred texts of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* could be reinterpreted to take account of contemporary realities and to promote greater peace, justice, and progress within the Muslim world and in its relations with the non-Muslim world. The report of ensuing panel discussions was written by David Smock.

Understandably, Islam has remained a vital force and retained its significance because of its capacity to be reinterpreted in a variety of ways according to the local conditions.

To begin with, we ask: How do Muslim people perceive this encounter? Muslim scholars are not sitting idly as modernity impacts upon contemporary Muslim family life. They are concerned about this encounter, and they are responding in various ways. Websites hosted by Islamic organizations are key channels through which present-day Muslim thinkers react to the challenge of modernity on the Muslim family. They are eager to provide answers from an Islamic perspective. This inquiry will scan through many Internet sources to glean what contemporary scholars suggest. For instance, A.D. Ajijola minces no words when he observes: "In the name of liberty and freedom the so-called civilized world has destroyed family values. The concept of Family in Islam is used to designate a special kind of structure, whose principles are related to one another through blood ties or marital relationship and whose relatedness, is of such a nature as to entail 'mutual expectations' that are prescribed by Islam law, and internalized by the individual Muslim Practice."<sup>60</sup>

*Islamonline*, a premier website for Muslim/Islamic affairs, gives us an insider's rationale: "The contemporary Western world...accords tremendous significance to these topics. However...the evolution of some newer norms and concepts in the international legal field has been such that, in respect of crucial details, there is a visible tendency to have the rights of the family give up some of their historical and inherent hierarchal position and status to specific and newly developed 'rules' in the broader field of human rights."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>A.D. Ajijola, *The Concept of Family in Islam*. <http://kitabbhavan.com/book>. Retrieved on 1 September 2005.

<sup>61</sup>"Family Ties in Islam." Anonymous writers, in <http://www.islamonline>.

The Muslim *Ummah*, according to some Muslims, has no territorial conflict with the West. Rather, “it seeks its inherent right to develop individual and social life in accordance with its own set of religious doctrine, culture and history where family is central to real target for bringing change. But, this change is presented as a threat to the West.”<sup>62</sup> Some Muslim scholars even suggest that it is time for *Jihad*:

*Jihad* is a struggle against all forces attacking Islam from within and without. Whether these attacks are being waged in order to ridicule Islam, to weaken its traditions and customs or to undermine its political power they have to be taken most seriously because they are out to destroy the very roots of our heritage. A family, where this spirit is constantly kept alert, will be the best guarantee for a sound Islamic society because it enables all family members to assume their vicegerency consciously. And this is one of the most important purposes of family life.<sup>63</sup>

This discussion by Muslim insiders proceeds in the background of an acute crisis of international proportions regarding the message and place of contemporary Islam. According to them, it is of no consequence whether or not one agrees with the thesis advocated initially in modern times by Samuel Huntington. From their perspective, it cannot be ignored that—from political avocations to the cultural and religious practices and beliefs—Muslims have come under severe criticism in the popular Western press. As such, the “clash” that Huntington spoke of has arisen, realistically speaking, from the imperceptible to the visible.<sup>64</sup> “Huntington was regrettably realistic in projecting a thesis of a clash of civilizations in the 21st century. This conviction has been strengthened by Pope John Paul’s recent affirmation of this doctrine in his recent address to a multi-congregational audience in Assisi on January 22, 2002, when he said, particularly to the Muslims, that he feared what he saw was

<sup>62</sup>Culled on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005, from an article by Prof. Khurshid Ahmad, “Muslim Ummah at the Threshold of 21st. Century” in <http://www.jamaat.org/world/twentyfirst.html>

<sup>63</sup>“Family Life in Islam”, in <http://www.jamaat.org/islam/FamilyCradle.html>

<sup>64</sup>“Family Ties in Islam.” Anonymous writers, in <http://www.islamonline>

an ongoing, even increasing crescendo of clashes, involving the Western civilizations and that of the Islamic peoples.”<sup>65</sup>

In the face of such an onslaught, many Islamic leaders have plainly become afraid, and few have openly defended anything that Muslims believe in or do. It is indeed “fashionable” for some nations/leaders to appear to be “modernistic” in outlook in all that affects the statecraft of such nations. In this context, in a Hegelian sense of historical perspective, recent political events towards a “secularized” Islamic World have been seen. Present-day examples include UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Afghanistan and Iran. According to some strategic thinking of contemporary international affairs this is “outlook” is “desirable.”

However, for some Muslims, it is clear that humanitarian postulates and dogmas of Islam are heavily grounded on principles of high morality. Any dilution in their ethos, therefore, would be a devastating blow to the religious practices of its millions of adherents. It would be a blow to other peoples and nations that direly need such ethical mores to keep afloat their own cultural value systems. The main point of concern here regards an international milieu rapidly losing such values in the wake of contemporary “progress.”

The greatest threats to the institution of the family come from contemporary “liberal” philosophies of the predominantly advanced Western civilizations. The problem that we are thus faced with is simple. Some of the “changes” that are currently advocated by a sizable segment of liberal-based ideologues are such that they aim to denude the very foundations and *grundnorms* of the institution of the family so as to adversely affect its well being and character. These challenges emanate from principally two sources, viz the liberal facets of contemporary thinking about human rights and perceivable trends at the United Nations while codifying newer evolutionary norms of this law. One sure way to combat such inherently derailing ideas for the coming generations is by reliance and adherence to the cherished values of our faith. Indeed, all religions that have survived through

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

man's history over several hundreds of years essentially stress this message.<sup>66</sup>

Clearly, there is an emphasis on the social aspect of Islam. It is as an aspect that is unquestionably important. Interestingly, Islamic faith has been both deeply cherished and misunderstood for its emphasis on enveloping the *entirety* of a person's life with its normative structure of rules of conduct and precepts. Among the major norms of such expected behavior are those that are devised to apply to the institution of the family. Simultaneously, the jurisprudence and moral philosophy of the faith also acutely focus on the larger matter pertaining to the subject of human rights.<sup>67</sup> As for "outsiders" interested in examining particular Muslim cultures, certain issues and questions assume significance.

First, we see that "Muslims are no longer a remote and exotic people living in Africa and Asia, but people who are very connected with what is happening in Washington and London."<sup>68</sup> Consequently, profound social transformation is taking place in the Muslim world. Yet "contemporary Islamic thought is still out of touch with contemporary Islamic realities. It does not sufficiently face the major challenges of the Muslim world."<sup>69</sup>

Second, we need to ask: What does it mean to be a Muslim family in today's world? Can Muslim families be modern and Muslim at the same time? Can Muslim family units who live in the modern world be devoutly Muslim? Should Muslims accept the institutions and ideas of the modern world? A key question for missionaries

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, (italics his)

<sup>67</sup> "Family Life in Islam", in <http://www.jamaat.org/islam/FamilyCradle.html>, (Italics is the author's).

<sup>68</sup> Akbar Ahmed. As interviewed in *Encounter* by Margaret Coffey on Sunday 21/03/1999. Retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2005, from [www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/humanrelations/womeninislam/polygamy.html](http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/humanrelations/womeninislam/polygamy.html)

<sup>69</sup> Hassan Hanafi, *Islam in the Modern World: Vol. 1, Religion, Ideology and Development* (Heliopolis: Dar Kebaa Bookshop, 2000), 539.

is: How can Christians plant churches among Muslim families? As a necessary point of departure, "we must reevaluate our own attitudes toward Muslim society and the relationship of the gospel to the Muslim family."<sup>70</sup> This preparedness will ensure relevance and effectiveness of the gospel to Muslim societies. This inquiry hopes to contribute to missionary preparedness in the Muslim world.

#### The Muslim Family and Church Planting: A Christian-Etic Perspective

The physical family first appears in Scripture as God's provision for human companionship and generation. The family perpetuates the human race and provides continuity; and through generations, it extends a person's physical life beyond his or her individual life span. It is the main social context within which people live their daily lives. Likewise, "The Bible begins with the biological family as the central social context of human life and as a chief means of God's communication with human beings. This social view of the family becomes extended into a spiritual and heavenly reality, with the community of God's people as a metaphoric family."<sup>71</sup> Indeed, the Bible is a story about God's family from beginning to end. God made families in the first place partly as a biological and social basis for the human race and partly as the channel of his grace and judgment. God is also making for himself a family of sons and daughters who will serve him and praise him and reign with him in his kingdom forever (Rev 22:3-5). The family is central to the Bible's message.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Valerie Hoffman, "The Christian Approach to the Muslim Woman and Family." In *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry, (The World of Islam - electronic version. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.

<sup>71</sup> Leland Ryken,; Wilhoit, James C.; Longman III, Tremper, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, Electronic Version) 2000, c1998.

<sup>72</sup> Desmond Alexander, T. and Brian S. Rosner, editors, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, Electronic Version) 2000.

In an article in the July 1978 issue of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Dr. Terry Hulbert of the Columbia Graduate School of Bible and Missions wrote that “the home is a key factor in evangelism and church growth . . . Household evangelism has strong Biblical and strategic bonds with church growth principles. It involves two ideas: 1) The Christian home is a means of evangelizing the extended family and the community, and 2) the pagan family is the goal of evangelism.”<sup>73</sup> For example, Peter and Paul both preached to whole households at a time. Household evangelism respects the integrity of the home, moving with and not against the social unit created by God . . . in this practical way, household evangelism reveals Jesus Christ to a whole family in a way they would never have seen by passing a church building, or by a brief individual contact.<sup>74</sup> In the Muslim household, a respectful approach to the head is appropriate and potentially very productive. We note

Islamic society demands strict conformity of its members. The values of individualism and personal achievement matter little in contrast to the West; it is the thinking of the group, particularly the family, which matters most. Individual behavior is thus controlled by society, leaving little scope for independent action. So your Muslim friend may be unaccustomed to making the sort of individualistic decision associated with acceptance of the gospel. Become acquainted with family members and work through the dynamic of their relationships; doing so may prove critical to effective witness. Develop a sensitive approach to Muslim family or household evangelism, remembering that converted family units are essential to the formation and stability of the local church in Muslim society.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup>Terry Hulbert, “Families are both the means and goal of evangelism,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 14, 1978: 171-177.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid, 175, 176

<sup>75</sup>George W. Peters, “Saturation Evangelism: Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970). In William J. Saal, *Reaching Muslims for Christ: A Handbook for Christian Outreach among Muslims* (Chicago: Moody Press Edition, 1993 Electronic Version). An effort of Arab World Ministries, Inc. Peters raises important and provocative questions about the strategic importance of household evangelism in penetrating cultures with the good news. Although his focus is not exclusively on Muslim societies, the concerns he raises have direct application.

### *Why Witness to Muslims? 76*

- 1) Muslims are the object of God's love. In no way are Muslims under some special condemnation that places them beyond the reach of that love, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NIV).
- 2) The expanse and depth of Christ's love for Muslims must find its expression in us. This love is our compelling motivation in witness. “For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NIV).
- 3) Jesus Christ commands us to proclaim the gospel to everyone and in every place. Muslim resistance to the message does not relieve us of this responsibility. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8 NIV). For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18 NIV).
- 4) In Christ, God has provided everything necessary for the Muslim's salvation; apart from Him Muslims are without hope. “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile (Romans 1:16); Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12 NIV).
- 5) Islam promotes a false conception of God and of the gospel, robbing Christ of His rightful position and providing a false sense of security through self-righteousness. “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4 NIV).
- 6) God desires to save Muslims, enter into a relationship with them, and give them eternal life. “This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3 NIV).
- 7) Muslims can become a new creation through the transforming power of Christ. “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:16-17 NIV)

<sup>76</sup>Adopted from William J. Saal, *Reaching Muslims for Christ: A Handbook for Christian Outreach among Muslims* (Chicago: Moody Press Edition, 1993 Electronic Version).

### *Building Passable Bridges*

Kenneth Cragg, in *Call of the Minaret*, makes a plea for a serious attempt to “re-interpret” the Gospel in terms that can be understood by Muslims. He writes:

If Christ is what Christ is, he must be uttered. If Islam is what Islam is, that “must” is irresistible. Wherever there is misconception, witness must penetrate, wherever there is obscuring of the beauty of the Cross, it must be unveiled; wherever men have missed God in Christ, he must be brought to them again ... We must present Christ, for the sole sufficient reason that he deserves to be presented.<sup>77</sup>

Clearly, Islam is not simply a religious system. It is a political, social, economic, educational, and judicial system. It is a religion and a world. We need, therefore, to gently and carefully probe the scope of that world as it touches Muslim family units. We need to ask the question: How might we become an effective witness to our Muslim friends and neighbors? What specific issues have created a barrier to our Muslim friend’s awareness of Christianity and the good news? How might we begin now to address those issues? How can missionaries develop opportunities to communicate the gospel to our Muslim friends?

We need to discover and be careful to note: 1) how, for some, secularism or materialism may exercise greater influence over their behavior than Islam, 2) when others may retain Islam only for the social and cultural identity it provides, and 3) when others are devout in faith and practice.<sup>78</sup> We need to make an attempt to build a bridge of understanding and communication between Christianity and Islam. Ordinary Christians need to know how to behave towards Muslim families, and how to witness about Christ among them.

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<sup>77</sup>Kenneth Cragg, *Call of the Minaret* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1956), 334-335.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

### *Christian Witness and the Concept of Family*

The family of believers (Gal 6:10), or the family of God (1 Pet 4:17), becomes a familiar picture in NT teaching. As Christ’s followers developed into the early Christian church, they saw themselves, Jew and Gentile, as members of God’s household – the extended family of God – through Christ’s reconciling death on the cross (Eph 2:19). The writers of the epistles refer to their fellow believers as brothers and sisters in the Lord more than a hundred times. They are not simply using a decorative or emotionally compelling image. The physical family is not a concrete picture of an abstract idea; rather, it is one step toward an even greater reality. These writers are addressing fellow members of an eternally real spiritual family, whose origin is the ultimate reality, God. It is the seed and blood of Christ that unifies these family members.

In our missiological quest to connect Muslim families with the spiritual family of Christ, we need to identify and utilize some opportunities within Islam itself. We note the following. First, family honor and solidarity are major values in most Muslim societies, whether the traditional patriarchal type is adhered to or not. All that the individual does reflects back on the way the family is regarded. The family as a whole is responsible for the actions of any individual. Members of the family are bound together by strong ties of mutual obligations and responsibilities. This interdependence represents both security and a lack of individualistic expression. The following illustration of the Muslim concept of family suggests the significant relationship between the basic family unit, religious and political authority. If our Christian witness is to be effective in any way, this relationship is noteworthy. It provides insights into the roles of faith and politics, and how this realms influence family values.

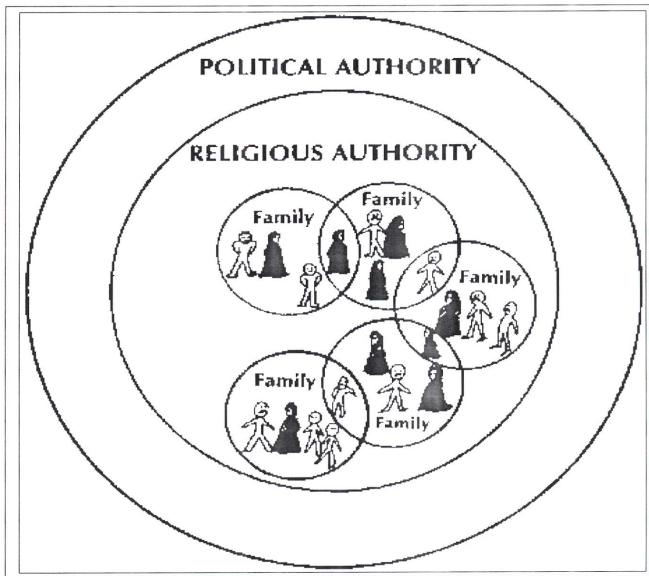


Figure 3: The Muslim Concept of family indicating the relationship between political and religious authority.

### Regarding the Role of Women

C. R. Marsh<sup>79</sup> wrote that there are three things which characterize most Muslim women: first, a background of fear... fear of being beaten, of evil spirits, of divorce, of the authority of her mother-in-law, of gossip leading to loss of honor; second, they are dominated by men or by a single man; third, whatever the outward veneer due to Western influence, there is always an underlying superstitious awe of the unseen spirit world, a respect for the religious leaders of Islam, and usually a deeply ingrained fear of God. Ethnographic studies have proved this analysis to be close to the truth. The woman, particularly the wife and mother, represent the family in its aspects as a moral corporation through her reputation for modesty. The family is the focus of security, and the woman of traditional segments of society prefers to stay within the familiar surroundings of neighborhood, friends and relations. What is the

<sup>79</sup>C. R. Marsh, *Share Your Faith With a Muslim* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1975) 69-70.

ideal woman in Muslim society? Elizabeth W. Fernea makes the following remarkable observation, and we need to see how close it is to the Biblical ideal.

Though the town and the country are worlds apart, a good woman is the same in both spheres: her reputation for fidelity is above reproach, she is hard-working, a devoted wife and mother, a good cook and housekeeper, and a quiet, obedient companion to her husband. Women did influence, but without coercion, without publicity, and above all without reproach.<sup>80</sup>

### Reaching Muslim Families: A Proposal

How can we reach Muslim families? Valerie Hoffman<sup>81</sup> presents a four-fold proposal to be implemented in the Muslim world:

- 1) That we respect the code of modesty and sexual segregation in classes and countries where this prevails.
- 2) That in addition to worship services for both sexes, women's activities in their homes are important, that women may feel at ease to participate and express themselves freely.
- 3) That we recognize and respect the authority of men who are heads of households, and attempt to witness to entire families at once.
- 4) That we attempt to find out what women are recognized as religious or community leaders, and work through them.
- 5) Are there any limitations to the implementation of this plan in the Muslim world? Are there restrictions to applying this in a sex-segregated society? How much of an impact are Christian families able to make on the Muslim world? Christian answers and alternatives must be presented in the Muslim world. This paper aims to make a contribution here.

<sup>80</sup>Elizabeth W. Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc) 65.

<sup>81</sup>Valerie Hoffman, "The Christian Approach to the Muslim Woman and Family." In *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, edited by Don M. McCurry, (The World of Islam - electronic version. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979).

### CHAPTER 3

#### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents activities involved in the process of collecting data on the encounter between modernity and Ja'aliyin Muslim families in Khartoum. The general concept was researched through a review of relevant literature in the previous chapter. At proposal level, the researcher anticipated a combined approach: ethnographic interview and participant observation. For security reasons, ethnographic interviews were avoided, though not totally discarded. For this reason, the main thrust to data collection was observation. Literature relating to ethnographic interview is hereby retained for futuristic reference, while the envisioned questionnaire has been included as an appendix. We note the following:

Ethnography (from the Greek *ethnos* = nation and *graphein* = writing) refers to the description of human social phenomena, based on fieldwork. Ethnography is a holistic research method founded in the idea that a system's properties cannot necessarily be accurately understood independently of each other. The genre has both formal and historical connections to travel writing and colonial office reports. Several academic traditions, in particular the constructivist and relativist paradigms, claim ethnography as a valid research method.<sup>82</sup>

Two interrelated objectives characterize ethnographic research. First, the need to examine some of the numerous practical and conceptual problems involved in field research and secondly, the need to demonstrate specific data gathering techniques. In order to explain the art of qualitative educational research: critiques, literature reviews, research design methodologies, sampling strategies, participant-observation,

<sup>82</sup> "Ethnography" Culled on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2005 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnography>. The author is not mentioned in this electronic encyclopedia article.

questionnaire formulation, interviewing techniques, and report writing, this researcher utilized Michael Genzuk's compendium, "A Synthesis of Ethnographic Research" for its simplicity, clarity, and relevance to the study.

#### A Synthesis of Ethnographic Research<sup>83</sup>

Michael Genzuk suggests that when used as a method, ethnography typically refers to fieldwork (alternatively, participant-observation) conducted by a single investigator who lives with and lives like those who are studied, usually for a year or more. Ethnography is a branch of anthropology that deals with the description of individual human societies. It is a written description of a particular culture – the customs, beliefs, and behavior – which is based on information collected through fieldwork. Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture. The description may be of a small tribal group in an exotic land or a classroom in middle-class suburbia.

Ethnography is a social science research method. It relies heavily on up-close, personal experience and possible participation, not just observation. The ethnographic focal point may include intensive language and culture learning, intensive study of a single field or domain, and a blend of historical, observational, and interview

<sup>83</sup> Adopted from Michael Genzuk, "A Synthesis of Ethnographic Research" retrieved on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2005 from [www.rcf.usc.edu/~genzuk/Ethnographic\\_Research.pdf](http://www.rcf.usc.edu/~genzuk/Ethnographic_Research.pdf). (emphasis mine). In this carefully written document, Genzuk cites academic work from the following volumes: (1) M. Agar, *Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*, 2nd ed. (Academic Press, 1996), (2) David M. Fetterman, *Ethnography*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), (3) M. Hammersley, *Reading Ethnographic Research: A Critical Guide* (London: Longman, 1990), (4) M. Harris & Johnson, O, *Cultural Anthropology*, 5th ed (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon 2000), (5) A. R. Krueger, *Focus Groups: A Practical guide for Applied Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), (6) L.C. Moll, &, J.M. Greenberg, "Creating Zones of Possibilities: Combining Social Constructs for Instruction" In L.C. Moll (ed.) *Vygotsky and Education: Instructional Implications and Applications of Sociohistorical Psychology*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990), (7) M.Q. Patton, *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation* (Newberry Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987), (8) J. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), (9) J. Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), (10) J. Van Maanen, "Ethnography." In: A. Kuper and J. Kuper (eds.) *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., pages 263-265 (London: Routledge, 1996), and (11) R.K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Newberry Park, CA: Sage Publications 1989).

methods. Typical ethnographic research employs three kinds of data collection: *interviews*, *observation*, and *documents*. This in turn produces three kinds of data: quotations, descriptions, and excerpts of documents, and the result in one product: narrative description. This narrative often includes charts, diagrams and additional artifacts that help to tell the story. Ethnographic methods can give shape to new constructs or paradigms, and new variables, for further empirical testing in the field or through traditional, quantitative social science methods.

Ethnography has its roots planted in the fields of anthropology and sociology. Present-day practitioners conduct ethnographies in organizations and communities of all kinds. Ethnographers study schooling, public health, rural and urban development, consumers and consumer goods, any human arena. While particularly suited to exploratory research, ethnography draws on a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, moving from “learning” to “testing” (Agar, 1996) while research problems, perspectives, and theories emerge and shift.

Ethnographic methods are a means of tapping local points of view, households and community funds of knowledge, a means of identifying significant categories of human experience up close and personal. Ethnography enhances and widens top down views and enriches the inquiry process, taps both bottom-up insights and perspectives of powerful policy-makers “at the top”, and generates new analytic insights by engaging in interactive exploration of often subtle arenas of human difference and similarity. Through such findings ethnographers may inform others of their findings with an attempt to derive, for example, policy decisions or instructional innovations from such an analysis.

#### ***Variations in Observational Methods***

Observational research is not a single thing. The decision to employ field

methods in gathering informational data is only the first step in a decision process that involves a large number of options and possibilities. Making the choice to employ field methods involves a commitment to get close to the subject being observed in its natural setting, to be factual and descriptive in reporting what is observed, and to find out the points of view of participants in the domain observed. Once these fundamental commitments have been made, it is necessary to make additional decisions about which particular observational approaches are appropriate for the research situation at hand.

#### ***Variations in Observer Involvement: Participant or Onlooker?***

The first and most fundamental distinction among observational strategies concerns the extent to which the observer is also a participant in the program activities being studied. This is not really a simple choice between participation and nonparticipation. The extent of participation is a continuum which varies from complete immersion in the program as full participant to complete separation from the activities observed, taking on a role as spectator; there is a great deal of variation along the continuum between these two extremes.

**Participant Observation:** is an omnibus field strategy in that it simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection. In participant observation, the researcher shares as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the people in the observed setting. The purpose of such participation is to develop an *insider's view* of what is happening. This means that the researcher not only sees what is happening, but also “feels” what it is like to be part of the group. Experiencing an environment as an insider is what necessitates the participant part of participant observation. At the same time, however, there is clearly an observer side to this

process. The challenge is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the experience as an insider while describing the experience for *outsiders*.

The extent to which it is possible for a researcher to become a full participant in an experience will depend partly on the nature of the setting being observed. For example, in human service and education programs that serve children, it is not possible for the researcher to become a student and therefore experience the setting as a child; it may be possible, however, for the research observer to participate as a volunteer, parent, or staff person in such a setting and thereby develop the perspective of an insider in one of these adult roles.

It should be said, though, that many ethnographers do not believe that understanding requires that they become full members of the group(s) being studied. Indeed, many believe that this must not occur if a valid and useful account is to be produced. Researchers believe the ethnographer must try to be both outsider and insider, staying on the margins of the group both socially and intellectually. This is because what is required is both an outside and an inside view. For this reason it is sometimes emphasized that, besides seeking to “understand”, the ethnographer must also try to see familiar settings as “anthropologically strange”, as they would be seen by someone from another society, adopting what might be referred to as the “Martian” perspective.

### ***Methodological Principles***

Three methodological principles are discussed here. They are used to provide the rationale or the specific features of the ethnographic method. They are also the basis for much of the criticism of quantitative research for failing to capture the true nature of human social behavior; because it relies on the study of artificial settings

and/or on what people say rather than what they do; because it seeks to reduce meanings to what is observable; and because it reifies social phenomena by treating them as more clearly defined and static than they are, and as mechanical products of social and psychological factors. Genzuk summarizes three principles: naturalism, understanding and discovery. We note the following:

**Naturalism:** This is the view that the aim of social research is to capture the character of naturally occurring human behavior, and that this can only be achieved by first-hand contact with it, not by inferences from what people do in artificial settings like experiments or from what they say in interviews about what they do elsewhere. This is the reason that ethnographers carry out their research in “natural” settings, settings that exist independently of the research process, rather than in those set up specifically for the purposes of research. Another important implication of naturalism is that in studying natural settings the researcher should seek to minimize her or his effects on the behavior of the people being studied. The aim of this is to increase the chances that what is discovered in the setting will be *generalizable* to other similar settings that have not been researched. Finally, the notion of Naturalism implies that social events and processes must be explained in terms of their relationship to the *context* in which they occur.

**Understanding:** Central here is the argument that human actions differ from the behavior of physical objects, and even from that of other animals: they do not consist simply of fixed responses or even of learned responses to stimuli, but involve interpretation of stimuli and the construction of responses. Sometimes this argument reflects a complete rejection of the concept of causality as inapplicable to the social world, and an insistence on the freely constructed character of human actions and institutions. Others argue that causal relations are to be found in the social world, but

that they differ from the "mechanical" causality typical of physical phenomena. From this point of view, if we are to be able to explain human actions effectively we must gain an understanding of the cultural perspectives on which they are based. That this is necessary is obvious when we are studying a society that is alien to us, since we shall find much of what we see and hear puzzling.

However, ethnographers argue that it is just as important when we are studying more familiar settings. Indeed, when a setting is familiar the danger of misunderstanding is especially great. It is argued that we cannot assume that we already know others' perspectives, even in our own society, because particular groups and individuals develop distinctive worldviews. This is especially true in large complex societies. Ethnic, occupational, and small informal groups (even individual families or school classes) develop distinctive ways of orienting to the world that may need to be understood if their behavior is to be explained. Ethnographers argue, then, that it is necessary to learn the culture of the group one is studying before one can produce valid explanations for the behavior of its members. This is the reason for the centrality of participant observation and unstructured interviewing to ethnographic method.

**Discovery:** Another feature of ethnographic thinking is a conception of the research process as inductive or discovery-based; rather than as being limited to the testing of explicit hypotheses. It is argued that if one approaches a phenomenon with a set of hypotheses one may fail to discover the true nature of that phenomenon, being blinded by the assumptions built into the hypotheses. Rather, they have a general interest in some types of social phenomena and/or in some theoretical issue or practical problem. The focus of the research is narrowed and sharpened, and perhaps even changed substantially, as it proceeds. Similarly, and in parallel, theoretical ideas

that frame descriptions and explanations of what is observed are developed over the course of the research. Such ideas are regarded as a valuable outcome of, not a precondition for, research.

### *Ethnography as Method*

In terms of method, generally speaking, the term "ethnography" refers to social research that has most of the following features.

- 1) People's behavior is studied in everyday contexts, rather than under experimental conditions created by the researcher.
- 2) Data are gathered from a range of sources, but observation and/or relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones.
- 3) The approach to data collection is unstructured in the sense that it does not involve following through a detailed plan set up at the beginning; nor are the categories used for interpreting what people say and do pre-given or fixed. This does not mean that the research is unsystematic; simply that initially the data are collected in as raw a form, and on as wide a front, as feasible.
- 4) The focus is usually a single setting or group, of relatively small scale. In life history research the focus may even be a single individual.
- 5) The analysis of the data involves interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions and mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most. As a set of methods, ethnography is not far removed from the sort of approach that we all use in everyday life to make sense of our surroundings. It is less specialized and less technically sophisticated than approaches like the experiment or the social survey; though all social research methods have their historical origins in the ways in which human beings gain information about their world in everyday life.

### *Summary Guidelines for Fieldwork*

It is difficult, if not impossible, to provide a precise set of rules and procedures for conducting fieldwork. What you do depends on the situation, the purpose of the study, and the nature of the setting, and the skills, interests, needs, and point of view of the observer. Following are some generic guidelines for conducting fieldwork:

- 1) Be descriptive in taking field notes.
- 2) Gather a variety of information from different perspectives.

- 3) Cross-validate and triangulate by gathering different kinds of data. Example: observations, interviews, program documentation, recordings, and photographs.
- 4) Use quotations; represent program participants in their own terms. Capture participants' views of their own experiences in their own words.
- 5) Select key informants wisely and use them carefully. Draw on the wisdom of their informed perspectives, but keep in mind that their perspectives are limited.
- 6) Be aware of and sensitive to the different stages of fieldwork.
  - a) Build trust and rapport at the entry stage. Remember that the researcher/observer is also being observed and evaluated.
  - b) Stay alert and disciplined during the more routine middle-phase of fieldwork.
  - c) Focus on pulling together a useful synthesis as fieldwork draws to a close. Be disciplined and conscientious in taking detailed field notes at all stages of fieldwork.
  - d) Be as involved as possible in experiencing the observed setting as fully as possible while maintaining an analytical perspective grounded in the purpose of the fieldwork: to conduct research. Clearly separate description from interpretation and judgment.
  - e) Provide formative feedback as part of the verification process of fieldwork. Time that feedback carefully. Observe its impact.
  - f) Include in your field notes and observations reports of your own experiences, thoughts, and feelings. These are also field data.

Fieldwork is a highly personal experience. The meshing of fieldwork procedures with individual capabilities and situational variation is what makes fieldwork a highly personal experience. The validity and meaningfulness of the results obtained depend directly on the observer's skill, discipline, and perspective. This is both the strength and weakness of observational methods.

### ***Summary Guidelines for Interviewing***

There is no one right way of interviewing, no single correct format that is appropriate for all situations, and no single way of wording questions that will always work. The particular evaluation situation, the needs of the interviewee, and the personal style of the interviewer all come together to create a unique situation for each

interview. Therein lie the challenges of depth interviewing: situational responsiveness and sensitivity to get the best data possible. There is no recipe for effective interviewing, but there are some useful guidelines that can be considered. These guidelines are summarized below.

- 1) Establish personal rapport and a sense of mutual interest.
- 2) Throughout all phases of interviewing, from planning through data collection to analysis, keep centered on the purpose of the research endeavor. Let that purpose guide the interviewing process.
- 3) The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms.
- 4) Understand the strengths and weaknesses of different types of interviews: the informal conversational interview; the interview guide approach; and the standardized open-ended interview.
- 5) Select the type of interview (or combination of types) that is most appropriate to the purposes of the research effort.
- 6) Understand the different kinds of information one can collect through interviews: behavioral data; opinions; feelings; knowledge; sensory data; and background info.
- 7) Think about and plan how these different kinds of questions can be most appropriately sequenced for each interview topic, including past, present, and future questions.
- 8) Ask truly open-ended questions.
- 9) Ask clear questions, using understandable and appropriate language.
- 10) Ask one question at a time.
- 11) Use probes and follow-up questions to solicit depth and detail.
- 12) Communicate clearly what information is desired, why that information is important, and let the interviewee know how the interview is progressing.
- 13) Listen attentively and respond appropriately to let the person know he or she is being heard.
- 14) Avoid leading questions.
- 15) Understand the difference between a depth interview and an interrogation. Qualitative evaluators conduct depth interviews; police investigators and tax auditors conduct interrogations.

- 16) Maintain neutrality toward the specific content of responses. You are there to collect information not to make judgments about that person.
- 17) Observe while interviewing. Be aware of and sensitive to how the person is affected by and responds to different questions.
- 18) Maintain control of the interview.
- 19) Tape-record whenever possible to capture full and exact quotations for analysis and reporting.
- 20) Take notes to capture and highlight major points as the interview progresses.
- 21) As soon as possible after the interview check the recording for malfunctions; review notes for clarity; elaborate where necessary; and record observations.
- 22) Take whatever steps are appropriate and necessary to gather valid and reliable information.
- 23) Treat the person being interviewed with respect. Keep in mind that it is a privilege and responsibility to peer into another person's experience.
- 24) Practice interviewing. Develop your skills.
- 25) Enjoy interviewing. Take the time along the way to stop and "hear" the roses.

### ***Site Documents***

In addition to participant observation and interviews, ethnographers may also make use of various documents in answering guiding questions. When available, these documents can add additional insight or information to projects. Because ethnographic attention has been and continues to be focused on both literate and non-literate peoples, not all research projects will have site documents available. It is also possible that even research among a literate group will not have relevant site documents to consider; this could vary depending on the focus of the research. Thinking carefully about your participants and how they function and asking questions of your informants helps to decide what kinds of documents might be available. Possible documents include: budgets, advertisements, work descriptions, annual reports, memos, school records, correspondence, informational brochures, teaching materials, newsletters, websites, recruitment or orientation packets,

contracts, records of court proceedings, posters, minutes of meetings, menus, and many other kinds of written items.

For example, an ethnographer studying how limited-English proficient elementary school students learn to acquire English in a classroom setting might want to collect such things as the state or school mandated Bilingual/ESL curriculum for students in the school(s) where he or she does research, and examples of student work. Local school budget allocations to language minority education, specific teachers' lesson plans, and copies of age-appropriate ESL textbooks could also be relevant. It might also be useful to try finding subgroups of professional educators' organizations that focus on teaching elementary school language arts and join them, attend their meetings, or get copies of their newsletters.

All of these things could greatly enrich the participant observation and the interviews that an ethnographer does. Privacy or copyright issues may apply to the documents gathered, so it is important to inquire about this. If one is given permission to include what one learns from these documents in the final paper, documents should be cited appropriately and included in the bibliography. If not given permission, they should not use them in any way.

### ***Ethics in Ethnographic Research***

Since ethnographic research takes place among real human beings, there are a number of special ethical concerns to be aware of before beginning. In a nutshell, researchers must make their research goals clear to the members of the community where they undertake their research and gain the informed consent of their consultants to the research beforehand. It is also important to learn whether the group would prefer to be named in the written report of the research or given a pseudonym and to offer the results of the research if informants would like to read it. Most of all,

researchers must be sure that the research does not harm or exploit those among whom the research is done.

### ***Analyzing, Interpreting and Reporting Findings***

We should remember that the researcher is the detective looking for trends and patterns that occur across the various groups or within individuals (Krueger, 1994). The process of analysis and interpretation involve disciplined examination, creative insight, and careful attention to the purposes of the research study. Analysis and interpretation are conceptually separate processes. The analysis process begins with assembling the raw materials and getting an overview or total picture of the entire process. The researcher's role in analysis covers a continuum with assembly of raw data on one extreme and interpretative comment on the other. Analysis is the process of bringing order to the data, organizing what is there into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units.

The analysis process involves consideration of words, tone, context, non-verbals, internal consistency, frequency, extensiveness, intensity, specificity of responses and big ideas. Data reduction strategies are essential in the analysis. Interpretation involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns, and looking for relationships and linkages among descriptive dimensions. Once these processes have been completed the researcher must report his or her interpretations and conclusions.

### ***Qualitative Description***

Reports based on qualitative methods will include a great deal of pure description of the program and/or the experiences of people in the research environment. The purpose of this description is to let the reader know what happened in the environment under observation, what it was like from the participants' point of

view to be in the setting, and what particular events or activities in the setting were like. In reading through field notes and interviews the researcher begins to look for those parts of the data that will be polished for presentation as pure description in the research report. What is included by way of description will depend on what questions the researcher is attempting to answer. Often an entire activity will be reported in detail and depth because it represents a typical experience. These descriptions are written in narrative form to provide a holistic picture of what has happened in the reported activity or event.

### ***Reporting Findings***

The actual content and format of a qualitative report will depend on the information needs of primary stakeholders and the purpose of the research. Even a comprehensive report will have to omit a great deal of the data collected by the researcher. Focus is essential. Analysts who try to include everything risk losing their readers in the sheer volume of the presentation. As Genzuck points out, this process has been referred by some as "the agony of omitting." The agony of omitting on the part of the researcher is matched only by the readers' agony in having to read those things that were not omitted, but should have been.

### ***Balance between Description and Analysis***

In considering what to omit, a decision has to be made about how much description to include. Detailed description and in-depth quotations are the essential qualities of qualitative accounts. Sufficient description and direct quotations should be included to allow readers to understand fully the research setting and the thoughts of the people represented in the narrative. Description should stop short, however, of becoming trivial and mundane. The reader does not have to know absolutely everything that was done or said. Again the problem of focus arises.

Description is balanced by analysis and interpretation. Endless description becomes its own muddle. The purpose of analysis is to organize the description in a way that makes it manageable. Description is balanced by analysis and leads into interpretation. An interesting and readable final account provides sufficient description to allow the reader to understand the analysis; a sufficient analysis allows the reader to understand the interpretations and explanations presented.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

In this chapter, research data is analyzed, and research findings are documented. The chapter begins by locating the cultural identity of the Ja'aliyin, and notes how their families in Khartoum are experiencing modernity and change. To help us “measure” types of responses by contemporary Muslims, the researcher utilized Voll's four Islamic insightful models of how change is experienced: 1) *Conservatism* - conservative interpretation of Islam, 2) *Adaptationism* – integrating Islamic ideas with Western techniques, 3) *Fundamentalism* – militant reaction to Western expansion, revivalism against imperialism and 4) *Individualism* – neither conservatist, adaptationist, nor fundamentalist. These broad models, though regarded as “contentious categories” by some Muslim people, are used towards an understanding of the manner with which the Ja'aliyin people are encountering modernity as an urban-oriented predominantly Muslim people-group.

#### Findings of the Research

We established earlier that the Ja'aliyin regard themselves as Arabs. Since they are likewise exhibit African cultural traits, the question needs to be asked: Who, then, is an Arab? In her book, *Islamic Society in Practice*, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban treats two related matters: 1) who is an Arab? and 2) Islamic tolerance of Christianity and Judaism.<sup>84</sup> Acknowledging that Arab culture and the Arabic language have played

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<sup>84</sup>Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, *Islamic Society in Practice*. Pg 84, 91, and 93.

major roles in the shaping of the religion of Islam and the cultural identity that it conveys, the anthropologist's definition of it has turned out to be socio political. Following many others, she associates the Arab in modern time with the political movement of Arab nationalism, articulated by many nationalist leaders in anti colonial activism throughout the Middle East and given international recognition and regional meaning by Gamal Abdel Nasser. So the best definition of an Arab, she writes, is someone who thinks of himself or herself as an Arab. This person speaks Arabic as the first language, but may be Christian or Muslim and may or may not claim descent in the long genealogy of the Arabs and their historical relationship with Islam.

#### Identity of the Ja'aliyin

Is the claim among the Ja'aliyin regarding direct descent from the founder of Islam true? Why is it that in the past, within the area where the Ja'aliyin come from, there was a marked Islamic tolerance of Christianity and Judaism? The issue regarding Sudan's black Arab identity factors has been a source of controversy over the years, especially when they claim descent in the male line from Arabs of Muhammad's time. What is more, the apparent difficulty in defining the term "Arab" is something that Modern Arab intellectuals are well aware of. Technically most Sudanese are not literally Arabs except in speech, a factor that further complicates matters of originality and identity.

In the Sudanese context, clearly, Arabs are not a distinct ethnic group, since there are both white Arabs and black Arabs. The primary criterion here appears to be language, coupled with the acceptance of Arab-Islamic culture. Roland Werner, an authority in Nubian Church history and co-author of *Day of Devastation, Day of*

*Contentment*<sup>85</sup>, helped shed more light on this issue of significance. The discussion that follows partly comes from personal conversations with him (Khartoum, January to February 2007), and from comments from his numerous writings or from his research assistant. The Ja'aliyin, Werner emphasizes, are Arabized and Islamized Nubians.

The term "Nubia" carries with it various shades of meaning to various people. For some, it has come to be virtually synonymous with blackness and Africa. To ethnographers and linguists, it refers to a specific region straddling southern Egypt and northern Sudan, where black-skinned Nubians have traditionally lived. To archaeologists in the 1990s it is an ever-widening area of the Middle Nile Valley and surrounding deserts that extends approximately from Aswan in Egypt south to modern Khartoum, Sudan, and beyond. Werner further explains: *Nubia* is the name given to the stretch of land along the Nile River starting from Aswan in the north all the way down to the confluence of the Blue and the White Nile, near modern Khartoum. The Arabic rendering *al-bilaad an-Nuubah* has sometimes given rise to a misunderstanding in which *Nubia* proper, which lies along the Nile, is confused with the Nuba Mountains in Kordofan. *Nubia* therefore is the land in the Nile valley between the first and the sixth cataract. In the period between the fifth and the fourteenth century was the homeland to the Nubian people, who organized themselves

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<sup>85</sup> Authored by three prominent scholars and veritable friends of Africa, Roland Werner, William B. Anderson and Andrew C. Wheeler, *Day of Devastation, Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church Across 2000 Years* is a whopping 688-page documentation. It is the first and doubtlessly the most comprehensive ecumenical history of Sudan. It is one book all shades of the Christian faith in the vast nation can identify with without any qualms. It describes the various stages of the Christian evolution in Sudan spanning a 2000-year period. Maps and pictures are generously used throughout the book to help readers have a better and lasting grasp of the content. "Reading this book," says Francis Deng (one of the most eminent Sudanese scholars) in his foreword, "reveals both the historical forces that have divided Sudan and commonalities of experience that could be a potential source of unification. Sudanese from both the north and the south will find in this book that Christianity has deep roots throughout the country and that it is as much a legacy of the history of the country as Islam, with an even greater claim to deeper roots." Some of this material is obtained from his pre-publication manuscript which Roland graciously shared with this researcher.

first into three and then into two kingdoms. But we can say that the influence of the Nubian Christian kingdoms was not confined to the Nile valley, but extended even farther south, and well into Western and Eastern Sudan, encompassing at certain times part of the Nuba Mountains and Darfur and bordering on the Christian kingdom of Axum (Abyssinia) in the south-east.

In ancient times the name that was given to this country along the Nile was *Kush*, a name that is also found in the Bible. One often reads about the Kushites, the inhabitants of this region. *Kush* or in another vocalization, *Kash*, was the Old Egyptian name for the country immediately south of Egypt, the country we now call the Sudan. In the Bible it occurs in various places. Here are some examples: In Isaiah 18, 1.2.7. We find a prophecy concerning the country of Kush (in English Bibles sometimes spelled *Cush*) with a clear description of the Nile confluence and the people that lived there at his time. This kingdom of *Kush* later developed into what is known as the Meroitic empire<sup>86</sup>, which existed roughly between 700 B.C. and 300 A.D. Characteristic of this kingdom with its capitals at Napata (near Jebel Barkal, close to present-day Karima) and later Meroe (some miles north-east of Khartoum) was its unique blend of indigenous African and Egyptian elements. Many archaeological remains from Meroitic times such as temples and pyramids are still visible in Sudan today.

One thing seems clear so far: most people do not realize that ancient Nubia was the site of highly advanced black African civilizations that rivaled ancient Egypt in wealth, power and cultural development. In fact, Nubian kings ruled over Egypt as pharaohs for nearly 100 years. Rulers of Nubia established their capital at Meroë (near

<sup>86</sup>Werner suggests that the Biblical "Ethiopian Eunuch," came from Meroe. He explains that the Meroitic Queen-Mother, known as *Katoki* or *Kandake*, is mentioned in a number of inscriptions and seems to have occupied a place of pre-eminence in the kingdom. After the Romans conquered Egypt, the Meroitic kingdoms had contact with them.

Shendi in Sudan) around 300 B.C., and the kingdom lasted there for more than nine centuries. Sudanese Arabs are, practically, just Islamic Nubians. However, for years, after Arab invasion and the forceful and sometimes willful conversion to Islam, these people see themselves as Afro-Arabs. In this case, one needs to understand that Arab culture is similar to that in the U.S with regard to the one drop rule, only in reverse. This is to say that, if one has one drop of Arab blood, then they are considered to be Arab. Following is an account of Ja'aliyin identity, as perceived by Ja'aliyin themselves.

#### ***Identity of Ja'aliyin: An Insider's Account***<sup>87</sup>

The existence of the Ja'aliyin goes back to the arrival of the Arab Muslims to Sudan after the Treaty (Pact) between the kings of the Nubian kingdom, and the Muslim governors of Egypt. This treaty opened the way to the immigration of Arab nomad tribes; some of them, including the Ja'aliyin, lived beside the Nile in the north. They mixed heavily with the Nubians. In the process, the Nubians became Muslims and the Arabs gained the Nubian culture. Arab groups appeared, and the Ja'aliyin is one of those groups. They now live as a tribe in the area extended from Damir to Jaily, and as families or branches of families in Jazeera, the White and Blue Nile. They are also spread as families strongly tied together, in most of the Sudanese cities. Also, they are one of the pioneering groups of people who work as merchants in the modern times in southern Sudan. Some maps have been provided to show the geographic areas under discussion.

Some of the major towns of the Ja'aliyin are Matama , Damir , Shandi, Halfaiat Almolook, Shabasha in the White Nile; Fadasi, Hasahisa, and Masalmia in

<sup>87</sup> This historical account was pieced together in March 2007, out of actual explanations from Ja'aliyin people in present-day Khartoum. Hatim Babiker, my research assistant, transcribed the original words in Arabic, and Majid helped translate it into the English language. As much as possible, these words are recorded the way they were stated.

Blue Nile. The Ja'aliyin contributed, as a tribe and as individuals, in spreading the faith of Islam especially through Khalwas (Damir) or the Kaderia Sufi order (Kadabas). Also the branch of the Ja'aliyin known as the Abdalab played a major role in ending the Christian kingdoms and the building of Sinar kingdom and its capital Halfaiat Almoolok and Garri. After Muhammad Ali invaded Sudan by the leadership of his son Ishmael Basha, he faced strong opposition from the Ja'aliyin. This opposition reached its peak in the assignation of Ishmael Basha by the Ja'aliyin hands, because they felt humiliated because of his arrogance and pride, and a leadership that did not give them any special privileges. According to Haitham<sup>88</sup>, one of the many Ja'aliyin merchants based in Khartoum central business district, the person reputed to have brought down Basha was McNimir – a Ja'aliyin himself. The Ja'aliyin see themselves as 1) descendants of the prophet's uncle Al Abaas, and 2) the most courageous and generous knights of all Arabs. The Ja'aliyin are divided to branches and they keep acknowledged genealogies. They have been influenced by the historical development, so they joined the schools that came from the Western civilization, and an educated group of them appeared. The most famous of them is Professor Abdallah Altaib who got married to a British lady, although the most common thing is that they intermarry inside the tribe itself. But it is not uncommon to see the educated amongst them getting married to foreign ladies, like the Europeans or Egyptians. Actually it is rare to find the educated Ja'aliyin getting married to women from other Muslim tribes

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<sup>88</sup>Haitham, in a conversation, told me that he is of mixed parentage. His father is Ja'aliyin, but his mother is comes from another tribe called the Shaygia. He runs a computer sales and services business in Suug Al Arabi – the city center. According to him, the children born out of such a marriage automatically become Ja'aliyin. He acknowledged that most Ja'aliyin are reluctant to marry from other tribes; that his parentage is more of the exception than the rule. From other sources, this is a factor that is partly due to feelings of superiority. Interestingly, most of the contemporary Sudanese Arabs do not seem to like being associated with the Merowitic kingdom (Nubia). What seems clear, though, is that they are readily proud to be associated with anything that is both Arabized and Islamized.

since they see themselves to be of more honorable origins than the rest of the Sudanese tribes.

One of the modern changes among the Ja'aliyin is the heavy migrations to Egypt and the Arab gulf countries where they have earned lots of money. They control the commerce in most of the Sudanese cities, and they deserted to some extend pastoral and agricultural jobs. The most important thing is that the Ja'aliyin are one of the most influential people in modern Sudan. More specifically, they influence the culture of the center (Khartoum) because of their pivotal role in human activities. They are occupying leadership positions in both civil and military life because they were educated before the others.

Most of the Sudanese (non-Ja'aliyin) that this researcher interacted with perceive the Ja'aliyin as foolish, cruel, and unreasonable. For them, it seems self-evident that concentrated wealth and influence in the hands of the Ja'aliyin has not resulted in cultural superiority. Even so, the Ja'aliyin have started to be integrated into the modern civil life in spite of their continued effort to keep their unique culture. They are doing this by way of reviving associations of tribal connections and using them for their own purposes. After sufficiently locating who the cultural and historical roots of the Ja'aliyin people, we are now ready to document the significance of the family unit, its form and structure, and its encounter with modernity.

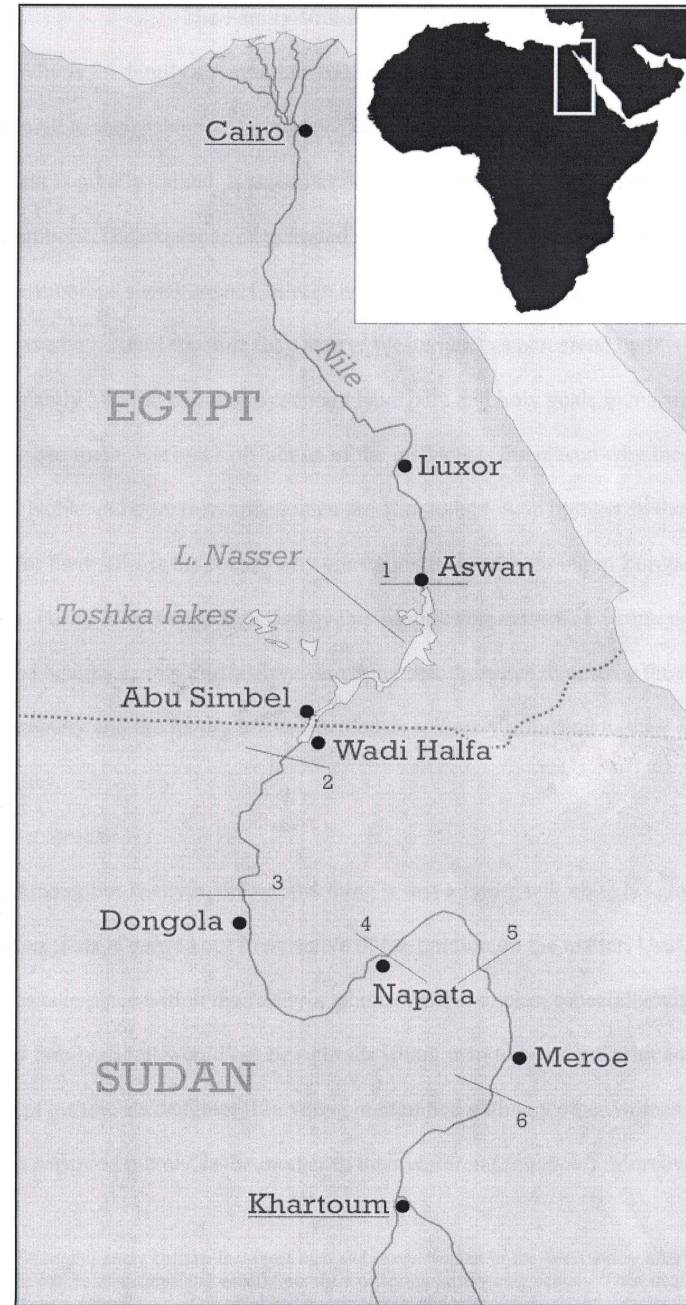
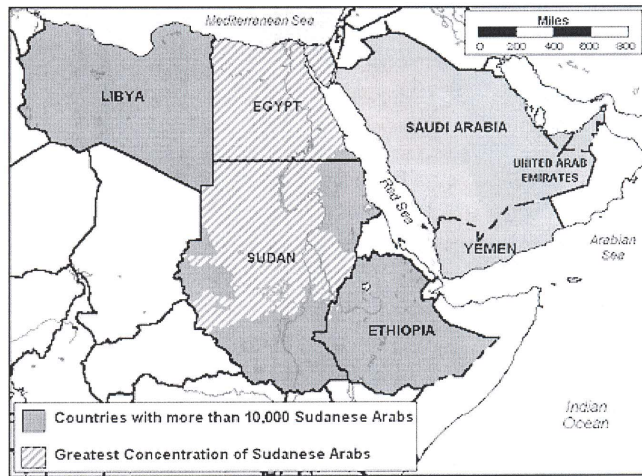


Figure 4. Concentration of Sudanese Arabs, in <http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php> Retrieved on September, 5<sup>th</sup> 2005

Figure 5. The Nubia Region Today. Source: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/e/ea/Nubia\\_today.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/e/ea/Nubia_today.png)

### The Family Unit and its Significance

Why is the family so important to the Ja'aliyin Muslims? The family unit is foundational to their Islamic community. The peace and security offered by a stable family unit is greatly valued. It is seen as an essential platform for the spiritual growth of its members. The existence of extended families among these people is desired to create harmonious social order. Children are treasured in their large numbers, and rarely leave home until the time they marry. Westerners, as perceived by this predominantly Muslim community, do not have pure and holy goals in marriage. According to them, lust and satisfaction of the instincts is the reason why they marry.<sup>89</sup> Noble and pure men and women are seen to be few in number in the Western world. For them, this is the reason why corruption is overwhelming in Europe and America. Purity in morals is regarded by this Islamic community as a cornerstone of a stable and healthy family and society. Anything that threatens to destroy the moral fiber of society and the family life is regarded as seriously offensive to their Islamic sensibilities.

#### *Finding a Spouse*

Among the Ja'aliyin, the normal thing is that a father will unite his girl to her uncle's son. This is carried out irrespective of her opinion on the matter. Usually marriages take place within the Ja'aliyin ethnic or tribal circles, especially within the extended family. So, it would not be right for young man to be united with any other girl except his uncle's daughter. If a young man united with any other woman, she would be regarded merely as the mother to their children (*Jahanom*). Moreover, if the

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<sup>89</sup>Additionally, many believe that most men and many women in the West marry after periods of unlawful sexual relationships and usually put their offspring in day care centers. Then they take them from the nursery school void of paternal and maternal love and pure emotions and they let them join in any type of corruption. They send them to the schools so that they apparently learn good behavior and become familiar with a few words. Then at the age of eighteen, they force them out of the home and leave them up to the environment and the society.

young woman happened to be barren, then she would be treated as though she were non-existent. That is to say, the social traditions will not recognize her. In time past, the Ja'aliyin mostly lived outside the cities and were easily distinguishable owing to their facial signs. Regardless of how well educated they might be, girls were not expected to choose their spouses. No matter how much confidence her family gave her, a woman could not summon enough courage to choose her own spouse.

After migrating to the center (Khartoum) and integrating with Westernization and modernity, certain flexibilities are taking place. For instance, the position and authority of the "fatherhood" among the Ja'aliyin has weakened slightly. Now, the young men have a right to choose spouses for themselves among their uncles' daughter. But, girls are not permitted to choose marriage partners for themselves. Even so, changes are being felt in Khartoum. The youth are pushing for greater freedom, they clamor for rights to choose marital partnerships for themselves. Having said this, it remains observable and true among the Ja'aliyin, that submission to traditional authority serves a greater significance than the respect of religion. However, their strong ties and respect of traditions is being gradually eroded through multi-ethnic and multi-cultural interactions happening in the city.

#### *Issues Regarding Dowry*

The Ja'aliyin concur with the Islamic saying, "little dowry is more blessing." In this community, the marital contract is not significantly affected by wealth. The young man's father or the girl's father may pay the expenditures incurred in the procedures. According to them, the significant aim is to be fruitful. This follows the perceived religious obligation to marry and have children, because Allah will be proud of them among the nations. For them, having children and being proud about it is an objective of marriage in its own right.

In contemporary times, however, contact with modernity and Western civilization has invalidated this simple approach to the marital contract. Several things are contributing to alter the current situation: 1) new forms relating to income generating capacities for both men and women, 2) the structure of authority in the family unit is disintegrating and becoming more disjointed, 3) the effects of rural-urban migration coupled with high living standards have driven the cost of marital obligations upwards, 4) competition among marriageable men and women has set in, and some people opt not to marry on account of huge expenses required, 4) due partly to some of the factors mentioned earlier, there is an increase on the number of people who are choosing to remain single.

#### ***Issues Regarding Engagement***

In the past, the Ja'aliyin conducted formal betrothal practices through the parents of those involved. The process was carried out while the boys and girls were still young. In the modern times in Khartoum, engagement parties are frequently held. But, the two intending to get married are the most significant people. Young women are engaged while they are still studying in the universities, or just immediately afterwards. The families they come from are scrutinized to see if they have a good standing in society materially. Families with enormous wealth, social and educational distinction are regarded “good” for suitors. Families whose members have achieved academic success and high positions are highly esteemed in the Ja'aliyin social circles. This situation persists in spite of: 1) modern trends impacting Khartoum from the Western world, and 2) religious fundamentalist ideology that has been spread in the more recent past.

#### ***Issues Regarding Arranged Marriages***

Many Ja'aliyin marriages are arranged even today. But, this does not mean that marriages are forced upon the young people involved. It means that parents and senior relatives often discuss various possibilities. Throughout the proceedings, they continue consulting with the persons involved. Over a period of time, it is hoped, both the weaknesses and strengths of possible partnerships may be clearly assessed. Following Islamic practice, both partners must clearly and before witnesses agree to be married; no one can be coerced into marriage. Since marriages take place within the Ja'aliyin tribal circles and extended family, it is difficult for husbands to be mean or cruel to their wives because husband and wife are related. Such behavior would cause adverse comment in the family and society. This is because the uncles and aunts of the wife would also be the uncles and aunts of the husband. Arranged marriages, it is believed by some, are perhaps one of the reasons why Muslim marriages are so stable, particularly in the light of the high statistics of divorce in the West.

Notwithstanding this sense of confidence, there are questions that some Muslims are asking themselves today: Are arranged marriages still viable within Westernizing families in today's Muslim cities? Is there a discernible trend evidenced by increased divorce cases within the urban areas of Muslim communities? Is a breakdown of the arranged marriage system imminent? These questions, in the observations of this researcher, are symptomatic of a community doing serious “soul-searching” as it encounters modernity. In this encounter, some traditional aspects are becoming more entrenched, clothed in garbs deemed congruent to a modernized and Islamic world. Others aspects are changing: some believe that a husband has absolute right to marry whomsoever he wants, both inside and outside the family, regardless of social and economic considerations.

### *Issues Regarding Marriage*

In Sudan, a valid marriage is contracted by two agents representing the bride and the groom. Usually the fathers of the marriage partners, the agents agree on a dower and on a payment schedule. They also sign the marriage contract before a registrar of marriages and divorces. The legal rights and responsibilities of the husband and wife begin after the signing of the contract, even though actual cohabitation and the consummation of the marriage may not begin for months<sup>90</sup>

Ja'aliyin Muslims consider it very important to be married. A single man or woman over thirty-five years old is considered a serious anomaly. For many, marriage is the basis of social life and the beginning of family life. Islam considers marriage to be a very sacred act and a step towards a better, purer and happier life.<sup>91</sup> According to Islamic law practiced in this community, a man may have up to four wives. Rules concerning marriage and divorce are held in accordance to what is written in the Qur'an. Regulations regarding inheritance, taxation, wartime, submission to those in authority, and the roles of family members can also be found there. Families consider as important ceremonies such as births, marriages, deaths, and even the first haircut and circumcision for boys.

However, the most elaborate of all ceremonies is the marriage ceremony. Wedding ceremonies among the Ja'aliyin in Khartoum are a model of luxury<sup>92</sup>. Elaborate banquets and festivities are held, and animals are sacrificed in honor of the occasion. These ceremonies aim at building coalitions in the civil communities. More and more, the phenomenon of "luxury betrothals" has been turned into professional events that take place in social clubs. Part of the ceremonies includes several sensuous

<sup>90</sup> Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, "Personal Status Law in Sudan," in *Everyday Life in the Middle East*. Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn Early, eds. Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 1993. Pg 111

<sup>91</sup> The Qur'an 4:2; 24:32-33; 30:21; 7:189

<sup>92</sup> Melody Mweu, this researcher's wife, has been invited to several of these ceremonies. They are, incidentally, out of bounds for males; the only male in attendance is the groom. She observed that in such events, what glitters IS actually gold.

dances from the bride, bedecked in gold, aimed at impressing both the groom and her future mother-in-law. Because the bride is not appropriately dressed (covered in accordance to Islamic tradition), men are not allowed to attend, except the groom. The taking of photographic images at the time the bride is dancing is likewise prohibited. The reason: it is not permissible for any other man, apart from her husband, to look at certain body parts.

### *Composition of the Family*

The Ja'aliyin people consider it a symbol of prestige to have large families with many children. A typical Ja'aliyin household hopes for many sons and also for many daughters to increase his number of sons-in-law. Children are considered to be a family's greatest asset, providing both workers and security for the parents as they grow older. Although boys and girls may be raised together when they are young, they are treated differently. Mothers show great affection towards the boys, pampering them and responding to their every wish. Girls are shown some affection, but are not pampered. The boys are taught by their fathers to obey and respect older males. Girls are taught the values of obedience to their future husbands. Teenagers are not permitted to have any contact with the opposite sex until after marriage.

### *The Extended Family System*

The extended family system is under threat as the Khartoum community gets more and more in contact with Westernization. As a result to rebellion towards traditional authority, families are assuming a more Western style structure. But, individuals are still required to take part in family events such as religious festivities, funerals and during the times when the family undergoes problems. The individual person is still required to place family duties above his own, and above his nuclear

family. Even in light of few cases that might be reflective of shifting marriage and family patterns, the idea of an extended family still predominates.

#### ***Authority and Decision-making in the Family***

Ja'aliyin men are the source of authority in the family. Following Islamic heritage, men are the primary decision-makers in the family. The man has complete authority over his wife (or wives) and children. This matter has not changed in spite of the modernizing trends influencing the Ja'aliyin in Khartoum. Tradition likewise gives men authority to make decisions. Moreover, men who are very wealthy are entrusted with weightier decisions-making. Women from wealthy families likewise tend to become influential in decision-making, both within their families and in the community. Likewise, women who work outside the home to provide livelihood have some authority partly transmitted to them as Western-style culture sets in.

Structurally, however, it is men who are the basis of authority. In the recent past, the center of decision-making is slowly shifting; it is not simply the wealthy men who are the seat of authority. More and more, the more educated or socially famous individuals such as lawyers, doctors, inspectors, and merchants tend to be entrusted with decision-making within the community.

#### ***The Status of Women***

In this community, womenfolk have traditionally tended to exist "separately" from men folk. The Ja'aliyin are notorious with regard to gender discrimination. Men are regarded more highly than women. For instance, professional women in Khartoum have yet to overcome issues that affect them, such as maternity matters. Still, women are working seriously to gain self-assertion and to overcome suffering brought about by gender discrimination. It is the feeling among some Ja'aliyin that the bringing up of well-balanced children is adversely affected because of this discrimination. This is

especially more evident on the girl-child, who is conditioned to realize that they are still women in spite of their possible successes. In addressing the changing family patterns in light of Shariah, Islamic law, Fluehr-Lobban<sup>93</sup>, observes the following:

The dramatic and most impressive change to be noted is what pertains to the status of women, especially their entry into the work force. Together with the family planning movement, this visible change is a by-product of the movement of female emancipation, which in turn was linked to the nationalist movements. However, the role of women has become controversial in that while the secular authorities conceive of women's education as career training, the religious authorities argue that the education of women enhances their natural role as mothers and educators. Nonetheless, much of traditional family structure still remains intact. However, if the current trends and the economic disparity in the region continues, rural migration to urban areas and expatriation from the poorer to the richer Arab countries will eventually destabilize family life. Because the pace of this alteration is slow, the impact has not been disruptive to date as compared to the Western experience.

#### ***Fertility and Contraception***

Fertility may be cause stability in the family. An infertile wife provides ready excuse or reason for her husband to find another wife or divorce her, unless she comes from a highly influential family background. In such a case, putting her away may become counterproductive. The Ja'aliyin tribe discourages limiting the number of offspring born to the family, citing religious reasons for this approach. Even so, those living in Khartoum have begun to change this position owing to economic reasons. Today's Ja'aliyin communities are attempting to clamor for gender equality. Fertility among women is not the overriding prerequisite to the marital contract.

#### ***Polygamy and Re-Marriage***

Can a Ja'aliyin Muslim man have more than one wife? Polygamous marriages are legal among the Ja'aliyin. For them, polygamy serves the purpose of solving many

<sup>93</sup>Ali Al-Taie, in a review of Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban's *Islamic Society in Practice*. Ali Al-Taie is a Coordinator and Adviser in the Department of Sociology at Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina. This material is copyrighted 1996 Association of Arab-American University Graduates and Institute of Arab Studies.

social and domestic problems that may confront the family. Islamic teachings, however, inform and regulate the practice of polygamy. Following Qur'anic instruction, the number of wives is limited to four. Polygamous men attempt to adhere to those specific responsibilities that Islamic tradition demands on them. Muhammad, their crowning example, is perceived to be both a lover and a provider for his wives.

Many Ja'aliyin Muslim men consider it a better idea to have legal wives rather than mistresses. The women are ready to share a husband where it is an established and publicly recognised practice, than when it is carried on secretly along with attempts to deceive the first wife. Generally, they believe that Islam was revealed for all societies, and all times. For them, Islam accommodates widely differing social requirements. For instance, wherever circumstances may warrant the taking of another wife, the right is granted in Islam. In accordance to their faith, a husband may marry up to four wives, provided he is scrupulously fair to each one of them.

Allah (God) is believed to have given men this license, on condition that it is not abused. Men are not encouraged to marry just for the sake of pleasure, but to give all women a chance to marry. The reasoning: at a certain point in time, men will be less in proportion to women. Also, polygamous marriages aim at giving bereaved women (whose husbands have died in war etc) the chance to marry and enjoy a secure peaceful life once more.

Among the Ja'aliyin, the idea of remarriage is still regarded as a mixed blessing. For them, especially viewed from Western "models", it amounts to marital separation. Also, remarriage and the blending of parts of former nuclear families after remarriage present new challenges to their definition of family structure. Such dynamic reshaping of traditional conceptions of the family unit appear, to them, as baffling or even as alarming evidence of breakdown and decay in the society. In the

past, it was very difficult for divorced women to remarry, especially when they had children. Later on, whenever a marriage collapses (*ghati El ghadah*), an educated woman of sound financial means may marry whomsoever she wants. This, however, may lead her to be cut off from some family relationships, and it may result in rejection from the influential Ja'aliyin communities.

#### ***Measures to Promote and Protect Morality***

In an Islamic state such as Sudan, adultery is strictly forbidden. It carries the maximum punishment available under the law. Fornication and homosexuality (rampant in Khartoum according to some), whether premarital or extramarital, are acts that are perceived to undermine stable family life. Wives may not tolerate cheating husbands or vice-versa. To protect and promote morality, Islam prohibits lustful gazes from either males or females towards each other. Anything that is deemed to stir passions that may ultimately lead towards temptation and the sin of adultery have been condemned and declared unlawful in Islam. This explains another measure aimed at promoting morality, the emphasis on covering parts of the body that evoke lustful feelings and emotions. This is encompassed in Islam's dress code. The Muslim woman has been ordered in Islam to cover the whole of her body except her hands and her face. This covering not only discourages undesirable attention towards her, but also accords her a degree of respect, honor and dignity. Some women consider this as being in charge of their body and experiencing a sense of power over themselves.

By strictly adhering to these protective measures, according to Muslims, the door to evil and vice could be effectively closed. Some Muslims offer this explanation: it as a case of removing the hay far away from the bonfire rather than trying to control the bonfire and hoping wishfully that the hay would somehow not

burn. This analogy, according to them, sums up the Islamic outlook on morality as compared to that of the West. For Ja'aliyin Muslims, only one way exists to reverse the rot in this world, and to restore the lost dignity to mankind – a return to the path of morality and modesty stipulated in Islam.

### ***Issues Regarding Divorce***

In the past, discordant and dysfunctional families were rampant since more people were forced into marital relationships without their consent. But, pleasing the social tradition was regarded more highly than personal desires. Divorce cases among married couples were limited because it was viewed as a complication towards those social relations within a family unit. Today, traditional authority still plays a key role; divorce cases rarely end up in court. However, life in the city is becoming more independent and individualistic. Even though many marital relationships may be collapsing, a sense of perpetual peacefulness is maintained outwardly even among couples going through divorce procedures. The sense of perpetual peacefulness is greatly challenged where Islamic tradition meets Western forces. As Alfred Guillaume notes, Muslim women now get a divorce from their husband: 1) if he fails to maintain them, 2) if he suffers from a serious physical defect, 3) for ill-treatment, 4) for desertion... a husband undergoing a prison sentence and thus unable to support his wife may find himself divorced when he returns to everyday life, and 5) if her husband is impotent or suffers from a noxious disease.<sup>94</sup> According to Guillaume, “contact with the West has stimulated self-criticism... a spirit of co-operation with non-Muslims is advocated” and “the history of Islam has shown that it has extraordinary powers of adaptation: it has succeeded in absorbing apparently incompatible philosophies, and mutually contradictory religious conceptions, and it

<sup>94</sup> Alfred Guillaume, *Islam*. Aylesbury, Britain. Penguin Books Ltd, 1973. pg 177, 184

has silently abandoned others which it has tried and found wanting... one danger is that the old forces of reaction will be too strong for the new spirit of liberalism.<sup>95</sup>

### ***Care for the Elderly***

Within the Islamic community in Khartoum, there are no observable old people's homes. Many people consider the strain of caring for one's parents during the most difficult time of their lives to be an honorable and blessed duty. It perceived as an opportunity for great spiritual growth. Family friends (Ja'aliyin) of this researcher, for instance, have opted to put up their new home within the same compound where the lady's mother lives. The reason: the mother is widowed, and even though she is a woman of means in her own right, her daughter and son-in-law are doing all they can, caring for her in her old age.

Muslims believe that they should not only pray for their parents, but act with limitless compassion. For them, serving one's parents is a duty second only to prayer, and it is their right to expect it. It is considered despicable to express any irritation, even in cases when the old become difficult and stubborn. They do this, remembering that when they were helpless children, their parents did everything in their capacity to care for them. Mothers, as illustrated in the example above, are particularly honored in this Islamic community. Muslims adhere to the saying attributed to Prophet Muhammad, “paradise lies at the feet of mothers.” When they reach old age, Muslim parents are treated mercifully, with even more kindness and selflessness than ever. This care, Muslims believe, is contrary to what usually happens in most of the Western societies.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. pg 192, 193

### The Family: Aspects that have Remained Traditional

The Ja'aliyin identify closely with their tribe, coming to one another's aid in the event of trouble or rejoicing in each other's times of celebration. They still regard themselves as the best of the Arab people-groups. They do not concern themselves with manual work. They concern themselves with trading activities. Mostly, as observed by this researcher's assistant, "they carry themselves with unlimited feelings of greatness." Consequently, they oppose marriages to people outside their tribe, believing that others are inferior. In this community, as observed, much of traditional family structure still remains intact. However, current trends and economic disparities that are impacting upon the community may conspire to destabilize family life. Still, because the pace of this alteration is slow, the impact has not been disruptive to date as compared to the impact of Westernizing forces brought about by the modern technology and the media. Nonetheless, two significant aspects have remained largely unaffected by external (Western) forces: 1) female circumcision, and 2) the *hijab*. We note the following:

#### **Female Genital Cutting**

"Female genital cutting (FGC) refers to the excision or tissue removal of any part of the female genitalia for cultural, religious or other non-medical reasons. It is also frequently referred to as female genital mutilation (FGM) or female circumcision (FC)."<sup>96</sup> Though many keep guarded silence over this issue, the practice of female

<sup>96</sup>From "Female Genital Cutting," Retrieved from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female\\_Circumcision](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_Circumcision), on 20 March 2006. This article explains: The use of the word *mutilation* not only establishes clear linguistic distinction from male circumcision, but it also emphasizes the gravity of the act. The word *mutilation* reinforces the idea that this practice is a violation of the human rights of girls and women, and thereby helps promote national and international advocacy towards its abandonment. At the community level, however, the term can be problematic. Local languages generally use the less judgmental "cutting" to describe the practice; parents understandably resent the suggestion that they are "mutilating" their daughters. In this spirit, in 1999, the UN called for tact and patience regarding activities in this area and drew attention to the risk of

circumcision is widespread here. In fact, it affects the vast majority of females since it is part of the value system and culture of northern Sudan. But, women suffer its consequences throughout life. Chronic infections are a common result, and sexual intercourse and childbirth are rendered difficult and painful. One lady, obviously unhappy about this practice, made her sentiments abundantly clear to this researcher. She said, "Female circumcision makes sex painfully unbearable for women. After the mutilation, the passage is so tight that it is difficult for an index finger to penetrate, leave alone the pain related to child-birth!"

However, cultural tradition in this community predominates. An uncircumcised woman is not respectable, and few families would risk their daughter's chances of marrying by not having her circumcised. It is interesting to note that British colonial officials outlawed the practice in 1946, but this served only to drive the practice underground. It became more dangerous. Women found it harder to get treatment for mistakes or for side effects of the illegal surgery.

#### **The Hijab<sup>97</sup>**

Tensions exist, both from within and without, regarding the Muslim veil (women's' head and body covering). In the contemporary Ja'aliyin Islamic context, the roots of female modesty in Islam are attributed both to "the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi" as well as to ancient Christian and Judaic customs. Westerners, according to Ja'aliyin society ladies, find it easy to condemn patriarchy in Arab and

"demonizing" certain cultures, religions and communities. As a result, the term "cutting" has increasingly come to be used to avoid alienating communities (the Ja'aliyin come to mind).

<sup>97</sup>*Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* (2003), p.721, New York, by Macmillan Reference. The term *hijab* or veil is not used in the Qur'an to refer to an article of clothing for women or men, rather it refers to a spatial curtain that divides or provides privacy. The Qur'an instructs the male believers (Muslims) to talk to wives of behind a *hijab*. However, in later Muslim societies this instruction was generalized, leading to the segregation of the Muslim men and women. The modesty in Qur'an concerns both men's and women's gaze, gait, garments, and genitalia. The clothing for women involves *khumūr* over the necklines and *jilbab* (cloaks) in public so that they may be identified and not harmed. Guidelines for covering of the entire body except for the hands, the feet, and the face, are found in texts of *fiqh* and *hadith* that are developed later.

Islamic society, yet few of them see it as a continuation of their own code and tradition! For them, dressing in conservative Islamist fashion adds a measure of protection for women. Nevertheless, as observed in Khartoum, some women have tried to incorporate fashion into the *hijab*. They are adapting it to serve both religious and aesthetic values. Critics of conservative interpretations of hijab point out that while many claim the *hijab* does not signify oppression, those for whom it does are not necessarily free to state their true views on the matter.

#### The Family: Aspects that have been Modernized

Based on this researcher's observation, some cultural practices among Ja'aliyin Muslims in Khartoum are beginning to change. We need, however, to state that cause and effect are difficult to determine. Hind Khalil Osman puts it well: "Muslims in Khartoum are not cut off from the rest of the world; it is not possible to impose traditions and value controls upon societies that are becoming increasingly exposed to satellite television and Internet, which guarantee that households are inundated with foreign media images...In this global age of shrinking boundaries we must foster mutual understanding and open dialog if we are to avoid a future of endemic bigotry, injustice and violence." having said that, we need to note that the Ja'aliyin, while in the city, have established ties on the basis of religion – among fellow Muslims. These ties are regarded more highly than traditional authority.

The upcoming generations are quickly learning through T.V. shows, commercials, movies, advertisements, songs, etc, that being sexy is a desired goal and aim in life. Many young girls in Khartoum admire and aspire to be 'superstar' beauty queens, models, singers, or actresses. When one visits the shopping malls coming up all over Khartoum (a new idea here), one will notice that some young Muslim girls

are not as keen to use the *hijab* as the older women do. Likewise, though the National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC) of Sudan attempts to block web-based sites deemed indecent, some Sudanese young men and women still consider pornography to be on the increase.

#### Voll's Model: A Synthesis

This inquiry begun by acknowledging the growing significance of the modern and contemporary Islamic world to the global community in general and to the evangelical church in particular. From Voll's research-based findings, we noted the required need to understand not only the broad continuities and commonalities, but also the new elements and local particulars of Muslim experience. Voll's research findings suggested a three-pronged approach towards a realistic understanding of how particular Muslim communities encounter change: 1) the impact of non-Muslim factors (Western world), 2) the particularity of local factors, and 3) the Islamic root – how Islam as a faith informs adherents regarding their response to change. These three elements, as Yakimow pointed out, interact with each other depending upon specific local conditions to form the bedrock of what it means to be a "Muslim" in the modern age.

Voll's models of how Islamic people are encountering modernity or experiencing change: 1) *Adaptationism*, 2) *Fundamentalism*, 3) *Conservatism* and 4) *Individualism* are helpful towards an understanding of the manner with which the contemporary Ja'aliyin Muslims families respond to change. However, this researcher sees weakness in the four models proposed by Voll, in that his classification of the Muslim world into such apparently divisible categories may hinder the observer from

seeing holistically the unifying factors that characterize the Islamic world today.<sup>98</sup> In order to more effectively locate those unifying factors characteristic of contemporary Muslims in Khartoum, this research focused on the Ja'aliyin family unit. A particularized inquiry is likely to overcome the inherent weakness in Voll's categorizations. The study intends to help us towards an enhanced understanding on their experiences and patterns of thought as they encounter modernity.

The crucial question we need to ask: *which model best describes the responses to change among the Ja'aliyin in present-day Khartoum?* Before stating the researcher's position based on a two-year period of participant observation, we need to note the following. First, it is clear that encounter with modernity is disturbing traditional Ja'aliyin Muslim ideas and values regarding family. This, consequently, is affecting behavior. There is a kind of internal pressure that is challenging Muslim family life. Local people perceive this pressure as coming from outside. For them, it is alien, foreign, distant and very often threatening. Secondly, it is clear social and economic changes have profoundly influenced the way people relate to one another in family and intimate life. It is clear that key aspects of Muslim life (following its central tenets) are being challenged, culturally refashioned, and preserved.

Thirdly, this researcher verified Fleur-Lobban's theory, that the commonly used Western term – Islamic fundamentalism – seems inappropriate among most Muslims in Khartoum, since there is no disagreement about the fundamentals of their faith. Voll uses this category, but for local Muslims, “fundamentalism represents a kind of revolt or rebellion against the secular hegemony of the modern world. Fundamentalists typically want to see God, or religion, reflected more centrally in

<sup>98</sup>This researcher agrees with Yakimow's assessment that the “strength of the four models is at one and the same time a weakness. While it helps learners to categorize various movements, it is liable to miss the trees for the forest” in his unpublished report on John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994)

public life. They want to drag religion from the sidelines, to which it's been relegated in a secular culture, and back to center stage<sup>99</sup>.

Following the findings of this inquiry, we can deduce that a vast diversity exists with regard to how Ja'aliyin Muslim families experience change in the wake of modernity. As regarding Voll's categories, we note the following:

*Conservatism*: conservative interpretation of Islam. The Ja'aliyin are mostly Sunni Muslims. Most Sunnis define themselves as those Muslims who are rooted in one of the four orthodox schools of Sunni law (Hanafī, Maliki, Shafīi or Hanbali). The words and example of Prophet Muhammad inform both their faith and family practices. A great deal of effort by the authorities in Khartoum is geared towards conservatist interpretation of Islamic faith, and there are “traces” of Ja'aliyin attempting to ground their families following these interpretations.

*Adaptationism*: integrating Islamic ideas with Western techniques. From observation, most contemporary Ja'aliyin families in Khartoum are largely adaptationist in tone. They are willing to integrate Islamic values and ideals with Western technology. Modern ideas are borrowed and amalgamated to Islamic faith, to form expressions that are contemporary in trends, Ja'aliyin in culture, and Islamic in faith.

<sup>99</sup>Susannah Heschel, Jim Wallis, and Feisal Abdul Rauf, “A Dialog with Karen Armstrong.” In *Fundamentalism and the Modern World*. Sojourners Magazine, March-April 2002 (Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 20-26). Source: <http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0203&article=020310>. The term “fundamentalism” was coined here in the United States, at the turn of the 20th century, when Protestant Christians said that they wanted to go back to the fundamentals of their faith. Sometimes Jews and Muslims, understandably, find it slightly offensive to have this Christian term foisted upon them, because they feel they have other objectives. For some people fundamentalism is about bigotry and rigidity. Very often, they argue, fundamentalists begin by retreating from mainstream society and creating, as it were, enclaves of pure faith where they try to keep the godless world at bay and where they try to live a pure religious life. Fundamentalists resisted the secularist exclusion of the divine from public life. Rejecting nationalism, fundamentalism often calls for the strict implementation of Shariah and the creation of an Islamic state. In Sudan, this scenario has clearly played out in the Sudan.

*Fundamentalism:* – according to Voll, this is militant reaction to Western expansion; revivalism against imperialism. According to Ja'aliyin Muslims, however, fundamentalism is about getting back to God; putting God first in the home and in public life. There is a growing number of Ja'aliyin Muslims who have joined the Muslim Brotherhood - a world-wide Sunni Islamist movement founded by the Sufi schoolteacher Hassan al-Banna in 1928. The movement expresses its interpretation of Islam through a strict religious approach to social issues such as the role of women where its founder called for a campaign against ostentation in dress and loose behavior. It has spawned several offshoot organizations in the Middle East, dedicated to the credo: “God is our objective, the Qur’an is our Constitution, the Prophet is our leader, and struggle is our way.” Among the Brotherhood's more influential members was Sayyid Qutb.

Sudan has a long and deep history with the Muslim Brotherhood compared to many other countries. By April 1949, the first branch of the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood organization emerged. The Muslim Brotherhood's main objective in Sudan was to Islamize the society and to institutionalize the Islamic law throughout the country where they succeeded. The Brotherhood penetrated into the ruling political organizations, the state army and security personal, the national and regional assemblies, the youth and women organizations of Sudan. They also launched their own mass organizations among the youth and women such as the *shabab al-binna*, and *raidat al-nahda*, and launched educational campaign to Islamize the communities throughout the country. At the same time, they gained control of several newly founded Islamic missionary and relief organizations, which led to the spread of their ideology. The Brotherhood members took control of the newly established Islamic Banks as directors, administrators, employees and legal advisors. Therefore

the Islamic banks became the source of power for the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood of Sudan gain power for the process of the Islamization of the laws, politics, the state and society of Sudan.

*Individualism:* (non-conservatist, non-adaptationist, non-fundamentalist).

There are very few individualists in present-day Khartoum. However, as modernity shakes the traditional foundations of family life, it can be expected that this group will grow in strength and number. These are Muslims individuals who feel that Muhammad example has outlived its usefulness and therefore needs contemporary interpretations. They are skeptical of Westerners and their “loose” family expressions, yet they are likewise shy of bringing Islamic approaches to the public arena.

#### The Contemporary Ja'aliyin Muslim Family: Implications for Christian Witness

We have located the identity of the Ja'aliyin, noted their perceptions on family values, understood the impact of modernity in their midst, and noted how Islam as a root faith informs this encounter. The question that may now be asked is: what does this understanding inform our evangelistic endeavors? What are the inherent implications to our Christian witnessing. What will serve to advance or hinder the spreading of the Good News?

#### ***The Ja'aliyin: An Unreached People-Group***

The Ja'aliyin people of northern and central Sudan are 98 percent Sunni Muslim, and most are strictly dedicated to their Islamic faith. They do not know the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Like many Sudanese, the Ja'aliyin desperately need to be introduced to the Prince of Peace—Jesus Christ. Ja'aliyin people are critical in reaching the whole of Sudan. They are the pulse of the cities and are key in breaking through the grip of Islam. Yet, majority of these Islamized tribes found along the now

famous 10-40 window are not being targeted by any missions agencies. Evangelistic work and much prayer are needed to penetrate the hearts of these precious people with the Light of the Gospel. The Ja'aliyin likewise live in a country engulfed by tension, terror, and war. They need to hear about the saving love of Jesus. They have some Christian resources available to them, thanks to endeavors from Christian workers. But churches are very few among them. Converts from the Muslim faith are likewise not well accepted. They will need courage and grace to withstand persecution from their Islamic relatives.

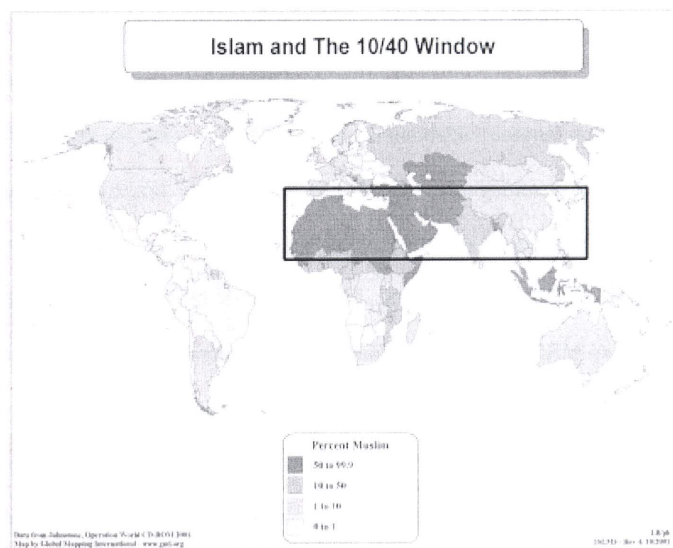


Figure 6: A map illustrating the 10-40 Window. Source: The 10/40 Window Map Set from Source: Global Mapping International. Available in <http://www.gmi.org/products/1040.htm>

### ***The Past in Light of the Present***

It is of great significance for our understanding of the history of Christianity in the Sudan, and of the development of the Christian Church in general, to know about

and understand that there existed an early, indigenous African church in northern and central Sudan, more than three centuries before Islam came into being or touched African soil. If we believe that 1) God is active in His world and the history of nations, 2) In spite of the falling short of man and of the various ways in which sin and human egotism spoil God's design, He nonetheless works out human story in such a way that it truly becomes His Story – then we will look at this exciting period in Sudanese history with new eyes. The fact that God called Sudanese people to Himself so very early in the history of Christianity shows His continuing purpose to build up a church in the Sudan and in Africa as a whole, a community of believers who praise His grace. This should ignite us to see that God could do it again!

### ***It All Begins with Prayer.***

Today, there are many rumors (with understandable reasons) around that work among Muslims is difficult, if not impossible. But the actual amount of work being done is quite surprising. Much of the work among Muslims happens in Africa. Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) and Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (WEC) both have vital works in the Sub Saharan region. With almost 1,000 people, SIM has works directed at Muslims in 10 nations including Niger and Sudan. Satan has erected many walls to keep Muslims from being open to the Gospel. In Sudan, political and national barriers have been created between Christians and Muslims. The crusades of the 11th and 13th centuries likewise developed deep and lasting wounds of bitterness. We need to pray against the stronghold of Islam that has kept the Sudanese Arabs bound for many generations. This is the crucial starting point.

The International Mission Board has identified four key areas that need focused prayer: 1) For the gospel to gain access to Ja'aliyin areas in Sudan, 2) For strategy leadership in response to God's call to focus on the Ja'aliyin, 3) That God

will raise up many intercessors to pray for the Ja'aliyin and other peoples of Sudan, and 4) For open doors for the workers currently among these people, and resources to be available so Sudanese evangelists can fulfill their strategy to reach the Ja'aliyin. People need to ask God to strengthen, encourage, and protect church planters, especially women workers. Similarly, there is need to ask God to protect the small number of Ja'aliyin believers, so that the Holy Spirit will complete the work begun in their hearts through adequate discipleship. Fear of persecution from Islamic relatives often hinders Ja'aliyin as they consider the Gospel. Prayer is needful for God to send workers who will offer encouragement and care for Muslim Background Believers, and for the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Sudanese Arabs for the glory of His name. It is significant to pray for a divine visitation for key Muslim leaders, that they might see Jesus for who He really is. We need to pray for mercy for the Sudan in light of persistent turmoil, and the massive number of refugees caught in various struggles.

### ***Reaching out to Whole Families***

It is a matter of great importance for Christians to listen and learn. It is essential to hear what Muslim faithful (our neighbors) are saying with regard to the institution of family. Specifically, it is crucial to gain more understanding on Muslim perceptions on family life outside of the households of Islam. Writings from many Muslims are very revealing. They bring out the following suggestions: we live at an age in which freedom is worshiped like a god, man is being deprived of the most important freedom: the freedom to choose his ideals, values, institutions, and, and patterns of life. One of the greatest tasks that lie ahead is restoration and rehabilitation of this freedom of choice and its judicious and informed use to set the house of

humanity in order. Certainly, this cry is consistent with our Christian mission. Muslims need to hear, from us, that we share this ambition for better societies.

It is very important to consider family patterns with regard to Christian witness among the Ja'aliyin in Khartoum. Failure to realize the centrality of family is likely to affect Christian mission quite negatively. Most missionaries, especially those from the Western world, often come with individualized concepts of conversion. They make attempts to convert individual Ja'aliyin persons. However, many Ja'aliyin are not willing, even if they think Christianity sounds appealing and are moving toward belief, to make an allegiance commitment that will in some way separate them from their family. Evangelism focused on witnessing to family units would likely be much more effective. For most of the Ja'aliyin, betrothal and wedding ceremonies are more for the sake of the relatives, children and friends, than for the spouses. These ceremonies are often very important family social occasions which go beyond just the aspects of a marriage. In Khartoum, Christians can find effective inroads to whole families through these functions.

### ***Meeting Felt Needs***

Sense of dissatisfaction and felt needs are keys to facilitating change in a society. Christian witness that frees people from this will likely be effective in introducing change in their lives. The church could have much greater impact in changing Ja'aliyin lives if it would reach out to meet their needs. In Khartoum, however, there is a twist to this. A barrier seems to exist for missionaries of British or American descent owing to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Most Sudanese people are bitter because of what they consider conquest of sovereign nations by Western imperialists. Their effort towards humanitarian aid or Christian witness is interpreted as receiving Christianity from its "imperialists and warmongers." It is seemingly more

appropriate for nations such as Uganda and Kenya, who have been perceived to have made efforts to reconcile Sudanese people, to be the messengers of the gospel!

### ***Building Meaningful Relationships***

The most effective basis for social acceptance is the relationship basis. Relationships are powerful. Someone that has a relationship with another is much more likely to truly affect their lives. One gains respect for those willing to listen and understand them; they genuinely care for what they have to say. Great respectability is accorded to people that have taken an interest in other people's lives.

### Lessons from Voll

Voll's emphasis on local conditions and their interaction with the general "styles" of Islam is important. Understanding of prevailing styles will be necessary points of departure to effective Christian witness. However, to be sure, it is necessary to understand the particular local history of an area and even the local history of an individual to be able to proclaim the Gospel with any effectiveness. Among the Ja'aliyin is Khartoum, seeing that adaptationism is pre-eminent, the inherent universality of Christianity and its applicability to multiple situations should be emphasized. Additionally, fundamentalism (in the form of Muslim Brotherhood) is gaining dominance among the elite. Therefore, an emphasis on the *usul* of Christianity – its Scripture and creeds – is equally important. The combination of Christianity's applicability to multiple situations, together with emphasis on Christian credo, calls for contextualized approaches to ministry discussed below.

### Contextualized Approaches<sup>100</sup> among the Ja'aliyin

Contextualization finds its legitimacy both in the shape and content of the Biblical Scriptures as well as the experience of those involved in evangelism and nurture of Muslim converts. There are two aspects to contextualization. The first relates to the process of bringing the gospel to a people who have not heard. How does one contextualize the gospel so the message can be heard, received and then to find its expression within that culture? The second aspect of contextualization is the expression of faith that the new believers and community develop for their particular culture and history. To some extent, there is a continuum where interaction between these two aspects continues even after the church is formed.

Christian ministry in the Islamic context must necessarily pay close attention to both. First, in the process of sharing the gospel, those who bring the message try to decontextualize from their culture and seek to behave, act and dress appropriately in the new context in order to commend the message. Further, they seek to contextualize the message so it can be understood. There should be testing of the contextualized message to hear what the audience actually understands. The group recognizes that it is impossible for those sharing the gospel to be self-aware enough to do either task very effectively. Encouragement is found in the fact that no amount of thought and effort can replace authenticity in witness demonstrated through self-sacrificing love. Christians need to be ready to show love to the Ja'aliyin.

Second, Christian identity and expression after conversion must find for itself a culturally satisfying Christian community for its particular situation. Contextualization is a process that must begin where people are. Theological input

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<sup>100</sup>Synthesized from "Ministry in Islamic Contexts", Copyright © 1996 by Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity. In *The World of Islam: Resources for Understanding*, Copyright © 2000 Global Mapping International. Used by permission. All Rights Reserved.

needs to be given to new believers forming their community expression, but they should not be forced into models that are developed from the outside. Establishing Muslim convert communities may keep the converts from interacting with the rest of the church. Similarly, to push them into other cultural forms that are dramatically different alienates them from their original community and inhibits their witness. Ja'aliyin converts should move towards becoming “bicultural” and “bilingual” in the sense that they need to be able to relate effectively to both their original community and the Christian community.

True and effective contextualization can only be done by the Ja'aliyin people themselves. In the New Testament, Paul fought the theological battles necessary in order to free the Gentiles to contextualize the gospel message for themselves. While we are committed to see the gospel message contextualized in all cultures, Islam is a non-Christian religion. In many aspects, it is set against Christianity. We need to affirm that new Ja'aliyin believers should move from an Islamic worldview toward a Biblical (not a Western) one and that they should retain those elements of their culture that are compatible with a Biblical worldview and the Christian faith. Any contextualization in Islamic culture must be done critically.

In the Ja'aliyin Muslim community, a person's sense of identity and purpose is based on his *Ummah* (including extended family), and he interacts with them daily. Open believers may be rejected from their family and community. Converts thrive in churches which often meet in homes, whereas those left without a new family often revert to Islam (this researcher know one example). This kind of contextualization is recommended. We note, however, that many converts may not be interested in continuing practices that have some Islamic connotations or forms in their Christian worship. There is need to support them in this. But we also support converts who are

seeking forms and practices of Christian worship that are culturally relevant in their Ja'aliyin Muslim contexts.

observed and practiced are elements which have been inextricably interwoven into the fabric of the Ja'aliyin community over the years. Even though Ja'aliyin people regard themselves as Arab Muslims, their historic strands have fused together over the years to form an integral whole that cannot be represented or denoted by any one particular constituent element.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary Statements and Conclusions

This research paper set out to describe the contemporary Islamic conceptions relating to family. It was motivated by the idea that family is everything in Islamic society and culture. The family unit is an important aspect to understanding Muslim society. The paper discussed the salient features and foundations of the family in Islam, its objectives and functions. With special reference to the Ja'aliyin Muslim families of Khartoum, Sudan, the study revealed actual workings of the family in Islam. Family structure, principles, rules and the manner with which Ja'aliyin families in Khartoum are responding to changes brought about by modernity were brought to light. In this chapter, conclusion and summary statements, implications for Christian witnessing, and recommendations are stated.

#### Ja'aliyin: A Concrete Identity

Who are the Ja'aliyin? They are Sunni Muslims who claim to be the direct descendants of the prophet Muhammad, the founder of the Islamic faith. However, evidence suggests that they are Islamized and Arabized Nubians – practically Islamic Nubians. Arab culture and the Arabic language have played major roles in the shaping of Islam and the cultural identity that it conveys. These people mixed identity, African, Arab and Islamic, reveals that these influences do not exist in isolation from each other. Additionally, the Christian legacy and other traditional beliefs still

#### Importance of this Present Study

This inquiry notes the significance of family life to Muslim people-groups, and seeks to understand aspects of its encounter with modern thought. It addresses the question: How is modernity impacting upon various aspects of the Muslim family life? Aspects that are examined here include: finding a spouse, marriage, composition of the family unit, polygamy, decision-making in the family, fertility and contraception, status of women and children, dowry, divorce, remarriage after divorce and matters relating to authority. The study focuses on how the Muslim family unit integrates with modernity to produce localized, modern and Islamic approaches to family life, with subsequent clues for Christian witnessing.

#### Theoretical Approaches

Modernity is shaping and transforming the contemporary Muslim society in both hidden and overt ways. Modernism is impacting upon beliefs and values hitherto held to be self-evidently true. This research sought to understand the continuities, commonalities, new elements and local particulars of the Muslim experience. Two things are significant due to this encounter: 1) the Islamic response as crucial towards an understanding of the nature of the struggle Muslims are facing; and 2) the Christian's need to re-examine attitudes towards the Muslim society, seeking to

understand the manner with which Islamic communities are interacting with contemporaneity.

Voll's four insightful models of how Islamic people are encountering modernity or experiencing change: 1) *Adaptationism*, 2) *Fundamentalism*, 3) *Conservatism* and 4) *Individualism* were useful towards an understanding of the manner with which the contemporary Ja'aliyin as Muslims family unit. The ordinary Muslims' view of the family unit is important; and gleanings from emic perspectives were discussed. The perspectives of political leaders and intellectual scholars in the Islamic societies are noteworthy. However, they do not provide the ultimate conceptualization of the ordinary peoples' experiences. Hence, examining family values among Ja'aliyin provided these experiences

#### The Muslim Family: Summary Statements

The Islamic attitude to family is very clear and defined. Islam places great importance on the family, viewing it as the cornerstone of society. Men and women are encouraged to come together in marriage, to fulfill their instincts and to benefit mankind through procreation. Marriage is perceived as the source of all other relationships. It aims at providing companionship, security and stability for the spouses, ensuring certain rights that both parties have upon each other. Piety is good motherhood highly valued.

Once married, the roles are clearly defined as to how the man and woman should live. Men provide for the family, protect their wives, and provide leadership. Women accept the authority of husband, show obedience to them, bear them children, and maintaining the home. Their primary responsibility is to nurture the children, producing individuals with Islamic personalities who are psychologically, emotionally

and physically sound. Both partners should maintain a peaceful and tranquil relationship, and strive for harmony, intimacy and love between themselves. Harmony is what provides compatibility and tranquility, the building blocks for stable families.

Divorce is only considered as a last option.

Parenthood is also defined. Parents are to be respected and treated well by their offspring. Parents in need of financial security and help in their old age must receive this from their children if they can. Siblings also have rights to be helped in times of need. In short, people are encouraged to show kindness to their mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers.

The Muslim Ja'aliyin family strives to achieve reward to get closer to Allah. Accordingly, family members are encouraged to forgive errors, not to hold grudges, to give gifts to build warmth between each other, and to help in times of trouble. Keeping relations with extended family and helping them is also very highly recommended in the *Sunnah*. Performing such actions will result in harmony and tranquility in the Islamic society, and might bring individuals success in the afterlife.

Muslims encountering the West are cautioned to be careful to maintain an Islamic family and exert immense effort to ensure the family unit is preserved. Current generations are called to play an active role to uphold the true Islamic values, and to promote these for future generations to come. In that manner, Muslim Ja'aliyin wish to be a beacon of light in the darkness that they see surrounding the contemporary family institutions particularly in the Western world.

#### Some Conclusive Statements

The Islamic world is seeking to assert its own religious and cultural identity. Despite the presence of nationalism and various secular ideologies in their midst,

Muslims wish to live in the modern world but without simply imitating blindly the ways followed by the West. Muslims wish to live at peace with the West. But, at the same time, do not wish to be dominated by them. They wish to devote resources and energies to build better lives for people on the basis of the teachings of Islam.

Wherever possible, internal or external conflicts are avoided. In the modern world, the destinies of the Islamic world and the West cannot be totally separated. By understanding each other better, scholars suggest that both worlds can serve their own people more successfully. They can, as a consequence, contribute to a better life for the whole of humanity. The Islamic world, with specific regard to family, seeks to create functional homes, believing that the West does not provide worthy examples.

We note:

1. Together with Christians and many humanists, Ja'aliyin Muslims believe that the preservation of family life is essential to the welfare and prosperity of society.
2. Ja'aliyin Muslims believe that disintegration of family life in the Western world is linked to collapse of the generally agreed framework of fixed values for family life and sexual morality.
3. Ja'aliyin Muslims believe that the Islamic way of family life is largely misunderstood. They consider some values of the Islamic family code as strikingly close to Christian values. They contend that Islamic cultural features such as the *Hijab*, polygamy and divorce can be understood as alternative ways to a secure interdependence and a caring community of love.
4. Ja'aliyin Muslims believe that Islamic law has specified irretrievable marital breakdown as ground for divorce. However, before divorce is invoked, the law demands an attempt at reconciliation.
5. Islamic Ja'aliyin scholars defend polygamy by pointing to the concealed polygamy in Western society, which lacks protection for its inevitable victims.
6. Ja'aliyin Muslims believe that one of the objectives of marriage is psychological, emotional and spiritual companionship between husband and wife.
7. Ja'aliyin Muslims believe that rules of Islamic family life laying down the principles to be followed in such matters as inheritance, the rights of orphans, and the mixing of the sexes, are calculated to foster the integrity of the family

in every way. Even the extended family is the product more of law than of custom.

8. Islamic nations (including the Ja'aliyin) believe that they may be in a stronger position in the world today because they possess stable system of domestic relationships such as the West is trying to do without.

The Contemporary Ja'aliyin Muslim Family: Implications for Christian Witness

The Ja'aliyin are Arabized Nubians whose ancestry shows some contact with Christianity. For this predominantly Sunni Muslim community, it is the words and example of Prophet Muhammad that informs both their faith and family practices. The unreached people-group seeks contemporaneity – integrating traditional culture, Islamic values, and modern ideas in their family system. However, the fact that 98 percent of the Ja'aliyin have not given their lives to Christ needs to arrest the attention of the evangelical community. The fact that 2 percent who have believed face persecution needs to arouse Christian empathy within the mission-sending world.

Reaching the Ja'aliyin is not an easy task. But, we need take encourage and recall that an indigenous African church existed in northern and central Sudan more than three centuries before Islam came into being or touched African soil. God established a community of believers in time past, and He can do it again. This idea should ignite us into prayer, asking God to send workers among the Ja'aliyin. There is need for evangelists who will point people to Christ through their words and actions, and there is need for workers who will take care of those who anchor their faith in Christ.

We must take note of the centrality of family among the Ja'aliyin, and factor whole families in our Christian witnessing. They must know from us that we consider family to be of paramount importance. In our family life, morality and good conduct must be in full view for our witnessing to be effective. Where possible, identification

of felt needs and willingness to meet them will greatly enhance practicality of the gospel. Among the Ja'aliyin is Khartoum, seeing that adaptationism is pre-eminent, the inherent universality of Christianity and its applicability to multiple situations should be emphasized. However, nothing beats relationships as a basis for social acceptance. Building of meaningful relationships carries with it inherent power to communicate the truth-claims of Christ.

#### Contextualized Approaches among the Ja'aliyin

Contextualization relates to the process of bringing the gospel to a people who have not heard. The Christian communicator's task is to ensure that the gospel message is heard, received and then expressed within the Ja'aliyin cultural milieu. To begin with, we need to genuinely love them and be sensitive to their culture. We need to behave, act and dress appropriately within the Ja'aliyin context in order to commend the gospel message. We need to understand their heart-questions, and avoid cultural forms that might totally alienate them from their community life and therefore hinder our witness. The Ja'aliyin must be encouraged to critically contextualize the Gospel message for themselves. New believers are most likely to thrive when incorporated with small churches that remind them of the essential family ideals they hold so dear.

#### Some Missiological Implications

Voll's thesis provokes many avenues for Christian missiological reflection. One is recognizing what makes Islam an adaptable religion yet still internally consistent. This lies in the four aspects of continuity Voll lists at the beginning: *Tawhid*, the Qur'an, the Prophet and the *Ummah*. Understanding the depth of feeling

Muslims associate with these items will allow Christian missionaries to begin to figure out the "heart-questions" of Muslims. But most importantly, Voll reminds Christians that Islam is a dynamic religion that is not going to die anytime soon. It will continue to act and react according to the styles that have been observed in the past. It embodies the hopes and aspirations of millions of people and must be addressed on its own terms, and Christianity must be shown to be at least equally relevant to Muslims within their own cultural context. Christianity must be shown to be a religion that functions within the culture of the hearers and is not a foreign imposition. We note the following:

1. Muslims, persuaded that Western is equal to Christianity view the Christian family with sense of disrespect. First, we need to put our homes in order, and cultivate those values that advance morality and purity in our families. Muslims hunger for religiously and morally excellent Christian individuals and communities. The message we intend to deliver will hardly succeed if we fail to recognize this thirst.
2. We need to demonstrate love and peace first among Christians! Muslims have many different opinions among Christians. Secondly, our house must not be divided. We should demonstrate unity by respecting and listening to one another first, even before we examine the Islamic world and attempt to present the gospel to them. This is helpful, since Muslims tend to misunderstand not only Christian doctrines but also the world of Christians in general. They tend to believe that Christians are divided into many competing denominations, which is quite in contrast against the popular Christian assumption that Muslims are all the same everywhere. We need to be patient and tolerant first with fellow Christians who hold different views. This is extremely important because the Muslim world look attentively at the Christian world.
3. We need to understand the internal struggles in the Islamic world with Christian sympathy, not with the spirit of ideological rivalry. We need to sympathize with the Islamist tussle with their identity issues and empathize with their thirst for God. Where possible, meaningful interfaith dialog should be encouraged.
4. We need to demonstrating spirituality (inner power) in every possible way. The felt need for power among Muslims is great indeed. We need to demonstrate the spiritual values and power to heal the sick, to cast out demons, and to comfort the deprived with God's words (Matthew 10:1, 8; Mark. 3:13-15; Luke. 4:18; cf. Isaiah 50:4)

### Some Recommendations

The following recommendations are informed by our *understanding* of the internal struggles taking place in the Islamic world. They are informed and motivated by Christian sympathy, not a spirit of ideological rivalry.

1. The average church attendee knows little to nothing about Islam and may actually be scared of Muslims. Likewise, when most missionaries look at the Muslim world, they see a uniform culture (Arab) with a single language (Arabic) communicated through a uniform religious belief and practice (Islam). This is a simplistic and mistaken view such misconceptions can only be addressed with knowledge of facts and historical data. Additionally, one's own experience by living among Muslims makes it an unbeatable combination. It is recommended that mission-minded Christian be ready to become part of the solution by living among Muslims and understanding them as *people*.
2. Christianity is often accepted by the desperate and marginalized in the community, thus becoming suspect. In the early church, some opponents of Christianity defamed it by stating that it was only foolish women and slaves that became Christians. The Acts, however, indicates that Christianity did have a broader appeal. It is recommended that the wealthy Ja'aliyin be presented with the Good News. Jesus Christ, considered a Prophet, also died for them.
3. When someone comes to Christ, we need to let God slowly work in their lives for behavior changes to follow their allegiance change. Patience with God's patience is recommended. In Khartoum, it means more baptize converts from a Muslim background soon after their conversion and completing some basic discipleship training. The baptism will not be in public so as not to provoke the Muslim community unnecessarily. Some Christians will be present as witnesses. The form will be in a way that it is neither seen as an expression of Islam nor as an expression of Western culture, but as identification with Jesus Christ and with his body on earth.
4. Christians should not only be willing pray for their parents. It is recommended that they act with limitless compassion to set a viable example.
5. There is a very real and powerful spiritual dimension in our lives. We must have balance between power, truth, and allegiance encounters. The battle between God and Satan takes place within every socio-cultural context. A preparation in power encounters is recommended.
6. In an urban setting like Khartoum, evangelism must consider not just orthodox Islam and folk Islam but modernity as well. Some Muslims, especially adaptationists, may be more influenced by secularism than by Islam. The Church needs to reflect on how to reach such people who are struggling with the issues of rationality.

7. We can either be cooperators or competitors when addressing Islamic cultures. It is recommended that we cooperate as people rather than compete ideologically if we hope to have any sort of positive impact. The appearance of outsiders advocating another religion seems very arrogant to the Ja'aliyin. While missionaries may think that they are changing these people for the good, the receptors may think that they are trying to impose their foreign ideas on them. We must begin with relationship and help people to see we are interested in more than just their conversion. We are interested in them personally; they are not just souls! Our message is a personal message - all we really have to offer is ourselves and to become a person according to the receptor's definition. When we live with, and work with, and love the people we are called to ministry among, we will be ministering as Christ ministered.

### Suggestion for Further Study

In spite of Islamic roots coupled with modern trends encroaching among the Ja'aliyin in Khartoum, their Marriage and wedding ceremonies have continued to be unique to the Sudanese culture. Islamic ideals and values still play a significant role, yet these functions have clearly retained and continue to perpetuate features that are strikingly northern Sudanese in character. Using the basic anthropological method of participant observation, a comparative study could be carried out among two predominantly Muslim people-groups. For instance, research can be done on wedding and marriage ceremonies among the Swahili in Mombasa and the Ja'aliyin in Khartoum. It would be of profound academic value to get a clear understanding on Islamic ideals that inform these social functions, and those aspects that are uniquely cultural in both cases. It would be interesting to unearth how both these Islamic communities integrate 1) non-Muslim factors (the West, modern thought etc, 2) local cultural elements in their particularity, and 3) how Islamic ideals inform this encounter.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Remarks: This structured interview to be done with 10 families only. The open questions may lead into further questions. For the structured questions, more explanations and details can be asked.

#### Islam's Message to the Family Unit: Structure, Form, Composition & Significance

#### How can we describe the Qur'anic message regarding the Muslim family unit?

1. What is the definition of family according to Qur'anic teachings?

1.1. What constitutes the Muslim family unit?

1.2. How does one gain sense of belonging in a Muslim family unit?

1.3. How does one lose their sense of belonging in the Muslim family unit?

1.4. What Qur'anic teachings serve to guide members of a Muslim family unit?

2. Does the family unit hold a place of significance to the Muslim Ja'aliyin?

NO

YES. In what ways is the family unit significant to the Muslim Ja'aliyin?

3. Does Islam forbid certain things within the Muslim Ja'aliyin family unit?

NO

YES. What things are forbidden among the Muslim Ja'aliyin families?

4. Does Islam tolerate other belief systems to teach Muslim family units?

NO

YES. What other belief systems hold some significance to the Muslim Ja'aliyin families?

#### Islamic Prescriptions Regarding Marriage.

1. How can we describe the marital relationship among the Muslim Ja'aliyin?

1.1. What is the origin of marriage?

1.2. What are the characteristics of the courtship process?

1.3. What is the purpose of the marital union?

1.4. What is the nature of the marital contract?

1.5. What is the function of Islamic faith towards the institution of marriage?

2. Do Muslim Ja'aliyin families practice polygamy?

NO

YES

2.1. Why does Islam permit polygamy?

2.2. What are the guiding rules regarding a polygamous marriage?

3. Does Islam allow couples to divorce?

NO

YES

3.1. For what reasons do Muslim couples get divorced?

3.2. What are the modes of divorce among Muslim couples?

4. Does Islam allow divorcees to remarry?

NO

YES

4.1. What rules govern remarriage for divorcees?

4.2. What is the procedure for remarriage among Muslim couples?

#### Men: Place and Role in the Muslim Family Unit

##### How do men function within a Muslim home?

1. What is the place of men in a Muslim Ja'aliyin family unit?
2. What role do men play in the Muslim Ja'aliyin family unit?

#### Women: Place and Role in the Muslim Family Unit

##### How do women function within a Muslim home?

1. What is the place of women in a Muslim Ja'aliyin family unit?
2. What role do women play in the Muslim Ja'aliyin family unit?
3. Is it a must for a wife to seek her husband's permission to perform the obligatory Hajj?
  - NO
  - YES. Please state the reason for this requirement.
4. What can you say regarding the idea that Islam "belittles" women?

#### The Place and Role of Children in the Muslim Family Unit

##### How do children function within a Muslim home?

1. What is the place of children in a Muslim Ja'aliyin family unit?

2. What role do children play in the Muslim Ja'aliyin family unit?

#### Regarding Equality and Human Rights in the Family Unit

##### 1. Does Islam guarantee human rights within the family unit?

- NO
- YES. How does Islam guarantee human rights within the family?

##### 2. Are men and women regarded as equal within the family unit?

- NO
- YES. How does Islam ensure gender equality?

##### 3. How does Islam fight against gender inequality?

#### Islam's Message to less privileged Family Units

##### 4. How does Islam treat less privileged members of its family units (the elderly, the poor, the sick, the homeless, and refugees)?

4.1. How do Muslim families treat the elderly?

4.2. How do Muslim families treat the poor?

4.3. How do Muslim families treat the sick?

4.4. How do Muslims treat the homeless (e.g. displaced, refugees)?

##### 5. Consider the following statement carefully and deduce its accuracy: *Family and community relationships are based on egalitarian (equal) values of respect and negotiation, as opposed to duty and obligation.*

- YES

NO. Please explain briefly.

### Modernity, Western Factors and their Impact upon Muslim Families

**How can we describe the encounter between modernity (the West) and the Ja'aliyin Muslim family?**

**1. How do you perceive the West?**

**2. Do non-Muslim factors (the West) have an impact upon the present-day Muslim Ja'aliyin family?**

NO

YES. What non-Muslim factors have an impact on the Ja'aliyin Muslim family?

**3. Please respond appropriately to the following statements.**

3.1. Current (Western/Modern) trends have an influence to your family forms.

NO

YES. Please briefly describe the type of influence experienced.

3.2. Current (Western/Modern) trends have an influence on your household composition.

NO

YES. Please briefly describe the type of influence experienced.

3.3. Current (Western/Modern) trends have an influence on your social categories (such as class, gender or family structure).

NO

YES. Please briefly describe the type of influence experienced.

**4. Family and household structures have changed over time?**

NO

YES. Please briefly describe the type of change experienced.

**5. Which of the following phrases best describes your family form?**

Cohesive traditional family form.

Fragmented contemporary family form.

**6. Do you think that modernity has contributed positively or negatively to your family?**

Negatively. Please briefly state your reasons.

Positively. Please briefly state your reasons.

**7. Do you think that Globalization has had an influence on your family unit?**

NO

YES. Please briefly state the kind of influence experienced.

**8. Do you think that the dominance of the West has had an influence on your family unit?**

NO

YES. Please briefly state the kind of influence experienced.

**9. The Western worldview differs from an Islamic worldview.**

NO

YES. What do you see as the differences between the Western and Islamic ways of seeing the world?

**10. The morality of the West is threatening with regard to the Muslim family unit**

NO

YES. In what ways is the morality of the West threatening?

### Particularity of local factors in encounter between modernity & the Muslim family:

**1. Modernity comes because of the increased communications planet wide.**

1.1. Does TV (including Satellite, Video, etc) influence your family?

NO

YES. Please briefly describe the type of influence experienced.

**1.2. Does the Internet have some influence on your family?**

NO

YES. Please briefly describe the type of influence experienced.

**2. What other forms of global communication play a significant role in the encounter between modernity and the family?**

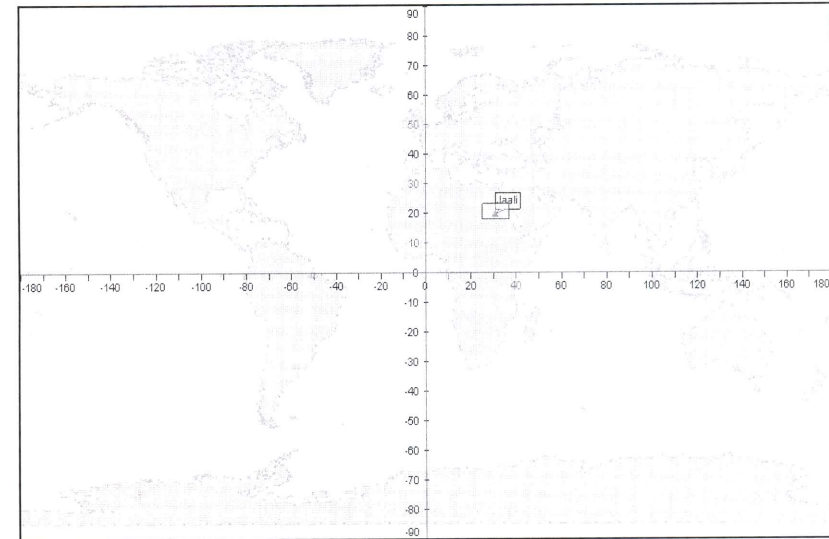
3. Name any other local factors that play a significant role in the encounter between modernity and the family?

The Impact of modernity on the Muslim family: Continuity or Change?

Attempts by scholars to chart the trends of Islamic thought over the last three hundred years reveals areas of continuity and patterns of change.

1. To what do you attribute the Islamic resurgence movement in recent decades?
2. Islam has been seen by some as a religion of terror since it prescribes jihad. Do you agree?
  - YES
  - NO. What is the place of jihad in modern-day Islamic world?
3. Which version of modern-day Islamic experience should we believe: Sunnis or Shiites?
4. A vast diversity exists with regard to how Muslims experience change in the wake of modernity. *Please indicate, in order of priority, which model best describes your response to change.*
  - Conservatist** (conservative interpretation of Islam)
  - Adaptationist** (integrating Islamic ideas with Western techniques)
  - Fundamentalist** (militant reaction to Western expansion, revivalism against imperialism)
  - Individualist** (neither conservatism, adaptationism, nor fundamentalism)

APPENDIX 2: MAP SHOWING GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF THE JA'ALIYIN

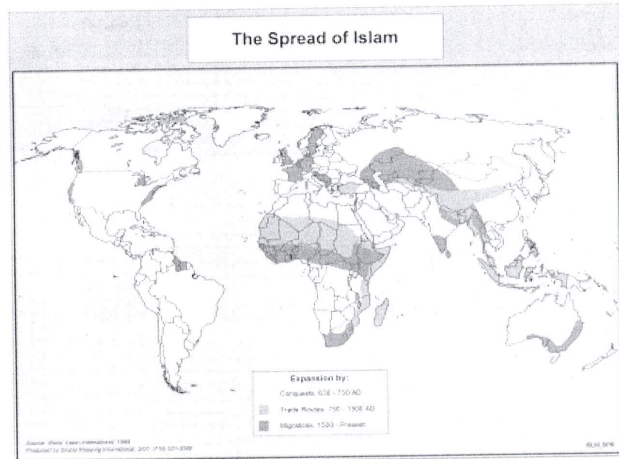
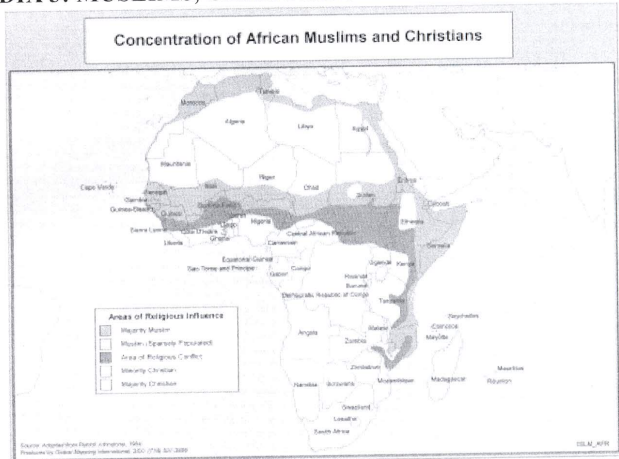


**Source:**

[http://alfred.med.yale.edu/alfred/recordinfo.asp?condition=populations.pop\\_uid='PO00692R#samples](http://alfred.med.yale.edu/alfred/recordinfo.asp?condition=populations.pop_uid='PO00692R#samples) Architected & implemented by Rohit Gadagkar with inputs from the Alfred group and Kei Cheung. Copyright © Kenneth K Kidd, Yale University.

**Geographic Location:** 23N, 25E; 18N, 37E. Geographic Coordinates represent two opposite corners of a rectangle encompassing the area where the population lives. This data is preliminary and changing.

**APPENDIX 3: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM**



Source: The 10/40 Window Map Set from Global Mapping International. Available in <http://www.gmi.org/products/1040.htm>

**APPENDIX 4: REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN'S LEGAL TABLE AND TEXT**

<b>Legal System/History</b>	<p>Legal system based on English common law and Islamic law. Under Egyptian-Ottoman rule from 1822. After opening of Suez Canal in 1869, European interest in region increased; British appointed governor of Egyptian Sudan in 1873. After defeat of Mahdist revolt, British and Egyptians shared sovereignty in Condominium period from 1899. Agreement to allow for three year transition period to independence in 1953 led to self-rule in 1956. Civil war between North and South continues to plague Sudan. Following the military coup of 30th June 1989, the Revolutionary Command Council imposed Islamic law all residents of northern states regardless of religion on 20th January 1991. On 1 July 1998, a new constitution came into force following a referendum. Sources of law are Islamic law, consensus of the population, the constitutional, and custom. In family law, judicial circulars (<i>manshurat</i>) issued by Qadi al-Quda (first issued in 1916) served to institute reforms or instruct application of particular interpretations. Family Code passed in 1991, codifying Sharia principles and interpretations of some <i>manshurat</i> and abolishing others. Section 5 of Code indicates Hanafi <i>fiqh</i> as residual source of law; Supreme Court (<i>Shari'a</i> Circuit) vested with power to issue interpretations of Code.</p>
<b>School(s) of Fiqh</b>	<p>Maliki school prevailed until Sudan was consolidated into Ottoman Empire through Egyptian rule, during which time Hanafi <i>madhhab</i> became dominant school.</p>
<b>Constitutional Status of Islam(ic Law)</b>	<p>Constitution came into force on 1 July 1998, after being approved in a referendum the previous month; Art. 1 states that Islam is the religion of the majority of the population, but does not proclaim it to be the state religion; Art. 65 identifies the sources of law as <i>shari'a</i>, the consensus of the people, the constitution, and custom.</p>
<b>Court System</b>	<p>The court system consists of a Constitutional Court, a High Court, Court of Appeals and courts of first instance. Civil and <i>shari'a</i> courts divided during colonial period reunified in 1983 during Islamisation campaign; there is nothing in the new constitution to suggest that there has been a change in the treatment of <i>shari'a</i> in the courts.</p>

<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<p>Constitutional Court Act 1998</p> <p>Muslim Personal Law Act 1991</p> <p>Also:</p> <p><i>Shari'a</i> Courts Act 1967</p> <p>Judicial Authority Act 1971</p> <p>Organization of Laws Act 1973</p> <p>Judiciary Act 1976</p> <p>Local Courts Act 1977</p> <p>[September Laws; part of Ja'far al-Numayri's Islamisation campaign during Sudan's previous period of military rule (1969-1985)]</p> <p>Civil Procedure Act 1983</p> <p>Civil Transactions Act 1983</p> <p>Criminal Procedure Act 1983</p> <p>Evidence Act 1983</p> <p>Judiciary Act 1983</p> <p>Penal Code 1983 (introducing <i>hadd</i> penalties)</p> <p>Sources of Judicial Decisions Act 1983</p> <p>Civil Code 1984</p> <p>Sudanese Criminal Act 1991 (reinstating <i>hadd</i> offences and law of <i>qisas</i> and <i>diyat</i>)</p>
<b>Notable Features</b>	<p><b>Marriage Age:</b> puberty, with requirement for willing consent of both parties. <b>Marriage Guardianship:</b> Guardian is to marry the adult woman with her consent, although the <i>qadi</i> is empowered to act in this capacity if her guardian refuses his consent without justification. Guardian retains entitlement to seek dissolution on grounds of lack of <i>kifa'a</i> of husband (defined as <i>kifa'a</i> in religion and morals. <b>Polygamy:</b> classical rules apply</p> <p><b>Obedience/Maintenance:</b> Provision is made for stipulations to be inserted in the marriage contract. The wife has rights against her husband in accordance with classical rules: maintenance, the right to</p>

	<p>visit her parents and other close (<i>mahram</i>) relatives to the extent recognized customarily. Maintenance includes medical fees and is assessed according to the circumstances of the husband; arrears of maintenance can be claimed for up to three years preceding the date of submission of claim. She loses the right to maintenance if she is disobedient, in accordance with the classical rules, but a ruling for obedience cannot be forcibly executed</p> <p><b>Talaq:</b> Regionally standard reforms affecting validity of <i>talaq</i> accompanied by a number in word or sign, <i>talaq</i> in the form of an oath, <i>talaq</i> phrased and intended to induce someone to do something. The wife must be informed of the husband's revocation of a revocable <i>talaq</i> during her <i>`idda</i> period in order for the revocation to be valid.</p> <p><b>Judicial Divorce:</b> wife may seek judicial divorce on following grounds: husband's incurable physical or mental illness making it dangerous for the wife to continue to live with him; husband's impotence not curable within one year (established by medical report); husband's cruelty or discord between spouses; husband's inability to pay; husband's absence for one year or more or his being sentenced to two years or more in prison; also, divorce by ransom, i.e., if wife is declared <i>nashiza</i> (disobedient) by court order, wife may waive her rights and if the man does not agree to the divorce, arbitrators must be appointed; if she proves that she suffers from remaining with him a <i>talaq</i> will be ordered by the court.</p> <p><b>Post-Divorce Maintenance/Financial Arrangements:</b> divorced wife entitled to maintenance as per the classical rules and in most cases to <i>mut`a</i> assessed according to the means of the ex-husband to a maximum of the equivalent of six months' maintenance.</p> <p><b>Child Custody and Guardianship:</b> divorced mother has custody over boys until 7 years and girls until 9 years; custody may be extended if proved to be in best interests of ward; until the male reaches puberty and the female consummates her marriage. Court has some discretion to allow a woman who re-marries a man not within the prohibited degrees of relationship to the child (i.e., a <i>mahram</i>) to retain custody if the interests of the ward so demand. The custody of a woman of a different religion to the father ends when the child is five years old, or earlier in it is feared that the child will take another religion. Child support considered father's duty until girl is married and until boy is of age able to earn his own living. Succession: Radd extended to include spouse</p>
<b>Law/Case Reporting System</b>	<p>Case reporting through Sudan Law Journal and Reports, includes section on personal status cases. Law reporting through the <i>Sudan Gazette</i>.</p>
<b>International Conventions</b>	<p>ICCPR &amp; ICESCR- accession 1986 without reservations</p>

**(with Relevant Reservations)**

CRC- signature &amp; ratification 1990 without reservations

**Legal History:**

The legal system is based on English common law and Islamic law. Sudan came under Egyptian-Ottoman rule from the time of the Egyptian defeat of the Funj Kingdom in 1822. After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, European interest in the region increased; British General Charles Gordon appointed a governor of Egyptian Sudan in 1873. The Mahdist revolt led by Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi in 1880 led to the capture of Khartoum from the Egyptians in 1885. The British re-established control over the region in 1898 under General Horatio Kitchener. The British and Egyptians shared sovereignty during the Condominium period from 1899. An agreement to allow for a three-year transition period to independence in 1953 led to self-rule in 1956.

Civil war between the North and South continues to plague Sudan. Three extended periods of military rule have been punctuated by briefer periods of multi-party parliamentary rule. The last elected government was suspended after a military coup on 30th June 1989. Sadiq al-Mahdi was overthrown by the military and an Islamist coalition led by Lt. Gen. Umar al-Bashir and Hasan al-Turabi and martial law was imposed. From 20th January 1991, the Revolutionary Command Council imposed Islamic law on all residents of northern states regardless of religion.

On 1 July 1998, a new constitution came into force following a referendum the previous month. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir became President and al-Turabi became Speaker of the Parliament. On 12th December 1999, President al-Bashir dissolved Parliament and declared a state of emergency. In April 2000, the state of emergency was extended through the end of 2000.

Sources of law are Islamic law, consensus of the population, the constitutional, and custom. In family law, judicial circulars (*manshurat*) issued by Qadi al-Quda (first issued in 1916) served to institute reforms or instruct application of particular interpretations. Family Code passed in 1991, codifying *shari'a* principles and interpretations of some *manshurat* and abolishing others. Section 5 of Code indicates Hanafi *fiqh* as residual source of law; Supreme Court (*Shari'a* Circuit) vested with power to issue interpretations of Code. Sources of law are Islamic law, constitutional law, legislation, judicial precedent, and custom. In family law, judicial circulars (*manshurat*) issued by the Qadi al-Quda (first issued in 1916) served to institute reforms or instruct the application of particular interpretations. The Family Code passed in 1991, codified *shari'a* principles and interpretations of some of the *manshurat* and abolished others. Section 5 of the Code indicates Hanafi *fiqh* as a residual source of law; the Supreme Court (*Shari'a* Circuit) is vested with power to issue interpretations of the Code.

**Schools of *Fiqh*:** The Maliki School was the predominant *madhhab* in Sudan, although the dominant school is now the Hanafi, due to Egyptian and Ottoman influence.

**Constitutional Status of Islam(ic Law):** The constitution came into force on 1 July 1998, after being approved in a referendum the previous month; Art. 1 states that Islam is the religion of the majority of the population, but does not proclaim it to be the state religion; Art. 65 identifies the sources of law as *shari'a*, the consensus of the people, the constitution, and custom. Prior to the enactment of the constitution, Sudan had largely been governed through a series of "constitutional decrees." Art. 137 repealed all of the constitutional decrees except Constitutional Decree No. 14, which provides for implementation of the 21 April 1997 Peace Accord.

**Court System:** The court system consists of a Constitutional Court, a High Court, Court of Appeals and courts of first instance. During the Islamisation campaign of 1983, the government reunified civil and *shari'a* courts, which had been divided during the colonial period. There is nothing in the new constitution to suggest that there has been a change in the treatment of *shari'a* in the courts.

**Notable Features:** The Muslim Personal Law Act 1991 requires that both parties to a marriage be past the age of puberty and be willingly consenting to the marriage. The male guardian marries adult women with their consent, although the *qadi* is empowered to act in this capacity if her guardian refuses his consent without justification. The guardian retains entitlement to seek dissolution on the grounds of lack of *kifa'a* of the husband, defined as *kifa'a* in religion and morals.

Classical rules apply to regulate polygamy. Provision is made for stipulations be inserted in the marriage contract. The wife is entitled to maintenance, assessed according to the circumstances of the husband; arrears can be claimed for up to three years preceding the date of submission of the claim at court. The wife loses the right to maintenance if she refuses to move to the marital home or leaves it without a *shari'a* justification, including if she works outside the house without her husband's consent, provided he is not being arbitrary in his prohibition on her working. The wife is required to obey the husband in accordance with the classical rules, but a ruling for obedience cannot be forcibly executed.

Reforms standard to the region to the rules on *talaq* have been introduced, affecting the validity of *talaq* accompanied by a number in word or sign, *talaq* in the form of an oath, *talaq* intended to induce someone to do something. In a further reform to classical law, the wife must be informed of the husband's revocation of a revocable *talaq* during her *'idda* period in order for the revocation to be valid.

The wife may seek judicial divorce on the grounds of the husband's incurable physical or mental illness rendering it impossible for the wife to continue to live with him without harm; the husband's impotence not curable within one year; the husband's cruelty, or discord between the spouses; the husband's inability to pay maintenance; and divorce by 'ransom' where a wife held disobedient by the court may waive her rights in return for a divorce and if the husband refuses to agree, arbitrators must be appointed and if the wife establishes that she suffers from remaining with him, a *talaq* will be ordered by the court.

After divorce the wife is entitled to maintenance for the *'idda* period and to *mut'a* to be assessed according to the means of her ex-husband to a maximum of six months' maintenance. This is unless the divorce was a judicial divorce by reason of

the man's poverty and inability to pay maintenance or for some physical reason arising in the wife, or unless the divorce was by *khul'*.

A divorced mother is entitled to custody of her male children till they are 7 years old and females till they are 9; the court may extend these period if it is proven to be in the interests of the wards, until the sons reach puberty and the daughters consummate marriage. The father or other male guardian is to maintain scrutiny of all matters related to the raising of the children in the custody of their mother. The court has certain discretion to allow a woman who marries a man not a *mahram* to retain custody if the interests of the ward so require. The custody of a woman of a different religion to the father ends when the child is 5 or earlier if there are fears for their faith being affected. Child support is the responsibility of the father until the daughter is married and the son is of an age when he is able to earn his own living.

In a reform to the law of succession, the *radd* has been extended to include the spouse relict after the fractional heirs and the succession of cognate relatives.

**Law/Case Reporting System:** Case reports are published in the *Sudan Law Journal and Reports*. Laws are published in the *Sudan Gazette*.

**International Conventions (with Relevant Reservations):** Sudan acceded to the ICCPR and the ICESCR in 1986, without reservations.

Sudan signed and ratified the CRC in 1990, without reservations.

**Background and Sources:** Amin, Middle East Legal Systems, Glasgow, 1985; Fluehr-Lobban, Islamic Law and Society in the Sudan, London, 1986; Hale, Gender Politics in Sudan: Islamism, Socialism and the State, Oxford, 1996; Mahmood, "Sudan" in Statutes of Personal Law in Islamic Countries, 2nd ed., New Delhi, 1995; O'Fahey, The National Front, Its Opponents and the Shariah Issue, Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara, n. 11 (Nov. 1997): 55-65; Pearl, A Textbook on Muslim Law, 2nd ed., London, 1987; Redden, "Sudan" in Modern Legal Systems Cyclopedia, vol. 6, Buffalo, NY, 1990; Rubin & Cotran, eds. Annual Survey of African Law, vols. I-VI (1967-1972), London; Safwat, "Islamic Laws in the Sudan," in Islamic Law: Social and Historical Contexts, al-Azmeh, ed., London, 1988; Safwat, "Sudan," Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law, vol. 1 (1994): 237-253; Women and the Law in Sudan: First and Second Reports, Women Living Under Muslim Laws, vols. I-III (1997) & vols. I-III (1999).