

CHAPTER TWO: SAUDI ARABIA AND ISLAM

Islam is the Saudi Arabian Kingdom's *raison d'être*. Having long adopted the strict Wahhabi interpretation of Sunni Islam, and having been in control of Islam's two most important holy cities of Mecca and Medina since the 1920's, Saudi Arabia is bent upon considering itself Islam's leading power and an example of the true Islamic state. As such, and unlike other Muslim countries, Saudi Arabia has none of the modern political institutions borrowed from the West, such as a constitution, parliament and political parties. Its constitution is the Qur'an and Islamic Holy Law [Shari'ah] is its official law. Its government is traditional Islamic and there is no separation between Religion and State. Saudi Arabia promotes Islamic missionary activity all over the world, supports fellow Muslims wherever they are, whenever necessary, and serves as the active force behind most concerted Muslim initiatives. The Saudi textbooks do not fail to emphasize Islam's role in Saudi life, and the leadership role assumed by Saudi Arabia within the Muslim world.

Islam in Saudi Arabia

Ahmad is in art class... Ahmad made a flag of the [Saudi Arabian] Kingdom... Father saw the flag... Ahmad asked his father: ... Why has the phrase 'There is no god except God [and] Muhammad is the Messenger of God' been written [on the flag]? Father said: To indicate the State's adherence to Islam...

Reading, Writing and Poems, Grade 2, pt. 1 (2001) pp. 54-56

The National Guard and its courageous and faithful men have an effective role in defending religion, then King and homeland.

National Education, Grade 9, (2000) p. 32

Every society has its own qualities and characteristics, whether cultural or social, that distinguish it from other societies. When you look at your Saudi society you will find out that it has features distinguishing it from other societies. Prominent among them [are the following]:

1. The implementation of Islamic Law [Shari'ah]: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is intent on the implementation of Islamic Law... This implementation is manifest in the laws, regulations and apparatuses responsible for maintaining public conduct against any violation or infringement of the requirements of the [holy] Law. There is hardly another state in the Muslim world where this wonderful sight, that appears anew with each prayer, materializes, as all government and [other] organizations' work stops and all shops are closed for the purpose of performing the prayer that the Muslims undertake to perform together at its appointed times. As regards the application of alms giving [zakat], the Kingdom is not slack in levying the zakat through the Zakat and Revenue Authority, which assesses and levies the zakat and disburses it in accordance with the Law. Our country upholds praiseworthy morality, which is derived from Islam's instructions and forbids beautification [i.e., the use of make-up and lipstick by women], or [social] mingling [of both sexes in public], or drinking alcohol, or other types of behavior that contradict the honorable Islamic Law.
2. The system of the Corps of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil: Enjoining good and forbidding evil is one of the greatest duties that the Lord has imposed on the Muslims, and it is one of the foundations of the Muslim state and its organization... The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is distinguished by being the only Muslim state that keeps a state-run apparatus the mission of which is enjoining good and forbidding evil. The apparatus that is entrusted with this mission in the Kingdom is the General Presidency of the Corps of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil. Among the most important actions of these corps [are the following]:
 - Guiding the people and advising them to follow the[ir] religious duties prescribed in Islamic Law and cause the people to perform them.
 - Forbidding evil by [measures] that prevent the perpetration of legally forbidden [sins].
 - Fighting bad habits and traditions as well as unacknowledged heresies.

3. Use of the Hijri calendar: ...
4. Prevention of mixed education: women in Islam enjoy an important position and great value. Therefore, the State provides them with all necessary services, including education. The Kingdom is thus intent on providing girls with education with no mingling with the opposite sex, which is harmful to their dignity.
5. Fight against heresy and superstition : The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia makes great efforts in the field of fighting heresy and superstition as part of the application of Islamic Law. That is manifest in [the following]:
 - Preventing the celebration of non-legal holidays that are widespread in various areas of the world, whatever their reason may be, and keeping the Islamic holidays only, which are Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha.
 - Fighting sorcery of all forms and types, as the most severe punishment is imposed on anyone who is engaged in sorcery.
 - The State has fought against followers of heresies and superstitions by all means and in all times and all places, which has helped to make them disappear... Our State has spread awareness amongst the people in schools, mosques and over the [mass] communications media in order to fight heresy and superstition ...

Activity 2:

The students will monitor what is published in newspapers about the State's fight against heresy and superstition and will prepare examples of these for discussion.

National Education, Grade 7, (2001) pp. 25-28

Islamic Sentences Applied in Saudi Arabia

The sentence of the apostate^{**} and his punishment

- He is separated from his wife
- ...
- The rules relating to the infidels^{**} are applied in his case after his death, as he is not washed, neither put in a shroud, nor prayed over, nor buried in Muslims' cemeteries...

The apostate has two punishments: [one] in this world and [another] in the hereafter.

His punishment in this world is death, if he does not repent. As regards his punishment in the hereafter, it is staying forever in the fire of Hell.

[Islamic] Jurisprudence, Grade 10, (2001) p. 55

Sodomy is [one] of the most repugnant sins and greatest crimes... It is an ugly deviation that contradicts sound nature and one of the greatest sins, being a heinous act and [an expression of] wickedness... Sodomy is prohibited and is [considered] one of the greatest sins. The punishment for sodomy is death. Both the active and the passive participants are to be killed...

[Islamic] Jurisprudence, Grade 10, (2001) pp. 77-78

* Heresy [bid'ah, pl. bida'] is any kind of Islamic doctrine that is not in line with orthodox Sunni Islam, according to the strict Wahhabi interpretation. The main targets of this reference are non-Sunni Muslims, the Sufi orders of Islamic mysticism and modern Islamic reformists. But not only them. In certain cases even a seemingly harmless habit of celebrating one's birthday could be described as heresy.
Superstition [khurafah, pl. khurafat] is any popular belief among Sunni Muslims that does not correspond to the strict Wahhabi doctrine, like the belief in saints [awliya'].

** An apostate [murtadd] is one who relinquishes Islam and converts to another religion.
An infidel, or unbeliever [kafer in Arabic in both cases], is a non-Muslim.

[Sodomy] is a perversion of nature, a ruin of morality and a relapse of humanity to the lowest degree. That is so because the natural tendencies are between men and women, and not between men and men. [Islamic] Jurisprudence, Grade 10, (2001) p. 78

Alcohol is a source of evil because it is the key to mischief and the cause of immorality... Drinking alcohol is forbidden and is one of the greatest sins... [Islamic] Law, Jurisprudence 10, (2001) pp. 88-89

The punishment of a wine drinker is a forty-lash flogging. The imam [the Muslim authority] may increase that to eighty... [Islamic] Jurisprudence, Grade 10, (2001) p. 92

As it is [well] known that the damage of drug smugglers and pushers is passed on to others, it is fitting to double their punishment, even if it causes their death... The State has acted well in its resolute attitude towards this crime, as a royal decree was issued to the effect that the death penalty is to be imposed on drug smugglers. [Islamic] Jurisprudence, Grade 10, (2001) p. 95

Stealing is forbidden and is one of the greatest sins... The thief's punishment is amputation of his right hand at the palm joint... If he returns to stealing - his left leg is to be amputated at the ankle joint and the heel will be left for him to walk upon. [Islamic] Jurisprudence, Grade 10, (2001) p. 99

Islam in Saudi Education

Islamic indoctrination is an integral part of the teaching process, as can be clearly seen in the introductory notes of various textbooks. Two examples of such indoctrination at an early age (first graders) appear in the following quotations:

God [Allah] is my Lord; Muhammad is my prophet; I am a Muslim; I love my religion. Reading, Writing and Poems - Workbook, Grade 1, pt. 1 (2002) p. 54

I prayed with my father in our mosque. I pray five prayers every day. I worship only God, Who has no partner. Reading, Writing and Poems - Workbook, Grade 1, pt. 1 (2002) p. 73

Among the goals that have been taken into account [are the following]:

...

4. Implanting Islamic principles in the pupil's soul...

Arabic Script, Grade 2, (2001) p. II of the Introduction, and see also Arabic Script, Grade 3, (1999), Grade 4, (1999), Grade 6, (2001) on the same page.

The textbook's subjects are suitable both for the student of this grade... and for the types of conduct according to which it is desirable that he be brought up, chief among them [being] the Islamic viewpoints that are placed by the State above its [other] goals. Then, other types of conduct follow: national, social, hygienic and others. Introduction, Reader and Poems, Grade 3, pt. 1 (1999) p. 5

My brother, the history teacher... You endeavor to bring the correct historical information to your students, to teach them how to seek truth in information and to educate them, so that the effect of [all] this will appear in their thinking and behavior and in their effort to raise the word of God and elevate the status of the nation of Islam... Be intent, then, on [maintaining] your students' pride in this glorious history and on strengthening their [sense of] belonging to the nation of Islam.

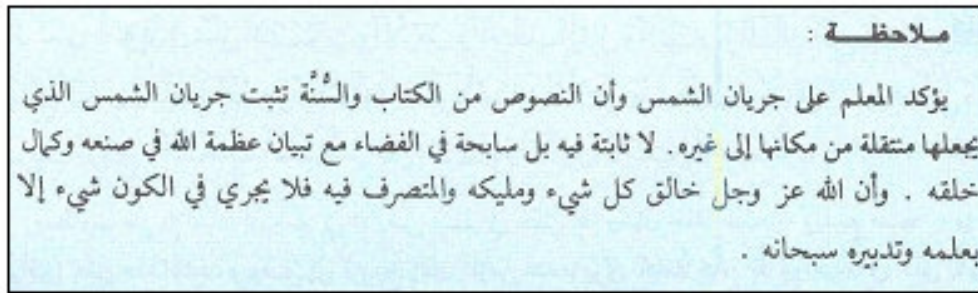
Preface by the Minister of Education, History of the Messenger's Life and of the Islamic Mission, Grade 4, (1999) p. not numbered, and see the same Preface in: Biography of the Prophet and History of the Orthodox Caliphs, Grade 7, (2000) p. not numbered.

And after that, the mission of the distinguished teacher [still] remains, namely, to implant the [religious] faith in the students' souls in an educational manner that will reflect on their tender personalities.

Introduction, Monotheism, Hadith, [Islamic] Jurisprudence and [Qur'an] Recitation, Grade 6, pt. 1 (1999) p. not numbered

Instruction for the teacher: You are, no doubt, qualified for the job, which you perform, and aware of its educational and psychological dimensions and of their influence on our sons, as well as able - with God's help - to direct them in the correct Islamic direction... You will vigorously see to it that pure and unblemished Islamic ideas reach them, envisioning - while explaining the lessons - the Islamic goals at which the nation has aimed in bringing up its sons. We also stress, while having confidence in your understanding of the requirements of your mission... that the book material presented [to the students] should not contradict [any] text in the Book [i.e., the Qur'an] or the Sunnah [the Prophetic Tradition], nor be incompatible with our True Religion...

Note: The teacher will emphasize the circulation of the sun and that texts within the Book and the Sunnah confirm the circulation of the sun, which makes it move constantly from one place to another - not [staying] fixed in it but [rather] floating in space...



Introduction, Fundamentals of Physical Geography, Grade 7, (2001) p. IV

... Increasing the student's awareness and giving him an education that will increase his knowledge and raise his spirit... and draw his attention to [the fact] that the Muslim world is one nation, no matter how much its countries are scattered in the [various] continents, so that the student will emerge, having studied this curriculum, with a lively yield that... will increase his faith in the importance of the Muslim nation... and will assure him that this Muslim entity will, God willing, have victory and glory sooner or later.

Introduction, Geography of the Muslim World, Grade 8, (1994) p. 5

And in the third chapter, the [present] textbook has dealt with the waves of internal and external aggression against the Muslim world in the Middle Ages and modern times, in order to enlighten the student [to the fact] that the aggression contrived against our Muslim nation in present times is but an extension of past aggression. It also clarifies the internal aggression against the Muslim world, [that is,] the errant religious sects [in Islam] and the deviationist and atheist trends [among Muslims] with which we have been afflicted and which have harmed Islam a lot and served our enemies. The purpose of bringing all this to the student's knowledge is to make him fully aware and informed about our Muslim nation and of what is contrived against it at present as well as strengthening him against those destructive sects and trends.

Introduction, Biography of the Prophet and History of the Muslim State, Grade 10, (2001) p. 5

Saudi Arabia - A Champion of Islam

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia today plays a leadership role in the Muslim world and [in] solving its problems. The [mass] communication media present to us the Kingdom's efforts in the [field of] mutual links with the Muslim world and in helping its states. Do you know any of the states helped by the Kingdom today? Mention some of them.

National Education, Grade 5, (1999) p. 40

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia... fulfills its role in serving Islam and calling for it[s adoption], which has made it assume its leading position in the whole Muslim world... Try to perceive our country's role in supporting the Muslims from what you see in the [mass] communications media.

Remember:

- Our country's rulers and religious scholars defend the faith and support the religion.
- Our country has a special position in the Muslims' hearts.

[Footnote:] The teacher should clarify the efforts of the Saudi state in supporting Islam and urge the students to follow that in the [mass] communications media.

National Education, Grade 5, (1999) p. 42

This is a textbook of National Education for the sixth grade [of] elementary [school]... It contains lessons of importance to the student of this grade, beginning with informing him of his country's importance and of its efforts to propagate Islamic mission[ary activity] and to support Muslim causes...

Introduction, National Education, Grade 6, (2001) p. V

The goals of the National Education subject for the sixth grade [of] elementary [school]:

It is expected from the student in this class that:

- He appreciates the Kingdom's efforts in propagating Islamic mission[ary activity] and in building mosques.
- He highlights the Kingdom's role in backing Arab and Muslim causes and supporting them materially and morally.

National Education, Grade 6, (2001) p. 7

One of the curriculum's goals is the realization of the following:

...

Understanding the position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia among the states of the world and its positive role in the service of the True Religion...

Guidelines, Geography of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom and the External World, Grade 9, (2000) p. I

Lesson Two: My Country and the Service of Islam

I am proud of my country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia... It is now the leader of Muslim solidarity in the world and takes upon itself huge responsibilities for the service of Islam and calls for it[s embracing]. It also plays an important role in Islamic indoctrination for the Muslim minorities [abroad]...

What are the means used by the Kingdom for the Islamic mission? The Kingdom works for the Islamic mission by preparing all necessary means of indoctrination, some of which are sending out religious scholars, thinkers and missionaries, as well as providing copies of the Qur'an... The missionaries teach the Holy Qur'an and the religious sciences in schools, academies, mosques and universities. My country also takes care of translating the content of the Holy Qur'an into the languages of the world in a correct manner in order to protect the Muslims from being trapped by what is contrived against Islam...

National Education, Grade 6, (2001) p. 16

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undertaken mosque construction... besides building mosques in countries where Muslim minorities are found, in all continents of the world, supporting existing mosques and providing them with mattresses, copies of the Qur'an and with books of Islamic culture. National Education, Grade 6, (2001) p. 18

Mention three means used by the Kingdom for propagating the Islamic mission[ary activity].

National Education, Grade 6, (2001) p. 19

A delegation of missionaries left the country in order to spread the Islamic mission. Mathematics, Grade 7, pt. 1 (2001) p. 3

The Offices of Mission and Guidance and Indoctrination of the Immigrant Communities

They are supervised by the [agencies of] Muslim Affairs, the Endowments [Awqaf], and Mission and Guidance. The aim of these offices is to call [upon non-Muslims] to [follow] God. This is done through [the following channels]:

1. Spreading [Islamic] juristic learning, as well as [Islamic] direction and guidance by distributing books, treatises, tapes, etc.
2. Calling upon non-Muslims within the immigrant communities that live amongst us to [embrace] Islam and explaining its merits and virtues.
3. Embracing the new Muslims and teaching them the principles of the true religion.
4. Paying attention to the immigrant Muslims by giving them lessons and lectures and booklets in their various languages.
5. Calling for the renunciation of heresies and wrong concepts among some of the immigrants.
6. Distributing the Holy Qur'an among the immigrants, Muslims and others [alike].

National Education, Grade 9, (2000) pp. 85-86

The role of the social, benevolent and voluntary foundations in the service of society: ...

They take upon themselves a very important role in spreading the Islamic religion in various regions of the world, helping Muslims in all places, working to solve their problems and defending their rights.

National Education, Grade 9, (2000) pp. 87-88

The [late] King Faisal - may God have mercy on him - embarked upon uniting the Muslims and joining them together... God willed that his blessed efforts would bear fruit... and the [first Muslim] summit conference was held in Rabat...(1969)... The Kingdom and its rightly-guided government still laboriously endeavor for the sake of that solidarity and unity.

Geography of the Muslim World, Grade 8, (1994) p. 14

O Muslims of the world, unite!

Language exercise, Facilitating the Rules of the Arabic Language, Grade 9, pt. 2 (1999) p. 11

...The Muslims in all parts of the world see the Kingdom as a state with a great leadership role which it plays in order to be able to perform its mission perfectly. It was the first to solve the Muslims' problems and defend them. It is, without doubt, the leader of Muslim solidarity. [The mere fact] that the first Muslim conference was convened by [the late] King Abd al-Aziz - may God have mercy on him - in 1345 AH [1926] in Mecca is in itself a cause for pride. [That solidarity] later took shape during the reign of [the late] King Faisal - may God have mercy on him - and produced the Islamic Conference Organization, the banner of which has been carried by the leaders of this country.

National Education, Grade 9, (2000) p. 11

The Muslim states felt that they could benefit from the common links between them, so they turned to establish several organizations. God granted [His] favor to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by making it the one which called for this action... The Kingdom hosts several Muslim organizations among which

are [the following]: League of the Muslim World, World Council of Muslim Youth and the Islamic Conference Organization.

Reader and Texts, Grade 9, pt. 2 (2002) p. 36

Put a V sign next to the correct phrase and an X sign next to the incorrect phrase:

- The Kingdom supports its Arab and Muslim brethren.

National Education, Grade 6, (2001) p. 28

It is neither unusual nor a new departure for the Kingdom and its leaders to adopt the causes of Islam and the Muslims in all places.

National Education, Grade 9, (2000) p. 22

Lesson Three: The Kingdom's Support of the Muslims' Causes

And among them - Kashmir, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Chechnya.

'It is our duty, as a state honored by God with the service of the two noble sanctuaries [in Mecca and Medina], to stand at the side of our Muslim brethren and extend them the help that will enable them to provide [themselves] with the means of security, stability and prosperity, with no interference on our part in their affairs and with no conditions attached to our help to them.' Servant of the Two Noble Sanctuaries, King Fahd Bin Abd al-Aziz, Tuesday, Shawwal 11, 1412 AH [1991]...

Proceeding from this exalted idea of the leader of our march and the leader of Muslim solidarity, our state has extended unlimited support for the purpose of backing the Muslims' causes in all places. Among the examples for that [are the following]:

A. Backing and Supporting the Cause of Kashmir

We know that Kashmir is a Muslim land that English Imperialism sold to the Hindus. The Hindus have mistreated the Muslims as they have considered them [part] of their possessions and denied them their religious and political rights. Out of the principle of responsibility towards our Muslim brethren, our state has spared no effort, with the cooperation of the Muslim states and organizations, in saving the Muslims in Kashmir from the conspiracies that threaten the existence of a whole people. The Muslims in Kashmir expect much of their Muslim brethren, as the Kashmiri Jihad movements called upon the Muslim states to intensify their efforts in their support politically and economically, in view of their severe suffering in these two fields.





B. Backing and Supporting the Cause of Bosnia-Herzegovina

The problem from which our brethren in Bosnia-Herzegovina suffered is one of several wounds with which the body of the Muslim nation has been afflicted. These Muslims faced a vicious onslaught on the part of the Christian Serbs, enemies of Islam. We all lived this problem in all its dimensions, and our precious Kingdom was at the head of the states whose noble position history has recorded, because of the measures they adopted which were aimed at protecting the Muslim people of Bosnia from annihilation. It organized contribution campaigns for the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina through the Higher Committee for Helping the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Muslim Relief Committee, the World Council of Muslim Youth and the Benevolent Foundation of the Two Sanctuaries.

C. Backing and Supporting the Chechen Cause

The Chechen Republic is one of the republics of the Russian Federation. It now demands its independence and the attainment of its freedom. In the cause of its demands of this legitimate right it has been subjected to all means of ferocious warfare in order to uproot its religion and faith. But Islamic spirit is still alive in the heart of its people and the light of Islam still radiates in their faces. Our precious Kingdom has backed the Chechens, on the basis of the program of the Servant of the Two Noble Sanctuaries which supports the Chechen Muslims who have been harmed by the barbarous Russian onslaught.

Dramatic Activity

The teacher will choose five students and will distribute among them the following roles:

'Ahmad' is to represent the Republic of Kashmir.

'Tareq' is to represent the cause of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

'Ali' is to represent the Republic of Chechnya.

'Faisal' is to represent the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

'Majed' is to represent the League of the Muslim world.

Ahmad, Tareq and Ali will prepare short statements about the problems suffered by the states they represent from the enemies of Islam and read them to their classmates. Then Faisal, having prepared a statement about the role of the Kingdom in support of these causes, will get up and read it to his classmates. At the end Majed will stand up and talk about our duty towards our Muslim brethren in all places, having prepared himself for that in advance.



National Education, Grade 9, (2000) pp. 17-19

Lesson Four: The Kingdom's Backing of the Muslim Minorities in the World

The Muslim minorities in the world number about 400 million Muslims who have all enjoyed the care and attention of our rightly-guided government for the sake of their unity and solidarity in all places, since the time God prepared for this country its unifier, King Abd al-Aziz - may God have mercy on him, and after him, his faithful sons - who created for it [i.e., for Saudi Arabia] a distinguished place among the states of the Muslim world, as it endeavors to achieve Muslim solidarity. [Some] of the forms of our rightly-guided government's attention to the Muslim minorities are building mosques, schools and hospitals, in addition to handsome loans and aid granted by the Kingdom to the poor Muslim states.

National Education, Grade 9, (2000) p. 20

Activity

Every student will prepare a short essay not exceeding four pages, in which he will make use of books found in the school library or in his home, or of local newspapers. He will discuss in this essay the conditions of the Muslim minorities in [various] regions of the world, the countries where they live and the Kingdom's role in helping and backing them.

National Education, Grade 9, (2000) p. 21

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia takes care of the affairs of the Muslim minorities in the world.

Dictation, Grade 5, pt. 1 (2001) p. 37