

AL-TAWHĪD

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IN THIS ISSUE

Philosophy of Science:
A Qur'ānic Perspective
Dr. Mahdī Gulshani

Sabzawāri's Analysis of Being
Dr. Wahīd Akhtar

Mullā Ṣadrā's Conception of Motion
Dr. Mahdī Dehbāshī

Sociology of the Qur'ān: Part 3
Martyr Murtaḍā Muṭahhari

Invisible Walls—A Play
Muḥsin Makhmalbāf

Reviews

Vol. II, No. 1, Muḥarram 1405

(October 1984)

مِنْ مَضِيَّةِ الْعَقِيدَةِ زَيْنَبِ سَلَامٍ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا

وَيْدِكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكُوفَةِ، أَتَذُرُونَ أَيَّ
كَيْدٍ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ فَرَيْتُمْ وَآيٍ كَرِيمَةٍ لَهُ
ابْرَزْتُمْ، وَآيٍ دَمٍ لَهُ سَفَكْتُمْ، وَآيٍ حُرْمَةٍ
لَهُ أَنْتَهَكْتُمْ، لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِذَا
تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ
الْأَرْضُ وَتَخْرُ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا .

Woe to you, O people of Kūfah! Do you realize what heart of the Prophet of God (S) you have cut into pieces!? What dignified ladies of his household you have unveiled! What sacred blood of his you have shed! What sanctities of him you have violated! You have indeed advanced something hideous! The heavens are well-nigh torn because of it and the earth split asunder, and the mountains well-nigh fall down crashing!....

From Al-Sayyidah Zaynab's (A) address to the people of Kūfa.

Al-Tawhīd

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CONTENTS

Editorial	page	5
Philosophy of Science. A Qur'ānic Perspective <i>Dr. Maḥdī Gulshani</i>		13
Sabzawāri's Analysis of Being <i>Dr. Waḥīd Akhtar</i>		29
Mullā Ṣadrā's Conception of Motion <i>Dr. Maḥdī Dehbāshī</i>		68
Sociology of the Qur'ān: Part 3 The Islamic View of History <i>Martyr Murtadā Muṭahhari</i>		79
Invisible Walls—A Play <i>Muḥsin Makhmalbāf</i>		134
Reviews		
<i>Muslim Education Quarterly</i>		155
<i>Hamdard Islamicus</i>		159
<i>The Muslim World Book Review</i>		162
<i>Islamic Studies</i>		163
—by Dr. Waḥīd Akhtar		

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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 months of Muḥarram and Ṣafar offer the yearly opportunity to commemorate the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (A), the grandson of the Prophet (S) and the third Imam of the Shī'ite Muslims, at Karbalā' on the tenth of Muḥarram in the year 61. The tragedy and heroism of the event, the resistance and self-sacrifice of the martyrs, are remembered during these days by the Shī'ah and the Ahl al-Sunnah alike, and by the Shī'ah with a special ardour, fervour and enthusiasm. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the ardour and enthusiasm inspired by the martyrs of Karbalā' is something unsurpassed in the history of religions. No individual or group in the history of the world has attracted such sustained admiration and love in the hearts of their followers as the martyrs of Karbalā' and in particular the figure of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (A), an admiration which has not dwindled in the course of more than thirteen and a half centuries that have elapsed since that event.

Mourning ceremonies are held by Muslims throughout Muḥarram and Ṣafar, and in gatherings which are called '*majālis*' (sing. *majlis*) elegies are recited and sermons are delivered from the *minbar*, the Islamic pulpit, in which the sufferings undergone by al-Imām al-Ḥusayn, the members of his household and his companions are narrated. For the Shī'ah sect, the *majlis* and the sermons delivered therein are the primary source of religious education for the children, the illiterate and even educated adults. However, with the general decline and deterioration in the Muslim Ummah, of which the Shī'ah community is a part, the great educative potential of the *majlis* has slowly eroded, to the extent that not only the great educative purpose that lies behind mourning for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn has been forgotten, the *majlis* has become a platform for intensification of sectarian animosities and propagation of misconceived beliefs that conflict with the spirit of the Islamic faith. With the general decline of the Islamic culture there has been a parallel deterioration in the educative level of the sermons that are delivered from the *minbar*. The spreading ignorance and inertia of the *majlis* audience has laid diminishing demands on the learning and capacity of the religious speaker, called '*dhākir*' in India and Pakistan and *rawḍeh khān* in Iran and Iraq. The lamentable ignorance of the masses and the deplorable negligence or absence of the sense of duty on the part of many *dhākirs* have converted most *majālis* into mere sources of nourishment of sectarian conceits and delusions. Shī'ism, which implies a voluntary and aware choice to shoulder greater responsibility as

member of the Ummah and devoted obedience to the *wājib al-ʿitāʿah* (i.e. those whose obedience is obligatory) Imams of the Household of the Prophet (A), its meaning has gradually degenerated into a mere emotional attachment for the Ahl al-Bayt (A), devoid of any sense of ethical or social responsibility for the present-day condition of Islam and Muslims. We, the self-declared Shiʿah of al-Husayn ibn ʿAlī (A), should pause and meditate at the answer given by him to a man who proclaimed to the Imam, “O son of the Prophet, I am one of your Shiʿah.” Al-Husayn ibn ʿAlī (A) said to him:

إِتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تَدْعِ عَيْنَ شَيْءٍ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لَكَ كَذَبْتَ وَفَجَرْتَ فِي دَعْوَاكَ إِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِنَا مَنْ سَلِمَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ غَشٍّ وَغِلٍّ وَدَغَلٍ، وَلَكِنْ قُلْنَا أَنَا مِنْ مَوَالِيكُمْ وَمُحِبِّكُمْ.

Fear God, and do not make such a claim that God, the Almighty, should say to you, “You lied insolently by making this claim.” Indeed our Shiʿah is one whose heart is free from every kind of deception, adulteration, hatred, malice, and corruption. If you are not such then say, “I am one of your admirers and supporters.”

The Qurʾān repeatedly calls its audience to meditate about its verses and to draw instruction from them.

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ...

What, do they not meditate in the Qurʾān?.... (4:82)

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا *

What, do they not meditate in the Qurʾān? Or is it that there are locks upon their hearts? (47:24)

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ *

A Book We have sent down to thee, blessed, that men of understanding may ponder its verses and so remember. (38:29)

Whereas the Holy Book calls the believers to emulate the Prophet (S) as the sublimest model of humanhood,

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْأَخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا *

You have a good example in God's Messenger for whosoever hopes for God and the Last Day, and remembers God oft. (33:21)

the *dhākir* struggles to project the Prophet (S) and the Imams (A) as supernatural beings to be admired and extolled, not to be imitated and obeyed. He strives to drive home the point that the Qur'ān is understandable only for God or the Holy Prophet (S) or the Imams (A), a book of sacred and abstruse meanings opaque to human understanding, a book so holy that it is impertinent even to try to understand it.

The Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* lay great emphasis on the duty of *al-'amr bil ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, and it is recognized as one of the most important duties of Muslims in general and the 'ulamā' in particular.

Unfortunately this duty is discreetly shunned by the *dhākir* who is averse to disturb the complacency of his audience and to venture to guide them at the cost of his own popularity. The strategy of connivance, though full of perils in the Hereafter, yields immediate returns. The strategy of reducing (seemingly, elevating) the *wājib al-īṭā'ah* Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (A), obedience to whom is obligatory, into holy inimitable metaphysical figure-heads to be admired and implored in supplications for worldly benefits, may serve to attract applauding crowds but does no service to the religion of God and does no justice to the great teachers of mankind, which the Ahl al-Bayt (A) in fact were. In some cases the attitude goes further than mere connivance, where the *dhākir* tries to soothe and appease bad religious conscience by proving on his own authority that absence of obedience to the commands of the religion of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) will not hurt the believer as long as he remains their passionate admirer, as if such a thing were possible. When such disastrous attitudes are consciously cultivated among the people, when the mourning assemblies—which were originally instituted to propagate the message of al-Imām al-Ḥusayn—are held without paying any attention to *al-'amr bil ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* and to the sublime goals of al-Imām al-Ḥusayn and the sacred purposes behind his resistance against the regime of Yazīd, it is not strange that those goals should gradually lose their relevance in the Muslim society, and the *aḥkām* should become unimportant for the Muslim masses.

The following sermon of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (A) delivered during Mu'āwiyah's reign at the time of Ḥajj in a gathering of eminent personalities of the period, not only shows the kind of issues that should be discussed during Ḥajj, but also is a good guideline for sermons which are delivered in *majālis* during Muḥarram and Ṣafar:

إِعْتَبِرُوا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، بِمَا وَعَظَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ مِنْ سُوءِ تَنَائِهِ عَلَى الْأَخْبَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لَوْلَا

بِنَهَاهُمْ الرِّبَانِيُونَ وَالْأَخْبَارُ عَنْ قَوْلِهِمْ الْآتُمْ، وَقَالَ لِعِنَ الدِّينِ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَى قَوْلِهِ لِبَيْسٍ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ، وَإِنَّمَا عَابَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ، لِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَرَوْنَ مِنَ الظُّلْمَةِ الدِّينَ بَيْنَ أَظْهَرِهِمُ الْمُنْكَرَ وَالْفَسَادَ فَلَا يَنْهَوْنَهُمْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ رَغْبَةً فِيمَا كَانُوا يَنَالُونَ مِنْهُمْ وَرَهْبَةً مِمَّا يَحْدُرُونَ وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَاخْشَوْنِي. وَقَالَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ، يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ فَبَدَأَ اللَّهُ بِالْأَمْرِ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ فَرِيضَةً مِنْهُ لِعَلِمِهِ بِأَنَّهَا إِذَا أُدِّيتْ وَأُقِيمَتْ، اسْتَقَامَتِ الْفَرَائِضُ كُلُّهَا هَيْئَتُهَا وَصَغَبُهَا وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْأَمْرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ دُعَاءٌ إِلَى الْأَسْلَامِ مَعَ رَدِّ الْمَظَالِمِ وَمُخَالَفَةِ الظَّالِمِ وَقِسْمَةِ الْفِيءِ وَالْغَنَائِمِ وَأَخَذِ الصَّدَقَاتِ مِنْ مَوَاضِعِهَا، وَوَضْعِهَا فِي حَقِّهَا، ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ أَيُّهَا الْعِصَابَةُ: عِصَابَةُ بِالْعِلْمِ مَشْهُورَةٌ، وَبِالْخَيْرِ مَذْكُورَةٌ، وَبِالنَّصِيحَةِ مَعْرُوفَةٌ، وَبِاللَّهِ فِي أَنْفُسِ النَّاسِ مُهَابَةٌ، يَهَابُكُمْ الشَّرِيفُ، وَيَكْرَهُكُمْ الضَّعِيفُ وَيُؤْتِرُكُمْ مَنْ لَأْفَضَلَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَدَّ لَكُمْ عِنْدَهُ، تَشْفَعُونَ فِي الْحَوَائِجِ، إِذَا امْتَنَعَتْ مِنْ طُلَابِهَا، وَتَمْشُونَ فِي الطَّرِيقِ بِهَيْبَةِ الْمُلُوكِ وَكِرَامَةِ الْأَكْبَارِ، أَلَيْسَ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا نِلْتُمُوهُ بِمَا يُرْجَى عِنْدَكُمْ مِنَ الْقِيَامِ بِحَقِّ اللَّهِ؟ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَنْ أَكْثَرِ حَقِّهِ تَقْصِرُونَ فَاسْتَخَفَّتُمْ بِحَقِّ الْأَيْمَةِ، فَأَمَّا حَقُّ الضَّعْفَاءِ فَضَيَّفْتُمْ، وَأَمَّا حَقُّكُمْ بِرَعْمِكُمْ فَطَلَبْتُمْ فَلَا مَالَ بَدَلْتُمُوهُ، وَلَا نَفْسًا خَاطَرْتُمْ بِهَا لِلَّذِي خَلَقَهَا وَلَا عَشِيرَةً عَادَ يُتَمُّوهُا فِي ذَاتِ اللَّهِ، أَنْتُمْ تَتَمَنُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ جَنَّتَهُ وَمَجَاوِرَةً رُسُلِهِ، وَأَمَانًا مِنْ عَذَابِهِ؟ لَقَدْ خَشِيتُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُتَمَنُّونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ تَحِلَّ بِكُمْ نِقْمَةٌ مِنْ نِقْمَاتِهِ، لِأَنَّكُمْ بَلَّغْتُمْ مِنْ كِرَامَةِ اللَّهِ مَنْزِلَةً فَضَلَّيْتُمْ بِهَا وَمَنْ يُعْرِفُ بِاللَّهِ لَا تُكْرَهُونَ، وَأَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ فِي عِبَادِهِ تُكْرَهُونَ، وَقَدْ تَرَوْنَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مَنْقُوضَةً فَلَا تُفْرَعُونَ، وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَعْضِ ذِمِّ آبَائِكُمْ تَفْرَعُونَ، وَذِمَّةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ص) مَحْفُورَةٌ وَالْعُمِّيُّ وَالْبُكْمُ وَالرُّمْنُ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ مُهْمَلَةٌ لَا تَرْحَمُونَ وَلَا فِي مَنْزِلَتِكُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ وَلَا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فِيهَا تَعْنُونَ وَبِالْأَذْهَانِ وَالْمُصَانَعَةِ عِنْدَ الظُّلْمَةِ تَأْمَنُونَ، كُلُّ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ مِنَ النَّهْيِ وَالنَّهْيِ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ، وَأَنْتُمْ أَعْظَمُ النَّاسِ مُصِيبَةً لِمَا غَلَبْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ مَنَازِلِ الْعُلَمَاءِ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَشْعُرُونَ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ مَجَارِي الْأُمُورِ وَالْأَحْكَامِ عَلَى أَيْدِي الْعُلَمَاءِ بِاللَّهِ الْأَمْنَاءِ عَلَى حَلَالِهِ وَحَرَامِهِ، فَأَنْتُمْ الْمَسْلُوبُونَ تِلْكَ الْمَنْزِلَةَ وَمَا سَلَبْتُمْ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِتَفْرِيقِكُمْ عَنِ الْحَقِّ، وَآخْتِلَافِكُمْ فِي السُّنَّةِ بَعْدَ الْبَيِّنَةِ الْوَاضِحَةِ، وَلَوْ صَبَرْتُمْ عَلَى الْأَذَى وَتَحَمَّلْتُمْ الْمَوُونَةَ فِي ذَاتِ اللَّهِ، كَانَتْ أُمُورُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ تَرْدٌ وَعَنْكُمْ تَصْدُرٌ وَإِلَيْكُمْ تَرْجِعُ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ مَكَّنْتُمْ الظُّلْمَةَ مِنْ مَنْزِلَتِكُمْ وَاسْتَسَلَمْتُمْ أُمُورَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ يَفْعَلُونَ بِالشُّبُهَاتِ، وَتَسِيرُونَ فِي الشَّهَوَاتِ سَلَطْتُمْ عَلَى ذَلِكَ فَرَارُكُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ، وَإِعْجَابُكُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الَّتِي هِيَ مُفَارِقَتُكُمْ

فَأَسْلَمْتُمْ الضُّعَفَاءَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمِنْ بَيْنِ مُسْتَعْبِدٍ مَقْهُورٍ وَبَيْنِ مُسْتَضْعَفٍ عَلَى مَعِيشَتِهِ
 مَغْلُوبٍ، يَتَّقَلَّبُونَ فِي الْمَلِكِ بَارَائِهِمْ، وَيَسْتَشْعِرُونَ الْخِزْيَ بِأَهْوَائِهِمْ، إِفْتِدَاءً بِالْأَشْرَارِ
 وَجَزَاءً عَلَى الْجَبَّارِ، فِي كُلِّ بَلَدٍ مِنْهُمْ عَلَى مِنْبَرِهِ خَطِيبٌ يَضَقُّعُ، فَلَا رِضٌ لَهُمْ شَاغِرَةٌ
 وَأَيْدِيهِمْ فِيهَا مَبْسُوطَةٌ، وَالنَّاسُ لَهُمْ حَوْلٌ، لَا يَدُ فَعُونَ يَدَ لَا مِسَ فَمِنْ بَيْنِ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ، وَذِي
 سَطْوَةٍ عَلَى الضُّعْفَةِ شَدِيدٍ، مُطَاعٌ لَا يَعْرِفُ الْمُبْدِيَءَ الْمُعِيدَ، فَيَأْجَبُ وَمَالِي لَا أَعْجَبُ،
 وَالْأَرْضُ مِنْ غَاشٍ غَشُومٍ وَمُتَّصِدِّقٍ ظَلُومٍ وَعَامِلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِهِمْ غَيْرِ رَحِيمٍ، فَاللَّهُ
 الْحَاكِمُ فِيمَا فِيهِ تَنَازَعْنَا، وَالْقَاضِي بِحُكْمِهِ فِيمَا شَجَرْتَيْنَا، اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ
 مَا كَانَ مِتًا تَنَافُسًا فِي سُلْطَانٍ وَلَا آلتِمَاسًا مِنْ فُضُولِ الْحُطَامِ، وَلَكِنْ لِثَرِي الْمَعَالِمِ مِنْ دِينِكَ
 وَنُظْهِرَ الْأَضْلَاحَ فِي بِلَادِكَ وَيَأْمَنَ الْمَظْلُومُونَ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ وَيُعْمَلَ بِفَرَائِضِكَ وَسُنَنِكَ
 وَأَحْكَامِكَ، فَإِنَّكُمْ إِلَّا تَنْصُرُونَا وَتُنْصِفُونَا قَوِي الظَّلْمَةِ عَلَيْكُمْ، وَعَمِلُوا فِي إِظْفَاءِ نُورِ
 نَبِيِّكُمْ، وَحَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْهِ أَنبْنَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ.

O people! Take a lesson from God's warning to His friends through His censure on the rabbis, when He says:

Why do the bishops and rabbis not forbid them to utter sin, [and consume the unlawful? Evil is the thing they are doing.] (5:63)

And when He says:

Cursed were the unbelievers of the Children of Israel by the tongue of David, and of Jesus, Mary's son; that for their rebelling and their transgression. They forbade not one another any dishonour that they committed; surely evil were the things that they did. (5:78-79)

God has reproved them because they beheld the open vices and corruption of the oppressors, but did not forbid them from that on account of attachment to their favours and fear of what perilled them. Whereas God says:

...So fear not men, but fear me.... (5:44)

And He says:

And the believers, the men and the women, are friends of one another; they bid to honour and forbid dishonour (i.e. perform the duty of al-'amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar), they perform the prayer, and pay the alms, and they obey God and His Messenger. They—upon them God shall have mercy; God is Almighty, All-wise. (9:71)

God mentions the duty of al-'amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar before all other duties, because He knows that if it is performed and

established in the society all other duties, the easy and the difficult, are also established. That is why *al-'amr bil ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* signifies invitation to Islam together with resistance against injustice, opposition to the oppressor, [proper] division of the public funds and booty, collection of alms and their correct distribution.

Then you, O company of men well-known for your learning! You, who have a good name and are known [among the people] for your goodwill. God has given you honour with the people. The illustrious venerate you and the weak respect you. You are preferred by him over whom you have no merit and over whom you have no power. The deprived seek your intercession in need, and you walk on the road with the majesty of kings and princes. Is it not that you have such honour and dignity because people place their hopes in you to stand for the establishment of Divine duties? If you fail to discharge most of those duties, then you have scorned the duties of leaders. You have forfeited the rights of the weak, though you have obtained your own claims. Neither you had to sacrifice your wealth nor endanger your lives for the sake of Him Who created you. Nevertheless, you desire that God should put you in the Paradise in the neighbourhood of His apostles, and you hope to be safe from His chastisement. Indeed I am afraid that you who harbour such hopes from God shall have to taste His vengeance. Because God had honoured you and raised you in station above others, for there are many servants of God who are not held in such high esteem as God has granted you among the people. God's covenants are broken before your very eyes, yet you are not dismayed, although you are alarmed if some of your ancestral compacts are endangered; as if the compact of the Messenger of Allah (S) were some insignificant and paltry thing! The blind, the dumb and the handicapped in towns are without protection and mercy, but you neither act as demanded by your high station nor care and have regard for one who attends to them. You have made your own life safe and secure by getting along with the oppressors and showing lenience and connivance in regard to their injustices, which God had commanded you to oppose and forbid. Indeed if you understand, the calamity that has befallen you is greater than the one which afflicts the people; because you have failed to safeguard the responsibility of the learned. Since the implementation of the laws and running of the affairs lie with the men of Divine knowledge, who are custodians of His [laws regarding the] *ḥarām* and *ḥalāl*. But you have been wrested of this status. And it was not taken away from you except for your departure from righteousness, and on account of your disagreement regarding the *Sunnah*, after that it had been made clear and evident to you.

Had you the endurance to put up with adversities and hardships for the sake of God, the affairs of God would have returned into your hands and your lost authority would have turned to you again. But you allowed the oppressors to take your place and handed over the affairs of God into their hands, that they may act dubiously and indulge in their lusts. They got their authority because of your running away from death [which is inevitable] and due to your love of life, which shall [anyhow] depart from you. In this fashion, you submitted the weak into their hands, to be enslaved and exploited, permitting them to run the affairs of the country according to their whims, and to make ignominy their way of life through their [unchecked] desires, following the perverse and disobeying the Almighty. They have appointed a loud-voiced orator for every pulpit in every town, and the country lies open and unprotected at their mercy. Their hands are free to do whatever they like, and the defenceless people are at the disposal of their

mercy. Among them are merciless tyrants who oppress the weak, and men of authority who know neither the creation nor the Day of Resurrection. It is surprising—and why shouldn't I be surprised—when the country is in the hands of a faithless tyrant and the ruler of the believers is one who has no mercy for them. Indeed God is a judge between us in our disputes and contentions.

My God, You Know that whatever I have said is not for the sake of rivalry for power, nor for the sake of futile vanities of the world, but because we desire establishment of the landmarks of Thy religion, reform in Thy lands, security of Thy oppressed creatures, and the practice of Thy commands and the duties laid down by Thee.

And you, [O company of the elect of the Ummah], assist us and do us due justice. The oppressors have power over you and they act to extinguish the light of your Prophet (S).

And God suffices us, and in Him we put our trust. Towards Him do we turn, and towards Him all things shall return.

The present situation in the Muslim world is no better than the conditions that prevailed during the later decades of the life of al-Husayn ibn 'Alī (A). All waymarks of the Islamic culture have been washed away in the deluge of modern paganism. The greater part of the Muslim world is under direct or indirect domination of non-Muslims. The sad signs described in a prediction of al-Imām 'Alī (A) have already come true:

يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يَبْقَى فِيهِمْ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَّا رَسْمُهُ وَمِنَ الْأَسْلَامِ إِلَّا أَسْمُهُ،
وَمَسَاجِدُهُمْ يَوْمئِذٍ عَامِرَةٌ مِنَ الْبِنَاءِ خَرَابٌ مِنَ الْهُدَى، سُكَّانُهَا وَعُمَارُهَا شَرُّ أَهْلِ
الْأَرْضِ. مِنْهُمْ تَخْرُجُ الْفِتْنَةُ وَإِلَيْهِمْ تَأْوِي الْخَطِيئَةُ يَرُدُّونَ مَنْ شَدَّ عَنْهَا فِيهَا، وَ
يَسُوقُونَ مَنْ تَأَخَّرَ عَنْهَا إِلَيْهَا...

A time will come when nothing will remain of the Qur'ān except its script, and nothing of Islam except its name. The mosques in those days will be flourishing with regard to architecture, but desolate with regard to guidance. Those staying in them and those visiting them will be the worst of all on the earth. From them mischief will spring up and towards them all wrong will turn. If anyone isolates himself from it (mischief) they will fling him back towards it, and if anyone hesitates, they will push him towards it....

In such conditions how can any discourse about the great struggle of al-Husayn ibn 'Alī (A) be unaccompanied with a discussion of the lamentable condition of the Muslim Ummah? Is it not the height of callousness and even hypocrisy to pass by in silence the aims and ideals for which he took a stand against the regime of Yazīd and sacrificed everything? Is it not the very extreme of injustice to deprive the Muslim children and adults of the great potential of the *majālis* which are held in the memory of al-Imām al-Husayn (A)? Is it right not to use the great

devotion of the Muslim masses to the Ahl al-Bayt (A) and their great enthusiasm and zeal during the months of Muḥarram and Ṣafar—a time when the hearts are softened by the stupendous tragedy of Karbalā' to receive the teachings of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives with al-Imām al-Ḥusayn—to inform and educate our children and adults about the *aḥkām* of the Shari'ah and the *akhlāq* of the Ahl al-Bayt (A)? The Shī'ites have admired 'Alī and his sons (A), their leaders and guides, for centuries, and wept over accounts of their sufferings. Is it not time that we should start following them in deed, in all walks of our life? After all they are our Imams, our leaders and our teachers, who underwent those sufferings and hardships in order to instruct us and guide us on the Straight Path of Allah? Should we not question our sincerity if we persist in our refusal to be benefited by their efforts to improve our lot, to purify our souls and to guide our intellects?

The *majlis* should inform and instruct. It should inspire and enlighten. Like al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (A), his *dhākir*, who occupies the *minbar* of the Ahl al-Bayt (A), should aim at resurrecting the spirit of Islam and the message of the Qur'ān. The *majlis* should instruct the people in the *uṣūl* and the *aḥkām* of the Shari'ah and the *akhlāq* of the Imams (A). If the *majālis* of al-Imām al-Ḥusayn (A) do not help our youths and adults to understand Islam profoundly, who else can stop them from falling into the clutches of deviate philosophical schools and from being swept away by the tide of the pagan Western culture? Would it not be more beneficial to discuss the great merits of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) as ideal human beings and ideal teachers of mankind, instead of discussing them as metaphysical entities to be revered but not to be obeyed, to be glorified but not to be emulated, to be invoked for assistance in worldly needs and affairs and to be ignored in vital matters of our duties, obligations, and responsibilities as Muslims?

Only when our *majālis* become classes for dissemination of the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) which lie buried in *ḥadīth* texts, only when our *majālis* become platforms of Muslim unity instead of being instruments of division and disunity, only when our *majālis* and *manābir* become the seats of the duty of *al-'amr bil ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, only when the Qur'ān is made again the book of our life and the light of our *majālis*, only then can it be said that our *majālis* and *manābir* are doing justice to al-Imām al-Ḥusayn (A) and to the people whom the *majālis* were originally instituted to nourish spiritually, morally, and intellectually.

Tehran

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Philosophy of Science: A Qur'ānic Perspective

by Dr. Mahdī Gulshani*

By 'science' here we mean that branch of knowledge which deals with the material world. The philosophy of science deals with all philosophical problems that arise in connection with science. Among its most important problems are:

- (i) How does our knowledge of the physical world expand?
- (ii) What are the principles underlying scientific research? Here we intend to discuss these two problems from the Quranic point of view.

1. The Quran's Epistemological Viewpoint:

From the Quranic point of view, there is a real world independent of our mind:

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ * وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ *

And in the earth there are signs for men of conviction, and in your own souls [too]; will you not then see? (51:20-21)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ...

All praise is due to Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light.... (6:1)

أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ...

Do they not consider the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and whatever things Allah has created.... (7:185)

And we are ordered to study the physical world to get closer to Allah (through His signs in nature), and to utilize the provisions He has

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made for us:

قُلْ انظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ *

Say: 'Consider what it is that is in the heavens and the earth;' and the signs and the warners do not avail a people who would not believe. (10:101)

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 is firm in power and He made the sun and the moon subservient [to you]; each one pursues its course to an appointed time; He regulates the affair, making clear the signs that you may be certain of meeting your Lord. (13:2)

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ * وَمَا ذَرَأَا لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَدَّكُرُونَ * وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لَيْتًا كُلُّوَا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسَخَّرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاحِرَ فِيهِ وَلِيَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ *

And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His commandment; most surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder....And He it is Who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh meat from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships clearing through it, and that you might seek of His bounty and that you may give thanks. (16:12-14)

If the study of nature were not possible, the Quran would not recommend us to study the origin and the course of evolution of beings and phenomena. Moreover, there are verses in the Quran that explicitly show this point:

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأُفُقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ...

We will soon show them Our signs on the horizons and in their own souls, so that it will become clear unto them that this [revelation] is indeed the truth.... (41:53)

On the other hand, the Holy Quran is a book of guidance for all people and has not neglected anything relevant to the conduct of man's life:

... وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ *

...and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything, and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit [to God]. (16:89)

... مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ...

...We have not neglected anything in the Book....(6:38)

We expect that through a careful study one should be able to deduce from it the ways and tools of studying nature.

Tools for the Cognition of Nature

According to the Holy Quran, the general tools for the study of nature are our senses and our intellect:

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّن بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ...

And God has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers—you did not know anything—and He gave you the hearing and the sight and the hearts.... (16:78)

We learn through observation and experimentation backed by reflection:

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ...

Say: 'Travel on the earth and see how He made the first creation....' (29:20)

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا...

Have they not travelled in the earth so that they should have hearts with which to understand.... (22:46)

The first parts of these verses refer to observation and experimentation and the second parts to the use of the faculty of reasoning. Thus, experimental work is an indispensable tool for the understanding of nature, but, contrary to the claim of some schools of thought, not all of our information about nature comes directly from sensation. If we confine ourselves to sensation and do not use our intellect, we are no better than animals:

... لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ *

...they have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear; they are as cattle, nay, they are further astray; they are the heedless. (7:179)

Furthermore, the Quran frequently mentions that the perception of Divine signs in nature is only possible for men of intellect and reflection:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ * الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men who understand. Those who remember Allah, standing and sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.... (3:190-191)

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَخْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَضْرِبُ الرِّيحُ وَالسَّحَابُ الْمُسَخَّرَ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ *

Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the sky, then gives life with it to the earth after its death, and spreads in it all [kinds of] animals, and the changing of the winds, and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand. (2:164)

Also, the Quran teaches us that there are many realities in the physical world that we do not perceive through our senses:

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ * وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ *

But nay! I swear by that which you see and that which you do not see. (69:38-39)

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا...

He created the heavens without pillars visible to you.... (31:10)

Finally, the Holy Quran condemns those who think that our only source of information about the physical world is through sense perception:

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ
فَقَالُوا آرِنَا اللَّهُ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ...

The people of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from the heaven; so indeed they demanded of Moses a greater thing than that, for they said: 'Show us Allah manifestly;' so the lightning overtook them on account of their injustice.... (4:153)

Unfortunately, the winds of positivism, that blew in the early part of this century, have affected many Muslim scholars' minds; and there are many Muslim scientists who think that our knowledge of the physical world extends no further than mere description of sensory experiences. Concerning this line of thought, we have the following observations:

1) We never encounter nature with empty minds, and, therefore, there is no such thing as pure experimental data. Our interpretation of experimental data and even our view about the reliability of experimental data depends to some extent upon preconceptions and assumptions that are held by the investigator. Planck explains this point beautifully:

Every measurement first acquires its meaning for physical science through the significance which a theory gives it. Anybody who is familiar with a precision laboratory will agree that even the finest and most direct measurements—such as those of weight and current—have to be corrected again and again before they can be employed for any practical purpose. It is obvious that these corrections cannot be suggested by the measurement process itself. They must first be discovered through the light which some theory or other throws upon the situation; that is to say, they must arise from a hypothesis.¹

2) As Einstein has rightly pointed out², the fundamental concepts and postulates of science cannot be derived from sense experience by any process of induction. Rather they are free inventions of the human mind.

Physics constitutes a logical system of thought which is in a state of evolution, whose basis cannot be distilled, as it were, from experience by an inductive method, but can only be arrived at by free invention. The justification (truth content) of the system rests in the verification of the derived

propositions by sense experiences, whereby the relations of the latter to the former can only be comprehended intuitively. Evolution is proceeding in the direction of increasing simplicity of the logical basis. In order further to approach this goal, we must resign ourselves to the fact that the logical basis departs more and more from the facts of experience, and that the path of our thought from the fundamental basis to those derived propositions, which correlate with sense experiences, becomes continually harder and longer....

The reason for this fact is that a theory can be counted to be a direct result of an experiment, if we can show that there can be no alternative explanation for that experiment; but this we can never claim, and past experience has warned us against this type of mistake. The agreement between a theory and a set of experimental facts does not necessarily mean that it is a correct one, because, logically speaking, a conclusion can be drawn from different premises. Thus, we can never claim that a theory is a direct result of experimental data. Infinitely many theories could be set up to explain a set of experimental facts. One has to add other assumptions or bring in other information to single out one of them. When Kepler was studying the data about the relative position of Mars against the background of fixed stars, he tried to infer a "good-looking" law from the available data, but he failed. Then after working on the theory of ellipse in another context, he assumed that the orbit was an ellipse. He checked this assumption against the experimental data and found it to work well. Thus, the assumption of an elliptical orbit for Mars was not a direct result from the observed positions of Mars.

The growth of science is, therefore, due to both experimental work and theoretical speculations.

3) There are many concepts which are not derivable from sense experience. For example, the concept of causality is not derived from sensory impressions. All that we receive through our senses is that, for example, B comes regularly after A. That there is a causal relation between A and B is a judgement of our intellect. Even in the physical sciences, there are many concepts in use which are not direct by-products of observation and have been introduced by scientists to explain experimental facts. For example, we use the concept of atom to explain thousands of experimental observations, yet no one has ever observed an atom (even with sense-extending instruments). We know atom by inference. Similarly, our information about distant regions of space and time is not a direct one.

The conclusion we want to derive from this discussion is that:

—Experimentation alone, without theoretical reasoning, cannot give us significant information about nature.

—Even though observation and experimentation are a must for having a thorough picture of the physical world, not all of our knowl-

edge about nature is derived from sensory experience.

The process of getting a right picture of the physical world is a lengthy one, and can be accomplished gradually, and only through the interplay of experimental work and theoretical enterprise.

Barriers Against Correct Reasoning

As we mentioned, the Holy Quran recommends both observation of nature and also reflection on what we observe. Reflection, in turn, involves using existing information and moving towards fresh knowledge. This intellectual movement, however, can lead to a right result provided certain principles and rules are observed. Thus we come to logic, which is the study of the principles of correct reasoning. The use of logical principles alone, however, cannot guarantee correct results, unless we make sure that the premises used in the reasoning are faultless. It is for this reason that the Holy Quran has warned us about those things that can prevent our intellect from functioning properly. Here we mention the main factors which prevent a correct cognition of nature:

1. Lack of Faith

According to the Quran, knowledge without faith cannot lead one to a correct understanding of nature:

قُلْ انظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنَّذِيرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ*

Say: 'Consider what it is that is in the heavens and the earth;' and the signs and the warners do not avail a people who would not believe. (10:101)

The principal role of faith in understanding is to restore man's faculty of intellect to its proper state, freeing it from all kinds of devilish inducements and temptations.

2. Partiality in Judgement

Following one's desires, bias and prejudice induced by love or hatred, are the most important factors that prevent the faculty of intellect from impartiality and sound judgement:

... وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا

نَصِيرٍ*

... And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have no protector from Allah's [wrath] nor any helper. (2:120)

لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ *

Certainly We have brought you the truth, but most of you are averse to the truth. (43:78)

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ * وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا...

So when Our clear signs came to them, they said: this is clear enchantment. And they denied them unjustly and proudly, while their souls had been convinced of them.... (27:13-14)

3. Blind Imitation of Ancestors and Men of Authority

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبْرَاءَنَا فَاصَلُّوْنَا السَّبِيلَا *

And they shall say: 'O our Lord, surely we obeyed our leaders and our great men, so they led us astray from the path.' (33:67)

... بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا آَلَفْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوْلَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ *

... nay, we follow what we found our fathers upon. What! Though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way? (2:170)

4. Unreasonable Negations and Affirmations

One of the main sources of error in judgements is due to replacement of knowledge by conjecture:

وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا *

And they have no knowledge of it; they do not follow anything but conjecture, and surely conjecture does not avail against the truth at all. (53:28)

An important principle in scientific research is that one should not confirm or reject anything without a reason:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنْ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا *

And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing

and the sight and the heart—all of these, shall be questioned. (17:36)

A Priori Principles of Scientific Research

We mentioned that scientific research is a combination of experimental work and intellectual activity. Now, in order to make this endeavour meaningful and to guarantee the attainment of correct result, one has to assume certain principles prior to any kind of scientific activity. There have been various views about the number and the interpretation of these principles. Using the Holy Quran as our guide, we think that, in addition to the basic principles of logic (e.g. the Law of Contradiction), the following are the principles that one has to assume prior to any kind of scientific activity.

1. The Principle of Monotheism (*al-Tawhīd*)

From the Quranic viewpoint the study of nature should not be for the sake of satisfying one's own curiosity, rather it should be for the cognition of the wisdom of the Creator and Governor of the universe. All natural phenomena are signs of the Almighty and any study of them should lead us to Him. Furthermore, there are many references in the Holy Quran to the presence of order, harmony, and purpose in the physical world:

... وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا *

...And Who created everything, then ordained for it a measure. (25:2)

... مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَاوُتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ *

...You see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent; then look again; can you see any cleavage? (67:3)

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ *

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know. (44:38-39)

This cosmic order and coordination is attributed to the One Creator and Coordinator of the universe:

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا...

If there had been in them (i.e. in the heavens and the earth) any gods except Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder.... (21:22)

... صُنِعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي اتَّقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ... ..

...the handiwork of Allah Who has made everything with thorough care.... (27:88)

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

Do they not then meditate on the Quran? And if it were from any other than Allah, they would have found in it many an inconsistency. (4:82)

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابِ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ... ..

It is He Who made the sun a radiance, and the moon a light, and ordained for it [various] phases, that you might know the number of the years and the reckoning. Allah did not create that save with the truth.... (10:5)

A firm belief in the principle of monotheism makes the researcher cast a comprehensive look on nature rather than see the isolated pieces, and enables him to explain the harmony and order present in the physical world. On the other hand, without a firm belief in the presence of order and coordination in nature, scientific research would not have any universal significance, and, at the most; will have a temporary value.

There are some scientists who believe in the presence of order and coordination in nature without believing in or paying attention to the principle of monotheism; but, in our view, without belief in *al-tawhīd*, there is no satisfactory explanation for cosmic order.

2. The Reality of the External World

As we mentioned earlier, from the Quranic standpoint there is a real external world independent of the perceiving subject:

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ... ..

And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers— you did not know anything—and He gave you the hearing and the sight and the hearts.... (16:78)

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ * ... وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ
الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ *

He Who made the earth a resting place for you, and made in it ways for you that you may go aright...and He Who created pairs of all things, and made for you of the ships and the cattle, what you ride on. (43:10,12)

The belief in an objective world is the basis of all physical and natural sciences, and without it any scientific endeavour would be only a play or idle sport. This belief has always been one of the strongest motivations for scientists' activities. Planck expresses this point beautifully:

The choicest and most original minds, men like Kepler, Newton, Leibniz, and Faraday, were inspired by the belief in the reality of the external world and in the rule of a higher reason in and beyond it.

3. Limits of Human Knowledge:

We learn from the Quran that:

(a) human knowledge is limited:

... وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا *

...And you are not given aught of knowledge but little. (17:85)

(b) there are many things that our sensory organs do not perceive:

فَلَا أُفْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ * وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ *

But nay! I swear by what you see and what you do not see. (69:38-39)

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا...

Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars visible to you.... (13:2)

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ *

Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind, and of what they do not know. (36:36)

And that we should believe in the Unseen, that is, in the super-

natural world:

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ * الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ *

This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard [against evil], those who believe in the Unseen, keep up prayer, and spend out what We have given them. (2:2-3)

The faith in the limitation of human knowledge and the Unseen is an incentive for us: (a) Not to stop our mind at the sensory stage, and (b) never to think that we have discovered everything.

The Principle of Causality:

This principle states that every event has a cause. This principle has two important corollaries:

(a) *The principle of determinism*: Any cause has an effect, and without a cause it is impossible to have an effect.

(b) *The principle of uniformity of nature*: Similar causes entail similar effects.

It has been a long-time assumption of many scientists of all times that there are certain laws governing our physical universe. The principle of causality is the postulate that gives meaning to the application of any law used to explain natural phenomena. In the Holy Quran, we find reference to this principle in several contexts:

(i) There are several verses which talk about the unchangeable *sunnah* of Allah operating in the universe:

... فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا سُنَّتَ الْأَوَّلِينَ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا *

... Then should they wait for aught except the way of former people? For you shall not find any alteration in the sunnah of Allah. (35:43)

... فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ...

... The nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation.... (30:30)

(ii) There are many verses that talk about the fixed mechanism for the occurrence of certain events:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ *

And certainly We created man of an extract of clay. (23:12)

... وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ ..

.... *And (Who) sends down rain from the sky then brings forth with it subsistence for you.... (2:22)*

(iii) Some of the Quranic verses explain the intermediary role of some events in the appearance of some others:

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ * تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ *

And sent down upon them birds in flocks, casting on them stones of baked clay. (105:3-4)

فَاتْلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ ...

Fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands (9:14)

On the other hand, there are some verses in the Qur'an that attribute the creation and direction of the world to Allah:

... قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ...

...*Say: Allah is the Creator of all things.... (13:16)*

... أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ...

...*Surely His is the creation and the command.... (7:54)*

Putting these two sets of verses together, one can conclude that everything is realized by Allah's will, but through a special channel. Verses of the following type confirm this interpretation:

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا ...

And as for the good land, its vegetation springs forth (abundantly) by the permission of its Lord; and [as for] that which is inferior [its herbage] comes forth but scantily.... (7:58)

This verse indicates that although Allah's will is necessary for the

growth of plants, the fertility of the land is in view too. Not every sort of plant can be raised in every sort of land.

Some well-known Muslim theologians [like al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī] of Ash'arite school rejected the necessary causal relation (determinism) in the physical world and said that physical means have no role in the realization of the natural phenomena. The cause of any occurrence is Allah's will, except that it is Allah's habit to create what we call "effect" after what we call "cause," without any relation between them that necessitates the "effect" to follow the "cause". If Allah does not want, the so-called "effect" will not follow the so-called "cause."

The reason why these theologians denied determinism is that they thought the assumption of the necessary causal relation would:

- (i) Negate Allah's unlimited power
- (ii) Leave no room for miracles.

This conclusion, however, is not right, because what is commonly called a cause is simply an intermediary or preparing cause, rather than the efficient cause. The role of intermediary means is to prepare the ground for the creation of everything, but He creates everything through definite intermediary, and preparing causes, and these are themselves created by Allah. The need for the presence of intermediaries is not due to any deficiency in the Creator, but is related to deficiencies in the receivers of Divine effusion.⁷

After the appearance of quantum theory in physics and the principle of uncertainty by W. Heisenberg in the early years of the second quarter of the present century, some of the founders of this theory denied the principle of causality and the principle of uniformity of nature in the atomic realm. In their view all laws of microphysics have a statistical status, referring to averages drawn from numerous similar observations, and admitting exceptions for single observations.

Most of the physicists, with the exception of some prominent ones like Planck and Einstein, accepted the new theory and its orthodox interpretation, the situation which is still going on, although the lapse of time has increased the number of opponents.

Einstein and Planck and other prominent physicists could not accept that laws of probability govern the universe. For them, the events in nature should ultimately be explained in terms of absolute laws, and a deterministic foundation should underlie the apparent statistical behaviour. One uses the laws of probability either because the underlying laws are not precisely known or because of the difficulties in handling large numbers.

In this regard, Einstein has the following comment:⁸

I cannot but confess that I attach only a transitory importance to this inter-

pretation. I still believe in the possibility of a model of reality, that is to say of a theory which represents things themselves and not merely the probability of their occurrence.

And in his letter to Born in December 1926, Einstein wrote:⁹

Quantum mechanics is certainly imposing. But an inner voice tells me that it is not yet the real thing. The theory says a lot, but does not really bring us any closer to the secret of the 'old one.' I, at any rate, am convinced that He is not playing dice.

Unfortunately, in recent years we can come across some Muslim scholars who have revived the forsaken theory of Ash'arites, citing quantum mechanics as a proof of their claims. We refute this kind of outlook on the following grounds:

(i) If we deny the validity of the principle of causality in the atomic and subatomic world, this would mean negating this principle in relation to the whole world, because causality relates different parts of the world together.

(ii) Should the principle of causality turn out to be untrue, there would be no relationship between the premises of an argument and its conclusion, because the premises are the cause of one's accepting the conclusion. Without the principle of causality, nothing could be the conclusion of an argument, and from any set of premises one can derive any conclusion, and there would be no difference between proving something and not proving it.

It is for this reason¹⁰ that even those who refute the principle of causality, implicitly use this principle, because if they did not believe that their argument would cause a change in others' beliefs they would not attempt to argue.

(iii) As Martyr Murtadā Muṭahhari¹¹ and Martyr Āyatullāh al-Ṣadr¹² have pointed out, the impossibility of prediction in the atomic domain is not due to lack of determinism, but is a result of our ignorance about the deterministic laws governing atomic phenomena, and this could be either because our present experimental and theoretical knowledge is incomplete, or is due to the fact that we cannot precisely measure the effect of the observer on his measurements. Anyhow, one should be aware that our failure to discover determinism in the atomic domain does not imply that the necessary causal relation does not hold, and we do not have any right to claim that we have discovered all parameters relevant to this domain.

At this point it seems appropriate to quote what Dirac wrote in 1979:¹³

It seems clear that the present quantum mechanics is not in its final form. Some further changes will be needed, just about as drastic as the changes

which one made in passing from Bohr's orbits to a quantum mechanics. Some day a new relativistic quantum mechanics will be discovered in which we don't have these infinities occurring at all. It might very well be that the new quantum mechanics will have determinism in the way that Einstein wanted. This determinism will be introduced only at the expense of abandoning some other preconceptions which physicists now hold, and which it is not sensible to try to get at now.

So under the conditions I think it is very likely, or at any rate quite possible, that in the long run Einstein will turn out to be correct, even though for the time being physicists have to accept the Bohr probability interpretation—especially if they have examinations in front of them.”

In short, the negation of causality means that nothing could be a requisite for another, and anything could be derived from anything, so there would be no room for science. Science qua science has to accept the principle of causality with all its corollaries.

NOTES

1. Max Planck, *The New Science*, Greenwich Editions (1959), p. 51.
2. Einstein, *A Centenary Volume*, edited by A.P. French, Heinemann (1979), p. 312.
3. *Ideas and Opinions by Albert Einstein*, Trans. Sonja Bargman, New York, Crown Publishers (1954), pp. 322-23.
4. Max Planck, *The New Science*, Greenwich Editions (1959), p. 250.
5. Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*, Cairo. ed. (1972) pp. 239-240.
6. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 2, pp. 110-111; vol. 14, pp. 193-195; vol. 30, p. 53.
7. Sadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-'Asfār*, vol. 6, p. 371.
8. *Ideas and Opinions by Albert Einstein*, Trans. Sonja Bargmann New York, Crown Publications (1954), p. 276.
9. Einstein, *A Centenary Volume*, edited by A.P. French, Heinemann (1979), p. 310.
10. Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* (The Incoherence of the Incoherence), Trans. by S. Van den Bergh, London, Luzac and Co. (1954), pp. 316-319.
11. M.H. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Uṣūl-e falsafah wa rawish-e riyālism*, vol. 3, p. 217 (Muṭahhari's footnote).
12. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, *Falsafatunā*, Dār al-Ta'āruf (Beirut, 1980), pp. 305-309.
13. *Some Strangeness in the Proportion*, edited by Woolf, Addison-Wesley Co., p. 65.

Sabzawāri's Analysis of Being

by Dr. Wahīd Akhtar

Introduction:

Sometimes certain false notions are uncritically accepted as facts. One such notion is that the development of the Muslim philosophy suffered an irremediable set-back after its period of glory, from which it could never recover and the whole Islamic world could not produce any philosopher of significance. The Muslims for centuries have been accustomed to looking towards the West for guidance even in the matters with regard to their own past achievements. No Muslim scholar ever challenged the validity of this unfounded belief because they were indifferent to the academic attainments of their worthy ancestors. Paucity of translated works of later Muslim thinkers was a just excuse for the orientalist. But how can we justify our own ignorance? Of course, there could not be a vacuum suddenly after a long period of original and creative intellectual activity. What actually happened was that the centre of learning gradually shifted from the Western part of the Muslim world to Iran and the Indian subcontinent, where new types of philosophy developed. In India, the cradle of a pluralistic and synthetic culture, the primary need of the time was to

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bring the downtrodden sections of the caste-ridden Hindu society in the fold of Islam during the first phase of the Muslim rule. Too much influence of the alien elements on the Islamic teachings made a group of the aware of the committed Muslims to feel the urgency of purifying Islam from non-Islamic doctrines. This feeling expressed itself in the form of the revivalistic trends. The later phase of the Islamic thought in India culminated in the movement of Shāh Walī Allāh, who was inspired by the puritanic movement of Shaykh Aḥmad Sarhindī, popularly known as '*Mujaddid al'alf al-thānī*.' This movement was the first step towards the pan-Islamic ideology. In Iran the philosophical studies moved in a different direction. Al-Ghazālī, after writing his magnum opus *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*, had turned his attention towards Ṣūfism and the Ṣūfī practices. In the same period Suhrawardī (the author of *Hikmat al-īshrāq*) popularized the Islamic version of the Neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation. Both al-Ghazālī and Suhrawardī advocated a synthesis of rationalism and mystic experience, which gave rise to the school known as '*al-ḥikmah*.' All the later attempts of philosophization in Islam issued from this source. The Indo-Islamic thought found culmination in pan-Islamism, an ideology predominantly political, while Iranian thought developed in '*irfān*,' apparently having no socio-political overtones. But ultimately both of them reached the same destination, i.e. the ideological reform of the Muslim society.

Actually no work worth mentioning has been done on the philosophical developments in these regions of historical importance. Some researchers wrote dissertations on the political aspect of Islamic thought in India, particularly on Shāh Walī Allāh and Sarhindī, with little reference to their philosophical ideas. In recent times the interest of the scholars of Indian subcontinent in the thought content of their Islamic heritage produced a few works. In so far as the Iranian philosophical contributions to *al-ḥikmah* are concerned, little work has been done. Iqbāl, in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, in the context of his discussion on the Islamic conception of time, has mentioned the names of Mīr Bāqir Dāmād, al-Ṭūsī and Mullā Ṣadrā, but he did not expound even their basic ideas. Recently Ṣadrā's major work *al-'Asfār al-'Arba'ah* has been translated into Persian. *Al-'Asfār* was translated into Urdu before 1947 by the Translation Bureau of Jāmi'ah Osmāniya, Hyderabad. *Al-'Asfār* has always been considered a great philosophical treatise, and a number of Iranian thinkers have written commentaries on it. But no attempt was made to present this work in proper perspective to the outside world. The post-Ṣadrā *al-ḥikmah* philosophy of the Shī'ah world is centred around *al-'Asfār*. One of the most important exponents of *al-ḥikmah* is Mullā Ḥājj Hādī Sabzawārī, whose *Sharḥ-e manẓūmah* is taught in the religious academies of Iran and Iraq for more than a century. This philosophical work was translated a few

years ago into English by a Japanese scholar in collaboration with Mahdī Muḥaqqiq. But it could not attract the attention of the Western authors and philosophers, and still remains an obscure work. Sayyid Ḥusayn Naṣr wrote a paper on Sabzawāri, which, despite being published in English, went unnoticed. Among the recent commentaries on *Sharh-e manzūmah* Martyr Murtaḍā Muṭahhari's study of Sabzawāri is not only comprehensive but also original and thought-provoking. Unfortunately Muṭahhari himself has not been properly introduced as a thinker to the world outside Iran. His work on varied topics is of encyclopedic nature. In my view, they are far more significant philosophically than 'Alī Shari'ati's interpretation of Islamic ideology. As the aim of the present paper is an exposition of Sabzawāri's ontology, I would refer to Muṭahhari's reinterpretation as a secondary source only.

It is generally believed that the revolt against essentialism was initiated by the movement of Existentialism. It is not true even in the context of the Western thought, because the egoistic idealism of Fichte and Schelling and the voluntaristic idealism of Schopenhauer with emphasis on Ego or Will as the basic reality had deviated from the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition. When Existentialism was confined to a very limited circle, Iqbāl criticized and rejected Platonic idealism in the opening parts of his philosophical poem *Asrār-e khudī* ("The Secrets of the Self," translated into English by Nicholson). It may not be just a matter of coincidence that Iqbāl made an attempt to synthesize rationalism with authentic religious experience in the same fashion as *al-ḥikmah* philosophers had earlier done. Iqbāl wrote his doctoral dissertation on the development of metaphysics in Iran and he, if not fully, at least partly, was acquainted with the recent Iranian philosophy. It is revealing that the thinkers of this tradition for the first time introduced the basic existentialist thesis, i.e., existence precedes essence. Surprisingly Sabzawāri's analysis of being is also similar to that of contemporary existentialists, which may be considered as an extension of al-Ghazālī's analytical method set forth in *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*. Sabzawāri strictly sticks to logic. This regard for logical form is something unique in the history of mysticism. In this respect also Mullā Ṣadrā is his predecessor. A critical study of this tradition can however reveal that its representatives could not fully liberate themselves from Aristotle's influence.

SABZAWĀRĪ'S LIFE AND WORKS:

Before proceeding to discuss Sabzawāri's ontological position, it would be proper to have some idea of his life and interests. According to Mīrzā Sayyid Ḥasan, son-in-law of Sabzawāri, Sabzawāri was born in 1212 A.H. in Sabzawār and died in 1289 A.H.¹ His father was a

merchant, but he was himself interested in the pursuit of knowledge. He started his studies at the age of seven or eight, with Arabic grammar. His father died when he was about ten years old. Whereafter his cousin al-Hājj Mullā Husayn Sabzawāri took over his education. Mullā Husayn always proclaimed the necessity of logical reasoning. After ten years of intensive training under Mullā Husayn Sabzawāri went to Iṣfahān, where he studied for five years the philosophy of the illuminationist school under the guidance of Ākhund Mullā Ismā'il Iṣfahānī. After his death he studied for a period of two to three years with Ākhund Mullā 'Alī Nūrī. Earlier he had also studied with Āqā Muḥammad 'Alī, famous as al-Najafī. He devoted another five years to the study of *fiqh* and *tafsīr*. For the following two years he remained in the Holy City where he had gone to perform the *hajj*. After returning from his pilgrimage he took up the job of teaching, of course, without any remuneration. Soon his fame as a scholarly and pious man reached the highest places in the country, and attracted the attention of the king and his ministers, who reportedly visited his humble dwelling with the utmost regard, and recorded their reminiscences later on. Mullā Sabzawāri was an authority on the traditional religious sciences as well as logic and philosophy, particularly Suhrawardī, Ṣadrā and other *al-ḥikmah* exponents.²

Mullā Hādī Sabzawāri wrote and compiled twelve books and eight tracts (*rasā'il*).

1. *Sharḥ-e manẓūmah-ye ḥikmat*: His major work consists of the two volumes of *Sharḥ-e manẓūmah*: the first part is a treatise on *al-ḥikmah*, and the second part is a treatise on *manṭiq*, i.e., logic. *Sharḥ-e manẓūmah-ye ḥikmat* is a commentary on Sabzawāri's own philosophical poem *Ghurar al-farā'id*, a systematic exposition of his views on general principles, physics, theology, and epistemology. This book is divided into seven parts and is the most popular textbook taught in Iran's madrasahs. The seven major themes of the book are as follows:

1. *First Part*: On General Principles
2. *Second Part*: On Substance and Accidents
3. *Third Part*: On the Special Idea of Theology
4. *Fourth Part*: On Natural Phenomena
5. *Fifth Part*: On Prophecy and Prophetic Dreams
6. *Sixth Part*: On Resurrection
7. *Seventh Part*: On Selected Principles of Ethics

The first two parts have been usually translated and commented upon by the later scholars. These two parts comprise Sabzawāri's ontology. I, therefore, give somewhat detailed index of the issues discussed in them.

FIRST PART

1. First Gem: Existence and Non-Existence
2. Second Gem: Necessity and Possibility
3. Third Gem: Eternity and Becoming (coming-into-being)
4. Fourth Gem: Actuality and Potentiality
5. Fifth Gem: Quiddity and its Properties
6. Sixth Gem: Unity and Multiplicity
7. Seventh Gem: Cause and Caused

SECOND PART

1. First Gem: The Descriptive Definition of 'Substance' and a Discourse on its Divisions
2. Second Gem: The Descriptive Definition of 'Accident' and a Discourse on its Divisions
3. Third Gem: The Divisions of Accidents

There are fifty-nine sub-headings under the major headings, which show the depth and width of the analysis undertaken.

Sharḥ-e manẓūmah-ye ḥikmat deals with the problems of existence and accidents (first two parts), the Divine Existence (third part), physics (fourth part), prophecy and prophetic dreams (fifth part), *al-ma'ād* or the Day of Judgement (sixth part), and morality (seventh part).

2. *Sharḥ-e manẓūmah-ye mantiq*: This is the second volume of *Sharḥ-e manẓūmah*, which deals with the problems of logic. This is a commentary by Sabzawāri on his own poem *al-La'āli' al-muntaẓamah*, which is a treatment of the sixfold objects of logic:

1. The object of 'what' of lexical explanation
2. The object of 'what' of definition
3. The object of Simple 'whetherness'
4. The object of composite 'whetherness'
5. The object of 'why?' of an objective fact
6. The object of 'why?' of an affirmation

This volume needs to be carefully studied and evaluated from modern point of view. It may be helpful to understand how the tool of logic was sharpened and used for conceptual clarification by a Muslim philosopher who represents the culmination of logical reasoning in Muslim philosophy.

Sabzawāri's other books are as follows:

3. *Asrār al-ḥikam*: a treatise on *al-Mabda'* and *al-Ma'ād*, a

comparison of the views of the peripatetic and the emanationist philosophers with those of the Şūfīs.

4. *Sharḥ-e ba'dī ash'ār-e mughlaqeh-ye mathnawī*: a commentary on some difficult verses of Mawlawī's Mathnawī.

5. *Dīwān-e asrār*: a collection of Sabzawārī's own verses.

6. *Hawāshī bar al-shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*: a commentary on Mullā Şadrā's book of the same title. The book deals with some delicate points of the Şūfī doctrines and practices.

7. *Hawāshī bar asfār*, Şadr al-Dīn Shirāzī.

8. *Hawāshī bar mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, Şadr al-Dīn Shirāzī.

9. *Hawāshī bar mabda' wa ma'ād*, Şadr al-Dīn Shirāzī.

10. *Sharḥ-e al-Nibrāsī fī asrār al-asās*: a commentary on the pattern of the *Sharḥ-e manẓūmah*, dealing with the principles of orthodoxy and jurisprudence from philosophical and mystic point of view.

11. *Sharḥ al-'asmā'*: an explanation of a popular *du'ā'* called "*Jawshan-e Kabīr*."

12. *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ wa mişbāḥ al-najāḥ*: on a *du'ā'* called "*Du'ā'-ye Sabāḥ*."

Apart from these works Sabzawārī wrote eight tracts or *rasā'il* in answer to various questions put to him.³

Mahdī Muḥaqqiq, in his introduction to *Ghurar al-farā'id*, states that it is generally believed that Muslim philosophy came to an end with Ibn Rushd and a vacuum was created in the Muslim world of learning. He quotes Sabzawārī himself with regard to the unacceptability of philosophy among the Muslims: "Philosophy is like a ruler whose people have revolted against him, not realizing that their good lies in seeking its support and taking refuge in it. It is a science which holds a special place in the domain of the knowledge of God and is lord of all the sciences."⁴

He laments the indifference of the Muslims towards philosophers like Mīr Dāmād and Sabzawārī, who are the most significant thinkers of the later period of Muslim philosophy. Iqbāl, in his doctoral dissertation on the development of metaphysics in Persia, gives an important place to Sabzawārī and has devoted major part of the chapter on recent developments in Iranian philosophy to the exposition of his philosophy.

Iqbāl holds that when the Muslims became aware of the futility of Neo-Platonic philosophy, and had access to the works of Plato and Aristotle, the Arabs turned to Aristotle and the Iranians to Plato. He, however, does not agree with Lewes that the Arabs were unable to appreciate Plato's thought. Iqbāl holds that if the Arabs had access to Plato's works in the early period, they would have even then rejected Platonism, for it was incompatible with their temperament. In Iran, the shift from Neo-Platonism to Platonism gave birth to a system of thought that culminated in Sabzawārī's philosophy. The salient feature of

this tradition is its absorption in religion. This always happens if people are cut off from sciences. The periods of crisis turn thinkers' attention from the external world to the internal reality through concentration upon God. What Iqbāl says is applicable to the mystic philosophy also. In a sense the later Iranian philosophy is predominantly mystical in nature.

Sabzawāri, in his epistemology, distinguishes between two types of reason; theoretical and practical. In order to understand the nature of reality one has to analyse the phenomena. This understanding indicates three types of existence, viz., being or light, appearance or shadow, and non-being or darkness. According to Sabzawāri, being is the absolute good. It is self-evident. The potential being, before coming into existence, has equal possibility of being existent or non-existent. He argues that a being that brings the potential into actuality can never be non-being. He further argues that non-being cannot act upon non-being. Sabzawāri, at this stage, turns against Plato and tends to agree with Aristotle that reality is the source of both permanence and change. Here, he takes recourse in the mystical terminology and says that it is love which controls the course of evolution. Here again he banks upon Aristotle and advances the cosmological argument to prove the existence of the Prime Mover i.e. God. Sabzawāri, a staunch believer in the Unity of God, believes in the plurality of things. This is again Aristotelian position. It is also possible to derive pluralism from Platonic philosophy. But Plato does not accept the physical objects as real, while Sabzawāri regards them as real. He believes in a specific type of pantheism, the doctrine of the Unity of Being. The Being is real, and consequently all the phenomenal expressions of Being are real. *Sharḥ-e manẓūmah* deals with this problem in detail.

THE PROBLEM

The problem of being is traceable in the tradition of Greek philosophy. Thinkers all over the world have been interested in the problem of the ultimate reality, which centres around the nature of being. This problem has been resolved in different ways by different philosophers from various angles. Indian philosophy, considered to be the most ancient recorded thought, considers being to be spiritual in the light of the teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads. But at the same time there were the Charvakas who believed in the ultimacy of matter. The school of the Vedānta dealt with being in more detail, and naturally there arose differences among them. The Advaita Vedānta version of Shankra considered the physical world as illusory (*maya*), and therefore unreal. The Dvaita Vedānta of Ramanuja accepted the phenomenal world as the copy of the ultimate reality and, therefore,

allowed to it some kind of reality. The modern thinkers, both the Hindus and the Muslims, refuted Shankra and rehabilitated belief in the reality of the physical beings. Iqbāl on the one hand, and Sri Aurobindo, on the other, criticized Shankra for his denial of the reality of the physical world and time. This criticism is influenced by the study of Western philosophy and particularly the recent trends in Western thought, which after a lapse of many centuries had again taken up the problem of being as the central problem of enquiry.

The Greek philosophers, right from Thales, considered the problem of being to be the main problem of genuine philosophic interest. The early philosophers discussed the problem from materialistic viewpoint. They accepted one or the other physical element as the basic substance; for Thales it was water, for Anaximander it was a heterogeneous mass, and for Anaximenes it was air. The Milesians were called physicists, but in modern terminology they were hylozists, because they believed that the world was composed of animate matter. This view was devoid of any conception of spirit. However, they raised two basic problems relating to the nature of the world and its origin. Pythagoras and his followers, in a mystical fashion, reduced the reality to numbers. Heraclitus and the Eleatics were led to different conclusions. Heraclitus insisted on change as the basic reality. He further emphasized on the unity of all things and proposed that the opposites were in reality identical. Fire appeared to him to be the ultimate reality, active behind the process of change. It is everliving. Among the Eleatics, Parmenides regarded change as impossible and accepted permanence as real. He holds that the existent and the real must be one, eternal, illimitable, homogeneous, without multiplicity, motion or alteration. He for the first time posed non-being as a category opposed to being. Empedocles advanced the doctrine of the four elements, i.e. the reality is composed of water, air, fire and earth. This led others to pluralistic view of reality, culminating in atomism of Democritus and his school. Anaxagoras is the first Greek thinker who introduced the notion of *Nous* or the mind. *Nous*, by virtue of being diffused throughout the invisible mixture that constitutes the world, can know what the senses cannot perceive. It is the only self-moving 'seed.' Parmenides introduced the notion of the opposition between being and non-being, and Anaxagoras supplied the notion of self-moving mind to Plato. Plato also made use of other philosophical notions, e.g., Pythagorean number, the atomistic notion of atom, and the notions of change and permanence. Plato placed the reality in the World of Ideas and assigned a secondary or rather illusory status in the realm of reality to the physical objects. Platonic Ideas are immaterial, eternal, absolute, objective, universal, and permanent. By virtue of being perfect, they are unchangeable. Change is perceivable in the world of physical objects

due to their inherent imperfection. He regards both time and change as unreal, related only to the material world, which is in itself a shadow of the ultimately real Ideas. The Ideas are 'concepts' or 'definitions.' But instead of deriving them from the physical objects Plato derives the particular things from them. The Ideas are real beings, which are plural. Plato does not realize the difficulty of maintaining his position with regard to the 'logical essences' being taken as the essential constituents of *being*. His position is not clear. The Idea of good occupies the highest place in the hierarchy of the Ideas. The good is neither knowledge nor truth, but higher than either of them. The good is not essence, but far beyond essence in dignity and power. He does not clarify his position with regard to the unity of good, truth and beauty. The good seems to occupy the same place in his system which is assigned to Deity in religion. From Aristotle onwards Platonic Ideas have been taken as the metaphysical principles, or metaphysical models and archetypes. Plato believes in the immortality of the soul, because it is related to the changeless and eternal objects of thought. Reason is the essence of the soul, which originally belongs to the world of Ideas. In the later period he realized the difficulty of his earlier suggestion that the physical objects participate in Ideas, or resemble them, as they are copies of the Ideas. Plato ends in a dilemma. The Ideas exist apart from and independent of all minds, but at the same time they must somehow be present in our minds in order to be the objects of thought. An escape from this dilemma was sought in the *Parmenides*, his dialogue of the later period, in the form of the concept of interdependence of unity and plurality. Real *being* is one-in-many and many-in-one, in the sense that both depend on each other. In the beginning God figures in the soul-mind section of reality, but in the *Parmenides* God appears as the Supreme Mind, the King of souls, and as a Being Who creates, sustains and directs all things. Here, He figures as personal God, whom Plato describes, in the *laws*, as the giver of forms. The principle which brings together *being* and *non-being* is in itself of dual nature, which Plato calls the world-soul. Thus God is brought closer to the sensible world through the mediation of the world-soul. He now seems to have concern for and contact with the world. Plato cuts up the world-soul into the fundamental activities of the universe—an outer circular motion and seven divergent irregular motions. From this description of the creation of the universe Plotinus and his followers derived the idea of emanation, which was later taken up and developed by the Muslim thinkers. In Plato's scheme of beings and non-beings matter is non-being. He says that such a principle must exist. This is other than the Forms and the ground of the sensible world. It exists as a substratum for changing sensible objects. It is non-being because it is neither this Form nor that Form. It is formless. The otherness of the sensible world from

the world of Ideas does not lie in its possession of any Form of being, but lies in the projection of the Forms into a formless dimension of reality. It is space which imparts to it appearance of a moving, changing world of particular objects. Space is the receptacle and the nurse of all generation. The Ideas stir and inform it to give rise to ever-changing conditions. It is space that makes participation and resemblance intelligible.⁶

Aristotle, breaking from Plato over the question of the relation of Ideas with the sensible world, questioned the independence of Ideas. In his view, the universals are not independent substances. If so, they cannot be the cause of the particulars in any way, as it is contradiction in terms. How can the universal, the abstract, and the general affect the concrete particular? He holds that substance is concrete and has individual character. The real being is to be sought in particulars. He brought the Ideas down from heaven to the earth and rehabilitated them in the concrete. Form and Matter are inseparable. They are always found together. To be a thing means some kind of thing. It is Form which makes a particular kind of thing; and it is Matter which makes a thing particular and concrete. Form and Matter are two separate sides of substance, but they denote two different directions in which each particular thing points. No sensible substance completely exhausts and realizes within itself all the possibilities, as it is a stuff of which other things can be made. It means that it is always a possible something else. It is both 'Form' and 'Matter.' 'Form' is that which makes the existence of a thing possible, and 'Matter' is that which is the ground of other possibilities, i.e., what it can become. Hence Form and Matter are relative to things. Form and Matter are not only inseparable, they are also interchangeable in the same object. Aristotle used two other terms: 'actuality' and 'potentiality.' Every sensible object is an actualization of potentialities latent in the substances, and in the course of actualization the objects acquire new potentialities of their own. In other words, each new actuality is also a new potentiality. In the terms of Form and Matter, each actualized object is both a Form and a Matter; a Form in which other objects are cast, and Matter which is used for recasting other forms. It is the actual nature or Form of an object that determines the object's potentialities. Aristotle's Matter is different from what is generally known as matter. It is anything which contributes to the existence and Form of anything else. Physical matter was for him simply one of innumerable stuffs and potentialities. Misunderstanding of the term 'Matter' in the context of Aristotle's philosophy has led to many confusions in the history of philosophy, particularly in the Muslim philosophy.

Another important part of Aristotle's philosophy relevant to the problem of being is the problem of change and its causes. The process of actualization of potentialities, i.e., the process of *becoming* signifies

motion, change, growth, decay, generation, dissolution, and the like. In this process, Matter is transformed into a relatively new Form. The natural creation, the production of artificial objects, the movement of bodies in space and all the qualitative and quantitative changes are forms of motion, which actualize the potentialities of the earlier stages or substances both in Form and Matter. Aristotle introduced the notion of the fourfold division of causes: (1) Material cause, that which is moved; (2) Efficient cause, that which moves; (3) Formal cause, that which indicates a line of change or motion; and (4) Final cause, that which is the goal or aim of the change. According to this theory, each movement requires four essential causes: (1) a body to move; (2) something to set the motion; (3) a line to follow; and (4) a purpose to be attained. Aristotle regards the actual as prior. What he means is that the plan or Form or purpose of the finished object must be somehow present from the beginning in the process. He thus puts the end in the beginning. He argues that causally the actual must be prior to the potential. It may be logically inferred that he believes in the priority of the concrete particular object. Hence, Form is both the beginning and the purpose of existents. The urge for self-actualization is the moving as well as the guiding force, which he calls 'entelechy.' Aristotle conceives God as the first cause or the unmoved mover importing motion without participating in it.⁷

The Aristotelian notion of God is actually a metaphysical hypothesis. It does not signify the reality of a Being regarded as the most real or the Real Being of religions, but it is strange that he was accepted as the architect and author of the official philosophy of the Church, and exercised great influence on Muslim theology. The Iranian revolt against his philosophy, in this light, is understandable. However, Platonic conception of reality and God is also alien to the Qur'ānic notions of God and reality. Why did then the later Iranian thinkers take recourse in either Plato or Aristotle? The answer to this question can be found in the renewal of the interest in the problem of being.

The problem of being with reference to Plato and Aristotle was taken up by the later philosophers. The Cynics and the Cyrenaics maintained that universals were nothing but impressions of similarity of individual things. Augustine and Boethius were of the view that universals were potentialities which assumed actual and substantial form only in the concrete. Roscellinus (1050-1122) maintained that all real and substantial existence was individual and concrete. He was a realist in the epistemological sense of the term. The nominalists believed that the universals did not exist. They are composite photographs of many similar percepts used by the mind to symbolize and stand for all of them. But nominalism as a doctrine was advanced later. Roscellinus does not seem to agree with the nominalists that the

universals do not exist even in the mind, for he maintains that they exist in the mind as abstractions, but do not exist outside the mind. Abelard denied that particular objects could be reduced to mere instances of the universal types and Forms. The early Christian scholastic philosophy mostly accepted the real existence of the concrete and individual objects. They differed only with regard to the status of the universals. The Muslim thinkers, under the influence of Greek philosophy and Neo-Platonism, vacillated between affirmation and rejection of the universals. The Qur'anic teaching was quite clear in respect of the reality of the individual concrete objects, but there was much scope for speculation in regard to the philosophical notion of the universals. This was not only an epistemological problem but also an ontological issue. Werner Brock writes: "The achievement of elucidation attained until Aristotle affected vitally the Medieval discussion of the problem and the whole of the Christian theological outlook; and through many changes the tradition of the problem kept alive down to Hegel's *Logic*."⁸ The problem did not fall into oblivion as it was taken up by the Muslim philosophers and continued to dominate their thought till Sabzawari's times.

Al-Fārābī, the first Muslim philosopher who seriously paid attention to the problem of being, was of the view that both Plato and Aristotle despite their differences believed in the existence of the Ideas. They, in his view, placed the Ideas in the Divine reason. Without the Ideas no creation was possible. Plato did not actually place the Ideas in the mind of God. Al-Fārābī made distinction between two types of being, viz., the necessary and the contingent. He holds that the possible or contingent being is possible-in-itself and becomes necessary by virtue of receiving existence from outside. The Necessary Being is necessary-in-itself. He gave an elaborate scheme of emanations, obviously under the influence of Plotinus. The world is an emanation from God through the mediation of the Active Intellect. Matter, comprising four elements, is the substratum of material objects and receives Form from the Agent Intellect.⁹

Al-Fārābī follows Aristotle in his belief in the eternity of Matter. But he had to reconcile this notion with the Qur'anic teachings. For this purpose he introduced a series of intellects, but failed to show how the world of change and destruction could be derived from the world free from change. Ibn Sīnā faced the same difficulty. Following the teachings of Aristotle, Ibn Sīnā regarded the physical world as consisting of three factors: Matter, Form, and Non-being. He holds that Matter is receptacle of the Form. The accidents happen to a being. The accidents are posterior to Matter, while Form as a cause, is prior to it. He accepted al-Fārābī's distinction between the necessary being and the possible being. He adds that the necessary being is of two kinds, viz.,

necessary-in-itself and necessary-dependent-on-other. God is the only Being Necessary-in-Himself. Matter is necessary-dependent-on-God. Al-Fārābī maintained that priority of a thing over others is either of the four kinds: priority in time, priority of part over the whole, priority in grade, and priority of excellence. Ibn Sīnā modified it and held that priority is of five kinds: priority in time, priority in grade and Form (spatial priority is a part of it), priority in excellence, and priority in causation, i.e., priority of the cause over the effect. The world is eternal in the sense that it emanated from the Essence of God in eternity, when God contemplated His Own Being from eternity. The world is posterior to God in excellence, nature, and in being the effect of His contemplation. The world is not posterior in time because it cannot be conceived that the world came into existence in time. If one thinks so, he has to accept that there was a time when there was nothing except God. This view leads us to many difficulties. One is that God was incomplete without the world. The second difficulty is that He willed to create at a particular time, which would mean that He needed the world, which logically would mean that He depended upon the world, as He had desired it.

Al-Gazālī, realizing that this view was against the Muslim faith, refuted the notion of the eternity of the world along with other philosophical notions of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, which were borrowed from Plato or Aristotle. However al-Ghazālī could not extricate himself from the labyrinths of Neo-Platonism, and took recourse in the terminology of emanationist philosophy. Occasionally he uses the terms which are not of Islamic origin. His views regarding man are also not purely Islamic.¹⁰ The Muslims could not emancipate themselves from the Greek influence in spite of all the efforts of purifying the Islamic philosophy. In other countries they fell prey to some other non-Islamic influences. It cannot be said with certainty if the later Iranian thinkers were fully emancipated from non-Islamic philosophies, but their attempt to base their ideas on the Qur'ānic teachings was without parallel in the history of Muslim thought.

Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274), a Christian thinker of post-Ibn Rushd era, felt the futility of proving God's existence on the basis of the idea of a Perfect Being in our mind, or on the ground that we needed a creator to account for the existence of the universe. He does not find any contradiction between the Christian doctrine of creation and the Aristotelian view of the uncreatedness of matter. The perpetual actualization of potentiality and formulation of matter become intelligible only on the supposition of an unmoved, uncreated and self-existent mover of the universe, whose sheer presence sets the whole world moving in pursuit of Him. In order to explain the God-world relationship, he deviates from Aristotle and puts the whole world of

Platonic Ideas into the Divine Mind. He does not, like the Muslim philosophers, accept Aristotle's view that God knows only His own Form. According to him, God's Self-knowledge necessitates the knowledge of the whole structure of being. He rejects Bonaventure's conception of the plurality of substantial forms. A thing is what it is. All forms except a thing's essence are accidental properties. The differences of individual men, in his view, are because of the soul and not due to an actualization of matter. The forms, archetypes in the Divine Mind, are the formal structure of the sensible world. The forms are also concepts of the human intellect.

The Muslims inherited the controversy regarding being from the Platonic-Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic traditions, and transmitted it to the later thinkers. In the West this problem was obliterated after the collapse of the ontological theories in the second half of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries. The philosophers were absorbed in the problems of epistemology and methodology. But in the Muslim world the problem of being remained the central problem of philosophy throughout its history. The Muslim philosophers discussed the problem in accordance with the Greco-Muslim tradition. In the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā and Sabzawārī, being is the central problem of enquiry. Their approach is realistic in the modern sense of the term. They opposed idealism of all types, specially Platonic rationalist-objectivist idealism. 'Allāmah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī adopted the same line of thought in his very original and penetrating comparative study of idealism and realism under the title *The Principles and the Method of the Philosophy of Realism*.¹¹ Here we cannot discuss the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā, probably the most original thinker among the Muslims after Ibn Rushd. While discussing Sabzawārī's ontological position, we, however, have to refer to him occasionally.

Sabzawārī's exposition of the problem of being covers a vast area of philosophical issues ranging from the Essence and Existence of God to the problem of potentiality, actuality, necessity, possibility, causality, quiddity, unity, multiplicity, eternity, becoming, Matter-Form relation, theory of knowledge, and eschatology. I propose to concentrate on some basic issues which cover most of the relevant problems. The issues are as follows:

1- The problem of existence and non-existence:

- a) the Absolute Being,
- b) finite beings,
- c) becoming,
- d) non-existence.

EXISTENCE

First two couplets of Sabzawāri's *Manẓūmah* deal with the nature of existence and its definition.

<p>وَلَيْسَ بِالْحَدِّ وَلَا بِالرَّسْمِ وَكُنْهَةٌ فِي غَايَةِ الْخَفَاءِ</p>	<p>مُعَرَّفُ الوجودِ شَرْحُ الْإِسْمِ مَفْهُومُهُ مِنْ أَعْرَفِ الْأَشْيَاءِ</p>
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All defining terms of existence are but explanations of the word; they can neither be a definition nor a description.

Its notion is one of the best-known things, but its deepest reality is in the extremity of hiddenness.¹²

Sabzawāri maintains that existence is indefinable. All the words and phrases used to define it do not transcend their lexical meaning e.g. self-subsistent or that which allows of predication. Most of such definitions are tautological. Here he affirms Ibn Sīnā's position, who holds that 'existence cannot possibly be explicated except lexically....it itself does not allow of any explication; rather, its form is in the mind without the mediation of anything else.' This is the position of the epistemological realists, which is opposed to the essentialist position or the view of the ontological realists like Plato. The ontological realism is based on the view that the universals or the ideas are real in the sense that they are objective and independent of mind. In modern philosophy this term is treated as obsolete. Plato was considered a realist in this sense only. The ontological realism is actually synonymous with idealism. The epistemological realism, contrarily, asserts the reality of the physical objects. This position is taken by G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, the Neo-realists, the Critical realists and all the positivists and existentialists of the modern age. The Medieval Christian scholastic philosophers, who regarded the universal as mental fabrications, were realists in this sense. The Quran repeatedly affirms that the physical world is real and it is created. No Muslim could ever doubt the reality of the world and the material objects. Though some Muslim thinkers tried to assign a special status to the Universals or Ideas, and also made an attempt to interpret the world in the terms of Ideas, yet they had to accept that the physical objects were not copies or shadows of Ideas. They existed in the external world and were real. Berkeley's subjective idealism is based on the premise: *Esse is percipi* (to be is to be perceived). He did not allow the physical things of any substantive reality, and reduced them to mere ideas. He argued that as all the objects were composed of the primary and the secondary qualities, which were in themselves nothing but ideas, therefore they were bundles of ideas and had no existence independent of the mind. This

led Hume to epistemological solipsism. The contemporary realists refuted the idealist position and made the 'ego-centric predicament' the main target of attack. They proved the absurdity of the subjectivistic view of the world. George Santayana, a realist, holds that all men accept the physical world as real on the strength of animal faith. Realism is the only world-view acceptable to the common sense. The Christian and the Muslim philosophers of the medieval ages were of the same view. Sabzawāri starts with the assertion that existence is self-evident, and therefore needs no proof. His contention that existence is indefinable is the logical corollary of his first assertion.

Murtadā Muṭahhari, in his interpretation of *al-Manzūmah*, says that each concept is either self-evident or theoretic. Existence, in his view, is not a theoretic concept and is therefore self-evident. He refers to al-Rāzī's analysis of theoretic import of a concept. Al-Rāzī says that what is called a theoretic concept is meaningless. What is a theoretic concept? Is it some thing that you have conceived or a thing not conceived? Or does it refer to a thing which is neither conceived nor has entered into your mind? It seems that a thing absolutely unknown is called a theoretic concept. If a thing is not conceived it is neither evident nor theoretic. When a thing is conceived only then it can be called evident or theoretic, otherwise it can be called none. If a thing is present in your mind, its very presence implies its knowability i.e. it immediately becomes an object of knowledge. Is knowledge different from conception? From this argument it can be inferred that all the conceptions refer to existence. Therefore a theoretic concept, having no referent, is meaningless. Muṭahhari also refers to Hegel's argument regarding the "unknowable" as complementary to al-Rāzī's argument. According to Hegel unknowable is meaningless. If a thing is unknowable it cannot be conceived. According to him there is nothing that is unknowable, because the mind and its objects are identical. It means that all that is conceivable is real. The real is rational and the rational (conceived) is real. Muṭahhari holds that definition means analysis, and analysis of a concept logically implies its synthetic nature. An object referred to by a concept that is synthetic is partly known and partly unknown. Hence al-Rāzī's argument that 'to be conceived means to be known' can be logically stretched further and it may be justifiably concluded that the 'known' is always of synthetic nature. If it is said that none of the components of the theoretic concept are known, it means that one does not know what he conceives and what he says.¹³

The theoretic concept is always synthetic, and all its constituent concepts are evident. Muṭahhari on this ground argues that a self-evident concept is simple i.e. it is unanalysable into other concepts. Sabzawāri says: "In view of the fact that existence is (absolutely) simple, having neither specific difference nor genus,...; nor can it be a

description because a description is obtainable by an accidental property which is part of the five universals whose division itself is based on the thingness of quiddity, while existence and its property derive from an entirely different source from quiddity.¹⁴ According to him the deepest meaning of existence is inexplicable. In the second couplet, Sabzawāri harmonized two different theses; the notion of existence is self-evident, and at the same time it is in extreme hiddenness. To be conceived means to be actualized in mind. A mental image cannot produce the actual effects. Furthermore if the conception is not followed by the effects it is not existent. In the knowledge-process the object imprinted on the mind may change its accidents but not its quiddity. But if existence has its quiddity, its quiddity would become the cause of its existence. This is impossible, for existence has no quiddity. Because of this unique characteristic (i.e. having no character at all) the existence is (in the ordinary sense) inconceivable.¹⁵

Apparently Sabzawāri's view seems to be self-contradictory. But it is not so. What he affirms is the self-evident nature of being, which in no way means that existence is intelligible also. Existence is a mystery even according to the existentialists. The existentialists consider the role of philosophy to be unfolding of this mystery. The founder of phenomenology, Husserl, holds that the main function of phenomenology is unfoldment of that which is hidden behind phenomena. No philosopher of any period made a claim that he could unlock the mystery called existence. But of course the majority of the philosophers accepted existence as evident, needing no proof. The Logical Positivists regard the protocol statements, which refer to the atomic reality, as self-evident. The atomic reality is self-evident, and the protocol statements are analytic statements, which need no proof. They object to Kantian notion of the synthetic *a priori*, because in their view only the analytic propositions are *a priori*. Existence, in Sabzawāri's philosophy, is a general category as well as the concrete being of the individuals. He, however, is opposed to the positivist thesis i.e. the metaphysical propositions are nonsensical. For him God's existence is more self-evident than the existence of other beings, for He is the Necessary Being. The Necessary Being by the very definition must exist externally, and before and after all the contingent beings. Sabzawāri's position in this regard is explained by Muṭahhari by means of the notion of immediate knowledge, which in the religious terminology is called *wahy* (revelation) or *kashf* (the immediate knowledge by means of intuition or religious experience). Muṭahhari also refers to the existential experience of man. Knowledge is basically self-knowledge. In the acquired knowledge the nature of reality is not disclosed and whatever is conceived is just an idea. But in *a priori* knowledge the object of knowledge is presented to the mind without

mediation. It is immediate. It is because of immediacy of *a priori* knowledge that what man knows about himself is identical with his being. In the case of self-knowledge there is no mediation of ideas or essences. A man in pain is directly aware of the pain itself. He does not know the pain by means of ideas.¹⁶ Self-knowledge is synonymous with existential experience. In a way Muṭahhari treats existential experience at par with *a priori* knowledge. Muṭahhari, with reference to Ṣadrā, says that in self-knowledge the distinction between noumenon and phenomenon disappears, you view a thing from two different points of view, and consider it as having two facets. As existence and its essence are identical, one facet of the reality is unveiled in the acquired knowledge and the other facet is unveiled in *a priori* knowledge. This truth is realized in the immediate knowledge only. Thus the Kantian notion of 'unknowability' is refuted, and the Hegelian position is posited to some extent.¹⁷ But one should be very cautious in applying the Western concepts to the Islamic philosophy and philosophers. Some parallelism can be drawn between the Western and the Muslim philosophies in the context of certain ideas, but parallelism does not amount to identity of two philosophies. Both Kant and Hegel regard the categories as essential, while Aristotle holds that the categories are 'meanings' not 'essences.' Muṭahhari maintains that if an 'essence' or concept is actualized externally, it is called reality. According to his interpretation Sabzawāri makes distinction between existence (actualized in a concrete form) and the essence or concept.¹⁸ The concrete existence is self-evident, while the essence of existence is a mystery.

Sabzawāri says:

دَلِيلٌ مِّنْ خَالَفْنَا عَلِيلٌ

.....

إِنَّ الْوُجُودَ عِنْدَنَا أَصِيلٌ

لِأَنَّهُ مَنبَعُ كُلِّ شَرَفٍ

Existence, in our opinion, is fundamentally real.
The argument of our opponents is invalid.
Because "existence" is the source of all values.¹⁹

Here it is to be noted that "existence," as the source of all values, is the Absolute Existence, which is different from the view of the atheist existentialists. Sabzawāri refers to two theories in this regard; the first holds that the principle of the realization of anything is "existence," while "quiddity" is a mental essence united with it afterward. He advances six arguments in support of this view, and refutes the other theory which asserts that quiddity is fundamentally real, and existence is mentally posited. The second theory is held by Shaykh al-Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī. Thus Sabzawāri rejects the priority of the essences and along with it the pantheistic doctrine, which derives all the

concrete beings from the Ideas or *a'yān*. His first argument, regarding existence as the source of all values, is based on the view that goodness of existence is self-evident. No value can be attributed to a concept that is simply in the mind. The second argument: 'the distinction between the two modes of being fully suffices.' A quiddity by itself cannot produce the effects expected from it without being externalized. It means that a mental-existence is the essential pre-requisite of quiddity. It would be absurd to say that what is realized is quiddity, because it would mean that there would be no difference between the external and the mental. The third argument: 'Also we hold that cause is necessarily prior to effect in causal relationship, while there can be no order with regard to quiddity. The gist of the argument is that without being existent nothing can cause the effects. Quiddity is incapable of producing the effects. The fourth argument: 'what brings to light our contention is the existence of degrees in the gradual increase of intensity (constituting) various species.' According to this argument it is existence that threads together the scattered quiddities, which in themselves are incapable of being graded in the order of intensity. The fifth argument: 'how can it be otherwise, since by being all things have left (the status of) equality?' Here the word 'being' is synonymous with existence, and the word 'thing' means quiddity. By coming into existence a quiddity takes a concrete shape, and is differentiated. Even those who regard essences as real, agree that 'quiddity qua quiddity' is nothing but itself. It is existence by which a quiddity becomes different. Existence can never be posited mentally. If a quiddity does not become different, it does not deserve to be predicated to the predicate existence.²⁰

Sabzawāri explains another character of existence i.e. it brings about unity in multiplicity.

إِذْ غَيْرُهُ مَثَارَ كَثْرَةٍ أَتَتْ	لَوْلَمْ يُوَصَّلْ وَحْدَهُ مَا حَصَلَتْ
إِلَّا بِمَا الْوَحْدَةُ دَارَتْ مَعَهُ	مَا وَحَّدَ الْحَقُّ وَلَا كَلِمَتُهُ

'If existence were not fundamentally real there would be no unity actualized.'
'...because all other things raise only the dust of multiplicity.'

The unifying character of existence forms the core of the sixth argument of Sabzawāri.

He further argues that it is existence which unifies the Truth (الحق) and His Words. The essences or quiddities, in the view of the idealists also, are independent of one another and are therefore disjointed. If one believes in the multiplicity of the Divine Attributes, how can he explain the fact that they belong to One Being without predicating

existence to Him? The Divine Existence unifies the Divine Attributes. Similarly it is existence which unites different characteristics of things. A man has various qualities; he may be a writer, a bread earner, a father, a husband and many more things at a time. How can one unify all these different aspects together except by saying that he is 'so and so?' The 'isness' signifies existence. Hence existence differentiates, as well as unifies all quiddities or attributes both in the case of the Divine Being and human beings. The differentiating and unifying character of existence is applicable to things also.²¹

Sabzawāri elucidates other characteristics of existence also on the strength of similar arguments. Existence is analogical in the sense that diverse entities are similar due to being existents. It is the source of division, because only an existent is divisible. It is one in the sense that it is opposite of non-existence, which itself being opposed to existence is indivisible, and is therefore one. Contradictory of what is one is one. The particular things or 'determinations' (التَّعْيِنَات) may disappear, but existence is never shaken. Existence is something additional to quiddity. It occurs to quiddity conceptually, while quiddities are unified for forming the concept of a concrete being. 'Existence alone is properly to be negated.' 'Its predication requires a middle term,' because it is neither the same as quiddity nor a part of it. Quiddity could be separated from existence through intellection. Thus Sabzawāri proves existence as prior to the essences (الذَّوَات) or quiddities (المَاهِيَّات) and all the other things. Existence is of two types viz. the Absolute (الوجودُ المُطْلَق) or Pure Existence, and the finite beings.²²

The Absolute Being (al-Wujūd al-Muṭlaq)

Sabzawāri, as mentioned above, proves the Existence of God from the very nature of Being. Existence by virtue of being the ground of all things and quiddities must be eternal and absolute. Nothing is eternal except God. He is the Absolute and brought all things into existence. Sabzawāri holds that existence is not definable, because it has no essence. God is the Absolute in the sense that His Essence is His Existence. He qualifies this statement by adding the prefix 'As for truth.' By truth he means that which is confirmed by the objective fact, actuality, and also that which is inaccessible to annihilation. God Himself is the Objective, and the Truth, and is therefore the Source of all values. The modern existentialist thinkers also consider existence the source of all values. Sabzawāri justifiably considers Divine Existence the Source of all values, because He is the Truth of all truths. He is Eternal, because occurrence would necessitate His Being caused. He is over and above the law of causation. Sabzawāri has based his argument on al-Fārābī's definition of the Necessary Being caused by something else

entails possibility of being caused by either a possible being or another necessary being. In both the cases the very definition of 'necessary being' is negated. He is one, because He is Existence, and existence by its very nature is one. Moreover He is one, because there cannot be more than one necessary being. If there are two or more necessary beings, they would be dependent on one another and therefore none of them could be called necessary. ²³

So far as the unity of Divine Being is concerned it is important to note that Sabzawāri, like Mullā Ṣadrā, takes pains to make it clear that it is not numerical unity but is essential unity. As God is beyond time, He is similarly over and beyond enumeration. Even *Wāḥid* (واحد) i.e. one, if taken literally, is divisible and multiplicable, and therefore one is referred to God metaphorically only. God is not One in the mathematical sense. His Unity is Essential and Pure. The notion of the Essential Unity as opposed to the numerical unity was advanced by Mullā Ṣadrā. The notion of Essential Motion logically follows from it. Sabzawāri rejects all the notions of analogicity or anthropomorphism (تشبيه). Some Muslim sects of *Mutakallimūn* advocated for anthropomorphism. They went even to the extent of attributing bodily organs such as hand, foot, eye, ear, and the like to God. This school was opposed by the advocates of the Purity of Divine Existence. The former school is called *'ahl al-tashbih*, while the latter is called *'ahl al-tanzih*. The *mu'tazilah* and the Shī'ah have been the followers of the latter school. As the arguments and the counter-arguments of both the schools are well-known, I would not like to go into their details here. However it may be pointed out that the advocates of *tashbih* were literalists, while *'ahl al-tanzih* took the Quranic verses describing God and His Attributes in the metaphorical sense, which was in accordance with the rationalist interpretation of the Quranic verses. Following the same line of thought Sabzawāri considers the Divine Attributes to be essentially identical with the Divine Essence. If the Divine Attributes are separate from the Essence, one has to believe in the existence of a number of beings co-eternal with God, which would be contrary to the Islamic faith in the Unity of God. Sabzawāri has used many terms for differentiating various shades of the word *wāḥid* (one). *Al-wāḥid al-aḥad* (The One, the Unique), *al-wāḥid al-jinsī* (the generic one), *al-wāḥid bil-jins* (the one by genus), *al-wāḥid al-Ḥaqīqī* (the Real One), *al-wāḥid bil-khuṣūṣ* (the specific one), *al-wāḥid bil-'adād* (the numerical one), *al-wāḥid al-'aradī* (the accidental one), *al-wāḥid bil-'arad* (one by accident), *al-wāḥid bil-'umūm* (the generalized one), *al-wāḥid bil-'umūm al-mafhūmī* (the one by conceptual generalization), *al-wāḥid ghayr al-ḥaqīqī* (the non-real one), *al-wāḥid ghayr al-munqasim* (the indivisible one), *al-wāḥid al-mufāriq* (the differentiating one, referred to non-material one), *al-wāḥid al-munqasim* (the divisible one), *al-wāḥid al-*

naw'ī (the specific one), *al-wāḥid bil-naw'* (the one by species), *al-wāḥid bil-wāḥdat al-ḥaqqat al-ḥaqīqiyyah* (the one by way of true and real unity), *al-wāḥid bil-wāḥdat al-ḥaqqat al-ẓilliyyah* (the one by way of a true but shadowy unity), *al-wāḥid bil-wāḥdat al-'adadiyyat al-mahdūdah* (the one by way of a numerical limited unity), and *al-wāḥid al-waḍ'ī* (the positional one).²⁴ Among all these terms only three are applicable to God viz. *al-wāḥid al'ahad*, *al-wāḥid al-ḥaqīqī*, and *al-wāḥid bil-wāḥdat al-ḥaqqat al-ḥaqīqiyyah*. Sabzawāri has analysed all these terms and explained their meanings and referents. He has devoted two sections or *ghurar* to deal with the nature of Divine Unity. The fifth, 'The Absolute is Pure Unity,' and the sixth sections, 'Different opinions about the unity and multiplicity of existence' discuss the nature of Divine Being and His relation to multiplicity of existence. Similarly he has used the term *al-wujūd al-muṭlaq* (the Absolute Existence) distinguishing Divine Existence from all the other modes of being.

Sabzawāri's doctrine of *tawḥīd* is influenced by emanationism through the Iranian doctrine of illumination. But he has disagreed with Suhrawardī on many points. His view of the world is in a way *wāḥdat al-wujūd*, with the difference that he is always cautious not to be carried away by the notion of the 'Unity of Being' too far. All forms of existence are signs of the Glorious, but they are dependent for their existence on God. He has employed the metaphor of light for referring to God. He rejects the peripatetic doctrine of the plurality of existence, which holds that existence means realities differentiated from one another. He rejects ontological pluralism on the ground that it negates the unity of existence. As discussed earlier existence is that which differentiates as well as unifies things. Pluralism ignores the unifying aspect of existence, while pantheism ignores the aspect of differentiation. Sabzawāri adopts an intermediate path.

All the modes of being are derived from and dependent upon God in one way or another. Divine Existence is absolute for no shadow of non-being can be attached to Him. He is pure in the same sense. He is the light of the heavens and the earth, because all existence is due to Him.

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

Third gem of the *Manẓūmah* deals with the problem of *ishtirāk al-wujūd*, which is entitled by Muḥaqqiq and Izutsu 'analogicity of existence.' Sabzawāri is of the view that a single concept cannot be abstracted from diverse entities, its analogicity (*ishtirāk*) is due to the fact that all diverse beings share existence. The existence is the source of all beings. Those who oppose this view, in the view of Sabzawāri, take the position of agnosticism. He refers to the views of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī and Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Basrī, and criticizes them for holding that

one cannot know God's Essence and His Attributes. Sabzawāri maintains that when we say that He is Existent we understand thereby that self-evident concept which remains the same in all existents.²⁵ Sabzawāri calls his view analogistic, which is actually a form of the doctrine of the Unity of Being, and is radically opposed to anthropomorphism. It means that the world has an existent origin.

Muṭahhari distinguishes between the unity of Being and the unity of reality or nature. The problem of the unity of the world has been accepted by many philosophers, both the idealists and the materialists. He rightly points out that monotheistic materialism also believes in the unity of the world. But the doctrine of the unity of Being is different from the general ontological conception of the unity. It is related to mysticism. Even the Greek atomists believed in the unity of matter as a general principle. In the Muslim world 'irfān world-view advocates the doctrine of the Unity of Being. Muṭahhari is of the opinion that, after Ibn al-'Arabī, the problems concerning existence were confined to the 'irfān philosophy. In his view Mullā Ṣadrā integrated all the issues concerning existence in a systematic way. Ṣadrā's contribution is that he provided a secure ground for the mystic doctrine of Unity. I, personally, hesitate to subscribe to this opinion, for Muṭahhari himself writes that Ṣadrā has summarized the *Muqaddamah* of al-Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ-e fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, and Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn Al-'Arabī himself had already expounded his mystical doctrine in philosophical terms. Muṭahhari refers to two views of the Muslim scholars with regard to the problem of the Unity of Being. According to one view the Sūfis of the third and the fourth centuries advanced a doctrine of the unity of reflection (*waḥdat al-shuhūd*), but called it the doctrine of the Unity of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). The other group of scholars holds that the Muslim thinkers have always been advocates of the Unity of Being, and what Ibn al-'Arabī did was that he made this doctrine acceptable and intelligible for the philosophers.²⁶ However, the difference between *waḥdat al-wujūd* and *waḥdat al-shuhūd* is so minute and intricate that some Muslim scholars consider it a merely linguistic difference. In India Shaykh Aḥmad Sarhindī developed a consistent philosophical theory of the unity of reflection (*waḥdat al-shuhūd*). But even among his own followers some thinkers tried to reconcile his doctrine with that of Ibn al-'Arabī. Shāh Walī Allāh, Khwājah Nāṣir 'Andalīb, and his son Khwājah Mīr Dard did not see much disagreement between the two. It would be presumptuous on my part to assess the worth of any such work done in Iran. Nevertheless I think that there has never been a controversy between Unitarianism and Apparentism in Iran. Both the doctrines have been considered to be overlapping. It is not easy to judge which of them is nearer to the Quranic doctrine of *tawḥīd*. So far as the notion of the unity of the world is concerned it cannot be denied that

its idealist version has culminated in pantheism of Spinoza in Western philosophy. The Muslim thinkers, including the Sūfis, have been conscious of the intricacies of the problem of the Unity of Being, particularly those who strictly adhered to Shari'ah. Mullā Ṣadrā seems to believe in the unity of the world or nature also, because this belief is philosophically not incompatible with *waḥdat al-wujūd*. He views different things or bodies as essentially one body. Thus in his view existence is one, at all levels, for all the material and spiritual modes of being are unified, having a common source. Plato also talks of one-in-many, and many-in-one, but his conceptions of the reality and God are far away from the Islamic notions. Similarly Spinoza's conception of the Unity of Being is not really mystical, but is a logical outcome of the Greek naturalistic notion of the unity of the world. The Muslim mystics made an attempt to propounding a theory of Being in conformity with the Quranic doctrine of *tawḥīd* and creation (*takhliq*).

Muṭahhari, in his exposition of Sabzawāri's position with regard to the problem of the Unity, draws our attention towards two basic formulations. (1) The unity of the reality is because of either existence or essence or quiddity. (2) Existence being self-evident is real, and essence or essences are derived from it. On the basis of these two it can be inferred that the unity is because of existence. But if one goes the other way and postulates that the essences are real, he would take recourse in the idea of the Unity of Essence. It is the major contribution of Sabzawāri that he examined both the approaches to reality, and traced the origin of the conception of the Unity of Being in the philosophy of Fahlawiyyūn (Pahlawīs). In his view, Shaykh al-Ishraq Suhrawardī was right in attributing authorship of this doctrine to them.²⁷ Mullā Ṣadrā questioned Suhrawardī's position for regarding existence as dependent on mind. Suhrawardī starts with the premise that each thing capable of recurrence is subjective in nature, and concludes that existence being recurrent is subjective. Ṣadrā agrees with both the judgements, but argues that it is not applicable to existence, because if existence is conceived in this way it should have some ground for being existent, which is absurd. Sabzawāri makes an attempt at reinterpreting Suhrawardī's view.²⁸ Suhrawardī believes in the reality of the existence of Light and says that perceptible light is one of the manifestations of the Light. Ṣadrā criticizes him for confusing the whole issue. His argument is that light is one of the modes of existence, which is accepted as the Real. It may be said that Light may be taken as a symbol. But as the problem has been thoroughly thrashed out by the Muslim thinkers, we can say that Light, as a symbol, signifies manifestation or appearance of existence. It does not stand for existence itself.²⁹ Suhrawardī generalized the perceptible light and made it a symbol of existence. The light by nature is self-manifest, it illuminates all things

and is the yardstick of the degrees of existence. Matter is either darkness or it is latent light i.e. it has capacity to be kindled. The advocates of the doctrine of the Unity of reflection regard the essences (*al-māhiyyāt*) as mirrors, capable of being illuminated. Things or their essences are called *'a'dām mutaḳābilah*, in which existence may be reflected. Thus things are potentialities. Ibn al-'Arabī put the essences (*a'yān thābitah*) in the mind of God, and thus attributed to them some sort of existence. Before Suhrawardī, three kinds of distinctions were made among things; complete opposition, partial difference, and essential similarity but accidental difference. Suhrawardī introduced a fourth kind of distinction, i.e. difference in degree of existence.³⁰ Both Ṣadrā and Sabzawāri accept the fourth type of distinction as valid, and they elaborated a scheme of gradation of existence accordingly.

There are at least four versions of the doctrine of the Unity of Being: (1) the Unity of reflection (2) the Unity of essences (*al-māhiyyāt*) i.e. the things have nothing common except the essence (3) all things are one existentially and the differences are merely appearances (4) the Existence is one but the existents differ from one another in grades of being.³¹ Ṣadrā seems to accept the fourth version of the doctrine, for he emphasizes the unity, but at the same time he admits that in reality there are various grades of being also. Sabzawāri's position is the same. The question of priority and posteriority is also linked with it. Sabzawāri went into the details of this question and took into account various types of priority.

There are some terms essentially related to the notion of Divine Unity, which Sabzawāri has used for elucidating the doctrine of Unity. *Tawḥīd Allāh* (تَوْحِيدُ اللَّهِ) means recognition of the unity of God. *Tawḥīd al-dhāt* and *al-tawḥīd al-dhātī* (تَوْحِيدُ الذَّاتِ، التَّوْحِيدُ الذَّاتِي) mean the unity of the Divine Essence. *Tawḥīd al-Ṣifāt* (تَوْحِيدُ الصِّفَاتِ) means the unity of the Divine Attributes. *Al-tawḥīd al-af'ālī* (التَّوْحِيدُ الْأَفْعَالِي) means the unity of the Divine Acts. *Tawḥīd fi'l Allāh* (تَوْحِيدُ فِعْلِ اللَّهِ) means the unity of the Divine Act. *Tawḥīd kalimat Allāh* (تَوْحِيدُ كَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ) refers to the unity of the Divine Word.³²

It may be summarized that Sabzawāri maintains that:

(a) The Existence is real, self-evident, and essences or accidents happen to it. (b) There is Unity of Existence, and it is existence itself that differentiates, as well as unites the individual beings. (c) God is the Absolute and Pure Existence, for His Existence is His Essence and His Essence is His Existence. In God Essence and Existence are identical. There is no question of priority or posteriority of Existence and Essence in His Case. He is infinitely above infinity as regards number, time, and intensity of existence. (d) Though all beings derive their existence from one Source, God, their concrete existence is prior to their essence, for the essences are abstracted from existence and are

therefore dependent on existence.

The Finite Beings: Their Gradation and Differentiation

In the section dealing with the problem of the unity and plurality, Sabzawāri discusses the nature of the relationship between God and other beings. He, in the tradition of *al-hikmah*, falls back on the symbolism of light, very popular in Iranian mystical as well as philosophical literature. It is true that he is inclined to endorse the early Fahlawiyūn (Pahlawī i.e. Zoroastrian) doctrine of the opposition between light and darkness as the two conflicting elements or forces responsible for the emergence of all beings, but it should be kept in mind that the symbolism of light is common in the literatures of all the religions. Moreover it should not be also ignored that he does not even remotely accept dualism of any type. Further, the Quran itself has repeatedly made use of the symbol of light for the existence. As the light has various degrees of intensity, in the same way existence has various degrees. Light varies in intensity according to the distance of the illuminated objects from the source of light. Mullā Ṣadrā also subscribes to this view. Sabzawāri is a follower of Mullā Ṣadrā in this respect too. Darkness alludes to the distance from the source of light. Darkness is also symbol of non-existence. Both Ṣadrā and Sabzawāri hold the view that all possible existents are grounded in existence. Light, however strong or weak, rich or poor, is light. It has a wide expanse with regard to its degrees, and each degree in itself has a wide expanse with regard to its relation with its various recipients. The same is true about existence. It has various degrees in terms of intensity and weakness, priority and posteriority. It means that there are degrees of existence in accordance with the spatio-temporal position of an existent in relation to the Source of Being. Sabzawāri does not admit any possibility of the compositeness of existence, for it is always simple. All the degrees of existence comprise simple existence, and go back to the same origin, which signifies a peculiar unity, and is different from any of the unities as commonly understood. This is the way how all existents are unified. In the terms of the Ṣūfī philosophy we can say that Sabzawāri believes in the doctrine of the oneness of the origin of all beings. This doctrine is different from pantheism, which holds that all beings are essentially one. He rejects the peripatetic view, according to which existence is derived merely as a concept from the Divine Existence.³³

Existentialist Approach

A term often used to explain the relation of the Divine Being and the particular beings is *al-tashakkuk* (التَشَكُّك), which is translated as

gradation. Its related term, occurring in the *Manzūmah* repeatedly, is *al-tashkik* (التشكيك) meaning analogicity or analogical gradation. These terms refer to the finite beings, which share Existence as their common ground. In the gems dealing with necessity and possibility, Sabzawāri has elaborated his concept of the contingent beings in details. The characteristics of the particulars correspond to those of quiddities, for we know the things through the impressions and from the ideas we form of them in our mind. The nature of the beings-other-than-ourselves is not comprehended directly by our minds. It is knowable through sense-data and their interaction with the ideas already formed in the mind. The rationalist-idealist maintains that at first we have the ideas, innate and inborn; then coming across their copies they are awakened in the mind and we recognize the things and name them accordingly. The empiricists claim that mind is a blank slate, having no impressions at all, and whatever impressions are engraved on it are acquired from the objects of the external world through the mediation of sense-data, which are combined together according to certain laws to form ideas. There is a third view, which holds that whatever is revealed to us in our existential experience is valid. But at the same time it also asserts that we can never know other beings directly and with certainty. Certain is only that which is subjectively experienced. Sabzawāri seems to subscribe to the third view. Muṭahhari, in his commentary on the *Manzūmah*, says that knowledge is basically self-knowledge, which in Iranian-Muslim philosophy is sometimes called 'knowledge by presence' (علم الحضور). It is surprising that the mystics and 'urafā' propound a theory of knowledge which is similar to modern existentialist view of knowledge. It would be rather more in the fitness of things to say that both the existentialists and the 'urafā' distinguish between two types of knowledge; one type of knowledge is self-knowledge, and the other is knowledge of other beings and things. The first knowledge is immediate, subjective, unanalysable, and incommunicable, while the second type is indirect, objective, analysable and demonstrable. Some existentialists, for instance Kierkegaard, go to the extent of totally rejecting the possibility of objective knowledge, and regard it as a fabrication of mind, having no relevance to the reality. The other existentialists, like J.P. Sartre, do not accept Kierkegaardian notion of subjectivity, and also do not regard objectivity as a mere fiction. In knowledge-process the immediate and the mediate are inseparable, but all knowledge involves both the factors. Ṣadrā takes existentialist position when he says that if a man wants to attain knowledge he should acquire it from within, i.e. on the basis of *m'arifah* of his own existence; it is the only way to know the whole existence. Existence of one's own being is revealed in the subjective experience. If one desires to understand the nature of pain, he has to undergo himself the

experience of pain. Otherwise he cannot know what pain is. The pain cannot be defined by means of its essence, which is unobtainable. Similar is the case of pleasure or any other state of feeling or emotion. Existence, being indefinable and indescribable, cannot be known and understood in terms of concepts. It is obvious that knowledge of existence is possible for human beings only, though Sabzawāri has not made this point explicit.

In order to understand the nature of existential experience, one has to know what existentialist approach is, and one should also understand different modes of existence as explained by the existentialist thinkers. The basic thesis of existentialism is: 'Existence precedes essence.' Existence or being (*sein*, in German) is always concrete, individual, particular. However, when we use the term *being* or *existence* in a general way, it refers to something which can neither be described nor defined. Most of the existentialists will agree with Heidegger that 'being' or 'sein' is not 'a being' (*das sein*). It is not a particular being. 'A being' has or is in being. Being is determinant of such a being as a being. A being is ontic, for it is just without being aware of its being. Its mode of being is handiness, which means that it acquires its meaning when it is used by a human being. Human existence is termed by Heidegger as *Dasein*. He does not use the term *existenz* for non-human beings. The being, to which human existence is specifically related, is called *Existenz*. Human *existenz* is a being, which, in being, is interested in his very being. It is ontological, in the sense that it is conscious of being a being. In other words awareness of *Existence* is the distinguishing feature of human existence. According to him the essence of human *existenz* is in its *existenz*. Such an understanding is called *existential*. Human *existenz* is aware of being-in-the-world, and it is, therefore, 'thereness'. "Thereness" implies being-with-others, and also a historical consciousness. No other being knows that it has to die, only human being is aware of death, and is, therefore, being-unto-death. Death makes *dasein* temporal and finite. Unawareness of this fact makes *existenz* of a human being unauthentic, and he takes refuge in day-to-day-being. The terms employed by Sartre are similar. He makes distinction between two types of being: being-in-itself, and being-for-itself. Being-for-itself is human existence, which is conscious of its own existence; it is free, and is condemned to be free. It is at the same time a being-for-another. Sartre denies Aristotelian doctrine of potentiality. He says that whatever is manifests itself. But the denial of potentiality does not exclude potentiality itself, for Sartre holds that the only source of possibility is being-for-itself. Even value is nothing but a modality of nothing. He means to say that all values are grounded in human existence, for it is the existence that brings about nothing into being. A similar notion is related to transcendence in the

philosophy of Karl Jaspers. In his view, *existenz* is derived lexically from *Ek-zistenz*, which means 'to-stand-out'. It means projection or transcendence. It is clear that the atheistic version of existentialism is fundamentally incompatible with the religious notion of existence. But there are many points of agreement between existentialist notion of existence and the Muslim mystics' notion of existence.

First two couplets of the *Manzūmah* emphasize the reality of existence and its indefinability very clearly. Existence is fundamentally real and all the things are defined through it. Sabzawāri further asserts that existence is the source of all values. He, besides elaborating different grades of existence, also elucidates various modes of existence. Despite his advocacy of the Unity of Being, in the sense of *wahdat al-wujūd*, he believes that all particulars are existents are objectively real, unique, and concrete. In addition to all these points, the point that brings him closer to the existentialist view of existence is his view that existence cannot be derived from anywhere else. In other words, he emphasizes the autonomy of existence. These ideas are traceable neither in Platonic thought, nor in Aristotelian tradition. He is closer to the Christian medieval philosophers, who reject the primacy of the Universals. When the origin of existentialism is traced back in early philosophies, some scholars, not unjustifiably, refer to Saint Augustine. There are many elements common in mystical approach and existentialist approach. What is called mystic experience is immediate, indefinable, unanalysable, and subjective. Existential experience has the same features. The common factor in both the approaches is that both of them agree that existence is revealed in all its concreteness and uniqueness in immediate extra-rational experience. The object of experience in both of them is existence itself, and the starting point of the quest for existence is human *dasein*. *Ṣūfīs* consider self-realization the key to true knowledge of the Divine Being. Kierkegaard declared that his mission was Socratic, and his dictum was: 'know thy self.' One who realizes his self, realizes God (مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ). But all these similarities do not prove that the *Ṣūfīs* or *Ṣadrā* or Sabzawāri may be labelled as existentialists in the strict sense of the term as it is used in contemporary philosophy. One important point of difference is that Kierkegaard aimed at fighting against all-embracing pantheism prevalent at that time, and which threatened to take away the right of individuality from human beings. On the other hand, 'urafā' of Iranian tradition believed in the Unity of Being. Theists among existentialists affirm the Existence of God on the basis of existential authenticity, which is similar to the truth revealed in mystic experience. Both *Ṣūfīs* and existentialists regard reason as insufficient as a tool of knowledge in the matters of supra-physical reality. *Ṣūfīs* consider that the immediate experience can apprehend the nature of reality as a whole. Intellect conceives reality in

parts, for its function is analysis, and it is incapable of having the vision of totality and unity.

As a basis for drawing parallelism, we may compare the views of Sabzawāri and those of existentialists regarding the modes of existence. Sabzawāri in the beginning of the second gem says:

ثُمَّتَ نَفْسِي فَهَكَ وَاضْبِطِ
وَجُوبِ امْتِنَاعٍ أَوْ إِمْكَانِ
ذَاتُ تَأْسٍ فِيهِ بِالْوُجُودِ
إِنَّ الْوُجُودَ رَابِطٌ وَرَابِطِي
قَدْ كَانَ ذَالِجِهَاتٍ فِي الْأَذْهَانِ
وَهِيَ غَنِيَّةٌ عَنِ الْحُدُودِ

“Existence is (divided into) copulative and inhering, then self-subsistent.

Take this (division) and keep it in mind.”

“Existence is possessed of ‘explicit modes’ in the mind; necessity, impossibility, and possibility.

These stand beyond definitions. Thus they have a perfect model in existence.”³⁴

According to Sabzawāri, existence may be divided into two categories i.e. *al-rābiṭ* (copulative), and *al-rābiṭi* (inhering) existence. He, on the authority of Mir Dāmād and Ṣadrā, holds that inhering existence is copulative, for it is not-in-itself. It is different from the existence of accidents. Sabzawāri makes distinction between existence-in-itself and existence-not-in-itself. The former is what is meant by the verb ‘be’ in the complete sense, while the latter conveys only its incomplete sense. Not-in-itself is actualized in the ‘composite whetherness’ (الهِئَةِ الْمُرَكَّبَةِ). He further explains three modes of being; in-itself, for-itself, and for-something-else (فِي نَفْسِهِ، لِنَفْسِهِ، لِغَيْرِهِ). God is Existence-in-Himself-for-Himself-by-Himself. Among these modes of existence ‘in-itself’ is either ‘for-itself’ or ‘for-something-else.’ The substances are ‘in-itself,’ and accidents are ‘for-something-else.’ Though the modern existentialists do not discuss the nature of substance and accident in the terms of classical philosophy, yet concepts similar to these are not absent in their writings. All the modes of existence are the modes of possibility, which is antithesis of both necessity and impossibility. Similarly impossibility is opposed to both necessity and possibility. Sabzawāri considers ‘impossibility’ also as a mode of existence, perhaps he thinks so because of its relation to possibility. If taken as antithesis of necessity, it can be nothing but non-existence. Heidegger has been criticized by analytical philosophers for referring to ‘nothing’ as a category of being, but Sabzawāri makes distinction between impossibility and absolute non-existence. He may be credited with being more

logical, consistent, and cautious in his use of terminology.

Instead of going into all the details of Sabzawāri's analysis of being I would confine the present discussion to Sabzawāri's use of different terms for various modes of existence. *Al-wujūd al-'ihāṭī* (the comprehensive existence), *al-wujūd al-'aṣīl* (fundamentally real existence), *wujūd al-'a'rāḍ* (the existence of accidents), *al-wujūd al-'imkānī* (possible existence), *al-wujūd al-ṭab'ī wa al-taṭaffulī* (subordinate and dependent existence), *al-wujūd al-tajarrudī* (abstract existence), *wujūd al-jawhar* (the existence of a substance), *al-wujūd al-ḥaqīqī* (the real existence), *al-wujūd al-khārijī* (external existence), *al-wujūd al-khāṣ* (particular existence), *al-wujūd al-dhihnī* (mental existence), *al-wujūd al-rābiṭ* (copulative existence), *al-wujūd al-rābiṭ al-mahḍ* (sheer copulative existence), *al-wujūd al-rābiṭī* (inhering existence), *al-wujūd dhu al-taqayyud* (existence in the non-absolute sense), *wujūd al-'araḍ* (existence of an accident), *al-wujūd al-'aynī* (concrete existence), *al-wujūd al-katbī* (written existence), *al-wujūd al-lafẓī* (verbal existence), *al-wujūd al-māddī* (material existence), *al-wujūd al-muta'akhhir* (posterior existence), *al-wujūd al-mahmūlī* (predicative existence), *al-wujūd al-muṭlaq* (Absolute Existence), *al-wujūd al-muqayyad* (determined existence), *al-wujūd al-munbasit* (the ever-expanding or unfolded existence), *al-wujūd al-nafsī* (self-subsistent existence), *al-wujūd lā fī nafsih* (existence-not-in-itself), *al-wujūd fī nafsih* (existence-in-itself), *al-wujūd fī nafsih li-ghayrih* (existence-in-itself-for-something-else), *al-wujūd fī nafsih li-nafsih* (existence-in-itself-for-itself), *al-wujūd fī nafsih li-nafsih bi-ghayrih* (existence-in-itself-for-itself-by-something-else), *al-wujūd fī nafsih li-nafsih bi-nafsih* (existence-in-itself-for-itself-by-itself), and *al-wujūdāt al-khāṣṣah* (particular existences).³⁵ All the various forms of existence are reducible to some basic modes such as necessary, possible, and impossible; or according to another categorization existence in-itself, and not-in-itself, then various sub-modes under these modes. Sabzawāri, despite his interest in existence, has no special theory of man.

Possibility and coming-into-Being

Possibility, as opposed to necessity, is the mode of all beings except Divine Being, on whom their existence depends. According to Sabzawāri there are three explicit modes of existence i.e. necessity, possibility and impossibility, which are mentally posited as relations, because they can be applied to non-existent as well, and entail infinite regress. Sabzawāri denies that they are external things. Impossibility is not something positive. Those who say that if impossibilities are not actualized, they negate the possibility of possibility.³⁶ Each one of these modes is by-itself, or by-something-else, or in-relation-to some-

thing-else. Possibility by-something-else is excluded from this division, for possibility by something else is a contradiction in terms. By-itself cannot be transmuted into something other than itself. It is by-something-else that can become something else. There are three kinds of relations: necessity-in-relation-to-something-else is the necessity of the actualization by way of 'demanding,' impossibility-in-relation-to-something-else is the necessity of the non-existence of a thing with regard to something else by absolute demand, as in the relation of cause and effect. Possibility-in-relation-to-something-else is the non-necessity of the existence and non-existence of a thing with regard to something else, as in the case of two necessary existences, because the relation of necessitation would be contradictory to their being necessary.³⁷

The problem of possibility is discussed by Sabzawāri on two levels, i.e. in relation to quiddity, and in relation to external world. In the gem dealing with 'inquiries concerning possibility itself and its properties,' at the very outset, he says that 'possibility occurs (to a quiddity) through analysis.'³⁸ He regards quiddity as a mental existence, and distinguishes it from essence. Some times he uses it as a synonym of essence. Quiddity (*māhiyyah*) is also called essence and reality if it has external existence. He gives the example of phoenix, and says we can speak of its quiddity, but cannot speak of its essence or reality. Essence is *jawhar* or *dhāt*, for it refers to some external object. However, each is a secondary intelligible (*al-ma'qūl al-thānī* المَعْقُولُ الثَّانِي). Quiddity is nothing but itself qua itself, neither existent nor non-existent.³⁹ Sabzawāri discussed its nature in the seventh section of the first gem, and devoted all sections of the fifth gem to an elaborate treatment of it. Quiddity is mixed, absolute, non-conditioned, and at the same time conditioned by something. It is also negatively conditioned. Quiddity, when called universal, refers to a class of beings. Its individual is the mediator of occurrence to it. Universal itself exists in the mind only. Quiddity requires possibility, which is *a priori*.

Possibility is of many types. The general possibility is the negation of necessity, it is 'not impossibility.' In a more special sense it is the negation of all kinds of necessity, whether it is due to the essence of a subject or due to a property, or due to time. According to Ibn Sīnā, the more special possibility is exemplified by (the potentiality of) writing. The third kind of possibility is the future possibility. The possible things belonging to the past or the present are either non-existent or existent. Only the future possibilities remain in their pure state, for their state is unknown, or their existence is undetermined. Al-Ṭūsī, in his chapter on 'contradiction' in his commentary on *Al-'Ishārāt*, states that: "The truthfulness and falsity sometimes become determined, as in the case of the implicit modes of necessity and impossibility...; sometimes they are not determined...especially in the case of 'future possibility.'⁴⁰

Possibility is also related to coming-into-being, which is succession of two states viz. non-existence—existence. Sabzawāri holds that there is no difference between coming-into-being and continuance with regard to need, because a possible thing has no requirement. At whichever stage of reality a possible may be, whether it be in the eternal duration, or in time, or in a unit of time, or be it temporal or perpetual, it is the very need and want of a cause. It is not an essence having a need. It subsists by the cause, acquiring an essence through the essence of the cause. As regards Divine Action and its continuation What is true of the initiation of 'Act' is true of all the succeeding stages. Hence, when something possible is caused by the first 'existence' its continuance and perpetuation also is because of the same. The requirement of a cause for continuation also is due to the nature of possibility itself. Sabzawāri maintains that any existent named pre-eternal in terms of time is an object of making. Thus he regards the world-soul and every other thing considered by philosophers as pre-eternal (*azali*) as caused by God. His argument is that 'eternity' and 'not-being-preceded-by-non-existence' do not negate dependence. He applies the same rational principle to the Divine Attributes and the Divine Acts also. In his words, likewise every quiddity has an essential property which is dependent upon it, and which cannot be posterior to it in time.

لَيْسَ الْخُدُوثُ عِلَّةً مِنْ رَأْسِهِ شَرْطاً وَلَا شَظْراً وَلَا بِنَفْسِهِ

*'Coming-into-being is not the cause of the need at all, neither by being a condition, nor by being a part, nor by itself.'*⁴¹

He explains this by pointing out that coming-into-being is a quality of existence, because it means existence being preceded by non-existence so that it is posterior to existence, which is posterior to bringing-to-existence, which is posterior to the need, which again is posterior to its cause.⁴² 'The need is followed by coming-into-being when enumeration of the degrees is made in a successive order in such a way that a thing first of all subsists, then becomes possible, then becomes being-in-need, then is 'made necessary,' then becomes necessary, then is made to exist, then exists, and then comes-into-being. This precedence is in terms of essence not in terms of time.⁴³ Sabzawāri says that some theologians hold that a thing becomes existent by preponderance-by-something-else, but they deny the necessitating and necessity in the bringing-into-being of a possible. He refutes this view. Preponderance, i.e. an active agent giving preponderance to the existence or non-existence of a possible, necessarily requires the necessitating of the particular existence of a possible or its non-existence. He further adds that nothingness of a possible (possible being in itself is nothing) negates

the essential preponderance completely in both of its kinds: sufficient and non-sufficient. A quiddity is essentially nothing but itself, and so long it does not accidentally come into the domain of existence, it is nothing. It cannot even be said to be itself. Its essence is its possibility, and its need. In the case of quiddity its essence precedes its existence by way of a conceptual precedence. But this type of precedence is due to the working of the mind only. It is very important to note that, here, Sabzawāri advances the existentialist thesis by saying that in the external world the contrary is the case, i.e. existence precedes the essential properties, the essence and its possibility and need. He clarifies this point further by adding that 'as long as there is no existence there is no quiddity, nor any appearance of its essential properties. Thus there is no quiddity so that it might require preponderance in either of its kinds.'⁴⁴

A possible is actualized in a particular way, because of the preceding necessity in a possible, issuing from a cause. There is also a 'following necessity,' which follows a possible in actua after its actualization.

'Thus a possible is surrounded by two kinds of necessity.'

'The relation between necessity and possibility is like the relation between complete and incomplete.'⁴⁵

Sabzawāri introduces the concept of being-through-preparedness, which is different from preparedness. He says that:

"...The preparedness of a thing for becoming another thing has two relations, one to the thing which has the nature of preparedness, and another to the thing for which it is prepared. In the first case it is called preparedness; for example, a sperm is said to have the nature of preparedness for being a man. And in the second case, it is called "possibility-through-preparedness;" for example, a man is possible to exist in the sperm. If by way of a loose expression it is said that the sperm is possible to become a man,...."⁴⁶

Possibility-through-preparedness is *al-'imkān al-'isti'dādī* الإمكان الاستعدادي. This is realizable possibility i.e. *al-'imkān al-wuqū'ī* الإمكان الوقوعي. Preparedness is in actua from the point of view of its being a special quality in matter, while it is in potentia from the point of view of its being possibility and receptivity for the thing, for which it is prepared. Šadrā has also made this point in *Al-'Asfār*. Thus potentiality and actuality are two sides of the possibility-through-preparedness, or it may be said that they are one, but when viewed from two sides are differentiated. There are two views regarding its relation to the essential possibility i.e. *al-'imkān al-dhātī* الإمكان الذاتي. The first is that 'possibility-through-preparedness' is the same as essential possibility with an additional aspect. The second is that essential possibility is the source of it, and the Active Intellect *al-'aql al-fa'āl* (العقل الفعال) is the intermediary. The essential possibility is both

existence and non-existence, it is the Agent which determines potentiality. Preparedness is removed by the occurrence of actuality. On the contrary, the essential possibility always follows the quiddity, and is, therefore, inseparable from the possible thing. Preparedness is in the "locus of a possible thing." Sabzawāri holds that in preparedness is intensity and weakness.

وَأَنَّ هَذَا فِي مَحَلِّ الْمُمْكِنِ وَفِيهِ شِدَّةٌ وَضَعْفٌ أَتَقِنِ

This is in corroboration with Ibn al-'Arabī's saying: 'What was demanded by your *'ayn* through 'preparedness' was bestowed upon you by God.'

Coming-into-being is the result of the act of making (*الجعل*) i.e. *al-ja' l*. Making, as the act of creation (not emanation) covers both composite and simple beings. The simple making is called *al-ja' l al-basit*. There are three synonymous terms for composite making: *al-ja' l al-ta' lifi*, *al-ja' l al-tarkibi*, and *al-ja' l al-mu' allaf*. In Sabzawāri's view the simple making is that whose object is copulative existence. The composite making is the making of a thing (a) something or (b) a making which is transitive to two objects. The composite making is inconceivable (a) between the thing and itself (b) between it and its essentials and (c) between it and its inseparable accidents. Following are three examples corresponding to the above-mentioned inconceivabilities: (a) Man is man. (b) Man is an animal. (c) Four is an even number. All these are necessary relations, while necessity and impossibility are grounds of self-sufficiency. The ground of possibility is need.⁴⁸

Sabzawāri examines two doctrines concerning the making of quiddity, existence, and becoming. The first, attributed to the illuminationists, states that quiddity is the effect brought about by the Maker, which in its turn necessitates the becoming-existent without demanding from the Maker either existence or the relation of qualification, because both of them, being rational abstractions, belong to quiddity. This doctrine was prevalent at the time of Shaykh al-'Isrāq and his followers. Sabzawāri rejects it. Suhrawardī thought that if existence was held as an object of making, quiddities would be regarded as self-subsistent, and independent of the Maker. Lāhijī, an illuminationist, testifies that his fellow thinkers wanted to dispense with the idea of the self-subsistence of the quiddities. But they did not realize that this gave rise to another equally wrong belief that existence is not a flow from God. Ṣadrā, contrary to this view, maintained that first of all existence was made, for there could be no quiddity before making. Existence is made essentially, and quiddity is made accidentally.⁴⁹

The second doctrine is that of peripatetics, who assert that existence and the relation of qualification are made. This school holds

that the effect of the Maker is a simple matter, which is analysed by the intellect into 'qualified' and 'quality'. In reality the simple matter is existence, for the relation of qualification presupposes the actualization of the two terms (qualified and quality). Sabzawāri enumerates the kinds of making by multiplying four (essential composite making, accidental composite making, essential simple making and accidental simple making) by three (i.e. existence, quiddity, and becoming). He says that the valid kinds of making are: existence being essentially made by way of simple making, and existence being accidentally made by way of composite making, and quiddity and the relation of qualification being accidentally made by way of both simple and composite making. Accordingly there are eighteen kinds of made or created objects. Sabzawāri has given a complete list of them along with those, which are wrongly supposed to be made.⁵⁰

NON-EXISTENCE

Sabzawāri has not committed the mistake of regarding non-existence (*adam*) as something positive. In the very beginning of his discourse on 'some of the properties of non-existence and the non-existent' he has made his position clear.

..... مَا لَيْسَ مَوْجُودًا أَيْكُونُ لَيْسًا

'What is not existent is non-existent.' It means that non-existence is nothing but the opposite of existence. He maintains that a quiddity which is not existent is a pure 'non-existent.' It is not subsistent before its existence. Mu'tazilah considered subsistence as more general than existence, and hence they held that a quiddity in the state of non-existence was subsistent. They were of the view that a non-existent, being subsistent, is neither negated nor is it existent. Mu'tazilah deny an intermediate state between existent and non-existent. A state is neither existent nor non-existent, it is defined as an attribute of an existent. Sabzawāri considers this view absurd, because a non-existent cannot have subsistence.⁵¹

The second point is that non-existences, having no subsistence, are not distinguishable from one another and there is no causal relationship among them, for causality applies to the existents only.⁵² However, he accepts the possibility of an affirmative judgement on the mentally non-existents i.e. the concepts of non-existents. For instance it can be said that 'the sea of quicksilver is cold,' or that 'the co-existence of two contradictories is different from the co-existence of two contraries.' But he warns that affirming something of something presupposes the existence of the subject in the external world. Non-existents can be

affirmed of something in mind only.⁵³

Sabzawāri regards both existence and non-existence as absolute and determined. But in the case of non-existence he qualifies it with 'the concept of non-existence,⁵⁴ which again means that non-existence is just a concept, it is not existent in any sense of the term. To be more precise non-existence is not even opposed to existence, for Sabzawāri says that 'there is nothing to be opposed to existence.' Two opposites are both things pertaining to existence, which occur to one and the same substratum, and being both subsumed under a proximate genus.⁵⁵

Non-existence engulfs existence on both the sides, but it is true of existence-by-something else only. The Necessary Existence is neither preceded nor succeeded by non-existence by virtue of being Pure and Absolute, and by being the Source of all existence. Non-existence of a possible being means cessation of existence. Sabzawāri asserts that 'the coming back of what has ceased to exist is an impossibility.'⁵⁶ He refutes all the contrary views. However, in the case of man he clearly says:

مَا ضَرَّ أَنَّ الْجِسْمَ غَبَّ مَا فَنِي هُوَ الْمَعَادُ فِي الْمَعَادِ قَوْلَنَا

'Our thesis is not harmed by the fact that the body after having decayed, comes back in the resurrection.'⁵⁷

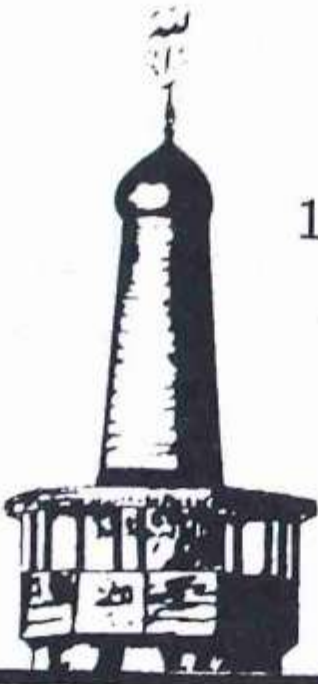
He has advanced his arguments in support of his belief in the resurrection of body in the sixth part of his *Sharḥ-e manzūmah*, i.e. 'On the Resurrection' (*al-ma'ād*). Sabzawāri has thus maintained consistently a distinction between human existence and non-human existences throughout his treatise on metaphysics.

At the end it can be safely said that Sabzawāri's analysis of existence is uniquely rigorous logically and at the same time penetrating. No other Muslim thinker, during the last two centuries, dealt with the problem of existence with so much knowledge of the Greco-Muslim tradition of thought, and originality. He cannot be dubbed merely as an interpreter of either Suhrawardī or Mullā Ṣadrā. He has differed with both of them on many issues. *Ghurar al-farā'id*, besides dealing with existence, has also brought the problems of knowledge into new light. His treatment of epistemology is equally penetrating, which needs to be studied separately. There is no wonder that his *Sharḥ-e manzūmah-ye hikmat* is studied as a textbook of metaphysics for more than a century.

NOTES

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 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.
 4. M. Muhaqqiq and Izutsu (ed.), *Sharh-e ghurar al-fara'id*, (second edition), Tehran, 1981, p. 4.
- All 'Arabi verses of *Sharh-e Manzumah* are quoted from the text of this edition.
5. *Iqbal, Sayr-e Falsafah dar Iran*, translation of Iqbal's *Development of Metaphysics in Persia* by A.J. Aryanpur, Tehran, pp. 122-23.
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 7. *Ibid.*
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 11. Ṭabāṭabā'i, 'Allāmah Sayyid Moḥammad Ḥusayn, *Uṣūl-e-Falsafah wa Rawish-e riyālism*, Tehran.
 12. *The Metaphysics of Sabzawari*, p. 31
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 14. *The Metaphysics of Sabzawari*, p. 31.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
 16. Muṭahhari, *Sharh-e Mabsūṭah-ye Manzumah*, p. 29.
 17. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-33.
 18. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-33.
 19. *The Metaphysics of Sabzawari*, pp. 32-33.
 20. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-36.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
 22. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-46.
 23. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
 24. *Sharh-e ghurar al-fara'id*, pp. 653-55.
 25. *The Metaphysics of Sabzawari*, p. 41.
 26. Muṭahhari, *Sharh-e Mabsūṭah-ye Manzumah*, pp. 209-12.
 27. *Ibid.*, pp. 216-17.
 28. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
 29. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
 30. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
 31. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-25.
 32. *Sharh-e ghurar al-fara'id*, pp. 604-5.
 33. *The Metaphysics of Sabzawari*, pp. 48-51.
 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99-100.
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 36. *The Metaphysics of Sabzawari*, pp. 100-2.
 37. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-4.
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
 39. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
 40. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-7.
 41. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-13.
 42. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
 43. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-17.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20.
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49. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-97.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
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57. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.



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Mullā Ṣadrā's Conception of Motion

by Dr. Maḥdī Dehbāshī

1. Some Basic Principles

Before we begin our commentary on Ṣadrā's text, it might be helpful to the reader if we reviewed some fundamental principles and suppositions of Ṣadrā's general philosophical position. Here, of course, we can only treat them briefly and in a mere outline. A full presentation and defense of them would require much more space than is available to us and further such a complete exposition is not necessary for our purpose. The reader can grasp his position concerning motion with a general understanding of them.

In our opinion, then, there are three principles, explained and

Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640), commonly known as Mullā Ṣadrā, is the most important philosopher of the Muslim world in the second phase of the history of Muslim philosophy known as al-Ḥikmah. Al-Ḥikmah is an attempt to synthesize mysticism and scholasticism on the basis laid down by Suhrawardī and Ibn al-'Arabī. Ṣadrā's philosophy is culmination of the al-Ḥikmah philosophy.

This article is a part of a detailed exposition and analysis of Mullā Ṣadrā's position with regard to motion. The first part of the article is an exposition of three basic principles postulated by Ṣadrā throughout his discussion of motion. The second part summarizes Ṣadrā's text, chapter by chapter, to recall the principal points of his argument.

This summary may help the reader to determine Ṣadrā's position in the context of various theories of motion and different philosophers' views on this issue. It is important to evaluate how far has Ṣadrā in his exposition and defence of his doctrine of transubstantial motion (chapters 18-21) succeeded in meeting the objections raised by other philosophers. A critical study of *al-'Asfār* and Ṣadrā's other works in support of his position would help the reader to fully grasp and appreciate his contribution to philosophy, specially in this context.

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defended elsewhere in *al-'Asfār* (I, pp. 35 ff; III, pp. 110 ff; VI, pp. 110 ff):

1. the primacy of existence over essence in the concrete, (*aṣālat al-wujūd*);
2. the principle of grades of existence (*tashkīk*);
3. the simple reality is everything (*baṣīṭ al-ḥaqīqah kull al-'ashyā'*).

The first, and perhaps the most important principle supposed in Ṣadrā's treatment of motion is the primacy of existence in the concrete, that is, in the order of things actually in the universe. This means that for him existence is the ultimate reality which encompasses everything. Nothing escapes it since nothing is non-existent.

Philosophers in the essentialist tradition, like Ibn Sīnā, held that being is firstly essence or nature (the possible) and only secondarily existence (the actual). Ṣadrā, however, like Aquinas, holds that existence (*esse*) is the fundamental ontological perfection of which essence is merely a limited manifestation.

It would be well here to examine more closely just what Ṣadrā understands by "existence." In the first place, existence can only be experienced, not defined. Mullā Ṣadrā points out that real definition is the result of conceptual analysis in which the entity analysed is specified according to genus and specific difference. But from one point of view, nothing can be more generic and determinable than existence, since it is common to everything. From another point of view, nothing can be more specific and determined, since it permeates every aspect of everything right down to individuating characteristics and notes. In a word, existence omits nothing whatsoever and so, properly speaking, it cannot be defined. At the same time there is no more evident characteristic of things than existence. Since it is all pervasive, what exists cannot be singled out and set off over against what does not exist. Even if we talk about the merely possible, we mean that which can exist, but in fact does not, and so the very notion of possibility supposes existence. Again since existence is so fundamental it can only be denoted and any description or definition must be circular.

Since existence contains everything that is common to existents and everything that differentiates them, when it is predicated of different existents it is from one point of view equivocal (since in specificity it is different in each case) and from another point of view is univocal (since generically it is common to all). So Ṣadrā says that it is equivocal in its concrete application, but is univocal in its abstract semantic meaning.

Ṣadrā distinguishes two senses of "essence." "Essence 1" corresponds to Aristotle's "tō ti ēn eīnai" and to Ibn Sīnā's "*māhiyyah*."¹ In

this sense, essence is an abstract formal universal, the quiddity of something, and as such exists only in the mind. Thus, "humanity" is the essence of Socrates. Essence in this sense does not distinguish from one another the individuals to which it applies. It is common to all. "Essence 2" is expressed in the phrase "*mahīyu al-shay', huwa huwa*" and is best translated by the question, "What is the thing?" Ṣadrā remarks that this question is not answered by "It is human," but only by the tautology "It is itself" and so "essence 2" clearly means the concrete existing individual. When we experience such an individual, we experience something unique, and although we can describe certain features of it by predicates applicable to other individuals also, the individual existent as such cannot be conceptualized; it can only be experienced.

For Ṣadrā, then, essence 2 is objective in the sense of non-mental (independent of finite minds thinking them). Essence 1, however, is the product of mental analysis, even though it is not an arbitrary constituent. By this he means that what is conceived of in such a concept is neither real in the sense of existent nor unreal in the sense of purely fictitious. One is reminded of Scotus' "absolute nature" which is neither formally universal nor concretely singular. Existence, however, is identical with the real, the existent, the non-mental. It is, therefore, first, while essence 1 (quiddity) is existence's manifestation and appearance of the limited existent. Mind abstracts those limitations of the existent and this abstraction is essence 1. Thus a concrete, singular, existing man is an objective reality. Mind abstracts the concept "man" or "rational animal" and subsumes the concrete instance under the universal, since mind recognizes the concrete singular to be limited because it has a reality different from all other objects either in kind or in number or both.

It follows immediately that only existence is capable of being manifested, and in the actual finite world, this manifestation is in different kinds of existents which form a hierarchy in levels and degrees of perfection. This brings us to the second principle, called "analogical gradation."²

Whenever a general term is predicated of its particulars in such a way that there is an application common to them all, but still a difference, we have what is called analogical predication. When and if this predication is not merely metaphorical, then there is in the particulars themselves a reality which is graded according to levels and degrees. The exact logical and ontological analysis of analogical predication and its ontological referent, need not detain us here. Suffice it to say that Ṣadrā thinks that essences, in so far as they are concepts and abstract classifications, exist only in the mind. As such they do not have any counterpart in the concrete order of existence. If essence in

any sense, has a function in the non-mental world it cannot be apart from existence. Since existence has no essence in the sense of something abstract (essence 1), it cannot be grasped in a concept. In so far as existents are differentiated into individuals which are in an hierarchy of levels and degrees of perfection, they are identical with their essences (in the sense of essence 2). Existence then is the real, objective, non-mental ground of both the unity and the multiplicity of being, since existence leaves out nothing. The truth of existence is unity, but a unity internally differentiated and articulated. Existence, then, is primary and principal; essence is secondary and accidental. All ontological differentiation (cause and effect, unity and multiplicity, potentiality and actuality, prior and posterior, etc.) comes from and is within existence as the single reality which, without any additions from without, has all differences and distinctions within itself. In effect, the very same reality, existence, shared by two entities is that by which they are distinct and different from each other. This kind of differentiation is called by Ṣadrā "analogicity" in a more specialized sense. Ṣadrā illustrates this by referring to physical light which is the same despite varying degrees in terms of intensity and weakness, and is that by which objects are made manifest. "The reality of "existence" is the Light, the very nature of "light" being to be "self-manifesting in itself and bringing others into manifestation (*ẓāhir bi-nafsih wa muẓhir li-ghayrih*)."³ The varying intensities of light are not accounted for by supposing that light is mixed with darkness; nor does dim light lack anything of light. The variation in intensity itself belongs to the very reality of light itself. So too, is it in the case of existence. Its highest degree is Necessary Existence, pure perfection devoid of all limitation—pure actuality. Its lowest degree is prime matter, imperfect in every sense—pure potentiality. Between these extremes are the grades of existence which from reason's viewpoint are composed of perfection and imperfection, potentiality and actuality, in an ascending hierarchy.

Ṣadrā's technical term for this hierarchy is "*waḥdat tashkīk al-wujūd*," "the graded unity of existence." Such an emphasis upon the unity of existence leads us to the third basic principle to be considered, namely, that the simple reality is everything. The following immediately obtains: Necessary Existence is a reality simple in every respect and so Necessary Existence is everything (all existence) and all His truth is existence.⁴

At first reading this sounds like pantheism and indeed it is perilously close in expression but not in intention. Many theists, especially those who are deeply religious, use language expressing the closeness of God which goes to extremes which in a more sober moment they would deny. Thus mystics, Muslim and Christian alike, speak of their "unity" (intimate union) with God, while at the same time they realize that they

are creatures and quite distinct from God. Ṣadrā speaks of finitude and creaturehood too often to suppose that he meant to abandon it here. At any rate it would be well to offer an interpretation which avoids such an obvious inconsistency.

Sabzawāri points out that this principle of Ṣadrā is meant to emphasize the priority of unity over multiplicity in such a way that one should conceive of diversity within the realm of unity and not the converse. To speak of unity in diversity may mislead one into thinking that unity is something to be achieved by bringing together various parts. Thus everything is within the realm of the unity of existence and since God is Necessary and Perfect Existence everything is within Him not in the sense that creatures are parts of God (since He is simple), nor in the sense that creatures are somehow unreal and illusory (again since God is simple), but in the sense that all creatures depend absolutely on God and are distinguished from Him precisely in their multiplicity by which they manifest His infinite, simple perfection. In a word, it is less misleading to speak of creatures being within the realm of God (pantheism) than to speak of God being within creatures, since this latter way of speaking would tend to thinking of God's immanence as a formal principle (pantheism). Thus however much the formula "the simple reality is everything" may sound pantheistic, its intention is quite the opposite. It means to emphasize both the immanence of God and His transcendence as the creative source of everything. In other words, there is no reality other than Absolute Reality and so the world and the things within it are not God but their reality is none other than His.

One final word in this regard needs to be said. For Ṣadrā, God is not only the source of everything but He is also its end or goal. The only source of existential emanation in the descending and ascending curves of existence's circle is God, and every existent is in the way to return to its original source through transubstantial motion, that is to say that the observed multiplicity is ultimately reducible to the original unity. The transubstantial motion is necessary for every existent only for its ascending curve toward perfection because the descending curve of existence had taken place through emanation, as God said, "When He decrees a thing, He says to it: 'Be,' and it is."⁵ All things flow out from God and return to Him. From the original absolute Unity of Pure Act flows out, by God's creative act, the differentiated unity of creatures all of which are destined to return to Him in a unity with His Attributes, not His Essence. Ṣadrā, of course, distinguishes among the attributes of God those which are negative and those which are positive. Again he distinguishes those which are substantive and those which are relational. All negative properties come to a denial of contingency in God. All relational properties come to the affirmation of God as

the Creator. All positive and substantive attributes of God are original and essential to Him and so are identical with His existence. All relational properties are derivative and accidental, since they ultimately are grounded in the contingents themselves. Return to God in the unity of His attributes refers here to God's relational attributes only, not to His substantive or essential attributes.⁶

It is clear that by these three principles (primacy of existence, analogical predication and the comprehensiveness of the simple) Ṣadrā emphasizes continuity in his metaphysics. Hence in his treatment of motion he treats space and time not as independent existents but rather as integrated aspects of motion itself. Transubstantial motion is simply a continuum of spatio-temporal events. Consequently, such events cannot be understood as a set of individual, discrete and disconnected entities. Events are connected into an event-system which itself is a continuous flowing.

2. Resume of the Argument of Ṣadrā's Text

With these general principles in mind, let us resume briefly the argument of the text chapter by chapter.

Chapter 18: Ṣadrā reviews the classical "Peripatetic" position concerning change, according to which it requires a substratum which is a composite of act and potency (substance = body). Reductively, this means that the substratum is the body itself and so motion is an "accident" in the sense of a mere appearance. Motion occurs in the body only after it is actualized. (But this is absurd).

Chapter 19: Ṣadrā maintains, to the contrary, that since the agent of motion must itself be intrinsically in motion, if the body (substance) really is in motion (and not only apparently) and so, as the agent of motion, it must be in motion intrinsically and essentially. Motion and all the moving bodies are separated only by abstraction. The notion of a substratum, the body, applies only in the abstract order of essence. In the concrete order of existence, however, the moving body is motion. The moving body is continuous renewal.

Chapter 20: Nature (the corporeal world) is the proximate agent of motion. It must, therefore, be essentially in motion. Nothing need be added to it from the outside. The efficient cause of motion must be essentially in motion, otherwise there would be an infinite regress. Such a regress is avoided if nature is a state of flux continuously coming into being as a result of the interaction of capacity and pure agency. The capacity is a disposing cause; pure agency is creative cause; nature itself is the efficient cause (more correctly it is motion essentially and so

needs no finite efficient cause).

Chapter 21: It follows, then, that if motion as continuous renewal is an essential property of something, it does not need any other agent to account for the renewal. Since everything is identical with its grade of existence, its unity is from that existence. Thus, whatever has as its stable essence, renewal is called "nature" and whatever has as its unifying principle the power to change is called "body" or "the corporeal." In so far as nature is considered to be stable (continuous renewal) it must depend on the First Principle, God, Who is immutable Nature, in turn, has all changing phenomena related to it. The relation of the Eternal to the temporally emergent (nature) is that of existential dependence.

Chapter 22: Ṣadrā considers four ways in which motion may be said to be "within a category." Three of them are rejected (namely, (1) the category is the subject of change, (2) substance through a category is the subject of change, (3) any category is a genus of motion). Only the fourth can be defended, namely, that substance itself is changed, or better, corporeal substance (body) is changed. Ṣadrā criticizes Rāzī's analysis of quantitative and qualitative change. It turns out that all "accidental" change is dependent upon "transubstantial" change, that is, there is no purely accidental change.

Chapter 23: Ṣadrā analyses motion into six factors: beginning, end, agent, patient, subject and time. In this chapter he shows that this division is purely mental, that is, belongs only to the abstract order. It gives the "essence" or "essential" features of motion. In the existential order, however, all of these aspects are concretely one. It follows, then, that motion cannot be said to be in the categories of action or passion, or time or relation or possession. At best motion can in some sense be said to be "within" the categories of quantity, quality, place and position. Of course, it can occur in the category of substance.

Chapter 24: Here Ṣadrā analyses in detail in what sense motion can be said to be in the categories of substance, quantity, quality, place and position. With respect to the 4 accidental categories, this can only mean a gradual increase (decrease) in intensity of the quality or a gradual increase (decrease) of the quantity, or a gradual shift in position or place (a change expressible by a continuous function). But this can be understood only in the order of existence. Essence necessarily sets limits and boundaries; it necessarily imposes a static view of motion and so loses motion.

Chapter 25: Here Ṣadrā addresses the problem of individuation of substance or body and the problem of its unity over time while it is continuously renewed. According to him, a body's identity is preserved so long as its *differentia* remains determinately the same. Over time, the substance or body can be considered as being made up of many instantaneous individuals (at least by conceptual analysis) but this does not destroy its identity as a substance over time and through continuous change if those instantaneous individuals are considered to be within the substance only in general and potentially, not concretely and actually. As long as each of those individuals, when isolated in thought, instantiate the *differentia* of the substance, unity is preserved. In the case of growth and decay, the subject of change is said to be body in general. In the case of contraction and expansion it is said to be prime matter. The *differentia* of any higher species (e.g., Man) has all the perfections of the lower. Any finite nature, therefore, has both a perduring rational "substance" as its principle (an *eidos*) and a continuously changing "substance" as its concrete instantiation. The first is "essence"; the second is "existence." These are related as the perfect or the ideal to the imperfect or the finite existent. Now if motion were not (existentially) a single continuum, it could not be gradual at all (e.g., the increase in intensity of black). It would be discrete and "chopped." Nature (the proximate agent of motion) must be considered differently depending on whether it is soul or body. Nature, in the sense of the powers of the soul, is essential to soul in the same way that its powers are essential to it. Nature, in the sense of the body, is subject to the soul only accidentally and so it can do violence by resisting the soul. Nature in the sense of soul and its powers perdures, while nature in the sense of body is transitory and subject to corruption and death.

Chapter 26: Ṣadrā here discusses the relation of nature to body. Nature functions in and through body. Material existence is positional and thus so is motion. But motion is an essential property of nature and so requires no further agency as intermediary between it and nature. Both nature and motion are determined by existence. When nature comes into existence so does its quantity, quality, form, matter, position, place and whatever else is true of it. Still in every body we distinguish between accidents which are necessary and inseparable from it, and those which are not. These necessary accidents or logical properties are signs of that body's *differentia*. Existentially this *differentia* is not an essence added on to a genus, but is the body itself existentially individuated. This is also true of all its other accidents (quantity, quality, etc.). They can be said to change in so far as the existing substance changes. This is transubstantial motion. Corporeal substance is

essentially in a state of flux.

Chapter 27: According to the Peripatetics, however, form does not undergo gradual change. It changes instantaneously. If it does change gradually, then either it remains in the same species or it does not. If it does, then the form does not change but only the essential properties. If it does not, then there is no form at all but only increase in intensity. If motion occurs in form, then, it must do so through a series of successive forms, one at each successive instant. In the category of quantity for example, what undergoes change is prime matter plus some quantity. In contrast to Ibn Sīnā (and the Peripatetics in general), both matter and form are perdurable during continuous renewal and this is compatible with individuation (as in mediating motion). Ibn Sīnā held that substance has no opposite. It cannot, therefore, undergo change. For if we assume that in change two opposites come to a single subject successively, the form, if it changes, would have an opposite.

Chapter 28: Ṣadrā remarks that, although one might think that philosophers have always held that only time and motion are unstable, the fact is that they disagreed among themselves about which time and motion was essentially and which accidentally unstable. Still it is true that no philosopher said that nature itself is an unstable thing. These expressions can be understood if one keeps in mind the difference between essence and existence. Time and motion as real are continuous renewal and passing away. Nature, in so far as it exists, is continuous renewal and passing away, and this is its stable essence. Since motion is the emergence of something from potentiality to actuality, motion is not the thing emerging but the emerging itself and hence is relational. When analysed it has three aspects (1) continuous renewal, (2) that in which renewal occurs, and (3) the thing renewed (motion, category, and subject). But these distinctions exist in the mind. In reality there is only the continuous renewal and this is nature itself. Abstractly considered, whatever is capable of emergence is called material and whatever emerges is called substance. The Qur'ān supports this view as do certain other philosophers.

Chapter 29: Circular motion is most basic because it is perfectly continuous. Since time is continuous only circular motion can guarantee and protect it. Circular motion is first among motions and the most perfect.

Chapter 30: The naturalist's account of the reality of time, Ṣadrā remarks, will help us understand the role of time in motions which vary in acceleration over a given distance or which vary in their beginning or

relative speed over the same distance. There is a quantitative being in which these variations in motion can take place. This being is neither the quantity nor finality of the moving bodies because it is not stable while these are. This non-stable being is the measure of another non-stable reality called motion. Every temporal emergence supposes something prior to it which is neither that of ordinal numbers nor that of causality nor that of pure potentiality. Since what is prior cannot come together with what is posterior, there can be no antecedent except by supposing another between it and the consequent and so on *ad infinitum*. The measure of such priority and posterity must itself be a quantity and must be continuous in order to be isomorphic to it. But this continuous quantitative measure is either a substance or an accident. If a substance, it is inseparable from the material and the contingent since it is itself continuous renewal. There is no need to consider the other alternative. This measure is regarded as measuring a substance which is renewal or as measuring the substance's renewal. This is to say that it is either the measure of motion or of something essentially in motion. It must be the latter because of its continuity, even though it could be thought of in terms of antecedent and consequent by deceptive imagination. In short, real time or duration has the same structure as motion.

Chapter 31: Ṣadrā presents Ibn Sīnā's views concerning the cause and goal of celestial motion. The point of this discussion is to show that Ibn Sīnā himself implicitly affirmed the doctrine of transubstantial motion. Otherwise there is no coherent interpretation of his texts. Ṣadrā concludes this long section with the remark that the cause of time must have two dimensions: one is rational unity and the other is the multiplicity of renewal. This cause is the farthest celestial sphere. The ultimate cause of time, however, is God.

Chapter 32: Ṣadrā argues that there can be nothing prior to time and motion except God. The argument is as follows: whatever "precedes" time and motion must itself be temporal and moving, unless this prior reality is God (eternal and immutable). Suppose there were something other than God prior to time and motion. It must be either possible (in the sense of contingent) or necessary or impossible. If it is impossible, the thesis is established. If it is necessary, the supposition is contradicted and so the thesis is proved. If it is possible (contingent), then it must be itself a continuous renewal and so must be temporal and changing. Such a being, then, is essentially in motion and its final cause must be a temporal entity. Otherwise, there would be no explanation of how possibility becomes actuality. It makes no difference whether the series of temporal causes is thought to be posited all at

once or successively. If all at once, they are still each contingent and so is the series. If successively, each would be discrete and in a time interval cut off from the others. But this can neither be conceived nor exist since time is continuous. If they were discrete, there could be no causal connections between them (by supposition). What holds together and grounds causally the perdurance of the essentially unstable nature (continuous flux) cannot itself be corporeal. It must, then, be either a soul, or an intellect, or God, the Creator. It cannot be a soul because in so far as soul belongs to body it has a material nature. It cannot be an intellect in the sense of an angel or other intermediary because the intermediary would receive its power from the source that uses it. It must, then, be God.

NOTES:

1. See Morewedge, *The Metaphysics of Avicenna* (N.Y. Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 313; see Morewedge, Parviz, *Greek Sources of Some Near Eastern Philosophies of Being and Existence*, forthcoming (New York: Fordham University, Baruch of CUNY, 1976), pp. 55-56.

2. See Raḥmān, *Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, pp. 34 ff; Izutsu, T. "The Fundamental Structure of Sabzawārī's Metaphysics" (Tehran: 1969), pp. 134 ff.

3. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah*, Part One (Metaphysics), "The Fundamental Structure of Sabzawārī's Metaphysics" as an introduction by Izutsu, ed. by M. Muḥaqqiq and T. Izutsu (Tehran: 1969), p. 7.

4. S.J. Sajjādī, *Mustalahāt falsafe-ye Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (Philosophical vocabulary of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī)* (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1961), p. 47.

5. The Quran 2:117.

6. See Faḍl ar-Raḥmān, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), pp. 141 ff.

Sociology of the Qur'an: Part 3 The Islamic View of History*

by Martyr Murtadā Muṭahharī

translated from Persian by Mahliqā Qarā'i

ISLAM AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Does Islam accept the theory of historical materialism? Is the Quranic logic based on historical materialism regarding the interpretation and analysis of historical events? There is a group of people who claim that historical materialism was forwarded by the Quran at least one thousand years before Marx. Dr. 'Alī al-Wardī, a Shi'ite scholar of Iraq and author of several controversial books including the one entitled *Manzilat al-'aql al-basharī*, ("The Place of Human Intellect"), is most probably the first to raise this issue. It has become a fashion among a group of contemporary Muslim writers to analyse history in Islamic phraseology from this point of view, which is considered a mark of being an intellectual.

But in our view those who think in this way either do not correctly understand Islam or historical materialism or both. A general review of the five fundamental principles of historical materialism and the six conclusions discussed earlier, is sufficient to tell anyone well acquainted with the logic of Islam that the logic of Islam and historical material-

*This is the third and the last part of Martyr Murtadā Muṭahharī's book *Society and History (Jāmi'-e wa tārikh)*. In this part, Martyr Muṭahharī continues his discussion on philosophy of history and criticizes the deviate attempts of some Muslim intellectuals who have tried to impose a Marxist interpretation of History on the Qur'an. The last part of the book, which examines the role of various factors in the making of history, ends abruptly, which shows that the author, unfortunately for us, could not complete it due to his martyrdom on Jamādī II 6, 1399 (May 1, 1979) at the hands of a deviate terrorist group, Furqān, which was afflicted with the same kind of distorted interpretations of the Qur'an and Islam which Martyr Muṭahharī had fought so resolutely and brilliantly throughout his life. May God bless us all with a spark of the sacred light that shone so brilliantly in that great human being.

ism are radically opposed to each other.

In view of the fact that this approach to the study of society and history—especially when it is tinged with Islamic colour and bears the stamp of Islamic acceptability for enhancing its authority and worth—is a grave danger for the thought and teachings of Islam, I consider it essential to investigate and analyse the problems which may otherwise lead to the misunderstanding that Islam considers economy as the basis of society and regards history as being materialistic in essence.

I would also like to remind that I have here discussed these issues in a more comprehensive manner than put forward by the proponents of this view themselves. The advocates of this view pick up two or three verses from the Quran or a few traditions of the Prophet (S) in support of certain points. I have dealt not only with their arguments, but also with those problems which they have not touched at all, but which, in my opinion, can be raised by them, thus making the whole discussion inclusive and comprehensive. Following are the arguments of those who imagine that the Quran believes in historical materialism.

1. The Quran has put forward various social notions, and I have already quoted about fifty sociological terms from the Quran while discussing sociology. The study of the verses having sociological implications, where these terms occur, may lead one to infer that from the Quranic viewpoint societies are in a sense bipolar, i.e., they are divided into two classes. On the one hand, the Quran points out a kind of polarization of society on the basis of material conditions, i.e., on the basis of prosperity and deprivation of its people. The Quran refers to one class by such names as, *mala'* (ruling clique), *mustakbirūn* (the arrogant, oppressors, tyrants), *musrifūn* (the extravagant, the wasteful), *mutrafūn* (the affluent), and refers to the other class by such names as *mustad'afūn* (the oppressed, the weaken and deprived), *nās* (mankind, masses), *dhurriyyah* (the insignificant, the unnoteworthy—as opposed to the *mala'*), *arādhil* or *ardhalūn* (the vilest, the lowest).¹ The Quran regards them as two opposite poles. On the other hand, the Quran puts forward the notion of bipolarity of society in spiritual terms. On the one side are the *kāfirūn* (infidels), the *mushrikūn* (idolaters, polytheists), the *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites), the *fāsiqūn* (the corrupt), and the *mufsidūn* (mischief mongers), and on the other side are the *mu'minūn* (the believers), the *muwaḥḥidūn* (monotheists), the *muttaqūn* (the pious, the God-fearing), the *ṣāliḥūn* (the virtuous), the *muṣliḥūn* (correctors, reformers), the *mujāhidūn* (the warriors), and the *shuhadā'* (the witnesses, the martyrs).

If we study and analyse the material and spiritual polarities in the context of the Quranic verses, we shall observe a kind of correspondence between the first material pole and the first spiritual pole and also between the second material pole and the second spiritual pole.

That is, the *kāfirūn* (infidels), the *mushrikūn* (idolaters), the *fāsiqūn* (the corrupt), and the *mufsidūn* (corrupters) are the same people who are called the *mala'* (the ruling clique), the *mustakbirūn* (the tyrants), the *musrifūn* (the prodigal), the *mutrafūn* (the affluent) and the *ṭāghūtī* ones. They neither form a separate group nor draw other people into their fold to form a composite group. The *mu'minūn* (the believers), the *muwaḥḥidūn* (the monotheists), the *ṣāliḥūn* (the virtuous), and the *mujāhidūn* (the warriors) are the same people as the *mustaḍ'afūn* (the oppressed), the *fuqarā'* (the poor), the *masākīn* (the wretched), the slaves, and the deprived. This pole does neither consist of a separate group nor is a combination of various other groups or persons. It means that society is not composed of more than two poles. The opulent, the oppressors, and the exploiters, who are also the disbelievers, are on one side and the oppressed, who are also the believers, are on the other side. It is quite obvious that the division of society into oppressors and oppressed is responsible for giving rise to two groups at level of faith, viz., the disbelievers and the believers. Oppression is the essential condition accompanying polytheism, disbelief, hypocrisy, inequity, and corruption; being oppressed is the condition accompanying belief, monotheism, virtue, goodness, and piety.

In order to be sure of the meaning of this correspondence, it is enough to study the verses of *Sūrat al-'A'rāf* beginning from the verse 59 ... لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ... (We sent Noah unto his people....) till the end of the verse 137, ... وَدَمَّرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرُشُونَ * (...We annihilated all Pharaoh and his folk had done and that they had contrived.). In these forty verses, the stories of Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot, Shu'ayb and Moses are narrated. In all these stories (with the exception of the story of Lot) it may be observed that the class that followed the prophets was the oppressed class (*mustaḍ'af*), and the class that arose in revolt and negated them was the ruling class (*mala'*) of the tyrants (*mustakbirūn*).² This correspondence is explained by nothing except class consciousness, which is the requisite condition as well as the result of historical materialism. Thus according to the Quran the conflict between belief and disbelief reflects the corresponding struggle of the oppressed and the exploited against the oppressors and the exploiters.

The Quran clearly considers *ghinā* (i.e. ownership, property and wealth) to be the source of man's rebellion, against God i.e., the riches are contrary to the values of modesty, humility, and submission—the virtues to which the prophets called the people:

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَيْطَغِي * أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَغْنَى *

Verily man is rebellious when he thinketh himself wealthy [and contented].
(96: 6,7)

Again we see that, in order to show the evil of property and ownership, the Quran narrates the story of Korah. Korah was not an Egyptian, but belonged to the tribe of Israel. He was one of Moses' people, the same oppressed people whom Pharaoh was exploiting. However this man belonging to an oppressed people, after becoming wealthy, started exploiting his own fellow sufferers and rebelled against Moses. The Quran says:

إِنَّ قَارُونَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَىٰ فَبَغَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ....

Now Korah was of Moses' folk, but he rebelled against them.... (28:76)

Does it not show that the stand of the prophets against rebellion is actually the stand against the haves, the rich, and their wealth? The Quran has disclosed in some of its verses that the real adversaries of the prophets were the affluent class, the *mutrafūn*; those who were immersed in the good things of life, being the pampered of history. In *Sūrat Saba'*, verse 34, this view is developed in the form of a general principle and a universal law:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ *

And We have sent not unto any township a warner, but its pampered ones (the mutrafūn) declared, 'Lo: We are disbelievers in that which you bring unto us.' (34:34)

All this indicates that the confrontation of the prophets with their adversaries and the struggle between faith and infidelity reflect the hostility between two social classes: the oppressed and the oppressors.

2. The Quran calls its addressees '*nās*' (mankind). '*Nās*' means the deprived and underprivileged masses. This indicates that the Quran acknowledges the concept of class consciousness, and considers the deprived masses as the only class capable of responding to Islam's invitation. This also indicates that Islamic ideology is class-oriented, and it means that Islam is the religion of the oppressed and underprivileged masses. The addressees of Islamic ideology are the underprivileged masses alone. This provides another basis for inferring that Islam regards economy as base and approves of the materialist conception of history.

3. The Quran makes clear that leaders, reformers (*muṣliḥūn*), warriors in the way of God (*mujāhidūn*), martyrs (*shuhadā'*), and ultimately the prophets, the apostles of God, arise from among the masses and not from the affluent, the wealthy, and the pampered class. Regarding the Prophet of Islam (S), the Quran says:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ...

He it is Who has sent among the illiterate (ummiyyūn) a messenger of their own.... (62:2)

The *ummah* (the religious community) is none other than the underprivileged masses. Similarly, the Quran declares about the martyrs in the way of God:

وَنَرْعَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ....

And We shall raise from every nation [the same deprived masses] a shahid (martyr) and We shall say, 'Bring your proof forward....,' (i.e. your martyrs). (28:75)

The fact that leaders of revolutions and reform movements necessarily arise from the deprived masses also implies that there is a necessary correspondence between social and religious origin on the one hand and economic and class origin on the other. This necessary relation cannot be interpreted except on the basis of the materialist conception of history and on the basis of assumption that economy is the real base.

4. The prime target of the mission of the prophets and their social movement is the base not the superstructure. It is inferred from the Quran that the mission and the message of the prophets aimed at establishing justice and equity by implementing social equality and obliterating class distinctions and divisions. The prophets have always started their mission from the base and later on brought changes in the superstructure, not the other way round. The superstructures, i.e. doctrines of faith, dogmas, moral and behavioural reforms, always occupied a secondary place in prophetic missions, as they were attacked only after the base was transformed. The Prophet (S) said:

مَنْ لَا مَعَاشَ لَهُ لَا مَعَادَ لَهُ.

One who does not have a means of subsistence does not have Hereafter either (which is a product of spiritual life).

This statement indicates the priority of the means of subsistence over the Hereafter, and the priority of material existence over spiritual existence. If stretched to its logical conclusion, it means that spiritual life is synonymous with superstructure and is based upon material conditions of human life. The Prophet (S) also said:

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي الْخُبْزِ، لَوْلَا الْخُبْزُ مَا تَصَدَّقْنَا وَلَا صَلَّيْنَا.

My God, bless our bread with abundance; for had it not been for bread we would not have been charitable, nor would we have offered prayers.

This statement also indicates the dependence of the spiritual superstructure upon the material base.

Nowadays, majority of people tend to believe that the prophets had set before them the task of reforming only the superstructure; that is they aimed at making men true believers and were interested only in the reform of their beliefs, morals, and behaviour; they were not concerned with changing the foundation, or at the most they considered matters related with the base or economic activity merely secondary in importance. It is imagined that the prophets thought that once the people became true believers all the matters would automatically be set right; justice and equality would be established and the exploiters would come up on their own to surrender their privileges to the exploited and the oppressed. To be short, it is believed that the prophets have used faith and belief as the weapon for attaining their goals, and their followers should follow the same path. This is nothing but a deception and an illusion that the priests and clergymen associated with the class of oppressors and exploiters have invented and imposed on the society in order to render the teachings of the prophets ineffective and futile. In the words of Marx, "The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of intellectual production....The material rulers are the intellectual rulers of the society and rule over the social mind as well."³

The approach and the method of work of the prophets were quite opposite to the view generally accepted by the majority of people. The prophets first delivered society from the evils of social polytheism, social discrimination, injustice, repression, and exploitation which are the root causes of ideological polytheism, and moral, behavioural, and religious perversions. After socially emancipating the people they engrained in their souls the faith in the unity of God (*tawhīd*), and taught them the methods of attaining moral and behavioural piety.

5. The Quran holds that the logic of the opponents of the prophets has always been opposed to the logic of the prophets and their followers throughout the entire course of history. The Quran explicitly explains that the ideology of the opponents has been always conservative, obscurantist, traditional, and backward-looking, whereas the ideology advocated by the prophets and their followers has been necessarily dynamic, anti-traditional, progressive, and futuristic. The Quran clearly propounds the view that the first group practised the same ideology which according to sociological analysis is practised in a

society divided into two classes of exploiters and exploited by the class of exploiters, who are the beneficiaries of the existing system and advocate the ideology of status quo. The prophets and their followers on the other hand followed and practised the ideology which, socio-logically speaking, is employed by the sufferers and deprived in human history.

There are frequent references in the Quran to the specific logic held by the opponents and the followers of the prophets, indicating what sort of philosophy these two groups followed. They are actually meant for pointing out that these two types of philosophies, like the two groups themselves, have always been opposed to each other. The Quran, by pointing out the logic of the opponents and that of the followers of the prophets, provides us with a criterion for today.

The Quran pictures several scenes in which these two ideologies confront each other. Those who are interested may study the following Quranic verses, *Sūrat al-Zukhruf*, verses (40-50); *Sūrat al-Mu'min*, verses (23-44); *Sūrat Ṭāhā*, verses from 49 to 71; *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'*, verses from 16 to 49; *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*, verses from 36 to 39. Here, for the sake of example, we quote verses from 20 to 24 from *Sūrat al-Zukhruf* with some brief explanatory remarks about their meanings:

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَالَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ * أَمْ اتَّيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا
مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ * بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ مُهْتَدُونَ *
وَكَذَلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا
عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ مُقْتَدُونَ * قَالَ أَوْلَوْ جِئْتُمْ بِآهْدَىٰ مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ
بِهِ كَافِرُونَ *

And they say: 'If the Beneficent had so willed, we should not have worshipped them (the angels). (Now that we worship them, it means that it is the will of God—absolute determinism). They have no knowledge of whatsoever of that; they are only conjecturing (about the matter of determinism). Or have We given them any Scripture before (this Quran) to which they hold? (i.e. it is nothing of these two: neither a sound faith in determinism nor any Scripture which could serve as evidence). Nay, for they say only 'We found our fathers following a religion, and we are guided by their footprints.' And even so We sent not a warner before thee into any township, except that men who lived at ease (mutrafūn) said, 'We indeed found our fathers following a religion, and we are following their footprints. (And the warner) said: 'What! even though I bring you better guidance than that you found your fathers following? [i.e. although the path shown by me is more in accordance with correct logic?] They answered, 'We disbelieve in that you were sent with.' (43:20-24)

We see that the opponents of the prophets sometimes utilize the

idea of fatalism and predestination to impress upon people that we are not free to act according to our will. This idea, as sociologists point out, always suits the interests of the beneficiaries of the status quo, who do not want any change in the existing conditions and, therefore, take shelter in the doctrine of predestination as an excuse. Sometimes they lay emphasis upon following the traditions of ancestors and consider the past as something sacred and worthy of imitation. Everything related with the past is accepted as right and correct, and is considered sufficient for guidance. This is the logic preached by the champions of status quo and vested interests.

In opposition to this view, the prophets never supported traditionalism and fatalism. They upheld logic, knowledge, and emancipation, which represent the approach of the revolutionaries and the sufferers under the status quo. The adversaries, when they see that they cannot win the battle due to their weak logic and arguments, as a last resort, declare that whether we believe in fatalism or not, whether we respect tradition or reject it, we are against your message, your mission, and your ideology, because your message contradicts the present social reality and class structure.

6. The most obvious aspect of the Quranic teaching is its siding with the oppressed. The Quran promises, in accordance with the prophecy of historical materialism on the basis of dialectical logic, that in the struggle between the oppressed and the oppressors the final victory is on the side of the oppressed.

The Quran through this alignment really affirms the necessary course which history is determined to follow, because according to it the class which is revolutionary in character ultimately emerges victorious in its struggle against the class which is reactionary and conservative due to its class situation, and is destined to inherit and rule the earth:

وَتُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ *

And We desired to show favour unto those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them leaders and to make them the inheritors. (28:5)

Similarly the verse 137 in *Sūrat al-'A'raf* declares:

وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَفْرُسُونَ *

And We caused the people who were oppressed to inherit the eastern parts of

the land and its western parts, thereof which We had blessed. And the fair Word of the Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of their endurance; and We annihilated all that Pharaoh and his folk had done and that they had contrived. (7:137)

This view of the Quran, that history moves in the direction of the victory of the oppressed, the exploited, and the enslaved, fully corresponds to the principle derived from historical materialism, according to which reaction and conservatism are the characteristics of exploitation which are opposed to the law of evolution, and are, therefore, bound to face extinction. The essential character of the exploited is enlightenment, dynamism, and revolutionary spirit, which being in harmony and agreement with the law of evolution are bound to be victorious.

Here it would not be inappropriate to quote a passage from an article lately published by a group of so-called Muslim intellectuals—who have left intellectualism behind to embrace Marxism. There, under the above-quoted Quranic verse, the following explanatory remarks are made:

...What is greatly remarkable is the position of God and all the phenomena of existence with respect to the world's oppressed. It cannot be denied that the oppressed of the earth according to the Quranic teachings, are the underprivileged, enslaved masses, who are forced not to play any role in determining their own fate...If we pay attention to this fact, taking into consideration the absolute will of God governing the course of being and all the phenomena of life, which tend to favour the oppressed, the question arises: Who are the persons that are instrumental in realization of the Divine Will? The answer to this question is quite obvious. When we evaluate the administrative organisations of societies as two poles of the oppressors and the oppressed, with the knowledge that the Divine Will can be translated into action, on the one hand, by bestowing the inheritance and leadership of the earth upon the oppressed, and on the other by destroying the institutions of exploitation and ultimately negating them, we find that the oppressed themselves and their apostles and committed intellectuals, who arise from within the oppressed class, act as the agents of the Divine Will in realizing this end. In other words, they are these chosen apostles⁴ and the departed martyrs from among the oppressed⁵ who make the initial moves in the struggle against destructive *tāghūtī* regimes, moves which pave the road for establishing the leadership of the oppressed and enabling them to inherit the resources of the earth. This view, in fact, represents our understanding of the Quranic interpretation of historical upheavals and the monotheistic revolutions,⁶ in the sense that in the same way as monotheistic revolutions, from a sociological point of view, revolve around the axis of the leadership of the oppressed and their inheritance of the earth, so also the leaders and the groups in the vanguard of this movement should necessarily arise from among the oppressed. Their ideological and social views should also be derived from the intellectual attitude and social alignment of the oppressed and exploited masses.

There are several implications of this statement.

a. From the viewpoint of the Quran, society is bipolar and is always divided into two classes representing the oppressors and the oppressed.

b. The will of God (according to the expression used in the article, 'the position of God and all phenomena of existence') with respect to the leadership and inheritance of the oppressed and the downtrodden is universal and applies without any discrimination whatsoever to believers and non-believers, monotheists and polytheists. It means that the relative pronoun **الَّذِينَ** is used in a general sense applicable to all people. The Divine promise guarantees the victory of the oppressed qua oppressed over the oppressors. In other words, the main conflict going on throughout history up to this date is between the exploited and the tyrants. The purpose of the evolution of the universe dictates that the downtrodden should emerge victorious against the oppressors.

c. The will of God is executed through the means of the oppressed. The leaders, guides, apostles and martyrs necessarily arise from among the oppressed; not from the other side.

d. The ideological base is always in harmony and correspondence with the social base and class character.

Thus we see how certain Marxist principles regarding history are derived and inferred from the Quranic verse, and how it is claimed that the Quran, one thousand and two hundred years before Marx came into the world, anticipated and echoed his thought and philosophy!

Well, now that such a view about history has been found in the Quran, what conclusions can be drawn in its light while analysing contemporary history? These gentlemen have hastily tried to draw conclusions from this so-called Quranic principle, applying it as a test to the contemporary movement of the 'ulamā'. They say that the Quran has taught us that the leaders and guides of revolutions should necessarily be from the class of the oppressed. On the contrary, nowadays we see that the 'ulamā', who represent one of the three dimensions of the system of exploitation throughout history, have shifted their social base and have become revolutionary. How is this phenomenon to be explained? The solution is simple. We can surely and with certainty conclude that there is an intrigue involved in this affair. When the ruling class finds itself in trouble, it asks the allied clergy to arrange a revolutionary pageant to manage its own escape. This is another conclusion derived from this Marxist—excuse me, Islamic—view. It is quite clear who will pocket the profits yielded by such interpretations.

Criticism:

All that has been said about the justification of historical material-

ism from the Quranic viewpoint may be regarded as being either basically wrong, or if correct the inference drawn from it is totally wrong. We have to critically examine the arguments given above.

1. The claim that the Quran has divided society materially and spiritually into two classes and that these two classes coincide with each other, is absolutely false. To say that according to the Quran the group consisting of the *kāfirūn* (unbelievers), the *mushrikūn* (idolaters), the *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites), the *mufsidūn* (mischief mongers), is the same as that of the *mala'* (ruling clique), the *mustakbirūn* (arrogant, oppressors) and the *jabbārūn* (tyrants), on the one hand, and on the other hand the group consisting of the *mu'minūn* (believers), the *muwaḥḥidūn* (monotheists), the *ṣāliḥūn* (righteous), the *shuhadā'* (martyrs) is the same as the oppressed and the exploited class, and to say that the confrontation between the believers and the unbelievers reflects the basic conflict between the oppressed and the oppressors respectively, is not correct. This type of coincidence is not at all validated by the Quran. On the contrary we find that the Quran affirms the absence of such a coincidence.

In its treatment of the lessons of history the Quran cites the examples of believers who belonged to a tyrannical ruling class, yet revolted against that class and its values. The believer of the family of Pharaoh, whose story is narrated in *Sūrat al-Mu'min*, is an example of such individuals. The Quran also mentions Pharaoh's wife who, in spite of being his life partner and equally sharing his luxurious life style, was a true believer in God.⁷

The Quran, in several places, in a moving style recalls the story of Pharaoh's magicians, and shows how the natural truth-seeking conscience of man, when faced with the truth, can rise on occasion against falsehood and error, setting aside all personal interests and ignoring with contempt Pharaoh's threats:

لَا قِطْعَانَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَ أَرْجُلِكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ ثُمَّ لَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ *

"I shall assuredly cut off alternately your hands and feet, then I shall crucify you all together." (7:124)

Basically the revolt of Moses (A) as related by the Quran, contradicts historical materialism. It is true that Moses belonged to the tribe of Israel—he was neither an Egyptian nor a kinsman of the Pharaoh—but Moses was brought up since infancy like a prince in Pharaoh's household. The same Moses who was brought up by Pharaoh revolted against the tyrannical system of his patron, a system in the midst of which he had grown up, renouncing him and preferring to work as a shepherd for the old man of Median, until he was chosen by God for prophethood,

when he formally confronted Pharaoh.

The Holy Prophet (S) was orphaned in childhood and led a life of poverty until his youth. It was after his marriage with Khadijah that he became prosperous and rich. The Quran refers to this point when it says:

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ... وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ *

Did He not find thee an orphan, and shelter thee? Did He not find thee needy, and suffice thee? (93:6,8)

It was in this period of prosperity that the Prophet (S) devoted his time to prayer and contemplation in solitude. According to the doctrine of historical materialism, during this period the Prophet (S) should have changed and assumed the role of a conservative advocate of the status quo. But it was during this period that he started to propagate his revolutionary message, rising in rebellion against the capitalists, the usurers, and the slavers of Mecca, and revolted against the practice of idolatry which symbolized the corrupt life of those days.

As all the believers, the monotheists, and the monotheistic revolutionaries did not arise from the oppressed class, the prophets also absorbed the good-natured and the relatively untainted natures from among the oppressor classes and aroused them to revolt against themselves (by way of repentance) or against the interests of their own class (by way of revolution). In the same way, all the oppressed people did not belong to the ranks of the believers and the monotheistic revolutionaries.

The Quran pictures numerous scenes where the people belonging to the oppressed class are counted among unbelievers and included among the doomed subject to Divine chastisement.⁸

Therefore, neither all believers belong to the oppressed class nor all oppressed are believers. The claim that there is complete correspondence between them is absolutely absurd. Undeniably, the majority of the followers of the prophets have belonged to the oppressed class, or at least came from those whose hands were not stained with blood and repression. Similarly the majority of the opponents of the prophets belonged to the class of oppressors. This is so because although the human nature which accepts the Divine message is common to both classes and exists in everyone, but the oppressors, the affluent, and the extravagant confront a great barrier because their souls are polluted and their habits are deeply entrenched in the evil existing system. There are few out of this class who are capable of freeing themselves from under the mountain load of these evils. But the oppressed class has no such restraints. Their nature not only responds readily to the Divine call, but

they see in it the opportunity to recover their lost rights. Identifying themselves with believers has a double advantage for them. It is on this account that the majority of the followers of the prophets consist of the oppressed and individuals of the opposite group among the believers form only a minority. Despite it the notion that the group of believers and the class of the oppressed are one and the same is totally groundless.

There is an acute difference between the fundamental principles regarding the nature of history laid down in the Quran and the basic doctrines of historical materialism. In view of the Quran, the spirit is a fundamental reality, and matter in no way is prior to the spirit. The spiritual needs and urges are fundamental to human existence and are not dependent on the material needs. Thought is also independent of action and the psychological nature of man precedes the social makeup of his personality.

The Quran, since it believes in the fundamental nature of the human being, a nature which is found even within extremely dehumanized persons like Pharaoh, who is a natural human being whose growth has been arrested, it also admits even for the most corrupt persons the possibility, however weak, of moving towards truth and self-realization. Accordingly the prophets were encharged to admonish the tyrant in the first place and perchance to liberate the natural man imprisoned within the oppressor, arousing his inherent humanity against his evil social personality. We know that success was achieved in a great number of cases, and what is called "repentance" is the name of this phenomenon.

Moses (A) at the initial stage of his prophethood, was entrusted with the task of persuading Pharaoh and awakening in him the true human nature by means of admonition. He was advised to fight against him only if he failed in this attempt. In Moses' view Pharaoh had internally captivated and fettered the man within himself, and enslaved and imprisoned other human beings externally. Moses first attempts to arouse the man imprisoned within Pharaoh to revolt against himself. He endeavours to arouse the remnants of humanity left in him against his social personality, i.e. the Pharaoh forged and fabricated by perverse social conditions:

إِذْهَبْ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ * فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَىٰ أَنْ تَزْكَىٰ * وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ *

'Go to Pharaoh; he has waxed insolent. And say, "Hast thou the will to purify thyself, and that I should guide thee to thy Lord, then thou shalt fear?"'
(79:17-19)

The Quran believes in the power and value of guidance, advice, admonition, reminder, argumentation and logical reasoning (in Quranic

terminology: *ḥikmah*, wisdom). According to the Quran these devices can change a man, alter his course of life, transform his personality, and bring about a spiritual change in him. This approach is contrary to Marxism and materialism, which restrict the role of guidance to merely transforming the 'class-in-itself' into the 'class-for-itself,' by bringing about consciousness of class antagonism and realization of class character.

2. It is claimed that the addressees of the Quran are *nās* (mankind, people), and *nās* as a term is synonymous with the deprived masses. Hence Islam addresses itself to the oppressed class, and Islamic ideology is the ideology of the oppressed class; therefore, Islam recruits its followers and warriors exclusively from the underprivileged masses. This whole line of argument is wrong. Of course the addressees of the Islamic message are *nās*, i.e., human beings, which include the whole mankind. No dictionary of Arabic language gives the meaning of the word *nās* as 'the underprivileged or oppressed masses,' and this word does not refer to any particular class of men. The Quran says:

.... وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا...

...It is the duty of all men towards God to come to the House as pilgrims; whoever can afford to make his way there.... (3:97)

Does this verse refer to the underprivileged masses only? The phrase *يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ*, "O, mankind!" which repeatedly occurs in the Quran, nowhere refers exclusively to the underprivileged masses but to all mankind in general. The universality of the Quranic address is also derived from the principle of universality of human nature propounded in the Quran.

3. It is said that the Quran claims that the leaders, the guides, the prophets, and the martyrs arise exclusively from among the oppressed. This is yet another mistake regarding the Quran. The Quran never makes such a statement.

The argument concerning the verse 62:2... *هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ* that messengers of God arise from among the *ummah* (community) and the *ummah* is equivalent to 'the oppressed masses,' is ridiculous. The word *أُمِّيِّينَ* (*ummiyyin*) is actually the plural form of the word (*ummi*) which means a person who is unlettered. Furthermore, *أُمِّي* is derived from *أُم* (*umm*), not from *أُمَّة* (*ummah*). Moreover, the meaning of the word *أُمَّة* is a society which is composed of different groups and occasionally different classes. By no means can it be used to signify 'the underprivileged masses.' Still more ridiculous is the argument regarding the verse 75 from *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ* about martyrs: *وَتَرَعْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ*.... They have interpreted it (or rather distorted

it) to mean this: "We shall raise from every *ummah* (the masses) a *shahid* (martyr in the way of God); i.e. We shall make him a revolutionary, then We shall ask every *ummah* to produce its proof, which is the same as its martyr—the revolutionary killed in the way of God."

Firstly, this verse follows another verse and both of them are related to the Day of Judgement, the day when God would address idolaters. The preceding verse is as follows:

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَاءِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ *

Upon the day when He shall call unto them, and He shall say, 'Where are now those whom you claimed to be My associates?' (28:74)

Secondly, نَزَعْنَا (*naza'nā*) means, "We shall separate," or "We shall draw out." It does not mean, "We shall raise" or "We arouse."

Thirdly, the word شَهِيد (*shahid*) is not used here in the sense of martyr but in the sense of witness—witness to the actions of his people. The Quran considers every prophet as a witness to the actions of his *ummah* (people). There is not a single instance in the Quran where the word شَهِيد (*shahid*) is used for martyr as it is currently today, for one killed in the way of God. The word شَهِيد was of course used by the Prophet (S) and the Imams (A) in this sense, but not in the Quran. Thus we see how the verses of the Quran have been distorted for the purpose of reconciling the Quranic teachings with an inconsistent philosophy like Marxism.

4. What was the principal aim of the prophets? Was their primary goal to establish justice and equality, or to strengthen the relation of man with God by means of faith and knowledge? Did they combine both the aims together and were dualist in approach? Do we require some other explanation? I have already dealt with this problem while discussing prophethood⁹ and there is no need to repeat what we have said there. Here we shall deal with this subject only from the viewpoint of the prophets' methodology. While discussing the practical implications of *tawhid*¹⁰ (the principle of Divine Unity), I have already explained that the prophets neither concentrated their efforts on reforming man and liberating him from within by breaking off all bondages to the worldly things—as the Sūfis maintain—nor did they devote all their energies to bringing about equity and reform in external human relations, considering this reform as sufficient for the reformation of man's internal relations (with God and himself)—as advocated by some materialist schools of philosophy. The Holy Quran, in the same breath and in a single sentence says:

..... تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا

..Come now to a word common between us and you, that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords besides God.... (3:64)

But the question is, from where did the prophets start their mission? from within or from without? Did the prophets initiate their work by transforming men from within by means of impregnating them with religious faith and spiritual fervour and after that people had undergone religious, moral, intellectual, and emotional transformation they made use of this change for attaining the aims of social unity, social reform, social justice and equality? Or did they act other way round by first concentrating their efforts to change material conditions by calling public attention to deprivation, backwardness, and oppression and by mobilizing the people to eliminate social disunity, discrimination and injustice, and attending to the task of cultivating faith, correct doctrine and morals only after this goal was realized?

A little study of the methods employed by the prophets and saints would reveal that they, contrary to the practice of so-called social reformers and the advocates of human welfare, started their work with emphasis on right thinking, correct doctrine, belief, spiritual fervour, love of God, and constant remembrance of the origin of the world (*mabda'*) and the Day of Resurrection. A glance at the chronological order of the sūrahs and revelation of the Quranic verses with reference to the problems discussed in them and a study of the life of the Prophet (S) and his approach to the problems he dealt with during the thirteen years of his stay in Mecca and the ten years of his life in Medina, is sufficient to throw light on the methods employed by the prophets.

5. That the opponents of the prophets should have maintained a conservative logic is quite natural. If it could be deduced from the Quran that the opponents of the prophets, without exception, believed in this logic, one might justifiably say that all opponents of prophets belonged to the affluent, privileged, and exploiter class. But what can actually be deduced from the Quran is that this type of thinking is the logic of the leaders of the opponents, the *mala'* and the *mustakbirūn*, whom Marx regards as owners and distributors of the society's intellectual products.

That the logic of the prophets should be a logic of dynamism, rationality, and indifference to custom and tradition is also natural. But it is not justifiable to say that deprivation, exploitation, and oppression of the lower classes have been responsible for moulding their consciousness in this manner, and that their thinking is naturally determined by their deprivations and privations. The prophets have this logic because

they have attained to a stage of human perfection with respect to their logic, reason, feelings, and emotions. In fact, the more a human being acquires perfection, the lesser is his attachment and dependence on his natural and social environment and material conditions, and greater is his independence. We shall talk more about it later. The independent logic of the prophets requires that they should not be tied to customs, habits, and traditions. On the contrary it requires of them to liberate the people also from the shackles of blind imitation of decadent customs and traditions.

6. Whatever has been said in the context of oppression (*istid'āf*) is also unacceptable. Why? Because, firstly, the Quran has itself clearly explained the evolutionary course of history and its ultimate goal variously in several verses. These verses explain and interpret the meaning of the above-mentioned verse (28:5) and are complementary to it, as they suggest that its contention is true only under certain conditions. Secondly, contrary to the common belief, the verse of *istid'āf* (28:5) cannot be interpreted as formulating any universal law in itself. This is so evident that there is little need for any elaborate comparison with other related verses or any detailed interpretation or explanation. This verse is related to the verse preceding it and the one following it. When these verses are read in successive order, we find that this verse does not contain the universal principle which has been inferred from it. I would like to discuss this verse in two parts. The first part of our discussion is based upon the assumption that this verse may be separated from the ten verses preceding and following it, and that a universal principle may be derived from it. Then we compare this verse with other verses which propound another historical principle which contradicts the assumed principle, and see what conclusion can be drawn from this comparison. In the second part, we shall show that this verse basically does not propound the universal historical principle that has been inferred from it.

(i)

In several verses of the Quran the ultimate destiny and fate of history as well as its course of evolution is pictured as the ultimate victory of faith over faithlessness, victory of piety over uncontained lust, the victory of righteousness over corruption, and victory of good and godly conduct over perverse behaviour. The verse 55 of *Sūrat al-Nūr*, reads thus:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا

يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا.....

God has promised those of you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed in the earth, even as He caused those who were before them to succeed [others], and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and will give them in exchange safety after their fear. They shall serve Me, not associating with Me anything.... (24:55)

In this verse the people who are promised final victory, vicegerency of God, and inheritance of the earth are no doubt the righteous believers. Contrary to verse 28:5 which mentions the condition of being oppressed, deprived, and exploited as the main characteristic of the believers, this verse relies upon ideological, moral, and behavioural characteristics. It proclaims the ultimate victory and domination of a particular kind of belief, faith, and mode of behaviour. In other words, this verse promises the ultimate victory of the human being who has attained conviction of faith, realization of truth and sublimity of character. One of the implications of the promised victory is 'succession in earth,' that is, wresting of authority from previous rulers and powers. The other implication is regarding the establishment of the rule of Religion, that is realization of all ethical and social values of Islam, such as, justice, chastity, piety, courage, self-sacrifice, love, worship of God, sincerity, purity of soul, etc. Thirdly, it implies rejection of all forms of polytheism (*shirk*) either in worship (*'ibādah*) or in obedience (*'itā'ah*).

In *Sūrat al-'A'rāf*, the verse 128 states:

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْعَيْنَا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ *

And Moses said to his people, 'Seek help in Allah, and be patient; surely the earth is God's and He gives it for an inheritance to whom He will of His servants, and ultimately to the God-fearing, [i.e., in the end the God-fearing would be the inheritors of the earth]. (7:128)

In *Sūrat al-'Anbiyā'*, the verse 105 declares:

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ *

We have written in al-Zabūr, after the Remembrance, 'Indeed the earth shall be the inheritance of My righteous servants.' (21:105)

There are other verses also relating to this subject.

What shall we do now? Should we accept the verse 28:5 related with *istid'āf* (oppression) or the verse 24:55 concerned with the matter

of *istikhlāf* (succession) and several other verses of its kind? Can we say that these two types of verses though apparently different in meaning express the same fact, that the oppressed are the same as the believers, the righteous, and the pious, and vice versa? Can we say that *istid'āf* (being oppressed) is the social and class character of the same people who are ideologically identified as men of faith, righteousness, and piety? Of course not. As I have already argued, the theory of correspondence between the so-called 'superstructural' characteristics of belief, righteousness, and piety, and the so-called 'infrastructural' characteristics of being oppressed, exploited and deprived is not justified from the point of view of the Quran. From the Quranic viewpoint it is just as possible that a group of believers may not be oppressed, as it is possible that a group of oppressed may not consist of believers. The Quran has introduced both of these groups.

However, as I have pointed out earlier, whenever a monotheistic ideology based upon the Divine values of justice, self-sacrifice, and benevolence is presented in a class society, it is evident that majority of its followers should belong to the oppressed class; because they do not have to overcome the obstacles which block the way of nature as in the case of the opposite class. But it does not necessarily mean that the class of believers is exclusively comprised of the oppressed class.

Secondly, each one of the above-mentioned verses presents two different mechanisms of history. The verse concerning oppression (28:5) identifies the course and movement of history with class struggle. The mechanism of movement is explained as being due to the pressures created by the oppressors and their reactionary character on the one hand, and the revolutionary spirit of the exploited class on the other hand. This struggle undeniably results in the victory of the oppressed class, irrespective of their commitment to the Quranic ideal of good conduct, and applies also to such peoples, for example, as that of Vietnam and Cambodia. If we try to interpret this verse from the religious point of view, we shall have to say that this verse expounds the principle of the Divine support for the oppressed. The Quran declares:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ....

And deem not that God is unaware of what the wicked do.... (14:42)

This is an affirmation of Divine justice. The verse concerned with *istid'āf* (oppression) containing the notions of leadership (*imāmah*) and inheritance (*wirāthah*) is indicative of Divine justice.

But the verse relating to *istikhlāf* (succession) (24:55) and other similar verses, expound a different mechanism operating in history as a natural process. From the religious point of view this mechanism

implies a principle more comprehensive and inclusive than the principle of Divine justice, since the latter is included in it.

The mechanism expounded in the verse 24:55, and other similar verses, can be explained in this fashion: Among the various kinds of struggles throughout the course of world's history, almost all of which have had waged for the sake of some material interest and gain, only that struggle which has been waged for the sake of God (*lillāh wa fillāh*) has been exclusively motivated by sacred values, free of any selfish material interest. This struggle, under the leadership of the prophets and the believers following them, has been instrumental in the advancement of humanity and human civilization. Only this type of struggle is worthy of being called the battle between good and evil. It were these battles which pushed forward history from the humanistic and spiritual point of view. The real motivating force behind these struggles was not the upsurge of a certain class but man's natural and instinctive urge for truth and understanding of the mystery of existence and his craving for justice, which aims at creating an ideal social order.

It was not the sense of deprivation and loss but the natural urge for self-perfection that had been instrumental in man's progress.

The animal faculties in man have remained unchanged from the beginning of history until now; they have neither developed in any way nor can they develop now. But his human aptitudes gradually develop and blossom, so that in future, more than today, he will be able to emancipate himself from material and economic bonds and incline more and more towards faith and spiritual perfection. The ground on which history has developed and evolved was not the battles fought for class interests and material gains, but the ideological and spiritual struggles based on Divine faith. This is the natural mechanism of man's evolution which ensures the ultimate victory of the righteous, the pious, and the warriors of the Divine path.

Let us discuss the Divine view of this victory. Whatever participates in the process of history and undergoes gradual evolution, attaining its ultimate goal as history approaches its culmination point, is manifestation of God's Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) and Benevolence (*raḥmah*), which necessitate that creatures attain perfection. It is something more than what is called Divine justice which necessitates only 'compensation.' In other words, what has been promised is issuance and manifestation of the Divine Attributes of Lordship, Benevolence, and Bountifulness, not just His Attributes of Omnipotence and Vengeance [retribution].

Thus, we see that the verse 28:5 concerning *istid'āf* and the verse 24:55 concerning *istikhlāf* (and other verses similar to it), each has a specific logic of its own. They differ in import with respect to the perspective of history, the class which is victorious, the course followed by history to ensure the promised victory, the mechanism or the natural

process responsible for the movement of history, and with respect to the manifestation of relevant Divine Attributes. Nevertheless, we see that the verse 24:55 concerned with succession is more comprehensive than the other one in respect of the conclusions it yields. Whatever man obtains on the basis of the verse concerning oppression is only a part of what he attains on the basis of the verse concerning succession. The moral value we derive from the verse concerning oppression is deliverance of the oppressed from the tyranny of the oppressor, which implies that God is the Saviour of the oppressed (thus highlights only one Attribute of God), whereas the verse concerning succession embraces all the Attributes of God including the one designated by the former verse.

(ii)

Now the second part of our discussion regarding the verse concerning oppression. The fact is that this verse is not meant to lay down any universal principle. It, consequently, neither describes the course of history nor indicates the mechanism of history for the ultimate victory of the oppressed qua oppressed. The erroneous presumption that this verse lays down a principle is caused by separating it from its preceding and succeeding verses and generalizing the meaning of the relative pronoun *الَّذِينَ* in the phrase *اسْتَضِعُّوْا* to deduce a principle which conflicts with the one deduced from the verse 24:55 concerning succession. Consider the following three verses:

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضِعُّ طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ * وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتَضِعُّوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ * وَنَمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ *

Indeed Pharaoh exalted himself in the earth and made its people into castes. Abasing one party of them, slaughtering their sons and sparing their women; surely he was of those who work corruption. And we desired to show favour unto those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them leaders and to make them the inheritors, and to establish them in the earth, and to show Pharaoh and Hāmān (his prime minister) and their hosts that which they feared from them. (28:4-6)

These three verses are interrelated and can be interpreted only when read together.

We see that the clauses ... *وَنَمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ* ... 'and to establish them in the earth,' and ... *وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ* ... 'and to show Pharaoh and Hāmān...'

in the third verse are related to the phrase *أَنْ نَمَنَّ*, 'that We shall favour,' in the second verse which is complementary to their meaning. Therefore, these two verses cannot be separated from each other. Besides, the content of the second clause in the third verse, i.e., *وَأُتْرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ*, is related to the content of the first verse, and makes an assertion about the fate of Pharaoh whose tyranny is described in the first verse. Thus we cannot separate the third verse from the first verse, as the third verse is related to the second verse and complements it. The second verse, also, cannot be separated from the first verse.

Had the third verse not been there or had it not dealt with the fate of Pharaoh and Hāmān, it would have been possible to separate the second verse from the first, and to consider it as independent, so that a universal principle could be deduced from it. But the inseparable connection of these three verses absolutely excludes the possibility of deducing any principle. What is meant is that Pharaoh indulged in acts of self-aggrandizement, discrimination, repression and infanticide, while God had determined to bestow leadership and inheritance of the earth upon those who were humiliated, oppressed, and deprived of their rights. Hence the pronoun *الَّذِينَ* in the second verse should be taken in the restricted sense of reference to the people who were promised, not in a general sense applicable to all oppressed.

Moreover there is another point in the verse to be noted. The phrase, *وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ آئِمَّةً ...* 'We shall make them leaders...', refers to the phrase *... أَنْ نَمَنَّ ...*, 'that We shall favour....' It does not say, *بِأَنْ نَجْعَلُهُمْ* which would have been more proper if it was meant that the Divine favour involved amounted to bestowing of leadership and inheritance. This is the general interpretation of this verse. However, the verse means to say, "We intended to show favour unto the oppressed through a prophet and a revealed Scripture (Moses and the Torah), through religious teaching and training, and through generation of monotheistic faith in them, making them righteous believers, and as a result the leaders and inheritors of the land [their own land]. Hence the verse intends to make this statement:

*وَأُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمَنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعِفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ (بِمُوسَى وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نُنزَلُهُ عَلَى مُوسَى)
وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ آئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلُهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ **

We desired to show favour unto those who were oppressed (by sending Moses and the revealed Scripture) and to make them leaders and inheritors....

Therefore, though the verse 28:5 concerning oppression (*istid'āf*) bears a specific meaning, it is quite similar in import to the verse 24:55 concerning succession (*istikhlāf*), i.e. it partially conveys the general meaning of the verse 24:55. Furthermore, aside from the relation of the

phrase *وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ آيَةً* with *أَنْ نَمُنَّ*, basically we cannot presume that the verse intends to say that the Children of Israel would have obtained the leadership and inheritance of their land by sole virtue of being oppressed whether Moses would have appeared as a prophet or not, irrespective of his heavenly teachings and regardless of their following those heavenly teachings.

Possibly, the advocates of justifiability of the theory of historical materialism from the Islamic point of view may raise another point. They may say that the Islamic culture in its essence and character is either the culture of the oppressed or of the oppressors, or it is a blanket culture. If the Islamic culture is the culture of the oppressed, it is bound to have the character of its class: its audience, its message, its alignment, and everything must revolve around the oppressed class. And if the Islamic culture is the culture of the oppressors, as claimed by the opponents of Islam, besides having its class character and revolving around its interests, it should be a reactionary and anti-human culture and so necessarily of a non-Divine origin.

No Muslim would accept this point of view. Moreover, the entirety of this culture bears witness to the contrary. Now the claim that the Islamic culture is a blanket culture. A blanket culture is a neutral culture, a culture of isolation and indifference, without responsibility, and commitment, whose motto is, "Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give back to God what belongs to God." It is a culture which attempts to reconcile water with fire, oppressed with oppressor, exploited with exploiter, by bringing together all of them under the same roof, a culture that neither roasts the meat nor burns the spit. Such a culture is practically a conservative culture which serves the interests of the oppressors and the exploiters. A neutral, indifferent, and noncommitted group, which does not participate in any social conflicts between the exploiter and the exploited, practically supports the exploiting class by not constraining its freedom. Similarly a culture whose spirit is neutral and indifferent should of necessity be considered to be the culture of the oppressive class. Taking this into account, it is claimed that since the Islamic culture is neither neutral nor a supporter of the oppressive class, it should be a culture of the oppressed with respect to its origin, its alignment, its message, and its audience, all revolving around the axis of this class.

This argument is totally fallacious. I think, there are two fundamental reasons for the inclination of this section of Muslim intellectuals towards historical materialism. Firstly, they presume that if Islamic culture is to be regarded as a revolutionary culture—or if Islam is to be equipped with a revolutionary culture—the recourse to historical materialism is inevitable. The rest of their talk and their claims that it is an idea inspired by the Quran and specifically derived from the

verse 28:5 about *istid'āf* are nothing but excuses and devices to conceal this prejudgement. This is the reason for their outright departure from the essence of Islamic logic, which makes them degrade the sublime, natural, Divine and human logic of Islam to the level of a materialistic philosophy.

These intellectuals have imagined that the only way open for a culture to be revolutionary is to identify it with the oppressed and the deprived class, to consider it bound to its interests, and as being exclusively related to it with respect to its source, alignment, and audience. Therefore, they think, all leaders and ideologues should arise solely from this class, the relation of this culture to all the other classes and groups being one of sheer hostility, antagonism, and conflict.

These intellectuals presume that the way to a revolutionary culture should necessarily end in the stomach, and that all great revolutions of history, even those led by the prophets, were the revolutions of the stomach, for the stomach. For the same reason, out of the great Abū Dharr, the wise man of the ummah, a staunch monotheist, a sincere and honest supporter of Islam, a determined warrior in the way of God, a man who fearlessly fulfilled the duty of *al-'amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, they have carved an Abū Dharr of the stomach, a psychopath remarkably sensitive to the pangs of hunger, who, for the sake of satisfying his hunger, considered it not only permissible but obligatory to draw the sword against all men. The highest value attributed to his life, in their view, is his personal experience of hunger, due to which he could understand the agony of the hungry class. His sympathy with the hungry caused him to develop a complex against those who were responsible for it. Consequently he committed himself totally to fighting against them. That's all there is to Abū Dharr. The whole personality of this Luqmān of the ummah, this monotheist seer, this ardent crusader, and one of the greatest personalities of Islam, is degraded to the level of a materialist.

These intellectuals subscribe to the view of Marx according to whom a revolution can originate only in a violent movement of the masses.¹¹

They are unable to imagine that a culture, a school of thought and an ideology which has Divine origin and addresses all human beings, and in fact the human nature itself, through a universal and comprehensive message, aligned with the values of justice, equality, piety, spirituality, love, benevolence and struggle against tyranny, is ever capable of giving birth to a great revolution accompanied with profound changes. But it is a revolution guided by the Divine light and the human conscience, and is accompanied with religious fervour, spiritual ecstasy, Divine motives, and humanistic values, similar to those monotheistic revolutions which have been witnessed by history again and again. The

Islamic Revolution is a clear example of such a revolution.

These intellectuals fail to conceive that it is not essential for a culture to necessarily originate in the oppressed class in order to be committed and purposive and not to be neutral and indifferent. They presume that a blanket culture is necessarily neutral and indifferent. They are unable to understand that it is impossible for a comprehensive school of thought and a blanket culture to be neutral, indifferent, irresponsible, and noncommittal if it has a Divine origin and is addressed to the human nature.

That which creates the sense of responsibility and commitment is not affinity with the oppressed class but dedication to God and human conscience. Ignorance of this fact is the root cause of their misunderstanding regarding the relationship of Islam with revolution.

The other main reason for this misconception should be sought in the relationship between Islam and its social alignment. These intellectuals have observed that there is a clear inclination in favour of the oppressed in the Quran reflected in its historical discourses about the movements led by the prophets. On the other hand, they have accepted with unquestioning credulity the validity of the Marxist doctrine of correspondence between the social base and ideological base, according to which the origin and alignment of an ideology correspond with each other. Since it has never crossed their minds to question the validity of this doctrine, they have been forced to draw this inference that since the Quran clearly considers the goals of the sacred movements to be in alignment with the interests of the oppressed and oriented towards recovery of their rights, therefore, it means that the Quran regards all the sacred movements as originating from the oppressed and exploited class. This leads to the conclusion that the essence of history from the Quranic viewpoint is materialistic and economic, with economy as the base of the social structure.

From what we have said so far it becomes clear that the Quran believes in the principle of human nature and considers it to be the logic which governs human life. This logic, which may be called the 'logic of the human nature,' is diametrically opposed to the 'logic of profit,' which is the logic of the beastly and degenerate human being. Accordingly Islam does not accept the doctrine of correspondence between the social origin and alignment of an ideology or the doctrine of correspondence between the social and ideological bases. Islam regards it as an inhuman doctrine applicable to semi-human beings who have not received any human education or training, and so are devoid of any sense of higher values. Such stick to the logic of profit only. But it does not apply to human beings who have attained humanhood, having received human education and training; their logic is the logic of nature.

Aside from all this, to say that the alignment of Islam is in favour

of the oppressed is a sort of loose statement. Of course, Islam is aligned with the values of equity, equality, and justice. Obviously the people who are benefited by this alignment are the oppressed and the deprived. Those who are adversely affected by it are the oppressors, the exploiters, and the despots.

It means that Islam, even while striving for the rights of a certain class, its principal goal is realization of a value and promotion of a human principle. It is here that the extraordinary worth of 'the principle of nature,' clearly expounded by the Quran, becomes evident in the Islamic culture as the fountain-head of all Islamic teachings.¹²

Much that is said about nature [in other philosophies] fails to elucidate its depth and to comprehend its full dimensions. Even those who often talk about nature, since they do not pay due attention to the various aspects of its vast dimensions, ultimately come up with views which contradict this principle.

Another example of this error, which is more appalling, is the theory regarding the origin of religions. Whatever we have discussed till now concerns the nature and origin of historical phenomenon from the viewpoint of religion (particularly Islam). Now we shall deal with religion as a socio-historical phenomenon, which has existed from the dawn of history up to present time, and concerns with the origin and alignment of this social phenomenon.

We have recurringly pointed out that the Marxist doctrine of historical materialism believes in a correspondence between the origin of every cultural phenomenon and its class alignment. There is a universal principle generally believed in by Muslim mystics and philosophers, according to which the end of everything is a kind of return to its origin:

النِّهَايَاتُ هِيَ الرَّجُوعُ إِلَى الْبِدَايَاتِ.

The ends return to the origins.

And Rūmī has said:

بلبلانرا عشق با روی گل است	جزئها را رویها سوی کل است
از همانجا کآمد آنجا می رود	آنچه از دریا به دریا می رود
وزتن ما جانِ عشق آمیزرو	از سرگه سیلهای تیزرو

*The parts are forced towards the whole,
Nightingales are in love with the rose's face;
What comes from the sea flows back into it,*

*And everything returns to its source;
Like the restless waves gushing from mountain-tops,
My soul burning with love, is restless to be free from the body.*

Marxism holds a similar view with regard to intellectual, aesthetic, philosophical, and religious matters, and in fact all socio-cultural phenomena. This school claims that all ideas are directed towards the source from which they originate. The end of everything is directed towards its source and origin. There is no such thing as a neutral or non-aligned philosophy, religion or culture. There is also no such thing as a philosophy or religion which seeks social reform that is not wholly to the benefit of the social class from which it arises. According to it, every class has its specific intellectual and cultural manifestations. Therefore, in all societies divided into two classes from the economic point of view, there are two distinct types of emotional, philosophical, moral, artistic, literary, aesthetic approaches, and two different types of sensibilities and world outlooks, and occasionally even two types of scientific knowledge. Whenever the infrastructure and property relations are of two forms, this division leads to bifurcation in two cultural and intellectual patterns and systems.

Marx personally accepts two exemptions from this principle: religion and the State. According to him, these two are special creations of the oppressive class and are used by it as instruments of exploitation. Naturally, they are aligned with the interests of the oppressors. As for the exploited class, due to its social position, it is neither the source of religion nor the State. Religion and the State are imposed upon them by the opposite group. Hence two systems of government or religion do not exist anywhere.

Certain Muslim intellectuals, contrary to Marx's view, claim that religion can be also divided into two different systems. As morality, arts, literature and all other cultural phenomena in a class society represent two systems and each of them has a specific origin and orientation related to its respective class—one system is related to the ruling class while the other is related to the ruled—so also religion is of two types: the religion of the rulers, and the religion of the ruled.

The religion of the rulers is polytheism (*shirk*), and the religion of the ruled is monotheism (*tawhîd*). The religion of the rulers is partisan and discriminatory, whereas the religion of the ruled advocates equity and equality. The religion of the rulers justifies the status quo, while the religion of the ruled demands revolution and condemns the status quo. The religion of the rulers is static and stagnant, and silences all criticism; whereas the religion of the ruled stimulates upsurge, dynamism, and protest. The religion of the rulers is the opium of the society, and the religion of the ruled is a tonic for it.

Therefore, Marx's theory, that the social orientation and alignment of religion is absolutely to the interests of the rulers, is true only for the religion of the ruling class, which is against the ruled and is the opium of the masses. This is the type of religion which has practically always existed and has been in vogue and power. But it is not true of the religion of the ruled, i.e., the religion of the truthful prophets, which was not tolerated by the ruling class and was suppressed by all means.

These intellectuals in this manner reject Marx's theory which considers all religions as an instrument employed in the interests of the ruling class, and presume that thereby they have rejected Marxism itself. They do not realize that what they have said, in spite of its going against the views of Marx, Engels, Mao and other Marxists, is nothing but a confirmation of the materialist-marxist interpretation of religion—something which is far more appalling. After all they accept that the religion of the ruled has a particular class origin. Thus they approve of the principle of correspondence between a religion's class origin and its class orientation and alignment. In other words, they have unconsciously affirmed the materialistic conception of religion and all cultural phenomena and hence the doctrine of necessary correspondence between the origin of a cultural phenomenon and its objectives. The only thing they have done is that contrary to the Marxist views, they have affirmed the existence of a religion which originates in the oppressed class and serves its interests. They have given an interesting explanation of the religion of the oppressed and its social orientation. But they ignore that this view in itself accepts the doctrine of materialistic-economic character of religion.

Furthermore, what sort of conclusions are drawn from this view? It is concluded that the polytheistic religion of the ruling class is the only religion that has played an objectively significant role in the lives of people throughout history. Due to the determinism of history, which supported it, and the economic and political power vested in its hands, the religion of the ruling class, which necessarily justified its situation, has been always the predominant religion. On the other hand, since the monotheistic religion could not materialize and objectify its social objectives, it did not play any historical role in society, as the superstructure can not precede the economic base or infrastructure.

According to this view, the monotheistic movements of the prophets, being the expression of the aspirations of the oppressed and the defeated, could not play any historical role and were bound to be defeated. The prophets preached the religion of unity of God and justice, but all their attempts proved to be short-lived, because the religion of the rulers under the mask of monotheism and prophetic teachings distorted the true religion and suppressed it. The religion of

the ruling class flourished by drawing its nourishment from prophetic teachings while growing in power and using it for exploitation of the deprived class.

In fact, the truthful prophets of God strove to provide the people with bread, but brought disaster upon them, as their religion became a tool of the opposite class for tightening the noose further around the neck of the oppressed and the weak. The prophets could not achieve what they desired through their teachings; rather the outcome was contrary to their objectives, or, to use an expression used by Islamic jurists, *ما قُصِدَ لَمْ يَقَعْ وَمَا وَقَعَ لَمْ يُقْصَدْ*, "the intended did not happen, and what happened was not intended."

What the materialists and atheists say about religion, that religion is opium of the masses, it stupefies them, bewitches them, causes stagnation and passivism, justifies tyranny and discrimination, and is conducive to ignorance—all this is true but only for the religion of the rulers: the polytheistic religion of social discrimination which predominated throughout history. But it is not true of righteous religion, the religion of monotheism, the religion of the ruled, the oppressed, which was always suppressed and was driven out of the arena of life and history.

The only role played by the religion of the ruled has been one of criticism and protest. It was similar to the role of a political party with minority seats in the legislature. The party which obtains majority, forms the cabinet out of its members, carries out its programmes and resolutions. The other party despite being more progressive, because of being in minority, is reduced to the role of a critic of the majority.

The party in majority does not pay any heed to these criticisms. Ruling the society according to its own desires, it may occasionally even utilize the criticism of the minority for strengthening its own position. If it were not for the criticism of the opposition, it may possibly collapse under increasing pressures; but the criticism of the opposition makes it more cautious and helps it to further consolidate its position.

The foregoing statement is not true on any account. Neither is it true in respect of its analysis of the nature of polytheism, nor with regard to its analysis of the nature of monotheism, nor in its treatment of the part played by these two religions in history. Undeniably religion has always existed in the world, be it in the form of monotheism, or polytheism, or both of them existing simultaneously. As for the priority of polytheism over monotheism or vice versa, the sociologists advance different views. The majority of them hold that in the beginning there was polytheism, and religion gradually evolved towards monotheism. Some sociologists hold the opposite view.

Religious traditions, or rather certain religious principles, confirm

the second theory . But as to the question how the religion of polytheism came into existence, and whether it was invented to justify the acts of injustice and tyranny by the oppressors, or if there was some other reason, researchers offer other explanations; and one cannot naively accept the view that polytheism is a product of social injustice. The interpretation of monotheism as the outcome of the aspirations of the oppressed classes to uphold the values of equality, brotherhood, and unity, as against the philosophy of discrimination and injustice of the rulers, appears to be more unscientific as well as incompatible with the basic tenets of Islam.

The above-mentioned view presents the truthful apostles of God as "the acquitted failures;" failures, since they failed in the struggle against evil and were overpowered throughout history; their religion could not influence society nor could it play any role comparable to the one played by the false religion of the rulers. Its role was restricted to passive criticism of the religion of the rulers. And the 'acquitted,' for the reason that, contrary to the claims of materialists, they never belonged to the pole of exploiters and plunderers, and were not agents of stagnation and passivism. Their alignment was not with the interests of the ruling class. On the contrary, they belonged to the pole of the oppressed and the exploited, arose from among them, experienced their agonies, worked in their interest, and strove for the restoration of their rights usurped by the ruling class.

As the truthful prophets are totally exonerated with respect to their call, message and their alignment, they are also exonerated from any accusation of failure; they were not responsible for it. It was the determinism of history arising out of the institution of private property which supported and sustained the opponent, the ruling class. The existence of private property necessarily divided society into two halves: the exploiters and the exploited. The half consisting of the exploiters, by virtue of its ownership of material production, necessarily monopolized intellectual products also. One cannot oppose "determinism of history"—which is a materialistic term for fate and predestination, predestined not by a god in heavens but on the earth, a deity which is material, not abstract, whose power represented by the "economic base of society" operates through the channels of the "tools of production." Therefore, the prophets are not responsible for their failure.

However, though the above-mentioned interpretation exonerates the righteous prophets, it negates the notion of a system of creation which is all good, is governed by truth, and where the good predominates over evil. The Islamic metaphysician optimistically maintains that the system of being is based upon truth and good, that evil, falsehood, and wickedness do not have a fundamental reality and do

not exist independently; they are accidental, relative, and transitory. Truth and good form the axis of the system of being and the human society:

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

...As for the foam, it passes away as scum [upon the banks], while that which is of use to mankind remains in the earth.... (13:17)

It is also said that in the struggle between truth and falsehood, truth emerges victorious:

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ....

Nay, but We hurl the true against the false, and it invalidates it, and behold! falsehood vanishes away.... (21:18)

It is further asserted that Divine providence has been with the truthful prophets all along:

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ *

Surely We shall help Our Messengers and those who believe, in the life of the world, and upon the day when the witnesses arise. (40:50)

The Quran also asserts:

وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ * إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَنْصُورُونَ * وَإِنَّ جُنَدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ *

And verily Our word went forth of old unto Our servants, the envoys; assuredly they shall be helped, and Our host—they are the victors. (37: 171-173)

But the view discussed above refutes these principles because although it exonerates all the prophets, messengers, and reformers of the past, their God is held responsible.

All these conflicting views pose a ticklish problem. On the one hand, the Quran presents an optimist view regarding the general course of the universe by repeatedly emphasizing that *haqq* (truth or right) is the axis of being and man's social existence. Theological philosophy on the basis of its particular principles claims that good invariably overcomes evil, right conquers wrong, and that evil is accidental, relative, and unreal, without any real and independent existence of its own.

On the other hand, a study of the history of the past and the

present gives rise to a sense of pessimism regarding the laws governing the universe and appears to affirm that the view held by the pessimists that entire history is a cavalcade of catastrophes, oppressions, exploitations, and violations against right and truth, is not unjustified.

Is there any way out of this dilemma? Either our understanding of the system of reality and human society is wrong, or we are mistaken in our comprehension of the meaning of the Quran by ascribing to it an optimistic world outlook. Or if we are not mistaken with respect to either of them, we have to accept an inherent, unresolvable contradiction between the reality and the Quran.

I have discussed the doubts which arise regarding the system of existence in this context and have solved them by the grace of God in my book *Divine Justice*¹³. The doubts which arise regarding the course of history and human society would be dealt with under the title "*The Battle between Good and Evil*."¹⁴ God willing, there we shall state our views for the resolution of this doubt. I will be delighted to learn the well-reasoned views of other scholars regarding this problem.

ISLAM'S 'PHILOSOPHY' OF HISTORY

Criteria

In order to discover the viewpoint of any school of thought regarding the nature of history we may use certain criteria which help us to exactly determine its approach to different historic movements and events. For this purpose, here I offer some criteria which I consider proper for such a study. Of course, there may possibly be other criteria which I fail to perceive.

Before we take up these criteria and before we apply them for determining the viewpoint of Islam, it is essential to point out that, in our view, there are certain principles laid down in the Quran according to which the spiritual and intellectual foundation of society is considered prior to its material bases. The Quran has clearly stated the following as a principle:

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

...God changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in themselves.... (13:11)

In other words, the destiny of a people is never changed unless they change their mental and spiritual attitudes. This verse clearly negates the theory of economic determinism of history.

Nevertheless, I shall give an account of the criteria I have deter-

mined and on their basis evaluate the viewpoint of Islam regarding the nature of history.

1. Strategy of the Call:

Every school of thought that has a message for society and calls the people to accept it, has to adopt a specific method which is related on the one hand to its principal aims and objectives, and on the other to its viewpoint about the nature of historical movements. The call of a school is meant, firstly, to awaken a particular consciousness in the people, and, secondly, to arouse and mobilize them by using certain specific means of motivation.

An example is the humanist school of Auguste Comte. Comte advocates a kind of "scientific religion," and considers the essence of human evolution to lie in the sphere of the human mind. He believes that the human mind has passed through two stages. The first stage is that of mythology and philosophy. The second is the stage of science. Naturally, he relates all the desirable forms of consciousness to science, and all the means of motivation required for attaining this objective are also related to the scientific spirit.

Another example is that of Marxism which is a revolutionary theory of the working class. The consciousness which it awakens is related to class antagonism. The means of mobilizing the working class lie in stirring its complexes and its feelings of deprivation and victimization.

In addition to their points of view regarding society and history, various schools of thought differ from one another with respect to different types of consciousness they wish to awaken and different types of means employed for bringing about the desired change. Various ideologies, in accordance with their interpretation of history and the course of its development and their outlook of man, also vary with regard to their target-audience, the reliance of their strategy on force and their view regarding its moral justifiability.

Some schools like Christianity approve only peaceful way of confrontation among human beings. Force or violence of all forms and under all conditions is disapproved of and considered immoral. Accordingly, one of its commandments is: "Offer the wicked man no resistance... If any one hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man tries to take your tunic, lawfully or unlawfully, let him have your cloak as well." On the contrary certain other schools of thought, such as the philosophy of Nietzsche, regard power as the sole moral value. To him human perfection lies in power, and his superman is the most powerful among men. According to Nietzsche, Christian morality is the morality of slaves, of the weak and the humiliated and is

therefore to be blamed for the arrest of human progress.

Certain other schools of thought associate morality with power and violence, though do not consider every kind of force as moral. According to Marxism, the use of force by the exploiters against the exploited is immoral, because it is intended to preserve the status quo, and causes stagnation. But the application of force by the exploited is moral, for it is used for the purpose of transforming society, leading it to a higher stage.

In other words, there is a continuous conflict in society between two groups: one playing the role of 'thesis' and the other working as 'anti-thesis.' The force acting as 'thesis,' by virtue of its being reactionary, is immoral; the force acting as 'antithesis,' by virtue of being revolutionary and progressive, is moral. It is quite natural that the same force which is now regarded as 'moral,' at a later stage, after coming into conflict with its counter force, would become 'immoral,' as it would then play a reactionary role, and the new rival force would become 'moral.' Hence morality is relative. What is moral at one stage, is immoral at a higher and advanced stage.

From the viewpoint of Christianity, its relation with the opposite group, judged by it to be opposed to progress and salvation, is that of softness and mildness. Only this kind of relation is morally right. According to Nietzsche, the only moral relation is the relation between the powerful and the weak. There is no moral value higher than power, and nothing more immoral than weakness. There is no sin greater than the sin of being weak. According to Marxism the relation between two economically opposite classes is nothing but a relationship of antagonism translated into acts of violence. In this relationship, the acts of violence committed by the exploiting class are immoral for being anti-progressive, and the acts of violence committed by the exploited are morally justified. The relationship between newly emerging forces and old forces is that of continuous conflict, and in this conflict morality is invariably on the side of new forces.

All the above-mentioned ideas are rejected by Islam. Islam does not confine morality to pacifism, persuasion through mild and peaceful manners, cordiality and love, as preached by Christianity. It holds that occasionally force and power are also moral. For the same reason Islam regards struggle against tyranny and injustice as a sacred duty and under certain conditions makes *jihād*, which means armed struggle, an obligation.

It is evident that Nietzsche's view is absurd, anti-human, and decadent.

The viewpoint of Marxism is based on the supposed mechanism operative in the development of history. Contrary to it, Islam regards violent confrontation with the opposing retrogressive group as a second

alternative not the first. The first alternative consists of communication through rational persuasion (*al-ḥikmah*) and moral preaching (*al-maw'idah*):

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ....

Invite them to the path of God by appealing to reason and moral sense....

Confrontation with the retrogressive forces through acts of violence is morally approved only when the methods of intellectual, moral, and spiritual persuasion have been unsuccessful. That is why the prophets who waged war against their adversaries had tried initially to convey their message through persuasion and preaching and occasionally through theological debating. Only when they failed in these attempts, or could attain only partial success, they considered the path of violent confrontation, *jihād*, and acts of force as morally justifiable. The main reason of this attitude is that Islam, since its approach is spiritual not materialistic, believes in the wonderful power of rational argument, logical demonstration, and moral persuasion. Just as it believes—to use an expression of Marx—in the power of weapons for the purpose of criticism, it also believes in the power of the weapon of criticism, and makes use of it. However, Islam does not consider it the sole weapon that should be used everywhere. The fact that armed struggle against the forces of reaction is permissible in Islam only as a second alternative not the first, and the fact that Islam has a strong faith in the power of reasoning, persuasion, and moral teaching, both point towards the characteristic spiritual outlook of Islam regarding man, and, consequently, society and history.

Thus, we come to know that the relation of a school of thought with its adversaries—whether it is one of sheer persuasion or of sheer conflict, or a two-stage relation consisting firstly of persuasion and secondly of conflict—clearly reveals the faith of any school of thought in the power of logical persuasion, and moral preaching, their effectiveness and their limits, and also reveals its outlook regarding history and the role of conflict in the course of history.

Now we shall discuss the other aspect. Let us see what kind of consciousness Islam strives to awaken and what means it employs to invite people for embracing its message.

Islamic consciousness attaches foremost importance to the belief in the Divine origin and resurrection (*al-mabda' wa al-ma'ād*). This method of cultivating this consciousness has been used by the Quran and, according to it, also by the prophets of the past. The prophets awakened among the people the awareness of their origin and goal: Wherefrom have you come; where have you come; to where are you

bound? From where has the world emerged, which course does it pursue, and in which direction is it moving? The primary concern instilled by the prophets into people's consciousness is the concern and responsibility towards the whole creation and existence. The concern for social responsibility is only a part of the concern for responsibility towards the whole universe and being. It has been pointed out earlier that the Meccan sūrahs, revealed to the Prophet (S) during the first thirteen years of this mission, bring into focus little except the issues of creation and resurrection.¹⁵

The Holy Prophet (S) started his mission with the declaration:

قُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَفْلِحُوا.

Say, there is no god except God, that you may be delivered.

This was a religious movement which aimed at purifying human belief and thought. It is true that the principle of *tawḥīd* (Divine Unity) has many dimensions—if all teachings of Islam are analysed, they are found to be reducible to the principle of *tawḥīd*; in the same way, the whole system of Islamic ideas can be constructed on this principle¹⁶—but it should be noted that in the beginning this declaration was meant for no purpose except changing the current polytheistic modes of thinking and worship into monotheistic belief and worship; nor if such a comprehensive objective was upheld would it have been comprehensible for the people.

When this consciousness, whose roots go down deep into the human nature, created a feeling of enthusiasm for defending and spreading this faith in a follower, he would not hesitate to sacrifice his life, property, social position, and children for its sake. The prophets started with what in our days is called “the superstructure,” working towards what is called ‘the base’ or ‘infrastructure.’ According to prophetic teachings, man is more committed to faith and ideology than to material interests. In fact, it is this faith and ideology which is the base, and labour, which is a relation with nature, natural resources or society, constitutes the superstructure. Every religious call, in order to be effective, must be ‘prophetic,’ that is, it should be accompanied by persistent reminding of origin and resurrection. The prophets mobilized the society by awakening this awareness, and by cultivating this consciousness, by removing all dust from the face of human conscience, and by relying on the notions of God's good pleasure, His sovereignty, His reward and retribution. In thirteen places the Qurān makes mention of the *riḍwān* (good pleasure) of God. This shows the kind of spiritual motivation employed by Islam for mobilization of the society of believers. This awareness may be called Divine or cosmic consciousness.

Of significance at the second level in Islamic teachings is man's consciousness of his humanity, and realization of the nobility and honour of man's station. In the view of Islam man is not the animal who in the beginning was like all other primates for hundreds of millions of years, who survives and has attained this stage of evolution by treacherously eliminating others in the struggle for existence. On the contrary, he is a being who carries within him the light of Divine Spirit, before whom the angels prostrated, a being to whom are addressed calls from the Divine Throne. Despite all animal propensities toward lust, sensuality, corruption and evil, his being is endowed with a sacred spark which is essentially averse to wickedness, bloodshed, falsehood, corruption, meanness, degradation, and humiliation and which resists repression and tyranny. That spark is a manifestation of Divine honour and majesty:

... وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ....

...Honour belongs to Allah and to His messengers and the believers.... (63:8)

The Prophet (S) has said:

شَرَفُ الْمَرْءِ قِيَامُهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَعِزُّهُ اسْتِغْنَاؤُهُ عَنِ النَّاسِ.

Man's nobility is in his nightlong vigils, and his honour lies in his being in no need of people.

'Ali (A) said to his fellowmen during the Battle of Siffin:

الْحَيَاةُ فِي مَوْتِكُمْ قَاهِرِينَ وَالْمَوْتُ فِي حَيَاتِكُمْ مَقْهُورِينَ.

Life is to die victorious, and death is to survive in subjugation.

Al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (A) said:

لَا أَرَى الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا سَعَادَةً وَالْحَيَاةَ مَعَ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا بَرَمًا.

I can see happiness only in death, and find nothing but agony and disgust in life in the company of tyrants and oppressors.

He also said:

هَيْهَاتَ مِنَّا الذِّلَّةُ

We and disgrace? How preposterous!

All these sayings rely on man's sense of honour and nobility which are inherent in human nature.

Of significance at the third level in Islamic teachings is awareness of one's social rights and responsibilities. There are several instances in the Quran which, by relying on the necessity of fighting for restoration for one's own rights or the rights of others, use this obligation as a means of motivation and mobilization. For an example, we may refer to the following verse of *Sūrat al-Nisā'*:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ
رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ
نَصِيرًا *

How should you not fight for the cause of Allah and of the oppressed among the men, women, and children, who say, 'Our Lord, bring us forth from this city whose people are oppressors, and appoint to us a protector from Thee, and appoint to us from Thee a helper'? (4:75)

This verse relies on two spiritual values for motivating towards *jihād*. The first value is necessity of struggling in the way of God; the second, human responsibility to rescue helpless and defenceless human beings out of the clutches of oppressors. In *Sūrat al-Hajj*, God says:

أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّا لَللَّهِ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ * الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ
حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهَدَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ
وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ * الَّذِينَ إِنْ
مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاللَّهُ غَاقِبُهُ
الْأُمُورِ *

Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged—and surely God is able to give them victory—who were driven from their homes unjustly only because they said: 'Our Lord is Allah.' Had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches, oratories and mosques, wherein the Name of Allah is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down. Assuredly Allah helps one who helps Him—surely Allah is All-strong, Almighty—who, if We establish them in the land, establish prayers, pay the poor-due, and bid to honour and forbid dishonour. And to Allah belongs the issue of all affairs. (22:39-41)

We notice in this verse that the sanction of *jihād* and defence begins with reference to the rights of those who are permitted to fight. But, at the same time, the underlying philosophy of defence is regarded as a

matter over and above and more fundamental than the injustice done to certain people. This philosophy of defence is that if the believers and the faithful do not act and do not rise to wage war against unbelievers, the mosques and other places of worship, which form the heart of the spiritual life of a society, would be demolished, ruined and deserted. In *Sūrat al-Nisā'*, the Quran says:

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ....

God likes not the utterance of harsh speech unless one has been wronged....
(4:148)

It shows that God does not like the words of abuse except in the case of those who are wronged. This is an evident encouragement for the oppressed to demand their rights. In the *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'* the Quran after reprimanding poets and condemning them for their illusory excursions, allows for the following exception:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا....

Save those who believe and do good works, and remember God much, and vindicate themselves [by means of poetry] after they have been wronged....
(26:227)

According to the Quran and the Sunnah, while it is the worst of crimes to submit to oppression and tyranny, and to guard one's rights is considered one's duty, but at the same time all such rights and duties are basically upheld because they represent a series of higher human values. The Quran never appeals to base psychological complexes. It does not rely on envy, jealousy, or lustful cravings as proper motivation for arousing the oppressed. It never says that such and such a group is enjoying a lavish style of life, eating and plundering; why shouldn't you take their place.

If someone wants to take away one's property by force, Islam does not permit passive surrender on the part of the owner on the pretext that material things have no value. Similarly in the case of assault on a person's honour (wife and daughters), Islam does not allow him to keep silent on the pretext that such sexual acts are natural. Islam regards self-defence as a duty. Someone killed in defence of his honour and property is regarded as a martyr (*shahīd*). Even when Islam encourages the defence of one's property, it is not in the form of instigation of the sense of greed and avarice, but for the sake of defence of what is rightful, which is a moral value. In the same way, when it regards defence of one's honour as an obligation, it is not for the sake of highlighting sexuality, but for the sake of safeguarding chastity,

which is one of the greatest sanctities of society, for which man has been appointed a custodian.

2. An Ideology's Nomenclature

Every school of thought identifies its followers with a specific name. For example, white racialism regards 'white man' as the mark of identity of those who subscribe to this theory. When they say 'We', it signifies the white race. Similarly Marxism, which is the philosophy of the working class, identifies its followers with the label 'worker,' which marks their identity. 'We' in their jargon means 'We the workers and the labourers.' Christianity specifies the identity of its followers with the following of a particular individual without bothering about any path or objective. A Christian's identity wholly lies in following Christ, wheresoever he may lead him.

One of the characteristics of Islam is that it does not approve of any racial, class, professional, regional or personal labels for introducing itself or its followers. Followers of this religion are not identified with any of such labels as nomads, Semites, poor, rich, oppressed, white, black, Asians, Westerners, Easterners, 'Moḥammadans,' 'Qur'ānites,' or 'Ka'bites.' None of the above-mentioned labels are considered a determinant of the real identity of its followers. As soon as the character of this school and that of its followers is identified, all labels and names disappear, the only thing that remains is a particular 'relationship'—the relationship between man and God. "*Islām*" means submission to God. What sort of community is the Muslim community? It is a community which submits to God, submits to truth, and to Divine Revelation which from the horizon of truth casts the reflection of reality into the heart of the worthiest of mankind for the guidance of humanity. Then what is the real mark of the identity of Muslims, and what is signified by the Muslims' use of the word 'We'? What sort of unity and identity does this religion impart to its followers, and what is their mark of identification? Under what flag does it assemble them? The answer is: *Islām*, submission to the truth.

The criterion of unity that every school approves for its followers is a reliable means of judging its aims and objectives. It also helps us to understand the outlook of a school regarding man, society, and history.

3. Positive and Negative Conditions for Acceptability

I have already mentioned that the mechanism of the movement of history varies according to different schools of thought. One school conceives the mechanism of natural movement as repression of one class by another, one of which is intrinsically revolutionary and the

other reactionary. Another school traces the source of mechanism in the nobility of human nature that strives to attain perfection. Similarly other schools have other views. It is evident that every school of thought interprets favourable conditions and obstacles in accordance with its definition of the mechanism of society's movement. The school which regards the pressure exercised by one class on the other as the mechanism of movement, in case such pressure is not adequate, tries to create such a pressure so as to stimulate the society out of its inert state. In some of his writings Marx has remarked that "The existence of a class of slaves is essential for the existence of the class of freemen." At the conclusion of the same study, he says, "Where does the possibility of liberation for the German nation lie? Our answer is this: We must form a class which is decisively in chains."¹⁷ Such an ideology regards reforms as obstacles; because reforms reduce social pressures and this reduction eliminates, or at least delays, the explosive conditions necessary for revolution. On the contrary, the ideology which believes in the natural and innate movement of society, does not sanction forging of chains for any class; since it does not consider social pressure as an essential condition for development. For the same reason, it does not regard gradual reform as an obstacle for progress.

What are the favourable, and unfavourable conditions from the viewpoint of Islam? The Islamic interpretation of these conditions revolves around the nature of the human being. Sometimes the Quran stresses the condition of adherence to primordial piety (*... هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* * "guidance for the God-fearing." [2:2]) Sometimes it mentions anxiety and apprehension arising from awareness of responsibility vis-a-vis the whole system of existence as a condition (*... الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ* "... who fear God in the Unseen," [21:49]; or *... وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ* "... who fears the All-merciful in the Unseen," [36:11]). Sometimes it mentions the condition that the God-given nature within one should have remained intact and alive: *... لِيُنذِرَ مَن كَانَ حَيًّا* "... to warn him who is alive" (36:70). Thus the essential conditions according to Islam for acceptance of its call are piety, anxiety and apprehension arising out of a sense of responsibility towards the system of creation, and intact survival of one's God-given nature.

In opposition to these conditions are such spiritual and moral vices as *إِثْمُ الْقَلْبِ* "sinfulness of the heart," (2:283); *رُسْنُ الْقَلْبِ* "rusting of the heart," (83:14); sealing of the heart (2:7), inner blindness or loss of sight (22:46); deafness of the heart (41:44); corruption of the book of the soul (91:10); blind adherence to the practices of ancestors (43:23); personality cult or hero worship (33:63); reliance on surmise and conjecture (6:116), and so on. Extravagance, affluence, and habitual luxury are also regarded as deterrents, because they strengthen the animal qualities in man and transform him into a beast and even a

predator. According to the Quran, these factors impede advancement towards the welfare of the society and are injurious to its development.

According to the Islamic teachings, young people as compared to the aged, and the poor as compared to the affluent, are more receptive to the teachings of Islam; since the youth due to their young age escape psychological pollution and their nature is purer; and the poor also are purer because their souls are not distorted by luxury and wealth.

These positive and negative conditions for the acceptability of Islam affirm that the mechanism of social and historical change suggested by the Quran is more spiritual-psychological in nature than materialistic and economic.

4. Rise and Fall of Societies

Every sociological school usually deals with the causes of the rise and progress of societies and reasons of their degeneration and decline. The viewpoint of a school regarding the main factors of progress or decline, indicates its approach to society and history and their movement towards development and decline.

The Holy Quran, especially with reference to the stories and anecdotes related to these matters, explains its view. We have to see whether the Quran interprets the causes of change in terms of the so-called infrastructure or in terms of the superstructure. To be more precise, we have to know what things are considered by the Quran as the basis and what matters are regarded as constituting the superstructure. Does the Quran emphasize the material and economic factors as being basic, or does it attach basic importance to matters pertaining to faith and morality? Or does it consider all the factors combined together responsible for the rise and fall of a society without giving priority to anyone of them?

The Quran, on the whole, enumerates four factors influencing the rise and fall of a society. In passing, I will give a brief account of these factors.

A. Justice and Injustice:

This notion finds reflection in many verses of the Quran. One of them is the fourth verse of *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*, which I have already quoted in the context of the 'verse of oppression':

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضِعُّ طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ يُدَّبِحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي
نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ *

Verily Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and divided its inhabitants into castes, oppressing one party of them, slaughtering their sons, and sparing their women. Verily, he was of those who work corruption. (28:4)

This holy verse first describes Pharaoh's lust for power and superiority and his claim to divinity, which led him to treat others as slaves. His policy of discrimination had divided them into mutually conflicting groups. He had humiliated a particular group of his people, killing their sons and sparing their women (for serving Pharaoh and his clique). The Quran mentions him as a 'mufsid' (one who corrupts). Evidently the sentence, *... إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ **, "Verily, he was of those who corrupt," is intended to condemn such offences against society which demolish its very foundations.

B. Unity and Disunity:

In the *Sūrat Al 'Imrān*, the verse 103 lays down a clear command to unite on the basis of faith and to hold on to the bond of God, and prohibits disunity and division. In a following verse (3:105) the believers are asked again not to behave like their predecessors [Jews and Christians] who quarrelled with one another and divided. Quite similar to it is the verse 153 in *Sūrat al-'An'ām*. In the same sūrah, verse 65 states:

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبَسَكُمْ سِيعًا
وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُم بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ

Say: 'He is able to send forth upon you chastisement, from above you or from under your feet, or to confuse you in sects and make you taste the violence of one another (6:65)

In the *Sūrat al-'Anfāl*, the verse 46 declares:

.... وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ

... Do not quarrel with one another for then you will be weak and your power will depart from you.... (8:46)

C. Practice or Neglect of the Principle of al-'Amr bi al-Ma'rūf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar :

The Quran puts great emphasis on the duty of *al-'amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (enjoining right conduct and forbidding indecency). An evident inference that may be drawn from one of its verses

is that negligence of this great duty on the part of a nation ultimately results in its destruction and doom. This is verse 79 in *Sūrat al-Mā'idah* which explains that one of the reasons for the denial of Divine mercy and compassion to the infidels of Banī Israel was their nonobservance of the duty to prohibit others from vices:

كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ *

They forbade not one another any dishonour they committed; surely evil were the things they did. (5:79)

In reliable Islamic traditions there are ample references to the advantages of observance and perils of abandonment of the duty of enjoining right conduct and forbidding indecency. However, we abstain from quoting them here for the sake of brevity.

D. Moral Corruption and Degeneration:

There are various verses in the Quran in this context also. In a series of verses luxury and opulence are regarded to be the cause of destruction and ruin.¹⁸ There are also a number of verses in which the word "zulm" (cruelty, injustice, oppression, tyranny) occurs. In Quranic terminology this word does not specifically mean violation of the rights of an individual or group by other individual or group. It also includes injustice to one's own self, as well as injustice of a nation to itself. Actually the word *zulm* is used in the Quran in a general sense. Any kind of deviation from the right path of humanness is injustice, and includes all acts of injustice to others as well as all acts of impropriety, corruption, perversion and immorality. This word is more often used in the Quran in the second sense (i.e., moral deviation). Such verses which consider *zulm* in its general sense as the main cause of destruction and ruin of nations are very numerous. It is beyond the scope of the present work to discuss them here.

Taking in view all these criteria as a whole, we can grasp the view of the Quran regarding the basis of society and that of history. The Quran allots a decisive and determining role to most of the factors which some consider as superstructural.

EVOLUTION AND CHANGE IN HISTORY

Whatever has been discussed so far concerns one of the two most important problems of history, i.e., nature of history—whether it is materialistic or not. The other important problem concerns change and evolution in human history.

We know that social life is not confined to man alone. Some other living creatures also have social life to some extent. They organize their lives on the basis of cooperation, division of labour, and sharing of responsibilities according to set rules and regulations.

We all know that the honeybee is such a creature. But there is a basic difference between the social existence of man and that of other animals; the pattern of their social life always remains fixed and static. Any evolution and change do not take place in the system of their existence, or in the words of Morris Metterlink, in their culture, if the term 'culture' can be used for animals. On the contrary, social life of man is ever changing and dynamic. There is not just a movement, but even an acceleration; i.e. the rate of movement increases with time. Thus the history of human social existence has different periods which are distinguished from one another in various aspects. For instance there are different periods according to the means of livelihood: the period of hunting, the period of cultivation, and the period of industrialization. According to economic system the different periods may be classified as the period of communism, the period of slavery, the period of feudalism, the period of capitalism, and the period of socialism. According to political system, we have the period of tribal rule, the period of despotic monarchy, the period of aristocracy, and the period of democracy; according to sex, the period of matriarchy, and the period of patriarchy. In the same way we may have other classifications from the viewpoint of other aspects.

Why isn't such a change exhibited in the social life of other animals? What is the secret of this change, and what is the main factor responsible for transition of man from one social phase to another? In other words, what is that human faculty that propels human existence forward, and which is not possessed by the animals? How does this transition and advancement occur, what are the laws that govern it, and by what mechanism is it controlled?

There is a question which is usually raised at this point by the philosophers of history, whether evolution and progress are real? In other words, are the changes that have been taking place in the social life of man throughout history actually in the direction of progress and evolution? What are the criteria of evolution?

Some are sceptical that these changes may be regarded as progressive and evolutionary, and their views are discussed in related books.¹⁹ And some others regard movement of history as cyclic, claiming that history starts from a point and after passing through certain phases returns again to the same point. 'Once again,' in their view, is the eternal cry of history.

For example, in the beginning a coarse tribal system is established by certain venturesome and determined nomadic people, which gradual-

ly evolves into aristocracy. The monopoly of aristocrats results in a popular uprising and giving birth to democracy. The chaos and anarchy created by unlimited and unchecked freedom in the democratic system once again leads to the re-emergence of despotism, helped by a tribal spirit.

Here we do not wish to enter an elaborate discussion on this subject and postpone it to some other occasion. However, for the purpose of the present study, we assume that the movement and course of history are on the whole progressive, and proceed accordingly.

Nevertheless, it is essential to remind here that all those who consider the movement of history to be in the general direction of progress acknowledge the fact that by no means the future is better necessarily than the past for all societies under all conditions; neither do they say that the course of societies is always marked by progress without any interruptions or set-back. Undeniably, societies become stagnant, decadent, and retrogressive. They have the tendency of inclining towards the right or the left and consequently are subject to decline and fall. All that is meant is that the human society on the whole is passing through an evolutionary course.

In the books on philosophy of history the problem regarding the dynamics of history and the motivating factors responsible for social progress is usually formulated in a manner which is revealed to be defective on some reflection. In the following sections the views usually advanced on this issue will be discussed.

1. The Racial Theory

According to this theory, certain races are mainly responsible for the advancement of history. Some races have the ability of creating culture and civilization, while others do not possess such talents. Some races contribute to science, philosophy, arts, crafts, and morality, while others are merely consumers of these products.

It is concluded that there exists some kind of division of work between the races. The races endowed with aptitude for knowledge, learning, and statecraft, and with ability to create arts, culture, crafts, and technology should be engaged in these higher, sophisticated and refined human activities; while the races not endowed with such talents should be excused from these activities and instead be engaged in hard physical labour and menial tasks which do not need refinement of thought and taste. Aristotle, who holds this view regarding racial differences, justifies the enslavement of certain races by other races on the same grounds.

Some thinkers believe that only particular races are able to lead the course of history. For example, the northern races being superior to

the southern races have been responsible for the advancement of cultures. Count Gobino, the famous French philosopher who was for three years French ambassador to Iran about hundred years ago, believed in this theory.

2. The Geographical Theory

According to this theory, the main factor responsible for creating civilization and culture and for development of industry is physical environment. Moderate temperaments and strong minds develop in regions of temperate climate. In the beginning of his book, "*al-Qānūn*," Ibn Sinā has elaborately discussed the effect of physical environmental factor on the modes of thought, taste, sensibility and other psychological aspects of human personality.

According to this theory, the factor that directs the advancement of history is not of racial origin or heredity. It is not true that a certain race regardless of its region or environment is the maker of history and responsible for its advancement and a certain other race whatever its physical environment lacks such abilities. In fact, the differences of races are caused by different environments. Moreover, with displacement and migration of races capacities are also redistributed. Thus particular regional and geographical factors are responsible in the main for the advancement and revitalization of civilizations. Montesquieu, the French sociologist of the seventeenth century, supports this point of view in his famous book *De l'esprit des lois* (The Spirit of the Laws).

3. The Theory of the Role of Genius or Heroes

According to this theory, all scientific, political, economic, technological, and moral changes and developments throughout history are brought about by men of genius. The difference between human beings and other animals is that from a biological point of view all other animals are equal in respect of natural capacities. There is at least no remarkable difference among the individuals of a certain species.

In contrast, human individuals bear vast differences regarding their natural capacities and talents. The geniuses of every society are extraordinary individuals of exceptional abilities endowed with extraordinary powers of intellect, sensibility, will, and creativity. Whenever such individuals emerge in a society they contribute to its advancement, taking it ahead scientifically, technically, morally, militarily, and politically. According to this theory, majority of individuals lack initiative and creativity. They are simply followers and consumers of the ideas and the products of the industry of others.

But there always exists a minority of creative individuals in almost

all societies who act as leaders, forerunners, innovators, and inventors, who produce new ideas, new methods, and new technologies. They are the people who steer society in the forward direction and enable it to enter into a new higher phase. Carlyle, the famous English thinker, in his well-known book *Heroes, Hero worship and the Heroic in History*, starting his book with the role of the Holy Prophet (S), holds such a view.

In Carlyle's view, every nation has one or more historical personalities in whom the whole history of a nation is reflected. Or more precisely, it may be said that the history of a nation reflects the personality and genius of one or more of its heroes. For instance, the history of Islam mirrors the personality of the Holy Prophet (S); the history of modern France mirrors the personality of Napoleon and certain other great men, and the last sixty years of the history of Soviet Russia mirror the personality of Lenin.

4. The Economic Theory

According to this theory, economy is the motivating factor of history. All social and historical modes of every nation, including the cultural, religious, political, military and social aspects, reflect the mode and relations of production of a society. Any change in the economic infrastructure of the society totally transforms it and steers it forward. The men of genius, whose role was discussed earlier, are nothing but the expressions of economic, political, and social needs of society; and these needs in their turn are the effects of changes in the tools of production. Karl Marx, and in general all Marxists, and occasionally a number of non-Marxists, subscribe to this view. This is probably the most dominant theory of our times.

5. The Religious View

According to this theory, all worldly incidents have Divine origin and are governed by God's consummate Wisdom. All evolutions and changes occurring in history are manifestations of the Divine Will and God's omniscient wisdom. Thus whatever moves history forward and transforms it is the Will of God. The drama of history is written and directed by the sacred Will of God. Bossuet, the famous historian and patriarch, who acted as the tutor to Louis the Fifteenth, supports this view.

These are the main theories that are usually discussed in the books of philosophy of history as the motivating forces or causes of history.

In my view this kind of formulation of the problem is not correct

and there is a confusion of issues. Most of these theories are not properly related to the motivating cause of history, which we want to discover. For instance, the racial theory is a sociological hypothesis, which may be proposed in relation to the question whether or not all races have—or at least could have had—the same kind of hereditary talents and are of equal level. If they are equal according to natural talents, all the races have an equal share in directing the movement of history. And if they are not equally talented, only some races have played, and could have played, the role of advancing history. Then it seems proper to mention this theory in this context. Nevertheless the secret of the philosophy of history remains in darkness: it does not make any difference for the purpose of solution whether we suppose that only a single race has been responsible for the evolution of history or if all human races participated in the process of change and advancement, because in both the cases it does not answer the question why man, or a race of men, undergoes this type of change and evolution while no such changes occur in the lives of animals. Where does the secret lie? Whether a single race is instrumental in the movement of history or if all the races participate in this process, makes no difference at all for answering this question.

Similar is the case with the geographical theory. It is useful in the context of the sociological problem regarding the role of regional environment in the development of man's intellectual, cultural, aesthetic and physiological faculties. Some environments hold the human being at or near the level of animals, but in other environments the distinction of man from animals is made more prominent and pronounced. According to this theory, history's movement is confined to the people of a specific region; in other regimes life remains static and unchanged like that of animals. But the main question still remains unanswered, since the honeybee and all other gregarious animals living in such geographically superior regions and zones remain unaffected by the movement of history. Then what is the main factor responsible for this disparity in the lives of the two different types of living beings, one of which remains static and unchanged whereas the other type undergoes unceasing change from one phase to another?

The most irrelevant among these theories is the theory of the Divine origin of history, because it is not history alone which manifests the Divine Will. The whole universe, from its beginning to the end, with all its myriads of causes and effects and all positive and negative conditions, mirrors the Divine Will. The relation of the Divine Will is the same with all causes and phenomena of the universe. In the same way as the ever-changing and ever-evolving life of the human being manifests the Divine Will, so also the static and monotonous life of the honeybee manifests the Will of God. Hence this theory fails to unfold the mystery

why the Divine Will created and moulded human life in a pattern which is ever-changing and evolving, and why it created other beings according to a static pattern which makes them unable to change.

The economic theory of history also lacks in technical and methodical precision. It has not been formulated in a correct way. The way it is formulated, it merely throws light on the nature of history as materialistic and economic, and all the other social modes are regarded as the accidents of this substance of history. According to it, if any change takes place in the economic foundation of a society, the transformation of all other social modes is also accompanied. But the theory is based on "if". The main question, however, remains unanswered. Supposing that economy is the foundation of society, "if" economic infrastructure changes, the whole society also changes with it. But the question as to when and under what circumstances and by means of which factors the infrastructure changes followed by changes in the superstructures, is not touched. In other words, to say that economy is the basis is not sufficient to explain the dynamic and changing character of society. Instead of saying that society is the base, the advocates of this theory may properly formulate their position in this manner: by stating that economy is the motivating factor of history, which is materialistic in essence; the contradiction between the economic infrastructure and the social superstructure (or between the two tiers of the infrastructure, viz. the tools of production and the relations of production) is the moving force that pushes history forward. There is no doubt that this is what the advocates of the above-mentioned view mean when they say that economy is the moving force of history. What they mean to assert is that all changes in history originate from internal contradiction between the tools of production and the relations of production. But here we are only concerned with proper formulation of the theory, not with conjecturing the inner purpose and objective of its advocates.

The theory of the role of genius in history, regardless of its truth, is directly relevant to philosophy of history and the question of motivating factor of history.

Thus until now we have arrived at two views regarding the moving force of history. One is the theory of heroes, which considers history to be a product of certain individuals, and claims that the majority of members of society lack creativeness and power of initiative. If a society consisted of such individuals alone, even the minutest change is unlikely to occur in society. But a few individuals with God-gifted genius, when they appear on the social scene, take initiative, draw plans, make bold resolutions, and demonstrate extraordinary resistance and force of will, drawing multitudes of ordinary folk behind them for realizing the desirable change. The personality of these heroes

is purely a product of exceptional natural and hereditary processes. Social conditions and material requirements of a society do not play any effective role in creating and moulding these personalities.

The second is the theory of contradiction between the social infrastructure and superstructure, or the theory of economic causation, which has been already referred to.

The Theory of Nature

There is a third theory which may be called 'the theory of human nature.' According to it, man is endowed with certain inherent qualities, which account for the evolutionary character of social life. One of such qualities is the capacity for collecting and preserving the experiences of life. Whatever has been attained through experience is retained to provide the basis for subsequent experiences.

Another is man's capacity of learning through speech and writing. Experiences and attainments of others are communicated through speech and, on a higher level, through writing. Experiences of a generation, through oral narration and writing, are preserved for the later generations. In this way, collective experience is accumulated with the passage of time. This is the reason why the Quran gives especial importance to the gifts of articulate speech and the pen by making a prominent mention of them:

الرَّحْمَنُ * عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ * خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ * عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ *

The Beneficent has taught the Quran. He created the human being and He has taught him articulate utterance. (55:1-4)

إِفْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ * خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ * إِفْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ * الَّذِي عَلَّمَ
بِالْقَلَمِ *

Read: In the Name of thy Lord, Who created, created the human being from a blood-clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who taught by the pen. (96:1-4)

The third quality of man is that he is endowed with the power of reason and inventiveness. This mysterious quality bestows upon him the powers of creativity and invention which are the manifestation of Divine creativity. The fourth quality is his natural tendency for innovation. It means that man not only possesses the ability of invention and creation which he translates into action whenever a necessity arises, but the urge for creation and invention is ingrained in his nature.

The capacity to preserve and store experiences, in addition to the

capacity to exchange and communicate experiences with others, and the capacity for creation and his natural urge for invention and innovation are the forces that continually drive man towards progress. The other animals neither possess the capacity of preserving experiences nor the capacity of transmitting and communicating their experiences; ²⁰ neither the capacity to create and invent, nor the urge for innovation. None of these qualities which characterize the human intellect exist in the animals. It is because of these qualities that man advances and the animals remain static. Now we shall critically examine these theories in detail.

The Role of Personality in History

Some people have claimed that "history is a battle between genius and ordinariness." It means that common and average people always favour the existing situation which they are used to, whereas men of genius want to alter the existing condition into a more developed and advanced one. Carlyle claims that history starts with the accounts of the lives of great men and heroes.

This viewpoint is actually based on two assumptions. First, that the society itself lacks any nature and personality. The composition of society is not a real synthesis of its members. Individuals are independent of one another. The interaction among individuals does not create any social spirit; any real, synthetic entity which has its own specific nature, personality, and laws does not come into existence. There are merely individuals and individual psychologies. The relation among human individuals in a society regarding their independence from one another is like the relation among the trees in a forest. Social phenomena are nothing but the sum total of individual events in the lives of individuals. According to this view the causes which govern society are determined by accidents and conflicts taking place in individual lives; there are no general and universal laws of causation.

The second assumption is that human individuals are created with different and divergent characteristics. In spite of the fact that human individuals are social beings or rational animals, almost all human beings lack originality and creativity. The majority are simply consumers of culture and not its producers. The only difference between animals and such people is that the animals cannot be even consumers. The spirit of this majority is one of imitating, following, and worshipping their heroes.

But a very small minority of human beings consists of heroes, geniuses, extraordinary supernormal individuals, who are independent in thought, creative and inventive, with a strong will power, who stand out distinct from the majority, as if they belong to a higher order of

beings from a different world. Had it not been for the scientific, intellectual, philosophical, mystical, moral, political, social, technical, and artistic geniuses, humanity would have remained in a primitive state and would not have taken a single step toward advancement.

I personally consider both of these assumptions as vulnerable. The first one is vulnerable for the reason mentioned earlier. In the discussion on society I have proved that society itself possesses its own specific nature, personality and laws according to which it functions. These laws in themselves are progressive and evolutionary by nature. Hence this hypothesis should be discarded. Now we have to see whether an individual can play any role in the development of society which has its own nature, personality and laws and pursues its course of evolution according to them. We shall discuss this matter afterwards. Admitting the differences among individuals, the second assumption is also incorrect, as it is unjustifiable to say that only heroes and geniuses possess the power of creation and the majority of people are merely passive consumers of culture or civilization. All human individuals, more or less, possess innovative and creative talents; on account of these talents all individuals, or at least a majority of them, participate in creative, productive, and innovative activities, however small their share may be as compared to that of geniuses.

Contrary to this theory that personalities make history, is another view which maintains that history makes personalities, not vice versa. It means that the objective needs of a society are responsible for creating personalities.

Montesquieu has said, "Great men and important events are the signs and results of greater and lengthier processes." Hegel said, "Great men do not give birth to history but act as midwives." Great men are 'signs' not 'agents.' Some like Durkheim who believe in the independent essence of society hold that human individuals in themselves have absolutely no personality. They acquire their whole personality from society. Individuals and personalities are nothing but expressions and manifestations of the social spirit, and in the words of Maḥmūd Shabīṭī, are just as "holes of a niche screen through which the social spirit emanates."

Others like Marx put social labour at the centre of human sociology, and consider society prior to man's social consciousness. They regard the consciousness of individuals as the expression and manifestation of material social needs. According to their view, personalities are manifestations and expressions of the material and economic needs of a society....²¹

Concluded; wal-ḥamdu lillāh.

NOTES:

1. The Quran itself does not use these detracting words, but quotes the ruling clique which uses them to refer to the followers of the prophets belonging to the oppressed classes.
2. Also refer to 18:28, describing the followers of the prophets; 11:27, and 26:111 describing the followers of Noah; 10:83 describing the followers of Moses; 7:88-90 describing the followers of Shu'ayb; 7:75-76 describing the followers of Ṣāliḥ, etc. There are many more verses of the kind, but we confine here to refer to the above-mentioned.
3. Karl Marx, *German Ideology*.
4. In the footnote, the verses 62:2 and 2:129 are referred to, to draw the conclusion that the prophets arise from among the "ummahs", and the word "ummah" is taken to mean "the underprivileged masses." We shall examine this argument later on.
5. In the footnote, the verse 28:75 has been referred to, and it is presumed that it means that the martyrs and those slain in the way of God always arise from among the "ummahs," or the masses, according to the author. This verse shall also be discussed later on.
6. These gentlemen, without expressing their real intention of presenting historical materialism of Marx in an Islamic guise, pretend to have reinterpreted the Holy Quran.
7. The Quran, 66:11.
8. See verses 4:97, 14:21, 34:31-37, 40:47-50.
9. See *Wahy wa nubuwat* (Revelation and Prophethood), the third book of the series, *Muqaddameh'i bar jahān binī-ye Islāmī*, of which the present book *Jāmi'e wa tārikh* is a part, pp. 35, 37-43.
10. *Jahān binī-ye tawḥīdī* (The World Outlook of Tawḥīd), the second treatise of the *Muqaddameh'i bar jahān binī-ye Islāmī*, pp. 62-81.
11. Andre Peter, *Marx and Marxism*, Persian translation by Shujā' al-Dīn Diyā'iyān, p. 39.
12. *Translator's Note*: The author emphasizes the importance of the principle of nature in the Quranic conception of man, and regards it as being central to Islamic teachings. The term he uses is "umm al-ma'ārif."
13. *Translator's Note*: Martyr Muṭahhari in his scholarly work *'Adl-e Ilāhī* (Divine Justice) has offered a convincing solution of this problem.
14. *Translator's Note*: Martyr Muṭahhari could not complete this book as he had originally planned. There is no such heading in the present edition of the book. See note No. 21 below.
15. Certain so-called Muslim intellectuals, in a number of commentaries they have written on various Sūrahs of the Quran, totally deny the presence of even a single verse in the Quran dealing with resurrection. They say that wherever the word "dunyā" (the present world) occurs in the Quran it always refers to the lower level of social existence, i.e. the system of discrimination, inequality and exploitation, and wherever the word "ākhirah" (the Hereafter) occurs, it means a "superior system of social existence," a system which permits no exploitation and discrimination, and which abolishes the institution of private property. If this meaning of "ākhirah" is to be accepted, it means that the Quran, a thousand years before the emergence of Marx's materialist philosophy, announced the death of religion and closed its file!
16. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān*, see the commentary on the last verse of *Sūrat Al 'Imrān*.
17. Andre Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 35 (the text and the footnote). Here we come to

know that the viewpoint of Marxism which holds that only the acts of violence of the oppressed class are moral, because they accelerate the course of social evolution, while the same kind of acts by the oppressing class are immoral, because they cause stagnation, is not defensible. It means that, in accordance with the views of this school, the exercise of pressure by the oppressors is as moral and effective in the course of social evolution as violence by the oppressed. The only difference between them being with regard to their orientation: one is directed towards the past and the other towards the future—not with regard to their effective role in social development. Evidently the retrogressive or progressive orientation cannot solely determine the morality or immorality of an act, without considering the motive behind the act, for judging its morality; and such a position, in the view of Marxism, amounts to a kind of idealism.

18. Refer to 11:116, 21:13, 23:33, 64.

19. See E.H. Carr, *What is History?*; See also Will Durant, *Studies in History, The Pleasures of Philosophy*, pp. 291-312.

20. Among certain animal species, at the level of routine existence, not at the level of scientific consciousness, a kind of transfer of learning exists. For instance, the Holy Quran refers to the story of the ant and Solomon in verse 27:18.

21. *Note by the publisher of the book*: It is a matter of regret that the manuscript of Martyr Muṭahhari ends at this point. It is obvious that the author had in his mind many other ideas which he could not enter. He achieved this cherished desire to obtain martyrdom in the way of God. We hope, in future, to present a more complete discussion with the help of his scattered notes, adding them to the future editions of the book.

INVISIBLE WALLS

A Play

by *Muḥsin Makhmalbāf*

translated from Persian by Shahyār Sa'ādat

Characters

THE OLD PRISONER
THE YOUNGER PRISONER
SAVAKI
THE LANDOWNER
THE CAPITALIST
THE AMERICAN
TWO PRISON GUARDS
A GROUP OF CITIZENS

ACT I

There are two cages at the back of the stage, in each of which there is a prisoner in chains and shackles. Two guards are standing on this side of the bars. One of them, the Custodian, who has a fu manchu mustache and is holding a bunch of big keys, is standing straight and stiff. The other Guard is waiting beside the two cells with a whip in his hand. The two guards and one of the prisoners are all old.

The two prisoners have long, dishevelled hair, obviously uncombed since many many years. Their beards and mustaches are also long, and they are wearing old, dirty rags.

The bars of the cells are rusted, and some of them are even broken.

GUARD: Which of you wants it first today?

OLD PRISONER: Since it has been rationed at ten a day, it no longer matters who gets it first.

YOUNG PRISONER: He's right; it doesn't matter.

CUSTODIAN: Hurry up a little—it's time for lunch (*He pushes forward the pot of food with his foot.*)

OLD PRISONER: It was a little hard at first. Now I am used to it for the last fifteen years. You might say, I am addicted to getting a few strokes a day. But if they get to be too many, then my feet hurt a little.

GUARD. Today let's start with this one.

The Custodian approaches with a stiff and formal gait, and opens the door of the first cell. The Younger Prisoner comes out. He picks up the bastinado board, puts his feet through its rope loop, holds up one end of the board himself, and hands the other end to the Older Prisoner, who has extended his hand through the bars of his cell.

The Guard administers ten strokes with the whip. The Younger Prisoner gets up, limps somewhat, and then steps back into his cell.

The Custodian opens the door of the other cell. The Old Prisoner comes out and lies on the floor. The Guard administers one stroke. Just then a sound of uproar comes from outside, and there is pounding on the door.

VOICES: Open the door! Open the door! Hurry up, open the door!

GUARD: It must be the boss coming to inspect the place.

CUSTODIAN: He always informs us beforehand.

OLD PRISONER: May be they are taking the prisoners to the clinic?

YOUNGER PRISONER: It must be time for a bath. It has been three months already. Was it in the fall when we took our last bath? Yes, it was in the fall. (*Addressing the Old Prisoner.*) Remember, how all the leaves were turning yellow.

OLD PRISONER: I even remember how some of them were noisily crushed under my feet. How I loved that! I've always loved autumn a lot more than spring or summer.

The Guard continues whipping him, but he continues to talk in a very normal manner.

VOICES: Open the door! Surrender, or we'll break the door!

GUARD: Who's making all this noise?

VOICES: There's been a revolution—open the door! There's been a revolution—open the door!

OLD PRISONER: (*Laughing.*) I bet the prisoners are up to some trick.

VOICES: Hurry up! Open the door!

CUSTODIAN: I can't open any door without permission. The cages can be opened only with the guard's per-

- mission, and the prison door with the permission of the Superintendent.
- VOICES: We've killed the Superintendent! Open the door or we'll kill you too! All have surrendered, only you are left! You better give yourself up!
- GUARD: Who're these people who dare to speak so loud?
- CUSTODIAN: I haven't heard anyone yell like that for the last twenty years.
- OLD PRISONER: I haven't for the last twenty-two years—except for the guards, of course.
The blows falling on the door become heavier.
- VOICES: When the door breaks we'll kill you all! You butchers! Open the door! Stop torturing the poor prisoners!
- OLD PRISONER: I'm tired. Be done with it, so I can get back into my cell.
- GUARD: *(Now really scared, holding the whip high in his hand, stands motionless facing the door.)*
- CUSTODIAN: Their voices sure aren't familiar. I haven't heard such voices in the last three years of working overtime.
- YOUNGER PRISONER: *(Yelling)*. Who's making all this noise? What's the meaning of all this?
- GUARD: No one has ever knocked so loudly in the twenty years I've been a guard here. Not even the Superintendent.
- YOUNGER PRISONER: I don't believe the prisoners dare pound on the door like that; they must be guards.
- CUSTODIAN: Last year, when my son came to see me, he said something is going on out there. May be it's them.
- VOICES: The door is about to break. We've freed all the prisoners—only this place is left. You better open the door yourselves.
- A VOICE: They say the dungeon is right here—smash the door.
- OLD PRISONER: They have lied to you, we don't have any dungeons here!
- A VOICE: Shut up! Butcher! Mercenary! We'll break the door and kill you right now.
The door crashes and a group of citizens armed with automatic rifles enter. Both the guards try to stop them, but are shot and killed.
- CITIZENS: Allāhu akbar! Allāhu akbar! They are dead. Come out, we've killed them! Allahu akbar! Khomeini rahbar!.
Their eyes are not used to the darkness inside and for a moment they can't see anything

- clearly.*
- FIRST CITIZEN: Look at him! This poor man was being whipped.
- SECOND CITIZEN: Where are the others? (*Both the prisoners are frightened and quiet. The Old Prisoner gets up, and runs back into his cell.*)
- THIRD CITIZEN: It seems they are the only prisoners here. (*Turning to the prisoners.*) Now be happy. God saved you. Let's get out of here.
The two prisoners, clinging to the back wall of the cells, refuse to come out.
- FOURTH CITIZEN: We shouldn't waste any time sticking around here; there are a lot of places around here we should look into. Let's go and look for other prisoners.
One of the Citizens, who is carrying several guns, opens the doors of the cells, putting a gun in front of each of them.
- CITIZEN: Come out! We got these guns from the prison guards. They're all dead now. (*He also leaves following the others.*) Allahu akbar!
The two prisoners look at the guns confusedly. Then the Younger Prisoner approaches the gun intending to pick it up.
- OLD PRISONER: Don't touch that—throw it away!
The Old Prisoner throws away the gun which was put in front of his cell. The Younger Prisoner follows his example. The Old prisoner, coming out of his cell, forcefully removes the keys from the hands of the dead Custodian, locks the door of the Younger Prisoner's cell, enters his own cell, locks the door from inside, and throws the keys towards the Custodian's body.
The light goes out.

ACT II

The same scene. One of the Citizens enters.

- THE CITIZEN: What! You're still here? Come out! The Imam has come. There's been a revolution and the Americans have fled. (*He sees the corpses and laboriously drags them off the stage.*) Don't be afraid. Come out. The other prisoners are all out assisting the people. They're picking out the Savakis for the people. Thank God, they're all doing very well. They cry with the people: "Allāhu akbar, Khomeini rahbar". (*He is very*

- agitated.*) Come out. Who has locked the doors? *(He looks very surprised)* Don't tell me that some of the guards are still alive? Who locked the doors on you? *(Taken aback.)* Where're the keys?
- YOUNGER PRISONER: There they are, Sir.
- THE CITIZEN: Where? *(He picks up the keys cautiously, looks around, and seems to be on his guard.)* OK. Come out as fast as you can. I'll tell the boys to search this place thoroughly.
- The Old Prisoner laughs. The Younger Prisoner, following his example, also laughs. The Citizen is a little frightened, but then he also tries to laugh. Gradually the laughter of the latter two dies down.*
- THE CITIZEN: Hey boys, where are you? Come here! Come here! *(Some people with beards, green ribbons tied around their heads, come in.)* Someone had locked the door on these two, and now they refuse to come out. I think they're afraid.
- SECOND CITIZEN: Don't be afraid—come out.
- THIRD CITIZEN: Probably they don't know that there's been a revolution. Have you told them that the Imam has come?
- FIRST CITIZEN: No, I didn't. Look here, old fellow, the Shah is gone—No more Shah!—See? They are all finished—gone to hell?! Don't be afraid—Come out.
- SECOND CITIZEN: Poor fellows, they probably don't know what has happened.
- THIRD CITIZEN: Hurry up. Join the people and see what has happened. All the police stations, the military posts and garrisons are in the people's hands! Everything has been taken over by the people!
- OLD PRISONER: They're all lies We respect the prison regulations.
- FIRST CITIZEN: What prison? You're free now. *(He opens the door.)* There ain't no jail for you anymore.
- OLD PRISONER: These things have happened a lot. It's the fifth time I've seen the guards kill one another.
- SECOND CITIZEN: Guards? What guards? We are from the people.
- OLD PRISONER: You killed one another because of internal contradictions. There's no reason why we should get ourselves mixed up in your internal contradictions. *(Addressing the Younger Prisoner as if others cannot hear him.)* We only use their contradictions to our own benefit.
- THIRD CITIZEN: Hey man, I think these guys are crazy. None in

- his right mind would stay in prison voluntarily.
- OLD PRISONER: Don't you insult us, guard!—Don't forget that respect for the prisoner is a must.
- THIRD CITIZEN: Good God! These guys have really flown their coop. When I came in, you were being flogged; what kind of respect is that?
- OLD PRISONER: Prison regulations must be obeyed....
- FOURTH CITIZEN: May be he's one of them—one of those who cooperated with the regime. Look at the kind of things he says!
- FIRST CITIZEN: Look, pa, you don't believe there has been a revolution? There ain't nothing to it—Give me your hand.... (*The Old Prisoner pulls back.*) Set foot out of here and see with your own eyes how many barricades they have put up in front of every masjid.
- OLD PRISONER: We know everything. It's not necessary for us to go out.
- THIRD CITIZEN: I swear these guys are crazy. They sure aren't political prisoners. See, they've put locks and chains on their feet.
- FIRST CITIZEN: He's right. No one in his right mind would lock himself up. Let's leave them and get out of here. (*Addressing the Younger Prisoner.*) You won't come out either? (*The Younger Prisoner looks at the Old Prisoner and remains silent. The Citizens leave the stage, and the two close the doors of their cells.*)
- CITIZENS' VOICES: (*From outside.*) Leave the door open! They'll eventually come out by themselves.
- OLD PRISONER: I bet we're witnessing some real tricky politics; otherwise, I bet you, nothing has changed. What could have changed? How could we possibly have moved from feudalism to capitalism and from capitalism to socialism during the twenty-one years that I've been in here?
- YOUNGER PRISONER: But it seems that something is going on.
- OLD PRISONER: It doesn't matter what's going on; what we are waiting for is something else. Perhaps there's been some quarrel amongst the feudal lords.
- YOUNGER PRISONER: You are right. We shouldn't be expecting the arrival of socialism so soon. It's going to be a long long time before capitalism is born in this country and before it attains maturity.
- Light goes out.*

ACT III

Both the men are asleep and the Old Prisoner is snoring. Some of the citizens are bringing in someone they have arrested.

- VOICES: Let's throw him into these cells where they used to jail others.
- SAVAKI: Have mercy—have pity for God's sake. This place is too scary; I never dared to enter such a place all alone.
- FIRST CITIZEN: It's time for you to take some of your own medicine. OK. folks, you better come out now, for we've got to lock up this rascal here. They shall be bringing in more of that filth.
- OLD PRISONER: Weren't they supposed to build new prisons?
- SECOND CITIZEN: Listen, man, don't argue with me. Now get up and get out. What a place to insist on staying! Now hurry up! We've got a lot of things to do.
- YOUNGER PRISONER: You can put him into my cell if you're short of space....on condition that he shouldn't touch my things. That towel is a personal property.
- SECOND CITIZEN: What a hassle we've got with these guys! You two better come out. *(They throw the Savaki into the cell of the Younger Prisoner.)*
- THIRD CITIZEN: Leave them alone; they will eventually come out by themselves.
- FIRST CITIZEN: *(Addressing the Savaki)*. You better be careful now, because if you try to escape, these two will strangle you. They've much reason to do that to you and your likes; so you better behave yourself. *(They leave and close the door.)* We have thrown you in with just the right people.
- YOUNGER PRISONER: Welcome comrade.
- OLD PRISONER: What group are you a member of?
- Silence.*
- YOUNGER PRISONER: He means, what led to your arrest? He and I were in the same group. He was my supervisor. Of course, I was arrested a few years after him, but the relationship between us is as strong as ever.
- OLD PRISONER: Don't be rash comrade. Don't give him so much information. Let's first see who he is.
- SAVAKI: You are prisoners too?
- OLD PRISONER: Did you expect us to be prison officials? Don't you see the chains on our feet?
- SAVAKI: O my God, you mean they are going to put those

kind of chains on my feet too? Isn't there any way to escape from this place?

OLD PRISONER: Escape? You surely are in a hurry, aren't you? Suppose you did escape, what are you going to do single-handedly? What can one individual do? What role can a single individual however strong play in the movement of history? Wait until the time is ripe, and, in the meantime, try to keep in contact.

SAVAKI: But these people don't give us any time; they put us in front of the firing squad in a jiffy. Don't you have a hair-pin? May be I can open the door.

YOUNGER PRISONER: This guy is surely pessimistic.. How many years has it been since you were arrested?

SAVAKI: Years?

OLD PRISONER: For the last three years I haven't seen any convict who has done less than ten years. But I don't think you have served more than five years?

SAVAKI: Five years? Hell, I was just arrested.

BOTH PRISONERS: (*Together*). Just now?

SAVAKI: They pulled me out of my father-in-law's house. People are searching everywhere. They are arresting whoever they can identify.

OLD PRISONER: What people are you talking about?...The peasants or the lumpens?

SAVAKI: Everyone, everyone. From the workers to the office employees. They're searching from house to house, arresting all the government agents. (*He sobs.*) But God knows I was a plain agent, just an ordinary Savak agent. No matter how much I cried, no matter how much I begged, and tried to explain that even though in appearance I was the so-called deputy of a station in a small town I was no different from any plain agent, they wouldn't listen.

OLD PRISONER: Well, you must have transgressed your duties. Do you know Mr...Mr. Sadeghi? He too was a Savak agent, and he had violated his orders. He was here for a while. We sure benefited from his being here. I remember them taking us to the showers seven times a week. It hurt my body. Well, it wasn't used to water for thirteen years. (*A period of silence. The Old man is lost in his memories.*) So you said that you're also one of them....?

YOUNGER PRISONER: That means something must be going on out

there.

OLD PRISONER: There you're being rash again! Nothing is going on! Probably the government has declared a bureaucratic cleanup. They do such kinds of things once in a while. You should neither overestimate their importance, nor should you ignore them altogether. In any case, they're transitory things, and until those two fundamental classes that we are waiting for haven't fully matured, nothing will happen.

Noises are heard and another prisoner is being brought in.

FIRST CITIZEN: You godless rascal, you scourge of poor peasants! So, you lived it up in the city while robbing the poor peasants! Didn't you? Your time is up, you wretch! You're finished!

SECOND CITIZEN: (*Addressing the two prisoners*) You two are really going too far. Hurry up and get out of here! Find yourselves a madhouse elsewhere. We've got to lock up these rascals in here.

OLD PRISONER: Put him here in my cell....there is still room. What can you do. When there ain't enough cells for everybody, you just have to share yours with someone.

THIRD CITIZEN: Next time, I'll just have to grab your hands and feet, and throw you out of here. I wonder why they even bothered to post guards for these two. (*They leave.*)

SAVAKI: Are you a Savaki, too?

OLD PRISONER: I have been expecting such a day for the last five years. I knew that it'd happen sooner or later, but happen it must. The day had to come when the internal contradictions besetting a feudal society would grow.

LANDOWNER: Excuse me, isn't there a telephone here?

YOUNGER PRISONER: Telephone?

LANDOWNER: I want to call His Highness, Prince Shahpoor. What kind of behaviour is this, sir? I'm a respectable man. In fifty villages no one mentions my name without due respect. Here I'm forced to see a bunch of barefoot serfs running out of masjids and yelling Allāh-u Akbar, Allāh-u Akbar! Where's the telephone, sir?

SAVAKI: The telephone is of no use any more. Those you want to contact have either fled or have been arrested. We better think of some other solution.

OLD PRISONER: Don't be so upset; you'll get used to it. Prison is hard only in its first few years, the rest of it

passes without much difficulty. You'll get used to it after ten years or so. You know, as I am, life would be hard for me without these bars. I feel insecure when I set my foot outside my cage—just like someone who's thrown into the street stark naked. But in here, I am safe, I am surrounded by walls and iron bars. Whoever wants to get to me must come through that (*Pointing to the door of the cell.*) You and we are similar; there is only one difference between us.

YOUNGER PRISONER: The difference is that your time is up while ours hasn't come yet.

OLD PRISONER: Well said, comrade! Well, dear friend, how is industry doing? I have heard that commerce has made a lot of progress. (*There is silence for a while.*)

YOUNGER PRISONER: (*Addressing the Savaki.*) Could you please move away from in front of those bars. It gives me claustrophobia. (*The Savaki moves away.*) If they're to throw in some more people here, it's going to be difficult. Then again I'm going to get short of breath as I had in the past. I bet they'll reduce the food rations too.

OLD PRISONER: These guys are here today, gone tomorrow. You should be thinking about thirty years from now when fifty workers would be crammed into every one of these cells. Imagine that, comrade! Fifty workers would be leaning their strong arms against these bars and singing songs. What a glorious day it would be!

SAVAKI: You are wasting precious time, you know. The minute they've rounded up everyone, they'll come here to finish us off. There's blood in their eyes. They are afraid of neither the Russian nor the Americans. They curse them all. It is obvious how barbaric such people would be. We should figure out a way to escape. Can't you open these locks? With a hair pin or something?

LANDOWNER: I won't let these guys off the hook so easily.... I'll take them to court....

SAVAKI: I've some documents in my pocket—a danger for all of us if found. Where can I dump them? (*He begins to tear up some papers.*) Don't you have any documents in your pockets? Sir—I am talking to you. Sir!

LANDOWNER: I don't understand this behaviour at all. I haven't been able to understand it for two

years. One day my deputy came to me and said that some peasants had gathered demanding land saying that Agha Khomeini has declared that the land belongs to whoever has worked it for seven years. I said to him: Go and tell them that I've been working this land for the last seventy years. Tell them that working isn't just ploughing the fields or watering. Then I heard they had gathered again repeating their claim, saying that Agha has said such and such. I said to them who is this Agha who dares to contradict my words? All of a sudden, they surrounded me, trying to kill me. Of course, I complained to the authorities—to the likes of you and even to your superiors. I told that stupid manager of mine a hundred times to stop this Allah-u Akbar business. I told the authorities over and over again to think of some fundamental solution for this problem.

YOUNGER PRISONER: Hey man, it seems that something is really going on out there.

OLD PRISONER: Now stop day-dreaming; nothing is going on. During its growth, capitalism picks up this sort of slogans; it sets up somebody to proclaim that land is for the peasants. Of what use is land? One year of work and a seven percent profit. This whole thing is a capitalist plot. What's wrong? Why are you unhappy? Rejoice! Capitalism is growing—This means that there is only one phase left before we get to socialism. Be happy, laugh, comrade—laugh!

SAVAKI: We'd better destroy these documents right away. These people are really merciless. If they find any evidence on you, they'll really fry you. Destroy these documents. (*He chews some of the documents, addressing the landowner.*) Could you please help me in eating some of these papers?

LANDOWNER: By no means, sir. In fact, I am gathering evidence. Do you have a pen? I've to make a report about the disrespectful way that I've been treated. Please give me a sheet of paper, too. Don't tear that up, sir—give it to me. I'll make a note on its back. I'll put these peasants in their place.

OLD PRISONER: Didn't I tell you that contradictions between capitalism and feudalism are coming into the open? At the most it can be just a peasant

rebellion. But it won't solve anything. All it'd do is to hasten the advance of capitalism.

SAVAKI: I can't eat all these papers. I'll get sick. There are so many of them. Isn't there any place where I can dump them?

YOUNGER PRISONER: Keep them, and throw them in the toilet when it's your turn to go to the bathroom.

OLD PRISONER: But the prison regulations forbid throwing papers in the toilet. Why do you insist on irritating the guards?

SAVAKI: Gentlemen, if everyone eats just a few of these papers, the problem will be solved—Please—I beg you.

No one shows any willingness to eat the papers; so he holds them in front of the Younger Prisoner.

YOUNGER PRISONER: I've to consult my supervisor.

OLD PRISONER: Everything is dubious these days. We've to wait and see what the new policy is. I've been unable to contact them for the last fifteen years.

YOUNGER PRISONER: What's the solution then?

OLD PRISONER: Nothing. I've to make an analysis myself. *(Addressing the Landowner who is holding on to the bars.)* Move away, would you? I can't think unless I hold on to one of these bars. *There is noise again and another prisoner is being brought.*

FIRST CITIZEN: This time I'm going to kick you two out, because we've got a new guest.

YOUNGER PRISONER: There's still some room left; bring him in here.

SECOND CITIZEN: You two are either nuts, or you're up to some trick? None in his right mind locks himself up. What makes you like this place so much? Don't tell me you're afraid that they'll take away your chains? What the hell are you guys waiting for? Why don't you come out and join the rest of the people out there? Well, get out of my way for now and let me throw this guy in. *(He throws in the Capitalist.)*

CAPITALIST: Excuse me, could you tell me how long I've to stay here?

SECOND CITIZEN: *(Ironically)*. Why not? I would rather want to get in there instead of you and give you my gun!

CAPITALIST: Can I make a phone call?

LANDOWNER: I'm first, If you want to make a phone call, I'm first in the line, sir. I asked to make a phone call one hour ago.

THIRD CITIZEN: You squeezed me dry for a whole lifetime in

your factory, and now you've the guts to ask for a telephone? I wish they'd hand you over to me so that I could shoot you. (*The Citizens close the door and leave*).

OLD PRISONER: Don't listen to them. They want you to suspect your own analysis. (*Addressing the Capitalist.*) Did they also arrest you just now?
The Capitalist does not answer.

YOUNGER PRISONER: What have you done? (*The Capitalist does not answer.*)

OLD PRISONER: Are you happy with the situation of your lands?
LANDOWNER: (*Addressing the Capitalist.*) Are you happy now—sir? You're the cause of all this. We at least beat back the peasants with the help of the rural gendarmerie; but what about you? You let the city workers have the face to pour into the streets and put up barricades. If only you had not allowed the workers so much impudence....

OLD PRISONER: They're all in this together. They're trying to make us believe that this man is a capitalist, so that we would doubt our own analysis.

YOUNGER PRISONER: What did they arrest you for, sir?

SAVAKI: Nothing; he is innocent, just like me. I know him. He has no more than four factories. He hasn't done any offence—poor man.

OLD PRISONER: They're all lies I've spent a whole lifetime in jail so as not to be tricked. Right now we're in the age of capitalism. May be fifty years from now we'll be seeing the first fat-cat capitalist being thrown in here.

YOUNGER PRISONER: May be contradictions have arisen among the capitalists themselves.

LANDOWNER: Didn't I tell you over and over again to find a solution?

CAPITALIST: I myself contacted the security officials repeatedly when the factories were closed on account of workers' strikes and the workers poured into the streets to demonstrate. One can say that the urban workers have learnt how to sabotage; but what about those stupid villagers? I say, we could have pacified them by giving them land. Then we could have used them to put down the rebellious cities.

LANDOWNER: What kept you from dividing your factories between the workers so that they could be used to put down the peasants?

SAVAKI: It wasn't a question of the cities or the villages; it all came out of those damned mosques. I told

the headquarters many years ago not to allow all these mosques to be built. But the people just kept on building them with the results that you see today.

CAPITALIST: Sure. Sure. I told the security officials repeatedly that if you want this country to make any progress don't try to appease these people. The only thing to do is to close all the mosques and execute every mulla.

OLD PRISONER: Don't listen to their prattle. They are conspiring together to make us doubt our analysis. From a scientific point of view, it's impossible for both the big landowners and the capitalists to face adversity at the same historical stage—unless the capitalists in question are nationalists in a tug of war with foreign capitalist interests.

CAPITALIST: When I saw that the authorities wouldn't listen to me, or—as they themselves claimed—they couldn't do anything, I directly informed the American authorities.

OLD PRISONER: Didn't I tell you? The minute he heard what we were saying, he changed his story. These guys have all conspired to make us think that a change has occurred. As for myself, I can't even believe that this fellow is a member of the national bourgeoisie.

YOUNGER PRISONER: Perhaps the next time they return, we should go out and contact our comrades to see what the situation is like?

LANDOWNER: The situation is terrible, sir. You see for yourself the way they've locked us all up. They have no respect either for position or for wealth; they fear neither authority nor arms. Could the situation be any worse?

CAPITALIST: It's a real jungle. The American Marines must have arrived by now....

SAVAKI: Hell! Even if the Marines should come, they wouldn't get us out of here. It won't do us any good. The next time they come in—let's take them hostage when they come in next time; otherwise it's the end of us. Nobody is going to come here looking for us. The U.S. doesn't give a damn for us.

LANDOWNER: I for one ain't prepared to mess up with those savages.

CAPITALIST: It's inadvisable to get into trouble with this bunch. All of a sudden they'll start yelling Allāh-u Akbar, totally shattering my nerves.

- OLD PRISONER: If their words affect you, put your fingers into your ears.
He plugs his own ears with his fingers. There is noise again.
- SAVAKI: They're probably coming to execute us.
- LANDOWNER: They can't! (*Calling out.*) Manager! Manager! Where the hell have these disloyal lackeys run away?
- CAPITALIST: (*To the Old Prisoner.*) What do you think they are going to do to us?
- OLD PRISONER: Don't talk to me, I can't hear your voice.
They have arrested an American and are bringing him in.
- FIRST CITIZEN: Here's your chief.
- SECOND CITIZEN: You should give a party, now that you are all together.
- THIRD CITIZEN: Haven't you two decided to come out yet?
- SECOND CITIZEN: They want to serve out their whole term and then come out.
- FIRST CITIZEN: At least come out and do your wudū'; the sun is setting, and soon the prayer time will be past.
- YOUNGER PRISONER: Mr. Guard....sir....you forgot to feed us today.
- SECOND CITIZEN: He is calling us "guard" again. Your daddy is a guard. (*Addressing the second man.*) Go fetch some bread and dates from the boys, and give them to these fellows. You two, now come out of there, and eat whatever you want. You guys are driving us crazy too. (*The man who had gone out comes back with some bread and dates and wants to give them to the prisoners but the first man takes them.*)
- FIRST CITIZEN: Not like that. Give it to me. Now whoever wants food must first say three ṣalawāt . Don't forget that this is the country of Imam Mahdi. (*Nobody says the ṣalawāt.*)
- FIRST CITIZEN: So you won't say the ṣalawāt, ah? I'll leave these things here anyhow, but I tell you: whoever does not say ṣalawāt and eats this food, his eating is ḥarām. (*They leave.*)
- YOUNGER PRISONER: (*To the American.*) What's your job comrade?
- SAVAKI: He's not Iranian.
- YOUNGER PRISONER: Where is he from, then?
- SAVAKI: Made in America.
- OLD PRISONER: (*Surprised.*) American? Now that's a lie if there ever was one. That's impossible.
- YOUNGER PRISONER: Now what's his job?
- SAVAKI: (*Addressing the American.*) What's your job?
- AMERICAN: Oil, oil.

- SAVAKI: I think he's an oil technician.
- LANDOWNER: Was there a shortage of jobs, sir? You could have planted beets, and with a lot less trouble, too.
- CAPITALIST: (*To the American*). Dear friend, didn't I see you at some meetings of the OPEC. Weren't you with an Iranian delegation?
- AMERICAN: OPEC? Oh, yes. OK. OK.
The two prisoners are gobbling up the bread and dates. The Savaki also eats. The American eats some, but with displeasure.
- AMERICAN: Excuse me, Caviar, caviar.
- CAPITALIST: What the hell are they waiting for? (*To the Savaki.*) If you know English, ask him when the American Marines are going to get here. Ask him if he didn't see them when he was being brought here. See if he has any news of them.
- SAVAKI: Hold on. Let me ask him one question at a time. When you come here, American Marines not come here?
- AMERICAN: What did you say?
- CAPITALIST: Hell, I could have asked like that myself.
- LANDOWNER: (*Simultaneously with the Capitalist*). Let me ask him.
- SAVAKI: Don't make a racket now; you'll only confuse him. (*Addressing the American.*) Hey, you! I am talking to you, buddy, look here! (*He laughs*) Understand? Understand? I say, people of Iran force Shah to flee. Shah, America, friend. America not send Marine to help him?
- AMERICAN: I can't speak Persian.
- SAVAKI: There ain't no use. He just doesn't understand what I say. Let me talk to him about things that he does understand. Oil, oil?
- AMERICAN: Oh, yes! Oil is very very good!
- SAVAKI: Mulla?....Mulla?
- AMERICAN: Mulla? (*He makes a gesture with his hand around his head.*) He's very very bad.
- SAVAKI: Now I'll make him understand. Mulla cut oil! Stopped it—like this! (*He imitates the movement of the scissors with his hand.*)
- AMERICAN: Oh! I am very sorry.
- SAVAKI: America—now—not send Marine?
The American shakes his head indicating that he does not understand.
- OLD PRISONER: Don't listen to them, that's all a put on. Is it possible that a Savaki agent, a landowner, a capitalist and an American all be thrown into one jail. What class could do that? If the pea-

sants have done it, they should have jailed just the landowners. If the working class—which has not come into existence yet—had done it, they would have jailed only the capitalists. It's all lies—lies—don't believe it—don't trust your ears. These people have all ganged up together to make us doubt our analysis. They want to kill the revolution that's going to happen one hundred years from now. Don't believe them! When capitalism grows and gives birth to the proletariat, then the proletariat will smash capitalism. What these men say is nothing but lies. I bet they shall be let out in no time! How do you know that these guys are capitalists, landowners, or Americans? Better take a nap. There isn't any hurry.

Light goes out.

ACT IV

It is the next day. The same characters, the same scene.

CAPITALIST: Where the hell are these Marines then? It has been one whole day for a man like me in this hole.

LANDOWNER: I'll change him....I'll hire a new manager. The stupid good for nothing has all the phone numbers of the authorities. He himself saw them come and arrest me; yet he has done nothing since yesterday. Think how Mr. Amuzegar would feel if he finds out that we are here.

SAVAKI: There's no hope for us any more. You're wasting your time waiting for them. I took them to the airport myself two months ago. I wish I had gone with them then.

AMERICAN: How long are we supposed to stay here? (*No one understands.*)

SAVAKI: What are you saying, you wretch? Why weren't you such a big talker last night when they took us to court and were questioning you in your own American tongue? I thought then that you'd defend us too, but you stood there mute as a statue. They should be coming to kill us all any moment now.

There is noise and some people come in.

LANDOWNER: I suppose they're going to take us to the court again.

SAVAKI: No, it ain't the court this time, they've come to carry out the sentence.

FIRST CITIZEN: All right. Get up and say your last prayers, for you are finished.

Everyone is taken out of the cells except the two prisoners.

SECOND CITIZEN: Someone tell this wretch to say his shahādah. Hey, look here. Say ashhad-u 'an lā ilāha illallāh. Say it, you wretched creature. Or you'll go straight to hell.

THIRD CITIZEN: Leave him alone. It wouldn't do him any good even if he says it now (*He takes out a piece of paper and reads.*) "In the name of God, the Destroyer of the Tyrants:

Mr. Jaberzadeh, Mr. Hasan Khan, Mr. Yazdani and Mr. George are hereby found guilty of killing innocent people, ordering such killings, misappropriating properties of people and public funds, cooperating with the Savak and the C.I.A., and extreme oppression of the poor and the downtrodden. They are hereby condemned to death. The sentence is legally and canonically valid and must be carried out immediately."

SECOND CITIZEN Stand in a line.

Two or three of the citizens open fire on the condemned with the cries of Allāh-u Akbar. All four men fall and are dragged off the stage.

FIRST CITIZEN: You two still don't want to come out? (*Both the prisoners, clinging to the back walls of their cells, remain silent.*) Anyway, we are leaving. The doors are open, so you can come out if you want to. Don't you want anything?

Silence. He leaves. The doors of the cells and the doors of the ward are open. Some time passes in silence. Then the Old Prisoner gets up and cautiously closes the door of his own cell.

YOUNGER PRISONER: They killed them all.

OLD PRISONER: It's a lie. None of them was a capitalist, a landowner, or an American. They were all plain agents. What if they weren't revolutionaries like us?

YOUNGER PRISONER: But if they were revolutionaries they would have at least told us.

OLD PRISONER: They do all these things in order to trick us. They want us to believe them and come out of here.

YOUNGER PRISONER: Well, what is wrong with our going out?

OLD PRISONER: Don't be stupid. You'll be a dead man as soon as

you put your foot out of that door! Yes, they'll kill you, then say that you were killed while trying to escape. Don't let your imagination run wild. Close the door and let's take a nap.

YOUNGER PRISONER: But they killed the guards, too. They killed even the American. I say....I say, why shouldn't we just take a look out there. We'll be real careful, and if there's the least sign that they're playing a trick, we'll hurry back to the cells.

OLD PRISONER: Don't be foolish. Can't you tell your right hand from your left after eighteen years of being here?

YOUNGER PRISONER: I don't know that, but something must have happened out there. May be the workers have revolted? May be socialism has been established?

OLD PRISONER: What workers? How could the revolution take place before the society has been industrialized? Didn't you see how the people who broke into this place talked? All they talked about was God, the Prophet and the Imam. This is the culture of the peasants; workers don't talk like that. Did you hear even one of them cry "long live the proletariat"?

YOUNGER PRISONER: Ain't it possible that we have been a bit mistaken in our analysis until now? I sometimes think, may be our analysis is wrong.

OLD PRISONER: What?

YOUNGER PRISONER: I don't know. Ain't it possible....(*He is getting out of his cell.*)

OLD PRISONER: Don't break the rules, comrade! Don't go out!

YOUNGER PRISONER: But all the doors are open. Come and look from here. I can see the sunlight. Come and see what a breeze is coming through the door. Come out, comrade!

OLD PRISONER: With those chains around your feet, everybody would know you're an escaping prisoner—wherever you go.

YOUNGER PRISONER: I'll take them off. They're rusted and come off almost by themselves. Look! (*He squats on the floor and takes the chains off his feet and flings them all around.*) I've been trying to keep them from falling apart for years.

OLD PRISONER: Don't do that—the guards will be furious. I could've done that too, but I rubbed fat on the chains so that they wouldn't rust—although my legs have become skinny and slip out of the shackles. But I wouldn't ever violate the regulations. It's a mistake to be hasty. Someday these

chains will fall apart by themselves. Come back to your cell....You can even use one of my shackles—You can put your foot through one of them and I shall put mine through the other. Don't do that comrade!

YOUNGER PRISONER: I wouldn't ever enter those cages again. You've become a fossil in there. You would understand what I mean if you had a mirror to look at yourself. Come out, I tell you. Come out of that damned dirty cage. Come out from behind those invisible walls. I can see those invisible walls now, and I hate them. I can no longer live within that iron cage. *(He moves forward a little towards the door.)*

OLD PRISONER: No, don't go! Don't be stupid. Don't let go your patience....You'd destroy yourself.... It's a dangerous world out there.

YOUNGER PRISONER: *(Takes a deep breath and laughs)*. Come out and take a breath from this fresh air. Enjoy the beautiful sunlight. I was right, all the doors are open. Something must have really happened out there. There are patches of blood on the snow and there's no sign of the guards. I can see everything. Come out and see it all with your own eyes! Comrade!

OLD PRISONER: But I don't see anything.

YOUNGER PRISONER: All you've to do is to come out of there. I can see everything with my own eyes.

OLD PRISONER: Don't trust your eyes. You're making a mistake. Close your eyes and come back in here comrade. You'll certainly catch cold in that cold air. Come back here, boy!

YOUNGER PRISONER: I am going. I am free now—I am free now!

OLD PRISONER: No. No! *(He utters several heart-rending cries which seem to come from the bottom of a well. A few moments of silence. He walks around the cell a few times and then sees the empty bowl.)* Guard....Guard....Mealtime has passed and I'm dying of hunger! But I'll not break the prison regulations to go out for food on my own. I won't come out of my cell. Come and bring my meal....Guard! Guard! *(Talking to himself.)* I wish I had asked him to bring my food before he left. *(He coughs a few times and leans against the wall of the cell.)*
Light goes out.

ACT V

Stage dark. Some people enter swinging flashlights. They are led by a Muslim clergyman.

FIRST CITIZEN: (*Addressing the clergyman*). Haj Agha, I think we should turn this place too into a museum. It's a really scary place. When we first came here a few months ago, there were two prisoners in it.

SECOND CITIZEN: They were whipping one of them when we broke into this place.

CLERGYMAN: Don't you smell something?

THIRD CITIZEN: (*Sniffing*). Yes. Yes, something stinks around here. (*He turns the beam of his flashlight around the cells, holding it when he sees the body of the Old Prisoner lying on the floor of his cage.*)

FIRST CITIZEN: That's that same old man! How he smells!

CLERGYMAN: How did he die? Wasn't he set free? Didn't you fully search this area?

FIRST CITIZEN: Of course, we did, Haj Agha. See. The door of his cell is open—the doors of the ward and the prison are also open. He himself wouldn't come out.

CLERGYMAN: Call the boys to come and take him out. He sure stinks.

THIRD CITIZEN: (*Holding the flashlight on the old man's body*). Haj Agha, he has totally rotten!

THE END

Bahman, 1360

REVIEWS

by Dr. Wahīd Akhtar

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The back page of the title cover carries an excerpt from the recommendations of the First Conference on Muslim Education, Mecca, 1977. Dr. 'Alī Ashraf edited the proceedings of that conference in book form in his capacity as the general editor of the Islamic Education Series, published by the King 'Abd 'al-'Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In this series, so far, seven books have appeared, all dealing with the problems of education from Islamic point of view. Apart from the aims and objectives of Islamic education, its curriculum and teacher-education, one book expounds the problems of social and natural sciences, and another brings into light Islamic approach to philosophy, literature and fine arts. This series may attract attention all over the world, because Islamization of education has become an issue of great significance in view of Islamic resurgence in recent times. The governments of a number of Muslim countries are making efforts, sometimes sincere but mostly superficial, to reframe syllabi and courses from Islamic viewpoint, and to restructure teaching of sciences and humanities in order to make them relevant to Islam as well as to the demands of the modern age. Secularization of knowledge, though instrumental in the rapid advancement of sciences in the West, has been used by the so-called advanced nations as an effective weapon of alienating the Eastern nations from their religious and cultural traditions. The dangerous consequences of Westernization of education can be witnessed throughout the East, particularly in the countries which adopted the Western style of life without having tasted the fruit of modern knowledge. The tragedy of the Muslim countries is that they remained cut off from advancement of knowledge for centuries, partly due to a conspiracy of

the colonial powers and partly due to their own unreasonable resistance to the new ideas. That is why that modern knowledge did not come to them naturally. In many countries sciences were planted in a soil that was not prepared to receive it, and therefore it failed to bear fruits. Of course, knowledge is a continuous process, not only in the life of an individual but also in the life of a nation. The thread cannot be picked arbitrarily from anywhere. There is naturally a gap in the East's understanding of recent developments in various branches of knowledge, due to which the crisis in education assumes far greater dimensions in the Eastern countries than in the Western world. Modern sciences developed in the West along with the changes brought about in the thinking patterns and the academic attitudes of the society. All the modern notions concerning knowledge emerged and developed in accordance with the ideology and the requirements of the West. The modern educated people in the East not only accepted all the theories of social sciences without question, but also applied them to the Eastern conditions mechanically without realizing that the social sciences in general, and certain notions in particular, had a bias that was contrary to our world outlook. The crisis in the educational programme and planning in newly liberated Eastern countries issues from the lack of awareness of these problems. In the name of liberalism and enlightenment our educated class imitates the West and ignores that most of the concepts do not fit in our tradition. The Muslim Education Quarterly aims at acquiring a proper understanding of the problem. But if such an attempt is made with certain incorrect premises, it will again fail to meet the challenge of Westernization of knowledge.

The editorial contains some misconceptions, which are presented in a manner as if the whole Muslim world subscribes to them. On the one hand, it is said that the First World Conference on Muslim Education 'very superficially advised Muslim authorities to accept the actual knowledge and ignore such theories as the theory of evolution,' and on the other, it is with equal superficiality suggested that we should 'go back to such a Muslim thinker as al-Ghazālī who had to face similar problems.' It is also claimed that al-Ash'arī and al-Ghazālī restated the Islamic faith in the omnipotence of God and freedom of His Will.' What it implies is that no other Muslim thinker restated this faith philosophically. Al-Ash'arī held particular views regarding theology, and he was opposed by others, specially by Mu'tazilah. He is criticized by his opponents for regarding the Divine Law as irrational and arbitrary. Similarly al-Ghazālī's view on causality is not considered to be final even in the Muslim world. Was ibn Rushd a non-Muslim? Do Muslims in general reject Aristotelian theory of cause and effect? Does the Quran totally reject the notion of causality? What will happen to all scientific knowledge if we do not accept any law of nature? Al-Ghazālī,

despite his greatness as an original thinker and as a sincere Muslim who tried to save the purity of Islam in the face of the influence of Greek philosophy, has been criticized by many for being responsible for the intellectual decline of the Muslim world. This criticism is not without justification, and cannot be brushed aside as unsound. Such suggestions made by the editor are claimed to be in the framework of the Quranic revelations. Some persons, of course not well-informed, can be led to believe that the Quranic revelations are in total confirmity with al-Ghazālī's views. One may form an impression that the law of causation conflicts with the Islamic conception of nature. Does the learned editorial-writer consider the law of causation as a mere fabrication of the Western scientists for misleading Muslims? One has to distinguish between a scientific law and a tentative theory. So far as the theory of evolution is concerned, it may be kept in mind that it is a general conception, which is interpreted differently by various scientists. Darwin's theory is one of the several theories of evolution. Before Darwin, Lamarck, Goethe and Erasmus Darwin had advanced tentative conceptions of evolution, and after Darwin even New-Darwinians did not fully agree with him. Apart from the scientific researches in this field, several philosophical theories of evolution were advanced that rejected Darwin's theory for being mechanical. In order to overcome this weakness some creative principle with a notion of purpose in the framework of evolutionary conception of nature was introduced. Bergson and Lloyd Morgan are significant in this context because of their influence on the religious thought. Iqbāl was greatly influenced by Bergson. There is no unanimity among the Muslim thinkers on evolution. A number of *mufassirūn* have made an attempt to reconcile the notion of evolution with the Quranic notion of creation. Among the contemporary Iranian thinkers 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Muṭahhari have criticized the theory of evolution, while others did not see it as contradictory to the Quranic theory of creation. In the Islamic literature itself there is much that can be relied upon for reinterpreting the phenomenon known as evolution. Why are the Muslims asked to follow the 'creationists' working in America to reformulate the whole concept of evolution within the limits set by the revelations? This is not a matter of scientific research, but a problem of ideological reinterpretation, which does not need to seek the American aid. In our view the Quran and Ḥadīth are sufficient in the matters of ideological interpretations. The suggestion that Muslims should go back to either al-Ghazālī or al-'Ash'arī is liable to give rise to new controversies, which must be avoided for the sake of constructive thinking on the problems of education in the Muslim world.

Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mannān, in his article "Non-informal Education From Islamic Economic Perspectives," has discussed the basic Islamic

values with reference to schooling. In this context he mentions the concept of 'economic trusteeship' as having roots in the Quran. In our view, this notion, as understood today, has not originated in the Quran, but was devised by the Muslim rulers in order to justify economic injustice. God, nowhere in the Quran, has said that 'a selected few' among men are made His trustees and they are His agents to control the distribution of the economic resources of the ummah according to their sweet wish. The human beings in general are God's trustees and His vicegerents on the earth having equal rights and responsibilities. The usurpers of power and wealth in the Muslim world misinterpreted the Quranic teachings so that they could suit their purpose. By the same logic the kings made the Muslims to call them *zill-Allāh*, the image of God, while Islam really disapproves monarchy.

The wealth and the resources of the ummah can be entrusted to God's chosen men like 'Alī (A.S.), who not only did not take from *bayt al-māl* more than his share, but also refused to favour even his elder brother 'Aqīl at the cost of Muslims. No monarch or shaykh, throughout the history of Islam, has been just to the people, nor can claim to be just even in the remotest sense of the word even today. Islamization of education requires establishment of a truly Muslim society on the basis of Islamic principles of social and economic justice as the first prerequisite. As all the attempts of Islamization of education or society are made half-heartedly retaining the present social structure, economically and politically irreconcilable with the Islamic teachings, they are bound to fail. The basic tenets of the Islamic faith cannot be injected in the brains of Muslim youth through superficial education unless the society and the state are built upon Islamic foundation, and all the political and social institutions, which are contrary to Islam, are destroyed. Ideological education itself fails to make any impact on the youth in an atmosphere which is not conducive to it. If the socio-political realities of the contemporary Muslim world negate the Islamic ideals, where from inspiration for Islamization of knowledge can be expected to come?

Apart from some basic questions, as raised above, the journal is of high academic standard. There are two articles on science education and religious values, one presents the problem from Christian viewpoint, and the other represents an Islamic approach to it. The article on teaching of English as a foreign language is relevant to the need of many Muslim countries. Ismā'īl R. Al-Fārūqī's book on 'Islamization of knowledge' is reviewed by Hādī Sharīfī. In the course of review certain pertinent issues are raised, for instance the conception of 'aql in Islam in the context of opposition of *wahy* to 'aql. The review gives us to understand that Dr. Fārūqī has paid more attention to the social, practical and worldly aspects of the Islamic teachings. Islam has been open to various interpretations, and that is why one has to be extreme-

ly careful in dealing with the problems related to different aspects of the Islamic teachings. It is much more important in the case of education which moulds and makes the minds of new generations.

Hamdard Islamicus

A Quarterly Journal of the Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, Karachi-18; Vol. VII, number 1 & 2, 1984; annual subscription U.S. \$ 15, single copy \$ 4; Editors: Hakim Muhammad Sa'id & Sayyid Husayn Ja'fari.

The Hamdard Foundation is a philanthropic organization, which besides doing valuable service in the field of Yūnānī medicine and public health, has been contributing to the area of Islamic medicine for many years both in India and Pakistan. This foundation has established an institute for research in Islamic studies and medicine in India, which also publishes books and journals on these subjects. The Hamdard Foundation of Pakistan brings out another journal in English, *Hamdard*—a quarterly journal of science and medicine, besides *Hamdard Islamicus*.

The advisory committee of *Hamdard Islamicus* consists of some well-known scholars of Islamic studies in the world. Dr. Sayyid Husayn Ja'fari, a member of the editorial board, is an outstanding scholar who has been associated with different academic institutes of repute in the field of Islamic studies, and has translated the celebrated collection of the speeches and letters and sayings of Ḥadrat 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (A), *Nahj al-balāghah* into English, and has written a book on Shī'ite Islam. In the first issue of the journal under review he has published an article "Iqbāl and Human Civilization." Iqbālian studies has become a discipline in itself in the Indian subcontinent, to which many Western scholars have also contributed. Among Iranian thinkers, apart from the literary critics, Martyr Murtaḍā Muṭahhari and 'Alī Shari'atī, have made extensive and penetrating studies of Iqbāl, which are unique for the freshness and originality of their approach. Dr. Ja'fari's exposition of Iqbāl's conception of human civilization presents the poet-philosopher in modern context. Iqbāl's thought is not always consistent for he is strongly swayed by poetic moods at the cost of philosophical consistency. Moreover, his attempt to reconcile modern Western notions with the Islamic faith and the ideas of medieval thinkers gives rise to contradictions, and occasionally results in half-baked notions. Dr. Ja'fari ignored this aspect and, therefore, failed to explain how Iqbāl could synthesize Nietzsche's view of society and civilization with the ideas of democratic thinkers, and particularly with the Islamic conception of human civilization. Apart from this aspect, the article shows the author's deep understanding of Iqbāl's prose and poetry. Rendering of verses into English is faithful, but at some places

quite literal.

Mustanşir Mîr's article on Ḥamid al-Dîn 'Abd al-Ḥamid al-Farâhî (1863-1930) throws light on an important Indian scholar of the Quran. Al-Farâhî argues that the Quran possesses a remarkable and significant arrangement, which has been ignored or not properly understood by most of the *mufassirûn* of the Holy Book. He challenges the view that the Quran lacks coherence of composition. He holds the view that the basic unit of the Quranic study should be a Sûrah, and not one or a few verses taken out of the context of a Sûrah. Al-Farâhî remains a relatively unknown scholar till this day. His scholarship as well as originality demand a serious study of his *tafsîr*. Mustanşir has compared his commentary on a few Quranic verses with either traditional interpretations or with Montgomery Watt's commentary.

Dr. Mushîr al-Ḥaqq has written on "Shâh 'Abd al-'Azîz al-Dihlawî and His Times." Shâh 'Abd al-'Azîz, a well-known figure in the Indian subcontinent, was the son of the famous Shâh Walî Allâh, and an eminent personality of the eighteenth century. Mushîr al-Ḥaqq has discussed the relations between the Indian Muslims and the British at that time. Shâh 'Abd al-'Azîz played an important role in fashioning the thinking of the Indian Muslims because of his family tradition and his own scholarship. The article revolves around three issues that arose again and again in his lifetime (1746-1824). The questions put to him were:

1. Could India be considered *dâr al-ḥarb* under the British rule?
2. Could a Muslim serve a non-Muslim government?
3. Was learning of English language permissible for a Muslim?

There was also some controversy regarding intermarriage between the Sunnîs and the Shî'îs, and between the Muslims and the Christians. 'Abd al-'Azîz is not reported to commit himself to the question of intermarriage between the Muslims and the Christians. He had good relations with some important British officers, and he did not want to indulge in this dispute. But unfortunately his attitude towards the Shî'ah was not friendly, which was reflected in his book *Tuḥfah-ye ithnâ 'ashariyyah*, in which he aimed at refuting the Shî'î faith. This book inaugurated a bitter controversy between the two sects. It is said that as he did not put his name on the book as its author but preferred to publish it under his chronogrammatic name Ḥāfiẓ Ghulām Ḥalîm, he did not reckon it a good work. But we know that he was against the growing Shî'î influence on the Sunnî families, as a result of which some members of every Sunnî family had embraced the Shî'î faith. Moreover he belonged to *mujaddidî silsilah*, initiated by Shaykh Aḥmad Sarhindî, who considered the Shî'îs as infidels, and wrote against them in his *Maktûbât*. During 'Abd al-'Azîz's lifetime bitterness between the two Muslim sects was on the increase. Some of his contemporary 'ulamâ', following the footsteps of Sarhindî, considered the Shî'îs outside the

fold of Islam. Mawlānā Dildār ‘Alī of Lucknow and Muḥammad Qulī Khān Kantūrī wrote books to refute *Tuḥfah*. Thus Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz is not unjustifiably considered the initiator of the sectarian polemics among Muslims in India. Dr. Aṭḥar ‘Abbās Riḍawī has translated into English all the books written in connection with this unfortunate controversy in his latest work on Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and his times. It is a good sign that the educated Muslims in India and Pakistan are not interested in such harmful sectarian polemics. Mushīr al-Ḥaqq’s attitude is indicative of this healthy change. He seems to be apologetic on behalf of the author of *Tuḥfah*. The article reveals a sympathetic understanding of the times and predicament of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, and he has based his study on some rare letters, verses, fatāwā and malfūzāt of the author of *Tafsīr-e ‘Azīzī* and *Tuḥfah*. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was not opposed to learning English language and had cordial relations with the Britishers. But Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī and Shāh Ismā‘īl, a close relative of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, who led the movement of jihad and reform of the Muslim society, were disciples of Shāh Ṣāhib. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz himself did not actively participate in these movements. In this article, lives and works of almost all eminent ‘ulamā’ and the Muslim reformists are discussed briefly, and it provides the reader with a proper perspective to assess the contribution of Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz to Islam in India.

The other articles that deserve special mention are “The Nature of Ribā in Islam” by M. ‘Umar Chaprā, “Ibn Sinā’s Methodological Approach Towards the Study of Nature” by ‘Uthmān Bakr, and Robert Avens’s comparative study of the views of Heidegger and the Muslim gnostics on death and immortality. Death has been considered in the Western Philosophy an event outside the pale of life. From Epicurus up to Wittgenstein all the thinkers treated the theme of death as a non-event and betrayed a superficial view of human death. Heidegger regards death as the last and the most radical possibility of *dasein* from ontological viewpoint, and deals with its existential dimension and pays due attention to the internal structures underlying and constituting death as an actual concrete occurrence. Avens has rightly pointed out that Heidegger’s phrase ‘total nullification’ is not synonymous with ‘nullity’ or ‘nothingness.’ This negation is at work from the moment we are born, and death pervades the very structure of life itself. *Dasein*’s possible being-in-death is an affirmation of the Islamic faith in life-after-death. Accordingly death as an ontological determination of *dasein* is perfectly compatible with life. The concept of ‘the radical openness’ of human existence is compared by Avens with similar notions found in the thought of Ṣūfis, particularly in the philosophy of Ibn Sinā, Ibn al-‘Arabī, Suhrawardī, Mullā Ṣadrā and Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. Avens has compared these notions with that of Heidegger on the basis of Corbin’s research in Persian Ṣūfism. In the same context Avens has discussed the

conceptions of things and angels with reference to Heidegger and the Persian thinkers of 'irfān tradition.

Hamdard Islamicus, which provides an open forum for a dialogue among all the schools of contemporary Muslim thought, can also be used as a forum for dialogue between the Western and the Eastern mind in order to gain better understanding of Islam and Islamic thought and its contemporary relevance to the world.

The Muslim World Book Review

The Islamic Foundation, 223 London Road, Leicester, LE1 2ZE, U.K.; Volume 4, Nos. 2 & 3, 1984; annual subscription rate (overseas) for individuals £11.00 (\$ 22.00) and institutes £ 15.00 (\$ 30.00), single issue £ 3.7 (\$ 7.5). Editors: Khurram Murād & Manāzīr Aḥsan.

This is a good quarterly journal of book reviews, which presents before the readers a picture of the publications on Islam all over the world. It covers almost all the aspects of Islamic studies ranging from Muslim thought and its sources to the recent problems of political, economic, social, cultural, and historical significance. Most of the reviewers are authorities on their subjects, and, in general, reviews are objective. Objectivity does not mean indifference to the facts and apathy in the matters of faith, it rather demands full exposure of the distortions of the Islamic teachings by some of the orientalist having ideological bias, and it demands critical assessment of the interpretations of Islam in the name of modernity by some Muslim intellectuals. Khurram Murād's criticism of Faḍl al-Raḥmān's book *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* is very harsh but illuminating. Of course, the editors subscribe to a particular image of Islam and the reviews reflect their commitment to fundamentalism of a particular sort. In the second issue there is a critical survey of four bibliographies viz. *Mideast File*, *Arab Periodicals and Serials: A Subject Bibliography*, *The Middle East: Abstract and Index*, and *Islamic Movements in Egypt, Pakistan and Iran: An Annotated Bibliography*. This survey deals with the Western domination of the intellectual field, and shows how far the Western scholars openly and frankly claim the domination of the fields of history of science and technology. This attitude is evident in compilation of the first two bibliographies dealing with the Middle East. Diyā' al-Dīn Sardār has exposed non-academic motives of the bibliographers. *Mideast File* is produced by the Shiloah Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies of Tel Aviv University. Its objective is 'to control, assess and pinpoint information on the Middle East.' *The Middle East: Abstracts and Index* is interested mainly in the geographical studies and recent events of historical importance. The objective is obviously political manipulation of this region. By ignoring religion and

philosophy, and by paying attention to anthropology, archeology, art, business, current affairs, economics, education, history, language, literature, psychology, sociology, government and politics, it makes its intentions clear. The remaining two bibliographies are edited by the Muslims, and are successful in exposing the so-called 'unbiased' nature of the journals and the bibliographies compiled by the Western-trained orientalist.

The *Muslim World Book Review* is a must for all the libraries and the researchers working in various fields related to the study of Islam. No other journal provides such up-to-date information about the books written on Islam in English language.

Islamic Studies

A Journal of Islamic Research Institute, Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan; Vol. XXXIII, Summer 1984, No. 2, single issue \$ 4 or Rs. 10. Editor: F.A. Shamsi.

The journal publishes articles related to Islamic history, philosophy, religion, science, literature, economics, political science, culture, law, and jurisprudence etc. The present issue has three articles and two book-reviews, and consists of 150 pages.

The most scholarly of all the articles is F.A. Shamsi's "Ibn Sinā's Argument Against Atomicity of Space/Time." I feel that the Muslim scholars are too much obsessed by Plato and Aristotle, while explaining the philosophical doctrines of the Muslim thinkers. It cannot be denied that Muslims were influenced by Greek philosophy, but Greek philosophy is not the final word in the matters related to scientific research. The medieval Muslim thinkers' preoccupation with Greek notions is understandable in the light of their limitations, and also because of the fact that sciences were at the stage of infancy at that time. The Muslim thought was stunted during the later period, for it could not outgrow the Greek influence. In the later period, philosophy has made much advancement in different directions with the advancement of theoretical sciences. But the theologians and 'ulamā' of medieval tradition stick dogmatically to the ancient and medieval notions, and some of them consider Aristotle to be infallible. In philosophy no one is irrefutable, and no theory embodies the final truth. Ibn Sinā, a great genius, is considered to be one of the most authoritative philosophers of the Muslim world. But despite his originality he could not transcend Greek tradition of thought. The greatest contribution of the Muslim thinkers to the development of philosophy in the world is their interpretation and reconstruction of Greek and Iranian and other metaphysical ideas borrowed from different philosophies in the light of the changing conditions of their times in new terminology. In the present age we have to interpret the basic notions of Muslim philosophy

in modern terms in the light of the progress made in various sciences, and have also to make them intelligible for others who are unacquainted with the notions of Muslim thought. Such a work has been done by Indian scholars in the context of Indian philosophy. In recent times, with the Islamic resurgence much work is being done on Islamic philosophy, culture, and its different aspects. The urgent need of the time is to outgrow outdated and worn-out modes of thought. Ibn Sinā's atomistic view regarding space/time can be analysed in the light of relativity theory and the recent researches in the nature of space/time. Mr. Shamsi has referred to some recent books on the problem, which help the reader to evaluate the relevance of Ibn Sinā's doctrines. No philosophy can be properly studied in isolation. A comparative study of Muslim and non-Muslim philosophies may prove to be more beneficial for understanding the notions dealt with by the Muslim thinkers.

Muhammad A. Abū Bakr has written on 'Sayyid Quṭb's interpretation of the Islamic view of literature.' The paper was written as a part of the requirements of M. Lit. examination, and was presented for discussion. The paper is expository and one should not expect originality of approach and view from the author, who is still engaged in research on the subject. However, certain points, raised in the paper, attract attention, and require some clarifications. The discussion on the Islamic view of literature revolves on the nature of poetry, and the role of poets in society with reference to four verses of the Sūrah of 'The Poets.' The Quran says:

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ * أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ * وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ * إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ *

As for poets, the erring follow them. Have you not seen they stray in every valley, And how they say that which they do not? Save those who believe and do good works, and remember Allah much, and vindicate themselves after they have been wronged. Those who do wrong will come to know by what a (great) reverse they will be overturned. (26:224-227)

Sayyid Quṭb analysed these verses along with Sūrat Yūsuf in his book entitled *Fī al-tārīkh, fikr wa minhāj*. Some maintain that the nature of the poets does not fit in with the nature of Islam. The censure of the Quran is based on the view that the poets are largely wayward, moody, unheeded of reality, swayed away by emotions, and thereby are lost in their own world, fabricated by imagination. Islam, both as a religion and as an all-embracing code of conduct, demands single-minded devotion to God and unfaltering commitment to the Islamic ideal. Such an interpretation, in the view of Sayyid Quṭb, is

biased, for it ignores a very important point, viz. the Quran censures one type of poets only: those who express that on which they are not prepared to act themselves. Even the most secular view of literature maintains that genuine poets are those whose poetry reflects their authentic experience. The artistic expression is unfoldment of one's innermost being, and if it is not so it is unauthentic, and is, therefore, superficial art. The people having no aesthetic sensibility make use of the above-quoted Quranic verses for condemning all literature irrespective of its content and value. Apart from the well-known poets, some of the most respected companions of the Prophet (S), including Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (A), composed poetry occasionally. Once when Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (A) was asked to comment upon the poets of *al-Jāhiliyyah*, he expressed his appreciation of them with certain reservations, and showed his preference for 'Imri' al-Qays. Sayyid Quṭb, besides being an Islamic thinker and reformer, was a poet also. He, therefore, could accommodate poetry also in his ideal Muslim society, and prescribed a role for poets also. The value of the aesthetic experience is repeatedly emphasized by the Quran, and it invites the human beings to witness the beauty of nature as a sign and proof of God and His aesthetically conceived plan of creation. Sayyid Quṭb's view is in conformity with the appreciative attitude of the Prophet (S) towards poetry. Usually the opponents of Islam insist that Islam is hostile to all forms of art. It is encouraging that even those Muslim thinkers, who are considered strict fundamentalists (of course, this term is used in a derogatory sense by the so-called modernists and reformists) are not averse to art and literature. The main point in the Islamic view of art is that no art should negate the Islamic ideal. Art, in all kinds of society, is considered as a tool of serving human interest. Even the countries like the U.S.A., which are never tired of claiming to be the champions of the human rights and freedom of expression, cannot tolerate the writers who are opposed to their professed ideology and policy, and try to stifle their voice directly or indirectly. The attitude of the totalitarian states is equally severe and oppressive, for they regard the writers as the mouthpieces of the ideology of the ruling party, and they suppress even the most mild criticism with brutal means. Islamic view of literature, as compared with the policy of all the forms of present-day governments with regard to art, is much more liberal. Sayyid Quṭb, as interpreted by the author of the article, seems to hold that adherence to the Islamic values does not mean that one should use poetry solely as a means of propaganda. If interpreted correctly, Sayyid Quṭb makes it explicit that art under the yoke of any imposed ideology loses its freedom to choose what to say and how to say. He seems to be aware of the fact that such restrictions have a negative effect on the quality of art. Islamic realism emanates from a moral philosophy, not in a narrow

sense, and encourages the writers to portray actual and potential capabilities of man truly. Neither undue emphasis on human weaknesses is desirable, nor is unrealistic utopian idealism like unshakable faith in man's goodness advisable, for both these approaches are misleading. A glance at Sūrah 12 in the Quran, which narrates the story of Zulaykhā's infatuation and Yūsuf's strength of character, is sufficient to understand the Quranic treatment of the human nature. In this context the author, with reference to Sayyid Quṭb's view, raises some pertinent issues that are relevant to the ever-fresh controversy concerning the meaning of obscenity in literature.

Other articles are also informative. The reviews of two books *Islamic Jurisprudence in the Modern World* and the English translation of *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 'The Bezels of Wisdom' do justice with the subjects dealt with in the books.



Al-HUDĀ is an Arabic magazine for Muslim children. So far eight issues have appeared.

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توحید آردو

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اکاؤنٹ نمبر ۹۰۰۲۵
سازمان تبلیغات اسلامی (مطبوعات خاوری)
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مقاصد

کلمۃ التوحید

و

توحید الکلمہ

قرآن و سنت و سیرت پر نئے زاویوں سے بحث اور علمی و عملی پہلوؤں کی تلاش۔ علمی سطح پر علماء و محققین امت میں اتحاد و ہم آہنگی۔

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Imam Khomeini on the Martyrdom of al-Imam al-Husayn (A)

According to the manner of depicting the city for the first time. This, like all his Islamic-political activities, them Islam probably al-Husayn (A)

The martyrdom of Muhammad (A) is a struggle against falsehood and injustice. It bears testimony to the fact that truth has always prevailed over falsehood throughout the course of his life.

Al-Imam al-Husayn (A), the Doyen of the Martyrs, ensured the existence of Islam by his heroic deeds. His movement, which led to his own martyrdom and the defeat of the Bani Umayyah, has endured and is alive. If we want our country should be a free and independent country, we should safeguard the secret [of his message].

Today our nation has understood the meaning of the words [of al-Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (A)] that, "every day is 'Ashura', and every land is Karbala'."

We are indebted to Muharram and to the *majalis* of al-Imam al-Husayn (A) for all that we have today. Our *majalis*, which are means of Islamic education, owe their existence to the martyrdom of al-Imam al-Husayn (A). We should examine the causes of the profound effect of this martyrdom, which continues unabated to the present day. Had it not been for these *majalis*, the mourning processions, gatherings and sermons, our country would not have been able to achieve victory [in its Revolution].

The *majalis* held to remember and mourn al-Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (A), have both an Islamic and a political aspect. The *majalis* and the sermons delivered from the *manabir* should keep alive the tragedy of his martyrdom, and our nation should safeguard this great Islamic tradition and keep it intact with all its power.