

AL-TAWHĪD

A Quarterly Journal of Islamic Thought and Culture

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—a Document

Vol. I, No. 2, Rabī' al-Thānī 1404

(January 1984)

قال رسول الله

مَنْ أَصْبَحَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي وَهَمَّتْهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ
مِنْ اللَّهِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَهْتَمَّ بِأُمُورِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَلَيْسَ
مِنْهُمْ، وَمَنْ أَقْرَبَ بِالذُّلِّ طَائِعًا فَلَيْسَ
مِنَّا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ .

Whoever of my ummah wakes up with a concern for other than God, is not of God; whoever is not concerned with the affairs of Muslims is not one of them; whoever willingly submits to humiliation is not of us Ahl al-Bayt.

—The Holy Prophet (S)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allāh,
the Merciful and the Compassionate*

NOTICE

Scholars and writers from all over the world are cordially invited to contribute to the journal.

Manuscripts may be typed in double space on one side of the paper. References and notes should be carefully listed at the end of the article and should contain complete bibliographical information.

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Editorial

The presence of various sects in Islam and difference of belief and opinion amongst them has been a weak point in the structure of the Muslim ummah, which has continually been exploited by predatory pagan powers. To the religious differences of Muslims were added ethnic and regional factors to divide the Muslim world in mutually apathetic nation-states, more disposed to reliance on the very powers that had divided them than on one another.

It is futile to talk about the unity of Muslim ummah on the level of governments, whose basic policy is to safeguard the myth of nation-states and to suppress the growing Islamic political consciousness of the masses. This means that the only proper approach to Islamic unity is that which is aimed at the Muslim masses.

During the last two hundred years, the effort made towards disintegration of this unity has been incomparably more intense and expansive than effort to preserve and foster it. The examples of Palestine and Lebanon bear painful testimony to the impotence of the Muslim ummah in front of the aggressors and its incapacity to defend itself against the predators. The continuing tragedy in Afghanistan is yet another result of this disunity and indecision. The issue of Islamic unity, therefore, is equivalent to future survival of the Muslim society itself. For, if the present situation continues, the Islamic ethos of the Muslim masses will itself be digested within the bellies of the nation-states and irrevocably eroded. It is a delusion if Muslims living in different lands think that the problems of Muslims *qua* Muslims are solvable within the vicious bounds imposed by the nation-states.

Only a living, tangible and vigorous sense of unity between Muslims living throughout the world can paralyse the strategies of pagan predators of the East and the West. Only such real, active and responsive sense of unity can serve as a reliable basis for defence of Islam and the interests of the Muslim ummah.

Let us at first clarify the meaning of "Islamic unity". Does it mean a universal adoption by the Muslims of one sect out of the various Islamic sects and rejection of the rest? Does it mean adoption by the Muslims of common points between all sects and rejection of all points of difference? Does it imply a mobilization for unification of various sects and their ultimate merger into one another? Or does Islamic unity imply solidarity of Muslims following various sects and living in different regions of the world vis-a-vis their determined enemies?

The enemies of Islamic solidarity and unity, in order to make this

ideal appear as illogical, impractical and even ridiculous, strive to project it as a unification of sects or a compromise of sectarian beliefs and principles. When interpreted in this manner, the ideal of Islamic unity is destined, evidently, to failure from the very first.

Obviously, the aim of Muslim scholars—both Sunnī and Shī‘ah—who have yearned and strived to bring about unity among Muslims, is neither unification of beliefs nor instant resolution of differences, nor do they imply that Muslims should universally adopt the common points between various sects and discard the rest of their differential beliefs and practices. Such a proposal, of course, should be considered as being neither practical nor logical. What they have aimed at by advocating Islamic unity, is the solidarity of Muslims and their unity against their common enemies.

These scholars point out that Muslims, despite their differences, stand on a solid common ground which can serve as the foundation of their unity. The Muslims worship the One God, Allah, the Supreme; they all believe in the prophethood of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh (S); they revere the word of the same Holy Quran; they cherish to perform the pilgrimage to the same Holy Ka‘ba; they perform the Ḥajj together and in the same manner; they pray, fast, associate, marry and trade in a similar way; they lead their lives under guidance of similar values and bury their dead in the same fashion; they all share a similar world outlook and a common culture, history and heritage. These Muslim scholars say that, in view of this common world outlook, common culture, history, heritage, tradition, morality, customs, etiquette, beliefs and social and spiritual experience, the Muslims *are* a single homogeneous community. There is, therefore, no reason why they should not stand together forming a single, undivided and determined nation that can meet the challenges of all the world’s great powers, which continue to oppress them and to play with their destinies. This is especially necessary because their solidarity has been greatly stressed by Islam and explicitly emphasized by the Holy Quran. Why shouldn’t the Muslims avail themselves of this great possibility which is a blessing of Islam?

It may be surprising for many to know that in almost all of the *aḥkām* of the *Shari‘ah*, the viewpoints of the Ja‘farī or Imāmiyyah school of *fiqh* concur with either the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Ḥanbalī or the Shāfi‘ī school. There are very few cases in all where the *fiqhī* viewpoints of at least two of these five prominent *fiqhī* schools do not coincide. This is so obvious that it may be said that a greater prevalence in Muslim countries of comparative studies of the *fiqh*’s of the five Islamic schools can serve as a powerful means of reinforcing unity, understanding and solidarity between the five Muslim sects. In fact, it is ignorance about the religious material which serves as a catalyst in the process of disintegra-

tion of the ummah and fosters the efforts of champions of disunity. Most Muslims are not well informed about the *uṣūl* and *aḥkām* of the sects they claim to follow; their knowledge of the viewpoints of other sects—if it can be called knowledge at all—is based on hearsay. Since realization of consanguinity among the Islamic sects is possible only through knowledge, the greatest champions of Muslim unity and solidarity between Shi‘ah and Sunni Muslims, have emerged from the ranks of Islamic scholars of the highest calibre. On the other hand, the champions of disunity; if they deserve at all to be called ‘*ulamā*’, have risen from the ranks of shallow and empty imposters, who, like vultures, make a living out of the disunity of the ummah. It is, therefore, the responsibility of every Muslim, whether Shi‘ah or Sunni, to distinguish between the true ‘*ulamā*’ and professional misleaders. The first and foremost criterion in this regard should be to see whether such and such an ‘*ālim*’s stance is in favour of Islamic unity or not. It is on the basis of this criterion that all enlightened Muslims regard those scholars who are committed in word and deed to the cause of Islamic unity, as the true friends and sympathizers of Islam and Muslims.

According to these scholars, there is no need for Muslims to compromise their sectarian beliefs and views, whether in the *uṣūl* (principles) or in the *furū‘* (secondary issues); neither, they say, there is any reason for Muslims to abstain from debating and arguing about their differential viewpoints regarding the *uṣūl* or the *furū‘* or other matters. What is important, however, is that the Muslims should abstain from rancour and acrimony in their debates and desist from calling one another names, from insulting one another and hurting the feelings of one another. Their debates should not trespass the limits of logic, mutual respect, propriety and decorum. They should always heed the warning carried in these words of the Qūran:

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ...

Muhammad, the Messenger of Allāh, and those who are with him are hard against the unbelievers and merciful to one another. (48:29)

The Muslims should, in their debates and controversies—at the very least—observe the criteria put forward by the Quran regarding dialogue with non-Muslims:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بَالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ...

Call thou (O Prophet) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and debate with them in a way that is preferable. (16:125)

Some Muslims have imagined that solidarity is possible only

among those sects whose differences are confined only to the *furū'*. According to them, there can be no brotherhood or solidarity between those who differ in the *uṣūl*. They view the *uṣūl* as an indivisible body of basic principles, in which damage to one means damage to all.

First of all, cooperation and solidarity between various sects does not imply any compromise on the *uṣūl* or the *furū'*. However, in order to interpret their psychological hurdles as ideological barriers, they restrict the area of possible cooperation with others by adopting the policy of "either all or none". According to them, for example, if the principle of *imāmah* is exposed to compromise, then the issue of solidarity and brotherhood with other sects is untenable. Accordingly, they say, it is not possible for the Shī'ah and the Ahl al-Sunnah to give each other a brotherly hand and stand in the same rank, regardless of whoever the enemy may be.

On the other side, the Muslim scholars who advocate Islamic unity, say that there is no reason for regarding the *uṣūl* as an indivisible set of units so that the policy of "either all or none" may be justified. Rather, they believe, that in such a case one should adopt the policy of "something is better than nothing", or, as it is said in Arabic, *مَالًا يُدْرِكُ كُتْلَهُ لَا يُتْرَكُ كُتْلَهُ*, i.e., that which cannot be obtained *in toto* cannot be abandoned *in toto*.

The practice and approach of Imam 'Alī (A) can be taken as the best model to be emulated in this regard. At various times of his life, 'Alī (A) took an approach which was most logical under those circumstances. Although he never missed an opportunity for recovering his rights and always strived to revitalize the principle of *imāmah*, he never followed the policy of "either all or nothing"; rather, he adhered to the policy of *مَالًا يُدْرِكُ كُتْلَهُ لَا يُتْرَكُ كُتْلَهُ* and *الْمَيْسُورُ لَا يُسْقَظُ بِالْمَعْسُورِ* (what is easily achievable is not to be rejected for difficulty in obtaining the rest). He did not make an insurrection to obtain his rights. It cannot be said that he was compelled by circumstances or that he feared death; for martyrdom in the way of God was his greatest desire. The fact is that, 'Alī (A), in his calculations, came to the decision that it was in the interest of Islam to cooperate and to abstain from insurrection. This he recurringly points out in his letters and speeches. In a letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, he writes:

... فَأَمْسَكْتُ يَدِي حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ رَاجِعَةَ النَّاسِ قَدْ رَجَعَتْ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ، يَدْعُونَ إِلَى مَحْقِ دِينِ مُحَمَّدٍ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَخَشِيتُ أَنْ لَمْ أَنْصُرِ الْإِسْلَامَ وَأَهْلَهُ أَنْ أَرَى فِيهِ ثَلَمًا أَوْ هَدْمًا تَكُونُ الْمُصِيبَةُ بِهِ عَلَيَّ أَعْظَمَ مِنْ قُوَّةِ وَلَايَتِكُمْ الَّتِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ مَتَاعُ أَيَّامٍ قَلِيلَةٍ.

At first, I withdrew my hand...until I noticed that some people had turned away from Islam, inviting others to join them in obliteration of the religion of

Muḥammad (S). It alarmed me that if I did not assist Islam and Muslims, I would have to face a damage or a collapse in Islam which would be more distressing for me than the loss of a transitory *khilāfah*. (*Nahj al-balāghah*, epistle 62)

In words addressed to the six-man *shūrā*, which in the lead of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf appointed ‘Uthmān to the office of the *khilāfah*, there are both a note of complaint as well as a willingness to cooperate:

لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ أَنِّي أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ بِهَا مِنْ غَيْرِي، وَوَاللَّهِ لَا أُسَلِّمَنَّ مَا سَلِمْتَ أُمُورَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهَا جَوْرٌ إِلَّا عَلَيَّ خَاصَّةً.

You know for sure that I deserve it (the *khilāfah*) more than any other man. However, by God, I will concede so far as the affairs of Muslims are intact and as long as there is no injustice except against my own person. (*Nahj al-balāghah*, sermon 72)

One need not bring further examples from the words and speeches of ‘Ali (A). His whole life bears testimony to the fact that he did not subscribe to the policy of “all or none” in matters of the *uṣūl* or the *furū*’.

Also, there is no need to unmask those who work for disintegration of Muslim solidarity in the name of Islam itself. Their efforts, packaged to draw sympathy from Muslims and aimed to incite misguided sectarian sentiments, are in the direct service of the cunning enemies of Islam and Islamic ethos of the Muslim ummah. For those who can understand and see, such efforts are eloquent revealers of the identity of infiltrators of the pagan predators in midst of Muslims.

Rabī‘ al-Thānī 1404

Tehran, Iran

Understanding the Uniqueness of the Qur'ān

Part 2

by Martyr Murtadā Muṭahhari

translated from Persian by Mahliqā Qarā'i

Issues in an Analytical Study of the Quran:

Now we shall proceed to study the contents of the Quran from an analytic viewpoint. Of course, if we were to deal with every subject of the Quran separately, it would call for—as Rūmī would say—seventy tons of paper. So we will confine our discussion mainly to general and then a few particular issues.

The Quran has dealt with a vast range of subjects, and in this process, it is more concerned with certain subjects and less with others. The universe and its Creator are among the most recurring themes of the Quran. We must try to see how it treats this theme. Is its outlook philosophical or gnostic? Is its treatment similar to that of other religious books like the Bible and the *Torah*? Is it similar to that of the religious books of Hinduism? Does it deal with this problem in its own independent manner?

The other problem that is repeatedly treated by the Quran is the problem of the universe or the world of creation. We must examine the outlook of the Quran about the universe. Does it regard the universe and all creation to be an exercise in vanity and futility or does it regard it as being based on coherent truth? Does it consider the state of affairs in the universe as being based upon a series of laws and principles, or does it regard it as a chaotic phenomenon in which nothing is the cause or condition of any other thing? Among the general issues dealt by the Quran is the problem of the human being. The Quranic outlook regarding the human being must be analyzed. Does the Quran possess an optimistic outlook of man? Does it speak of him in pessimistic and negative terms? Does the Quran consider man as a despicable creature, or does it acknowledge his nobility and dignity?

The other problem dealt with in the Quran is the problem of human society. We have to see if the Quran considers the society to be primary and the individual as secondary or whether it subordinates the society to the individual. Are societies, according to the Quran, subject

to laws governing their life and death, their rise and decline, or are these conditions applicable to individuals alone? In the same way, its conception of history also needs to be clarified. What is the Quranic view regarding history? What are the forces that control the dynamics of history? To what extent can an individual's influence affect the course of history in the view of the Quran?

The Quran deals with numerous other issues. I shall enumerate some of them here. One of them is the point of view of the Quran about itself. The other issue is related to the Prophet (S) and its manner of introducing and addressing him. Another issue is its definition of a believer (*mu'min*) and his characteristics and so on.

Furthermore, each of these general issues possesses various branches and divisions. For example, when discussing mankind and its situation, it is natural to speak about morality. Or, when speaking about society, the problem of human relationships also unavoidably enters the discussion. The same is true of such notions as 'enjoining good and forbidding evil' (الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر), and the problem of social classes.

How does the Quran Introduce Itself?

For the purpose of analysing Quranic themes, it is better to start by examining the opinion of the Quran about itself and its manner of self-introduction. The first and foremost thing that the Quran pronounces about itself is that all of its words, phrases and sentences are the Word of God. It makes clear that the Prophet (S) was not its author; rather the Prophet only related whatever was revealed to him through the agency of the *Rūh al-Qudus* (Gabriel) with the permission of God.

The Quran describes its other function as the presentation of the prophetic mission, which is aimed at guidance of humanity, by delivering it from *darkness* and leading it towards *light*:

... كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

....A Book We have sent down to thee that thou mayest bring forth mankind from the darkness into the light....(14:1)

Without doubt the darkness of ignorance is one of the vices from which the Quran emancipates humanity and leads it towards the light of knowledge and wisdom. However, if merely ignorance were regarded as darkness, then the philosophers could have accomplished this job. But there exist other evils more dangerous than the vice of ignorance, and to subdue them is beyond the power of sheer knowledge. Among

them are the vices of worship of material benefits, egoism, enslavement to desires, and greed, which are considered to be personal and moral vices. Social vices like oppression and discrimination manifest the spiritual darkness of a society. In Arabic, the word *ẓulm* (injustice and oppression) is derived from the same root as *ẓulmah* (darkness), which shows that injustice is a form of social and spiritual darkness. To struggle against such forms of darkness is the responsibility and mission of the Quran and other heavenly books. Addressing Prophet Moses (A), the Quran says:

... أَنْ أَخْرِجَ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ...

...that thou mayest bring forth your people from the darkness into the light....(14:5)

This *darkness*, this shadow, is the darkness of Pharaoh's oppression and injustice and that of his clique. The *light* is the light of justice and freedom.

The exegetists of the Quran emphasize the point that whenever the Quran mentions darkness, it always uses it in the plural form *الظُّلُمَاتِ* though it always uses light in its singular form. This means that the word *الظُّلُمَاتِ* (darkness) includes all sorts of darkness, all of the evil ways that lead towards darkness, and that *النُّورِ* (light) signifies one single right path—the path of righteousness, whereas the ways of deviation and perversion are many. In *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, the Quran says:

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ
الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ...

God is the Protector of the believers; He brings them forth from the darkness into the light. And the unbelievers—their protectors are *tāghūt*, that bring them forth from the light into the darkness....(2:257)

The Quran determines its goal to be the breaking of the chains of ignorance, misguidance, moral and social corruption and destruction, or, in other words, to dissipate all sorts of darkness, and to guide humanity in the direction of justice, goodness and light.

The Language of the Quran

The other issue is that of gaining familiarity with the language of the Quran and the recitation of it. There are some people who think that the Quran is to be read merely for the purpose of obtaining spiritual reward (*thawāb*) without need of understanding anything of its contents. They continuously recite the Quran, but if they are even once

asked, "Do you understand the meaning of what you are reading?" they cannot answer. To recite the Quran is essential and good, being regarded as the first step necessary for comprehending its contents; and not merely as a means for gaining Divine reward.

The comprehension of the meaning of the Quran has certain peculiarities to which due attention must be paid. While other books are read for the purpose of acquiring the knowledge of novel ideas that merely involve reason and the rational faculties of the reader's mind, the Quran must be studied with the intention of educating oneself. The Quran itself clarifies this point:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ *

A book We have sent down to thee, blessed, that men possessed of mind may ponder its signs and so remember. (38:29)

One of the functions of the Quran is to instruct and to teach. For this purpose, the Quran addresses human reason and speaks in logical and demonstrative terms. There is also another language that the Quran makes use of. But this language is not used to appeal to the faculty of reason, but to the heart. This is the language of feeling. Whosoever wants to acquaint himself with the Quran, should be familiar with both of the languages and be able to make use of both of them simultaneously. It is a grave mistake to separate one from the other.

That which is termed here as *the heart*, is the great source of profound feeling that resides within all human beings. This is sometimes also called "the sense of being", i.e. the feeling of relationship between human existence and the Absolute Being.

One who knows the language of the heart, when he addresses the human being in this language, can move the inner depths of his being. It is not merely the mind and the intellect alone which is affected, but his whole being, which is profoundly influenced. This sort of influence can perhaps be illustrated by the example of music. The various forms of music share the common quality which is stimulation of human feelings. Music appeals to the human soul and immerses it into a specific world of feeling. The nature of feelings, excited by different kinds of music, of course, varies. Certain types of music may be associated with the passions of valour and bravery. In the past, on the battlefield, the effects of martial music were evident. Sometimes its effects were so strong that the frightened soldiers who would not dare come out of their bunkers, were made to march in fervour despite fierce attacks from enemy's ranks. It is possible that certain other kinds of music may excite sensual feelings and invite the listener to succumb to sensual vices. The results of such music are noticeable in the moral

waywardness of our own times. Perhaps no other thing could have so effectively broken down the walls of morality and chastity to the extent of this kind of music. Other kinds of instinctive feelings and passions, whether aroused by means of music or by some other means, can be controlled when addressed in the language that appeals to them.

One of the most sublime instincts and emotions present in all human beings is the urge for religion and the natural quest for God. It is in the same heavenly echoes that the Quran speaks to the Divine instincts of mankind.¹ The Quran itself recommends that its verses be recited in fine and beautiful rhythms; for it is in those heavenly rhythms that it speaks to the Divine nature of man.²

The Quran, describing itself, maintains that it speaks in two languages. Sometimes it introduces itself as the Book of meditation, logic and demonstration; at other times as the Book of feeling and love. In other words, it does not merely seek to nourish the intellect and thought, but also nurtures the human soul.

The Quran lays great emphasis on its own specific quality of music, a music which more than any other music, is effective in arousing the profound and sublime feelings of the human heart. The Quran directs the believers to devote a few hours of the night to reciting its verses, and to recite them during their ritual prayers when their attention is turned towards God. Addressing the Prophet, the Quran says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُ * فِيمَ اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا * نِصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا * أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ
تَرْتِيلًا *

O thou enwrapped in thy robes, keep vigil the night, except a little (a half of it, or diminish a little, or add a little) and chant the Quran very distinctly. (73:1-4)

It asks the Prophet (S) to recite the Quran while standing for the prayers. *Tartil* means to recite neither too hastily that words cannot be distinguished, nor too slowly that their connection be lost. It commands the Prophet (S) to recite its verses rhythmically, and at the same time to cogitate upon their meaning. Again, in a later verse of the same sūrah, the Prophet is reminded that he needs enough sleep to effectively perform the daily chores of business or jihad in the path of God; nevertheless, he should not forget to seclude himself for worship.

It were the same rhythms of the Quran that became the singular source of spiritual joy and strength, and the means of producing inner purity and sincerity among Muslims. It was the same music of the Quran, which, in a very short period of time, converted the barbarous tribes of the Arabian peninsula, into a steadfast nation of committed believers, who could grapple with the greatest powers of the age and

overthrow them.

The Muslims did not merely view the Quran as a book of moral advice and instruction alone, but also, as a spiritual and ideological tonic. They recited the Quran with devotion of heart during their intimate nightly supplications, and during the day, they derived from it the strength to attack the unbelievers like roaring lions.³ The Quran had just such an expectation of those who had found their faith. Addressing the Prophet, it says:

فَلَا تُطِيعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا*

Obey not the unbelievers, but struggle against them with it [the Quran] striving mightily. (25:52)

The Quran advises the Prophet (S) not to pay heed to the words of the infidels and to stand firmly against them equipped with the weapon of the Quran. It assures him that the ultimate victory shall be his. The life of the Prophet (S) itself is a positive proof of this assurance. He stood all alone against enemies without any support except the Quran, and the same Quran meant everything to him. It produced warriors for him, furnished arms and forces, until, ultimately, the enemies were totally subdued. The Quran drew towards him individuals from the enemy's camp, and caused them to submit before the Messenger of God. In this way the Divine pledge was fulfilled.⁴

When the Quran calls its language 'the language of the heart', it means the heart which it seeks to purify, enlighten and stimulate. This language is other than the language of music that occasionally arouses sensual feelings. It is also different from the language of martial music that arouses the spirit of heroism in the hearts of soldiers and strengthens and enhances their enthusiasm. Rather, it is the language which converted the Arab bedouins into inspired mujāhidīn, for whom it was said:

حَمَلُوا بَصَائِرَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَسْيَافِهِمْ

They carried their visions on their swords.

Those people carried their vision, their ideology, their religion and spiritual discoveries on their swords, and used them in the defence of those ideals and ideas. The notions of private and personal interest were alien to them. Though they were not innocent and infallible, and they did commit mistakes, yet they were those who rightly fitted the description:

قَائِمُ اللَّيْلِ وَصَائِمُ النَّهَارِ

Standing in prayer during nights, fasting during daytime.

Every moment of day and night, they were in contact with the depths of Being. Their nights were passed in worship, and days in jihad.⁵

It is on account of this characteristic, that the Quran is a book of the heart and the soul. Its appeal overwhelms the soul and brings tears flowing from the eyes and makes the heart tremble. It stresses this point and considers it true even of the "People of the Book":⁶

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ هُمْ بِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ * وَإِذَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِهِ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ
مِنْ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مُسْلِمِينَ *

Those to whom We gave the Book before this believe in it, and, when it is recited to them, they say, 'We believe in it; surely it is the Truth from our Lord; even before it we were of those who surrender. (28:52-53)

It describes a group of people who undergo a state of veneration and awe when the Quran is recited before them. They affirm faith in all the contents of the Book, declare everything in it to be nothing but truth and their veneration of it continues to increase. In another verse, the Quran affirms that among the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (The People of the Book), the Christians are closer to the Muslims than the idolaters and Jews. Then a group of Christians who believed and became Muslims on hearing the Quran are described in these words:

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَىٰ أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ
رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ *

And when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, thou seest their eyes overflow with tears, because of the truth they recognize. They say, 'Our Lord we believe; so do Thou write us down among the witnesses.' (5:83)

In another place, while describing the believers, the Quran says:

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ
تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ...

God has sent down the fairest discourse as a book, consimilar in its oft-repeated parts, whereat shiver the skins of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of God....(39:23)

In these, as well as in many other verses (such as 19:58, 61:1,

etc.), the Quran tells us that it is not merely a book of knowledge and analysis; but at the same time that it makes use of logical arguments that appeal to the intellect, it also speaks to the finer sensibilities of the human soul.

The Quran's Addressees:

Another point that has to be inferred from the Quranic text during its analytical study, is to determine the identity of those who are addressed by it. There are certain expressions like *هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* (guidance for the God-fearing), *هُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ* (guidance and good tiding for the believers), *لِيُنذِرَ مَن كَانَ حَيًّا* (to admonish and caution him who is alive), which often recur in the Quran. Here, the question may arise: Of what need is guidance for those who are already guided, the pious and the righteous? Moreover, we see that the Quran describes itself in these words:

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ * وَلَتَعْلَمَنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ *

*It is but a reminder unto all beings, and you shall surely know its tiding, after a while.*⁷ (38:87-88)

Then, is this book meant for all the people of the world, or is it for the believers alone? In another verse, addressing the Prophet, God, the Most Exalted, says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ *

We have not sent thee, save as a mercy unto all beings. (21:107)

A more detailed explanation of this matter would be undertaken during the course of later discussion regarding the historical aspect of the Quran. Here it is just sufficient to mention that the Quran is addressed to all the people of the world. It does not single out any particular nation or group. Everyone who accepts the invitation of the Quran is assured of spiritual salvation. However, the verses which mention the Quran as the book of guidance for the believers and the God-fearing (*mu'minūn* and *muttaqūn*), clearly specify the kind of people who will be attracted towards it and others who will turn away from it. The Quran never names any particular nation or tribe as being its devotees. It does not take sides with a specially chosen people. Unlike other religions, the Quran never associates itself with the interests of any specific class. It does not say, for example, that it has come to safeguard the interests of the workers or the peasants. The Quran

repeatedly emphasizes the point that its purpose is to establish justice. Speaking about the prophets, it says:

... وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ ...

...and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that men might uphold justice....(57:25)

The Quran advocates justice for all mankind, not merely for this or that class, tribe or nation. It does not, for example, like Nazism and other such cults, stir up the passions of prejudice to attract people. Similarly, it does not, like certain schools of thought like Marxism, base its appeal upon the human weakness of interest-seeking and enslavement to material motivations to incite people;⁸ because the Quran believes in the essential primariness of the rational consciousness of man and his intrinsic conscience. It believes that it is on the basis of its moral potentialities and its truth-conscious human nature that mankind is placed firmly on the path of progress and evolution. This is the reason why its message is not limited to the working or farming class or exclusively to the oppressed and deprived. The Quran addresses both the oppressors as well as the oppressed, and calls them to follow the right path. Prophet Moses (A) delivers the message of God to both Bani Israel and Pharaoh, and asks them to believe in the Lord and to move in His path. Prophet Muḥammad (S) extends his invitation both to the chieftains of Quraysh and to ordinary persons like Abu Dharr and 'Ammār. The Quran cites numerous examples of an individual's revolt against his own self and his voluntary return from the path of deviation to the straight one. But, at the same time, the Quran is aware of the point that the restoration and repentance of those immersed in a life of luxury and opulence is comparatively more difficult than that of those familiar with the hardships of life: the oppressed and the deprived, who are, as a matter of fact, naturally more inclined towards justice; whereas the rich and wealthy, at the very first step, have to forgo their personal and class interests and abandon their wishes and aspirations.

The Quran declares that its followers are those who have a clear and pure conscience. They are drawn to it solely by the love of justice and truth, which is ingrained in the nature of all human beings—not under the urge for material interests and worldly desires and allurements.

Conception of Reason in the Quran

Heretofore we have discussed briefly the diction of the Quran, and said that, for the purpose of communicating its message, the Quran makes use of two types of languages, namely, the language of rational

argument and the language of feeling. Each of these languages has a specific appeal. The first type addresses and appeals to the intellect or reason, while the second one is meant to appeal to the heart. Now we shall examine the point of view of the Quran regarding reason ('*aql*).

It is to be seen whether or not the Quran acknowledges the 'authority' (*hujjah*) of reason—as the scholars of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *uṣūl* put it. This means whether or not we should respect the judgments of reason and act according to them if they happen to be correct and rightly deduced by it. Moreover, if one acts according to the dictates of reason and occasionally falls into error, will God exonerate him for it, or whether He will punish him on account of that error? And, if one fails to act according to the ruling of reason, does he deserve punishment?

Evidence in Favour of the Authority of Reason

The issue of the authority of reason in Islam is certain. Since the earliest times until the present, none amongst the Islamic scholars—except for a very small number—has ever negated the authority of reason; they have counted it as one of the four sources of Islamic *fiqh*.

1. The Quran's Emphasis on Rationalism

Since our discussion is about the Quran, I think it necessary to produce arguments concerning the authority of reason from the Quran itself. The Quran, in various ways, confirms the authority of reason. About sixty to seventy verses can be cited—and that, too, for just *one* of the various ways, as mentioned—in which the Quran indicates that such and such a matter has been mentioned for reason to reflect on. In one instance, the Quran refers to this issue in a striking statement:

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ *

*Surely the worst of beasts in God's sight are those that are deaf and dumb and do not reason.*⁹ (8:22)

Of course, it is obvious that the Quran does not mean the physically deaf and dumb, but those who do not want to listen to truth, or those who, when they hear, do not wish to admit it with their tongues. In the view of the Quran, the ears which are unable to listen to truth and which are only used for listening to absurd and nonsensical things, are deaf. The tongue which is merely used to utter nonsense, is dumb. The people who do not reason (... الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ *) are those who do not make use of their intellect and their faculty of thought. Such are not fit to be called

human beings. The Quran includes them among the beasts.¹⁰

In another verse, while bringing up a subject related to Divine Unity (*al-tawḥīd*), the Quran refers to the issue of unity of Divine Acts, and says:

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ...

It is not for any soul to believe, save by the leave of God....(10:100)

After stating this profound issue—a problem which is not easily comprehensible to every human mind—the Quran continues the verse like this:

... وَيَجْعَلُ الرَّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ *

....and He lays abomination upon those who do not reason. (10:100)

In these two verses, which I quote here for the sake of example, the Quran, in the terms of logic, invites us to ratiocination. There are many other verses in the Quran which, on the basis of consequential signification, can be said to accept the authority of reason.¹¹ In other words, the Quran makes statements which cannot be accepted without accepting the authority of reason. For instance, an opponent is asked to forward rational argument in favour of his position:

... قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ *

....Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful. (2:111)

This can only be inferred to mean the Quran's ratification of the authority of reason. In another place it uses syllogistic argument to prove the existence of the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*):

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا...

Were there gods in them [earth and heaven] other than God, they would surely disintegrate....(21:22)

In these verses the Quran has framed a conditional proposition, which exempts or excludes the antecedent premise for arriving at a conclusion which is consequent upon it. Thus the Quran aims at emphasizing the role of reason and refutes the view of some of the religions that faith is alien to, or, is incompatible with reason, and that to embrace faith one has to suspend his rational faculty and concentrate upon heart alone, so that it may absorb the Divine light and become illuminated by it. This

view is totally negated and refuted by the Quran.

2. References to the Law of Causality

The other argument that supports the view that the Quran approves of the ultimate authority of reason, is that it defines various problems in terms of cause-and-effect relationship. The cause-and-effect relationship, or the law of causation, is the foundation of rational thinking. This law is honoured by the Quran and is also employed by it. The Quran speaks on behalf of God, the Almighty, the Creator of the system of cause and effect. Despite the fact that His Word transcends the limitations of causality, the Quran is not oblivious of pointing out to the system of causality operating in the universe; it views all phenomena and events as being subservient to this system. The following verse supports this view:

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ...

....God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves.... (13:11)

The Quran intends to say that, although all destinies depend on the Will of God, He never imposes upon human beings such fate as is outside and alien to their determination, will and action. The destinies of societies also change according to their intrinsic system of functioning. God does not extravagantly alter the destiny of a nation without any specific reason, unless they themselves bring about a major change in their system of social and moral values and their manner of performing their individual duties.

The Quran urges Muslims to study the conditions and circumstances of societies of the past and to take lesson from their history. It is evident that if the destinies of races and nations were random, or dependent upon accidents, or were prescribed from above, the advice to study and draw a lesson would not have any sense. By laying emphasis on it, the Quran intends to remind us that a uniform system of laws governs the destinies of all the nations of the world. It also reminds us that if the conditions of a society in which we live, are similar to the conditions prevalent in a society of the past, the same fate awaits us too. Elsewhere, the Quran says:

فَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَبُرُجُهَا مُعَبَّدَةٌ وَقَصْرِ
مَشِيدٍ * أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُون لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ...

How many a city We have destroyed in its evildoing, and now it is fallen down upon its turrets. How many a ruined well, a tall palace. What, have they not

journeyed in the land so that they have hearts to understand with, or ear to hear with....? (22:45-46)

From this statement, we can infer that the affirmation of the law of causality and the approval of the cause-and-effect relationship, imply the acceptance of authority of reason.

3. Rational Basis of Divine Commands

Another argument which proves that the Quran believes in the ultimate authority of reason, is that the Quran always explains the rationale behind its commands, laws and precepts. The scholars of *uṣūl al-dīn* (the principles of the Faith) maintain that the harms and benefits caused by human deeds are among the reasons behind laws and commands. For example, while at one place the Quran ordains the performance of prayers, in another place it explains the philosophy of prayer:

... إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ...

....indeed prayer forbids indecency and dishonour....(29:45)

It mentions the spiritual effects of prayer, and states how the prayer can edify man. It explains that it is on account of this exaltation that man can dissociate himself from indecencies. Elsewhere, after laying down rules for observing the fast, the Quran explains the rationale for its command:

... كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ*

....prescribed for you is the Fast, even as it was prescribed for those that were before you—haply you will be God-fearing. (2:183)

Similarly, with respect to other commandments like those regarding *zakāt* (alms) and *jihād*, the Quran clarifies their necessity for individual, as well as for society. In this way, the Quran, notwithstanding the transcendental nature of Divine commandments, clarifies fully their worldly and terrestrial relevance, and asks men to cogitate upon their rationale until their meaning becomes explicit, so that it may not be imagined that these laws are based on a series of occult notions beyond the power of human comprehension.

4. Combating Deviations of Reason

Another evidence in favour of the Quran's affirmation of the authority of reason—which is more conclusive than that mentioned

above—is the battle it launched against all those agents which obstruct the proper functioning of reason. For clarification of this point, we are forced to mention certain things in the way of an introduction.

The human mind can, in many cases, fall into error. This fact is acknowledged by all of us. However, this danger is not limited to the intellect alone, but can equally befall the senses, and feelings as well. Just for the sense of vision, scores of visual errors and optical illusions have been pointed out. In the case of reason, too, there are times when people frame an argument and rationale and draw an inference on its basis, but later on they realize that the basis of their conclusion was erroneous. Here the question arises, whether the faculty of reason should be suspended on account of its occasional failures, or whether we should employ other means for discovering the errors of the intellect and seek to avoid such errors. In answering this question, the Sophists said that reason should not be relied upon, and that, basically, argumentation and reasoning is an absurd practice. Other philosophers have given a fitting reply to the Sophists, and said that though the senses can also err like reason, but no one has ever recommended their suspension. Since it was not possible to discard reason, the philosophers resolved to find ways of making reason secure from error. During their efforts in this regard, they discovered that all arguments consist of two parts, namely, matter and form. Like a building which has various ingredients in its construction, like, lime, cement, steel, etc. (matter), to acquire a specific structure (form). In order to attain the permanence and perfection of its construction, it is essential to procure proper material as well as to draw a perfect and faultless plan. For the correctness and accuracy of an argument, too, it is essential that its content and form be both free of error and defect. For judging the validity of the form of any argument, the Aristotelian or formal logic came into existence. The function of formal logic is to determine the accuracy or inaccuracy of the form of an argument, and help the mind to avoid errors in the process of reasoning.¹²

But the major problem that remains is that solely formal logic is inadequate for this purpose, because it cannot alone guarantee the validity of an argument. It can give assurance about one aspect alone. To obtain the perfection of the material aspect, the use of material logic is also essential, that is, we need certain criteria for controlling the quality of the rational material.

Thinkers like Bacon and Descartes strove hard to evolve some kind of material logic similar to the formal logic of Aristotle, which was devised for formal reasoning. They did obtain certain criteria in this regard, though they are not as universal as those of Aristotelian logic, but are, to a limited extent, helpful in preventing the mind from committing errors in reasoning. Some may be surprised to know that

the Quran has presented such principles for the prevention of any lapses in the process of reasoning, which surpass in merit and precedence the efforts of philosophers like Descartes and others.

The Quranic Viewpoint Regarding the Sources of Error

Among various sources of error mentioned by the Quran, one is that of taking conjecture and hypothesis for certainty and conviction.¹³ If a person were to adhere to the principle of putting conviction only in certainties and of not confusing between conjectures and certainties, he would not fall into error.¹⁴ The Quran lays great emphasis on this problem, and has clearly stated in one place that one of the biggest errors of the human mind is pursuit of conjectures and hypotheses. In another verse, which is addressed to the Prophet (S), the Quran says:

وَأَنْ تُطِيعَ أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَأَنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ *

If thou obeyest the most part of those on earth, they will lead thee astray from the path of God: they follow only surmise, merely conjecturing. (6:116)

In another verse, the Quran says:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ ...

And pursue not that thou has no knowledge of....(17:36)

This is the word of caution to mankind extended by the Quran, for the first time in the history of human ideas, warning mankind against this kind of error.

The second source of error in the reasoning process, which is particularly relevant in social issues, is imitation. Most people are such that they accept whatever beliefs that are current in their society. They adopt certain beliefs merely for the reason that they were followed by their preceding generation.¹⁵ The Quran bids people to carefully scrutinize all ideas and judge them by the criteria of reason—neither to follow blindly the conventional beliefs and traditions of their ancestors, nor to reject them totally without any rational justification. It reminds us that there are many false doctrines that were introduced in the past, but were accepted by the people, and there are also certain truths that were presented in the distant past, but people resisted them on account of their ignorance. In accepting any ideas or principles, men are advised to make use of their intellects and rational faculties, and not to indulge in blind imitation. Very often, the Quran puts imitation of ancestors in

direct opposition to reason and intellect:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَّلًا كَانُوا هُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ *

And when it is said to them: 'Follow what God has sent down', they say, 'No; but we will follow such things as we found our fathers doing.' What? Even if their fathers had no understanding of anything, and if they were not guided? (2:170)

The Quran constantly reiterates the view that the idea of antiquity of an idea is neither the evidence of its falsity, nor is it a testimony of its truthfulness. Antiquity affects material objects; but the eternal truths of existence never become old and outmoded. Truths like:

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ...

....God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves....

are true for ever and ever. The Quran asks us to face issues with the weapon of reason and intellect. One should neither forsake a belief for fear of becoming the target of others' ridicule and banter, nor should he accept a belief just because it is upheld by some important and well-known persons. We should ourselves study and investigate the roots of all matters and draw our own conclusions.¹⁶

A Third effective source of error pointed out by the Quran is

غرض آمد هنر پوشیده شد
صد حجاب از دل بسوی دیده شد

*Selfish motives tarnish virtue and merit,
A cascade of curtains gallops from the heart towards vision.*

Unless one maintains objectivity and neutrality in every matter, he is unlikely to think correctly. Reason can function properly only in an atmosphere that is free of selfish desires and motives. A well-known anecdote of al-Allāmah al-Hillī, can illustrate this point.

A problem of *fiqh* was put before al-Allāmah al-Hillī: If an animal falls inside a well, and the carcass cannot be removed, what should be done with the well? Incidentally, during the same days, an animal happened to fall into the well in his own house, and it became inevitable for him to deduce an injunction to solve his own problem, too. There were two possible ways to solve the issue: Firstly, the well should be totally closed, not to be used again; secondly, a fixed quantity of

water should be emptied from the well and the rest of well's water would be clean and usable. The 'Allāmah realized that he could not give a completely impartial verdict about the problem without interference from his own personal interest. Accordingly, he ordered his own well be colsed. Then, with an easy mind, free of the pressure of selfish motives, he turned to deducing the details of verdict in the second case.

The Quran contains a large number of warnings regarding the evil of submission to personal desires. The following is just one instance of it:

إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ...

....They follow nothing except conjecture, and what the self desires....(53:25)

To be continued

NOTES

1. Various Eastern and Western scholars have spoken regarding this religious or spiritual consciousness in man. Here I shall cite quotations from two of those thinkers of world renown. One is from Einstein. In one of his treatises he has expressed his views about religion. In his view, three types of religion exist in the world:

a. The religion of fear; that is, the religion of those people whose driving motive towards religion consists of a series of fears associated with nature and environment.

b. The religion of ethics; by this, he means the kind of religion which is based on moral expediencies.

c. Then he mentions another religion, which he calls "the religion of being". This interpretation of religion by Einstein almost concurs with what we mean by "the heart". According to Einstein, one sometimes attains a spiritual state when he liberates himself from the confinement of his limited self, chained in the shackles of petty worldly desires, and is successful in spontaneously elevating himself above the level of mundane physical existence which has entrapped him. Then he is able to gain a panoramic view of the totality of being and perceives it as a single reality. In such a state, the greatness and grandeur that lies beyond the phenomenal existence, are revealed to him. That is the time when man is able to evaluate his own existence as an insignificant and infinitesimal fraction of the totality of being and becomes a part of it.

This interpretation of Einstein reminds us of the episode of Hammam, who once asked Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A) about the attributes of the pious, and 'Alī gave him a concise reply saying:

يا همام، اتق الله وأحسن: ف «إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ»

O, Hammām, fear God and perform good acts, because verily God is with those who guard themselves against evil and those who do good (to others). (Nahj al-balāghah, sermon 193)

But Hammām would not be satisfied with this answer and wanted a more detailed and elaborate description. Then 'Alī (A) took to describing the qualities of a believer in detail, enumerating approximately 130 characteristics of the pious.

There he says:

وَلَوْلَا الْأَجَلُ الَّذِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ لَمْ تَسْتَقِرُّ أَرْوَاحُهُمْ فِي أَجْسَادِهِمْ ظَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ،...

If there had not been a fixed period (of life) ordained for each, their spirits would not have remained in their bodies even for the twinkling of an eye.

This is the same state as Einstein refers to. He says that a religious person feels himself as if in an imprisoned state, and wants to get out of the cage of his physical existence in order to recover his vision of the unity of the totality of being. This truth has been defined more intensely and colourfully by 'Ali (A). According to him, it is as if the *mu'min* accumulates the totality of being in his physical frame; as a result, his spirit spontaneously breaks its barriers and obtains liberty. It is recounted that as 'Ali finished his speech, Hammām gave a cry and his soul left his physical form.

In the context of spiritual experience, Iqbal too, has said something interesting; he says: The spiritual reward of the prayer as a means of spiritual illumination is not at all puzzling; it is a vital act by which the tiny island of our personality discovers its true situation within the vast ocean of existence.

2. The Imams (A) used to chant the Quran in such a moving tone that the passers-by stopped, stood in awe and tears flowed from their eyes.

3. Imām al-Sajjād (A) mentions this point in his prayer meant for reciting on the occasion of completion of the Quran by someone:

وَاجْعَلِ الْقُرْآنَ لَنَا فِي ظُلْمِ اللَّيْلِ مُؤْتَسًا.

....*And make the Quran a companion unto us in the darkness of the night.*

4. In our own times, this truthful promise of God has been once again fulfilled, and a single man, a descendent of the Prophet (S), who, like his holy ancestor, had his sole reliance in the power of Quran and his faith, brought about a deadly and crushing defeat on the militia of *kufr* and evil.

5. Imam 'Alī (A), in one of the sermons of the *Nahj al-balāghah* which is popularly known as "*al-Muttaqūn*" (sermon 193), enumerates many qualities of the pious and delineates their character, behaviour, their manner of speech, how they spend their nights and so on:

أَمَّا اللَّيْلُ فَصَافُونَ أَقْدَامَهُمْ،...

During nights they line up their feet (standing) for worship....

...تَالِينَ لِأَجْزَاءِ الْقُرْآنِ يَرْتَلُونَهَا تَرْتِيلاً.

....*reciting in a well-measured way (not like many of us, who hastily recite the Quran without understanding its meaning)....*

...يُحْزِنُونَ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ...

....*Creating through it feeling in their souls....*

"If they come across a verse creating eagerness (for Paradise) they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. And when they come across a verse which contains fear (of Hell) they turn

the ears of their hearts towards it, and feel as though they hear the raging of hellfire with their ears.”

6. *Ahl al-kitāb* or “the People of the Book”, is a term used to designate the Jews and Christians as distinct from the idolaters.

7. This verse is one of the most wonderful verses of the Quran. At the time of its revelation the Prophet was in Mecca and his intercourse was limited to the people of this small town. It seemed ludicrous to many that a man so alone among his own tribe should talk so confidently, and calmly tell them that they would learn about the significance of this verse later on and would find out how this Book will change the world and its people in a short period of time.

8. Because, in that case, the followers would not really aim at the goals of justice and truth, but they would be after their own material gains and fulfilment of their desires.

9. Here the term ‘*dābbah*’ (beast) includes insects also; but in Arabic the usage of this term is confined to four-footed animals like the horse, cow, mule etc.

10. The same idea has been put into verse in the following fine couplet of Sa’di:

به نطق آدمی بهتر است از دواب دواب از توبه گرنگوئی صواب

*Speech makes man superior to animals,
But misuse of the same can make animals excel him.*

11. In all cases in which a particular object guides us to another object, it is called *dalīl* (proof, argument or evidence). Proofs or arguments are of different kinds. One of them is linguistic argument (that is, a particular term has various implications). Such an argument is possible in three ways:

First: Argument by complete identity (*dalālat al-muṭābaqah*): a term or word indicates the totality of a thing; that is, it includes in its domain all of its useful aspects. For instance, when we say ‘automobile’, we mean to indicate the whole body of the machine, inclusive of all of its parts.

Second: Argument by implication, or partial identity (*dalālat al-taḍammun*). A term in this case refers to a specific meaning only. For instance, when we say, ‘there is an automobile’, we understand that its chassis or its engine is also present there.

Third: Argument by necessity (*dalālat al-iltizām*): Here a term or word leads us to the understanding of something which is not included in its domain of meaning. For example, when we hear the name, ‘Hātim’, it immediately suggests ‘generosity’.

12. The source of various misconceptions that affected science during the last several centuries was the false notion held by some that the function of Aristotelian logic was also to prove the validity of the matter or contents of a demonstration. Since this was beyond the power of Aristotelian logic, they gave the verdict of its ineffectualness. Regretfully, this error has been repeated many times in our days also, which, of course, shows that those who commit it have neither any correct knowledge of Aristotelian logic, nor did they properly understand it. Making use of the same allegory of construction of a building, we may say that the role of Aristotelian logic in determining the validity of an argument is exactly similar to that of a plumb in determining the straightness of a wall. The plumb line cannot detect any adulteration in the cement used, nor can it indicate the presence or absence of desired qualities in the materials of its construction. What a plumb indicates is just the straightness or irregularity in a wall. The Aristotelian logic, which has been improved by several later thinkers, and has become much more developed, can merely judge the form of an argument and is silent regarding any approval or disapproval of its matter and content.

13. This is the method laid down by Descartes in his work, the *Rules for the direction of the mind*. He will, he says, confine his thinking to fields in which

certain and undisputable knowledge seems possible of attainment. He will not take other people's opinions, or accept as a starting-point anything short of an intuition, or mental content, so clear and so distinct that there is no avoiding it. Building upon this intuition, he will keep his superstructure anchored and riveted to its foundation by constant analysis and review and unification of his procedure. No difficulties will be skirted or left unresolved. The foundation will be frequently re-examined and retested by subjecting even the seemingly self-evident to searching criticism. Last, but not least, he will do his best to avoid what we today call "wishful thinking".

14. However, we must notice that in issues from which probability cannot be excluded and in which certainty cannot be achieved, what is to be taken into consideration is the amount of probability. However, conjecture and probability should be taken for what they are and must not be confused with certainty. Taking probability for certainty is what leads to the second form of error.

15. This idea also occurs in one of the essays of Bacon. Unfolding the celebrated account of idols, or false images of the human mind, which distort the judgement in its search for truth, he named this class of idols as "idols of the tribe"; by it he aims to point out this practice of blind imitation.

16. The problem of following the ancestors and elders, or following the spirit and ethos of the age—things strictly forbidden by the Quran—should not be confused with the issue of following (*taqlid*) an Islamic jurist (*faqih*), which is a religious duty of every muslim based on the sound principle of utilizing the specialized knowledge of a specialist.

Outlines of the Development of the Science of Ḥadīth *Part 2*

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Reasons Behind Emergence of 'Ilm Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

Unfortunately on account of various reasons, some of which we shall mention shortly, the ḥadīth did not remain immune from forgery and other problems. A great number of incorrect traditions found way into collections of prophetic sayings. The task of separating genuine traditions from apocryphal material was as necessary as that of removing weeds from a flower bed; as in case of weeds, their identification and removal was not an easy task, nor could they be left to flourish untouched, threatening the genuine material itself. This was the reason why religious scholars, in their capacity as vigilant gardeners of the Faith, began to look for ways of separating forged material from genuine ḥadīth. They needed new tools for this task, which was not an easy one, as is evident from the fact that despite centuries of scholarly efforts the remnants of these dangerous and destructive weeds have continued to survive.

As to how these weeds found their way into the flower beds of prophetic tradition, here are some of the important reasons:

1. There were some who wilfully sprinkled the seeds of such weeds, and dedicatedly looked after their growth and survival. Amongst them were supporters of Banī Umayyah and other opponents of Islam who dissembled adherence to it.¹

2. Emergence of various sects in Islam led to forgeries by followers of different sects who wished to produce documentary evidence in favour of their own sect and to detriment of their opponents.²

3. Fabrications made by the devout about virtues of piety and abstinence from evil, who imagined that by this means they would be better equipped to guide others.³

4. Inclusion of Jewish myths, a process which was stimulated by the popular sense of curiosity and the people's interest in the lives and times of former prophets. Such imaginative accounts are replete in narrations regarding the lives and deeds of prophets—such as the

account related by al-Ṭabarī on the authority of Ibn Munabbih. According to this account, the serpent, formerly, had hands and legs; but since it allowed the Devil to enter its belly, God had made its limbs to sink into its stomach!⁴

5. Tribal and regional prejudices and rivalries, which incited some to forge traditions to be produced as evidence of their superiority over others—as is evident from traditions related to some cities.

6. Personal ambition was another stimulant which prompted some to be included among the scholars of ḥadīth through forgery.

7. Fabrication of ḥadīth as a means of procurement of personal gain or of earning goodwill of the caliph in power.⁵

8. Controversies and differences among jurists (*fuqahā'*) prompted some scholars to fabricate traditions to be invoked in support of their own legal positions.

9. Story-tellers and reciters of fables, admittedly, were not averse to letting their imagination wander into the domain of ḥadīth.⁶

Due to the above-mentioned and other reasons besides, a critical examination of ḥadīth was necessary. As a result of the efforts made by Muslim scholars in this regard, a new branch was created in the science of ḥadīth; it came to be called "*dirāyat al-ḥadīth*".⁷

The *Nihāyat al-dirāyah* defines *dirāyat al-ḥadīth* in these words: "It is a science which investigates the *isnād*, contents, subject and the mode of transmission of *aḥādīth*, so that acceptable traditions can be separated from unacceptable ones."

Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

The emergence of '*ilm dirāyat al-ḥadīth*' was followed by its division into numerous branches. Certain rules and guidelines were evolved for distinguishing reliable from unreliable *aḥādīth*. The body of such rules came to be called "*muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth*", which together with '*ilm al-rijāl*' (lit. science of men), formed the means of scrutinizing ḥadīth material. However, for this purpose, knowledge of other preliminaries such as Arabic grammar and syntax, familiarity with literary style and form, knowledge of abrogated (*mansūkh*) and the abrogating (*nāsikh*) verses of the Quran, knowledge of the history of Islam and that of various Islamic sects and their beliefs, and other details regarding ḥadīth, is necessary.

Ḥājī Khalīfah, in his *Kashf al-ẓunūn* defines '*ilm al-dirāyah*' in this manner: "*Ilm dirāyat al-ḥadīth*, which discusses the content and meaning of the words of ḥadīth on the basis of Arabic grammar and syntax, and *shar'ī* criteria, and examines their correspondence with the circumstances of the Messenger of Allah (S), linguistic standards of Arabic sciences and reports about the Messenger (S), consists of '*ilm al-rijāl*,

(the science of narrators, their names, genealogical lineages, lifetimes, their dates of death, their characters and circumstances of reception and transmission of *ḥadīth*, as well as its topic or subject) and aims to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable traditions. It entails classification of various modes of transmission, linguistic background of narrators, their remarks and criticism about what they have narrated, their connection with the prior source from whom they have received, knowledge of possession of permission (*ijāzah*)⁸ by a narrator, and knowledge of various classifications of *ḥadīth*, such as *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *da'īf*, etc."⁹

'Ilm al-Rijāl

The following verse of the Quran made it incumbent upon *al-muhaddithīn* (scholars of *ḥadīth*) to make a thorough enquiry into details of narrators of *aḥādīth*:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ
نَادِمِينَ *

O believers, if an ungodly man comes to you with a report, investigate, lest you afflict a people unwittingly and then repent of what you have done.
(49:6)

As to who were pioneers in this field, it must be admitted that the Shi'ah had taken a lead in this field. The first writer to compile a book on this subject was Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh ibn Jibillah ibn Ḥayyān al-Kanānī (died 219/834).¹⁰ But according to Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī in his *Kitāb al-'awā'il*, the first writer on *'ilm al-rijāl* was Shu'bah (died 260/873-74).¹¹ However, it is clear that the statement of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī does not correspond with historical fact, for 'Abd Allāh ibn Jibillah died forty years before Shu'bah.

Another important point that should be noted here is that writing of chronicles of persons or biographical accounts was current amongst the Shi'ah from the very early days of Islam. If this is taken into account, Abū Rāfi' and his desendants took a lead before all others.¹²

Some books on *'ilm al-rijāl* give biographical accounts of narrators without giving the dates of their death, such as *Tārīkh* of Ibn Jarīr, *Murūj al-dhahab* of al-Mas'ūdī, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh* of Ibn al-Athīr. Some give dates of death without biographical accounts. Others, being more comprehensive, give almost all essential details; such as the works of Abu al-Faraj Jawzī and al-Dhahabī.¹³

Five Important Shī'ite Works

The most important books compiled by Shī'ah scholars on *'ilm al-rijāl* are five. They are:

1. *Kitāb al-rijāl* by Abī al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Najāshī (died 450/1058), which later became known merely as "*al-Najāshī*", gives accounts of lives of narrators who have compiled books, giving little attention to others. Though the biographical accounts are given in an alphabetical order, the compilation is not very orderly. However, later, through the efforts of Kāzīm al-Anṣārī (died 1006/1597-8), Mullā 'Ināyat Allāh Quhpā'ī (died 1016/1607-8)—the author of *Majma' al-rijāl*—and Shaykh Dāwūd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Baḥraynī (died 1104/1692-3), these defects have been removed.

2. *Kitāb al-fihrist*, by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, known as "Shaykh al-Ṭa'ifāh" (died 460/1067-8). This book gives the biographical accounts in an alphabetical order. Moreover, several others have worked upon it.

3. *Kitāb al-rijāl*, also by al-Ṭūsī, in which he gives the names of the contemporaries of every Imam (A) in the order of their succession.

4. *Ma'rifat akhbār al-rijāl*, by 'Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Kashshī.

5. *Al-Du'afā'* by Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh, a scholar of the fifth century Hijrah.

Important Books Composed by Scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah

The most important books compiled in the field of *'ilm al-rijāl* by scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah are four:

1. *Kitāb ibn Mandah*, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā (died 301/913-14).

2. *Hilyat al-'awliyā'* by Abī Nu'aym al-'Iṣfahānī (died 430/1038-9).

3. *Kitāb Abī Mūsā*, Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr al-'Iṣfahānī (died 581/1185-6), which is a continuation of the work of Ibn Mandah.

4. *Al-'Istī'āb* by Ibn 'Abd al-Birr.

After the above four works, other writings on *'ilm al-rijāl* by Sunnī scholars were primarily based on them. 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Athīr al-Juzurī (died 630/1132-3) brought them together in his *Usd al-ghābah*. Al-Dhahabī produced a summarized version of *Usd al-ghābah* in his *Tajrīd Asmā' al-Ṣaḥābah*, adding some new entries. Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Qudsi and Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Kāshgharī, too, produced their own condensed versions of the *Usd al-ghābah*.¹⁴

A point worthy of notice here is that Shī'ah scholars of *'ilm al-rijāl*, in the fifth and sixth centuries, named such books as were exclusively related to Shī'ite narrators of ḥadīth as "*rijāl*", calling accounts of

others, including both Shi'ah and Sunnī narrators, as "tārīkh".¹⁵

Another notable point is that, in the past, there existed a mutual, inseparable link between the three disciplines of *dirāyat al-ḥadīth*, 'ilm *rijāl al-ḥadīth* and bibliography. Works dealing with one of the topics, invariably discussed issues connected with the other disciplines.

Important Scholars of al-Rijāl

The most important authors who have compiled works on 'ilm *al-rijāl* are following:¹⁶

1. 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Abī Rāfi'.
2. Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (died 151/768), grandson of Yasār. His work is called *Madrak al-'Istī'āb*.
3. Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja'far (died 210/825-6). His work, too, is called *Madrak al-'Istī'āb*.
4. 'Abd Allāh ibn Jibillah ibn Ḥannān (died 219/834). He compiled a book on 'ilm *al-rijāl*.¹⁷
5. Al-Yaqṭīnī, Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā ibn 'Ubayd ibn Yaqṭīn. He is an author of a book on 'ilm *al-rijāl*.¹⁸
6. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Nu'aym, son of Shādhān Nishābūrī. He is the author of *al-Tarājim*.
7. Al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb (died 224/838-9). His works are *al-Mashīkhah*¹⁹ and *Ma'rifat ruwāt al-akhbār*.²⁰
8. Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-'Azūdī. He rearranged *al-Mashīkhah* in an alphabetical order.
9. Al-Muḥāribī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan. He is the author of a work on 'ilm *al-rijāl*.
10. Al-Jazāwīnī, 'Alī ibn al-'Abbās is the author of *al-Mamdūḥūn wa al-madhmūmūn*.
11. Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Faḍḍāl al-Faṭāḥī (died 224/838-9). He is the author of a work on 'ilm *al-rijāl*.
12. Muḥammad ibn Sa'd, al-Azharī al-Baṣrī al-Wāqidī (died 230/844-5). His fifteen-volume *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* has been reprinted. Al-Sūyūṭī (died 911/1505-6) has compiled a condensed version of it.
13. Al-Wāqidī, Muḥammad ibn 'Umar, teacher of Muḥammad ibn Sa'd al-Wāqidī, has a work on *al-rijāl* called *Madrak al-'Istī'āb*.
14. 'Alī ibn al-Madyanī (died 234/848-9). He compiled a chronicle extending over ten volumes.
15. 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, son of Faḍḍāl al-Faṭāḥī, compiled a work on 'ilm *al-rijāl*.
16. Khalīfah ibn al-Khayyāṭ (died 240/854-5) is the author of *Madrak al-'Istī'āb*.
17. Al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il ibn Mughīrah (died 256/

- 870), is an author of three books.
18. Muslim ibn Hajjāj (died 261/874-5). His work, too, is called *al-Ṭabaqāt*.
 19. Al-Barqī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid (died 274/887-8). He is the author of *Ṭabaqāt al-rijāl*.
 20. Al-'Ayyāshī al-Samarqandī, Muḥammad ibn Mas'ūd, is the author of *Ma'rifat al-nāqilīn*.²¹
 21. Al-Rawājini, 'Abbād ibn Ya'qūb, is the author of *al-Ma'rifah fi ma'rifat al-ṣaḥābah*.²²
 22. Al-Narmāshirī, Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyyā, is the author of *Manāzil al-ṣaḥābah*.²³
 23. Abū al-Faraj al-Qanānī, son of Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb, is the author of *Mu'jam rijāl Abī Mufaḍḍal*.²⁴
 24. Al-Dabilī, Muḥammad ibn Wahbān, author of *Man rawā 'an Amīr al-Mu'minīn*.²⁵
 25. Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī, author of *Ma'rifat al-nāqilīn* and *Firaq al-Shī'ah*.²⁶
 26. Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wāhid, author of *Fihrist al-rijāl*.²⁷
 27. Ibn Abī Khuthaymah, Aḥmad ibn Zuhayr (died 279/892-3), author of *Madrak al-'Istī'āb*.
 28. Al-Ḥaḥiqī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī (died 280/893-4), authored *Tārīkh al-rijāl*.²⁸
 29. Muṭayyin, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Sulaymān al-Ḥadramī (died 297/909-10), authored *Madrak al-'iṣābah*.
 30. Ibn Ḥazm al-Harawī (died 301/913-14).
 31. Ibn Mandah, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā (died 301/913-14).
 32. Ḥamid Naynawā'ī Dihqān (died 310/922-923).
 33. Al-Dūlābī (died 310/922-23).
 34. 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Ishāq.
 35. Al-Kulaynī, Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb (died 329/940-41), the author of *al-Kāfī*, has also compiled a work on *al-rijāl*.²⁹
 36. Al-Jallūdī (died 332/943-44).
 37. Al-Mas'ūdī, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (died 333/944-45).
 38. 'Isā ibn Mihrān.³⁰
 39. Ibn Baṭṭah, Muḥammad ibn Ja'far Mu'addab al-Qummi.
 40. Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh.
 41. Ibn 'Uqdah al-Hamadānī (died 333/944-45). He compiled biographical accounts of 4000 figures. Reportedly, parts of his work still exist in the royal library in Yemen.³¹
 42. Abū Sulaymān, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh (died 338/949-50).
 43. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ash'arī.
 44. Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ash'arī.³²
 45. Al-Ṭabarānī (died 340/951-52).

46. Ibn Walīd al-Qummī (died 343/954-55).³³
47. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ammār al-Kūfī (died 346/957-58).
48. 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Zubayr al-Qurashī (died 348/959-60).
49. Ibn Sakan, Sa'īd ibn 'Uthmān (died 353/963).
50. Ibn Ḥabbān (died 354/965).
51. Qādī al-Ja'ābī, Muḥammad ibn 'Umar (died 355/965-66).
52. Al-Kashshī, Abū 'Amr, Muḥammad ibn 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Azīz, authored *Ma'rifat al-nāqilīn*, which al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (died 460/1067-68) condensed under the title *al-Rijāl*.
53. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Dāwūd al-Qummī (died 368/978-79).
54. Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī, Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad (died 368/978-79).
55. Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (died 381/991-92), compiled *al-Maṣābiḥ*.³⁴
56. Ibn Shāhīn (died 385/995).
57. Ibn al-Nadīm, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (died 390/1000), compiled *Kitāb al-fihrist*.
58. Ibn Ḥāshir, Ibn 'Abdūn (died 423/1023).
59. Abū Nu'aym al-'Iṣfahānī (died 430/1038-39).
60. Muḥammad ibn Abī Qurrah, teacher of al-Najāshī, (died 450/1058), compiled *Mu'jam rijāl Abī Mufaddal*.³⁵
61. Abū al-'Abbās, al-Ṣirāfī Aḥmad, teacher of al-Najāshī, authored *al-Maṣābiḥ*.³⁶
62. Ibn al-Ghadā'irī, Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn, compiled *al-Rijāl al-du'afā'*.
63. Abū Ya'lā al-Khalīlī (died 442/1054-55).
64. Al-Najāshī, Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Alī (died 450/1058), the author of *Ma'rifat al-rijāl*.
65. Al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan (died 460/1067-68).
66. Al-Kitānī (died 466/1073-74).
67. 'Abd ibn Jārūd.
68. Al-'Aqīlī.
69. Ibn Abī Ḥātim.
70. Al-'Azraq.
71. Ibn 'Abd al-Birr (died 463/1070-71).
72. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī (died 463/1070-71).
73. Ibn Fathūn, Abū Bakr.
74. Shihāb al-Dīn, Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf.
75. Al-'Akfānī, Hibat Allāh ibn Aḥmad (died 466/1073-74).
76. Al-Sam'ānī, 'Abd al-Karīm (died 562/1166-67).
77. Abū Mūsā, Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr (died 581/1185-86).
78. Muntajab al-Dīn, 'Alī ibn 'Ubayd Allāh Bābawayh (died after 585/1189). He wrote *Kitāb al-fihrist*, and a history of the Shī'ah scholars. Al-Majlisī included it at the end of vol. XXV of his *Bihār al-anwār*.

79. Ibn Shahr Āshūb, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (died 588/1192). He made additions at the end of al-Ṭūsī's *Fihrist*.
80. Abū Al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Alī (died 597/1200-1).
81. Al-Muqaddasī, 'Alī ibn Mufaddal (died 611/1214-15).
82. Ibn Bitriq, Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥasan (died 600/1203-4). He wrote *Kitāb rijāl al-Shī'ah*.³⁷
83. Ibn al-Athīr, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Juzurī (died 630/1232-33) wrote *Usd al-ghābah*.
84. Ibn Abī Ṭayy, Yaḥyā ibn Ḥamid al-Ḥalabī (died 630/1232-33), wrote *al-'Istī'āb*.
85. Quraysh ibn al-Sabī' (died 664/1265-66) summarized *al-'Istī'āb* and *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd.
86. 'Abd al-Azīm ibn 'Abd al-Qawī al-Mundhirī (died 656/1285).
87. Ibn Ṭāwūs, Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far al-Ḥillī (died 673/1274-75) wrote *Hall al-'ishkāl* in the year A.H. 644, and brought together in it all biographical accounts of the five major works on 'ilm al-rijāl: al-Kashshī, al-Najāshī, al-Ṭūsī's *Rijāl* and *Fihrist*, and Ibn al-Ghadā'ri's *al-Du'afā'*.³⁸
88. 'Izz al-Dīn, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (died 656/1258).
89. Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī, Ja'far ibn al-Ḥasan (died 676/1277-78), condensed al-Ṭūsī's *Fihrist*.
90. Ibn Ṭāwūs, 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far (died 693/1293-4).
91. Ibn Dāwūd, al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Dāwūd (born 647/1249-50).
92. Al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī, al-Ḥasam ibn Yūsuf (died 726/1325-26) wrote *Khulāṣat al-'aḳwāl*, *Idāḥ al-'Ishtibāh* and *Kashf al-'ishtibāh*.
93. Al-Birzālī, al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Dimashqī (died 738/1337-38).
94. Al-Dhahabī, Shams al-Dīn, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān (died 748/1347-48) summarized *Usd al-ghābah*.
95. Aḥmad ibn Aybak al-Dimyāṭī.
96. Ibn Rāfi', Taqī al-Dīn, made additions at the end of al-Birzālī's work.
97. Ibn Kathīr al-Dimashqī (died 774/1372-73) wrote several works on 'ilm al-rijāl.
98. Ibn Mu'ayyah al-Dībājī, Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Qāsim al-Ḥillī (died 776/1374-75).
99. Ibn al-Mulaqqin, 'Umar (died 804/1401-2) wrote *Ṭabaqāt al-muḥaddithīn*.
100. Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī, 'Abd al-Raḥīm (died 806/1403-4) made additions at the end of Ibn Aybak al dimyāṭī's work.

101. Bahā' al-Dīn, 'Alī Nīlī al-Hillī ibn 'Abd al-Karīm (died 841/1437-38), wrote *Kitāb al-rijāl*.
102. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī (died 852/1448) wrote *Kitāb al-'Iṣābah*.
103. Al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn (died 911/1505-6) summarized *al-'Iṣābah* calling it *'Ayn al-'iṣābah*.
104. Al-Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Shahīd al-Thānī (martyred 1011 / 1602-3) is the author of *al-Ma'ālim*, *Taḥrīr Ṭāwūsī*, *Tartīb mashīkhat man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*.
105. Mullā Muṣṭafā, translated the *al-'Istī'āb* upto the letter "ḥā" by the orders of the 'Uthmānī king, Sultān Aḥmad.
106. Ṭāsh Kubrā-Zādeh, Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad (died 962/1554-55) continued the unfinished work of Mullā Muṣṭafā to the letter "rā".
107. Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-'Āmīlī (died 982/1574-75) compiled *Jāmi' al-'aḳwāl* and edited the *Rijāl* of al-Kashshī.
108. 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn 'Alī ibn Shaykh Aḥmad al-'Āmīlī, pupil of the author of *al-Ma'ālim*, (died 1011/1602-3) and Shaykh al-Bahā'ī (died 1031/1621-22) compiled a *fihrist* of narrators of the four books: *Al-Kāfī*, *Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*, *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-Istibṣār*.
109. Mullā 'Ināyat Allāh Quhpā'ī, 'Alī ibn Sharaf al-Dīn, (died 1016/1607-8), also like Ibn Ṭāwūs compiled a collection of the books of al-Kashshī, al-Najāshī, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, *al-Rijāl* and *al-Fihrist*, putting the biographical accounts in an alphabetical order. His work is called *Majma' al-rijāl*.
110. Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Shūshtarī (martyred 1019/1610-11) wrote *Majālis al-mu'minīn*.
111. Mullā 'Abd Allāh al-Shūshtarī (died 1021/1612) extracted the *al-Du'afā'* of Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, which had been included in *Hall al-'ishkāl* of Ibn Ṭāwūs.
112. Mullā 'Abd al-Nabī al-Jazā'irī, ibn Sa'd (died 1021/1612) wrote *Hāwī al-'aḳwāl*.
113. Mīrzā Muḥammad al-'Astarābādī (died 1021/1612) wrote three books, of which the most important is *Manhaj al-maḳāl*.
114. Khudāwardī, 'Afshār (died 1021/1612).
115. Mīrzā Fayḍ Allāh Tafrishī (died 1025/1616).
116. Mīr Muṣṭafā Tafrishī (died 1031/1621-22).
117. Nizām al-Dīn al-Qurashī (died 1031/1621-22).
118. Shaykh Muḥammad al-Najafī (died 1085/1674-75).
119. Quṭb al-Dīn al-'Ashkawarī (died 1040/1630-31).
120. Mīr Dāmād, Muḥammad Bāqir ibn Muḥammad al-'Astarābādī al-Ḥusaynī al-'Iṣfahānī (died 1040/1630-31).
121. Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī al-Awwal, ibn Maḳṣūd 'Alī (died

- 1070/1659-60) wrote *Mashīkhat kitāb man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*.
122. Al-Ṭurayḥī (died 1085/1674-75).
 123. Muḥammad Amin al-Kāzimī (died 1085/1674-75).
 124. Āqā Raḍī al-Qazwīnī (died 1096/1684-85).
 125. Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī, Shaykh Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-‘Amilī.
 126. Shaykh Ḥurr al-‘Amilī, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan (died 1104/1692-93) wrote ‘*Amal al-‘amal* and *Tadhkirat al-‘ulamā’ al-muta’khhirīn*.
 127. Mullā Faraj Allāh al-Ḥuwayzī.
 128. Mullā Ḥaydar ‘Alī al-Qummī.
 129. Muḥaddith al-Tawbalī (died 1107/ 1695-96).
 130. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Khātūnābādī al-‘Iṣfahānī (died 1116/1704-5), was the nephew of al-Majlisī II.
 131. Sayyid ‘Alī Khān Madanī (died 1120/1708-9).
 132. Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Āfandī (died 1131/1718-19).
 133. Mullā Muḥammad al-‘Ardabīlī (died 1111/1699-1700).
 134. Shaykh Sulaymān al-Mākhūrī (died 1121/1709-10).
 135. Mullā Muḥammad Ja‘far al-Khurāsānī (born 1080/1669-70).
 136. Āqā Ḥusayn al-Khwansārī (died 1128/1715-16).
 137. ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Baḥraynī (died 1127/1714-15).
 138. Mīrzā Muḥammad al-Akhhārī (died 1132/1719-20).
 139. ‘Abd Allāh al-Samāhijī (died 1135/1722-23).
 140. Shaykh Yāsīn al-Baḥraynī (died 1145/1732-33)..
 141. Mīr Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, son of Mīr Ma’sūm al-Qazwīnī, (died 1145/1732-33).
 142. Raḍī al-Dīn, ibn Sayyid Muḥammad al-‘Āmilī al-Mūsawī, (died 1168/1754-55), in a work called *Ithāf dhawī al-‘albāb*, has arranged the entries according to surnames ending with the letter “yā”, and modelling it on Ibn al-Athīr’s work and *al-Lubāb* of al-Suyūṭī.
 143. Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Bilādī (died 1186/1772-73).
 144. Shaykh Yūsuf (1186/1772-73) has compiled *Lu’lu’at al-baḥrayn*.
 145. Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Qazwīnī (died 1208/1793-94).
 146. ‘Abd al-Nabī ibn Muḥammad (died 1191/1777).
 147. Sayyid Mahdī Baḥr al-‘ulūm al-Burujerdī al-Najafī (died 1212/1797-98).
 148. Abū ‘Alī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘il (died 1215/1800-1).
 149. Sayyid Aḥmad al-Kāzimī.
 150. Dāwūd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Jazā’irī, worked on *Ikhtiyār al-rijāl* of al-Kashshī, and *al-Rijāl* of al-Najāshī.
 151. Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad Ṭālib al-Ḥusaynī al-‘Ardabīlī.

152. Shaykh Yaḥyā, who was a muftī of Bahrayn.
153. Mullā Darwish 'Alī al-Ḥā'irī.
154. Sayyid Muḥsin al-'A'rajī al-Kāzimaynī (died 1227/1812).
155. Sayyid 'Abd Allāh Shubbar ibn Muḥammad Riḍā (died 1242/1826-27).
156. Muḥammad 'Alī ibn al-Qāsim Āl Shakūr al-Ḥā'irī (died 1245/1829-30).
157. Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir, Ḥujjat al-Islām Shaftī (died 1260/1844).
158. Shaykh 'Abd al-Nabī al-Kāzimī (died 1256/1840).
159. Mullā 'Alī Kanī al-Ṭehrānī (died 1306/1888-89).
160. Shaykh Murtaḍā al-'Anṣārī (died 1281/1864-65).
161. Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī.
162. Ḥājī Nūrī, Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Taqī.
163. Muḥammad Ṭāhā Najaf (died 1323/1905), son of Mahdī, son of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ṭabrīzī al-Najafī, compiled *Itqān al-maqāl*. In this book, he divided narrators of *ḥadīth* into three categories: truthful, righteous and weak.
164. Al-Māmaqānī, Shaykh 'Abd Allāh ibn Shaykh Ḥasan (died 1350/1931-32).
165. Sayyid Muḥsin al-'Āmilī (died 1370/1950-51) wrote 'A'yān al-Shī'ah, of which thirty-four volumes have been printed in Syria.
166. Āqā Buzurg, Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Ṭehrānī, wrote *al-Dharī'ah ilā taṣānīf al-shī'ah*, in which he devoted each volume to figures of every century starting from the fourth century Hijrah. He also compiled a work on history of 'ilm al-rijāl with the title *Muṣaffā al-maqāl*. In this book he has given biographical accounts of six-hundred narrators.

To be continued.

NOTES

1. See Muhaqqiq's introduction to al-Suyūṭī's *Tadrīb al-rāwī*; al-Madīnah 1379/1959. One instance of this case is the "ḥadīth" which was forged regarding the following verse of the Holy Quran on the orders of Mu'āwiyah:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنُ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ...

And among men is he who sells himself in exchange for God's good pleasure....(2:207)

Through this forgery, an attempt was made to relate this verse to Ibn Muljam, the assassin of Imam 'Alī (A); whereas, in reality, this verse is related to 'Alī (A) himself, who exposed himself to the danger of death by lying in the Prophet's (S) bed on the night of his *hijrah* to al-Madīnah. See also Kāzim Mudīr Shānehchī, 'Ilm al-

hadīth, p. 66; Mashhad University 1964-65.

2. See Muhaqqiq's introduction to al-Suyūṭī's *Tadrīb al-rāwī*; al-Madīnah 1379/1959. See also Aḥmad Amīn, *Fajr al-'Islām*, p. 255; Egypt 1347/1928.

Aḥmad ibn Naṣr says: "The Prophet in reply [to a question that he had put] said, 'Hold on to al-Shāfi'ī, for he is from me, and God is with him and his followers.'" See Kāzīm Mudīr Shānehchī, *Ilm al-ḥadīth*, p. 69; Mashhad University 1964-65.

3. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp. 24, 25. Aḥmad Amīn, *Fajr al-'Islām*, p. 256; Egypt 1347/1928. See also *Parto-e Islām*, vol. I, p. 258. An instance of this is the case of Abī 'Ismah Nūh ibn Abī Maryam, whose practice was to forge a tradition in relation to every *sūrah* of the Quran. Once, when asked about the source of his narrations, he said, "Since people started turning towards the *fiqh* of Abī Ḥanīfah and the chronicles of Muhammad ibn Ishāq, they have been neglecting to memorize the Quran by heart. I have fabricated these traditions only for the sake of God's good pleasure." See *Parto-e Islām*, p. 258 and *Fajr al-'Islām*, p. 256.

4. *Parto-e Islām*, vol. II, pp. 356, 385.

5. An instance of this is the case of Ghiyāth ibn Ibrāhīm, who once on visiting the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr saw him playing with pigeons. One the spur of the moment, he fabricated a "*hadīth*" for the caliph's good pleasure: The Prophet said, "No racing is better than that of hoofs and feathers." See *Fajr al-'Islām*, p. 255, and *Parto-e Islām*, vol. I, p. 258. Abū Hurayrah once fabricated a "*hadīth*" about onions of 'Akka (seaport in Palestine). Asked by Mu'āwiyah as to where the Prophet said such a thing, he answered, "there where he said, 'Mu'āwiyah is the maternal uncle of the faithful (*khāl al-mu'minīn*)'."

6. Kāzīm Mudīr Shānehchī, *Ilm al-ḥadīth*, pp. 74, 75, Mashhad University 1344 A.H. According to Ibn al-Jawzī, once Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn were in the mosque of al-Raṣāfah (in Baghdād) for prayers. In the meanwhile, a story-teller gathered around himself some people and began to recite a tradition, citing as his sources Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn, that the Prophet said, "Whoever says, '*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*', God will reward him with a bird whose beak is of gold and feathers of coral." Then he proceeded to describe the bird and the reward of the recipient in such a detail as can not be contained even in twenty pages. On hearing him, Yaḥyā and ibn Ḥanbal looked at each other, while the "*muḥaddith*" started collecting tips from the people. Yaḥyā approached the man and asked him as to who had told him this tradition. "Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn," was his reply. "I am Yaḥyā and this is Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal", said Yaḥyā pointing to Ibn Ḥanbal, "we ourselves have never heard of such a tradition." The story-teller replied, "I had heard that Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn is an idiot. I didn't believe it. You talk as if you two are the only Yaḥyā and Ibn Ḥanbal in the whole world! I have written traditions from seventeen Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn's and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's." Then he promptly slipped out of the mosque. See Hāfiẓ Nishābūrī, Ḥakīm Abu 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh, *Ma'rifat 'ulūm al-ḥadīth*, p. 289; Egypt 1937.

7. Shaykh al-Bahā'ī, *Nihāyat al-dirāyah*, p. 7; 'Imād al-'Islām Press 1324. See also al-Suyūṭī's *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, pp. 4, 5; al-Madīnah 1379/1959.

8. During the earliest times, the traditions were transmitted orally by teachers to students of *hadīth*. One who had learnt traditions in this way under the direction of a teacher could, in his turn, again communicate them to others. *Ijāzah* (lit. permit) was the term for a teacher's sanction granted to those considered reliable by him for further transmission of traditions to others.

9. Hāji Khalīfah, Muṣṭafā ibn 'Abd Allāh, *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmi al-kutub wa al-funūn*, pp. 635-636; 1360/1941.

10. Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr, *Ta'sīs al-Shī'ah*, p. 233; see also al-Najāshī's *Ma'rifat aḥwāl al-rijāl*, p. 340; Bombay 1317.

11. Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr, *Ta'sīs al-Shī'ah*.

12. Al-Najāshī, *Ma'rifat aḥwāl al-rijāl*. See Shaykh Āqā Buzurg al-Tehrānī, Muḥammad Muḥsin, *al-Dhari'ah ilā taṣānīf al-Shī'ah*, vol. III, p. 224. See also Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr, *Ta'sīs al-Shī'ah*, p. 232.

13. Ḥājī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa al-funūn*, p. 834, 1360.
14. See the Catalogue of the Library of University of Tehran, p. 503.
15. Shaykh Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭehrānī, *al-Dhari'ah ilā taṣānīf al-Shi'ah*, vol. III, p. 224.
16. The names in this list are of those who have worked on history or *'ilm al-rijāl*, regardless of whether they were merely chroniclers or those whose work was aimed at distinguishing reliable from unreliable narrators. The names in the list have been taken from the Catalogue of the Library of University of Tehran.
17. Al-Najāshī, *Ma'rifat aḥwāl al-rijāl*, p. 235; Bombay 1317.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, p. 47; Najaf 1359/1937.
20. *Tawḍīḥ al-maqāl*, p. 65.
21. Al-Najāshī, *Ma'rifat aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 248; Bombay 1317.
22. Al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, p. 119; Najaf 1359/1937.
23. Al-Najāshī, *Ma'rifat aḥwāl al-rijāl*, p. 309; Bombay 1317.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
27. *Tawḍīḥ al-maqāl*, p. 65.
28. Al-Najāshī, *Ma'rifat aḥwāl al-rijāl*, p. 59.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
30. Al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, p. 116.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 28; al-Najāshī, *Ma'rifat aḥwāl al-rijāl*, pp. 68, 69; See also the Catalogue of the Library of Tehran University.
32. Al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, 75; al-Najāshī, *Ma'rifat aḥwāl al-rijāl*, p. 126.
33. Al-Najāshī, *Ma'rifat aḥwāl al-rijāl*, p. 23.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 276, 278.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 63; al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, p. 37.
37. Shaykh Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭehrānī, *al-Dhari'ah ilā taṣānīf al-Shi'ah*, vol. III, p. 222.
38. *Ibid.*, vol. VII, p. 64.

Shī'ism in Relation to Various Islamic Sects

by Dr. Abulqāsim Gorjī

Shī'ism Among Various Islamic Schools of Thought

The common points among various Islamic schools of thought are many, yet the differences in points of view are not so trivial as to permit being summarized in a few pages. Great Islamic scholars and theologians have compiled detailed and voluminous books on just certain aspects of this subject. In the summary presented here, I have pointed out some of the most significant points of difference between the Shi'ite and other prominent Islamic sects.

1. Uṣūl al-Dīn (The Principles of Faith)

The faith of Islam is based upon three principles: (1) belief in the One God, the Creator of the world—which is called *al-tawḥīd* (monotheism); (2) belief in the prophethood of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allah (S) as the last of all prophets (*al-nubūwwah*), and (3) belief in the Day of Resurrection (*al-ma'ād*). Anybody who wants to be considered a Muslim, must recognize these three principles (*al-uṣūl*) through the agency of his intellect. Thus, there is no difference of opinion as to these main points among Muslims. However, the differences occur in some of the secondary issues related to the three principles, some of which are as follows:

1. About God's Affirmative Attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-thubūtiyyah*), namely, the qualities positively attributed to God, such as Omniscience, Omnipotence, Life, etc., the Ash'arites believe that as in the case of a human being whose attributes are different from his essence and dependent upon it, so with God, whose Essence and Attributes are different things; the latter being derived from His Essence. However, in the case of man the attributes are contingent (*ḥādith*) while God's Attributes are pre-eternal (*qadīm*).

In this connection, the Mu'tazilites have various beliefs, but most of them hold the same opinion as the Shī'ah. The Shī'ah say: If there

is any distinction between Divine Attributes such as Knowledge, Power, etc., and the Divine Essence, this difference lies only at the level of conception and thought, and not in reality. "God" is the same as "Omniscience", the same as "Omnipotence", and, moreover, such Attributes are in reality one and the same. Therefore, nothing has been appended to Divine Essence from outside; rather God is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Living by virtue of His Essence.

2. About the Divine Will (*irādah*), the Ash'arites hold that Divine Will and Omniscience (*ʿIlm*) are two separate Attributes. But the Shi'ites, and a group of Mu'tazilites maintain that God's Will is the same as His Knowledge, and they call it *Dāʿī*, meaning "Divine Intention".

3. No doubt, one of the Divine Attributes is Speech (*Kalām*); that is, God speaks, or is *Mutakallim*. However, since *Kalām*, the Divine Word—from which the word "*Mutakallim*" is derived—is composed of letters, and letters occur in a temporal sequence, so a disagreement of opinion has been caused in this regard.

The Hanbalis consider God's Word (*Kalām*) to be pre-eternal (*qadīm*), and some of them even believe the cover and sheath of the Holy Quran to be pre-eternal.

The Karrāmiyyah hold God's Word (*Kalām*) to be *ḥādith* (temporal or accidental), yet consider it permissible for a temporal thing to be dependent on Divine Essence.

The Ash'arites believe the *Kalām* to be *ḥādith* but have said: What is dependent on God's Essence is not the spoken Word (*al-Kalām al-lafzī*)—which is *ḥādith*—rather, it is the sense and meaning of the Divine Word which is *qadīm*. This they call "*al-Kalām al-nafsī*".

Both the Shi'ites and Mu'tazilites have rejected the idea of *al-Kalām al-nafsī*, and have said that the origin of the word "*mutakallim*" is "*takallum*" and not "*kalām*". And "*takallum*" (speaking) means origination or creation of literal speech (*al-Kalām al-lafzī*) in others. Now, "creation" or "origination" is a quality of Act, not an Attribute of Essence. So no problem arises out of its being contingent (*ḥudūth*); for, though an Act issues from God, it is not dependent on His Essence.

4. The Ash'arites believe God to be visible, not in the way the Karrāmiyyah and the Mushabbihah believe, but in freedom from the factors of time and space. But the Shi'ites and the Mu'tazilites consider the possibility of seeing God incompatible with His immaterial, necessary existence and have explained away the Quranic verses and narrations of the Holy Prophet which in appearance seem to imply visual perception of God (*rū'yah*).

5. There are some differences of opinion as to whether actions can be regarded as "good" or "bad" in independence of the decree of the Divine Lawgiver (*al-Shāri'*).

The Ash'arites believe that a "good" action is that which the

Shari'ah has ordered the people to do, and a "bad" action is that which it has prohibited people from doing. But the Shi'ites and the Mu'tazilites hold that "goodness" or "badness" of actions can be recognized by human reason; that is, regardless of the decree of the *Shari'ah*, some actions are good and some bad. The Lawgiver orders people to do what is "good" and prohibits them from doing "bad" deeds.

6. Is man really free to perform actions which are apparently done of his own free will, or is he compelled to perform such actions? A group of the Ash'arites are of the opinion that man's will and power have no effect in bringing about these actions, and it is only God's Will and Power that is effectual in their taking place. This belief is called "*Jabr*".

The Mu'tazilites hold that the only factor causing these actions to take place is man's will and power. God has only created man and given him power, will and intelligence. As long as God has not taken these forces and potentialities away from him, he can independently do whatever he wants; there is no need for him to be instantaneously and constantly given power, will and other potentialities by God. This belief is called "*al-tafwid*".

However, the Shi'ites believe that man's actions depend on his own will, but not in the sense that he is totally independent in doing them. Rather, just as God is the initiating cause (*al-'illah al-muḥdithah*) of man's life, power and will—that is, God has originally given man these qualities and abilities—so God is as well the maintaining cause (*al-'illah al-mubqiyah*) of these potentialities and qualities. That is to say, God grants these powers and abilities constantly and perpetually, otherwise man cannot perform any action. Thus, such actions can be attributed both to God and man. This belief is neither determinism nor free will, but something between the two (*amr bayn al-'amrayn*).

7. About Divine Destiny and Providence (*qadā' wa qadar*), there are also differences of opinion among Islamic thinkers. If by "Destiny" (*qadā'*) it is meant that all things—even man's actions—are brought into existence by God, and if by "Providence" (*qadar*) it is meant that the qualities and particulars of all things—even of those things originated by man's will—have taken place and shape *solely* as a result of God's Will, then *qadā'* and *qadar*, in this sense, are accepted by the Ash'arites and rejected by the Shi'ites and the Mu'tazilites. And if by "*qadā'*" and "*qadar*" other senses are meant, such as: "The existence or happening of everything, even man's free actions and their particulars, depends on God's Will, but not directly, and rather through the special means of that thing, including man's will and power," or if "*qadā'*" and "*qadar*" are taken to mean 'declaration and determination of some matter by God', then in both of these senses, *qadā'* and *qadar* are admitted by the Imāmiyyah Shi'ites. Moreover, there are certain verses in the Quran and

aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet and Imāms affirming this belief.

8. The Shī'ites and the Mu'tazilites consider it reprobate and wrong to attribute certain qualities or actions to God such as oppression, tyranny, giving of a duty to anybody beyond his strength, and so on, and believe it necessary and right to attribute certain qualities and actions to Him such as mercy, compassion, assigning of prophets and so on.

The Ash'arites, due to their negation of rational foundation of goodness and badness of actions (*al-ḥusn wa al-qubḥ al-'aqlīyyān*) and also owing to their maintaining that nobody can possibly assign duties and obligations to God, reject both of the above viewpoints.

But it is obvious that both of their own viewpoints rest on shaky grounds. Because, as to the first position, it has been established that the goodness and badness of actions are rational, and as to their second position, it may be said that by denial of certain qualities and actions to be attributed to God, what is meant is that such things as tyranny and oppression are inappropriate for the sublime station of God, and if some acts—like assignment of prophets—are considered to be incumbent upon God, it is meant that refraining from such acts is not becoming to God, the Almighty, which is affirmed by reason. And this notion of denial or incumbency, in this sense, by no means entails any imposition on God by somebody else.

9. Like the Mu'tazilites, the Shī'ites believe that since God is Wise (*Ḥakīm*), He never does any useless or frivolous action, any action which is in vain and devoid of benefit and expedience, because God is absolute and total perfection; the benefits of His actions accrue to His creatures, not to Himself. But the Ash'arites believe that since God has absolute perfection, His actions are not out of motives and purposes.

10. About prophethood (*al-nubūwwah*), the Shī'ites and the Mu'tazilites hold that because God is Merciful and Gracious (*Latīf*) towards His creatures, it is incumbent upon Him to assign prophets to guide humanity; but the Ash'arites, owing to their denial of the principle of Divine Grace (*al-Luṭf*), do not regard it incumbent upon God to assign prophets.

11. There is, on the whole, no difference of opinion as to the credibility of the principle of infallibility (*'iṣmah*) of the prophets. Rather, the differences lie in the secondary points of the issue.

The Mu'tazilites have considered it possible for prophets to commit venial sins; that is to say, they believe committing venial sins is not incompatible with their prophethood.

The Ash'arites and the Ḥashawiyyah have only regarded *kufr* and falsehood to be unattributable to the prophets, not other sins. Some Ash'arite scholars have said that a prophet cannot commit major or

minor sins after being assigned to prophethood, but as for other sins, he can avoid committing them intentionally, not inadvertently.

But the Shī'ites believe that since the prophet has to be a reliable and perfectly trustworthy means of Divine guidance, he cannot commit *any* sins, neither major, nor minor, nor venial, neither intentionally nor inadvertently, neither before nor after being assigned to prophethood.

2. Uṣūl al-Madhhab (Doctrines Particular to Sects)

1. There is no question as to the necessity of appointment of the *Imām*, leader or ruler of an Islamic society. The point of difference, however, is that the Ash'arites say that the appointment of the *Imām* is an obligation of the people themselves, and base their argument on quoted traditional evidence (*adillah naqliyyah*).

The Mu'tazilites and the Zaydiyyah, too, consider the appointment of the *Imām* the duty of the people, but base their argument on rational reasons (*adillah 'aqliyyah*).

The Imāmiyyah Shī'ites, in accordance with the belief in Divine Grace (*al-Lutf*), believe the appointment of the *Imām* to be incumbent upon God.

2. About the infallibility (*'ismah*) of the *Imāms*, the Imāmiyyah and the Ismā'īliyyah consider infallibility as a necessary attribute of an *Imām*; but other Islamic sects have rejected the idea of necessary infallibility for an *Imām*.

According to the reasons Nasir al-Din Ṭūsī has set forth in his *Tajrid*, not only an *Imām* should be free of sin, but he should be immune from committing errors and mistakes as well.

3. Should there be any explicit Divine decree (*naṣṣ*) about the appointment of *Imāms*?

The 'Abbāsids believe that *imāmah* (leadership) is proved either through *naṣṣ* (explicit text or decree) or through inheritance. The Zaydiyyah hold that *imāmah* is proved through *naṣṣ* or through the *Imām's* calling upon the people to himself. And many are of the opinion that in appointing an *Imām* it is necessary either to have an explicit decree (*naṣṣ*); or eminent persons who are responsible for deciding the affairs of the society should accept the *Imām* as such.

But the Shī'ites say, since *'ismah* (absolute infallibility) is a concealed matter and none other than God knows about it, only God can appoint the *Imām*, and thus there is no way other than that of *naṣṣ*.

3. Uṣūl al-Fiqh (Principles of Jurisprudence)

1. There is no considerable difference as to the principle which

maintains that inference of religious decrees can be based on or supported by consensus of opinion (*ijmā'*). But there are some differences as to what are the criteria of authority and authenticity (*ḥujjiyyah*) of *ijmā'* (consensus of 'ulamā').

The Sunnis consider *ijmā'* as a credible and an authoritative source (*ḥujjah*) by itself as soon as a consensus is reached. But the Shi'ites say that *ijmā'* (consensus of 'ulamā') is absolutely valid only if confirmed by an infallible *Imām* (*imām ma'ṣūm*).

2. Also, there are some differences as to the validity of reasoning by analogy (*qiyās mustanbat al-'illah*). All the Sunnis, with the exception of the Zāhirīs, believe this kind of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) to be a legal authoritative source (*ḥujjah*). But the Imāmiyyah Shi'ites, in addition to rejection on logical and rational basis of all the arguments of the Sunnis in favour of *qiyās*, consider it as unwarranted in the light of explicit traditions (*riwāyāt*) of their infallible Imāms.

3. As to the practice of *istiḥsān* (application of discretion in a legal decision; something that looks "good" and "advisable" to a jurist, but he can't argue convincingly in its favour), there are some differences among various Islamic sects. The Mālikīs, the Ḥanafīs and the Ḥanbalīs believe *istiḥsān* to be *ḥujjah* (an authoritative source for legal decisions). But the Shi'ah, the Shāfi'īs and the Zāhirīs do not regard it as *ḥujjah*. In this respect, the Shi'ah say: Some of the definitions given for "*istiḥsān*" supply no credible reasons for their support, whereas other acceptable arguments advanced under its title affirm the validity of something which is not "*istiḥsān*".

4. As to the "expediencies of the situation" (*al-maṣāliḥ al-mursalāh*), many Sunnis, including Mālik and Aḥmad, consider them to be *ḥujjah*. That is, they infer religious decrees in accordance with expediencies. But the Shi'ites and the Shāfi'īs do not regard *al-maṣāliḥ al-mursalāh* as *ḥujjah*. On the whole, in cases where inference has been made from expediencies, in absence of a specific *naṣṣ* (explicit religious text or decree), the issue can be deduced from "general decrees" (*nuṣūṣ 'āmmah*), or based on definite rational reasons; in such cases, no doubt, the inference is valid; however, its validity depends not on the basis of "expedience", but because of its compatibility with the "general decree" or on account of its rational basis. Otherwise, one cannot base an argument solely on "expediencies" and pronounce a decree on this basis.

5. (*Taṣwīb wa takhṭi'ah*): The Mu'tazilites and many of the leaders of Ahl al-Sunnah believe that in cases other than those explicitly defined or ordered (*aḥkām manṣūṣah*), the interpretation of the Divine decree is subject to the opinions of *mujtahidīn* (authorities on religious law); or, if a *real* decree (*ḥukm*) does exist and the opinions of *mujtahidīn* turn to be the contrary of that *ḥukm*, the real *ḥukm*

undergoes change and the new one will be considered the real *ḥukm*. This viewpoint is called "*taṣwīb*" (ratification). The Imāmiyyah Shi'ites, as well as many other Muslims, believe that in all cases, whether an explicit decree (*naṣṣ*) exists or not, there is, in fact, a fixed unchangeable decree (*ḥukm*) which the *mujtahid* may or may not find out. This viewpoint is called "*takḥṭi'ah*" (fallibility of *mujtahids*).

4. Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence):

In this category, many details and secondary issues (*al-furū'*) such as *al-'ibādāt* (worships), *mu'āmalāt* (transactions), *'uqūd wa iqā'āt* (contracts) and other matters have been propounded, and the views of various Islamic sects, especially the Imāmiyyah Shi'ah, have been explained. Here, to avoid prolongation, we refrain from mentioning all the *furū'*, and confine ourselves to pointing out only few of them.

1. *Damān* (suretyship): The Sunnis believe that besides the main debtor, the surety (the person who has stood surety for the debtor) will be held responsible for the due; but contrary to the opinion of the Sunnis, the Shi'ite believe that after suretyship the creditor can no longer ask the main debtor for the due, but can simply demand its return from the person standing surety.

2. *Mut'ah* (usufruct or temporary marriage): This decree of temporary marriage is considered abrogated by the Sunnis. But the Shi'ite believe that according to *ijmā'* and as suggested by Quranic verses and reliable traditions (*riwāyāt*), the decree of *mut'ā* stands valid, and its permissibility which existed in the time of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) remains as it was, and no change has occurred in that decree.

3. The presence of witnesses: The Sunnis believe the presence of witnesses in *nikāḥ* (marriage contract) to be requisite for its validity. The Shi'ites believe that it is not necessary to have the witnesses present at the time of *nikāḥ*, and contrary to the belief of the Sunnis, the Shi'ites believe it is requisite for the validity of divorce that two "just" (*'ādil*) individuals should be present at the time of divorcing.

4. Regarding inheritance (*irth*), too, some cases of difference are observed, of which just two points shall be mentioned here: (1) If after paying the shares of the heirs, anything is left over from the property of the deceased person, the Sunnis allocate the remainder merely to the male relatives of the deceased person and call it "*ta'sīb*". But the Shi'ite divide the remainder among all those who have inherited from the deceased person in accordance with their shares and call it "*radd*". For example, if the heirs of a (deceased) person are his father and a daughter of his, half the estate will be the share of his daughter and one-sixth the share of his father. As for the two-sixths of the estate which is still left, the Sunnis believe it to be the share of the father of

the deceased person and the Shi'ites believe that it (the remaining two-sixths) should be divided into four parts, and of these remaining four shares, three shares will be given to the daughter and one share to the father of the deceased person. On the contrary, if there is a deficit and the estate of the deceased person is less than the shares of his or her heirs and it is not possible to give all the shares of the heirs, for instance, if the heirs of a woman are her husband, her parents and a daughter of hers, half ($\frac{1}{2}$) the estate will be the share of her daughter, two-sixths ($\frac{2}{6}$) will have to be given to her parents and a quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) to her husband, and if we add up the shares, it will become thirteen-twelfths ($\frac{13}{12}$) shares. In this case, the Sunnis deduct the one-twelfth ($\frac{1}{12}$) lacking from the shares of all the heirs in accordance with their own shares. That is, instead of dividing the estate into 12 parts, the Sunnis divide it into 13 parts and give six shares to the daughter, four shares to the parents and three shares to the husband of the deceased person. Obviously, in this way, the shares of all the heirs will somewhat diminish. And this is called (*'awl*). But in the opinion of the Shi'ites, the deficiency will have to be borne by some of the heirs, in this case by the daughter of the deceased person.

Jāmi' al-Sa'ādāt Part 2 (The Collector of Felicities)

by Muḥammad Mahdī ibn Abī Dharr al-Narāqī

condensed from Arabic text by Muḥammad Bāqir Ansāri
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Moral Virtues and Vices

In our last discussion, we stated that the human soul possesses four distinct powers. They are: Intellect, Anger, Passion, and the Power of Imagination (*al-quwwah al-wahmiyyah* or *al-'āmilah*)¹. The thing we should notice now is that the purification and right training of every one of these powers will result in the emergence of a particular faculty in the human being.

The purification and rightward training of the Power of Intellect will result in the development of knowledge, and subsequently wisdom, in a human being. The purification of the Power of Anger will result in the emergence of the faculty of courage, and subsequently forbearance (*ḥilm*). The purification of the Power of Passion and desire will result in the development of the faculty of chastity, and subsequently generosity. And the purification of the Power of Imagination will cause the emergence of the faculty of justice in a human being.

The moral virtues, therefore, are: wisdom, courage, chastity, and justice. The opposite qualities of these are: ignorance², cowardice, concupiscence (gluttony and lust), injustice and tyranny.

Wisdom means possession of an understanding of the objects of the world which concurs with the reality of things. The presence of courage and chastity means that the powers of anger and desire are entirely at the command of the intellect and completely free from the bondages of concupiscence and egoism. As for justice, it refers to the condition when the Power of Imagination is completely under the command of the Power of the Intellect. This implies the regulation of all the powers of the soul by the Power of Intellect. In other words, the presence of the faculty of justice in the soul necessitates the presence of the other three faculties of wisdom, courage and chastity.

An important matter must be pointed out here. In the view of Islamic ethicists, a person who has developed the four faculties within himself, is not praiseworthy unless the possession of these virtues

benefits other people also. This is what reason tells us. That is, it tells us that purely internal and private virtues do not have much value, and their possessor does not deserve praise.

Moderation and Deviation

Every one of the four ethical virtues is to be practised to a certain degree and within definite limits, transgression of which would transform a virtue into a vice. If every virtue is thought of as the center of a circle, any movement away from the center would be considered as a vice, and the farther away it were to move from this point, the greater the vice. For every virtue, therefore, there are innumerable vices; since there is only one center in a circle, whereas points all around the center are infinite in number. In regard to deviation, it does not make difference in which direction the deviation occurs. Deviation from the center, in whatever direction, is a vice.

To find the real center, which entails absolute moderation, is thus difficult to attain. To remain at this center and to preserve this balance is even more difficult. The Prophet (S) said:

شَيْبَتْنِي سُورَةُ هُودٍ لِمَكَانٍ «فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتُ»

The *Sūrat Hūd* has made an old man of me because of the verse, 'Remain as steadfast as you have been commanded'. (11:112)

As opposed to the real center, there is the approximate center, which is more accessible. Individuals who purify and develop their souls usually reach this relative center and acquire relative moderation. It is for this reason that moral virtues differ with different individuals, circumstances, and times. Relative moderation, like deviation, covers a wide area at the center of which lies the point of absolute balance and moderation.

The Various Types of Vice:

We have already said that deviation from moderation and the mean causes vice. This deviation towards either of the two extremes on each side of the mean has infinite degrees. Here we will mention only the two extremes for every moral virtue.

Deficiency

Moderation

Excess

stupidity

wisdom

slyness

cowardice

courage

foolhardiness

lethargy
submissiveness

chastity
justice

rapaciousness
tyranny

There are, therefore, eight kinds of vices, for every one of which we shall give a brief description.

1. *Stupidity* is deficiency of wisdom; that is, not using the power of the intellect to understand the nature of things.

2. *Slyness* is the excessive use of the intellect; that is, using the power of the intellect in matters for which it is inappropriate, or using it too much in matters for which it is appropriate.

3. *Cowardice* is deficiency of courage; that is, fear and irresolution in cases where there is no cause for them.

4. *Foolhardiness* is the excess of courage; that is, reckless action in cases where it is inappropriate.

5. *Lethargy* is the deficient state for which the point of moderation is chastity; that is, failure to use things which the body needs.

6. *Rapaciousness* is the other extreme in opposition to lethargy; that is, excess in sexual activity, eating and drinking, and other sensual pleasures.

7. *Submissiveness* is the deficient state for which the point of moderation is justice; that is, accepting oppression and tyranny.

8. *Tyranny* is the other extreme in opposition to submissiveness; that is, oppressing either one's own self or others.

Every one of these eight vices possesses numerous branches and subdivisions, which are connected with the direction and degree of deviation from moderation represented by the four virtues. Since deviation can occur in a limitless number of degrees, it is not possible to enumerate all of them. We shall, however, mention some of the most well-known ones here, and later discuss the ways in which they can be fought against.

Vices are divided according to the powers they are related to, namely, Intellect, Anger and Passion.

1. The Power of the Intellect (*al-quwwah al-'aqliyyah*) can possess two kinds of vices, which are stupidity and slyness, the further subdivisions of which are as follows:

Simple ignorance: not knowing.

Compound ignorance: being ignorant, and being unaware of one's ignorance.

Perplexity and doubt: the opposite of which are certainty and conviction.

Carnal temptations: in opposition to which is contemplation of the beauty of Divine creation.

Deceit and trickery to attain ends dictated by Passion and Anger.

Shirk (polytheism): the opposite of which is belief in the Unity and Oneness of God.

2. The Power of Anger (*al-quwwah al-ghaḍabīyyah*) has two vices: cowardice and foolhardiness, the subdivisions of which are:

Fear: a psychological condition which is caused by expecting occurrence of a painful event, or loss of a favourable condition.

Lack of endurance and self-depreciation: This is one of the consequences of weakness of the spirit and indicates an incapacity to face hardships. The opposite of this characteristic is steadfastness, which means the capacity to endure hardship and adversity.

Timidity: this is brought about by a lack of self-confidence and a weak character, and indicates inability to struggle for the sake of attaining noble and worthy goals. The opposite of this vice is the virtue of fortitude; that is, courage and willingness to undertake great efforts to attain true felicity and perfection.

Lack of sense of dignity: this is also brought about by a weakness of character and indicates failure to take care and watch over matters which need to be looked after and watched over.

Hastiness: this is another manifestation of a weak character and means making decisions and embarking on actions without having given them proper thought. The opposite extreme of this quality is lethargy, which is the tendency to slackness and lack of alacrity in initiating action when required.

Suspicion about God and the believers: this is another manifestation of a weak and timid character. The opposite of this is trustfulness towards God and the believers, which is a sign of courage and self-confidence.

Anger: the opposite of which is patience and forbearance (*ḥilm*).

Revengefulness: the opposite of which is the quality of forgiveness.

Violence: this is caused by the Power of Anger and use of force to achieve an end. Its opposite is conciliation and compassion.

Ill-temperedness: the opposite of which is good-temperedness.

Envy and malice: it also results from the Power of Anger.

Enmity and hostility: this is a manifestation of the power of anger and its opposite is friendliness; in other words, having the welfare of others at heart.

Self-conceit and vanity: the opposite extreme of which is having an inferiority complex.

Arrogance: the opposite of which is humility.

Boastfulness: which means talking about oneself with pride and satisfaction. This condition is brought about by arrogance.

Rebelliousness: disobedience towards someone who deserves one's

obedience. This condition is also caused by arrogance, and its opposite is obedience to someone to whom it is necessary to be obedient.

Fanaticism: intense uncritical devotion to something.

Injustice and concealing of truth: the opposite of which is justice and steadfastness in the defense of truth.

Brutality: lack of mercy and compassion when these qualities are called for.

3. The vices of the Power of Passion and desire are lethargy and greed; and their subdivisions are the following:

Coveting the world and riches: the opposite of which is *zuhd* (self-restraint).

Affluence and opulence: the opposite of which is poverty.

Avarice (ṭama'): the opposite of which is indifference to possessions of others.

Greed (ḥirṣ): the opposite of which is contentment with what one has.

Coveting of things forbidden by religion, and engaging in illegitimate acts: the opposite of which is *wara'* (piety, caution), abstinence from forbidden things and activities.

Treachery: the opposite of which is honesty.

All kinds of debauchery: such as adultery, sodomy, wine drinking, and other forms of frivolous conduct.

Sinking into falsehood and believing in false things.

Indulging in frivolous and nonsensical talk and empty boasting as a matter of habit.

Thus we come to the end of recounting the virtues and vices belonging singly to each of the three powers. Now let us consider those virtues and vices which belong simultaneously to two or three of the powers of the soul. These virtues and vices are as follows:

Jealousy, that is wishing a decline in the fortunes of another person.

Insulting and degrading other people: the opposite of which is honouring other people and respecting them.

Not being sympathetic or helpful to others.

Flattery.

Breaking one's ties with family and kin.

Being undutiful to parents and earning their disavowal.

Sticking one's nose into other people's affairs in order to discover their faults.

Revealing other people's secrets: the opposite of which is guarding other people's secrets and concealing them.

Causing friction and disharmony among people: the opposite of

which is to make peace and bring harmony among them.

Cursing.

Verbal argument and animosity.

Making fun of other people and ridiculing them.

Backbiting.

Lying.

Coveting fame and station.

Lover of praise and hatred of criticism: the opposite of which is indifference to both.

Simulation: which is doing something in order to attract favourable attention.

Hypocrisy: the opposite of which is being the same in one's exterior appearance and inward self.

Self-deception: the opposite of which is insight, knowledge and humility.

Rebelliousness: the opposite of which is obedience.

Impudence and shamelessness: the opposite of which is modesty and shame.

Having elaborate and far-flung hopes and desires.

Persistence in sin: the opposite of which is repentance.

Self-neglect and alienation from one's self: the opposite of which is self-attention and awareness of one's goal.

Apathy and indifference towards one's felicity and good.

Misplaced hatred: the opposite of which is appropriate friendship and love.

Inconsistency and disloyalty: the opposite of which is loyalty.

Isolation and seclusion from people: the opposite of which is being sociable and friendly.

Pique and peevishness: the opposite of which is calmness and self-composure.

Sorrow and remorse: the opposite of which is cheerfulness and joy.

Insufficient trust of and reliance on God.

Ingratitude and unthankfulness: the opposite of which is thankfulness and gratitude.

Anxiety, alarm and impatience.

Impiety: that is disobedience and transgression of Divine commands the opposite of which is piety and obedient performance of the duties set by God, and also performance of acts which are recommended by God.

The Importance of Justice

Now that we have recounted all the virtues and vices, it is

necessary to gain an understanding of the true significance of the quality of justice, since all ethical virtues originate from this quality just as all vices emanate from injustice, which is the quality opposed to it. Plato says:

When the faculty of justice develops in man, all the other faculties and powers of the soul are illuminated by it, and these faculties and powers all acquire light from each other. This is the condition in which the human soul moves and acts in the best and the most meritorious manner possible, gaining affinity and reapproachment with the Source of creation.

The quality of justice saves the human being from the danger of deviation towards extremes, whether in personal or social matters, and enables him to attain enduring felicity and bliss. Of course, it should be noted that this quality can be successfully exercised only if the individual knows what the Golden Mean is, and can distinguish it from excess when he confronts it. Such discrimination is impossible to attain except through the holy teachings of Islam, which contain elaborate instructions relating to all the things needed by human beings to attain happiness and felicity in this world and the next.

Various Kinds of Justice

Justice is of three kinds:

1. The justice between the human being and God; that is, the penalties and rewards which God bestows on man in relation to his acts and deeds. In other words, for whatever acts he commits, whether good or evil, an appropriate reward or punishment is given to him by God. If it were otherwise, it would imply injustice and violation of rights on God's behalf and unfair treatment of His creatures —characteristics which God does not have.

2. The justice amongst human beings; which means that everyone must honour individual and social rights of others and act according to the sacred laws of Islam. This is called social justice. In a prophetic tradition, social rights are enumerated in the following manner:

إِنَّ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ عَلَىٰ أَخِيهِ ثَلَاثِينَ حَقًّا لَا بَرَاءَةَ لَهُ مِنْهَا إِلَّا بِالْأَدَاءِ أَوْ الْعَفْوِ: يَغْفِرُ زَلَّتَهُ، وَيَرْحَمُ عُزْبَتَهُ، وَيَسْتُرُ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَيُقِيلُ عَثْرَتَهُ، وَيَقْبَلُ مَعْدِرَتَهُ، وَيُرُدُّ غِيْبَتَهُ، وَيُدِيمُ نَصِيحَتَهُ، وَيَحْفَظُ خِلَّتَهُ، وَيَرْعَىٰ ذِمَّتَهُ، وَيَعُوذُ مَرْضَتَهُ، وَيَشْهَدُ مِيتَتَهُ، وَيُجِيبُ دَعْوَتَهُ، وَيَقْبَلُ هَدِيَّتَهُ، وَيُكَا فِيءُ صِلَّتَهُ، وَيَشْكُرُ نِعْمَتَهُ، وَيُحْسِنُ نُصْرَتَهُ، وَيَحْفَظُ حَلِيلَتَهُ، وَيَقْضِي حَاجَتَهُ، وَيَشْفَعُ مَسْأَلَتَهُ، وَيُسَمِّتُ عَظْمَتَهُ، وَيُرْشِدُ ضَالَّتَهُ، وَيُرُدُّ سَلَامَتَهُ، وَيُطِيبُ كَلَامَتَهُ، وَيُرِيءُ نِعَامَتَهُ، وَيُصَدِّقُ إِقْسَامَتَهُ، وَيُوَالِيهِ وَلَا يُعَادِيهِ، وَيَنْصُرُهُ ظَالِمًا أَوْ

مَظْلُومًا، فَأَمَّا نُصْرَتُهُ ظَالِمًا فَيَرُدُّهُ عَن ظُلْمِهِ، وَأَمَّا نُصْرَتُهُ مَظْلُومًا فَيُعِينُهُ ظُلْمَهُ أَوْ يُعِينَهُ عَلَى
أَخْذِ حَقِّهِ، وَلَا يَسْأَمُهُ، وَلَا يَخْذِلُهُ، وَيُحِبُّ لَهُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ وَيَكْرَهُ لَهُ مِنَ
الشَّرِّ مَا يَكْرَهُ لِنَفْسِهِ.

Every believer has thirty obligations over his brother in faith, which he could not be said to have met unless he either performs them or is excused by his brother in faith from performing them. These obligations are: forgiving his mistakes; being merciful and kind to him when he is in a strange land; guarding his secrets; giving him his hand when he is about to fall; accepting his apology; discouraging backbiting about him; persisting in giving him good advice; treasuring his friendship; fulfilling his trust; visiting him when he is ill; being with him at the time of his death; accepting his invitation and his presents; returning his favours in the same manner; thanking him for his favours; being grateful for his assistance; protecting his honour and property; helping him meet his needs; making an effort to solve his problems; saying to him: 'God bless you', when he sneezes; guiding him to the thing he has lost; answering his greetings; taking him at his word (not drawing a bad interpretation of things he says); accepting his bestowals; confirming him if he swears to something; being kind and friendly towards him, not unsympathetic and hostile; helping him whether he is being unjust or is a victim of injustice [when we speak of helping him when he is being unjust, we mean that he must be kept from being unjust; when we speak of coming to his aid when he is a victim of injustice, we mean that he should be assisted in securing his rights]; refraining from feeling bored or fed up of him; not forsaking him in the midst of his troubles. Whatever good things he likes for himself he should also like for his brother in faith, and whatever he dislikes for himself he should also dislike for his brother.

3. Justice between the living and the dead. This is the kind of justice that commands that the living should remember the dead with kindness, pay their debts, act according to their wills, pray for them, give alms seeking their forgiveness from God, and perform charitable acts in their memory.

Self-development

At the end of this section, the conclusion that we draw is that justice means the complete mastery of the intellect over all other faculties and powers of the human soul, so that all are employed towards the ultimate goal of human perfection and the end of making oneself God-like. In other words, the intellect is the sovereign of the body; if justice prevails within it, it will also prevail in the domain under its jurisdiction. Just as if the ruler of a society is just, justice shall expand throughout that whole society, whereas if the ruler is unjust, then there will be no justice in that country. This is expressed in a narration:

إِنَّ السُّلْطَانَ إِذَا كَانَ عَادِلًا كَانَ شَرِيكًا فِي ثَوَابِ كُلِّ طَاعَةٍ تَصْدُرُ عَنْ كُلِّ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَإِنْ

كَانَ جَائِراً كَانَ سَهِيماً فِي مَعَاصِيهِمْ

Whenever a sovereign is just, he shares in the reward and merit of all the good works done by his subjects; but if he is not just, he will be considered an accomplice in all their sins and evil deeds.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that one cannot reform others as long as he has not reformed himself. That is, if an individual is unable to make justice prevail within the domain of his own individual self, how can he put it into effect amongst his partners, family members, fellow citizens, and finally, the whole society? Therefore, self-development is necessarily prior to all else, and this is impossible except through the science of ethics.

To be continued

NOTES:

1. The Power of Imagination is also called the "practical intellect", which is the counterpart of the "speculative intellect". The "speculative intellect" comprehends the notions of virtue and vice and gives advice and guidance. The "practical intellect" puts the directives of the "speculative intellect" into effect and follows its orders. The directive of the "speculative intellect" are always directed at the regulation of the powers of passion and anger in the human being .

2. Ignorance or *Jahl*, are here used in a wider-than-ordinary sense. "*Jahl*" here stands in opposition to "*aql*" (reason or "*hikmah*" (wisdom), not in opposition to "*ilm*" (knowledge).

Islam and the Modern Age

by 'Allāmah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'i

translated from Persian by Mahliqā Qarā'i

The Way of Nature

In view of the present state of marvellous rate of progress, can one really believe that Islam can cater to the needs of the modern world? Today, when man, by the means of his power of reason, is conquering the planets and is able to journey far out into the depths of space, is it not time for us to discard such ancient dogmas and concentrate our vision and will on the pursuit of our magnificent victories, pursuing the modern sophisticated way of life?

Before answering these questions, I consider it essential to mention this point first: It is true that we human beings naturally prefer the new to the old. We always give priority to the new model of something over its older forms. But this generalization cannot be applied to all situations and practices. As we can never say that since the well-known formula $2 \times 2 = 4$, has been used by mankind for thousands of years, it has become obsolete and thus needs to be discarded; or, as we cannot say that the system of forming social life has become old and out-dated, it has to be cast away and a new style of individual living should be established; or, we cannot propose that the civil codes unnecessarily restrict and hamper individual freedom and have become ancient as well, and as these laws fetter the human being, and that too in an age when he is conquering the vastness of space by launching spacecrafts into the orbits of different planets in order to discover the secrets of the universe, so new vistas should be opened for him and he should be liberated from the shackles of law and the clutches of those assigned to enforce it. It would all seem to be ludicrous, since notions such as 'old' and 'new' make sense only when used in the context of variable, transitory objects which can lose their freshness and lustre under the destructive influence of time and change. Consequently, while we are engaged in a serious discussion which is based upon a realistic approach, and concerned with the laws of nature and the system of creation (one of these issues is whether Islam can satisfy the

human demands in view of present conditions), we should not give much significance to such rhetorical distinctions between old and new. Such distinctions, of course, have their proper place and occasion, which is certainly not the context of this discussion.

The question as to whether or not Islam can administer the needs of humanity in the present circumstances is itself a strange one. Its incongruity becomes more apparent when it is put in the context of the real meaning of Islam on which the Quranic invitation is based; since Islam is the path which acquaints humanity with the system of creation of universe. Islam provides such laws for mankind as are in conformity with human nature and are in complete harmony with the really natural instinctive human needs—though not such “needs” as are conceived by imagination and caprice. It is evident that the human nature is the same and will be the same as long as human beings exist, irrespective of place and time or their way of life. Nature has laid before them a path, which they may either accept or refuse to tread.

On this basis, the above-mentioned question may be put thus: if human beings act according to the path indicated by nature, is there any guarantee of their attaining the happiness and bliss as demanded by their nature?

Islam is the path of nature and, therefore, is the eternal and unchanging path for mankind to follow. Its unchangeable laws affirm man's legitimate, natural and physical desires, and guide him towards the ultimate abode of his happiness and bliss. The Quran says:

فَاقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ
الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ...

So set thy face to the religion, as a man of pure faith—God's nature upon which He originated mankind. There is no changing God's creation. That is the right religion....(30:30)

We know that there are different types of living organisms throughout the world of creation. Each one of them has a specified term of life and a specific course of development. Their well-being and happiness depend upon their capacity to resist and combat the harmful and destructive elements which confront them in their brief period of survival. It means that living organisms can reach their goal and select the path of survival by utilizing various resources incorporated within their structure without much trouble.

During its biological course of development, the wheat grain has to pass through definite stages to obtain its ultimate growth. Its constituent parts and biological mechanisms by reacting to specific environmental conditions and by absorbing certain specific elements in definite

proportions essential for its growth and development, guide it towards its ultimate goal of maturity. The wheat seedling never alters its particular natural mode of growth and development that it has adopted. It can never be that a wheat plant, after a certain stage of development, may suddenly alter its course to adopt that of an apple-tree and start sending out branches, leaves and blossoms. Neither does it suddenly alter its course to that of a sparrow and starts growing feathers and a beak and begins fluttering its wings for flight. This is a general and universal law prevailing in every sphere of life. Human beings are also not exempt from it. In their natural course of life, human beings, also, have to pass through certain fixed and inherent stages to reach the goal of perfection and attain their summum bonum. Their constitution is so designed that with the help of the available and suitable means and resources, they can reach ultimate maturity.

Regarding this characteristic of general natural guidance, the Quran says:

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ *

Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation, then guided it. (20:50)

Describing the presence of guidance in mankind, it says:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّيْنَاهَا * فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا * قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا * وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ
دَسَّاهَا *

By the soul, and That which shaped it and inspired it [with the capacity to distinguish between] lewdness and God-fearing, prosperous is he who purifies it, and failed has he who seduces it. (91:7-10)

It should be quite obvious that the real path of human life which leads human beings towards true happiness is actually that path which is pointed out by nature. It is meant for their real gain and success, and it corresponds with the laws of creation of man and the universe. This path may or may not be according to the sentiments and emotional preferences of individuals; rather their feelings and urges themselves need to follow nature and fall into harmony with it. A human society, likewise, should be established on the firm foundations of realism and not on the weak and shaky grounds of false and fake ideals.

It is here that the difference between Islamic laws and other civil codes lies. Ordinary social laws are legislated according to the wishes of the majority of individuals in the society (i.e. 50 percent +1), whereas Islamic laws have been formulated according to the dictates of nature and instinct, which represent the Divine Will. Hence, the Holy Quran

reserves the right to legislate solely for God. It says:

...إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ...

....Sovereignty solely belongs to God....(12:40)

And:

....وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ*

....Who is better in judgment than God, for those who are certain in belief?
(5:50)

Whatever generally goes on in an ordinary human society is either according to the intentions of the majority of individuals, or according to the dictates of a powerful despot, regardless of whether they are in conformity with the principles of justice and the real interests of the community or not. But in a true Islamic society, authority belongs to truth and justice and individual interests are subordinated to it.

The other misunderstanding that needs clarification is the notion that Islam is not congenial to the social spirit of the modern-day human societies, which are enjoying every kind of freedom and prosperity and are not in a position to subject themselves to the kind of restrictions that exist in Islam.

Of course, with the present state of prevalence of moral degeneration in all walks of human life, and all sorts of corrupt and unjust practices that are debasing human societies, endangering their very existence, we find very little affinity between the Islamic spirit and today's unfortunate, deviated humanity. To be certain, while still retaining the status-quo, we cannot hope that a partial application of Islam can effectively save humanity. It would be like expecting benefits of democracy from a dictatorial regime with a democratic label attached to its name.

But if we take into consideration the instinctive human nature and Islam—which is itself a manifestation of nature—we can hope to find a complete harmony and compatibility between the two. How is it possible that no such harmony should exist between the two?

Of course, as a result of prevailing perversions and distorted vision, which are the outcome of an extravagant attitude on the part of the recent generations, there has taken place a severance of ties between the two. However, the wisest way of overcoming these adverse conditions is to launch a war to combat them, so that the grounds may be prepared for a reunion. We should not be disappointed if the people have deviated from the path of nature. We must be hopeful regarding human potentialities. History bears witness as to how every new movement or

regime has to confront the resistance offered by representatives of the old forces of the previous times. It is only after a prolonged tug-of-war and occasionally a bloody conflict that they can open a road in the society for themselves and obliterate the memory of the rival system from minds of the people.

Democracy itself, which has been regarded as the most successful alternative by its followers and was established through popular support for the most part, has been established after bloody clashes. The French Revolution and other such revolutions were brought about in this manner. The communist regimes, which according to the Marxists are the most "progressive" of human political systems and the "most magnificent" gift of history, were established through a bloodbath of millions of people. Russia, and afterwards many Asian, European and Latin American countries, present this type of picture.

Accordingly, the resentment initially exhibited in a society does not prove the unsoundness and instability of any proposed social system. Islam is alive by all means and it has the full capacity of being implemented in today's society.

Now, I shall go ahead to further elaborate this subject and analyze it.

Islam and the Genuine Needs of Every Epoch

The significance and value of every scientific idea depend upon its practical value in life. The most primitive and simple idea like the drinking of water, and the eating of food, occupies an important place in human existence; that is, notwithstanding its simplicity it is as vital as life itself. Another idea that apparently seems to be very simple and trivial is the idea of the necessity of social and collective life; it has the same importance in human history as human civilization itself. It is this idea that coordinates, every second, millions of human acts with one another and produces every day billions of desirable and undesirable effects. Evidently, the question whether or not a religion like Islam can cater to *all* human needs in *every* age is of such paramount significance that nothing more important can possibly be conceived.

Almost every Muslim individual is acquainted with at least some of the Islamic laws. Like other religious intellectual material that Islam has produced, this conceptual inventory has been stored in the minds of its followers for century after century. It has been transferred from one generation to the next as a religious heritage. However, like other religious relics, this heritage has lain idle in the minds of individuals without being subject to proper use, inquiry and scrutiny.

If we Easterners try to recall the history of the times of our ances-

tors and forefathers, we shall see that for thousands of years the regimes that ruled us never gave us any freedom of thought, especially in scientific or social matters. A ray of hope that shone for a while during the early era of Islam through the efforts of its Messenger and which brought tidings of a distant dawn, was lost in the centuries-long night of oppression by a series of egocentric tyrants. Again we were left in a state of slavery and bondage. We remained tortured and tormented in the infernal, deadly dungeons, repeating our age-old obsequious utterances: 'Yes! Yes Sir! Yes your highness! Yes your royal majesty!'

Whoever was more clever was only able to guard and preserve the religious material in an intact condition storing it for some luckier generations to come. Moreover, the rulers of those times were not indifferent to encouraging such an attitude for preventing open and free discussion of issues in the society. Their only concern was that people should be so busy with their work that they would not leave their cocoons. With the public submerged safely in their own personal errands, the administration of the community was the concern of the rulers and the self named guardians of the society. They were not alarmed at people's interest in the comparatively simple religious material. They only wanted to keep them from free and inquisitive discussions. They considered themselves as the community's active mind.

They had well realized that the most powerful source of strength in social life is the will power of human individuals, and this power was safely harnessed by the rulers by controlling their minds. As a result all their effort was concentrated on the conquest of the public's mind so that they may themselves become the active intellect of the community. These are the facts that anyone who turns to the historical chronicles of the past will uncover without much assiduous study.

Of late, the Western deluge of "freedom", after satiating the Europeans, has now turned towards Eastern lands. Initially it sought admittance to our continent as a guest, then it became an authoritative master in our own house. At first it gave a war cry against dogmatism and intellectual repression. The presence of this partisan of freedom seemed to provide a good opportunity for us to restore our lost dignity and to start a new life of intellectual brilliance and to undertake a belated synthesis of knowledge and action. But sadly, the same European freedom that delivered us from the clutches of the oppressors took their place to become our "active mind".

We did not know what to do. When we came to our senses, we realized that times had silenced the lords of the olden days and dethroned from the seat of authority the commands of the autocratic sovereigns and aristocrats. We were asked to pay no more heed to what the broken idols spoke but instead to listen to and to imitate what the Europeans said and did.

One thousand years had passed since the soil of Iran embraced the last remains of Ibn Sinā. His philosophic and medical books were preserved in our libraries and his scientific views were on the tips of our tongues, though without any consequence.

Seven hundred years had passed since the mathematical works and the cultural heritage of Khwājah Nasīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī were the goal of our lives, though without any result. But following in the footsteps of the Europeans, we joined them in celebrating their one-thousandth and seven-hundredth anniversaries. More than three centuries were past since the philosophical school of Mullā Ṣadrā was followed in Iran and his philosophical ideas were the subject of study. On the other hand, many years had also passed since the Tehran University was established and had opened a faculty of philosophy. But some years back when a conference was held there, one of the Orientalists made some remarks in appreciation of Mullā Ṣadrā, this caused an unprecedented clamour in the university regarding his personality and philosophic thought.

These are a few examples which fully illustrate the state of affairs in our society and the nature of our intellectual temperament. This shows the degree of our intellectual bankruptcy and servility to others.

Such was the condition of the majority of our intellectuals. A few of them, who were successful in retaining their independence of thought and had preserved their intellectual heritage, became the victims of the malady of split-personality. They were infatuated with the ideas of Western thought and at the same time remained loyal to their Eastern intellectual heritage. They strived to bring about a reconciliation between these two opposite poles and to create a state of matrimonial harmony between the unlikely pair.

One of our able writers tried to reconcile the Islamic tradition with the Western tradition of democracy in an article entitled "Islamic Democracy". Another gentleman strove hard to extract the notion of a classless society from Islamic texts, under the title of "Islamic Communism"!

Isn't that strange? One should ask them: if the relevance and validity of Islam should conditionally depend upon its affinity to the "vital principles" of democracy or communism, when the same democracy and communism with their all pomp and pageantry have come to us on their own, what is the necessity of taking such great pains in trying to produce a compromise between them and a handful of out-dated fourteen-centuries-old notions?

If Islam is an independent and living entity by itself, what is the need to compromise its natural grace with borrowed artificial adornments in order to invite customers?

During the post-Second-World-War years, Western scholars have been enthusiastically discussing and studying various religions and pub-

lishing their findings. Imitating them, we also followed the same course and chose certain aspects of our holy religion as the subject of discussion and debate: Are all religions true? Are the 'heavenly' religions anything more than a series of attempts in social reform? Do these religions have any other aim except purification of the soul and correction of morals? Can religious rites and rituals exist forever in their respective societies? Do religions have any purpose other than the exercise of rites and rituals? Does Islam fulfil the needs of every epoch? etc.

Indeed, a careful scholar, before entering into any controversy, would first verify the validity of questions raised according to certain established scientific criteria and only afterwards he would express his opinion. But the Western thinkers consider religion to be simply a social phenomenon, a result of a series of physical factors, like society itself.

Those Western thinkers who were rather optimistic regarding religion—including Islam—say that it is the mental contrivance of a group of men of genius, who, under the effect of a purified spirit, a rich intellect and an indomitable will, have conceived certain moral laws for the purposes of reforming their societies. These laws have evolved with the gradual development of human societies. They say that the empirical data, as well as historical evidence, provide sufficient proof of the fact that human societies gradually move towards perfection, and every day humanity takes a new step in the direction of civilized living. They cite the results of psychological, legal, sociological and even philosophical discussions, particularly the theory of dialectical materialism, to prove that since human societies do not remain in a static condition, in the same way their enforceable laws also cannot remain unalterable.

They argue that the laws that might have guaranteed the welfare of primitive human beings who ate of the fruits of the jungle and who dwelled in caves, can never be sufficient for the purposes of sophisticated life of modern times. How can the laws that were formulated when people used to fight with spears and clubs, suffice for a resourceful and cultured age like ours equipped with the most sophisticated nuclear bombs? Could laws belonging to an age when people used to travel on horseback and on mules be of any use to people accustomed to aircrafts and nuclear submarines?

It means that the modern world neither accepts, nor should it be expected to accept, the laws and regulations belonging to the ancient times. Consequently, the laws legislated by societies of the past should be subjected to constant change with respect to the changing conditions of humanity. As a result of change in practical values, moral norms also need to be revised; since morality is no more than a series of psychological habits that become stable due to repeated performance.

The simple life of two or three thousand years ago did not require

the intricate political systems of today. Can the women of modern society lead a life of chastity similar to the veiled ladies of the past? Even the labourers and peasants and other toiling classes of today's world could not be expected to possess the patience and endurance of the toilers of past ages? The agitated revolutionary minds, living in an age of the conquest of space, could not be expected to be terrified by lunar and solar eclipses or black winds and made to resign and submit to the Will of God?

It means that human societies, in every age, desire law and morality to be according to the temper of that age.

The Islamic Approach to Law

Islam, on the other hand, with a specific series of laws, claims to guarantee, to perfection, the satisfaction of the needs and happiness of human society. In fact, "Islam" is the name of such a method and system of regulations.

It is evident that such an approach and a system of such laws is called upon to modulate its approach with the needs of every age. One of the modulated instances of this system was the practice of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) and the set of laws that he implemented in his time.

In other epochs, as well, the modulated application of Islam should also imply the best and purest approach to life that can effectively forward the interests of human society of that age. This clarifies the point that the answer to the question raised by a Western scholar about the capacity of Islam to cater to the changing needs of every epoch—in view of the fact that his question is based on a valid scientific basis—is positive. However, as explained, he views Islam as a fixed system of Divine doctrines, which, despite their permanence, claim to guarantee the satisfaction of the needs of every epoch.

In any case, we should examine whether or not the Holy Quran, which is the revealed Book of Islam, and the best interpreter of the ends of this Divine religion, interprets the meaning of 'prophethood' and 'religion' on the basis of social, psychological, philosophical and material grounds which call for a separate set of laws corresponding with the ethos of every age; or does it lay down a set of permanent unchangeable laws and fixed moral norms and obligations for mankind of all ages; and if the latter is in reality the Quranic viewpoint, how does it justify its claim to satisfy the needs of every epoch?

Does the Quran desire that human societies should gradually reach a fixed static condition, and that all the doors of progress should be closed to human civilization? Does the Quran want all sorts of developmental and progressive human activities to be brought to a permanent

halt? And how does it meet the challenge of a fluid Nature and an everchanging system of the cosmos, of which man and his society are a part?

What is certain is that the Quran explicates the position of the revealed religion as originating from the hidden world (*'ālam al-ghayb*). It links its message to the total system of creation and the perpetually changing universe. At the same time it explicitly states the fixity, unchangeableness and permanence of the constituents of religion. The Quran interprets the merits, happiness or misfortune of an individual or a society in a way which differs from the outlook of a Western scholar. These issues, when examined from the eyes of the Quran take an appearance quite different from what they seem when perceived through the spectacles of materialistic discussions.

The Quran regards the Islamic law and the Islamic approach as a series of principles that guide the system of creation and in particular the human society with its continuously changing and evolving nature—which is itself a part and parcel of the world of nature. In other words, the Quran considers Islam to be a series of principles that are in complete harmony with the laws of creation, and hence these laws are as unchangeable as nature itself. These laws embody truth; they are not subservient to the desires and whims of any person, like the laws and statutes of countries with despotic and dictatorial regimes, nor like the laws of democratic countries which are subject to the wishes of the majority. Islamic laws have been legislated in harmony with the system of creation of the universe, and are wholly dependent upon the Will of the God of the universe.

How does Islam Satisfy the Demands of Every Epoch?

In the discussions about society this point has amply been stressed that it was on account of the necessities of life and due to an individual's inability to cope with its demands all alone, that the human being chose to lead a social existence. Similarly, we often hear in juridical discussions that a society can genuinely satisfy the vital needs of its individual members only when it formulates a set of laws and regulations that correspond with their needs, so that each member of society can obtain his genuine rights and benefit from the fruits of collective existence.

In the light of these two notions, the principal basis of social laws is satisfaction of the basic needs of human life, without which a human being cannot, even for a moment, continue its existence. It is this fulfilment of basic needs that directly results in the formation of a society and formulation of laws and regulations. Evidently, a society in which

there is no collective effort for the fulfilment of basic needs, and where there is no interrelationship of activities among members, such a group does not deserve to be called a 'society'. In the same way, laws and regulations whose existence and implementation has no effect on fulfilment of the social needs of the people, are not worthy to be called 'laws', that is, a set of regulations that safeguard vital social interests. The presence of laws which more or less satisfy the needs of society and which are, on the whole, acceptable to its members, is necessary even for the most barbarous and backward societies. However, in primitive societies the laws and regulations are products of custom and tradition, having gradually emerged from the irregular collective behaviour of the past. At times, in such societies, laws are imposed upon the people through the extravagant will of one or more powerful individuals, resulting in the establishment of a well-defined base for the mainstream of social life acceptable to the majority. Even today we see such people in various corners of the world who conserve their customs, culture and traditions without losing the fabric of social life.

In an advanced society, if it is a religious one, the Divine Law prevails. If it is a secular society, the laws legislated through popular consent, exercised directly or indirectly, are implemented. No society exists, nor can exist, where the members are not bound to certain laws, obligations and duties.

How to Determine these needs?

It is obvious that the main reason responsible for the legislation of laws and regulations is to meet the social needs of human life. But the question arises: What are these needs? How should they be determined?

These requirements should be, of course, directly or indirectly, susceptible to determination by man, however sketchy and general that determination may be. By the way, we are also confronted with the question whether or not the human being can occasionally make errors in determining his duties and his means of attaining happiness. Are we to accept his estimations and judgements at their face-value?

The majority of people in the so-called progressive world of ours consider human will and wish as the genuine and sufficient basis for legislation of laws. But since it is impossible that all individuals belonging to a nation should think in a similar manner, the consensus of the majority (i.e. 50 percent +1) is, unavoidably, regarded as decisive. The opinions of the minority (i.e. 50 percent -1) are ignored out of necessity, and it is deprived of any freedom of action altogether.

It cannot, however, be denied that human resolution and will is directly related to conditions of life. A wealthy person who is provided with all necessities of life, cherishes a great number of fanciful desires

that would never occur to the mind of a pauper. A hungry person who suffers from extreme hunger and who has lost his control, only longs for food; whether it is delicious or not, whether it belongs to him or others, does not matter to him. But an affluent person may be indifferent even when the most delicious foods are laid out on the table before him. During the times of prosperity, human beings conceive of more fancies than during hard times.

In this way, the pattern of needs changes because of civil progress; while the previous needs of people are satisfied with the march of civilization new needs are generated which replace the old ones. With this change in conditions, people outgrow certain laws and need new laws or demand amendment of the old ones. In this way, among the living nations of the world, new laws always replace worn-out laws. As mentioned, it is the will and support of the majority of members of every nation which gives validity to the laws and stamps them with the seal of authority, even though the legislation may not be in the interest of the society.

For example, a Frenchman by virtue of his French origin, is a member of the French society and whose will and opinion is honoured if it coincides with that of the majority. The French laws are designed to fashion him as a twentieth-century Frenchman; not like a contemporary Englishman nor as a tenth-century Frenchman. Nevertheless, are there not any constant factors in the varying patterns of human needs which change with the march of civilization? Aren't there any common factors among human societies that have existed in various epochs of history? Has the basic substratum of humanness, to which a series of natural needs of life are related, undergone an irreversible, though gradual, change? Have our human ancestors of distant past been physiologically different from us? Did incidents such as war and blood-shed, or times of peace and harmony, have any significance other than what they mean to us today? Did the effect of wine and nature of intoxication in the past have a quality different from what it is today? Did the musical compositions of the past impart different types of pleasure than they give today? In short, was the external and internal structure of the human beings of the past different from that of present-day mankind? Obviously, the answers to all these questions are in the negative.

We cannot say that humanity has gradually metamorphosed into something other than what it was in the past. We, also, cannot say that the essence of humanness—which is the common factor between the white race and the black, between the wise as well as the fools, between the young and the old, between the people living in the tropics and those living in the polar zones, and between the peoples of the past and the present—has changed with respect to the pattern of common needs.

There are, definitely, certain needs which require a series of fixed

and permanent rules and regulations that have nothing to do with the rules that are subject to alteration and change. There is no nation in the world which would not choose to wage a war whenever its existence is decisively threatened by an enemy, and when the enemy cannot be repelled except through blood-shed, would not go for it. There is no nation, for example, which would prohibit people from eating food or ban sexual association altogether. Many such examples can be given, and they all prove the necessity for unchangeable laws which are independent of laws subject to change. The above statement throws light on certain issues:

1. The main reason responsible for emergence of society, social laws and legislation, are the needs of life.

2. All nations of the world, even the barbarous ones, have their own laws and regulations.

3. The means of determining the needs of life, from the modern point of view, is through the will of the majority of the members of society.

4. The will of the majority is not always in accordance with reality and truth.

5. There is a class of laws that are subject to alteration with the passage of time; since they are related to specific conditions and circumstances. But there is another class of laws that are related to mankind's "human essence", which is a common factor among all human beings of all times, in all parts of the world and in all circumstances and environments. These laws are unchangeable, enduring and fixed.

Now that these issues have been clarified, let us see what the Islamic viewpoint is:

What is the Islamic Point of View?

Islam is a system of universal laws which haven't been formulated for any specific group of people or for a specific period of time. In its teachings, its focus is on the "natural man"; that is, its attention is centered upon the natural structure of the human being and the conditions of a common individual, whether he is poor or rich, strong or weak, black or white, an Arab or a non-Arab, male or female, old or young, wise or foolish. The "natural man", is a human being who carries the primordial, God-given nature along with a pure consciousness and a will untainted by illusions or deviations. This is what we call a "natural man". It cannot be denied that the distinguishing characteristic which discerns the human being from other animals, lies in his intellect; whereas other animals do not enjoy this gift of God.

All activities of all living organisms, except the human being, are subservient to the dictates of their instincts. These animal instincts

guide and motivate them towards satisfaction of their vital needs.

Human beings are the only animals who, besides the drives motivated by diverse instincts, feelings and emotions—like love and hatred, friendship and enmity, hope and depression—are equipped with the faculty of judgement, which can decide between conflicting emotions and forces and select a right course of action despite obstinate opposition by emotion and passion. Sometimes this faculty decides against an action despite the pressure of instinct and emotion; at other times it recommends an action despite unwillingness of instinct and passion. Yet at other times, when the overall interests of the human being coincide with the demands of instinct and emotion, it ratifies their demand.

The Basis of Islamic Outlook

Since the education and training of every species of beings should be based on cultivation and development of its distinguishing characteristics, Islam has based its teachings on the firm basis of intellectual faculty of man, not on the unstable foundations of feelings and passions. This is the basis of the Islamic invitation composed of certain sublime beliefs, higher morals and practical laws, whose truth and veracity is confirmed by the human being's primordial nature, in conjunction with its God-given intellect free of illusions and deviations.

The "Natural Man"

Man, in the state of pure nature, perceives through his God-given primordial nature that the vast realm of the universe, from the minutest particle to the greatest galaxies with their wonderful system of precise laws, points to its origin from the One God. He clearly perceives that all things have come into existence by His act of creation; their functioning, their working—everything that followed their creation—are of His making.

The "natural man" perceives that this world of existence, with all its scattered fragments, is itself a huge unified whole in which all parts are interrelated with one another. Everything is linked with other things, and a perfect harmony and unity prevails amongst them.

The human world is just an insignificant fraction of the great cosmos, an insignificant drop in the vast and infinite sea; but it is a phenomenon in whose emergence the whole of universe had a share. It is a product of the whole universe, which is a creation of the Divine Will.

Since the human being is the offspring of the world of creation and he lives and flourishes under its leadership and guidance, it is the system of the creation which, by employing myriads of means that are outside human reach and power, has created the human being in its

present form, and has provided it with awareness, perception, faculties of reason, intellectual and emotional capabilities and other external and internal features. Through these means it has guided his consciousness and will towards the goal of his real felicity, his summum bonum.

The human being is the only creature which can distinguish between good and evil, between loss and profit, through its consciousness and free will. He is, therefore, a free being. However, it should not be forgotten that the world of creation is the same as the Will of God of the universe, Who has carved out all those internal and external patterns in man's being, making him a free being.

The natural man, with his thought and intellect, unmistakably perceives that his felicity, happiness and his true goal in life is the same as the destination determined for him by the world of creation which has created and fostered him. It is the world of creation that directs the human being towards the ultimate goal and purpose which has been determined and ordained for him by the One God, Who has originated all being and existence.

On this basis, the "natural" human being would make the judgement that the only road to his felicity in life lies in aligning his own being with the system of creation, considering himself to be an inseparable part of it. His judgement would be that he can neither afford to neglect his own situation in the perspective of existence, nor can he afford to overlook the duties assigned to him in the book of creation.

The essence of the innumerable duties laid down for him in the book of creation is that the human being should never humble himself and prostrate himself before anything other than the One God, and that all his acts and deeds motivated by his natural emotions and instincts must be performed under the surveillance of reason and on condition of its approval.

Fixed and Variable Laws

Laws are divisible into two distinct kinds:

1. Those laws and regulations that protect vital human interests (taking into consideration the fact that people lead a collective existence, regardless of its specific mode in every region and period).

This class of laws pertains, for example, to a section of beliefs and principles which concretize human devotion and humility towards the Creator (wherein there is no possibility of change and alteration), and those general laws pertaining to the general aspects of human life, such as food, housing, marriage, defence etc., which are a permanent feature of man's social existence.

2. Those laws and regulations which have a temporal, regional or

some other special aspect and change their form with variation in modes of living. This class of laws are subject to variation in accordance with gradual cultural advancements and changes in the social scene, and need revision with abolition of old customs and methods and emergence of new ones. For example, in the days when people used to travel on foot or on horse-back from one point to another, very simple laws were sufficient for the purpose of traffic control. But today with progress in the means of transportation, we are in need of a variety of complex laws for control of marine, land and air traffic.

The primitive man, who had a very simple way of life and only handled simple and primary raw materials, needed simple laws to fulfil his elementary needs of life, like food, clothing and shelter, although he spent most of his waking hours in tedious labour. In the modern world, where life is as fast as electricity, tremendous diversity of jobs and professions has emerged due to the variety of work. This division of work into thousands of professions has resulted in legislation of thousands of regulations, to which several more are added every day.

Islam, which focuses its educative attention on the "natural" human being and which, through its invitation, leads human society towards piety, virtue and purity of belief, action and purpose, bases its programme on this unpolluted purity of the intellect of the "natural" human being. Consequently, it has divided human laws and regulations into two classes: the first class of laws that are fixed, being based on the primordial nature of man and the characteristics peculiar to his species. This class of laws is named "Islamic Shari'ah". They guide humanity towards the goal of its highest felicity:

فَاقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ
الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ...

So set thy face with sincerity to the Religion—God's nature upon which He originated mankind. There is no changing God's creation. That is the right religion....(30:30)

Secondly, it should be noted that determination of the second class of laws, which are alterable and can be modulated according to the changing conditions of place and time, has been assigned to the institution of *al-wilāyah al-āmmah* (general guardianship), and are subject to the opinion of the Prophet of Islam (S), his successors (A), and those appointed by him. These laws and regulations are formulated by *al-wilāyah*, in the light of the permanent religious laws, in accordance with spatial and temporal requirements, and counted as part of the Divine law, the *Shari'ah*, and are not considered a part of "*al-Dīn*":

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ...

O believers, obey God, and obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you. (4:59)

This is, in brief, the reply that Islam gives in regard to the question of satisfaction of the real needs of every age. This problem needs a more elaborate explanation and a deeper inquiry. This we shall take up in the next section.

Constant and Variable Laws in Islam

In the previous section we came to know that Islam has divided its laws into two groups: the fixed and the variable laws.

The fixed laws are such as have been formulated with a view to human nature, i.e. the universal human nature, which is common to civilized or uncivilized, white or black, sturdy or weak, persons of every region, and every age. Since all human beings are created with the same human structure, with similar types of internal and external faculties and organs, whenever two or more human beings come in contact with one another and try to cooperate with one another to form a companionship to be distinguished as a social entity, and since they inevitably face the same kinds of problems when they try to solve them with their joint efforts, this commonness of various factors in their makeup and needs necessitates a series of uniform regulations applicable to all individuals in the group.

The faculties of intellectual comprehension are of the same kind in all human beings. Their rational judgements, as long as illusions and superstitions do not intervene in their reasoning, are also similar. Their mental and critical faculties need to be satisfied through a similar kind of testimony. Similarly, various feelings, like love and hatred, hope and fear, needs for food, clothes, shelter and sexual association, exist among all human individuals and need to be gratified in a similar manner for every individual. On account of this common human nature, it cannot be said that the satisfaction of hunger is permissible for one person and prohibited for another. Nor it may be said, while one person must submit to the judgements of his reason, another should completely ignore the dictates of this conscience.

Moreover, it can't be said that human nature, despite its age-old association with emotions, faculties and consciousness peculiar to it, should dissociate for a period with its consciousness or totally negate it for all time. Can one suggest that mankind should lead collective life in one period and adopt individual living at other times, or that one should defend himself at one time but surrender unconditionally to his

enemies at other times, or that one should engage in work and activity at some times and choose a life of idleness and sloth at other times?

This makes it obvious that human society, by nature, requires a series of fixed and uniform laws.

Through its religious message, Islam has endeavoured to convey nothing but this point. It says that nothing except a series of such laws and regulations as are in conformity with the general system of creation and the particular makeup of mankind, can fulfil the vital needs of human existence.

It asks man to turn to his God-given conscience and consciousness, to prevent every kind of sensuality, caprice, impropriety and waywardness from influencing his judgements, and follow whatever has been determined to be right and truthful. We should neither label the following of a series of truths as "imitation", nor should we imitate our ancestors blindly in the name of "national pride" or "age-old national customs and traditions". We should neither label godliness and realization of truth as "conservatism," nor surrender ourselves to a group of sensualists in power, becoming the instrument of their whims, and, as a result, sell ourselves into the worship of hundreds of man-made "gods". "Islam" (*lit.* submission) is the name of this religion, basically because it invites man to the sole worship of the One Creator of the universe and calls for his submission to the truth. This invitation, in its elaborate form, consists of a series of beliefs, morals and laws, put forth as fixed obligatory duties before mankind.

It may be pointed out that the elements of all the three aspects of religion—that is belief, morals and laws—are perfectly interrelated with one another as well as with the great system of creation. However, an elaborate discussion of these wonderful interrelationships and the perfect harmony, coherence and unity between various aspects of Islamic teachings is outside the scope of our present discussion. Here our main aim is to prove that Islam possesses a series of fixed laws.

Alterable Laws in Islam

Just as human beings require a series of fixed and constant laws for the purpose of regulating their permanent and homogeneous natural needs, in the same way they also require a number of changeable and variable laws without which human societies cannot carry on their stable existence. Evidently, while the "natural" life of all human beings is almost the same because of their permanent and homogeneous structure, their temporal and spatial requirements are constantly subject to evolutionary and revolutionary changes. As the conditions and circumstances of human societies gradually change, they transform themselves in order to adjust to changing conditions, thus giving rise to the neces-

sity for bringing about certain changes in prevailing laws. It is in the context of such laws and regulations that Islam recognizes the necessity of a principle. On account of this, the guardian of the Law (the *walī*) has been authorized to make necessary changes in various periods and for people of different regions, when he considers it to be necessary. This can be done without subjecting the permanent laws to change, while satisfying the demands of human society.

Clarification of this Viewpoint

In the same manner as a member of an Islamic society is free to spend his income in whatever way he likes (of course, within the limits of the Law and in accordance with the criteria of God-fearing and piety; i.e. he is free to make use of his property in any manner he chooses, to expand or restrict, to increase or reduce the level and scope of his lifestyle, to defend and recover his rights and property or to waive or relinquish them if he chooses, to adopt any profession and work he chooses and the hours and frequency of such work and activity), so also the *walī* of Muslims, in the position of the caretaker of the affairs of Muslims, whose authority is sanctioned by Islam, by virtue of his *wilāyah* over a region, presides over their social affairs; he represents the social will and consciousness, and is free to exercise his discretion in social affairs, like an individual in affairs of his own life.

He is authorized, in the light of fixed religious laws and with due observance of *taqwā* (God-fearing), to legislate laws in such matters as related to roadways, transport, housing, commerce etc. He can resolve on a war of defence, and, when necessary, order the mobilization of the army; or, if he decides that armed defence is not in the interests of the Muslim society, order for conclusion of hostilities through negotiation, settlement and conclusion of suitable treaties.

He can, for example, implement a programme for cultural development related to religious or other affairs, and launch large-scale operations; or, if he deems fit, withdraw certain programmes in some fields and advance others in their stead.

In short, all those new regulations that can be beneficial in the progress of the social life of a society and are to the interest of Islam and the Muslim community, come under the authority of the *walī al-'amr*. There is no restriction whatsoever in their legislation and execution. However, although such laws are compulsorily enforceable, and obedience to the *walī al-'amr* is obligatory, at the same time, these laws are not considered a part of the Shari'ah, or Divine Law. The juristic bases of such laws are the demands of conditions and circumstances, which call for their formulation. Accordingly, as soon as the grounds for their legislation disappear, their validity also ceases. In such a case, it

becomes the duty of the present *walī al-'amr* to proclaim among the people the abolition of the old law and enforcement of a new valid law.

But the Divine commands that constitute the *Shari'ah* are permanent and everlasting; not even the *walī al-'amr* has any authority to bring about any change in them in the name of appearance of a necessity, or abrogate them in name of its disappearance.

Clarification of Certain Doubts

This brief explanation regarding the permanent and the alterable laws in Islam is sufficient to prove the baselessness of any charges against it.

Some say that the magnitude of the present social life cannot in anyway be compared with the life of fourteen centuries ago. The laws and regulations dealing with today's system of traffic and transportation alone are more numerous and of a wider range than the total number of laws prevalent during the days of the Prophet (S). Many of the laws that exist today were not necessary to be legislated then. This is the reason why the Islamic *Shari'ah* which does not contain such regulations, has become irrelevant for the present-day world.

These gentlemen, of course, do not possess sufficient information regarding the Islamic Law and are entirely ignorant of variable laws sanctioned by Islam. They imagine that Islam, being a chain of fixed and static laws, tries to administer an ever-changing and developing world by their means. In other words, Islam, armed with an ancient sword has risen to fight the undefeatable system of creation; it desires to harness inevitable changes in human culture and to stop the march of time! Others have said that inevitable social evolution and change require an alteration and gradual change even in 'fixed' laws; therefore, the fixed laws of Islam, if their utility and strength be admitted, were good for implementation only during the times of the Prophet (S), not in all ages.

These gentlemen have not attentively pursued their legal studies. They have failed to realize that in all civil codes prevalent in the world, there is always certain material which is not subject to change. It cannot be denied that the laws and regulations in the past were different from what they are today, and will, in general, differ from the laws of future, too. Nevertheless, there will remain certain common aspects in all law codes that shall never become obsolete and outmoded. In any case, as I have already mentioned in the previous part of our discussion, the process of legislation in Islam, whether it is derived from Divine Revelation—as in the case of fixed laws—or based on counsel (*shūrā*) and *al-wilāyah*—as in the case of changeable laws—is exclusively based on reason and rationality, not on the emotional inclinations and irra-

tional prejudices of the majority. However, in spite of it, the Islamic approach to law-giving cannot be compared with the mode of government in social regimes; Islam possesses a set of permanent laws, the Divine *Shari'ah*, whose alteration is beyond the powers of the guardians of the Muslim community (*awliya' al-umūr*). The *general* Law of the *Shari'ah* is obligatory under all conditions and circumstances; only the *particular* laws are alterable, on account of the necessity to suit the changing and evolving social conditions and to guarantee the fulfilment of changing social needs.

Most systems of government have a law called "the constitution;" neither the government, nor the senate, nor the parliament, is authorized to bring about any change and alteration in it. There are other laws that are legislated either by the parliament or legislative council or are a product of deliberations and decisions of cabinet ministers. Only the latter class of laws, on account of their specific, particular applicability, is subject to change and alteration in accordance with changes occurring in a society or a country. As it cannot be expected from the constitution of a country to define, for example, every detail of the traffic rules or make amendments and changes in them every month or every year according to changing requirements, so also the Divine *Shari'ah*, which occupies the sanctified position of a constitution, should not be expected to contain any amendable elaborate codes. Just as one does not expect the constitution of a country to put all its articles at the disposal of the parliament or government to make changes in them—even those articles which stress the independence of a country and its basic system of government—so also one should not expect that the laws of the Divine *Shari'ah*, which has the same significance as a constitutional law, be subject to alteration and change.

Thus the first criticism that Islamic laws are imperfect and are based upon such principles that are not relevant today, is proved to be baseless. The second charge, also, according to which laws should be alterable and that Islamic laws are static and fixed, has been refuted.

In this connection, there is another question which arises, and which is a corollary to the second objection: It is true that among the standing laws of a progressive society there is certain material which cannot be abolished *in toto*, but do the laws of the Islamic *Shari'ah* guarantee the felicity of human society during all ages and at all times? Can the modern civilization continue its unabated march through such Islamic practices as *ṣalāt*, *ṣaum*, *ḥajj* and *zakāt*? Can such Islamic laws as those related to slavery, marriage, interest on debt, and other laws, hope to survive without modifications in the present-day world? These questions and others like them need a series of elaborate discussions which call for another time and place.

The Qur'ān and the Theory of 'Ālam al-Khalq and 'Ālam al-'Amr

by Martyr Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Beheshtī

translated from Persian by Shams al-Hudā

The Theory of *Khalq*, and *Amr*

In theological philosophy, the domain of being has been divided into various classifications from different angles: necessary and contingent, essential and accidental and so on. One of the divisions is into 'non-material' (*mujarrad*) and 'material' (*māddī*). The material beings are subject to motion, change and alteration. The non-material beings are free from matter, movement, change and alteration. A material being is bound by time and space, whereas a non-material being is free from them, and is not limited by these two binding factors. The complete domain of non-material being is called '*ālam al-'amr* (the World of Command).

In the 'World of Command' every being assumes existence spontaneously on exercise of Divine will or command, without the need of preparation of any material, temporal or special ground.

The realization of every being is subject to its essential possibility (*al-ḥikmah al-dhātī*). Anything which is essentially impossible (*al-mumtani' bil-dhāt*) and incapable of assuming existence, whether material or non-material, God does not command for its coming into being. However, the essential possibility of a being is always with its essence, and time and space do not intervene in it.

As opposed to the World of Command, there is the World of Creation (*'ālam al-khalq*). The material world is called the World of Creation. In this world, the existence of every being, in addition to its essential possibility (*al-ḥikmah al-dhātī*), depends on its possibility of preparedness (*al-ḥikmah al-isti'dādī*); that is, its materialization can take place only under the presence of favourable conditions and readiness of ground. Here also, the realization of every being takes place with the will and command of God. However, so long as the ground for the emergence of a material being is not prepared, the necessary conditions are not fulfilled and hindrances are not removed, God *does not* will its creation and does not command its realization.

**'The Theory of Creation and Command'
and its Relation to the Quran:**

In one of the verses of *Sūrat al-'A'raf*, the Quran briefly describes the creation of the world in these words:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي
اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مَسْخَرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ
تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ *

Lo! Your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then mounted He the Throne. He covereth the day with the night—which is in haste to follow it—and hath made the sun, the moon and the stars subservient by His Command. His, verily, is all creation and commandment. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. (7:54)

In the sentence: 'His verily is all creation and commandment', the words *khalq* (creation) and *amr* (command) bear different meanings. Some of the commentators, with a view to affirm this difference of meanings, state that 'the World of Creation' means the world of matter and 'the World of Command' means the world of non-material beings, and both belong to God. For instance, Fayd al-Kāshānī, in his exegesis *al-Sāfi*, says, "The phrase *أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ* (His is the creation) means the physical world and *وَالْأَمْرُ* (...and the command) implies the world of spirits."¹

The viewpoint expressed in the above-mentioned verse of *Sūrat al-'A'raf* has led Quranic exegetists to interpret the word *amr* (command) as 'the World of Command'. This word recurs in yet another verse of *Sūrat al-'Isrā'*:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا *

And they ask you about the soul. Say: 'The soul is of the commands of my Lord, and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little.' (17:85)

Explaining the sentence, "Say the soul is of the commands of my Lord", it has been said that the soul belongs to the world of command. This interpretation has influenced the interpretations of other verses as well. For instance, verse 82 of *Sūrat Yā Sīn* says:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ *

His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it, 'Be', and it is. (36:82)

In regard to this verse, it is said that it refers to the most immediate specimens of creation, i.e., the creation of non-material beings in the World of Command, since they come into existence no sooner than God commands them to be. However, in the world of creation and material existence, material beings cannot be ordered to be, so long as the necessary circumstances for their emergence are not ready.

A Baseless Transference:

During my study of Islamic philosophy I imputed the aforementioned meanings to the words 'creation' and 'command' as they occur in the above-mentioned verse of *Sūrat al-'A'rāf*. As far as the verse of *Sūrat al-'Isrā'* is concerned, my understanding of the term was the same and I accepted the interpretation: 'The soul is from the world of command'. This interpretation, when applied to these two verses, did not seem to me to be shaky.

However, confining the implication of the verse of *Sūrat Yā Sīn* exclusively to the beings of the World of Command, was something that I could not accept without doubts. While studying books on Islamic philosophy, I repeatedly came across such interpretations in regard to the verses of the Quran which did not appear convincing to me. Probably such recurring encounters, after a while, compelled me to review my understanding of the meanings of the Quran.

For the last several years, I have undertaken research in regard to those verses of the Quran which deal with metaphysics, theology, and other related subjects. My method of work is that firstly I collect the verses of the Quran relating to each subject, I then derive their meanings as indicated by the verses themselves, comparing the contents of one verse with another, without any reference to the views expressed by commentators and others. After this, I survey the views expressed by commentators, traditionists, theologians (*mutakallimūn*), philosophers, mystics (*'urafā'*) and others, in regard to the meanings of these verses. The purpose was to separate the views that can possibly be attributed to the Quran and considered as being based and dependent on it, from all that is part of a hangover resulting from such factors as tradition (*ḥadīth*), views of the commentators, theologians, philosophers, and mystics, as well as other viewpoints derived from attempts at interpretation and explanation (*ta'wīl wa tafsīr*) and transference of extraneous notions to the explicit meanings of the verses of the Quran.

It is most undesirable and inappropriate that a view relating to theological matters which is regarded as acceptable and convincing on various grounds, should be thereafter transferred to the Quran, and

then, with great labour, a coincidence of meaning be juggled out; further, when the topic is put for discussion and debate, a verse of the Quran be quoted as one of the arguments—or the main argument—in favour of the preconceived view, thereby imposing it upon the Quran and invoking its justification.

I undertook a study of the above-mentioned verses of the Quran on the same basis. My research in regard to these and other seventy-five verses bearing the word *amr* (command) or its other derivations which are more or less related to this discussion, as well as many other verses collected in relation with the subject of Divine Unity (*tawhīd*), and which are related essentially with this topic, indicated that the term 'World of Command', or rather the very basis of the theory of World of Command as formulated by some philosophers, theologians and mystics—as discussed briefly in the beginning of this article—can not be based on the Quranic verses.

The Meanings of 'Amr' in the Quranic verses:

As shown by any dictionary of Quranic words, the word *amr* and its other derivations occur in 248 places in the Quran. On surveying all the instances of this word in the Quran, one comes to the conclusion that the word *amr* has been used in the following two basic meanings: firstly, meaning "order" or "command", as in verse 77 of *Sūrat al-'A'rāf*:

فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ إِنَّا بِمَا تَعِدُّنَا إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ *

So they hamstrung the she-camel and revolted against their Lord's command, and they said: 'O Salih, bring on us what you threatened us with, if you are one of the apostles. (7:77)

The other meaning, which is more general and wider, is "affair" or "matter", which is applied to relations among things, activities and matters, such as in verse 83 of *Sūrat al-Nisā'*:

وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوِ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ...

And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it [without consideration of its being correct or not]. (4:83)

Here the sense of the word "*amr*" used for "news" is in accordance with the second meaning.

In Arabic, the word "*amr*" in its first sense meaning "command"

is pluralized as "awāmir", and in the second sense when it means "affairs" as "umūr". In the verse of *Sūrat al-'A'rāf*, the word "amr" is used in two successive sentences:

... وَالشَّمْسِ وَالْقَمَرِ وَالنُّجُومِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَّا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ...

....and He made the sun, the moon and the stars subservient by His amr [Command]; His, verily, is all khalq [creation] and amr [command or affairs?] (7:54)

In the first sentence, "subservient by His amr" bears the first meaning and there is no doubt about it; but what is the meaning of the word "amr" in the second sentence? A little careful thought to the verse itself makes the meaning clear. The first part of the verse states that the creation of the heavens and the earth is the work of God. God, after creation, mounted the Throne ('Arsh). What for? Suppose there is a king who after a lot of campaigning and fighting battles carves out a kingdom for himself. Having done this, he mounts the throne.. What would he want to do? Obviously to rule his kingdom, to hold the reins of all the affairs of the state in his lands and to organize them. God created the world and then mounted the 'Arsh to organize the system of the whole universe. The most basic element for maintenance of human life is the order of the universe, which provides for man's various needs. This order plays a significant role in keeping the temperature of the surface of our planet moderate, maintains conditions favourable to life growth in the vegetable and animal worlds, regulates the hours of activity and rest and makes possible the study of celestial bodies. But isn't this system related to the sun, the moon and the stars? Why not? But the sun and the moon and the stars are all subservient to God's command. As a result, both creation of the world and exercise of command over it relate to God. Nothing comes into existence by itself and nothing happens without His command. Read this verse once again:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي
اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسِ وَالْقَمَرِ وَالنُّجُومِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَّا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ
تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ *

Lo! Your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days, then mounted He the Throne. He covereth the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it, and hath made the sun and the moon and the stars subservient by His amr. His, verily, is all khalq and amr. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (7:54)

Consider the meaning of the verse in the light of what has been

said above. See how closely coherent and well-knit are the sentences. The Quran clearly states that the creation of the universe is exclusively the work of God, and after its creation it is subject to His authority, wisdom and command. The system of nights and days is in His hands. Neither the sun, nor the moon, nor any of the stars, which are considered by some as the principal agents of order in the universe, has any will or independence of its own. They are all subservient to His command. Not only the sun, the moon and the stars, but all the beings in the universe are subservient to His command—even the ships on the high seas move by His command, and vegetation grows on ready ground by His will:

... وَالْفُلُكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ...

....The ships run on the sea by His amr....(23:65)

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ...

And as for the good land, its vegetation springs forth by the permission of its Lord...(7:58)

Now, apply the theory of the World of Creation, (the material world, the world where, supposedly, the Divine command of 'Be!' does not apply, and nothing comes into existence just by ordering it to be), and the World of Command (the world of abstractions, to which the phrase *kun fa-yakūn* ['Be!' and it is] is supposed to apply) to the verse (7:54) under consideration. You will find that not only this theory is not supported by the verse of the Quran, but it also fails to correspond to the subject matter of the verse. It is because *khalq* and *amr* have two different meanings in the verse: "creation", and "command" or "sovereignty"; but both of them relate to the entire world—not that one of them relates to the physical world and the other to the world of abstract beings.

As mentioned above, a careful study of the other parts of this verse shall further clarify the meaning. Nonetheless, we may also consider other verses of the Quran on this topic:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ
الْأُمُورَ مِمَّنْ شَفَعَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ *

Your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then established Himself on the Throne to regulate the affairs [of the world]. There is no intercessor to intercede but with His permission. This is Allah, your Lord, then worship Him. Would you not remember? (10:3)

And:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ *

Allah is He who raised the heavens without any pillars that you see. And He then established Himself on the Throne. He made the sun and the moon subservient to His command; each one is in motion up to an appointed time: He regulates the affair [steers the course of the universe]. He makes clear the signs so that you may be certain of meeting your Lord [on the day of judgement]. (13:2)

In verses 4 and 5 of *Sūrat al-Sajdah*, it is said:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ مَا لَكُمْ
مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ * يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ....

It is God who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six days. Then He established himself on the Throne; you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor [you have no one who has authority of his own and who may do something for you, nor is there any one amongst you who can intercede of his own will between you and God and fulfil your needs]. Will you not then remember? He regulates the affair (amr) [steers the course of the universe] from heaven to earth....(32:4-5)

These are verses where mention has been made of both *khalq* (creation) and *amr* (command or affair). In addition to these, verse 31 of *Sūrat Yūnus*, verse 123 of *Sūrat Hūd* and verse 12 of *Sūrat al-Nahl* also relate to *amr* and clearly illuminate its meaning.

Why do the verses of the Quran pay so much attention to this topic? The Quran generally pays greater attention to matters with which Islam came into contact at the early stages of its propagation. Besides Jews and Christians, the beliefs of the people living within the area of Islamic expansion were mostly influenced by the views of the Sabaeans. Al-Mas'ūdī in his book *Murūj al-dhahab* devotes a whole chapter to religious views and tenets of the Arabs.² From what he says, and what is found in other sources, particularly the Quran itself, it can be inferred in general that the Arabs recognized the creation of the world as the work of God and believed in God, the Creator. However, they held diversified views regarding how the worldly affairs were administered and who administered them. Some believed that God created the world as He willed; thereafter He left the affairs of the world and its creatures to themselves without having anything to do with its big or small affairs. Hence, to worship or to pray to Him for fulfilment of our needs, was considered futile and meaningless. After

this assumption, no room is left for prophethood, resurrection, duties, reward and punishment. If God has nothing to do with the affairs of the world, where is the need to send apostles to prescribe duties and obligations, and to forewarn regarding reward or punishment in the Hereafter?

Another group believed that God created the world but did not entrust the regulation and administration of affairs to the creatures, but to the angels, gods of the sun, the moon, and the stars, or spirits of His favoured and intimate servants etc., so that they might do whatever they wanted in the world. Therefore, men should pray and appeal to these authoritative managers of the world for the solution of their difficulties, and should have nothing to do with God. People should worship them to please them and to invoke them for solution of their problems. They should stand facing their icons or statues and perform ceremonies to worship and glorify them. They should make offerings and sacrifices to them lest they may get enraged and cast their wrath on human beings.

Another group said that God created the world and held the reins of the affairs of the world in His own hands. However, He did not involve Himself in all big and small matters of the world. Rather, like a great emperor, He sought the assistance of His agents and representatives for the administration of this great kingdom. God, also, like great emperors, is not easily accessible to His creatures for submission of their applications and petitions. They have to resort to God's agents and assistants, and try to earn their good pleasure so that they may, as and when necessary, convey their demands to God and act as intercessors and intermediaries between God and His creation. Hence people should bow their heads on the thresholds of these intermediaries so as to approach God and have their needs and demands fulfilled.

In view of such curious beliefs, the Quran, in many of its verses, announces that they are totally baseless and nonsensical. In the verses quoted earlier, as well as in many other verses, it is declared that:

1. God created the universe, which from the moment of its inception, stood in need of governance of this vast kingdom. He, therefore, mounted the Throne of command (*'Arsh*) and took over the task of its administration, so that all its affairs, big and small, would be performed by His command, and no agent had the least independence of his own.
2. The angels, the sun, the moon, the stars and all the other creatures of the universe are subject to His command, and even their smallest movement is with His permission and command. They do not have the least authority or independence, and can do nothing of their own will: they are neither angry with anyone, nor can

they show favour to anyone on their own accord.

3. These creatures are not aides, helpers, colleagues or partners—not even subdued and weak partners—of God in the administration of the world's affairs. God is not like other rulers who need aides and adjutants. The angels are entirely obedient workers of God and are themselves a part of this splendid system of creation.

4. God is closer to His creatures than anything else and is more aware of their pleas than any other being. He Himself listens to their prayers. Therefore, there is no need of anyone to submit the pleas of His creatures to Him? In His establishment there is no intermediary or intercessor who could mediate of his own will and wish between the Creator and His creatures, so as to call for the creatures' special worship and veneration, and motivate them to offer sacrifices and offerings in order to come closer to God with his assistance. Would a wise man worship an intermediary who does not have even a particle of authority of his own and cannot intercede in any matter but with the permission and will of the real master? This is how the affairs of the world are administered. Nothing is worthy of man's worship except God, since *khalq* (creation) and *amr* (administration of affairs) both are from Him; nothing else is of any effect in the affairs of the world besides Him.

The Verse of Sūrat Yā Sīn

This verse follows other verses relating to physical resurrection:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ * وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ
قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ * قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ
عَلِيمٌ * الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُوقَدُونَ * أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي
خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ * إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ
إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ * فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُونَ *

Does not man see that We have created him of a sperm-drop? Then Lo, he is an open disputant. And he strikes a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation: he says 'Who will quicken the bones when they are decayed?' Say: 'He shall quicken them, who brought them the first time; He knows all creation, He who made for you the fire from the green tree so that with it you kindle fire. Is not He, who created the heavens and the earth, able to create the like of them? Yes indeed; He is the All-creator, the All-knowing'. His command (amr) when He intends [to create] anything, is only to say to it, 'Be', and it is. So glory be to Him, in whose hand is the dominion of everything, and unto

whom you shall be returned. (36:77-83)

Note that all the matters relate to creation and the removal of doubts about physical resurrection. The verse, "His command, when He intends anything...." is also to state this: "The enactment of the scene of Doomsday and physical resurrection, which appear so improbable to you, are very simple and easy matters for God. All that God has to do, is only to say 'Be'."

The same topic is discussed in almost similar words in connection with the creation of the physical world. For instance, verse 47 of *Sūrat Āl-Imrān*, related to the story of Mary (A), states:

قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ
أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ *

'Lord', said Mary, 'how shall I have a son seeing no mortal has touched me?' 'Even so', God said, 'God creates what He will. When he decrees a thing He does but say to it "Be", and it is.' (3:47)

Similarly, in the story of Abraham (A), verse 69 of *Sūrat al-Anbiā'* states:

قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ *

We said, 'O fire, be coolness and safety for Abraham!' (21:69)

The fire that was prepared to burn Abraham(A) to death, immediately became harmless on Divine command. Can then, the phrase 'Be and it is' be said to be exclusively applicable to the World of Command as compared to the World of Creation, even if it is assumed that the World of Creation is subservient to the World of Command and subject to its regulation?

The Verse of *Sūrat al-Isrā'*

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا *

They ask you about the soul. Say, 'The soul is of the amr [comand or affair?] of my Lord, and you have been given of knowledge nothing except a little.' (17:85)

What purpose lies behind the reply "the soul is of the *amr* of my Lord....", given to answer the questioners? There can be two possible answers to this question: firstly, that the verse throws light on

the obscure matter of the soul. Secondly, it may be said that the verse wants to say that the very question about the soul is pointless, because the soul, like many other unknowables, is not known to anybody except God. The more the human understanding expands, the more it finds itself confronted with greater number of obscurities. "You have been given of knowledge nothing except a little," would, therefore, imply that man should apply his energies to matters which have not been put beyond the scope of his intellect, cognitive and even imaginative faculties, and abstain from indulging in matters beyond their power and range. In such affairs, his share is only to the extent that, he may, through the guidance of his inborn insight, realize that such and such beings do exist in the universe—just as he realizes that the Creator exists—though he is unable to fathom their reality.

In the light of the last part of the verse, "You have been given of knowledge nothing except little", the second view seems more acceptable. Therefore, the meaning of the sentence, "Say, 'The soul is of the *amr* of my Lord'," is, "Say that the soul is one of those affairs that relate to my Lord, and that He has reserved the knowledge of it to Himself. The knowledge which has been put within man's reach is very limited."

However, the second part of the verse also seems appropriate in the light of the first viewpoint. Seen in its perspective, the meaning of the verse shall be: "Say, 'The soul is by the *command* of my God. and O Jews, who want to test Our Prophet by raising these questions and want to judge his sayings with what you find in your Book, know that not much share of knowledge had been provided for you.' " Nevertheless, the two parts of the verse seem more coherent when interpreted according to the second viewpoint. Well, what is the meaning of the sentence, "The *rūḥ* (spirit or soul) is by the command (*amr*) of my Lord," according to the first viewpoint? Does it mean that the *rūḥ* is the work and creation of God? Or that the *rūḥ* is by the command of God? Or that the *rūḥ* is from the World of Command? None of these meanings can be clearly derived from the verse itself.

What is here meant by *rūḥ*? The human "spirit" or "soul", the "Spirit" meaning *Rūḥ al-Qudus* (the Holy Spirit or Angel Gabriel), "spirit" in its common unspecified sense, "*rūḥ*" when used for the Quran, "*rūḥ*" to mean Jesus (A)—who is also called *Rūḥ Allāh* or the "Spirit of God"—are the various instances in regard to which the word "*rūḥ*" has been employed by the Quran. Now which of these meanings the questioners had in view, is not clear. Perhaps, the purpose was to ask the same generally understood meaning of human soul. But if the Jews or the idolaters (*mushrikūn*) under the influence of Jewish notions, had raised this question, it is possible that all or some of these meanings of the word *rūḥ* were in view. Therefore, can the notion of

the World of Command, or the theory of creation and command, be considered as being validly supported by the Quran? Not at all. Following are the reasons behind this unwarranted and baseless transference of an extraneous notion to the Quran:

A study of the books of exegesis and a comparison of various commentaries written under the influence of ideas expounded by the scholastic theologians (*mutakallimūn*), philosophers, mystics and gnostics, with other commentaries written by others who have escaped such influence, show that the correspondence contrived between the Quranic verse *إِلَّا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ* (His, verily, is all *khalq* and *amr*) and the theory of creation and command, originated from the controversies of *mutakallimūn*.

With the beginning of *ilm al-kalām* (Islamic scholastic philosophy), following the discussion about the Essence and Attributes of God, the question arose whether the Quran, being the Word of God, was pre-eternal (*qadīm*) or of temporal original (*hādīth*). This problem was, for centuries, the subject of heated controversies between many thinkers during the distinguished epoch of Islamic culture and civilization. The discussions regarding pre-eternity (*qidam*) and temporality (*hudūth*) became a typical and fundamental issue between the two schools of *kalām* known as the Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites. Each of these theories, which incorporated many other views, gathered a number of staunch and warring supporters. The gatherings of the elite, in which the major political and religious personages of the time were present, set the usual stage for a show of debates and controversies of the adept exponents of each school. During these controversies, raged with the tongue or the pen, the rivals tried to avail of every possible means to prove the authenticity of their views. They put all their thinking effort into looking for new tools and fresh arguments in support of their position. Throughout these efforts, which were aimed at only getting hold of fresh arguments, the spirit of truth-seeking remained very weak. It is a well-known fact that the spirit of rivalry and flair for controversy, despite one's intellectual keenness and knowledge, deviate the mind from the path of truth and lead to extreme distortion in perception of rational issues and understanding of textual material.

It was in the midst of such tempestuous controversies that the matter relating to Divine verses came under discussion. During these debates, their attention was mainly or totally devoted to finding new 'evidence' in the Quran to support their preferred viewpoints, thereby arming themselves with lethal weapons to demolish their enemies' positions. If they came across any faintest literal resemblance of meaning that corresponded with their viewpoints, they endeavoured to forge interpretations that would fit their views. It was not their

concern to check the meaning of one verse against other verses on the same subject. Very often, if one portion of a verse seemed to correspond with their viewpoint, the fact that the rest of the verse would not affirm such a correspondence did not discourage them. Novel interpretations and new notions circulated from mouth to mouth and were handed down by ancestors to succeeding generations. In many cases that interpretation was considered as the *only* interpretation of a certain verse by the later generations.

This is what happened in regard to the sentence أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ in the verse of *Sūrat al-'A'rāf*. In early centuries when the Word of God was not considered as created and temporal, the argument was laid out in this manner: The distinction made between *khalq* and *amr* shows that the Word of God is uncreated; because all creatures are temporal (*ḥādith*), and *amr*, in opposition to *khalq*, means the domain of pre-eternal (*qadīm*), uncreated things. Therefore, the Word of God, being His *amr* or command is pre-eternal and not temporal. This mode of interpretation of this Quranic sentence was mixed up with what was said in philosophy in regard to material and abstract beings. Thereafter, this interpretation was transferred to the verse of *Sūrat Yā Sīn*

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ.

and it was taken to mean creation of abstract beings in the World of Command, and the two commonplace concepts of "material world" and "abstract world" were substituted by the terms "World of Creation" and "World of Command". Later, the main purpose, which was to seek justification from the Quranic verse for believing in pre-eternity of the Quran, was forgotten. From the view that "*khalq*" and "*amr*" in the verse represent two mutually exclusive things, the conclusion was derived that the phrase الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ (creation and command) means the "World of Creation and the World of Command." Subsequently, even those who considered the Quran as temporal and created also accepted this idea.²

NOTES:

1. Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Ṣāfi*, p. 193.

2. In order to discover the veracity of what I have said, one should first study the exegeses which were not written under the influence of the notions of *'ilm al-kalām*, philosophy and *'irfān*, and later those which were written under this influence, specially the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* of Imām Fakhr al-Rāzī, vol. IV, p. 236, ff. vol. V, pp. 446 ff.; the exegesis of Nizām al-Nishābūrī, vol. II, pp. 143, 266; the exegesis of Mullā Ṣadrā, p. 488; also see the introduction to Persian translation of *al-Milal wa al-nihal* of al-Shahristānī, pp. 35,36, 39. In this introduction, which

S.M. Husaynī Beheshtī

constitutes the Persian translation of the text of al-Shahristānī's speech, numerous instances of the characteristic deviation we have discussed can be found.

In consideration of the common reader, attempt has been made here to keep the text free of specialist jargon to the extent possible. We have also abstained from mentioning all the relevant sources and references. Hopefully, we shall be able to present this discussion to the interested readers in greater elaboration at a more suitable time.

History and Human Evolution —Two Lectures*

by Martyr Murtaḍā Muṭahhari

translated from Persian by Dr. 'Alā'uddīn Pāsārgādī

LECTURE ONE

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The subject of our discussion is the meaning of evolution in history, or in other words, man's social evolution and progress. Men of science assume two types of evolution for man: one of which is biological evolution, about which you may have read in biology and know that man is considered as the most perfect animal and the last link in the natural evolution of animals. The meaning of biological evolution is clear: it is an evolution that the process of nature has produced without the intervention of man himself and without his asking for it. In this respect there is no difference between man and other animals; since every animal has reached a stage of evolution by a natural and coercive process. The same process has brought man to the stage that we call him a human being, and consider him a specific kind of species as distinct from other species.

But the historical or social evolution means a new process of evolution in which nature does not play the role it played in man's

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biological evolution. This evolution is an acquired one, namely, an evolution that man has secured by his own effort, and in every period has transferred it to the next generation through teaching and learning, and not through heredity. The biological evolution has taken place without man's will power and initiative, and has been achieved through a series of laws of heredity. But the social or historical evolution, being acquired by man's effort, has not been handed down from one generation to another, or from zone to zone through heredity, and there is not even a possibility of its being such. It has been accomplished through education, teaching and learning, and primarily through the art of writing. We see that the Quran swears in the name of the pen and tools of writing¹, and addresses the Prophet thus: "Read in the name of your God, Who created man from clotted blood. Read, and your God is the most exalted; He, who taught with the pen."² This means that God taught man how to use the pen; that is, He granted him the power to make progress in his historical and social evolution.

There is no doubt that human society since its origin, that is, since civilization first began to appear, has continuously progressed and evolved. We all know that like the biological evolution, social evolution, too, has been gradual, with one difference, and that is, with the passage of time the rate of evolution has increased in speed; in other words, it has followed a course of acceleration. It has moved on and on and has not been stationary, and the motion, too, has not been a fixed one. A car may move at a fixed speed of a hundred kilometers for several hours; but a speed with an acceleration means a gradual increase of speed in which the speed increases every minute.

But although evolution and progress seem an obvious matter, you may be surprised that there have been learned men who have doubted whether what has happened can be called progress or evolution. One may wonder that there should be any room for doubt in this matter. But the reason why they have expressed doubt about it will be discussed later on. Here, it is sufficient to say that although we do not consider their doubt justified and we believe that human society has continued its course of an all-round evolution and is approaching its final phase, at the same time their doubts are not quite without foundation. Nevertheless, we must clarify the cause for this doubt in order to be able to fully understand the meaning of evolution.

What is Evolution?

We must first define evolution. Many matters seem at first so obvious as to require no definition. But when one tries to define them, he finds it very hard and is faced with difficulties. I have no intention of quoting all the definitions which philosophers have given for evolu-

tion. There is a fine point in Islamic philosophy which is subject to argument from the viewpoint of the Quran, and that is the difference between "complete" and "perfect". We use the word "complete" as the antonym of "defective", and again we use "perfect" as the antonym of the same word "defective". But does "complete" mean "perfect"? No. There is a verse in the Quran³ which is related to the question of *Imāmah* and *wilāyah*⁴. It says: "Now We made your religion perfect, and completed Our blessings on you and were content for Islam to be your religion."⁵

This shows that the Quran attributes two meanings to "perfection" and "completeness". The blessings were completed from a defective state, and religion was perfected from a defective condition. But before explaining the difference between the two words, let me first explain the difference between evolution and progress, and then return to this matter.

Is progress the same as evolution, and is evolution identical with progress? They happen to have a difference and you may consider their usage. We sometimes speak of a sickness which is progressing, but we do not say it is evolving. If an army which is fighting in a land occupies a part of it, we say that the army is advancing, but we do not say that it is evolving. Why not? Because there is a sense of exaltation in evolution: evolution is an upward movement, a vertical movement, from a lower level to a higher plane. But progress and advance is always on a horizontal level. When an army has occupied a territory and added some land to its own possessions, we say that it has advanced, which means that it has moved ahead but on the same plane that it had before. Why do we not say that it has evolved? Because, there is the idea of exaltation in evolution. So, when we speak of social evolution, it means man's social exaltation and not just progress. Many things may be considered progress for man and society without being evolution and exaltation for the human society. We say this to show that if some scholars have expressed doubts about such progress' worthiness to be called an evolution, their view is not without foundation. Although we do not confirm their view, yet what they have stated is not entirely pointless. Therefore, there is a difference between evolution on the one hand and progress and development on the other; for progress and development are almost similar in meaning.

But the difference between perfect and complete can be explained in this fashion: If something consists of a number of parts, such as a building or a car, as long as all the necessary parts do not exist in it, we say that it is imperfect. But when we place the last part in it, then we can say that it is "complete". In comparison, evolution has many phases and stages. When a child is born with some defect in his limbs, we consider him defective; but even when he is born with all his limbs

complete, it is still considered defective from another point of view; he must pass through many stages of evolution in his education which are for him a form of exaltation and ascension by degrees and steps. So far our discussion was about the definition of evolution in the social and biological sense. But now we deal with other matters in this connection, the most important of which may be stated in three questions:

1. Has man, in his social life and throughout history, achieved evolution and exaltation?

2. Is human society undergoing evolution and will reach a fully evolved state in future?

3. If it is undergoing evolution, what is that ideal society, or, as Plato would say, that utopia of man, and what are its peculiarities?

We can understand the course of history up to the present; but what about the future? Should we close our eyes about the future and say that history inevitably moves on an evolutionary course? Is evolution in nature imposed by time? Is the ship of time voyaging on an evolutionary course without the slightest intervention of man and without any responsibility on his part? Have human beings in the past had no role as beings endowed with free will, freedom of choice and responsibility? Has the role of human beings in the past been secondary and subject to determinism or if there has been no such determining force in the past?

Human beings, by their own free will and choice and their own initiative and planning of their society, have determined an evolutionary course for their society, and have advanced it. This matter of free will and freedom of human beings in the past, should not be forgotten. Therefore, a group of men are worthy of praise and admiration, and they are those who had the choice to stand against historical evolution, or deprive it of their support, and prefer their personal welfare to the struggle for the sake of progress. But they chose the other way, and freely, by their own choice, followed the way of evolution, and sacrificed themselves. Similarly other human beings should be reproached and even cursed for posing hindrances in the way of this evolution.

If we do not recognize the future and have no plan for it, and if we pay no attention to our responsibility for making history, we too deserve being reproached by future generations. History is made by man, and not man by history. If we have no plan for the future, and do not realize our responsibility for the future of history, no one can promise us that this ship will reach its destination automatically. The least that can be said is that it may either go ahead or turn backwards. This matter of ability to advance or reverse the course of events, the idea that there isn't a blind coercive force that drives events ahead, is in Islam, and especially in Shi'ism, a question, which from a sociological

viewpoint (as I have explained in my book, *Man and Destiny*), may be considered one of the most sublime of Islamic teachings.

The Problem of *Badā'* (Revision)

In Islam there is an issue called *badā'* (revision)⁶. The concept of *badā'* has an apparent meaning which few would regard as acceptable. Some have even criticized the Shi'ah for believing in *badā'*. The meaning of *badā'* is revision in Divine Destiny (*qadā'*), meaning that God has not fixed a definite and final form for the course of human history. In other words, God says to man: "You yourselves are in charge of the fulfilment of Divine Destiny, and it is you who can advance, stop or reverse the course of history." There is no blind determinism either on the part of nature or the means of life or from the viewpoint of Divine Destiny, to rule over history. This is one way of looking at man, his history and destiny.

Therefore, as long as we do not understand the direction of evolution and man's ultimate goal, we cannot speak of evolution and merely state that man is progressing; for then, immediately, the question arises: towards what? If we cannot answer this question, what right do we have to speak of evolution? Don't we study history in order to open a way for the future? If by studying history we get only so far as to allow it to introduce itself without showing a way for the future, what is the use of history? But we see that the Quran surveys history in a way to show us the path for the future, and this is how it should be. Therefore, our discussion is related to the past up to the present, and then the future. The question of our duty and responsibility is determinable only when, after becoming familiar with the past, we gain an understanding of the future too.

The Evolution of History in the Past

If we regard history from two points of view, there has been indubitable progress of man, if not an evolution. One of them is in the matter of tools and implements of life. Man has certainly made progress in making tools, and, of course, an amazing progress it has been. Once his tools consisted of unhewed stone, which later on was hewed and polished. Today he has attained the present advanced state of technology, craft and industry. Man has not only advanced in technical skills and achieved stunning progress in production of tools, but he has made such a marvellous progress that if our predecessors and philosophers of a hundred or two hundred years ago had been told that man would advance so much in a hundred years time, as he has today, no one would have believed it. You may call it whatever you like, either

“progress” or “evolution”, there can be no doubt that man has made tremendous progress in making tools, and it may be expected to continue in future too, on condition, however, that it is not checked by a historic catastrophe, a calamity which is again predicted by some men of learning. They consider it probable that man’s technical and industrial progress will reach a point when man may destroy himself and all his achievements in science and technology, his books, his learning and civilization and all its vestiges. A new type of human being may appear to start life from the beginning. If no such catastrophe occurs, there is no doubt that the creation of tools may further advance to a stage which may not be imaginable today. This evolution is produced by the evolution of man’s experience and his knowledge; for man has made so much progress in his experimental understanding and knowledge of nature that he has been able to conquer nature and turn it into a docile servant. This was one aspect of human progress.

Another aspect of man’s evolution (which again may hardly be called “evolution”) is in the relations of social life and the structure of society (by “relations” here is not meant human relationships). Human society has gradually been transformed from a simple one into a complex structure. In other words, in the same way as he has advanced in technical and industrial matters from the simple cars of yesterday to the present day aircrafts and sophisticated spacecrafts, in the same way as in natural evolution a unicellular organism is so simple as compared with an animal like man in bodily structure, human society, too, has changed from a simple to an extremely complex structure.

Some have defined evolution as a process involving two stages: at first, there is an accumulation, that is, a multiplication of parts followed by division, characterized by a movement from homogeneity towards heterogeneity, or, in other words, movement towards organization between parts and organs interconnected by a unifying relationship. For example, we know that in the process of fertilization, a cell which is formed by the combination of male sperm and female ovum has a simple form at first; then it begins the process of division (accumulation); one cell divides into two, the two into four, the four into eight, the eight into sixteen, and this division goes on. But it is only a question of quantity until a stage is reached when there takes place another form of division; this is, one part becomes the nervous system, another emerges as the heart and system of blood circulation, and so on, and all these organs are interrelated forming an organized unity which is the human body. In this respect, human society, too, has progressed, whether you may choose to call it ‘evolution’ or not. That is, the structure of human society has changed from a simple state into something complex. The structure of primitive and tribal societies was very simple. Someone was the chief of a tribe consisting of a number of

people, and the chief divided the tasks between them, and these tasks were few in number. But you see that with the progress of science and technology, such division of work has become complicated because there are more tasks and more people to perform them. Compare the existing variety of jobs, tasks, professions and crafts of modern day with those of the societies of a hundred years ago. Or look at the degree of specialization at the administrative and scientific levels. In the past, a man was able to master all the sciences of his own time. He could become an Aristotle or an Ibn Sīnā. But now the system of education has undergone such subdivisions, that we have hundreds of the like of Aristotle and Ibn Sīnā, each a specialist in his own field, who are not the least acquainted with other branches of science and quite unaware of even their existence in the world. This is a characteristic of our time, a quality that removes uniformity and homogeneity from among human beings and replaces it with differences and distinctions. For, as man creates work, work too builds up man. As a result, although all are human beings living in one society, but they seem to possess different natures, since everyone is dealing with a task which is unknown to another who is engaged in another task. Every one of them seems to live in a different world of his own. The result is that human beings vary from one another. If we speak of progress or evolution in connection with society and its organization and division of labour, skills and talents, again the structure of human society has changed from a simple into a complex and extremely entangled one.

You may, from these remarks, realize that if things go on in this fashion, there is a danger of the creation of so many differences that the unity of mankind will be threatened; that is, human beings will resemble one another only in appearance, but their mental, spiritual, emotional and educational structures will be totally different from one another; and this is a great danger for humanity. That is why it is said that technological progress has alienated man from himself, and made him a stranger to himself. It has turned man into a creature styled and tailored to the needs of his job and profession, and destroyed human unity. This is in itself a serious problem. In any case, we may say that from the viewpoint of social structure too, societies have evolved in the past. However, here, in addition to the problem of power and domination over nature and besides the structure of human society and social organizations, there are a number of other problems which are related to human nature, and that is the relationship of individuals with one another.

Human Relationships

Has man made progress in the quality of relationships of human

beings with one another in the same way as he has made progress in the creation of tools, and in the complexity of social structure? If he has, then we may call it evolution and exaltation. Have human beings progressed in the sense of co-operation? Does a human being of today feel more co-operative towards others than in the past? Has he made a proportionate advance in the sense of responsibility towards other human beings? Has man's exploitation of other human beings been really effaced? Or is it that only its form has been altered and that it has increased in degree? Has man's aggression against the rights of others diminished? Have human relations improved in proportion to the advances made in building tools and with the complexity of social structure? Or have these problems remained the same as before? Or there may be some who claim that not only no progress has been made in this connection, but also there has even been a retrogression? In other words, can it be said in general that human values, and everything that is the criterion of the humanity of man, have advanced proportionately?

Different views have been expressed in this connection; some cynically deny it totally that man has made any progress whatsoever in this respect, for, they say, if the criterion of progress is welfare and happiness, we may hardly call it progress. For example, even in the case of tools, it is doubted whether they have provided man with welfare. As an example, speed is one of the things which has greatly advanced as exhibited by the telephone, airplane and other such things. But can this improvement in speed be called progress when measured by the criterion of human welfare? Or, since speed is a means, it has produced comfort in one respect, in other respects it has deprived man of welfare: it carries a good man promptly to his destination, but it also carries a wicked man as quickly to his goal and as promptly in his evil purpose. A sound and honest man has found stronger hands and quicker legs. A wicked man, too, has the same advantages. These means have made possible the transfer of a criminal from one part of the world to another part in a few hours, to kill thousands or even millions of people at once. What, then, is the final conclusion? Though I am not in favour of this cynicism, yet I wish to explain why it has been expressed by some. For example, is the progress in medicine a true progress? In appearance, it is, for I see that when a child suffers from diphtheria, right drugs and proper medical treatment are readily available. This is progress. But some people like Alexis Carl who measure these things with the criterion of humanity, believe that medicine is gradually weakening human species. They say: In the past, human beings had resistance against diseases; the weak were destroyed and the strong remained alive, and this made successive generations stronger and resistant to diseases, and also prevented the unnecessary increase of population. But now,

medicine is artificially preserving weak persons who otherwise would have perished and were really condemned to death by nature. Therefore, the successive generations are not fit to survive, and so every generation becomes weaker than its predecessor. A child born in the seventh month of pregnancy is by the law of nature condemned to death; but now medicine, with its progress and means, preserves this baby. But what will become of the next generation? Moreover, there is the question of over-population. It happens that those who are fitter for the improvement of the human race are destroyed and those who are not competent to bring about this improvement somehow manage to survive. This is the reason for doubt in this matter.

Another Example

In connection with the mass media, one may think it wonderful to sit in a corner and at the right moment hear the news in which he is interested. But remember that this same thing creates so much anxiety and worry for human beings; for, in many matters, it is more advisable for man not to hear such news. For instance, in the past the people who lived in Shirāz were unaware of the flood which overran Ghuchan, drowning so many people and making others homeless. But now they learn of it immediately and feel sad and anxious. There are thousands of such unpleasant happenings occurring in various parts of the world.

It was from the viewpoint of human welfare, and welfare as a criterion that learned men have doubted whether to regard speed as a measure of progress and evolution or not. However, we have nothing to do with these problems, for as we believe, there is ultimately an evolution and all these difficulties may be overcome—a subject which we will discuss later. Thus, in the question of human relationships, we cannot say that any progress or evolution has taken place, or, even if it has occurred, it is not proportionate to the progress made in making tools and to the growth in social organization.

The Relation of Man with Himself

Another question is the relation of man with himself, which is termed 'ethics'. If we do not say that all the happiness of man lies in the establishment of a good relationship with oneself—and we do not say so because it would be an exaggeration—yet we may say that if the means of man's happiness are compared with one another to find a percentage of role of every factor, a greater part of human happiness would be found to lie in the relation of man with himself, or with his "self": the relationship of man with his animal aspect. For, man, in spite of his humanness and the human values inherent in his nature, is

also an animal; that is, he is an animal on which humanity has been imposed. In other words, he is an animal, which, by the side of his animality, also possesses humanity.

The question arises here whether the humanity of man is subordinate to his animal side, or if his animality is subservient to his humanity. The Quran says:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا * وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا *

He who purifies the soul indeed attains deliverance, and one who corrupts it certainly fails. (91:9-10)

The problem here is of self-purification, which means not being captivated by greed and concupiscence of the self, and not being in the clutches of one's base animal characteristics. As long as man has not evolved ethically and has not attained internal emancipation from his own animality, it is not possible for him to establish good relations with other human beings. Good human relations can come into existence when man liberates himself from the captivity of other human beings, and is also able to abstain from subjugating other human beings to himself.

So far we have discussed four points:

1. The relation of man with nature, in which he has made progress.
2. The relation of man with his society, which has progressed from the viewpoint of social structure and organization.
3. The relation of man with other human beings, and the quality of his relations with other members of his kind, which depends again on his spirituality and is linked with the substance of his humanity. In this matter there is doubt as to whether he has made progress or not: that his progress in this sphere has not been on a par with other aspects is beyond doubt; the real question is whether he has made any progress at all.
4. The relation of man with himself, which is the subject of ethics.

The Role of Prophets and Religion in the Historical Evolution

Has man of today overcome his animality more than his ancestors in the past, and have the higher human values been realized in his existence? Or, has the quality of human existence been better in the past? The role of the prophets in the historical evolution, their role in the past and in the future, becomes clear in this connection. Here we can discover the role of religion in the past and thereby find out its role in the future, and on the basis of scientific and sociological evidence,

we can guess whether man requires religion in future for his evolution or not; because, the survival or annihilation of every thing is subject to its being able to fulfil human need. This principle has been stated by the Qurān and is affirmed by science. The Quran says:

.... فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُتُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ...

....as for the scum, it vanishes as jetsam, and what profits men abides in the earth....(13:17)

There is a parable which I have repeatedly used in my lectures, and that is the parable of flood and the foam on water. It says that the foam disappears quickly and the water remains. Right and wrong are compared to water and foam, and what is beneficial remains, and what is useless disappears.

The question whether religion will survive in the future is related to its role in human evolution, that is, in the evolution of his essence, his spirituality and humanity and the evolution of good relation of man with himself and with other human beings—something which cannot be replaced by anything else, either now or in future.

The question, therefore, is that, either, in the future, human society will dissolve and mankind will be effaced from the face of earth as a result of collective suicide, or human society will attain its true destiny, which is an all-round evolution (evolution in his relation with nature, evolution in awareness, in power, in liberty, in emotions and sentiments and other kinds of human feelings). We believe that this evolution will be achieved—a belief which, in the first place, we have obtained under the inspiration of our religious teachings.

In a lecture entitled “The Significance of Occult Aids in Human Life” I have stated the point that this optimism concerning the future of humanity and human evolution and man’s deliverance from reaching a dead-end, cannot be provided by anything except religion. It is the role of religion in human life which alone guarantees the evolution in the *human* essence of man’s being.

Questions and Answers

Question: In your talk you said that technology is harmful for man, since it is used for wicked purposes. Thus technology is anti-human. But you did not discuss it from the point of view of classes; for, in cases where technology is used against man, the fault does not lie with technology, but it lies with economic relations between human beings.

Answer: I request you to pay more attention to what I say, especially in connection with those points which I emphasize. I never said that technology is harmful for man, and I did not say that it is anti-human. When did I say so? I asked you to regard their (the critics') point of view. Moreover, neither they, nor I, who have quoted their words, said that technology is harmful to man or that it is anti-human. They say that technology is a neutral tool for man, and tools and even sciences are neutral. Since science is a neutral tool for man, and since tools do not provide a goal for man, it is man who chooses goals and employs the tools for his chosen goals. A car does not tell you where to go or where not to go. It does not tell you to go to aid those suffering from an earthquake, nor does it tell you to go for crime and theft. Tools are neutral, and that is all they say. Therefore, the basic point is that man's nature must be right in order to make proper use of tools. And this is what Rūmī has emphasized in his poems:

جنبشش چون جنبش کژدم بود
فتنه آرد در کف بدگوهران
به که آید علم نادان را بدست

هر که اوبی سر بجنبید دم بود
علم و مال و منصب و جاه و قرآن
تیغ دادن در کف زنگی مست

*That which moves without a head is only a tail,
And its movement is like that of a scorpion.
Knowledge, wealth, rank and status,
Produce mischief in the hands of evil-natured.
Allowing a drunken savage to swing a dagger,
Is preferable to putting knowledge in an ignoble mind.*

So our talk is about the nature of man. Some have simplified the matter and said that there is one thing that has caused man to choose anti-human goals and use technology against human beings, and that is the stratification of social structure in various classes. According to them, if you get rid of contradiction between class interests, then all these difficulties will be removed. We shall deal with this matter in our second lecture, to show that the removal of class conflicts is a necessary condition for human happiness and evolution, and in contrast with what you say, it is not the sufficient condition. Therefore, if we want to know the viewpoint of Islam concerning ideal Islamic society, we should refer to what is said about the government of Mahdi (A) so as to understand the view of Islam in regard to evolution. However, this does not mean that just waiting is enough for evolution to take place.

In the book *The Rise and Revolution of Imam Mahdi (A)*, I have particularly pointed this out. The essential point made by the book is that evolution is gradual and it must be pursued, and that the problem

of economic exploitation of man by man, and the removal of this exploitation is one of the conditions and one of the foundations of evolution, but not a sufficient one. The reason for this is that, in a society where there are no classes, man has not yet attained his own human essence. Aren't those reports that are received about genocide in the classless societies true? There is no reason for you to suppose them false. Why do those massacres take place? There are no classes there. What is then their cause? Solzhenitsyn, in his book *The Gulag Archipelago*, claims that since the October Revolution about 110 million people have been killed in the purges in Russia. Therefore, is the problem of man a question of classes or that of domination of man over man? This dictatorship of the proletariat is the worst form of man's aggression against man. Therefore, the removal of class differences is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one.

Question: If economic, social and cultural relations are evolving, should religion, too, not evolve in the same manner? In other words, if everything is subject to evolution, religion, too, must be so?

Answer: The answer is clear. What do we understand by "religion"? Is religion a phenomenon which has appeared at a time under a set of conditions of time and place; in other words, is it a product of certain specific conditions? If you have thought so, then firstly that is not religion, and secondly, if it were religion, it would be subject to change. But if we think of religion as the expression of the laws of social evolution, you must admit that the law of evolution itself cannot be subject to evolution. Since such an evolution is an acquired one, its laws have been set forth for man through Revelation. It is a law and not a phenomenon that it would be also subject to evolution. For example, in the biological evolution, if you say that plants have evolved on the basis of these laws, have the laws of evolution, too, evolved? No, a law is not a phenomenon, and only phenomena evolve. The Prophet himself is a phenomenon, and so he is born, grows, lives and dies. But the Quran (by which we do not mean its paper, which is perishable) is a set of teachings and laws sent for man, and so it remains. The Prophet is addressed thus: O Prophet, you die, but the Quran remains. You are a phenomenon, but the Quran is Law; phenomena may disappear but the Law remains.

Question: What should be done to attain spiritual and moral evolution in a society in which corruption is widespread?

Answer: As it happens, in a society where there is much corruption, the condition is more favourable for the spiritual and moral evolution of man. No mistake should be made here. The spiritual and ethical evolution of man is the result of resisting the opposing current. You may have had this experience as I have. In a village where the people are at the same moral level, if a bad man is found, his limit of badness is

that he may be a liar, and the level of the good men is not very high either. But in a society where contrary currents exist, as there are many victims, there are also many evolved individuals. I have had the experience of contact with various villages and cities. I believe that the environment of Tehran may be the most corrupt of all places I have been to; but I have also met the most virtuous and the most pious personalities in that city. If a society must always move towards goodness, it would be like a river which is continually flowing, and a person who can float on it can go on with the current. But this is not much of an accomplishment. The accomplishment is to be able to swim against an evil current, and it is then that perfection becomes possible.

LECTURE TWO

Our former discussion was about the meaning of the historical or social evolution of man in the past. We examined the question whether the processes which man and his society have undergone may be called evolution or at least progress, or whether there is a third alternative explanation that in some aspects of social life considerable progress has been made, while in other aspects there has been no progress or evolution. Or we may, at least, say that if there has been progress it has been very slow and out of harmony with the rate of progress in technical matters and evolution of social structure. The dimension in which man has not been able to make proportionate advance is the human dimension of social life. If we liken man's social life to an individual human being, technical progress and social development may be thought of as the body of society, while the human aspect of social life is the ethos of the individual. We may conclude, therefore, that humanity has physically overgrown, while its spirit and human ethos have made very little headway. The divergence between various views concerning the future is rooted in this matter.

Man's Future from Different Viewpoints

Some people are doubtful about the fact as to whether man has a future at all. They are uncertain because man is threatened with self-destruction. Such an uncertainty is evident among the enlightened and learned men of the West. Another group go a step further, and in addition to uncertainty, they are extremely pessimistic about humanity's future and openly cynical about human nature. They believe that man's nature consists of animality, lust, selfishness, egoism, deceit, cunning, falsehood, tyranny and such things, and since times immemorial when man began his life and social existence, this familiar

scene of life has been always as full of evil and mischief, both in the days of barbarism and in the age of civilization. They believe that civilization and culture have not changed the nature of man, and nothing has been able to transform the wicked nature of this creature called man. The difference between the savage of primitive times and the civilized man of today is nothing with regard to goals and objectives. The only difference lies in the method of work, and outward form and style. The primitive man, because of his primitiveness and lack of civilization and culture, committed his crimes more openly and unaffectedly, whereas the civilized man equipped with modern culture, commits the same crimes under the deceptive cover of high-sounding and stylish phrases and euphemisms. But both are essentially alike. What the wild man did, is not different in nature from what the civilized man does; the difference lies only in the outer form and appearance of their acts.

What is the conclusion? They say: pessimism and despair. What is the solution? They say: suicide—collective suicide. Fortunately, there are few among us who think in this fashion. If there had been no such ideas at all amongst us, I would not have mentioned it. But the thinking exists, and it may more or less exist mainly among students, and I mention it because I have noticed such thinking in some of the books which I have come across.

What is amazing in what they say is that man, after having reached cultural maturity, should commit suicide. Why? Because, they explain, when we find that human nature is beyond remedy, every person has the right to kill himself, and encourage others to commit suicide too. This is the logic of the type of writers such as Sadegh Hedayat. Such a kind of thinking is prevalent in various forms in Europe, and statistics show that in spite of all the welfare that exists in the civilized world, the number of suicides is increasing daily. By comparing the figures published in our newspapers we see this steady increase between the years 1955 and 1975. The Hippie movement was a social phenomenon, which was a reaction that took the form of dislike of civilization. It meant that civilization has failed to do anything for man, and that it has failed to change his nature. Do not compare this Western hippyism with our own hippyism, which is only a superficial imitation. But those who had originated this way of thinking in the West, had in fact a philosophy for it: the philosophy of disgust for civilization, and despair on account of its inability to do something to solve human problems. And this difficulty, too, is considered insoluble, a knot that by no means can be disentangled.

You may have read the reports coming from the UNESCO and elsewhere, as well as the articles written by our own experts, about the urge for taking refuge in narcotics. This trend in Western countries is the result of despair and cynicism about the future of mankind.

When man reaches the stage where he finds no remedy, when he thinks that reform and revolution have, both, failed to change man, when regimes and systems of government and economic and non-economic solutions have only changed their form without changing the content, then some people say: let us drop this matter once for all. And this is one type of view and theory.

The View of Scientism

Before this, there existed another view or theory which finds no support in the developed countries today, although there are still some who follow it in the developing countries. This view began with Bacon and those like him who said that the remedy for all human pains is science: when you build a school, you destroy a prison. By securing science and freedom, all sufferings will come to an end. Why does man suffer? On account of ignorance, weakness and helplessness before nature, sickness, poverty, worry and anxiety, oppression of man by man, need and greed. They offered science as the remedy for all these pains.

There may be some truth in this view. Science remedies ignorance, and weakness, helplessness and abjectness in front of nature, and the pain of poverty—in so far as it is related to nature. But not all human suffering comes within bounds of his relation with nature. What about the suffering produced by the relation of man with man, namely, greed, tyranny and oppression, which are derived from man's own nature, his feeling of loneliness, fear and anxiety? Science has not been able to remedy these. Therefore, this view that science can remedy all human pains has been abandoned in those countries. But in the countries which follow on the trails of the West, there are still individuals who think that science can really remedy all pains and sufferings.

Do not misunderstand me; my intention is not to negate science; for, as I said before, half of human pains find no remedy except through science. But man has other pains which constitute his 'human' suffering, the suffering which relates to his human dimension. Here science provides no help, and the scientists, when they reach this point, declare that science is neutral and indifferent; it is a means and it does not prescribe any goal for mankind. Science does not elevate human objectives, and does not provide a direction. Rather, it must be said that man uses science as an aid in the direction which he selects in life.

Today we observe that most of the human suffering is caused by human beings, by those who are well-informed, and not by the ignorant. In the problem of colonialism in the world of today and since the last few centuries, were it the ignorant who exploited and plundered the resources of others, the ignorant and the learned alike? Or were it

the learned and well-informed men who exploited both the ignorant and others?

Therefore, this supposition that science and education are the remedy for all pains and suffering of humanity is unacceptable. What I mean by 'science' or 'education' is that which makes man aware of the world; and awareness or understanding is something which is necessary, and nothing else can take its place. Again, do not misunderstand me: understanding is not enough to remedy all the pains of humanity.

The Viewpoint of Marxism

There is a third viewpoint here which says that the problem lies somewhere else, and that we should not be cynical of man's nature and despair on its account. The answer as to why the past has been disappointing, is that you have not been able to discover the roots of human suffering. These roots lie not only in ignorance, helplessness and such things, but in the type of ideology ruling over mankind. There is another problem for man which is independent of science, education and technology, and that is the problem of the ideology prevalent in society. To enable man, with all his human weaknesses, to start his struggle to change his situation, his ideology must be changed.

According to this view, since man left behind his early communistic system and since the institution of private property came into existence, and since ideologies have been based on private property and class distinctions, and social systems have been based on class division, and the exploitation of human beings by other human beings has been given legality and legitimacy, all these defects and shortcomings, these bloodsheds, wars, conflicts, massacres and cruelties have occurred. But if the ideology ruling over man is changed, then all these defects will be removed; for then, mankind takes the form of a united entity, and all will be like brothers. There will remain no trace of tyranny, fear, worry and anxiety. Then human society will advance in its human dimensions on a par with the technical and material evolution; the spiritual development of society will then be parallel with its physical growth. This is the view of Marxism.

Marxism considers the root of all human suffering to lie in the ideology of class distinctions and private property; therefore, a society which has attained its ultimate form is a classless society, free of any contradictions.

There are many objections against this theory. One of them is: if an ideology is merely a system of thought or a philosophy, does it possess the power to change man's nature? Why, then, science couldn't change the nature of man? If all the elements of an ideology consist

only of understanding without possessing the element of faith or belief, how can it influence human nature?

Is the ruling ideology derived from the nature of human beings in power? Or is it ideology that shapes the nature of the rulers? If you believe in the priority of objectivity over subjectivity, can you say that the dominant classes oppress others because they possess that ideology? Do they possess this tyrannical ideology because their nature is tyrannical? This means that their self-seeking nature requires it in so far as it is human nature to pursue selfish interests to the greatest extent possible. Then, according to this view, the quality of seeking profit has created this tyrannical ideology, and not that the ideology has produced that nature in man. Ideology is a tool in man's hand, and not vice versa. It is sheer idealism to say that man is a tool in the hands of his own thought and the ideology created by himself. If that is true, when the ideology is changed while human beings remain unchanged, has man then reached a dead end to the effect that the greatest exploitation of man by man and the extreme suppression of man by man should be perpetuated by those in the name of a classless ideology? The heart of the matter is that, no matter what form the social system may have taken in the past, man has remained unchanged and used that system as his own tool. How can we guarantee that it would not be repeated again? Do people have freedom in the countries where such an ideology is followed? There may be equality, but not in happiness; it is an equality in misfortune. There are classes there, but not economic classes. Out of a population of two hundred millions, ten millions control everything in the name of the communist party. Why do they not allow the other 190 millions to share the same privileges provided by the communist ideology? Because, if they do so, then there would be an end to those privileges.

The severest repression and gravest misfortunes and miseries have been inflicted in the name of a classless ideology. A new class has emerged without bearing the name of a class. This is because when an idea or philosophy is related to the mind and based on an abstract understanding of mankind, such an understanding by itself cannot influence his nature. Understanding clarifies the way for man to distinguish his interests better and to be more farsighted. But it does not offer him any higher goals. If I lack a higher goal intrinsically, in my nature, how can I find it? Do the Marxists not say that thought does not have any fundamental reality for man? If thought has no fundamental reality, clearly it cannot control human behaviour.

The View of Existentialism

There is another philosophy called existentialism, whose outlook

of the world and man is the same as the materialist world-view. The existentialists have a plan and a theory which tries to solve the deficiency of Marxism, namely, the question of human values. Since in Marxism the questions of humanity and human values and ideas such as peace and justice and ethical norms are considered worthless, idealistic chimeras, existentialists clung to the question of human values in order to provide man with a source of inclination, not just a source of thought but something which would be attractive enough to draw man towards itself, something which would provide exalted goals besides material ends. That is why they emphasize human values and what is called man's 'humanity'.

One may ask: you who say that the world is a mass of matter and physical action and reaction, and that totality of being is confined to matter, then what are these 'human values' in a universe of matter? Where do they come from?

Let us now talk of man. According to this view, man has no reality except his body. Matter constitutes his entire being. What may be related to this material composition is profit, which is something real. If I am totally a material entity, and nothing but matter exists in me, then in my relation with the external world, too, nothing but matter can interfere, and I must seek something which has material objectivity. For me, food, clothes, sexual relations and housing are objective matters. What, then, are the human values and the value of self-sacrifice which man senses within his being? They answer that they do not exist; however, man by his will can create values. Values do not have an objective existence; there is no such thing as 'value' in the external world that man can attain, they say.

Then, this question crops up: what is the destination of this mass of matter? It can only move from one point in space to another; reaching a destination which lacks a material or physical existence, is meaningless. They say that values have no objective reality, but we *give* them 'value' by *creating* them.

This is one of the most comical and stupid remarks ever made. They should be asked: what do you mean by your claim that you 'create' values, and 'give' value to an act, to friendship, to generosity, to sacrifice, and to service (which according to you have no value in their own nature, since value has no meaning in the world of matter.)? Do you then mean that you can really give value to an objective existence? It is like saying to this steel microphone: "O microphone, I will give you the value of gold." Does it become gold with my saying so? Iron is iron. Or if I say: "O piece of wood, I grant you the quality of silver." If I keep on saying so to the end of time, it will not become silver. Wood is wood. Its reality cannot be changed, and man is unable to change it.

Therefore, granting value by creating it in the sense of giving

objective reality has no meaning. What has meaning is giving an arbitrary, suppositional reality. What does this mean? It means, supposing something to be what it is not. Such arbitrary and conventional notions are useful only as means. For example, a non-Iranian visits our country, and we can grant him Iranian citizenship and an Iranian identity card, on the basis of which he becomes an Iranian national and can benefit from all the privileges and rights which an Iranian enjoys. The value of this conventional act is a means to something which may have an objective significance. This is like saying that a man or woman may want his or her spouse to be handsome. If the spouse happens to be ugly, and if the other says, "I grant you the hypothetical credit of being handsome," and then begins admiring the spouse for his or her handsomeness, it is meaningless. This is the cult of idolatry, creating idols and then worshipping them. The Quran says: "O man, how can you make a goal out of something that you have yourself created, and make an idol of something that you have yourself hewed?"⁷

The goal must possess a reality beyond imagination and assumption. One cannot assume something for himself as a goal, and then think it to be real. The value of an assumed thing is only within the limit of its being a means and a tool. Therefore, it is an illusion to say that man creates his own values. It is here that Islam asserts the existence of its absolutely coherent ideology.

The View of Islam

Islam to begin with, does not regard the past with total pessimism. Secondly, it is not so cynical of human nature. It says: This testimony that man of today gives against human nature, to the effect that it is based on wickedness and mischief, is similar to the ignorant verdict that the angels gave about man before he was created, and God rejected it.

See how the Quran relates the secret truths of events that preceded man's creation:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً....

And when your Lord declared to the angels: 'I will make a deputy on the earth'....(2:30)

In these words God declared His decision to create a being upon the earth who would be God's deputy and viceroy on this planet. The angels, for some reason or another, seemed to be aware of only the animal side of man, and no more. So they said to God, as the man of the nineteenth or twentieth century would say: "Do You wish to make a being Your deputy whose very nature is mischief and bloodshed?"

Create a being, who like us, shall be free of bestial desires, and one which is wholly spiritual.”⁸ How did God answer them? He said to them:

....إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ*

....Certainly, I know what you do not know. (2:30)

God says to the angels, “You paid attention only to one aspect of man: his natural and animal side, and are unaware of his spiritual and Divine aspect. I have placed something in his nature which makes him intrinsically free of any ideology. I have planted in him an inclination for exaltation. I have granted him an ideology, one of whose pillars is this natural and rational inclination. I have planted in his nature the seeds of love of truth, love of justice, and love of freedom. His essence is not totally selfishness, animality and class interests, or tyranny. He is a creature made of both light and darkness and this combination of qualities has lifted him above every other creature, above you who are angels and others besides you.”

Can an ideology, which reduces all problems to that of classes and class interests, provide guidance for mankind? Can an ideology, which is totally rational or exclusively philosophical, heedless of any spiritual inclinations and unaware of the reality of man, serve as a guide for man? or teach and develop exalted values in man? Or, can the other view which makes the absurd claim that man is essentially devoid of a nature, and is merely an earthly and material being, and that he ‘creates’ or hallucinates values for himself, help man to know himself?

O man, know yourself!

O man, teach yourself properly!

O man, train yourself!

O man, know your goal!

O man, recognize the path of your evolution!

It is an insult to the station of humanity to consider all man’s efforts in the past to be motivated by the selfish interests of individuals, groups or nations. As man has two natures, an exalted one and a base one, within him, this internal conflict has raged within every individual human being. Those who have been able to subdue their lower urges to the higher powers, thus attaining a sublime balance, stand in the ranks of the supporters of truth and justice.

Those who have failed in this combat, have formed the group of means, bestial and degenerate beings. As the Quran says, the most magnificent struggle of man has been the combat between the supporters of Truth and the followers of falsehood. Who are these two groups? Supporters of Truth are those who have been liberated from the

captivity of external nature and of other human beings and from the clutches of their own inner beast. They are those who have attained belief, faith and ideal, and rely on them. They are different from those human beings who seek material gains and are mean and corrupt.

The Quran speaks of the first clash and contradiction in the human world, which may either be interpreted historically or taken as an allegory:

وَأْتِلْ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبِلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ * لَئِن بَسَطْتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسٍ بِكَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ * إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبُوءَ بِآثَمِي وَإِثْمِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ * فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ *

And relate to them truly the story of the two sons of Adam [Abel and Cain], when they offered an offering, and it was accepted of one of them, and not accepted of the other. 'I will surely slay thee,' said one. 'God accepts only of the God-fearing,' said the other. 'Yet if thou stretches out thy hand against me, to slay me, I will not stretch out my hand against thee, to slay thee; I fear God, the Lord of all beings. I desire that thou shouldst be laden with my sin and thy sin, and so become an inhabitant of the Fire; that is the recompense of the evildoers.' Then his self prompted him to slay his brother, and he slew him, and became one of the losers. (5:27-30)

Islam takes the story of Abel and Cain to discuss the conflict between two human beings, one of whom has attained his ideal and belief and seeks truth and justice, and is free from materialistic inclinations; the other is a low animalistic being. The man with an ideal and faith is one whose speech is Divine and chaste, and his deeds are wholly based on piety. He tells his corrupt brother: 'If you wish to kill me, I am not the one to kill.' Thus killing is not a part of his human nature, for, he fears the Creator. But the other is fettered by his own carnal desires. The story of Abel and Cain is one of the most magnificent stories in the Quran, which describes the Quranic view of a man who has attained belief and the ideal and is freed from the bondages of nature, society and self. How steadfast he is in the way of his faith! While the other is inclined towards something which is quite the opposite of it.

This story should not be mistaken for a parable of the class conflict, which is a Marxist idea. While the Quran speaks of the oppressed on the one hand and oppressors on the other (*mala'* and *mutrafūn*), it always tries to show that the progressive wars in history are those which are waged between men who have realized belief and

faith and the profit-seekers—a point which I have explained more fully in my book *The Rise and Revolution of Mahdi (A)*.

As there are two opposing processes within man, in human society, too, there are two types of human beings: those who are exalted and progressive, and those who are base and bestial. Rūmī, the poet, says:

رگ رگست این آب شیرین و آب شور در خلائق میرود تا نفع صور

*The two streams of water, saltish and sweat,
Shall run through human nature until the doomsday.*

In this school of thought, which believes in the love of truth and love of justice as ingrained in the human nature, in this school which trusts in man and in human values, and which unlike Marxism does not negate them or consider them mere idealisms, these things are regarded as an inherent inclination towards the existence of discoverable truths, and not something conventional or imaginary created by man himself. The Quran says: O man, know yourself, and your own reality; these values exist within yourself as they exist in the great world, and you are a microcosmic model of the entire macrocosm:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

Mould yourselves in accordance with Divine norms.

These are Divine qualities, the reflection of which exists in the inner depths of his being, and he must discover it.

Accordingly, what is the future of man? Should we repeat the words of angels and say that man has a wicked nature, and wrap our hearts in despair for his future? Should we follow such suicidal ways as that of hippyism and take refuge in narcotics and such stuff? Or should we expect a miracle from an ideology, the only quality of which is belief in class divisions, and overlook thousands of its shortcomings? Shall we embrace a creed which says that motion is caused by contradictions, and without contradiction there is no motion, which means that when a society attains a stage in which there is no contradiction, it means a society without an ideal, without motion, a dead and stagnant society? Is the ultimate goal of man and his evolution to reach a position of standstill? Doesn't human evolution imply something far above the questions of contradiction and conflict?

Moreover, after man resolves those conflicts and contradictions and negates class controversies, he reaches a position when he must remove his own defects and this is only a beginning, the beginning of

his vertical ascent which has no limit; for, in this system there is infinite room for ascension and edification even for the Prophet (S), though it is something that lies beyond our imagination, even though it is a reality for the Prophet (S). This is why the ideal human society is in fact a society of men who have realized their ideal and attained faith and belief. It is the victory of effort, endeavour, piety and justice. Victory is one side of this coin of human existence, whose other side, as the Quran says, is the victory of God's Party over the party of Satan.

Man has been created to be an intelligent, aware, free and responsible being. From the first day that man has attained the station of humanity—regardless of whenever that might have occurred—he has been the deputy and vicegerent of God. There has been no time since the instant of creation of man when the earth was ever without the existence of a vicegerent, the *hujjat* (testimony) of Allah, that is, a being endowed with freedom and responsibility. As long as mankind has such a Creator who has decreed for it a goal and purpose—a purpose which implies his knowledge of himself and ultimate conquest of evil and mastery over his own mind—the battle between good and evil, and between truth and falsehood, will continue. It will continue to the point—as predicted by our great religious figures—when it will ultimately result in a universal government, which is also interpreted as the universal rule of Imam Mahdi (A)—may God expedite his appearance. On this basis, the evolution of man in his human dimensions has, by no means, reached a dead end from the point of view of Islamic ideology. Islam, here, emerges as an ideology that relies on the spiritual aspect of human nature and which reclines heavily on recognition of this aspect of human nature. It stresses the need to make man aware of it and to motivate him to develop and nourish this aspect of his being. Islam seeks to achieve a balance between the two aspects: the higher and the lower, inherent in the human nature. The recommended acts of worship, rituals, the enjoined abstinence from sins, the forbidding from lies, treachery, slander and oppression, all and all, besides their social value, are basically designed for cultivation of the human aspect of man and revival of his humanity. Therefore, if we really desire to take a step in the direction of this evolution, there is no alternative to rising above all the materialistic criteria and notions about human nature; that is, we must consider man as a being whose faith transcends the notions of class differences and classless society. Only then human struggle can acquire an essentially ideological character based on faith and belief.

But where is the beginning point of this struggle? The answer is: from inside oneself. This is what the Prophets have taught; and you will not find any example in other teachings which can equal in magnificence of meaning with what the Prophets of God have taught.

The Holy Prophet (S) sent an army to fight external enemies. The

victorious warriors returned and the Prophet went forth to welcome them. Now look at the Prophet's sense of timing and occasion. At a moment when he is expected to congratulate them and welcome them with a cry of 'Bravo!', the Prophet (S) instead says to them:

مَرْحَبًا بِقَوْمٍ غَزَوْا الْجِهَادَ الْأَصْغَرَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالْجِهَادِ الْأَكْبَرِ.

Praise on you who have taken part in the minor *jihad*, and who have yet to wage the major *jihad*!

Surprised, his Companions declare: "O Messenger of Allah, we don't have any battle ahead bigger than the one we have just been fighting?" The Prophet answers: the greater battle is the *jihad* against the self. This *jihad* is the struggle of becoming a human being. This is the viewpoint offered by Islam for understanding of man and his struggle against his own carnal self.

The Quran says in this regard:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا * وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا *

He who purifies the soul indeed attains deliverance, and one who corrupts it certainly fails. (91:9-10)

Issues such as these cannot be encompassed by other teachings which neither possess the requisite capacity to uphold them nor the room for such dicta and ideals.

Questions and Answers

Question: Sadiq Hedayat committed suicide. Did he see the reality of his society and put forth his vision of it?

Answer: No mistake should be made here. Persons like Hedayat have insulted our society as well as the entire humanity. They have used the same logic as that used by the angels in their protest. They noticed only ugliness and vices in their society and were blind to its beauties and virtues. A one-sided judgement is wrong, and is accompanied by miseducation. The proper way of viewing a society is to see it without any bias or prejudice, to see both the good and the bad sides.

If we see only the vices without seeing the virtues, it is a kind of treachery to society that may gradually lead to criminal attitude towards oneself. If one keeps on repeating to himself that nothing exists in this world but intrinsic error, wickedness and evil, this produces despair and loss of hope and eventually leads towards suicide.

I must add that one sees things through his own eyes, and those who lack goodness in themselves constantly suffer from an inner conflict; so they suppose that in society too, there is no goodness. But if one finds some goodness in his own self, there is no reason for him to presume that nothing but evil exists in the world.

Question: If human society attains perfection in its own course, what need is there for Mahdi (A).

Answer: There is an erroneous notion common in our society, and that is thinking of the advent of Mahdi as a sudden explosion. This is in itself a kind of pessimism which has either been wrongly deduced from various narrations, or is founded on the incorrect supposition that when mankind reaches the limit of darkness, when there is no more any sign of truth and truth seeking, an explosion shall occur leading to the advent of Imam Mahdi (A). But, in fact, this is not the case. He is the last link in the struggle of man, as I have deduced from the Quranic verses and narratives. It does not mean, therefore, that man should totally cease making any effort to improve his lot since the Imam shall act like a superman on behalf of humanity; rather, it means that the Imam shall act as an additional support and aid to striving humanity.

Question: You said that science cannot solve all the problems of man. This is true as far as the relationship of man with himself is concerned, but what about the question of his relation with other human beings? Do those people living under the yoke of colonialism, who have remained at that limit of science [*sic*] fail to liberate themselves?

Answer: What you mean is that the sin of those subject to colonialism is their ignorance, therefore, only knowledge can provide a remedy. I affirm this view. But my point was whether science can change the nature of man or not? This implies that knowledge may change the nature of the colonizer and prevent him from exploitation. But your meaning is that people subject to colonialism lack knowledge now, so they should gain knowledge in order to use it as a tool to attain their own goals. An exploiter, too, can equally use this knowledge as a tool. I am not arguing on the possibility of using science as a tool by either side; my point is, whether science can change the nature of men who possess the knowledge of that science.

Question: In the story of Abel and Cain, the Quran quotes Abel as saying: "If you stretch your arm to kill me, I will not stretch mine to kill you." Does that mean that he refuses to defend himself?

Answer: No, that is not what it means. It does not mean that if you wish to kill me, I will not prevent you from it. It means that if you intend to kill me, I will not entertain any intention to kill you. For both of them it is a question of taking the first step towards murder,

and not a question of self-defence. So, the Quran quotes Abel as saying "If you desire to be a killer, I will never kill you."

This is similar to the statement of Imam Ali (A) when he told the people that he knew his own assassin; those around him said that if the Imam knew, then he should kill his would-be assassin. He answered: "This would be punishment before crime. If I killed him before he killed me, I would be his killer, and he would not be my murderer." Here, too, it means that if Cain intends to be the first killer, Abel refuses to be the first one to plan to kill his brother.

Question: What is meant by 'khalifah' in this verse of the Quran where God says: "I shall create a 'khalifah' for Myself upon the earth?"

Answer: By "khalifah" is meant a deputy, and a model. It means a creature in whom God's attributes may be observed. In every type of succession, this rule holds true that if a person happens to hold an office or a post, he will choose someone as his successor who would exhibit the true nature of his predecessor.

NOTES:

1. The Quran, 96:1.
2. *Ibid.*, 96:2,3.
3. *Ibid.*, 5:3.
4. "Al-Imamah" means "leadership", and "al-wilayah" means "guardianship". Both the terms refer to the leadership of the Muslim community.
5. The Quran, 5:3.
6. *Badā'* literally means "appearance". Its meaning in the case of a human being is this: the appearance of an idea about some action which he did not have previously, in such a way that it influences his intention in regard to that action. That is, something happens which alters his understanding and will in regard to that action. Obviously such alteration and change in intention is due to human ignorance and limitation of knowledge and understanding. *Badā'* in this sense is impossible for God, for revision and alteration in Divine will is not account of imperfections common to man. It is in regard to such a misinterpretation of the concept of *badā'* that Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) said:

Someone who supposes that badā' occurs to God about some matter, causing Him to regret, is considered by us to be an unbeliever in God.

For a Quranic basis of the concept of *badā'* one must look into verses such as the following:

وَوَاعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرِ فِتْنَةٍ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً...

And we appointed with Mūsā a time of thirty nights and completed them with ten (more), so the appointed time of his Lord was complete forty nights....(7:142)

عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يَرْحَمَكُمْ وَإِنْ عُدتُمْ عُدتُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيرًا .

Perchance your Lord will have mercy upon you; but if you return, We shall return; and We have made Gehenna a prison for the unbelievers. (17:8)

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أَوْفٍ بِعَهْدِكُمْ...

O Children of Israel, remember My blessing wherewith I blessed you, and fulfil My covenant and I shall fulfil your covenant.... (2:40)

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ...

God changes not what is in a people unless they change what is in themselves. (13:11)

يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُنْثِبُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ *

God blots out whatever He will, and establishes (whatever He will); and with Him is the Essence of the Book. (13:39)

A *ḥadīth* of Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A) refers to the episode of Ibrāhīm’s (A) sacrifice of his son Ismā‘il as an instance of *badā’*:

مَا بَدَأَ لِلَّهِ بَدَاءٌ كَمَا بَدَأَ لَهٗ فِي إِسْمَاعِيلَ أَبِي إِذْ أَمَرَ أَبَاهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِذَبْحِهِ ثُمَّ قَدَّاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ.

There was no badā’ for God as in the case of my ancestor Ismā‘il (A) when his father Ibrāhīm (A) was commanded to sacrifice him then God “ransomed him with a mighty sacrifice”. (37:107)
(*Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, al-Tawhīd, p. 336, Tehran, 1398.*)

Included in the concept of *badā’* is that of abrogation, such as that of previous *sharā’i’* (pl. of *sharī‘ah*) by the arrival of the *sharī‘ah* of Prophet Muhammad (S) and also the abrogation of some of the commandments which were brought by him.

However, in the light of verses 13:11, 2:40 and 17:8, it can be said that since man is a being endowed with free will, his share in his own destiny is certain. As the verse 2:40 indicates, fulfilment of Divine promise in case of a nation is conditional to its own performance. As in the case of an individual, who is free to choose either Divine reward or punishment in the Hereafter, so also a nation’s destiny in this world is determined by its own performance and struggle.

7. This is a reference to verse 37:95.

8. This is a reference to verse 2:30.

Divine Revelation, Human Reason and Science

by Ayatullāh 'Abdullāh Jawādī Āmulī

translated from Persian by Shahyār Sa'adat

Knowledge and Action

Man is a thinking creature whose action is guided by his thought. It is neither possible to deprive him of thought nor to suspend his faculty of action and turn him into an inert, inactive object. It is also impossible to ignore the relationship which exists between human action and thought. Therefore, human existence is a mixture of knowledge and action, in which action is based on and guided by knowledge. That is, besides the fact that man is an active and aware being, his knowledge and awareness demarcate the outlines of his activity, and his work benefits from his vision. His knowledge finds concrete expression in his activity and his activity stimulates his knowledge. This is a vital fact of human life. If knowledge does not manifest itself in action and action is not guided by knowledge, and if there is no fusion between the two, life, which is the result of a fusion and harmony between them, will cease to exist. In other words, a "living" being is an active intelligence in which the leadership of knowledge and the obedience of action are fully realized.¹

Eternal life as a Fruit of Knowledge and Action

Since the life of man is directly dependent on his thought and action, and the quality of his thought and action directly affects the quality of his life, the deeper his knowledge, the wiser his action, the stronger the ties between his thought and activity, and more rational and fruitful his life would be. This is because the significance of life is as much as the significance of its constituent factors, and their value is the same as the value of life. Therefore, the best life, which is the eternal life, is the result of the best knowledge and the most profitable action and effort, and existence of an unbreakable fusion and coordina-

tion between such knowledge and effort.

The Leading Role of Knowledge

Since the highest aim of Divine Revelation is revival of humanity², the three principles mentioned above (that is the principle of knowledge, the principle of action, and the principle of leadership of knowledge over action and subservience of action to knowledge) have occupied a prominent position in the teachings of the prophets (A). This is so because, with their realization life comes into existence, and if these principles are abandoned, human life would deteriorate. This issue is clearly stated in the Quran, so that sometimes it praises "certain knowledge" and encourages "firm action", exhorting human beings to strengthen the bond between knowledge and action. At other times it denounces ignorance, idleness and disunion between knowledge and action³. The Quran thus attempts to provide grounds for correct action and accurate knowledge and a harmonious relation between the two, which is the basis of the "rational life" of individual and society. Thereby it seeks to safeguard humanity from falling into the abyss of ignorance, inertness and death, and to vitalize it. Furthermore, in order to make it easier for humanity to traverse this path and reach its sacred end, the prophets, as perfect human beings who had attained to "rational life" on the basis of the three principles mentioned, accepted the responsibility of guiding humanity towards realization of this ultimate goal.

Theoretical and Practical Knowledge

The relationship between knowledge and action in the human being is such that all its actions are based on its knowledge, dictated by it, and follow its leadership. However, not all of man's knowledge directly affects his actions. In fact, some of man's knowledge has a purely speculative and theoretical aspect, having no direct or clear-cut influence over his activities; whereas other aspects of his knowledge directly affect his actions and provide the plan and framework for them. Thus, the domain of human knowledge is wider in scope than that of human action. In other words, knowledge is something unlimited, while action is something limited. That is why knowledge enjoys a stature completely denied to and out of reach of action. The reason for this is that some of the things known by the mind transcend the arena of human life, and the human being plays no role in their realization. On the contrary, the human being owes its existence to some of these realities and is an "effect" of which they are the "cause". Other things known to man, however, fall within the domain of his life, and

their realization depends on his will and efforts, so that if man did not exist, these things would also not exist.

It is at this point that division of knowledge into "theoretical" or "speculative" science and "practical" science (*al-ḥikmah al-naẓariyyah* and *al-ḥikmah al-'amaliyyah*) is established, and the influence and limits of human knowledge in each of these areas are studied. Furthermore, it is here that the role of Divine Revelation in each of these fields can be examined. Such analysis would clearly show to what extent man is capable of attaining knowledge of reality, and clarify the new approaches suggested by Divine Revelation with respect to the human sciences. We shall know then what is to be done if there arises any incongruity between human discoveries and the Revelation, what authority to consult in such cases and which of them to consider prior to the other. Basically, is it possible for any difference to occur between definitive and certain human knowledge and Divine Revelation, or not? And supposing that such incongruity is possible, can it be overcome? Each one of these issues could be studied separately.

Method of Reasoning in Speculative and Practical Sciences

The axis around which the discussions of the speculative sciences revolve, and the rational basis of arguments involved in these branches of human knowledge, are completely and fundamentally distinct from those of the practical sciences. The very axis of study in the speculative sciences is something whose reality transcends the domain of human will and science and whose realization or non-realization is not affected by man's being. This is true whether the subject under discussion is the general principle of being and non-being, or that of the being or non-being of a finite object; the first class of questions belongs to the domain of philosophy, and the second class of questions belongs to the domain of mathematical and experimental sciences.

The foundations of the reasoning in the speculative sciences, especially philosophy and metaphysics, are self-evident axioms, whose validity is beyond doubt. All complicated theoretical statements must refer to that series of self-evident axioms, so that their complexity is resolved and their validity or invalidity can be determined. In order to do this, we are forced to discover the series of self-evident truths and their interrelationships so as to reach complex propositions, and then to analyse the complex propositions with utmost care by referring them to basic, self-evident truths. In other words, both the axiomatic material through synthesis of which, or through reduction to which, complex propositions are solved; must be self-evident and certain, and the method of synthesis or analysis and the reasoning process must be self-

evident and certain. This is necessary, because if either the axiomatic material or the reasoning method have the slightest uncertainty about them, the conclusions attained would be uncertain, and the theoretical problem under consideration would retain its peculiar complexity and ambiguity even though a partial aspect of it may be clarified. Thus, one cannot rely on conjecture, analogy, imagination or fantasy and the like, either in regard to the axiomatic material or in regard to the method of reasoning. The only thing that can be relied upon is pure reason. Discussion about the primary axiomatic material and the method of inference is the task of philosophy and logic.

However, as said above, the axis of the study of the practical sciences is situated within the realm of human existence and these sciences depend on human initiative and will for their existence. Things such as justice and injustice, humility and pride, contentment and greed etc., are examples of problems that practical philosophy (*al-ḥikmah al-'amalīyyah*) is concerned with, and all of them are of the 'do' and 'don't' variety. The method of reasoning for reaching conclusions is based on self-evident moral values and criteria. In other words, those things whose "evilness" and "badness" (*fujūr*) are indubitably and certainly perceived by the mind, serve as the reference points and foundations upon which all inference regarding the 'don'ts' is based, whereas all those things the "goodness" and "desirability" (*taqwā*) of which are indubitably clear to the human mind serve as the foundation on which all judgements regarding the 'do's' are based.⁴ All the complex and difficult problems of practical philosophy are solved through reference to primary and self-evident goods and evils. We reach solutions to our problems either through synthesizing these primary values with one another, or by analysing the complex problems, reducing them to a series of simple and self-evident values. In any case, there is no alternative to reference to these primary and self-evident values, either in the form of synthesis or in the form of analysis and reduction.

If there is an imperfection in any of the two—that is either in the basic, underlying axiomatic material or the method of inference, or in other words, if the "goodness" and "badness" of a thing is not self-evident, or if the method of inference is not absolutely reliable—the conclusions reached would lack certainty; as a result, that particular problem of practical philosophy which we are dealing with would retain its former complexity and ambiguity, even if some aspects of the problem may be resolved. We must conclude, then, that neither in the axiomatic material used for our arguments nor in the form of reasoning used, is there any room for conjecture, fancy, personal prejudices, desires, likes and dislikes. The only things which can be relied upon are pure reason and healthy instinct. Passion and desire should influence neither the material of our arguments nor the method

of reasoning. Description and definition of the primary “evils” and “goods” and the form of reasoning—whether in the form of synthesis or analysis—are amongst the duties of ethics (*‘ilm al-‘akhlāq*) and practical philosophy (*al-ḥikmah al-‘amalīyyah*).

Reason and Revelation, Conjecture and Certainty

Revelation consists of witnessing all those truths and realities the knowledge of which is necessary for man’s rational existence through ‘direct experience’ (*al-‘ilm al-ḥudūrī*), as well as attainment of complete understanding and comprehension of them after revelation (*al-nuzūl*) through ‘acquired knowledge’ (*al-‘ilm al-ḥuṣūlī*), which is absorbed in the form of perceptible signs and comprehensible concepts. Since the source (*al-mabdā’ al-fā‘ilī*) of such Revelation is a creator who has absolute knowledge of the totality of existence, and is free from any trace of ignorance, forgetfulness or neglect, and since the carrier of the Revelation is the knowing and truthful angel (*Gabriel*), and since its receiver (*al-mabdā’ al-qābilī*) is the infallible consciousness of the Prophet (S), consequently, if the message can be verified as being Divinely revealed, it can be also said to correspond to absolute truth. In other words, it is impossible for something to be indubitable Divine Revelation and still admit the possibility of even the smallest amount of error.

The issue of the infallibility and reliability of Revelation is arrived at by the rational mind through the process of either analysis or synthesis, the basis of both of which are the self-evident, primary propositions. However, if there is any doubt about something being Divine Revelation, it means that there can be no certainty about its infallibility either. In other words, since the necessary correspondence between Divine Revelation and reality depends upon its immunity from mistake, ignorance, and forgetfulness—even as the reliability of philosophic reason depends on its purity from any contamination by conjecture, surmise and prejudice—it can be relied upon only when its being Divine Revelation has been proved beyond doubt. If there is uncertainty about its being Divine Revelation, it cannot be the source and foundation of “speculative philosophy”, whose realm lies outside the domain of ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’. Moreover, purely rational statements, if they are not self-evident, or incapable of being reduced to basic self-evident truths, shall be devoid of authority and acceptability in theological matters. Accordingly, ‘conjectural revelation’ (*al-waḥy al-ẓannī*), as well as rational statements based on conjecture and surmise are outside the scope of our discussion. Their sole worth lies in problems of “practical philosophy” and in issues relating to ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’ as “conjectural evidence” (*dalīl ẓannī*). That is, it is subject to limitation and

restriction if a more definite evidence is found. In a case where ‘conjectural revelation’ has a general applicability and is found to be contrary to a certain rational evidence, the general application of “conjectural revelation”—be it based on verses of the Quran or on the prophetic traditions or on traditions traced to the Imams—must be abandoned because “conjectural evidence” (*dalīl ḡannī*) can never be maintained when “definitive evidence” (*dalīl qaṭ‘ī*) is available.

If, on the one hand, we have a *dalīl naqlī* (a statement handed down by tradition) whose authenticity of source is as certain as that of the Quran, but whose literal purport is not precise and clear, but is based on interpretation and conjecture and which, moreover, has a general applicability, and if on the other hand, we have indubitable rational reasons to the contrary, its general applicability is superceded by the *dalīl qaṭ‘ī*, even though the *dalīl naqlī*’s authenticity of source may be certain.

Characteristics of Waḡy Qaṭ‘ī

“*Waḡy qaṭ‘ī*” refers to Revelation that has been proven beyond doubt to have originated from one of the *Ma‘ṡūmūn* (the Prophet and Imams) and which is clear and precise in its content and purport and which allows of no ambiguity, or multiplicity of interpretation to contrary. Moreover, the statement must have been issued with the purpose of expressing true judgement, not for the purpose of dissimulation (*al-taqīyyah*).

If something definitely possesses the three characteristics just mentioned, it can be said to be “*waḡy qaṭ‘ī*”. And if all the three, or any one, of the above characteristics cannot conclusively be shown to belong to it, then its being a revelation is conjectural (*ḡannī*) rather than definitive (*qaṭ‘ī*). In other words, if the claim that one of the *Ma‘ṡūmūn* made certain statement cannot be proven beyond doubt, or if the content of the statement is not perfectly clear and unambiguous, or if it cannot be categorically proven that it was issued for the sake of announcing a *ḡukm* (command), such a statement cannot be judged to be *waḡy qaṭ‘ī*, rather it must be considered to be “*waḡy ḡhayr qaṭ‘ī*”, that is “uncertain” or “conjectural revelation”.

Non-contradiction between Waḡy Qaṭ‘ī and ‘Aql Qaṭ‘ī

It would be impossible for *waḡy qaṭ‘ī* (definitive Revelation) and ‘*aql qaṭ‘ī* (correct reason) to contradict each other, and if, hypothetically, such a conflict were to arise, it would be impossible to resolve. That is, as it is not possible for two definitive rational statements to con-

tradict each other, or for two statements definitely based on Revelation to contradict each other, it is also impossible for two statements, one of which is based on *wahy qat'i* (definitive Revelation) and another on *'aql qat'i* (definitive or correct reason), to contradict each other. Moreover, if such a contradiction between two definitive rational statements or two definitive revealed statements, or two statements one of which is based on reason and another on Revelation, were it to arise, it would be impossible to resolve. Any such hypothetical conflict would imply that each of these definitive statements is self-contradictory. This is so because the foundation of all categorical and definitive logical propositions is the law of contradiction, which says that "nothing can be both A and not A" and, when applied to propositions, that "no proposition can be both false and true". It means, that nothing with all its characteristics such as subject and predicate, potentiality and actuality, generality and particularity, time and place and relations, be existent and non-existent. Whenever a proposition is said to be definitive it means that on the basis of this eternal and irrefutable law, it is impossible for it to contradict with another definitive proposition.

Since *'aql qat'i* (definitive reason) affirms the necessity and infallibility of *wahy qat'i* (definitive Divine Revelation) and the *wahy qat'i* affirms the authority (*hujjiyyah*) of *'aql qat'i*, presents its message in the form of ratiocinated statements, calls upon all rational human beings to join the intellectual struggle on the side of righteousness and truth, and all its teachings meet the criteria of *'aql qat'i*, it follows that *wahy qat'i* and *'aql qat'i* cannot contradict each other; since such a contradiction would, in essence, be self-contradiction. Moreover, if such a contradiction were, hypothetically speaking, to occur, it would be incurable, because preferring one to the other would bring about the collapse of both. This is so because both of them are based on one principle, namely, the law of contradiction, and if any one of them is moved off this base, it means that its foundation is destroyed. When the foundation is destroyed the other edifice would also collapse.

Moreover, since all definitive propositions in the field of acquired knowledge (*al-'ulūm al-ḥuṣūlī*) are based on the law of contradiction, there would be no solution to any contradiction, whether between two definitive propositions of Revelation (*wahy qat'i*), or between two definitive rational statements (*'aql qat'i*), or between two propositions each of which is drawn from *wahy qat'i* and *'aql qat'i*.

Now, as far as Divine Revelation is concerned, its reality is that of direct apprehension of the truth and "knowledge through presence" (*al-'ilm al-ḥudūri*) and does not rely on acquired knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ḥuṣūlī*). It, therefore, has no need of affirmation by reference to the law of contradiction. In other words, Divine Revelation is its own justification and requires no extraneous justification. However, it is something

experienced only by the Ma'şūmūn (A), and is a shrine closed to all others. It, therefore, transcends the limits of our present discussion. What is referred to here as "*wahy qat'i*", then, is that which has been passed down to us in the form of acquired knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ḥuṣūlī*) and the authenticity of which is judged through the triple criteria of "definitive origin", "definitive interpretation", and "intended for definitive issuance of Divine command."

Priority of *Wahy Qat'i* and '*Aql Qat'i* over *Wahy Zanni* and '*Aql Zanni*

As has been already said, in any conflict between '*aql qat'i* and *wahy zanni*, that is, between "definitive reason" and "conjectural revelation", priority and preference always lies with '*aql qat'i*. In general, in any conflict between *wahy qat'i* and *wahy zanni*, and between '*aql qat'i* and '*aql zanni*, priority and preference always lies with the *qat'i* over the *zanni*. That is, the definitive is always preferred to the conjectural. This is so because conjectural propositions owe their validity to the definitive propositions, while the definitive propositions have inherent validity and authority, and serve as the principle on which the validity of the conjectural propositions depends. We can say, therefore, that conjectural propositions are on a different plane than that of the definitive propositions. On the basis of this difference of planes, they cannot contradict with the definitive propositions, because contradiction is possible only when propositions are on the same plane.

It should be kept in mind, however, that definitive rational propositions are rarely found outside the field of metaphysics and mathematics, because their realization in the natural sciences such as biology and medicine is extremely improbable, while their attainment in the humanities and the social sciences such as law, sociology, psychology, etc., is most difficult.

If we carefully consider the meaning of "certainty" (*yaqīn*) and preconditions necessary for its attainment—as they have been enumerated in Ibn Sinā's *Shifā'* in the section on logic—we shall realize that in many fields of humanities and the social sciences, attainment of a hundred-percent certainty, if not impossible, is at least very difficult—even in such fields as astronomy, the problems of which appear at first glance to have definite answers; yet many of these answers lose their unchallengeable certainty when examined through the eyes of such a profound and brilliant logician and philosopher as Ibn Sinā.

It is neither possible, therefore, to use a series of experimental laws, laboratory hypotheses and such, to produce certainty, and then to delude oneself into attacking Divine Revelation and its products; and finally try to establish the superiority of reason ('*aql*) over tradition

(*naql*); nor is it possible to depreciate tradition by relying on conjectural rational evidence (*dalil ḡanni 'aqlī*) and then to judge Revelation, while standing on such shaky grounds, considering it opposed to reason and science. This, according to Ibn Sīnā, is caused either by failure to understand what "certainty" is, or by an inability to judge fairly. Because it is a manifestation of weak thinking to ignore "definitive evidence" and the limitations it puts on the application of any ruling based on a superficial and literal interpretation of quoted evidence. Similarly, to rely on superficial and literal meanings in fields other than practical philosophy, such as the experimental sciences, which are outside the realm of 'do's' and 'don'ts' and giving them precedence over the accumulated knowledge and experience of man, seems rather unreasonable. Much the same charge can be levelled against those who, relying on certain conjectural pieces of evidence and inconclusive experiments, abandon the literal meaning of quoted evidence in the field of practical philosophy, mistake hypothetical and theoretical postulates for self-evident axioms, and confuse imitation with research, and surmise with certainty. All this is caused by careless reasoning and inept synthesis between conflicting views, arising probably out of a refusal to completely obey the teachings and instructions which have been conveyed through Divine Revelation.

Accordingly, if in any problem of one of the fields of practical philosophy, such as ethics, jurisprudence, or law, any conflict arises between a ruling based on "conjectural experimental evidence" (*dalil tajrubī ḡanni*) (the kind of evidence which relies on hypothesis rather than on self-evident truths) and a ruling based on "conjectural jurisprudential evidence" (*dalil fiqhī ḡanni*), we cannot abandon the jurisprudential ruling and give preference to the "conjectural experimental evidence" (*dalil tajrubī ḡanni*) over the "jurisprudential evidence" (*dalil fiqhī*) which, in fact, is the same as conjectural revelation (*wahy ḡanni*).

In the case of the branches of the natural sciences, such as biology and physics, if any conflict arises between "conjectural experimental evidence" and "literal quoted evidence" (*dalil lafzī naqlī*), one cannot give preference to the "literal quoted evidence", because the issues in hand are not in the realm of moral obligations and duties and do not fall into the category of 'do's' and 'don'ts'. In all such cases, therefore, preference belongs to the "conjectural experimental evidence". It is clear, therefore, that conflict between reason and Revelation is readily solvable in the field of natural sciences; that is, either it does not arise, or, if it does, it is superficial and easily solvable.

True Reason is the Same as Revelation

What is important is the conflict between reason and Revelation in

metaphysics and cosmology, that is, in regard to Divine Unity (*al-tawhīd*), prophethood (*al-nubuwwah*), resurrection (*al-ma‘ād*), and other general conceptions which are related to these three principles. However, as has already been mentioned, there is no possibility of any conflict arising between “definitive Revelation” and “definitive reason”, and if, hypothetically, such a conflict were to arise, it would be insolvable. As said before, this insolvability is caused by the fact that preference of one over the other would require the destruction of their common base which is the law of contradiction, and the destruction of the common base would automatically mean the collapse of both, which are superstructures. Because, the foundation on which belief in the truth of Revelation and the necessity of obeying its commands is based, is definitive reason. Relying on axiomatic propositions, *‘aql qat‘ī* rules that the existence of Divine Revelation and prophethood is necessary, and that it may be received only through miraculous means. Miracle is essentially different from other occult “sciences” such as magic, witchcraft, astrology, and palmistry. Miracle is the sign of the Divine mission and prophethood of one who performs it.

In any case, miracles and other things like it are irrefutable evidence when it comes to the question of Divine Revelation and prophethood and when they are confirmed and proved by *‘aql qat‘ī*. If, moreover, all these speculative matters are resolved by *‘aql qat‘ī* with the final result that Revelation and prophethood are proved, to invalidate the judgement of *‘aql qat‘ī* on account of a *dalīl lafzī* (superficial or literal evidence), which is, of course, a piece of “conjectural revelation” rather than “definitive Revelation”, would mean giving priority to “conjectural evidence” over “definitive evidence” and its certain conclusions. The final consequence of such a process would be the collapse of all those metaphysical beliefs which were affirmed and proved through *‘aql qat‘ī*.

In the impossible condition when a *wahy qat‘ī* be opposed to a *dalīl ‘aqlī qat‘ī* (definitive rational evidence), if we attempt to give preference to *wahy qat‘ī* over the “definitive rational evidence”, this would necessitate invalidation of *‘aql qat‘ī*. Consequently, invalidation of the *dalīl ‘aqlī qat‘ī* means nothing less than total collapse of the metaphysical foundations, belief in the validity of which forms the basis on which *wahy* itself is proved (this point should be noted carefully). To put it in another way, attempting to invalidate definitive rational evidence by the means of definitive Revelation is like attempting to deny the existence of a ladder after one has climbed it rung by rung and is now standing on its top-most rung. If there was no ladder with its hierarchy of rungs, climbing to such a height would have been impossible. In the same way, if definitive rational evidence had no validity, how could the necessity of Revelation and the authority (*hujjiyyah*) of

its message be confirmed?

Instances of Harmony and Mutual Support Between Revelation and Reason

Just as the necessity of Revelation and prophethood is proved by *'aql qat'i*, and the integrity and reliability of its message is confirmed by rational arguments and evidence, the legitimacy and validity of reason and of the conclusions made by *'aql qat'i* are confirmed and strengthened by *wahy* (Divine Revelation). Therefore, the whole of the Quran is full of invitation to thought and reason. It commands the faithful to seek certainty, knowledge and clarity. It warns the Muslims to stay away from ignorance and not to rely on conjecture, surmise, imagination, probability, irrational doubt, and all unscientific and prejudiced views and positions. The Quran presents the heights of revealed truth in the form of logical arguments so as to demolish the arguments of those who deny the Truth, and to dissipate the conjectures of idolaters and materialists by presenting definitive arguments which demonstrate their inherent weakness and irrationality. For this reason the Quran is presented as "light", that is something in which there is not a trace of uncertainty, doubt, ambiguity, or complexity—all of which are forms of darkness and have no place in Truth, which is absolute light.

Therefore great emphasis is laid by the Divine Revelation that man must always make an effort to attain certain knowledge and should not accept or reject anything without research and investigation. The following are a few examples of the harmony and mutual support that exist between Revelation and reason.

First Example

The sixth Imam, Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (A), has been quoted as saying that in two verses of the Quran God has commanded His creatures not to talk about something of which they are ignorant, and not to deny the validity of something which they do not understand.⁵ The first verse is:

... أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ لَا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ...

....*Hath not the covenant of the Scripture been taken on their behalf that they should say concerning Allah nothing but the truth?....(7:169)*

The second verse is:

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ...

Nay, but they denied that the knowledge whereof they could not compass, and whereof the interpretation hath not yet come unto them....(10:39)

The purport of the first verse is that any speech, affirmation or acceptance of anything on theological matters must be based on sure and certain knowledge. The purport of the second verse is that any denial of validity of something must always be based on reason and knowledge. Therefore, if man is to live a rational existence, all his affirmations and negations must be based on faultless reasoning and certain knowledge. Such statements as these are clear witnesses of the categorical backing of reason and rational certitude by Divine Revelation.

Second Example

The seventh Imam, Mūsā ibn Ja'far al-Kāzīm (A) has been quoted as saying that God has given good tidings to the wise and the intelligent. He went on to mention some of the verses of the Quran that invite the faithful to reason and rationality.⁶ Then he said:

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجَّتَيْنِ، حُجَّةً ظَاهِرَةً وَحُجَّةً بَاطِنَةً، فَأَمَّا الظَّاهِرَةُ فَالرُّسُلُ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءُ
وَالْأَئِمَّةُ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ وَأَمَّا الْبَاطِنَةُ فَالْعُقُولُ.

God has two proofs against mankind: the "apparent proof" and the "hidden one". The "apparent proof" consists of the messengers, the prophets, and the imams (A), while the "hidden proof" is reason.

In this statement, 'aql qat'i is given the same weight as Divine Revelation and is considered to be equally reliable.

Third Example

The eight Imam, 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (A), in response to a question by Ibn al-Sikkīt as to what is the proof (ḥujjah) of God against people of every age, is reported to have said:⁷

الْعَقْلُ يُعْرِفُ بِهِ الصَّادِقُ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَيُصَدِّقُهُ وَالْكَاذِبُ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَيُكَذِّبُهُ.

Through the use of one's intellect one can recognize the true preacher of God and affirm him, (just as) one can recognize the man who falsely claims to preach for God, and deny him.

The purport of the statement mentioned above is that reason is the source of definitive proof needed for final affirmation or denial of any proposition and it is the criterion against which all propositions and

views must be gauged. Upon hearing this answer, Ibn al-Sikkīt said:

هَذَا وَاللَّهِ هُوَ الْجَوَابُ.

By God, that is the only complete answer.

Reason is the criterion for judging what is true and what is false, what must be affirmed and what must be denied. Furthermore, the fact that Ibn al-Sikkīt's statement was made in front of an infallible Imam, and he, with his silence, affirmed it, is another proof of the ultimate and absolute authority of reason.

Fourth Example

Arguing with the idolators of the Hijāz of those days and with the non-monotheists throughout history, the Holy Quran tells them: Your statements should either be backed by definitive rational evidence, or be confirmed by Divine Revelation. A statement which is neither proved by certain reason nor backed by quotations from sources known to have been Divinely revealed, lacks all validity, and any claim that is not backed by one of these two sources of definitive evidence is merely baseless talk, which cannot serve as basis for any metaphysical or religious beliefs:

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَالَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ * أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ * بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ مُهْتَدُونَ *

And they say, 'Had the All-Merciful so willed, we would not have worshipped them'. They have no knowledge whatsoever of that; they are only conjecturing. Or did We give them a Book aforetime to which they hold? Nay, but they say, 'We found our fathers following a religion, and we are guided by their footprints.' (43:20-22)

The polytheists accepted God as the Creator of the universe and as the Lord of totality of existence. However, they also believed that every region of this vast universe has its own god, who is independent in his province, and the responsibility for seeing to the welfare of his subjects rests directly on his shoulders. This is the case; although all these various and independent gods are under the authority of the "god of gods", who is the Lord of the universe.

Since these people were polytheistic with regard to the Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) of God, they were also polytheistic when it came to worship (*ibādah*) and obedience (*iṭā'ah*). As a result of this belief, they

denied revelation and prophethood in principle; besides, they believed the attainment of such a high station to be impossible for any human being. Their denial of the principles of prophethood and revelation was based on their belief that God did not have any direct jurisdiction over human societies and, therefore, would not set any course for them to follow or give them any commands. The argument of their thinkers was stated in the above-mentioned verse put in the form of an "exceptional syllogism". The argument went like this: If God had wanted us not to worship the idols we would not have worshipped them, and since we do worship them it follows that God is not opposed to our worshipping them. Because, if this were the wish of God, we would have had no choice but to do things the way He wanted them done, since His will is superior to ours. It follows, then, that worship of God is not necessary and one should only worship the idols. The same kind of fallacious reasoning is mentioned in *Sūrat al-'An'ām*:

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ
كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ
إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ * قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَيْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ *

The idolaters will say, 'Had God willed, we would not have ascribed [unto Him] partners, neither our fathers, nor would we have forbidden aught.' Thus did those who were before them cry lies [to God's messengers] until they tasted of Our might. Say: 'Have you any knowledge that you can bring forth for us? You follow only surmise, thereby conjecturing.' Say: 'To God belongs the argument conclusive; for had He willed, He would have guided you all.'
(6: 148-149)

In *Sūrat al-Nahl* we read:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَحْنُ وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا
مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَهَلْ عَلَى الرُّسُلِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ *

And the idolaters say: 'Had God willed, we would not have worshipped anything beside Him, neither we nor our fathers, nor would we have forbidden aught without [command from] Him.' So did those before them argue. Are the messengers charged with aught save the delivery of the manifest Message?
(16:35)

These groundless arguments of the polytheists were put forward sometimes to deny the Unity of God, and at other times used to deny the reality of Revelation and the mission of the prophets of God. Their line of reasoning about the prophets went like this: If such a thing as prophethood did exist and had there been messengers from God, it

would follow that the polytheists did not have any authority to forbid certain things in the name of law. And since they *have* forbidden certain things and passed laws regarding them, it follows that no such things, either Revelation or prophethood, exist.

In short, their argument, both in proving polytheism and denying the Unity of God, or in proving the validity of independence and autonomy in religious matters and denying the reality of Divine Revelation and prophethood, was like this: 'If God had wished to direct our vital affairs Himself, and had He, by sending prophets and messengers and formulation of Divine laws, wanted to guide our individual and social lives, we shouldn't have ever become polytheists and worshipped the idols, just as we would never have banned or prohibited anything in the name of law. However, since we do worship idols and do prohibit certain things in the name of law, it is clear that God did not want us to be monotheists, and He did not wish to send us any prophets, Books or Revelation. It follows, therefore, that polytheism is the correct and the righteous path, and that there is no such thing as Revelation and prophethood.' This was the essence of what the thinkers amongst the polytheists set forth as justification of their beliefs. What their followers said was: 'Since our ancestors, generation after generation, have been worshipping and honouring these idols, we shall remain loyal to their customs, beliefs and traditions inherited from them.'

Since the Holy Quran is the Book of truth, its call is always for rational investigation. The recommendation it makes to humanity is that every individual should either investigate himself or follow someone who does. Such an imitation is tantamount to investigation. The Quran does not permit blind imitation, because it considers the views of those who are not men of research and investigation as worthless. Thus, the fact that the ancestors of a certain individual held a certain set of beliefs or worshipped in a particular manner, does not justify imitation. Such following would be nothing but blind imitation.

Then the Quran goes on to make a critique of the arguments set forth by the thinkers amongst the idolaters. In a number of places in its critique it states that an acceptable opinion is one which is either founded on reason and knowledge or is based on Divine Revelation. A position which is backed neither by definitive Revelation nor by definitive reason is groundless and should not be trusted:

... مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ *

....They have no knowledge whatsoever of that. They do but guess. (43:20)

That is, their statement is not based on certain knowledge and is

founded on nothing except surmise and conjecture. They have not made a scientific investigation into this matter.

أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ *

Or have We given them any Scripture before [this Quran] so that they are holding fast thereto? (43:21)

That is, the argument set forth by them is not backed by Divine Revelation either, because they have not been given a Divine Book in which polytheism and idolatry are justified and recommended and the Unity of the Creator is denied. This restriction of valid reasons to those based either on 'aql qaṭ'i or on waḥy qaṭ'i can also be found in other verses of the Quran. One such example is in *Sūrat al-'Aḥqāf*:

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ اتَّبُونِي بِكِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثَارَةٍ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ *

Say [unto them, O Muhammad]: 'Have you thought on all that you invoke beside God? Show me what they have created of the earth. Or have they a partnership in the heavens? Bring me a Book before this, or some vestige of knowledge (in support of what you say), if you are truthful.' (46:4)

In other words, the worship of the idols could be justified only when they have independently created something in this world or have had a hand in the creation of the heavens. Moreover, since such a thing has been affirmed neither by Divine Revelation nor proven by reason, it must follow that idolatry is nothing more than a deviation and a delusion. Much the same purport can be seen in *Sūrat al-Fāṭir*, a verse of which reads:

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَ كُمْ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا فَهُمْ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْهُ بَلْ إِنْ يَعِدُ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا غُرُورًا *

Say: 'Have you considered your associates to whom you pray beside God? Show me what they created of the earth; or have they any partnership in the heavens?' Or have We given them a Book, so that they act on clear proof therefrom? Nay, the evildoers promise one another nought but delusion. (35:40)

In this verse, polytheism and worship of idols is considered to be an intellectual and cultural fraud based on empty promises, because it is backed neither by rational evidence nor is based on Revelation.

Since worthiness of worship is based on creating or being a partner in the act of creation, and since the idols have no role whatsoever in either of these, there is no rational evidence for their worship. On the other hand, there is no evidence that Divine Revelation affirms them either. Since polytheism or idolatry is backed neither by definitive reason nor by definitive Revelation, it must have its origins in nothing except surmise, conjecture, fancy, and self-centered desire (*hawā*). Because, if an opinion is not based on science and knowledge, it is conjectural; if it is not in harmony with the guidance of Revelation, it must have originated from selfish interests and desires. Accordingly, the Holy Quran considers all deviated and misguided schools of thought opposed to monotheism (*al-tawhīd*) as creatures of fancy and conjecture, which rely for their existence on the selfish desires of their followers:

... إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ رَبِّهِمْ الْهُدَىٰ *
 وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا *

....They follow only surmise, and what their selves desire. And now the guidance has come to them from their Lord.... They have no knowledge thereof; they follow only surmise, and surmise can never take the place of truth. (53:23,28)

And:

... إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ *

....They follow only a conjecture, and they do but guess. (10:66)

And:

... وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ *

....they have no knowledge whatsoever of (all) that; they do but guess. (45:24)

Moreover, the Holy Quran instructs humanity not to adopt beliefs, in general, beliefs the truth and the validity of which is not absolutely certain:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا *

[O man], follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Lo, the hearing and the sight and heart—all of those shall be questioned of. (17:36)

**Invalidity of the Syllogism
Used by the Polytheists:**

At the end of this section it would be useful to briefly point out the reason for the falsity of the exceptional syllogism used by the polytheists and quoted in *Sūrat al-'An'ām*, *Sūrat al-Naḥl*, and *Sūrat al-Zukhruf* of the Quran. The reason for the falsity of the exceptional syllogism in question is that it does not distinguish between God's creative will (*al-'irādah al-takwīniyyah*), and His legislative will (*al-'irādah al-tashrī'iyyah*). The "creative will" of God is irresistible; to it belongs the law of causality which determines processes and phenomena. His "legislative will" consists of commands, instructions and advices, which although obligatory do not compel or determine human behaviour. Therefore, the will of God which man has no choice but to obey is *al-'irādah al-takwīniyyah*, while *al-'irādah al-tashrī'iyyah* of God is related to human action by virtue of the human being's freedom and free will. The whole cosmic system was created by God through His "creative will" and is governed by Him on the basis of His *qadā'* (Divine Destiny) and *qadar* (Providence), irrespective of whether someone is a polytheist or not. Schools of thought and points of view have no bearing on this aspect of the Divine will and are irrelevant to its function. However, the legislative will of God ordains *al-tawḥīd* as the right faith for the human being. Here man has a choice; he can obey or rebel. He can either follow the instruction and the guidance given to him by God, or he can ignore it and worship the idols. In both of these cases, however, his action is not incompatible with the will of God. That is why it is not possible to say that if it were Divine will that men should worship the One God and abstain from idolatry, men would not have practised polytheism and would not have forbidden things in the name of law. In short, the major and the minor premises do not mutually necessitate each other in this exceptional syllogism. With the absence of mutual necessity between the minor and the major premises, the syllogism does not lead to the fallacious conclusion drawn from it. This is why the Holy Quran has considered polytheism to be a product of ignorance and has mentioned it as something unjustifiable by either science or reason:

وَأَنْ جَاهِدَاكَ لِيُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا...

....But if they strive to make thee associate with Me something of which thou hast no knowledge, then obey them not....(29:8)

And:

وَأَنْ جَاهِدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا...

But if they [the parents, obedience to whom is emphasized by the Quran] strive with thee to make thee ascribe unto Me as partner that of which thou hast no knowledge, then obey them not....(31:15)

The reason for the fact that the Quran considers polytheism and similar other schools of thought merely to be by-products of ignorance and as being scientifically unjustifiable, is that they cling to things which have no objective existence; what is non-existent is devoid of reality and has no place in knowledge and science. This idea is expressed in *Sūrat Yūnus* in the following manner:

... أَتَنْبِئُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ...

....Would you inform Allah of (something) that He knoweth not in the heavens or in the earth?....(10:18)

What God, the All-knowing, does not know must surely be non-existent. Then in *Sūrat al-Mu'min* the Quran quotes a prophet as asking the idolaters:

... وَأُشْرِكُ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ...

....and [shall I] ascribe unto Him as partners that whereof I have no knowledge?....(40:42)

Polytheism, in this verse, is alluded to as a pretension to know what is basically non-existent.

Fifth Example

The Holy Quran recognizes no other standard for either imitation or reason than definitive reason and definitive Revelation, and considers legitimate only that which is either proved by definitive reason or definitive Revelation. Following and imitation or leadership and guidance that are based on neither of these two, are considered by the Quran to be nothing but empty and fruitless opposition to truth, the end result of which is following the devil into deviation, misguidance and deception. The Quran encharges the human being to investigate and reason about his actions. He should either investigate the matter himself, or, if he is not able to do this, must follow those who carry out research and investigation in a particular field. Such an imitation is itself a form of investigation; because it is a judgement of definitive reason that if a

man is unable to investigate something which requires action on his part, he must follow the judgement of those who do investigate such matters. If he does not follow the judgement of those investigators, but his own inclinations, or imitates the views of non-investigators, his judgement would be of no value; because it is neither directly or indirectly supported by research and investigation. Moreover, a judgement not based on investigation lacks firm foundations and is shaky. Because of this shakiness, such judgements, in the vocabulary of the Quran, are referred to as "rumours" in *Sūrat al-'Ā'rāf*:

... وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ ...

....Those who spread rumours in the city.... (33:60)

As far as leaders in matters of belief and opinion are concerned, their leadership must be based either on scientific and rational investigation or on Divine Revelation. The fact that these two are mentioned side by side is another indication of their mutual supportive role and harmonious relationship. The Quran stresses the necessity for investigation and wholesome imitation in these words:

وَمَنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطَانٍ مَرِيدٍ *

And among mankind there is such a one who disputes concerning God without knowledge, and follows every rebellious Satan. (22:3)

It stresses investigation and inquiry as being necessary for opinion leaders:

وَمَنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُنِيرٍ * ثَانِي عِظْفِهِ لِيُضِلَّ
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَتَذِيقُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ *

And among mankind there is such a one who disputes concerning God without knowledge or guidance or an illuminating Book, turning away in pride to lead astray (men) from the way of God; for him is degradation in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall let him taste the chastisement of fire. (22:8-9)

In dealing with the question of imitation, the Holy Quran considers blind imitation to be following the lead of the devil. Since this kind of blind following has no foundations, it changes according to the circumstances of the moment, following one devil today, and another devil tomorrow. Therefore, the blind imitator is the follower of numerous devils. This is why the Quran says, "disputes without

knowledge, and follows every rebellious devil." As to intellectual and ideological leadership, the Quranic viewpoint is that if leadership is not based on certain acquired knowledge, or logical and definitive reasoning, or valid mystical experience of the *'arif*, or on self-purification, and sincere and devout action performed for the sake of God, or on Divine Revelation, its investigation and inquiry is false and deceptive, bringing for the opinion leaders disrepute in this world and burning fire in the next one. This is why it says, "...without knowledge or guidance or an illuminating Book." By "knowledge" it is apparently referring to definitive rational evidence, and by "guidance" it means the direct perception of the truth available to the purified soul of an *'arif* which is attained as the result of great effort and which leads to reception of Divine guidance.⁸ This is what is implied in yet another verse:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ *

As for those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our paths; and God is with the good-doers. (29:69)

The phrase, "an illuminating Book", refers to Revelation and prophethood. Thus, if intellectual leadership is not in agreement with rational evidence, or correct mystical insight, or the Holy Quran, it would be nothing more than a futile and misleading exercise. It is here that the coherence and unity of Revelation and definitive reason becomes evident. If the only source of acquisition of knowledge were Revelation, the Holy Quran would not have set forth numerous sources and ways, and would not have mentioned "knowledge" and "guidance" alongside the "illuminating Book". Moreover, this also calls attention to the fact that the proof of the necessity of Revelation, its distinction from other sources which are not Divinely revealed, and its comprehensiveness in coverage of reality, can not be attested by Revelation itself, since that would be begging the question. That the proof of these things has been left to definitive reason, implies the validity of the authority of reason.⁹

In short, by paying close attention to the verses of *Sūrat al-Hajj*, *Sūrat Luqmān* (verse 20) and certain other Quranic *Sūrahs*, the independent authority of reason and the validity of definitive rational evidence becomes clearly evident and the mutual supportive and harmonious relationship between reason and Revelation becomes fully established.

Sixth Example

The Holy Quran considers rational evidence and definitive

knowledge to be evidence of the truth of Divine Revelation. It says that correct rational reasoning invariably affirms the authenticity and validity of Revelation and that definitive knowledge leads to acceptance of Divine Revelation:

وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَيَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطِ
الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ *

Those who have been given knowledge see that what has been Revealed to thee from thy Lord is the Truth, and guides to the path of the All-mighty, the All-laudable. (34:6)

What this verse means is that all those who are knowledgeable about Divine matters and who make judgements based on definitive evidence believe in the authenticity and validity of Revelation and the Quran. They believe that the Quran guides men to the path leading to God, to whom belongs all power and praise. This interpretation implies that denial of Revelation is caused by a lack of definitive knowledge. In other words, it is ignorance which causes one to deny the validity and the legitimacy of the Quran. This is also the case in the problems of practical philosophy (*al-hikmah al-'amalīyyah*); it is rational and systematic knowledge that determines the ethical values and it is ignorance that denies absolute moral standards and criteria explaining them away on false and hollow foundations:

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ
فَارُوقُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ * وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيَلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ آمَنَ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَلَا يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا الصَّابِرُونَ *

Then went he forth before his people in his pomp. Those who were desirous of the life of the world said: 'Ah, would that we possessed the like of that Korah has been given. Surely he is a man of mighty fortune.' But those who had been given knowledge said: 'Woe unto you, the reward of God is better for him who believes and works righteousness; and none shall receive it except the steadfast.' (28:79-80)

Thus, the standard by which a system of values is determined and arrived at is through reason and certain knowledge; just as real knowledge is only arrived at through definitive evidence. That learning which does not take into consideration Divine truths and fails to discover the real system of values, is imperfect and unreliable. Such learning is considered to have little value by the Quran:

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا * ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ...

So turn thou [O Muhammad] from him who turns away from Our Remembrance, and desires only the life of the world. That is their sum of knowledge....(53:29-30)

Revelation and Resurrection of the Human Sciences

Although Revelation and reason are complementary and not contradictory—in the sense that demonstrative reason is relatively sufficient, or even perfect, for the perception and the understanding of realities—Divine Revelation is necessary and more complete than demonstrative reason for perfect and definitive understanding of the totality of existence. Therefore, what is discovered by demonstrative reason is supported and confirmed by Revelation, and what is inaccessible to reason is revealed to it by Revelation. Revelation stimulates reason and guides it so that it can discover things through investigation and inference. What reason is potentially capable of knowing becomes actualized for it through the guidance and inspiration of Divine Revelation. What reason perceives but dimly is made clear and precise for it by Revelation. In short, Revelation completes reason and compensates for its shortcomings and weaknesses. Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (A), has spoken of the role of prophets in relation to thought and culture in the following terms:

... وَيُشِيرُوا لَهُمْ دَفَائِنَ الْعُقُولِ وَيُرُوهُمْ آيَاتِ الْمَقْدِرَةِ ...

....to stimulate and activate the dormant deposits of reason and to reveal to it the manifestations of His Omnipotence....¹⁰

It is, therefore, in the light of Revelation that reason realizes its complete role and function, grows under its nourishment, and obtains far-reaching vision. This is because Revelation is the Word of God, Who encompasses the entire universe, and His Word is as universal as His knowledge. Thus when God speaks of any part of the universe, He so describes it that its relationship with the totality of existence is also described, and it is also made clear that the totality of existence, too, has a direct link with its Ultimate Source, so that one can clearly comprehend the relationship of a part with the First Cause. In the same way, when God speaks of something, He does not limit His description to its matter and form, its genus, differentia or species, its history, or its various material transformations; His description of objects is not a circular and tautological definition. In other words, His descriptions are

not confined to a single plane, the plane of the physical world.

This is to remind that some of the experimental sciences merely deal with description of the past history and present state of a particular material phenomenon, its possible future transformations in time and space, its constitution, movement and other such characteristics. All such descriptions and observations are confined to a single plane. In other words, their investigation is confined to the inner mechanics of a closed system. For example, in biology, medicine, geology, astronomy, and other branches of the experimental sciences, and also some of the social sciences, discussion is limited to describing the past, the present, and the predictable future of a phenomenon and is confined to the closed system of "internal structure" of an object, without any reference being made to its relationship with the rest of the universe. For instance, when certain mineral deposits are studied in geology and a discussion is made about the processes by which the deposits are formed underground, the various stages in the history of their development, their present state, and their future course of change, nothing is said about the "efficient cause" that created such deposits. Nor is it ever asked whether this cause is itself a phenomenon caused by some other phenomenon, which relates by a series of causes and effects to a Source which is the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*), whose Existence is the same as its Essence, which is completely self-sufficient and can fulfil the needs of all other things, which are incomplete. Nothing is said about the *purpose* of the existence of this phenomenon, whether the purpose is itself another phenomenon with yet another purpose, whether the chain of such purposes must end with an aim which is the Necessary Being, which is infinitely perfect and whose perfection and purpose of being are not separate from Its Essence, which is the Ultimate Purpose of all those things that have a purpose. In short, nothing is said about the ultimate end of a thing and no attempt is made to place it in a universal perspective of purpose (telic and teleological perspectives).

The experimental sciences and some of the human sciences concern themselves with only the internal structure of phenomena, leaving the question of their ultimate purpose and efficient cause to the field of metaphysics. Therefore, all things are viewed in isolation and separation from their ultimate origin and end (*al-mabda' wa al-ma'ād*). Obviously, even though all researches carried out in these fields of study enrich our knowledge about the internal structure of the object being studied, they tell us nothing about its origin and purpose.

Limiting the study of natural phenomena to their internal structure and ignoring the ultimate origin and purpose of things, result in deficient description and interpretation of these phenomena. This is the cause of innumerable difficulties and shortcomings in our understanding of the nature of reality, whose unfortunate signs and consequences

can be observed in today's world of reason without Revelation and knowledge without vision.

Revelation, however, considers all things to be "signs" (*āyāt*) pointing to the ultimate origin of the world; besides describing the internal structure of an object, its history, present state, and future course of development, it also discusses its place in a perspective of origination and ultimate end; that is, it makes a vertical movement that cuts across the horizontal physical plane. Thus the systems of "efficient cause" (*al-'illah al-fā'ilīyyah*) and "final cause" (*al-'illah al-ghā'īyyah*) act as two wings attached to the body of the experimental science (study of internal structure) helping it to break out of a static, earth-bound state and enabling it to fly in the infinite skies of the Divine world outlook. It encourages it to rise to ever higher altitudes and guides it on the best course of ascent. For example, the following Quranic verse alludes to all the three aspects of the natural phenomena mentioned above:

... رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ *

....Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything its nature, then guided it aright.
(20:50)

That is, our Lord has given everything its inner structure, equipped it with its means of attaining perfection, and then guided it towards its real goal.

The same sort of approach towards the phenomena of this world can be seen throughout the Quran. In this manner the two wings of origination (*al-'illah al-fā'ilīyyah*) and ultimate purpose (*al-'illah al-ghā'īyyah*) are revived and rejuvenated in all the research being carried out about these phenomena. In this way, the Holy Quran turns knowledge into reason, reason into wisdom, and mental conceptions into verities. This is the fashion in which the Quran coordinates the findings of theoretical reason with the effort of practical reason, and objectifies what were intellectual and subjective conceptions. Finally, it is by these means that the Quran turns a specialist into a man of religion, a scientific researcher into a practical investigator, a scientific "authority" into a devotee of the Truth, a technical inventor into a committed believer, an industrial entrepreneur into a man of faith, thus transforming raw mind into a seasoned intellect.

Below are given few examples of the blossoming of sciences in the light of Divine Revelation.

First Example

Explaining the creation of the heavens and their stability without reliance on any visible columns, and the orderly system of the sun and the moon, the Quran says:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ *

God is He who raised up the heavens without visible supports, then mounted the Throne. He subjected the sun and the moon each one running to a term stated. He directs the affair; He distinguishes the signs; haply you will have faith in the encounter with your Lord. (13:2)

In this verse, besides describing the inner structure of the heavens and the planets, the system of efficient causes and the system of final cause is also pointed to. In other words, both monotheism and the Day of Resurrection (*al-tawhīd* and *al-ma'ād*) are spoken of.

Second Example

In explaining the genesis of the earth and the emergence of the mountains, and the way various trees and fruits grow and mature deriving nourishment from the same substances by their roots, it says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشَى اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ * وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُّتجاوِرَاتٌ وَجَنَاتٌ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزَرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنَوَاتٌ وَغَيْرُ صِنَوَاتٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفِضِلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأَكْلِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ * وَإِنْ تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ ءَ إِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا أَيْنَا نَبِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ...

It is He who spread out the earth and set therein firm mountains and rivers, and of every fruit he placed therein two pairs. He covereth the night with the day. Surely, in that are signs for people who reflect. And in the earth are neighbouring tracts, vineyards and fields sown, and palms in pairs, and palms single, which are watered with one water. And some of them We prefer in produce above others. Surely in that are signs for a people who understand. If thou wouldst wonder, surely wonderful is their saying, 'What, when we are dust, shall we indeed then be raised up again in new creation?'....(13:3-5)

Thus we see that, in this chapter, the Quran not only describes the inner structure of the earth, mountains and rivers, the world of vegetation, etc., but it also mentions them in a perspective of efficient cause

and of final cause. That is, both unity of creation (*al-tawhīd*) and the ultimate end (*al-ma'ād*) are fully taken into account. The way, however, that the causal perspective is described in the first and the second verses is not the same. In the first verse the chain of causation is described moving from unity to multiplicity: it was the One God who stretched out the earth, and caused the mountains to emerge and the rivers to flow, etc. But in the second verse, the description moves from multiplicity to unity; here we have an earth which is divided into many adjacent tracts, and in each tract there is a particular garden in which grow trees bearing particular fruits; the gardens and the tracts resemble one another and the trees derive nourishment from one vital fluid: water. This movement from multiplicity to unity in nature guides the intelligent observer towards the realization of the One Source. After this, the Quran describes resurrection and the problem of re-creation after death.

Third Example

Describing the coming into being of cattle, the way that they should be taken care of, the way that domesticated animals are to be used, and the beauty of scenes of the herds going to pasture and returning from it, and other problems relating to domesticated animals and related matters, it says:

... وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ * وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ * وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا بِالْغَيْهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ * وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ *

....And the cattle—He created them for you; in them is warmth, and uses various, and of them you eat, and there is beauty in them for you, when you bring them home to rest and when you take them out to pasture; and they bear your loads for you unto a land you could not reach save with great trouble to yourselves. Surely, your Lord is All-clement, All-compassionate. And horses, and mules, and asses (He has created) for you to ride, and as an adornment; and He creates what you know not. (16:5-8)

In the verse just mentioned, besides describing the inner structure of the emergence and development of herds, their system of efficient cause (which is the same as *al-tawhīd*) is also pointed out. Then after these verses, the Holy Quran refers to the system of final cause of all these things:

إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَالذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مُنْكَرَةٌ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ *

Your God is One God. But as for those who believe not in the Hereafter their hearts deny, and they have waxed proud. (16:22)

Fourth Example

Explaining the appearance of clouds, their concentration, the dropping of rain from their midst, their formation in the sky so that they resemble heavenly mountains, the pouring of hail from them, the way lightning strikes, other problems in regard to the order of night and day, and describing the genesis of various animals, the Quran says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَّامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ * يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ * وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ * لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ مُبِينَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ *

Hast thou not seen how God drives the clouds, then composes them, then makes them layers, and thou seest the rain come forth from between them? He sends down from the heaven mountains (of clouds) wherein is hail, and He smites therewith whom He will, and turns it aside from whom He will; wellnigh the gleam of His lightning snatches away the sight. God turns about the day and the night; surely in that is a lesson for those who have eyes. God has created every animal of water, and some of them go upon their bellies, and some of them go upon two feet, and some of them go upon four. God creates whatever He will; God is powerful over everything. Verily We have sent down revelations and explained them; God guides whomsoever He will to a straight path. (24:43-46)

Thus we see that in the verses just quoted, the causal structure and the ultimate destiny and end of all the things under consideration are described. That is, while describing the inner structure of these natural phenomena, the formation of clouds, the pouring down of rain, the hail, the lightning, etc., it is pointed out that the chain of efficient causes behind their emergence leads to God, who is the Creator, the Nourisher of all things. The natural phenomena are referred to as *āyāt* (signs); reference is also made to guidance towards the straight path that leads to the ultimate purpose of all life, which is nothing other than God. All the three perspectives are thus taken into account; the causal perspective, the inner structure, and the perspective of goal and purpose.

In short, in explaining the things of this world, while the Holy

Quran gives us a brief but useful description of their inner structure, it also considers their causal background and their ultimate destiny. In fact, the emphasis of the Quran is on explaining the starting point and the ending point in the vertical ascent of a thing; that is, the starting point of all things in the view of the Quran is the One God, and their ending point is the Hereafter. The Quran does not consider the description and explanation of the inner structure of a thing to be by itself a full and complete explanation of that thing.

Sciences and the Guiding Role of Revelation:

In conclusion I would like to mention some examples of the flowering of human knowledge in the light of Divine Revelation, in order to show the effect of the heavenly teachings on man's thought and knowledge.

First Example

What man gains through intellectual effort is power over the natural phenomena. His intellect, however, does not provide him with the adequate guidelines of use of this power. This is the task of Divine Revelation. It sets before man the proper goals for attainment of which human powers must be channelled. For example, it states the following as a general rule:

... أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رَحِمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ ...

....(The believers) are hard against the unbelievers and merciful among themselves....(48:29)

With this general guidance the manner in which all the energies of the community—material and spiritual—are to be used, is indicated.

Second Example

When, through a Divine miracle, hard and cold iron was made soft and forgeable in the hands of Prophet David (A), Divine Revelation instructs him that iron must be used in making defensive weapons and not destructive ones:

... وَاللَّيْلَةَ الْحَدِيدَ * أَنْ أَعْمَلْ سَابِغَاتٍ وَقَدِّرْ فِي السَّرْدِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحاً إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
بَصِيرٌ *

....And We made the iron supple unto him, saying: 'Make thou long coats-of-

mail and measure the links (thereof). And do ye righteousness, for surely I see the things you do. (34:10-11)

The important point here is that a hard metal such as iron is to be turned not into a destructive weapon, but into the best defensive tool, and that what could have been a powerful offensive weapon must be turned into the most delicate instrument of defense. In short, two aspects are taken into consideration: strength of iron and its use in the interest of the people:

.... وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ ...

....And We sent down iron, wherein is great might, and uses for mankind.... (57:25)

Thus, the aspect of iron which is emphasized is its usefulness to man and not its possible use in killing and destroying.

Third Example

Whenever war breaks out between two unrighteous, or two non-Muslim adversaries and there is a big demand for weapons, all those human crafts and techniques which are at the disposal and service of worldly and short-term profits are activated to make weapons and sell them. Divine Revelation, however, clearly delineates the path that one should take in response to such events. It instructs man to put into the hands of two adversaries only defensive equipment, even though both of them may be unrighteous Muslims or unbelievers.

Hisham quotes Muḥammad ibn Qays as saying: "I asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (A): 'If two groups of unbelievers go to war against each other, should I sell arms to them or not?' He answered: 'Sell defensive weapons to *both* of them:'

سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) عَنْ فِئَتَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَاطِلِ أَيْبِعُهُمَا السِّلَاحَ فَقَالَ: بَعْهُمَا مَا يَكُونُهَا الدِّرْعُ وَالْخُفَّيْنِ وَنَحْوَهُذَا.

I asked Abu 'Abd Allah (A) whether I could sell weapons to two unrighteous groups at war. He said: "Sell to both of them protective gear such as shields, greaves, and so on." ¹¹

This is a humane and an Islamic command which does not allow anyone to profit from a human tragedy such as war by selling offensive and destructive weapons to warring factions, thus encouraging bloodshed and destruction, or by taking the side of one party against the

other make it possible for one particular group to gain hegemony and establish its domination over others. The duty of the man who has been liberated from bondage of greed and myriads of desires, rivalries, jealousies and corruptions, is to take an even-handed approach towards warring parties and to sell defensive weapons and equipment to *both* of them. His motivation for doing so should be to help save lives and to prevent destruction and blood-shed by selling to warring parties things that protect human beings from injury and death.

Fourth Example

The model and the proper form of Islamic government was explained by Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A) in a directive given to Mālik al-Ashtar. In this order, Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A) clearly delineates the nature of the commitments of his government and the way political power is to be used. He also states that the power of the government should never be used outside the boundaries set by justice and fairness:

... وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعًا ضَارِيًا تَغْتَنِمُ أَكْلَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ صِنْفَانِ إِمَّا أَحَ لَكَ فِي الدِّينِ أَوْ
نَظِيرُكَ فِي الْخَلْقِ...

(O Mālik) do not rule (the people of Egypt) like a predatory beast who is always looking for a chance to devour them. (Do not trespass the sacred boundaries of justice) because they are either your brethren in faith, or follow men of your own kind.¹²

In this political directive the flowering and perfection of the art of government, which comes under the category of "practical philosophy" and is one of the most important of human sciences, is clearly evident. Here, Imam 'Alī (A) has limited the power of the State to that which falls within the boundaries of justice and the rights of the people. He does not allow transgression from its sacred tenets even towards the non-Muslims. This is nothing other than the perfection of the art of government in the light of Divine Revelation.

In conclusion, we should keep in mind that the mission of the Islamic Cultural Revolution is to walk on the path that has been described above, so that the social sciences, humanities, and the experimental sciences may all attain their highest pinnacle and the highest degree of flowering and development possible for them. It is therefore necessary that, while the "inner structure" of the various specialities is studied, their "causal perspective" and their "perspective of purpose"—the understanding of which brings about religious commitment and obedience—also be taken into account and entered into the university curricula so that science may flower into wisdom, and

expertise may be infused by religious commitment.

NOTES:

1. See 'Allāmah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabātabā'ī's exegesis *al-Mizān*, vol. V, p. 273.
2. The Qur'ān, 8:24.
3. *Ibid.*, 2:269, 39:9, 3:66, 4:157, 6:144, 6:119, 6:140, 11:46, 22:8, 22:54, 24:15, 45:24, 53:28, 20:114.
4. *Ibid.*, 91:8.
5. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, "Kitāb al-'ilm".
6. *Ibid.*, "Kitāb al-'aql wa al-jahl".
7. *Ibid.*
8. The well-known *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (S) regarding the practical results of a forty-day sincere devotion to God is another witness to what we have said. The *ḥadīth* says:

مَنْ أَخْلَصَ لِلَّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا فَجَرَّ اللُّهُ بِتَابِعِ الْحِكْمَةِ مِنْ قَلْبِهِ عَلَى لِسَانِهِ.

Whoever sincerely devotes himself to God for forty days, God shall cause springs of wisdom to emanate from his heart flowing to his tongue.

9. See 'Allāmah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabātabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. XIV, p. 382; vol. XVI, p. 242.
10. *Nahj al-balāghah*, sermon 1.
11. Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. XII, p. 70.
12. *Nahj al-balāghah*, epistle 53.

Islam and Women's Rights

by Martyr Muḥammad Jawād Bāhonar

translated from Persian by Shams al-Hudā

The story of woman's rights and her liberty is one of the live and attractive issues being discussed over the last few years in the Eastern circles. Islamic countries are also faced with this debate, and different societies have different views in this regard, positive and/or negative.

Occasionally the matter extends beyond the limits of a debate and quietly enters the field of action making some special appearances in the Islamic environment. This issue of freedom and equality of rights is occasionally extended to such lengths, rightly or wrongly, that it reaches sensational limits, sometimes to the extent of being dangerous and repulsive.

Naturally in these discussions or actions, the name of Islam is also dragged in and various interpretations of the Islamic viewpoint are made in this regard. Some say that Islam is totally opposed to any liberty or progress for women and declare that Islam regards woman as a lowly weakling totally captive in the hands of man, deprived of all rights and social privileges. She, according to them, has no right to property or dignity, not even in the selection of her husband and determination of her own destiny. She is deprived of the blessing of letters and is required to stay, with her eyes and ears closed, in the corner of her house, detached from society, to obediently perform every whim of her husband. She is condemned to live the life of a miserable creature who has no wider role to play in the human society. The life envisaged for her is the mean life of a helpless captive condemned to live and die without rights and without dignity. This is one type of thinking in regard to Islam's view of women's rights.

There is another group of extremists who feel that they can stretch Islamic laws in accordance with their whims and fancies and make the sacred laws of Islam march in step with their own imagination at all cost. They feel that Islam has granted all sorts of rights and freedom

to woman so as to permit her to intervene in all social spheres along with men, working shoulder to shoulder with him. At times she is pictured as being present on the battlefield and, sometimes, supposed to decorate the seat of a deputy or a minister. She may roll up her sleeves and work to launch missiles, hold the command of an army or sign a treaty of peace.

She is also, at times, required to dance in rhythm with men and twine her arms in the arms of any friend or stranger or appear in her bikini, bathing in public swimming pools or at the beaches. They are those who do not consider it wise, in view of social considerations, to formally negate the Islamic doctrines. They, therefore, try as far as possible, to explain and interpret Islamic laws so as to meet their objectives.

There is another group which, without the least reservation or hesitation, openly and clearly pursue their objectives. It is none of their business that the country is an Islamic state or its people followers of the teachings of Islam. Irrespective of all this, they move ahead in the direction of their whims and fancies and senseless imitation of others.

As to the question how this debate started, what its origin is, here are the clues:

Change in Woman's Legal Position in Europe:

A woman in the tribal and barbaric societies was considered a sub-human beast or a chattel used to fulfill sensual needs and required to perform menial and worthless jobs. She was a bonded labourer who lived only to be exploited by man in whatever manner he deemed fit. She did not live to enjoy life or exercise human rights and privileges.

Later, in semi-barbaric or half-civilized human societies, woman continued to be the subject of debate, and different opinions were expressed about her such as:

- woman is the abominable creation of the devil;
- she does not have a human soul, hence no life in the Hereafter;
- women's deeds are not acceptable to God;
- being a means of satanic seduction, she should be physically tortured;
- death, poison, fire and the serpent are lesser evils compared to her;
- girls should be buried alive to wash away the scars of disgrace;
- woman is a human being, but was created to serve man.

These and other such views have been expressed by the ancient Romans, Arabs, Frenchmen and Athenians in regard to woman.

Europe's civilized societies recognize woman as a human being but

deprive her of many a human right. They even did not consider her to be a citizen of the state, nor granted her any personal rights. A girl was required to accept anyone selected by her guardians as her husband. She was only the means of fulfilling the carnal desires of man and maintained for this purpose. She was used to work on farms and at home on the one hand, and, on the other, to satisfy man's sexual passions; beyond this she had no significant legal protection.

Before the advent of the Industrial Revolution, European families lived a simple and modest life; women helped in agriculture and household affairs. They occasionally kept themselves busy with some small handicrafts within the household. However, the family and social life of a woman, along with her husband and children, was confined to the premises of her home, enriched by the environment of mutual love and affection. The Industrial Revolution brought into existence large industrial complexes and heavy industries. The need for large numbers of workers resulted in the breakup of the family. Women and children had to leave the warm family atmosphere of their villages and were dragged into industrial cities and towns. Hard and tiring working conditions, breakup of families, unlawful mixing of women with men in the work premises, the pressure of sexual urges on both sides, the erosion of familial sentiments, the exploitation of unprotected and unsheltered women by the managers of industrial houses in order to satisfy their lusts, resulting in the spread of corruption, prepared the ground for a revolution. The women felt that the burden of life had fallen on their shoulders and they had been deprived of all sentiments and privileges of a pleasant family life. They had lost their husbands, their children, their honour, their chastity and everything else. They realized that although the war had devoured millions of men and youth, and the factory owners were in urgent need of women to keep the wheels of industries moving, yet they never attached any value to them and continued to oppress them. Moreover, they were not even paid proper wages. Discrimination between men and women continued. The women were dragged into all types of corruption and moral pollution. The unsheltered and unprotected women, crushed under the pressure of such a life, were compelled to surrender to this forced life of indignity and sub-human existence.

They felt that they had lost everything: they had to turn the wheel, to carry the burden and yet keep their mouths shut. They had to tolerate oppression yet abstain from protests under its crushing weight. Apparently, they were working shoulder to shoulder with men, but, in fact, they were no more than the oppressed beasts of burden fallen captive in the hands of a handful of profiteers. Every hour they had to surrender to all and sundry, suffering severe indignities for meager wages.

The pressures caused by this atmosphere aroused their feelings and encouraged them to protest and strike resulting in their eventual arrests and killings. Finally as a result of continued efforts, through speeches and writings, they found their way to the centers of authority and penetrated into the legislative assemblies. Slowly and gradually, they not only achieved the goal of equal pay for equal work, but also achieved equal rights with men with the right to participate in all spheres of activity. The question is, how far has this freedom and equality of rights in all spheres been to the benefit of men and women or how far has it been harmful to them? This is the subject of another debate to be discussed some other time.

Woman's 'Liberation' Comes to Eastern Countries:

Europe with its industrial advancement achieved industrial hegemony over the world. This was followed with expanded activities in other fields as well. The European civilization with its big row and fanfare succeeded in snatching the leadership of the world and attracting the attention of the backward nations. The nations of the East were so impressed by European developments that for them anything that the Europeans did was exemplary. Their food, their dress, their mode of thinking, their etiquette, their morals, laws, their system of public rights and everything else were regarded as flawless and to be diligently imitated. They felt that whatever the Europeans did and said must be accepted with folded hands and closed eyes. They felt that they should lay down their determination, their individual respect, their moral and material wealth, their religion and national customs and traditions at the feet of these Europeans and in turn put the chains of slavery around their necks without any complaint.

Following this allurements mixed with moral and spiritual weakness, these lovers of the West turned their eyes towards it anxiously waiting to welcome whatever came from Europe. The tumult of woman's liberation and its practical off-shoots found their way to the Islamic countries, where they received a warm welcome as souvenirs from the West, forgetting that it was a creation of special circumstances and developments in the West which demanded such an outcome; whereas those conditions did not prevail in Islamic countries.

Islam, for the last so many centuries, had granted a dignified personality to woman, bestowing all human rights and privileges upon her, including some special rights in particular spheres. It will be discussed in detail as to how Islam did provide a special privileged position to the female sex and favoured her with a sublime position in accordance with her physical and spiritual structure.

It may be pointed out that the explosive conditions of industrial development, resulting in the breakup of families, leading to the suffering and oppression of women, and calling for a revolution in Europe, did not exist in these countries. But it was only the urge for doing what others had done which obliged the people in Islamic countries to follow suit. They thought that whatever came from Europe was a heavenly command to be followed. On the other hand, all this had a strong appeal based on sensual and carnal desires. All these factors put together brought a group into existence who started struggling for the so-called women's liberation. They gathered under this slogan and the result is what we see today.

The Relationship Between Woman's Natural Structure and Her Rights:

Here, as we enter the main subject itself, we shall discuss the question of women's rights from the Islamic point of view, setting aside all fanaticism and keeping ourselves aloof from the pressures of the environment and the uproar of the supporters of 'civilization'. Let us first of all briefly consider men and women from the point of view of physical structure, biological and psychological make-up and see whether or not these two creatures have any difference from these points of view. If they have, do these differences demand that each of them should have a particular limitation or special rights? Also, whether or not these legal differences in such special circumstances are incompatible or inconsistent with the human personality and social status of either of them?

The world is full of different objects and phenomena, each having its own peculiarities as different from the others. Each has its own limitations and special features which bring elegance and grace to them. There is variety amongst animals, the fauna and flora, and similarly between individuals of the same species. Similarly, human beings are different and have particular characteristics. Whereas differences between species are deep, the differences amongst individuals are superficial. However two persons are not the same in all respects, so much so that even the fingerprints of two persons are sufficient to distinguish one from another, leave alone other aspects. One notices differences amongst people in their thoughts, capabilities, sentiments, mental and physical abilities, the intensity of instincts, outward appearance, height and weight and other internal and external factors. The effect of these superficial differences is witnessed in the status and ranks these individuals obtain in society. Each according to his capabilities and circumstances shares the burden of the society. It is this variety which fulfills all the requirements of the society and perpetuates the move-

ment of life.

In regard to men and women, there are some deeper observable differences which make the two sexes separate from each other and call for special duties and status for each of them. As far as the physiological structure is concerned, the male is on an average endowed with stronger nerves, physical structure, greater weight, height, and brain quantity. This by itself indicates that he is made for hard and difficult jobs.¹ The part of the brain which is related to emotions is more in a female, whereas the portion of the brain dealing with thought and deliberation is greater in a male. As against this, one notes that a female's body is equipped with organs to carry a child and feed it with her milk. This is a special feature bestowed upon her, indicating that a child's training is her obligation. Training a child needs strength and richness of feelings so that the child's growing and ever-changing demands are catered to. Undoubtedly, woman, with her special physical features meant to bring up children, has also been equipped by nature with the required emotions and strong feelings of love and affection for the child. This maintains the discipline and order in human life. The very fact that the woman is endowed with great affection and tender sentiments as compared with a man goes to prove her special responsibilities towards human society and there is no need for any elaborate argument in this respect.

Role of Thought and Emotion:

Affection is a deep, tender sentiment which creates a sense of tolerance, courage and patience. It is soon provoked and makes a deep immediate effect. It is a sentiment which needs no deliberation or any long drawn out preliminaries. Its objective is quickly attained and no careful long term planning is needed. Affection, in other words, is deep interest and strong passion which is superficial and not deep rooted but at the same time elegant and glorious. A child's cry or his smile soon provokes the loving heart of the mother and attracts her deep affection. It is with the mother's burning affection that children's continual demands are fulfilled. The lamentations and bitter sighs of a pale-faced patient and his bony frame can affect only a sensitive heart, which would provide it with untiring nursing care.

The scene of untiring and ceaseless efforts of a man in his struggle for a living, his perspiring forehead, his tired face and exhausted nerves invoke the sentiment of affection in a woman. It is out of this sentiment that she tries to make her house a well-managed refuge full of joy, so that the exhaustion caused to her husband due to his struggle in life can be compensated for in the warmth and affectionate atmosphere of the family. It is under the shadow of this affection and the freshness of

this loving sentiment that man forgets his fatigue. It is the aesthetic sense of a woman and her flair for elegance that affects the dress of her husband and children and gives a look of charm and luxury to the home and makes it glow with life and the spirit to live.

As against this, the search for livelihood and struggle for life need far-sightedness and perseverance, both of which require thoughtfulness. Sentiment cannot tolerate to view objectives and goals from a far-off distance. It cannot rear into its heart a love which may ripen and bear fruit ten years later, which would at first appear like a fairy tale or myth for whose achievement it has to tolerate all kinds of hardships. It cannot traverse this long distance, overcome obstructions on its way and pave the path towards success. The emotive spirit does not get along well with deceptive and colourful manifestations in the path of the search for a living. This strenuous and crooked path needs strength which, despite tender sentiments, is accompanied by a fiery doggedness which does not easily surrender, but exhibits a tolerance and coolness that supercedes sentiment and emotion. It is through such hardheartedness and connivance that a man has to run the race of reaching prosperity and achieving his objectives.

It is up to a man to maintain and protect his family in the tumult of life, whether it is by cutting wood in a jungle, or by operating huge industrial machines and installations, or participation in the battlefield or managing the affairs of the government and society. All need hard work, far-sightedness and planning. This cannot be achieved by gentle sentiments, or emotional ethos or tender-heartedness. Every organization has its own peculiar interests. The administration of different aspects of life needs different qualities, sometimes thoughtfulness and at other times sympathy, sometimes finesse and feeling, and at other times, strength and serenity. Since all the wheels of society must continuously move, the system of creation has equipped each man and woman with a particular type of constitution. Each is greatly valuable in its own place and useful and worthy in its own manifestations.

Despite this difference and variety in structure, the personality of neither is crushed. Instead each has a specified path to cover.

This was a description from the physiological and psychological points of views.

Equal Rights of Men and Women and the Islamic Viewpoint:

Islam considers men and women equal as far as the basic human rights are concerned. It not only recognizes a human personality for both, but also considers them equal in all rights and human privileges. The following verses of the Quran support this statement:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً...

O, mankind, fear your Lord who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women....(4:1)

And:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىكُمْ...

O mankind! We have created you male and female and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing of you....(49:13)

...أَنْتَى لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ...

I waste not the labour of any that labours among you, be you male or female —the one of you is from the other....(3:195)

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ...

And the believers, the men and the women, are friends one of the other; they bid to honour and forbid dishonour; they perform the prayer, and pay the alms, and they obey God and His Messenger. Those upon them God will have mercy....(9:71)

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا*

Men and women who have surrendered (unto Allah), believing men and believing women, obedient men and obedient women, truthful men and truthful women, enduring men and enduring women, humble men and humble women, men and women who give in charity, men who fast and women who fast, men and women who guard their private parts, men and women who remember God much, for them God has prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward.(33:35)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْخَرُوا قَوْمًا مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءً مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِاللُّغَابِ...

O believers, let not any people scoff at another people who may be better

than they; neither let women scoff at women who may be better than they. And find not fault with one another, neither revile one another by nicknames....(49:11)

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي
وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ

And We have charged man concerning his parents—his mother bore him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning was in two years—be thankful to Me and to your parents....(31:14)

... هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ...

They (women) are a vestment for you, and you (men) are a vestment for them....(2:187)

لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ
وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ ...

To the men a share of what parents and kinsmen leave and to the women a share of what parents and kinsmen leave....(4:7)

... لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبْنَ ...

To the men a share from what they have earned, and to the women a share from what they have earned....(4:32)

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ...

The fornicatress and the fornicator—scourge each one of them a hundred stripes, and in the matter of God's religion, let not tenderness for them seize you if you believe in God and the Last Day....(24:2)

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ ... وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ ...

Say to the believers, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts; that is purer for them....And say to the believing women, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts....(24:30-31)

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِنَ اللَّهِ ...

And the thief, male and female: cut off the hands of both as a recompense for what they have earned and a punishment exemplary from God....(5:38)

These verses were quoted as examples only, for there are many more verses clearly mentioning both the men and women and specifying the

directions in their regard. Apart from this, there are hundreds of verses which take the form of address, "O mankind!" or "O believers!" which cover both men and women. The above-mentioned verses, in short, mean as follows: Both men and women are human beings, both are expected to follow Islam, be faithful and obedient believers. The good reward, paradise and God's grace are for both. Both have similar duties to perform; for instance, the ritual prayer, fasting, *zakāt*, to command to good and to prohibit from evil. The criterion of their personal superiority is based on piety and guarding themselves against evil. Moral virtues such as tolerance, sublimity, truthfulness, help to the poor....are desirable for both. Both are required to observe chastity and keep their looks cast down. Moral vices, such as obscene acts, backbiting and mockery are not desirable for either of them. Both inherit property. The right to property and usage of property is granted to both men and women. The father and mother both deserve extreme respect. Both men and women are responsible for their deeds, which shall not go unreckoned. Both are equal in the eyes of the Law and are to be punished for crimes committed. Finally, if a woman is at some loss in a particular case from the legal point of view, at another place the Law compensates for this loss and effects a legal balance in her favour.

Other verses in the Quran independently mention woman's rights, occasionally ordaining men to preserve those limits. At times the attitude of the pre-Islamic culture in regard to women is criticized. For example, a verse condemns the practice of slaying girl-infants in the words:

وَإِذَا الْمَوْؤُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ * بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ *

And when the buried infant shall be asked for what sin she was slain. (81:8-9)

In addition to this, the Quran discusses well-known women of religious history and describes their lives to the extent that falls within the scope of its objective. Such women are twelve in number. Even one of the surahs of the Quran is named *Sūrat al-Nisā'*, which glorifies women.

In the above paragraphs, a general discussion regarding the respect shown by the Quran to the woman has been mentioned. A description has also been made of the equal rights of men and women. This prepares the grounds for a future debate.

NOTES

Physiology texts state that the structure of a man's body is different from that of a woman in all respects whether it be muscles, blood, bones, heart or brain. Whereas a man's brain weighs 100 gms. more than a woman's, his lungs weigh 300 gms. more. The average weight of a male is 4000 gms. more than that of a female body. Man's bones are heavier and stronger. Woman's muscles are weaker and more delicate. The heart of an average man is nearly 50 gms. heavier than that of an average woman. Hence differences in physical structure are reflected in the mental capabilities of the two sexes.

Text of the Bill on Interest-free Banking

—a document*

CHAPTER ONE: Objectives and Functions of Banking System in the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Article 1

The objectives of the banking system are as follows:

1. Establishment of a monetary and credit system based on righteousness and justice (according to Islamic laws) with a view to systematize a correct circulation of money and credit for a healthy and developing economy in the country.
2. Working towards realization of the objectives, policies and economic programmes of the Islamic Republic of Iran with monetary and credit tools.
3. Creation of necessary facilities for the expansion of public co-operatives and interest-free lending through attraction of free funds, savings, deposits and accumulations, and their mobilization for provision of conditions and possibilities of work and investment, with a view to implement Paragraphs 2 and 9 of Article 43 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹
4. Preservation of money value and creation of equilibrium in

* The formulation of a set of laws that would serve as a legal framework for implementation of interest-less banking was an important task that lay before the Islamic Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran (the Majlis) since its inception. On August 30, 1983, the Majlis finally approved the bill on interest-free banking, whose full text has been translated here. The bill was ratified by the Guardianship Council (Shūrāy-e Nigāhbān) two days later on September 1. While the bill was in Majlis, training courses were devised to acquaint the bank employees with the new system, and on October 19 a Central Bank official announced that to date about 20,000 bank employees have attended such courses. Meanwhile, he said, during the probational programme which was put into effect after the approval of the bill, the banks had handled over 100 billion rials worth of banking transactions in accordance with it. The bill will come into full effect from January 21, 1984.

balance of payments and provision of facilities in commercial exchanges.

5. Provision of facilities in matters of payments, receipts, exchanges and dealings and other services which according to law pertain to a bank.

Article 2

The functions of the banking system are:

1. Circulation of currency notes and metal coins according to the rules and regulations.

2. Organization, control and channelling of the circulation of money and credit according to rules and regulations.

3. Performance of all foreign and Iranian currency banking operations and commitment or guarantee of foreign exchange payments of the Government in accordance with rules and regulations.

4. Supervision over gold, foreign exchange dealings and the import and export of Iranian currency and foreign currencies, and framing of relevant rules in accordance with the laws.

5. Carrying out of operations relating to bonds and negotiable documents in accordance with rules and regulations.

6. Implementation of monetary and credit policies in accordance with rules and regulations.

7. Performance of banking activities relating to the part of approved economic programmes which should be implemented through the monetary and credit system.

8. To open various interest-free loan accounts (current and savings) and long-term investment deposits, and issuance of relevant documents in accordance with rules and regulations.

9. Giving of loans and credits without interest according to rules and regulations.

10. Giving of loans and credits and extension of other banking services to legal cooperatives for realization of Paragraph 2 of Article 43 of the Constitution.

11. Carrying out of transactions of gold and silver and safekeeping and management of foreign exchange and gold reserves of the country in accordance with the rules and regulations thereof.

12. Custody of rial deposits of international monetary and financial organizations and/or similar organizations and/or those affiliated to such organizations in accordance with rules and regulations.

13. Signing of agreements of payment for implementation of monetary, commercial and transit agreements between the Government and other countries in accordance with rules and regulations.

14. Acceptance and safekeeping in trust of gold, silver and other

valuable articles, negotiable bonds and official documents belonging to individuals or corporate persons and leasing of safe vaults.

15. Issuance, attestation and acceptance of foreign exchange or rial surety bonds for customers.

16. Rendering of services of attorney and guardianship in accordance with rules and regulations.

CHAPTER TWO: Mobilization of Monetary Sources

Article 3

The banks may, under any of the following heads, accept deposits:

- a) Interest-free loan deposits:
 - (i) current
 - (ii) savings.
- b) Long-term investment deposits.

NOTE: Long-term investment deposit in respect of which the bank has the power of agency for utilization for the purposes of 'partnership' (*mushārah*)², 'limited-partnership' (*muḍārabah*)³, 'leasing with the condition of transfer of ownership' (*'ijārah bi shart al-tamlīk*)⁴, instalment dealings (*mu'āmalāt bil taqsīt*), 'farm leasing' (*muzārah*), 'orchard letting' (*musāqāt*), direct investment, 'forward purchases' (*mu'āmalāt bay' al-salaf*) and *ju'alah*.⁵

Article 4

The banks are duty bound to repay the deposits in respect of interest-free loans (savings and current) and can also undertake, guarantee and insure repayment of the principal of long-term investments.

Article 5

The profits obtained from activities mentioned in the note under Article 3 of this act, shall be divided, on the basis of agreement arrived at, in proportion of time and the amount of investment deposits, taking into consideration the share of the bank resources in proportion to the time and amount in the total funds utilized in these activities.

Article 6

The banks, with a view to attract deposits, can provide following privileges to the depositors by way of encouragement:

- a) Giving of un-fixed awards, in cash or kind, on deposits for interest-free loans.

b) Offering reduction or exemption to depositors from payment of service charges or agent's fees.

c) Granting of priority to depositors in utilizing facilities granted by bank in matters mentioned in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE: Banking Facilities

Article 7

The banks may, for purpose of creation of necessary facilities for expansion of activities in different fields of production, commerce and services, provide a part of capital or resources required for this purpose by way of partnership (*mushārah*).

Article 8

The banks may directly invest in production or developmental matters or plans. The programmes for such investments should be passed by the Islamic Consultative Assembly as a part of the annual budget of the State and the schemes should prove conclusively free of losses on evaluation.

NOTE: The banks are not entitled to invest in production schemes of articles of luxury or other unnecessary consumer goods.

Article 9

The banks may, with a view to provide necessary facilities for expansion of commerce, within the framework of the Government's trade policies, provide necessary financial resources on the basis of 'limited-partnership' (*muḍārah*) to their clients, giving preference to lawful cooperatives.

NOTE: The banks are not entitled to 'limited partnership' with the private sector in matters of import.

Article 10

The banks may, with a view to provide necessary facilities for expansion of housing, resort to construction of low-cost residential units in coordination with the Ministry of Housing and Urbanization, for sale on instalments, or lease on condition of transfer of ownership.

NOTE: Ownership of land by banks for construction of low-cost

residential units mentioned in Article 10 is permissible according to the law governing urban land.

Article 11

The banks, with a view to provide facilities for expansion of industry, mining, agriculture and services, purchase movable property on the application of the client on agreement by him to purchase for consumption or direct utilization of property or properties, and sell to the client on instalments on submission of security.

Article 12

The banks may, with a view to create facilities for expansion of services, agriculture, mines and industries, purchase properties (movable and immovable) at the request and agreement of the client that he shall take it on lease on condition of transfer of ownership and for his own utilization, and put it at disposal of the client on lease on condition of transfer of ownership.

Article 13

The banks may, with a view to facilitate provision of working capital for production units, resort to any of the following activities:

- a) Purchase and sell on credit, raw material and spare parts required by production units at their request and undertaking that they shall buy and utilize the requested raw material and spare parts.
- b) Buy in advance the produce of these units, as is easily salable, at their request.

Article 14

The banks are duty bound to allocate a part of their resources to interest-free loans for applicants, in order to fulfil the objectives of Paragraphs 2 and 9 of Article 43 of the Constitution. The rules in respect of the implementation of this Article shall be prepared by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran and approved by the Council of Ministers.

Article 15

All agreements exchanged for the implementation of Articles 12, 13 and 14 of this Act, in accordance with the contract signed bet-

ween the two parties, will be considered officially valid documents subject to the standing law pertaining to legal documents.

Article 16

The banks may, for the purpose of providing necessary facilities for expansion of production, commercial and service sectors, resort to *Ju'alah*.

Article 17

The banks may, lease and/or share in produce of agricultural lands (*muzāra'ah*) and orchards (*musāqāt*) in their possession.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its Monetary Policy

Article 18

The Central Bank of Iran, which shall hereafter be called "The Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran," will, in respect of Governmental corporations all of whose shares do not belong to the Government, undertake only those activities which come under this law.

Article 19

The credit policy and short-term facilities (one year) shall be prescribed on the proposal of the General Assembly of the Central Bank and with the approval of the Council of Ministers. The policy and facilities pertaining to five-year and long-term credit shall be presented to the Islamic Consultative Assembly along with the country's five-year and long-term development plans for its approval.

Article 20

The Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran may, for improving the performance of the country's monetary and credit systems, use the following tools, according to the rules to be approved by the Council of Ministers, on the basis of Article 19, and exercise its control and regulation over monetary and banking affairs:

1. By fixing the minimum and maximum percentage of the share of bank's possible profits in partnerships (*mushārahah*) and limited-partnership (*muḍārahah*) activities. This minimum percentage of profit

may differ in different fields.

2. By categorizing various fields of investment and partnership. By fixing the minimum percentage of possible profit for selection of investment and partnership schemes. The minimum percentage of possible profit in different fields may differ.

3. Fixation of minimum and maximum percentage of possible bank profit on instalment dealings, and lease on condition of transfer of ownership on the basis of total cost of a deal. This percentage may vary in different cases.

4. Fixation of the minimum and maximum percentage of bank service charges of various types (provided that it is not more than the costs of work performed), and agent's fee (*haqq al-wikālah*) for utilization of investment deposits received by the banks.

5. Fixation of the types and minimum and maximum value of gifts mentioned in Article 6 and rules regarding advertising for banks in various cases (mentioned therein).

6. Fixation of minimum and maximum of the amount of partnership (*mushārah*), limited-partnership (*muḍārah*), investment, lease on condition of transfer of ownership, instalment dealings, credit, forward purchase (*salaf*), leasing of farms (*muzārah*), letting of orchards (*musāqāt*), *Ju'alah*, and interest-free loans for banks and/or for each of them in every case and in different fields, as also fixation of maximum free facilities to be provided to a client.

CHAPTER FIVE: Miscellaneous

Article 21

The Central Bank with all the other banks, and the banks amongst themselves, are not permitted to carry out usurious banking activities.

Article 22

The banks may, with the permission of the Central Bank, enter into permissible banking activities with Government organizations and Government companies, or those affiliated to the Government.

Article 23

The amounts received as service charges and agent's fee shall be a part of the bank's income and is not divisible among depositors.

Article 24

Exemption from commercial levy and exemption from taxes

provided under the law for factories and production units, shall also be applicable to the banks in respect of imports or ownership in lieu of factories and production units.

Article 25

The units wherein the banks are share-holders, or in which they have invested, shall be subject to the Commercial Law if they do not fall under any other law.

Article 26

With the passage of this law, all other laws, rules and regulations contravening this law, shall be null and void; and the powers and functions mentioned in the Monetary and Banking Law and the Act on Administration of Banking Affairs and its supplement, which have been passed on to other authorities by this law, have been taken over from the previous authorities.

Article 27

The Ministry of Economic and Financial Affairs is duty bound to prepare rules of procedure for the implementation of this law on the proposal of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran and enforce it after the approval of the Council of Ministers, which should not take more than four months.

NOTE: All the activities after the approval of this law and the drafting of the rules of procedure shall be done in accordance with this law. All earlier savings and deposits shall, after the passage of this law, be changed into one of the accounts provided here within a maximum period of 18 months. All credits and loans given by the banks prior to the passage of this law shall be accorded with this law within a maximum period of three years.

NOTES

1. The Paragraphs 2 and 9 of Article 43 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran are as follows:

“(The economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on the following regulations, in order to achieve independence in the national economy, uproot poverty and impoverishment and fulfil growing human needs, while preserving its independence:)...Securing opportunities and possibilities for

employment for all in order to achieve full employment, offering employment opportunities to all who are able to work but lack the means, making use of the cooperative system, in providing interest-free loans and other legitimate means, so that capital is not concentrated and is not circulated in the hands of specific individuals or groups, and in a way so that the government does not become a major absolute employer. These measures must be accomplished while considering the dominant needs of the developing national economy in all phases of growth."

"....Emphasizing increased agricultural, animal husbandry and industrial production in order to secure the country's needs and bring the nation to a self-sufficient state and rid it of dependency."

2. *Mushārahah*, means partnership in which profit and loss is shared on the basis of percentage capital of various parties in the investment. However, according to Islamic Law, there is no restriction whatsoever on any of the parties withdrawing his capital at any time.

3. *Mudārahah*, means handing over of capital to a party to work with the money in return for an agreed share in profits or losses.

4. *Ijārah bi shart al-tamlīk*, is leasing of a property to a party on the condition that it shall be sold to him after an agreed period on terms and conditions mentioned in the agreement of lease.

5. *Ju'alah*, is a contract which lays down a fixed amount of payment for services defined in the contract to whatever party that performs them.

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وَاللَّهُ
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Imam Khomeini on Higher Education

"The role of universities in every country is to shape and mould the human personality. The university can produce individuals who can either deliver an entire nation, or lead it towards destruction. (June 11, 1978)

"What we are afraid of most is the 'colonial university', which means our youth to serve Western interests. We are afraid of the type of university which turns our youth into slaves of imperialism. (April 21, 1978)

"The university must not be a mere technical school, but a place where the youth are trained to be leaders of the nation, and to serve the interests of the country. (May 11, 1978)

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