

AL-TAWHĪD

A Quarterly Journal of Islamic Thought and Culture

IN THIS ISSUE

Forty Ḥadīth: An Exposition

Imam Rūḥullāh al-Mūsawī al-Khūmeini

Tariq Istinbāt al-'Aḥkām

al-Muhaqqiq al-Karakī

Legislation in an Islamic State

Āyatullāh Aḥmad Jannati

Importance of the Problems of World-View

Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ

Introduction to Imāmiyyah Scholars.

Al-Kulayni and His Works

Dr. Wahid Akhtar

Glimpses of the Nahj al-Balāghah

Martyr Murtadā Muṭahhari

Islam and Christianity:

A Review Article

'Alī Qulī Qarā'i

Vol. II, No. 3, Rajab—Ramadān 1405

(April-June 1985)

قِيلَ لِأَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ^ع: مَنْ خَيْرُ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ
بَعْدَ أُمَّةِ الْهُدَى... قَالَ: الْعُلَمَاءُ إِذَا
صَلَحُوا. قِيلَ: وَمَنْ شَرُّ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ بَعْدَ
إِبْلِيسَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ... قَالَ: الْعُلَمَاءُ إِذَا
فَسَدُوا...

الْأَمَامُ الْاِسْكَرِيُّ^ع

الْبَحَارُ ٨٩/

Amir al-Mu'minin 'Alī (A) was asked, "Who are the best of God's creatures after the Imams?" He replied, "The scholars, when they are righteous." Asked, "And who are the worst of God's creatures, after the Devil and the Pharaoh?" He replied, "The scholars, when they are corrupt."

*A hadith of al-Imām al-'Askari (A)
from Bihār al-'anwār, vol. 89*

Al-Tawhīd

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CONTENTS

Editorial	5
Forty Ḥadīth: An Exposition <i>Imam Rūḥullāh al-Mūsawī al-Khumaynī</i>	19
Ṭariq Istinbāt al-'Aḥkām <i>al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī</i>	42
Legislation in an Islamic State <i>Āyatullāh Aḥmad Jannatī</i>	56
Importance of the Problems of World-View <i>Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ</i>	71
Introduction to Imāmiyyah Scholars: Al-Kulaynī and His Works <i>Dr. Waḥīd Akhtar</i>	90
Glimpses of the Nahj al-Balāghah <i>Martyr Murtadā Muṭahhari</i>	113
Islam and Christianity: A Review Article <i>'Alī Qulī Qarā'ī</i>	136

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

NOTICE

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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

In the history of the monotheistic religion, it has often happened that a people reared on the practice of the creed and values of *tawhîd* were corrupted by the influence of polytheistic environments. From the viewpoint of the Quran, every nation and people upon the earth has undergone this degeneration, i.e. falling down from the grace of monotheistic purity, at one time or another in its history, into the abyss of polytheism through a process of continuous decline in case of many nations. The only agency which has fought this degeneration was the role played by God-sent prophets. However, the only historical record that we possess is the history of the Children of Israel. First in Egypt, then in Palestine, then during their exile in Assyria and Babylon, then again in Palestine under Persian, Greek, Seleucid and Roman domination, throughout the various phases of their history the Children of Israel were exposed to the cultures of various peoples who worshipped idols and pagan gods. In fact the Old Testament is mainly a record of the successes and failures of a monotheistic people who lived and strived in a polytheistic environment, and who often failed to resist its degenerating and occasionally destructive influence upon their monotheistic creed, laws, and culture. The corruption of the rulers was another factor which assisted the corrupting influences of pagan tribes inhabiting Palestine and surrounding regions. After the era of the Judges and kings like Saul, David, and Solomon, the Children of Israel were ruled, in both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, with few exceptions, by corrupt kings who neither respected the creed of Moses nor its Divine laws. At a juncture in their history, the Children of Israel had so thoroughly forgotten their religious heritage, during the rule of the Kings, that the book of Law had to be rediscovered by the Temple's high priest. This incident, reported in 2 Kings 22, as taking place during the reign of Josiah, the king of Judah (640-609 B.C.), proves that a long period of neglect preceded the discovery of the book of Law.

There are certain close parallels between the history of the Children of Israel and that of Muslims. In fact there are numerous Prophetic traditions which persuade us to look for such parallels. With regard to subjection to pervert rule, there are close parallels between the history of the Children of Israel under the kings of Judah and Israel and the history of Muslims under monarchic rule, with the difference, of course, that the Islamic drama was enacted on a larger stage and involved a diversity of peoples who came from varying cultural and racial backgrounds: pagan Arabs, Christians, Jews, Sabaeans, Zoroastrians, Magians, etc. Moreover, the teachings of Prophet

Muhammad (S) had so effectively fought idolatry and pagan mythology that a radical relapse into overt forms of polytheism was made impossible. As a result neither the Muslim masses nor their kings and rulers ever relapsed into overt polytheism like the Jews before the fall of the Israeli kingdoms. The deviations of the Muslims were much more subtle than of their Jewish or Christian counterparts. Their deviations can be likened to those of the Jews during the time of Jesus Christ (A).

Nowhere in the Gospels do we find any instances of condemnation of idolatry or pagan practices among his contemporaries by Jesus. Jesus mainly condemns moral deviations, which are more or less subtle and concealed, such as, hypocrisy, pride, dishonesty, injustice, etc. That monotheism was comparatively well established as a doctrine is proved by the fact that many Jews rejected what came to be prevalent in the name of Christian teaching, under whose influence the majority of Christians adopted the doctrine of divinity of Christ.

In any case, the main threats to the purity of the Divine messages came from two sources: firstly, the extraneous influence of pagan environment on the Jewish religious culture; secondly, doctrinal, moral, and legal corruption and distortion within the religious tradition itself. Similar detrimental forces have been at work within the Muslim world. As Islam spread and various nations embraced its message, the un-Islamic sentiments and beliefs of their pre-Islamic past continued to survive, at least partially. Although unlike the Jews, the Muslim world converted its barbarian invaders to its faith, it became more and more fragmented and exhausted politically and religiously. It lay exhausted and prostrate when the Western powers, at the turn of the seventeenth century, invigorated by an industrial and a political revolution began to eye the Muslim lands as an attractive prey. The Western onslaught against the Muslim world was backed not only by superior technology, and more efficient military and political machinery, it was also based on scholarly studies of its socio-political and geographical conditions and religious background and history. The Western colonial designs against the Eastern countries produced a phenomenon hitherto without any comparable parallel in the history of religions: Orientalism. Since, in the Muslim world, religion occupied a central position in social and political life, Western scholars paid much greater attention to Islam than any other Eastern religion. This kind of scholarly activity was eagerly supported and liberally financed by the Western governments, since it provided the statesmen and political decision makers with expert advice and guidance for making policy decisions. Therefore, Orientalism must be considered as a part of the political strategy of the Western powers. The strategic objectives which it pursued can be stated as below:

1. To acquire an in-depth insight into the Muslim mind and the

Islamic teachings, the beliefs and practices of various Muslim sects by training comprehensive expertise. The first trainees, after receiving brief instruction in the Western capitals, were sent out as travellers, emissaries, missionaries, diplomats, colonial officials and spies, to obtain a broader field experience and knowledge of the Muslim world. Their studies served as the crude foundation on which relatively more refined edifice of Islamic scholarship was afterwards built up. Despite the separation of the State and the Church in the secular Western world, here was a field in which there was unlimited scope of cooperation and unified efforts between the Western States and the Church. From the beginning, their emphasis was on Sunnī Islam because of its immense strategic relevance. The Sunnī world covered the greater part of the economically fertile domains spreading from the Far East to West Africa. Moreover, the Sunnī world was less closely knit, more amorphous and more vulnerable.

2. To acquire a working understanding of various Islamic sects and groups and various racial, linguistic, regional and other factors at work in the Muslim countries and their relevance to the strategic plans and policy decisions of the colonial governments and their foreign-affairs departments. For this purpose, the English, French, German, and Dutch governments encouraged the training of scholarly cadre well-versed in different spheres of Islamic sciences. This required a break with the kind of work done in the past by Christians on Islam, which served merely a polemical and apologetic purpose and painted a gruesome picture of Islam, its Prophet, and its Book, to prove to the European audience the superiority of the visage of Christianity and its teachings, a picture too incredible to be displayed in Muslim lands. Since it was necessary that the plans of the colonialists should be based on facts, not on fancies or prejudices of the Christian fathers, there was a certain movement towards objectivity in the new scholarship, although its ulterior objectives and purposes became more concealed and far more dangerous.

3. With the achievement of colonial domination over Muslim lands and the commencement of European-style education of the Muslim natives, new opportunities of exploiting the scholarly potential became obvious: Orientalist scholarship could be deployed for altering the religious attitudes of Muslims and changing their social behaviour to the benefit of the Europeans. This called for production of a wide range of writings which could influence the opinions of those who received Western education, about their religion, its Law, and teachings. Overt attempts to obliterate the faith of Muslims would be doomed to failure. Writings on Islam in the former style of the Christian fathers, though it might have had a mighty success with the European Christian, were destined to failure in Muslim countries. A more sophisticated approach

was required for the relatively sophisticated educated Muslims. This would put a greater demand on Orientalist scholarship. Nevertheless, the task would not be that difficult after all, because the educated Muslims had already been deprived of access to the original Islamic texts in Arabic, including the Holy Quran, with the destruction of the traditional educational institutions, and one of the European languages now formed the basic ground of their literate existence. All that was required was to create an entire 'library of doubts' to make the Muslim doubt his religious tradition, doubts whose clarification would lie hopelessly outside the range of his capacities. Also, the traditional 'ulamā', who rarely knew any European language and had little idea of the doings of Orientalism, would not be of much help to him in resolving his doubts. Moreover, the Muslim's respect for the West's reputation for its scientific objectivity and the Orientalist's secular and apparently disinterested style led him to believe whatever he read about Islam, its Prophet, its Law and history, its past contributions and achievements. The writings of the Orientalist now became a vehicle for gradual alienation of the educated Muslim class from its religion, a gap that gradually grew to astronomical dimensions.

While in the different parts of the Muslim world the scholars hardly knew of what passed in other countries, there was an efficient system of communication between Oriental scholars of different European countries. Similarly, the colonial powers learnt from one another the optimum strategies and effective tactics to be applied to the Muslim countries. Some of their common objectives and plans with regard to the Muslim world can be stated as follows:

(i) Exaggeration and exacerbation of sectarian, racial, linguistic, and regional differences and sentiments among Muslims. This applied not only to the Shi'ah and Sunni sects but to all other different factions which divided the Muslim world across various lines.

(ii) Propagation and encouragement of nationalist sentiments in the Muslim world. This would not only act as a disintegrative political force but as a disruptive agent within the Muslim consciousness, which regarded the Muslim world as a single unit. Colonial spies, writers, journalists, political activists, statesmen, historians—all have worked in concert to produce disintegrative nationalist sentiments in the Muslim world. The Turkish empire, before and after its collapse, is the classical example of this kind of disintegration.

(iii) Support of despotic and tyrannical rulers in the Muslim world, who suppressed the Islamic sentiments of the people, thus helping themselves and their colonial allies and masters.

(iv) Creation of social and religious discord amongst Muslims by creating fake religious movements controlled by colonial powers which would weaken Islam from within. Bahā'ism in Iran, Qādiyānism in the

Indian subcontinent, and Wahhābism in the Arabian Peninsula, are examples of this kind of subterfuge. The Orientalists in general have a soft corner for this kind of phenomena in the Muslim world and have undeniable sympathy with their objectives.

(v) Separation of religion from politics and encouragement of an exclusively otherworldly attitude towards religion. In this relation, the Orientalists have showered great attention on Ṣūfism and its various sects, cults, and personalities. Orientalist works on Ṣūfism alone, probably, exceed the combined number of such works on Islamic Law, ḥadīth, history, *kalām*, and philosophy.

(vi) To make the Muslims gradually accustomed to West's cultural paraphernalia incompatible with the Islamic Shari'ah, such as: gambling, usury, sexual waywardness and corruption, consumption of alcoholic drinks, eating of pork, and lately, pornographic literature, films etc. This plan was completed in the Muslim countries, under direct or indirect colonial control, by enforcement of Western civil and criminal codes, which permitted open violation of the Shari'ah, and as a result caused common man's alienation from Islam.

(vii) To replace the regard and respect for the Muslim 'ulamā' with disrespect or outright hostility. The Orientalists have striven to project the 'ulamā' in bad light as a class representative of an obsolete tradition, opposed to progress, and responsible for the backwardness of the Muslims.

(viii) To change the traditional attitude of the Muslims towards Jews and Christians, which was of suspicion and distrust—an attitude strongly recommended by the Quran—into that of unscrupulous trust and confidence. This change of attitude made the Muslims unwary victims of the intrigues and subterfuges of the colonial powers.

(ix) To weaken the Muslim's great respect for the Quran and ḥadīth. Since the entire edifice of Islam was based on these two sources, the Orientalist have cunningly striven to undermine the Muslim's confidence in their infallibility as prime sources of guidance in all walks of life.

(x) To reduce the Muslim's estimation of the importance of obligatory Islamic duties, such as of *al-'amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* as 'interference with individual freedom,' of *jihād* as 'an instrument of military expansionism,' of *Hajj* as a 'national rite of the pagan Arabs Islamized by the Prophet (S),' etc.

(xi) To weaken the institution of the family, which serves as a vehicle of perpetuity of traditional values. The colonialists put their finger rightly on the central role of women within Muslim families, and their agents projected Islamic *ḥijāb* as an 'impediment to progress,' 'an offence against human dignity' (!), 'contrary to human freedom' and as a 'vestige of medieval male chauvinism.' The real motive behind all this

kind of propaganda has seldom been a genuine regard for women's rights. The real motive has been to prompt Muslims to abandon their Islamic life-styles and to imitate the European patterns of living.

(xii) To develop an educated class in the Muslim world alienated from Islam as a comprehensive way of life, a class which is culturally and intellectually sympathetic and allied with the West, and torn away from its Islamic tradition.

Today when we look around and see our educated class throughout the Muslim world, we discover how successfully this strategic objective of the Western powers has been achieved. While Orientalism encouraged a "liberal" attitude among the educated Muslims towards their religion, Western education, European habits, and practices in direct conflict with the Islamic Sharī'ah completed the process of this alienation. How far the adoption of this liberalized version of Islam made the educated Muslim drift away from the core of the teachings of the Quran, and to what extent it has altered its sensibilities and loyalties can be seen from the difficulty experienced by this class in fully sympathizing with the aims and objectives of the present Islamic revival. Fortunately, this plague of liberalism did not spread to the poorer and illiterate sections of the Muslim society, and today it is this class together with those brought up in the Islamic educational tradition or the 'defectors' from the Western educated class that forms the active core of the Islamic revolutionary movement today.

Although the present period is one of rapid decline of liberalism in the Muslim world (and also that of non-committed traditionalism), and probably represents its last phase of ultimate extinction, the liberal minority has played a disproportionately dominant role in controlling the destiny of the Muslim world during the past century. Under its leadership, the Muslim world has gradually weakened in spite of increasing opportunities, has become more impotent despite enlarging potentialities, and has lost tangible hold over its destiny despite progress in the economic, industrial and military aspects. The leadership of liberalism has been unable to steer the Muslim world out of its paralyzing dichotomies. This was natural because liberalism, which projected itself as a cure-all, was itself a symptom of the debilitating disease. W.C. Smith, a keen observer of the Muslim world though not a sincere sympathizer of Islam, writing thirty years ago, makes the following comment about the dominant role of liberals in the Muslim world:

Such men have been not only numerous but greatly significant. They have supplied the recent leadership of their societies in almost all spheres of activity (except the religious). Not only have they staffed most of the educational institutions, virtually constituted the major professions, written a

great many of the books, and edited the major newspapers. At the present time also they man the governments of almost every Muslim state. It is only partially untrue to remark that in this century the higher a Muslim's position in leadership, the more liberal he has generally been. Though a minority the liberals have come close to being a dominant minority more or less throughout the modern Muslim world. (*Islam in Modern History*, p. 67)

After making this remark, Smith asks, "If the liberals are so strong, why is liberalism weak?" He rightly observes that the liberal ideology "however frequently and closely related...does not seem to have been much integrated with the faith." The failure of the liberals to integrate the Western secular vision with the Islamic teaching is not due to any lack of talent or effort on the part of the liberals or that of their patrons, but is a glowing tribute to the consistency, integrity, coherence, resistance, and comprehensiveness of the transcendental vision of Islam, which does not easily assimilate harmful foreign material. The Quran itself stands like a formidable, in fact insuperable, barrier in the path of attempts to mix Islam with pagan ideologies in general. It was the insuperable, unchallengeable majesty of the Quran that required the alienation of the liberal Western educated class from the Quran in the eyes of the Western strategists—an objective which Orientalism has tried to achieve. The Western cultural policies, of which Orientalism forms an integrated part, were aimed to bring about a dichotomy in the Muslim intellect which, it was thought, would finally result in the dominance of the liberal mentality and ultimate eradication of the 'fundamentalist' outlook. Writing about the Islamic crisis in the Arab world, the Orientalist quoted above remarks:

The crisis of the Arabs is acute. And within it, the crisis of Islam is acute. Its greatest problem is the degree to which those who in the fullest sense know the religion have largely lost contact with the modern world, and those genuinely oriented to modernity have largely lost contact with their religion. (*op. cit.* p. 165)

Among others, the active policies of the colonial powers in the Muslim countries and their educational cultural and legal strategies have been the most effective factor in bringing about this dichotomy. As the Islamic Revolution in Iran has shown, the real solution of this paralyzing dichotomy does not lie, as the Orientalists, almost invariably, insinuate, in abandoning Islam or in taking Islam less seriously, in the liberal spirit; but in a purely Islamic determination to grapple with the contemporary problems in the light of the Islamic teachings and principles. This requires not only taking Islam seriously but also our historical destiny in the contemporary situation. The leadership appropriate for carrying out this determination can come only from the

Islamic 'ulamā' who not only comprehend the contemporary realities but can view the contemporary world in an Islamic perspective and can devise creative Islamic solutions of its problems. The failure of liberalism is the failure of disjointed, partial economic, administrative, military, political and legal solutions to problems, inspired by the Western secular experience. The Islamic determination to solve those problems must be firmly located in a purely moral, spiritual perspective in which the economic, military, political, social and administrative solutions acquire their proper Islamic relationships. The Islamic Revolution in Iran was a product of a general resolution of this paralyzing dichotomy eased by the leadership of a great 'ālim who could see the problems of the Muslim world in a Quranic perspective and was infused by unshakable conviction that they could be solved only through the Divine agency of Islam. The present effort to overhaul the educational system in the Islamic Republic of Iran is aimed at eradication of the roots of the forces of alienation and dichotomy which are inbuilt in the educational systems prevalent throughout the Muslim world, systems which have been borrowed from the West. Within these schemes of education it is specifically such disciplines of questionable scientific value as humanities and social 'sciences' which work as the artificial forces of alienation and dichotomization.

Orientalism, which originally formed a part of the Western politico-cultural strategy aimed at breaking the Muslim's pride in his religion and tradition, ended by creating a populous, powerful educated class which was ignorant of the Islamic heritage, had a lukewarm loyalty towards its faith, was distrustful of the 'ulamā', their scholarship and expertise, and was at home in the Western secular cultural stream.

In order to discover the causes of this great misfortune, one must look into the writings of the Orientalists. Montgomery Watt in his book *Islam and Christianity Today* (which has been reviewed in this issue of *al-Tawhīd*) makes the following remarks:

Western Christians had little contact with Muslims until the occupation of Spain in the early eighth century and the conquest of Sicily in the ninth. After this they gradually became aware that in these regions and on the southern coasts of the Mediterranean they had a formidable enemy, who was culturally far superior to them, and whose military might was redoubtable. For some considerable time they had little accurate knowledge of Islam. Mahound, a deformation of the name of the Prophet, was popularly identified with the Devil. The Crusades brought a demand for fuller knowledge, and from about 1100 for a century or two this was provided by various scholars. Yet, although they had access to the Qur'ān and other Muslim books, the image of Islam which they produced for Western Europe was a distorted one. This was probably because even the scholars had a feeling of cultural inferiority, and so by way of 'defence' had to show that as a religion Islam was much inferior to Christianity. Among the points which went to compose this 'distorted image'

of Islam were the following: Islamic doctrine contained many false assertions and deliberate perversions of the truth; Islam was a religion of violence, spreading by the sword; it was a religion of self-indulgence, especially sexual; and since Muḥammad, beside exhibiting moral weakness, was the author of a false religion, he must be a tool or agent of the devil. None of these points could be accepted by an objective historian today. The 'distorted image', however, has continued to influence the Western understanding of Islam into the present century, despite the efforts of scholars for two hundred years or more to correct the more flagrant distortions. Just as their efforts appeared to be successful certain events linked with the present revival of Islam are causing not a few Westerners to turn back to the 'distorted image'.

However, close study of the efforts of the later Western scholars of Islam will show that all they did was to substitute subtle distortions of Islam in place of the earlier coarser ones, which were, anyway, inviable. Distortion of Islam has been an inbuilt necessity of the imperialist, exploitative, and aggressive Western powers. If the distorted image of Islam painted by the early Christian fathers was obviously incredible to the naked eye, the Orientalists using assiduous expertise have painted an image whose distortion is not easily perceptible even to an intelligent layman. Mr. Watt is perhaps referring to post-revolutionary events in Iran in the latter part of his above-quoted passage. Without going into details it could have been said that what is causing "not a few Westerners to turn back to the distorted image" of Islam is not the events themselves as their reporting by the "free" Western press, an achievement as brilliant as that of the medieval Christian fathers. Otherwise every informed Easterner or Westerner, knows what bloodshed, war, cruelty, injustice, exploitation, aggression and every manner of unchristian act has not been committed and on what scale in the last four hundred years or so by the Western Christians from Siberia to Oregon and Nevada, and from Poland to Rhodesia and South Africa. The world groans under the agony of the present unchristian state of affairs prevailing throughout the world and holds its breath in the brief reprieve granted by their nuclear arsenals. Yet it does not occur to any Western or Eastern historian or journalist to draw a hasty correlation between the creed and deeds of Western Christians.

Western scholarship, if it were truly objective, would realize what great disservice Orientalism has done to the Western man himself by depriving him of the greatest blessing of God to man, which is Islam. This is because Orientalism not only strived to diminish the educated Muslim's estimation of the Quran as an unassailable word of God and his respect for the ḥadīth and the Prophet's Sunnah—an indispensable source of Islamic Law—and to depreciate the Prophet's station by striving to show him as less than a perfect man and his religion as less than an ultimate faith, and to obliterate the Muslim's pride in the Islamic tradition by downplaying its achievements and contribution to

human civilization, but it was also aimed to deflect the interest a curious Westerner may have in Islam by turning his sympathetic curiosity into antipathetic ignorance.

By weakening the educated Muslim's respect for the religious scholars and the 'ulamā', or rather its substitution by a feeling of mutual distrust, the colonialists neutralized the intellectual potential of Muslim societies by dividing it into two inert, ineffective, and mutually hostile factions. This mutual distrust between the modern educated and the traditionally learned was to spread throughout the Muslim world like a disastrous plague, which did greater damage to the life of the Muslim Ummah than any other factor taken singly.

Even today there is a dearth of authentic books on Islam in the European languages. Most Islamic books written or translated by Muslims are substandard. It is a shame that the so-called encyclopaedias of Islam, which are in fact encyclopaedias of subtle distortions, wild irresponsible guesswork and hypotheses, libraries of mischievous insinuations or outright inaccuracies, serve as standard reference books on Islam throughout the world (In a future issue of *al-Tawhīd* we shall, *in shā' Allāh*, review the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, published by The Royal Netherlands Academy and printed at Cornell University Press, to prove our point).

However, the blame lies on the shoulders of the Orientalists only partially, because their work fills a vacuum which the Muslims themselves have allowed to exist. The blame is also partially shared by certain texts of the Ahl al-Sunnah which provide the Orientalist with the ammunition for launching his attacks against Islam and its teachings. To be certain the Shi'ah texts would have hardly provided the Orientalist with the kind of gunpowder he needed for blasting Islam; hence his coveting the Sunnī tradition as the "main stream" of Islam and his neglect of Imāmiyyah Shi'ism as a heresy.

This is very important; because it is an unquestioned axiom of the Western scholarship of Islam that any ḥadīth, legend, or story in the Islamic texts on ḥadīth, *tafsīr* or history when it is detrimental or damaging for Islamic teachings should be taken as being true, because, so the argument goes, any orthodox tradition is prone to conceal its faults and highlight its positive points. Therefore, if there is anything which puts the Prophet (S), his character, acts or sayings in a bad light it must have been undeniable and unescapable truth. This cunning axiom conveniently ignores the role of many un-Islamic or anti-Islamic currents that have existed throughout the long history of Islam, striving to pollute the purity of the Divine teachings, and perfectly serves the unholy purposes of the Western scholar, whose scholarship and expertise is supported and financed by the Western governments to further their anti-Islamic interests—anti-Islamic, not merely because it

is aimed to overthrow a particular system of religious beliefs and practices, but also because it fought a system of Divine teachings which is the sole guarantee of universal human welfare and salvation, for the sake of the West's cultural, political, and economic domination. This is true, because though all religions may advocate similar kind of higher human values and ideals as Islam advocates, but no other religion has preserved the necessary vitality and power of inspiration to mobilize huge numbers of ordinary human beings, not only to adopt those ideals but to sacrifice and struggle for their sake. The Islamic Revolution of Iran is a living example of this everlasting power of Islam. However, if the Western scholarship of Islam had really been motivated by higher human ideals and objectives, it would have performed an altogether different mission in the last two hundred years or so. Instead of deceiving unsuspecting Muslims, instead of disarming them of their faith—the only means of preserving their spiritual, moral, and cultural integrity—instead of declaring war against God and His ultimate message to humanity, it would have striven for better understanding of the values which Islam embodies. Evil motives distort understanding. The wicked motivated by selfish and worldly ends will not understand the Divine Message. The enemies of human salvation shall be the leaders of misguidance. God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. Those who refuse to view human existence and its purpose in the Divine light shall lose the thread of meaning of their existence. They shall see without perceiving, hear without understanding, speak without uttering anything of value. This is what God has decreed.

أَفَمَنْ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ أَعْمَى....

What, is he who knows what is sent down to thee from thy Lord is the truth, like him who is blind?.... (13:19)

...قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ....

...Say: 'Are the blind and the seeing man equal, or are the darkness and the light the same?'.... (13:16)

Basically, it is absurd for a Muslim to gain his knowledge of Islam from non-Muslim scholars. It is like taking a fatal enemy as a guide on a nightly journey through a dangerous mountain terrain. Obviously, if the Orientalist had himself benefited from his own scholarship, he would have been able to see the truth of Islam and accepted the Divine Message. The Quran gives its verdict about scholars who do not benefit from their scholarship in these words—a verdict which equally applies to the Muslim scholar of Islam who does not live according to what he

knows:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ *

The likeness of those who have been charged with the Torah, then they have not carried it, is as the likeness of an ass carrying books. Evil is the likeness of the people who deny the signs of God. God never guides the evildoers. (62:5)

The Orientalists mainly come from Jewish or Christian backgrounds—the very groups regarding whom the Quran warns the Muslims again and again to be on their guard against. The attitude which the Quran advises the Muslims to adopt vis-a-vis the Jews and the Christians, as a class, is one of caution and suspicion. It informs them about the inner attitude of theirs towards the Muslims and makes it clear that they, as a class if not as individuals, will never like Muslims *qua* Muslims. This attitude is not one consciously evolved or adopted by them; rather it is an existential demand of their innate being as those who resist or reject the will of God, the Creator. Consider the following verses of the Quran:

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنْ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَلَئِنْ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ *

Never will the Jews and the Christians be satisfied with you, not until you follow their way. Say: 'God's guidance is the true guidance.' If you follow their caprices after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have against God neither protector nor helper. (2:120)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ *

O believers, take not Jews and Christians for friends: they are friends of each other. Whoso of you makes them his friends is one of them. God guides not the evildoers. (5:51)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُوًا وَلَعِبًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَافِرَ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ *

O believers, take not as your friends those of them who were given the Book before you, and the unbelievers, who take your religion in mockery and as a sport, and fear God if you are believers. (5:57)

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُم مِّنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ أَنفُسِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ....

Many of the People of the Book wish they might restore you as unbelievers, after you have believed, in the jealousy of their souls, after the truth has become clear to them; yet do you pardon and be forgiving, until God brings His command.... (2:109)

All these verses reveal the attitude of the Jews and the Christians—from whom most of the Orientalists come—towards Muslims *qua* Muslims, and lay down clear guide-lines for the kind of stand the Muslims ought to take with respect to them.

Western authors have often criticized the Muslims in general and the Shi'ah in particular for what they call "xenophobia". Although the exact limits and rationale of such precautionary attitude practised by the Muslims need to be clearly demarcated and explained to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, it is undeniable that such an attitude is not only recommended but required by the Quran. The history of the past two hundred years of the Muslim world, and in particular the emergence of the disastrous phenomena called 'Islamic' liberalism, amply prove how detrimental the results of relaxation or absence of such spiritual, intellectual, and cultural precaution can be. It is a kind of precautionary attitude adopted for ideological and spiritual reasons comparable to the customary hygienic precautions recommended to Western tourists travelling in the Third World countries regarding reliable drinking water and wholesome food.

Ideological and spiritual health is of central significance in the Islamic way of life and is of utmost importance for sustaining the life, vigour, and vitality of the Muslim Ummah. It is of so much importance that, it may be said, the Islamic history of the Muslims runs in close parallel to the record of their success or failure in maintaining the state of spiritual and ideological health on the level of the Ummah. The Islamic Revolution in Iran is in fact only a political name for a process of ideological and spiritual recovery on the level of the Iranian society. Seen in this light, what is called Islamic liberalism is an ideological and spiritual disease produced under the ideologically and spiritually unhygienic influence of the sick Western spirit.

In the light of what we said above, there is an immediate need to realize the dangers posed by Orientalist works on Islam for the common literate class in the Muslim world as well as outside it. In the long run, it is up to the Muslim scholars to appraise the disservice done by this kind of scholarship and the extent of damage or rather the disaster caused by them. What is urgently needed is to enlighten the educated class about

the subversive nature of this kind of scholarship and its ulterior motives. It is also an urgent necessity to exclude the works of non-Muslims on Islamic subjects from university curricula and to substitute them by texts written by able Islamic scholars. This applies to all relevant subjects, such as Islamic Law, history, *kalām*, philosophy, *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, *ʿirfān* etc. Students using the current encyclopaedias of Islam compiled by non-Muslim Western scholars should be cautioned about the highly questionable nature of most of the entries covered in such books. Even the non-Muslims using such books ought to be made aware that such texts were compiled by scholars overtly or covertly hostile to Islam and miserably fall short of the requirements of objective scholarship.

Basically, in the study of religion, objectivity is not similar to objectivity in the empirical sciences. Religion is concerned with spiritual reality. Perception of this reality does not pertain so much to what one *knows* as to what one *is*. The clarity of religious vision depends mainly on the purity of the inner self. The *mu'min* (true believer) is not one who is adept in juggling religious notions, but one who is endowed with a vision unobscured by sins and selfish desires. The religious reality is a reality illuminated by the Light of God, Who is the Ultimate inner meaning of all reality. How can one who like the bat shuns this Light and is at home in the darkness of his soul, fluttering around in it with the wings of greed, pride, and envy, succeed in seeing the grandeur of the Sun-illuminated world. How can the Orientalist, even if 'fair' and 'objective'— in his own imagination and according to his convenience—do justice to a set of Divine values and objectives, to undermine which is the primary objective and goal of the system which finances and supports his scholarship? God has decreed that the Devil shall not serve Him, the wicked shall not see His Face, and those blinded by imperialist lusts shall not bow before His Majesty. To search for the meaning of Islam in the scribblings of the Orientalist is to look for the Light of the Lord in the Devil's dark den, to look for the nectar of life in the gutters of a pagan city, to search for the echoes of prophetic eloquence in the hissing of the serpent, to look for the message of freedom in the files of the Colonial Office.

Tehran,
Rajab, 1405

Forty Ḥadīth: An Exposition* Part 1

by Imām Rūḥullāh al-Mūsawī al-Khumaynī

translated from Persian by Mahliqā Qarā'i

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى
أَعْدَائِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ.

Lord! Grant brightness of sincerity to the mirror of the heart. Cleanse the rust of hypocrisy from the tablet of the heart, and show the path of virtue and salvation to the helpless wanderers in the mazes of the bewilderment and error and confusion. Endow us with the nobleness and generosity of character. Reveal to us your glory and splendour, that you have reserved only for your chosen servants. Expel the legions of Satan and ignorance from the realms of our heart, implant the divine hosts of knowledge and wisdom in their stead. Enrich our hearts with the profusion of your love and that of your Chosen in this transitory world, this ephemeral lodging place. And shower Your choicest blessing upon us at the time of death and thereafter. Extend to us your mercy, and grant us proximity to the Highest Good.

PURPOSE OF WRITING THE BOOK:

I, a humble servant of God, was contemplating for some time, to select forty *ḥadīth* from among the *aḥādīth* of the members of the Household of the Prophet (S) from the authentic books of the Ṣaḥābah, and scholars, and was trying to compile them with an appropriate explanation of each of them that can be applied to the general conditions of the people. I chose to write them in Persian, so that the Persian knowing people may also be benefited from them. God willing, this compilation would be an attempt to serve the command of the Prophet (S) who said:

مَنْ حَفِظَ عَلَى أُمَّتِي أَرْبَعِينَ حَدِيثًا يَنْتَفِعُونَ بِهَا بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرِيحًا
عَالِمًا.

From among my followers, one who shall preserve and protect my forty *hadīth*, so that my people may be benefited from them, God Almighty will treat him on the Day of Resurrection with great men of wisdom and learning (jurisprudence).

Verbal Translation:

Al-Sukūnī relates on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣādiq (A): ‘Verily on seeing the returning armies from the battlefront, the Prophet (S) of God said: Blessed are those who have performed the minor *jihād*, and have yet to perform the major one. When asked, what is the major *jihād*? the Prophet replied, “the *jihād* of the self” (struggle against self).

Exposition:

السَّرِيَّةُ قِطْعَةٌ مِنَ الْجَيْشِ يُقَالُ خَيْرُ السَّرَايَا أَرْبَعَمِائَةِ رَجُلٍ.

Sariyyah is the section (contingent) of a big army, and it has been said that four hundred is an optimum number for the best *sariyyah*. According to the wordings of the tradition this can be inferred that man is a marvel possessing two lives and two worlds within one existence. That is, apparent life or the outward world, which is this worldly existence, and is associated with his body, and the other is ‘inner life’, the inward world, associated with the hidden, invisible, higher other world, his soul in short, which belongs to the realms of invisible and celestial world, and consists of several levels and grades. These levels are generally divided sometimes into seven sections and sometimes into four. They are sometimes divided into three, and sometimes into just two sections. For each one of them is specified host of guardians. The host related with the divine and intellectual powers attracts him towards the sublime, heavenly spheres, and summons him to the acts of virtue and goodness. The other host of guardians is the ignoble and satanic which attracts man towards the baser realms of darkness and shame, and invites him to the acts of villainy and destruction. There is always a state of conflict and strive between these two forces, and human existence serves as the battleground of these two bands. When the divine forces of good become successful, man emerges as a virtuous and blessed being, and attains the high station of angels, and is congregated under the category of prophets, saints and the pious. When the satanic forces of darkness dominate, man becomes a rebellious and vicious being, and is flocked with the fiendish group of the infidels and cursed. Since this is not an occasion to discuss it here, I shall take up this issue of the crusade of the self whenever the self and causes of its deterioration and perfection would be discussed in the latter passages.

First Grade:

This grade itself consists of different stages (*fuṣūl*). You have to know that the lowest of them is the worldly and outward human existence comprising the initial stages of the self and its apparent manifestations. The divine spark is blended with the physical to form man's earthly existence. It is here in this body that the armies of good and evil are stationed, and the visible potentialities of body function as warring forces. It has seven quarters. They are: ears, eyes, tongue, stomach, private parts, and arms and legs. All these diffused faculties under the control of the self are employed by the self in seven spheres of life. The seat of imagination also is an important faculty, as the thought and imagination are sovereign over all visible and invisible human faculties. If the faculty of thought resolves to employ all other faculties to move in the fiendish directions, all of them are converted into satanic forces and the whole territory (of existence) is turned into a satanic domain, and the forces of piety, rationality and good are weakened and subjugated by them. As a result they wind up their business and leave off the scene, vacating the empire for the possession of Satan. If the faith and reason take possession of the mind, and they command all human faculties to work in their own direction, man acts according to the dictates of reason and faith (*sharʿ*), thus making the empire (of his existence) a domain of divine and rational powers, and compel satanic forces to retreat with all its weaponry accepting defeat.

Thus the *jihād* of the self is the *jihād* of greater importance. This *jihād* is superior to being killed in the way of God, since this condition implies overpowering one's own powers and faculties, and placing them under the yoke of God's command, and purging the domain of our body of satanic elements and their forces.

Contemplation—The First Step:

The first and foremost condition for one's strife with his own self, and hence his movement towards God essentially means introspection and self-reflection. Some of the moral philosophers have given it the fifth position in priorities, which is also correct. Here introspection is used in the sense of devoting some time, however insignificant it is, contemplating about our duties towards our Master and Creator, Who has brought us into this world, and Who has bestowed upon us all the means of pleasure and joys of life, Who has equipped us with a sound body and faultless faculties and senses, each of whom serves a specific purpose of its own, and whose functioning bewilders human intellect. In addition to all these endowments and graces, He has sent so many prophets and His Holy Book for our guidance and invited us to receive

His blessings. Whether all these things have been granted to us by the Master and Emperor of all kings merely to serve this animal existence and to satisfy our appetites and instincts, which we share with other animals, or whether there is some higher aim? Whether all the prophets of God, great sages, thinkers and scholars of every nation have invited the people to follow certain rational principles and Divine legislation, and asked the people to abstain from all animal tendencies and detach themselves from this mortal and perishable habitation were their enemies, or they had conceived an entirely different idea of salvation, which we ordinary human creatures, blindly obeying the dictates of lust, could not conceive?

If we reflect in a rational manner for a moment, we shall realize that the aim of imparting to us all these graces and endowments is something else, superior to and higher than what is visible. This world is a stage of action and its aim is a higher and more sublime sphere of existence. This lower and animal existence is not an end in itself. A rational man should think of his own self introspectively and should feel pity for his state of helplessness. With a sense of pity he should address his own self saying; "O callous self! Thou has wasted precious years of thy short life in pursuance of hedonistic and sensuous propensities! And nothing is gained except regret and sense of loss. Thou should be regretful before God for thy past deeds, and commence a new journey in the direction of His prescribed goal, the journey that leads to the life of eternity and perpetual bliss. Thou should not bargain short-lived transitory joys, which are hard to obtain for eternal bliss and felicity. Think for a while, O Callous self! Thou should think over the conditions of the people from the dawn of civilization up to the present time that is witnessed by thee. See and balance their hardships and torments with the comforts and pleasures they could attain, and thou shall see their pains and sufferings always overwhelmed and cancelled their joys and pleasures. Joys and pleasures are not for everyone in this life. One who invites and induces thee to pursue the worldly joys and material gains, is evidently one of the satanic hosts in the human form, who undoubtedly is an emissary of the Satan. He always induces other men to join him in his indulgence in sensualities, and declares his conviction in material life herewith. At this juncture, O self! thou should pause for a moment, and think whether he is satisfied with his own condition, or whether all this points to one who himself is inflicted, and wants to taint others' poor life with the same vice. O self! thou should entreatingly ask God's approval of thine acts, and seek His pleasure. Pray to Him that thine acts be approved by Him. Between Him and thee there is always a spark of hope. This hope is realized in thy thinking with firm resolution to fight against the Satan and thine own baser self. This strife with the self leads thee to a higher stage, and

try thy best to attain that through sincere struggle.”

Will and Resolution:

The next stage, after the stage of contemplation and ponderance through which an individual striving to progress on the spiritual path has to pass, is the stage of resolution. (This is a different thing from volition, which al-Shaykh al-Ra'is Ibn Sinā, in *'al-'Ishārāt'*, alludes to as the initial stage of *'irfān*). Some of our revered scholars (may God grant them longevity) also state that resolution is the essence of humanity and criterion of human freedom. The differences in human gradation are actually indicative of the discrepancy of the stages of human resolution. The resolution which is required for this particular stage is synonymous with laying the foundation of a good life, a resolution to purge life from sin, and to perform all obligatory (*wājib*) acts, and a resolution to compensate for the days lost (in sinfulness), and finally resolve to behave as a rational and religious person ought to. That is, he should adopt a behaviour that is in accordance with the codes of religious law, which would acknowledge him as a real human being, a rational man. His gait and manner should be an imitation and copy of the Prophet's life. He must, in appearance, follow the Prophet (S) as a model in his manner and actions, in his abstinences and his choices. This is quite possible, since it is in the powers of ordinary servants of God seemingly to act in the way of that great leader of human beings.

You should know that no path for the realization of divine existence can be undertaken unless one familiarizes himself with the apparent or overt form of *Shari'ah*. Unless a person fully acquaints himself with the knowledge of the *Shari'ah* laws and follows them faithfully, the higher values of morality cannot be attained by him. Without adhering to the apparent teachings of Islam it is not possible that the light of the Divine Knowledge could descend upon his heart, and the wisdom of the invisible, and the mysteries of the holy law be revealed to him. After attaining this stage, the truth unveiled for him and enlightenment bestowed upon his heart, a person would act with greater observance of the manifest forms of religion. This falsifies the claims of pseudo spiritualists, who say that the inner perfection can only be acquired by relinquishing outer accomplishments, or, that after acquiring inner excellences, necessity of observing outward forms does not remain obligatory. This is a mistaken conception born of ignorance about the stages of worship and the different grades of human progress. We shall deal with this subject in the latter chapters, may God grant it so.

Effort and Struggle (Spiritual):

Dear friend: try to be a man of strong will-power and resolution, so that you may not go from this world as a person without resolution, and hence rise on the day of resurrection as a brainless-being, not in the form of human being. For the other-world is the place where what is hidden is unveiled and secrets are exposed. One's audacity to commit sin, converts him little by little into a man devoid of will-power, and takes away the noble essence of humanity from him. Our respected teacher used to say that more than anything else, giving the ears to the sounds of music and songs, steal from men their will-power and the power of resolution. Hence, my brother, desist from transgression, resolve to return to God, and acquire a mien similar to that of true human being. Join the community of the men of religion and in seclusion pray to God, so that He may assist you in your mission, and pray that the Prophet (S) and the members of his Household (AS), intercede for you. May God bestow His graces and favours upon you. May He escort you in the coming dangers, since the path of life is full of great risks and hazards. On the way of life there are very deep crevices and it is possible that one may stumble and fall in them in such a manner that none of his efforts could save him from the coming catastrophe. It is also probable that in some cases the intercedings of an intercessor cannot save him either.

Self-Examination and Stipulation (*Mushārāṭah*):

Self-conditioning, contemplation and self-examination are essential pre-requisites for a seeker (*mujāhid*) of truth who is battling with his self. Self-conditioning or stipulation means binding oneself with the resolve not to do anything against God's commands. This is called *mushārāṭah*, such as 'I will not violate the Law of God today.' It is very easy to stick to such condition for one day. Try to resolve, abide by your own resolve, and experiment, and you will see that how easy this task is. Satan, the cursed creature, and his legions may magnify the volume of the task in your eyes, but these are the guiles played by the cheat. Curse, and drive the Devil and evil thoughts from within the depths of the heart and the domain of your mind. Experiment for one day and you will verify how easy this task is.

Guarding Against Evil (*murāqabah*):

After stipulating about his acts, man should enter this stage. It is essential that throughout the period of stipulation the *mujāhid* struggling against his own self should constantly concentrate upon his

actions. If any time any idea of violating Divine commands occurs to him, he should know that this idea has been instilled into his mind by the Satan and his allies, who want to deter him from his good resolutions. He ought to curse them, and seek God's compassionate protection, and banish those villainous ideas from the realm of his heart, and tell the Satan that this day also he has to abide by the condition imposed upon his own self that he would not go against God's commands, as He is the One Who has provided him with all the excellences and bounties. It is He, Who has given him the riches of health, security and peace year after year in this world. In recognition of all God's graces it is not sufficient even if he serves Him till eternity, let alone a trivial thing like this. I hope, that Satan will be driven away, and the Divine forces will prevail. I assure you that this practice of self-criticism and self-examination would not hinder your day-to-day activity. I advise you to remain in the same state of mind till night—the time for introspection and inner deliberation—and evaluate your deeds of the whole day. This is the time to see whether you have been honest to the Giver of all, to whom everybody is accountable. If you have been faithful to Him, you should be thankful to Him, that He has made you successful in your intentions. And realize that you have gone a step forward in His direction and became an object of His attention. God willing, God will help you in performing all worldly and religious duties, and will diminish your pains for the next day. If you repeat this many times, it is imminent that you will be accustomed to the acts of piety. You will see then that all this does not require you to make hard efforts. You will also notice that obedience to God gives ample pleasure. Though this world is not where one is immediately rewarded, yet faithfulness to God and abstaining from sins is fruitful in this world also. God never entrusts His creatures with cumbersome and heavy tasks which are beyond their powers, but it is the Satan and his allies who magnify them in your view. God forbid, if there are any lapses on your part, ask God's forgiveness, and beseechingly implore Him that you will be more careful in future, so that the Almighty may throw open the doors of His grace and compassion to you, and may guide you in the straight path.

Remembrance (*tadhakkur*):

The factors, that fully assist man in his *jihād* with his self and the Satan, and to which a treader *mujāhid* has to pay greater attention is constant remembrance of God. Though there are many other important stages, I will be content to discuss this stage here. Remembrance of God, remembering the graces bestowed by Him. You know that thankfulness is natural and man's nature commands man to be grateful

to his benefactor. If one tries to read the book of his own heart, he will see that this law is written there. The sense of veneration and gratitude for the benefactors increases with the amount of benefaction, particularly if the benefactor's generosity has no selfish motive. Greater the selfless generosity, greater is sense of gratitude. For example, compare the extent of veneration for one who presents you a horse with a selfish motive, with the respect you have for a person, who grants you a village of several hectares, without any inkling of selfish motives. If a doctor rescues you from the darkness of blindness, you naturally owe to him a lot of respect, and if someone saves you from the clutches of death, you owe him a lot more. You yourselves reflect and estimate the seen and unseen favours bestowed on us by the Almighty, even a small fraction of which all men and the *ginn* cannot even provide us with. Take for instance the air we breathe day and night, upon which our existence as well as that of other living beings is dependent, nothing can remain alive even if it is taken off merely for a quarter of an hour. What a marvellous gift it is! If all men and the *ginn* of the world labour hard to contrive such a thing, they cannot do that. In the same way, try to recall other gifts of God also, like external bodily senses viz. sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, etc., and inner faculties like thinking, imagination and reason, etc., each one of which carries unlimited benefits and which are granted to us by Our Lord. Besides these valuable gifts, there are several other gifts also. Moreover, He has sent His messengers and prophets and His Books as well to show us which path is right and which one is wrong, which path leads us to Heaven or Hell. He fulfils all our needs in this world and the Hereafter, without having any need of our adoration. Observance of His commands, or transgressing them does not make any difference to Him, it is for the sake of our own benefit that He has enjoined good and forbidden indecencies. While remembering all these and various other favours, whose reckoning is beyond the powers of human beings, do we not see that respecting and obeying such a Benefactor is essential for us, or does our reason approve of the acts of violating His commands?

This is an evident fact that we respect great people and those older in age. This is also true that people respect the wealthy and powerful persons, and rulers and kings, since they are recognized as great. Can their greatness be matched with the grandeur and magnificence of that King of kings, in Whose kingdom this world of us is merely a particle of dust. He is the Creator and King of this vast cosmos, whose infiniteness cannot be measured or even conceived by human intellect. Human being, a creature crawling on one of the smallest planets miserably fails to grasp the extent of his own small world, whose sun cannot be compared with far greater suns of innumerable galaxies. Our solar system is nothing as compared to lesser several other solar systems,

which still elude the keen eyes (and refined telescopes) of great explorers and investigators of the world. Is that Greatest of the great, who can know and cover not only minute details of these known worlds, but of many more unknown worlds, in a twinkling of an eye, is not venerable according to the dictates of reason, as well as in the light of the great book of nature? If any one fails to do this, he ought to be extra watchful and careful, since God Almighty is present everywhere, and no odd corner of the world can delude his Omnipresent sight. Every living being is within the range of His view and all knowledge is in His infinite attendance, so never forget Him. A speck of penitence in one's heart would not melt any person into water, and he would not fall to the ground. Therefore, my dear friend, remember God and remember all His favours and graces, and stop disobeying Him. Overpower and subdue the satanic band in this great war, and convert the spheres of your mind into divine realm by driving out the satanic legions and inviting the divine hosts, so that God may succour and protect you in the dangers threatening to befall you in this battle. The battlefield, which is more immense than this one, is the scene of the battle (*jihād*) against thine own self, the invisible world of within and the second stage of this *jihād*. We shall deal with this subject afterwards. By the time, I remind you not to have any expectations from anyone but God. Except Him, the Almighty, nobody can help you. With all humility and with all the tears your eyes can offer (to wash your sins), pray to God and seek His assistance to emerge victorious in this crucial battle. *wa innahu walī al-tawfiq*

The Second Stage:

The second stage also consists of several steps:

The human soul inhabits another realm and another territory also, which is the world of the hidden and the sphere of the sublime world. In that world, the role of the sensual forces assumes graver dimensions. This is the place, where the struggle and conflict between the divine forces and the fiendish ones is more severe and also more significant. Everything that exists in the external or visible world drifts to this hidden world, and is manifested there. Whichever of the forces—whether godly or devilish, is victorious here is essentially triumphant there also. So, the *jihād al-nafs* or the internal struggle is of great significance for all great religious thinkers, mystics and moralists. It can be rather considered as the origin and the source of all felicities or woes, and of promotion and sublimation or debasement and degradation of self. One should be extremely self-conscious while undertaking this *jihād*. Because, it is possible that, God forbid, due to the defeat of heavenly forces, the self is left vacant for the unholy

occupation of the vicious and unworthy satanic legions, and hence causing an eternal loss to the human being that cannot be retrieved. Even the intercession of an intercessor cannot save him from becoming an object of the wrath and indignation of the Most Merciful of the merciful. It is also possible that man's intercessor may become his adversary. It is a pity that such a thing should happen to anyone that one who pleads for him should become his opponent. God alone knows that what misfortunes, what perils and what hardships are to follow Divine wrath and antagonism of God's friends, compared to which all the infernal fires, plagues, evils, serpents and scorpions are insignificant and mild. God forbid, whatever sufferings of hell have been described by saints, ascetics and mystics, compared to them all the imaginable pains and sufferings of this world are very mild. All of the torments about which we have heard, are trifle and insignificant when compared to the miseries one has to undergo in the Hereafter. Heaven and hell whose account has been given in the Book and in the traditions of prophets of God are certainly the heaven and hell of wicked actions, and are prepared for rewarding or punishing good and bad human deeds. There is a subtle allusion also to the heaven and hell of morality, which is more significant than even the *Bihisht-e liqā*, the heaven of beatific vision, and the *Jahannam-e firāq*, the hell of separation from Him. This is considered to be of great significance but is hidden from our eyes and is opened to them alone who deserve it. You and me who do not deserve it should not doubt it. We should have faith in it, since God and His friends have told us that this non-detailed (*ijmālī*) faith also is beneficial for us. Sometimes, it is also possible that unbelief arising out of ignorance, and unreasonable rejection, without any knowledge and understanding of the truth may bring great harm to us, the extent of which is unthinkable. In this world we cannot understand those harms. If you hear something which has been reported from any thinker, mystic or ascetic, do not refute it or consider it invalid just because it is not in accordance with your taste, or does not fit in your mode of thinking. This idea may have its origin in a higher source, inaccessible to you like the Quran, *ḥadīth* or reason. How strange it will be that a *faqīh* issues a *fatwā* (a religious or legal opinion) regarding a certain *diyāh* (a pecuniary compensation for any offence against a person) of which you are ignorant, and you reject it without checking the relevant evidences. Or, when a holy person or a mystic speaks something concerning religious learning, or he refers to the conditions of heaven or hell, it is easy for you to refute him or even dare to insult him. For it does not need much thinking or knowledge. But do not forget that it is possible that the person, who is an authority on that subject and a master in that field, might have traced it back to the Holy Book, or has access to some traditions transmitted from infallible Imams (A.S.), and

you may not have come across it. In that case, you would be guilty of rejecting God and His Prophet (S) without any plausible excuse. You have no justification to say later that your judgement was not correct, your knowledge was limited, or that you had heard a certain person speaking otherwise on the *minbar* (pulpit); such excuses are unfounded, and in any case let not your objective be blurred.

Whatever has been related about the paradise of good morals and deeds and about the inferno of bad morals and deeds refers to the states, which we cannot experience here. Thus, my friend! take great care, search for remedy, and try to discover the ways and means of deliverance for yourself. Seek refuge in God, the Most Merciful and Beneficent, and beseech His mercy with humble supplications and lamentation, so that He may help you in this holy war against your carnal self and you may be victorious and the domain of your heart may be liberated from evil influences. The fiendish legions may be turned out of the place so that it may be given in the possession of its rightful Owner, and the felicities, honours and joys may be granted to you by God. All the praises that you have heard of the Heaven, its houris and its mansions, are nothing compared to Divine Bliss, nothing can be estimated higher. That domain is absolutely a divine sphere, which has been described by the friends of God from this rightly guided luminous *ummah* (*millat-e bayḍā*). This is a world of pleasures which no ear has ever heard of, and no human heart has ever experienced.

Hidden or Inner Powers (*Quwwa-e bāṭinī*):

You should know that with His Wisdom and Authority, God Almighty has created certain powers and faculties in the invisible world of the inner self. They are of enormous benefits for us. Here we shall mention three of them: they are, *al-quwwah al-wahmiyyah*—the power of invention or imagination, *al-quwwah al-ghaḍabiyyah*—the power of passion or anger, and *al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah*—the power of lust or sensuality. Each of these powers is of great benefit to the mankind, like the preservation of the human individual and species, advancement of human interests in this world as well as in the Hereafter, of which religious scholars have given elaborate accounts and I need not repeat them. What is essential to state here is that these three powers are the source and origin of all virtuous and vicious deeds, and the source of all invisible and sublime forms. Briefly speaking, as man possesses a physical and a terrestrial form in this world, which is devised and contrived by the Almighty in such a wonderful manner that all great philosophers and scientists are puzzled, and the science of anatomy is not fully equipped to discover and understand its functioning rightly

even to this day. God has made man superior to other living beings by endowing him a superb constitution and a beautiful appearance. Yet there is another form and a different face of him, which is heavenly and invisible, which is determined by the qualities of his soul and his inner nature. In the Hereafter, whether it is in the *Barzakh* (an interval of time between the death of man and his resurrection) or whether on the Last Day, if one's inner nature, his deeds and his inner self are really human, his heavenly visage also will be man-like. But if his deeds are unhuman, he will not possess human form; it will be rather subject to the state of his inner self and his psyche. For instance, if his inner self is dominated by the power of lust or sensuality (*al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah*) and animality and brutality overwhelm and govern his inner self, his other-worldly visage will be of a brute and the reign of his inner world would be under the control of one of the beasts, corresponding to that quality of his soul. If the power of passion or anger conquers one's inner self and his psyche, his other-worldly appearance will resemble one of the bestial forms, corresponding to that attribute of his nature. And if the power of imagination and invention is governed by fiendish forces and his inner self is made vicious, governed by the vices like deceit, dishonesty, slandering, backbiting, which are the attributes of Satan, he may undergo a metamorphosis and assume one of the forms of Satan. Sometimes it is also possible that he would have an appearance that symbolizes two or several vices. In that case, a form which does not resemble any of the brutes, but an unusual and queer form, with which cannot be compared the most terrible and ugliest monster in the world, will be acquired by him.

It has been recorded from the Prophet (S) of God that some persons will be raised on the Last Day in such a mien that even monkeys and dogflies will appear better looking than that. It is also possible that several forms may be prescribed for one individual in that world. Because that world is not like this world, where one individual cannot acquire more than one form. This account itself is logical as well as self-evident. Because, the criterion of those different forms (of which human form is one) would be the state of soul at the time of death—the state in which the soul departs from the body. It is in this very state and form that man's soul enters the realm of *Barzakh*. At the time of entering the other world, that is, the domain of the Hereafter, the first stage of which is *Barzakh*, in whichever state one's soul departs from the body, it assumes a form suited to it in the next world also. It is the same form in which he is perceived by the inhabitants of *Barzakh* and by himself, when he first opens his eyes there, if he has not lost his sight to do so. Because, it is not necessary that man may enter the next world in the same physical state as he had in this world. God Himself says that on the Last Day some of the persons will ask God that why has He

raised them as blind while they possessed eyes in the world. God will answer them that as they disregarded His clear signs in the world, they are forgotten and disregarded by God today.

O poor fellow! You had only external sight and were blind inwardly. You are realizing your blindness now, while you were already blind from the very beginning. You did not possess the inner vision which could perceive His clear signs. You, the poor creature, who was endowed with a perfect earthly body and proportionate form, alas you did not know that the measures of the hidden and sublime world are different from this world. You should strive for inner uprightness, so that you may be upright on the Last Day. Your spirit should be a human spirit, so that your form in the *Barzakh* and the Hereafter may be a human form. You are mistaken to consider the world of the hidden realities, where the secrets of this world are to be unveiled and your deeds are to be disclosed, as similar to this world of appearances, where one can deceive others and can create chaos, confusion and misjudgement. Your eyes and ears, your hands and feet, and other parts of your body will bear witness against your deeds in this world with their supernatural tongues. Some of them may also appear in their celestial forms. So, my friend, it is necessary to keep open the ears of your heart. Be brave, and have mercy on your own self, so that you may leave this world in a human form, and may be counted as redeemed and virtuous. Mind you, these words repeatedly occur in the speeches and teachings of great thinkers, in the inspirations of mystics and in the transmissions of the truthful and infallible servants of God.

How to Regulate Human Instincts:

It is possible that *wahm*, the power of imagination and invention, *ghaḍab*—the power of passion and anger, and *shahwah*—the power of lust or sensuality, also possess divine aspect, and may bring about felicity and good luck to man, if these powers are subjected to the dictates of reason and good sense and the teachings of prophets of God. They may become satanic forces if they are unleashed and the power of invention and imagination is allowed to rule and lead other two powers. It is not a secret that none of the prophets of God ever tried to eradicate the powers of passion, sensuality or imagination completely. None of the messengers of God have ever demanded to completely kill sensuality and desire or to extinguish the fire of passion or anger and ignore the inventions of imagination. But they have rather advocated for controlling and bridling them and making them function under the command of reason and Divine Laws. For each one of these powers struggles to dominate others and win its goal, whatever mischief, chaos and confusion may be stirred up. For instance, the

obstinate bestial self is determined to reach its goal even if it is resolved on committing adultery with married women in the Holy *Ka'bah*. Intractable power of passion arouses the self to win its objective even if it is contemplating to kill prophets and the friends of God. And the power of imagination, while devising satanic instruments, wants to go its own way, to cause corruption of the whole climate on earth, and to create chaos and disorder in the world.

The great prophets of God were sent to this world with the light of Divine Laws. God revealed to them heavenly books, so that they may prevent people from indulging into extravagances and immoderations, and bring the human self under the control of reason and the law of *Shari'ah*. To bridle the human self is essential so that it may not exceed the measures of reason and *Shari'ah*. Hence, every individual who subordinates himself to the Divine Laws and principles of good sense is fortunate, and it is he who attains salvation. He finds refuge in God, the Most Exalted and the Most High, from the dangers and misfortunes which might befall him, and thus is saved from the disgrace of assuming those beastly and hideous forms that may accompany him in the *Barzakh*, in the grave and on the Last Day, as the result of his vicious deeds and corrupt practices.

How to Bridle Fancy and Imagination:

The first condition for a *mujāhid* in his struggle that he has to observe and abide by, at this juncture and at all other stages, is to control the flight of one's imagination, so that he can subjugate the Devil and his armies. Imagination is like a bird restless to fly, and sit on any tree it reaches. This flight may bring about many great misfortunes. Fancy is one of the tools of the Devil, with which he enslaves man and renders him helpless. With the help of fancy, he entices men to committing villainies and indecencies.

A *mujāhid* who is determined on self-rectification, and who has made up his mind to purify his inner self and banish satanic forces from there, should firmly hold the bridle of his imagination and let not it soar and wander about wherever it likes. He should try to prevent his mind from nursing corrupt and sinful thoughts, and always divert it to high and noble ideals. In the beginning, it appears to be a little difficult, since Satan and his forces may glorify bad things in your eyes. But with little concentration and attention everything becomes easy. It is possible that as an experiment you may just think for a while, and will not be able to concentrate upon an object. Whenever you see that your thoughts are stooping to lowly and mean things, turn your attention aside from them and think about the worthier and nobler things. If you have been successful in your attempts, thank God Almighty for His

help, and pursue these matters further. May God, out of His mercy, open the path of spiritual progress for you, and may you be invisibly guided in the straight path. May human deeds and right conduct be made easy for you. Be careful that vicious thoughts and vain fancies are induced by Satan, who wishes to fortify its forces in the domain of your inner self. You, who are at war with Satan and his legions, and want to make the realm of your inner self a heavenly domain, are expected to be on guard against the guiles of the cursed villain. You should drive away those thoughts that counter Divine command. God willing, you will be able to recapture this significant fortification from the unholy occupation of Satan and his allies, in this internal war. This fortification serves as a boundary (between good and evil). If you are victorious here you may hope for greater and nobler victories.

My dear friend, seek for God's help at every moment. Pray and beg humbly in the court of your Lord.

O God Almighty! Satan is a great enemy, who has enticed your great friends and prophets. O God! help this weak and entrapped servant of yours, and guard him against these vain ideas and these infirm thoughts that inflict me, so that he may succeed in his war against this strong enemy, who is threatening to destroy my felicity and humanity. O God! please accompany Thy servant and guide him so that he may drive the Satan's armies from Your seat, and may clip the hands of this usurper.

Estimation and appraisal:

The thing which is to be strictly followed during this process is the estimation and evaluation (of vices and virtues). An intelligent person should carefully examine the effects and demerits of each one of moral vices and bad deeds, which are the product of sensuality, passion and imagination, and are under the control of Satan. He has to compare them with the benefits and blessings of good deeds and moral and spiritual excellences, which are under the guidance of reason and religious law (*Shari'ah*) and then decide which way is better to act. For instance, the advantages of obeying the dictates of uninhibited sensuality that gets hold of the human soul and firmly takes its roots there, and gives rise to many vices to flourish, may be taken into consideration. In the course of time the sensual aptitudes develop, and a person does not hesitate to commit any of the vices, and tries all means and ways to obtain the sensual pleasure at any cost, and does not fail to perpetrate any crime which he desires to commit, even if it results in something extremely vicious. As a result of letting loose one's passions several other vices are born and become his second nature. And he is more than ready to maltreat and subdue everyone who comes

in his way. Those who react against oppressive activities and try to defend themselves, or show any signs of disagreement or hostility are crushed and oppressed by him. He tries to repel all oppositions by all means, although it may lead to an outbreak of corruption in the world. In the same way, the person, who has surrendered himself to the demoniac power of imagination and lets it to be firmly rooted in his soul, does not hesitate to indulge in a fit of excessive passion and sensuality with all his satanic designs and treacheries and rule over the creatures of God by all kinds of unjust means, even if it is to dispossess a family of their belongings or stripping a city or a country of its resources.

These are the achievements of these faculties, while they are active under the ignoble supervision of Satan. If we think about it, and examine the plight of such people, we shall notice that every one of them, despite the enormous strength they possess, and most of their wishes being fulfilled, they still nurture thousands of new desires that are yet to be fulfilled. It is not possible in this world that all the desires and ambitions that we cherish be fulfilled here, since this world is the abode of obstacles. The elements of this world dispirit our wishes. Our desires are also not limited. For instance, the power of sensuality and lust acts in man in such a way that if he is given one woman, he is attracted to other women. If he is given an empire, he will hanker after some other empire. Man always desires for what he does not possess. In spite of this vanity of imagination and futility of human desire, the kiln of sensuality is always hot, and its heat ever increasing, and our desires are never cooled down. Similarly, the forces of passion are implanted in human nature in such a way that even if he is made an absolute monarch of a state, he will be attracted towards another state, which he cannot get, and he will try to pounce on it with all the force he can muster. This power is also ever increasing. Anyone who has any doubt is advised to examine his own self and other human beings belonging to the classes of poor, rich and powerful; he will agree with me. It is obvious that man is always allured by something which he does not own. This is the human nature as conceived by various great Islamic thinkers and holy men, especially one should refer to a great master of divinity, Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Shāhābādī.

Anyhow, even if man attains his goals, for how long can he be benefited from them? How long his youthful years are to continue? When the spring of youth fades out and the autumn of his life sets in, his heart has no more a zest for mirth and joy, his organs lose their vitality and those activities lose their relish. His eyes dim, his hearing is impaired, his sense of touch and other senses and faculties weaken. Ability to get pleasure declines or is completely lost. Then hosts of

ailments make him an easy prey. His digestive, assimilative and excretory system fails, and his respiratory system cannot perform its function properly. Nothing but deep sighs, displeasure, regret and remorse are left to accompany him. Thus, the duration of our exploitation of these bodily powers, from the days when one gains consciousness of good and bad till the process of decline sets in, is not more than thirty or forty years, even for a person of very strong constitution. That too, if one does not happen to come across all sorts of diseases and afflictions, which we witness every day and forget about. If, for the time being, we take it for granted (although it has no reality), that a man can attain the age of one hundred and fifty years, with all opportunities of involving oneself fully in all the three indulgences—sensuality, passion and imagination, excluding all the chances of coming across any adversities and misfortunes, even this period of time would prove short, and pass soon like the wind; and what would be in store for you for the next world? What benefit will you derive from all these treasures of amusements for your eternal life? What will save you from the horrors of the day of doom, helplessness, desolation and loneliness? What will you present on the Day of Judgement, and how would you face God, His angels, and His chosen servants and prophets? Of course, nothing will accompany you except your wicked and sinful deeds, which will metamorphose you in such a form that would not be known to anybody except God. Everything that you have heard and conceived about the infernal fire, torments of the grave and agonies of the Doomsday, etc., you measured them with the worldly fire and worldly pains. What a gross error you committed. Fire of this world is relatively an accident, and all the horrors are easy to bear. Your estimation of the other world on the basis of this one is imperfect and faulty. Even if the fire burning throughout the world is accumulated at one place, it will not be hot enough to burn the human soul. In the next world, besides burning and roasting the body it will burn the soul and incinerate the heart also. Whatever you have been listening about till now, is actually the hell of one's actions, which you will see in the Hereafter as a reality, for God Almighty has said:

... وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا ...

... And they find all that they did confronting them,.... (18:49)

You will have to face whatever you did in this world. If you thrived on the property of orphans, God alone knows in what state you will appear in hell and what comforts you will have to enjoy there as your reward. If here your harsh words have injured the hearts of people, this pain and discomfort caused to the hearts of the creatures of

God, God alone knows, what punishment it will incur upon you in the Hereafter. You will know it only when you experience it what sort of pain and torture you have procured for yourselves. Because of your detractions, the other worldly and sublime form that was conceived for you is denied to you and you will have to undergo the pains of chastisement.

This will be the hell of one's actions, which is comparatively milder, cooler and tolerable, and is reserved for those who committed sins in this world. But for those who have acquired the viciousness of character and villainy of conduct like, greed, lust, hoarding, avarice, contentiousness, love of wealth, power and corporeal things, rapacity, ravenousness and other vices, the hell is their place, a place beyond human apprehension, a state and form which can never be anticipated by any stretch of the imagination, and emanates from within the soul itself. The inhabitants of that hell will be so distressed that they will try to escape from it, (but in vain). In some of the authentic narrations, it occurs that there is a valley in hell, which is reserved for the proud, and which is named as *ṣaqar*. once it complained to God about the intensity of its heat, and asked Almighty for a relief, so that it might take a breath. After the relief was granted, when it breathed, its breath filled the hell with fire.

Sometimes one's vices may cause a human being to become a permanent dweller of hell. Because they take away from him his faith and belief. For instance, a vice like jealousy, according to authentic traditions, eats away faith as the fire consumes wood. Another example is that of the love of the world, worldly power and riches, which, according to authentic narrations, consume the faith of a believer more rapidly than two wolves let loose on a sheep herd without a shepherd, one attacking from the front and the other from the back.

Adoration for the worldly things and lust for power deprives a believer of his belief, and God forbid, this sinfulness results in dark and ugly deeds, which finally leads to the loss of faith and one's end as an infidel, and the hell of the false beliefs and erroneous faith is severer, hotter and darker than those two other hells, mentioned above.

My friend, the higher knowledge has proved that the grades of intensity are infinite. The punishment is severer than what you imagine or what others imagine. If you do not believe in the arguments advanced by philosophers, or the revelations made to mystics, thanks to God, being a true believer, you have faith in the teachings of the prophets of God, and you consider all the reports recorded in the authentic books of the traditions which are accepted by all the Imāmiyyah scholars as true and authentic. I hope that you believe in the prayers of infallible Imams, and have read the prayers and sermons uttered by Imam 'Alī (A), and the invocation by Imam Sayyid al-

Sājidīn (A) uttered in the prayer of Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī. My friend, reflect a little upon their subject matter and think for a while on their wordings. It is nowhere required to make a rapid reading of the lengthy prayer in a hurry without pondering over its meaning. You and I are not blessed with the spiritual state of al-Imām al-Sayyid al-Sajjād (A) to recite that lengthy prayer in a state of sustained ecstasy at one time. Try to read one third or one fourth of it every night with feeling, and meditate upon its words. You may feel ecstatic while reading it. Apart from this, pay a little more attention to the meaning of Quranic verses, and see what punishment has been prescribed for the inhabitants of hell, to escape which they will pray to the Lord for death, and alas death also will not help, as God Almighty says:

... يَا حَسْرَتِي عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ وَإِن كُنتُ لَمِنَ السَّٰخِرِينَ *

...Alas, my grief that I was unmindful of Allah, and I was indeed among the scoffers! (39:56)

What kind of regret it will be, of which Almighty is making an emphatic mention. Do not pass quickly, without pausing and meditating upon such verses of the Quran:

يَوْمَ تَرَوْهَا تَذَهَلُ كَأَنَّ مَرْضِعَةً عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمَلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَىٰ وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ *

On the day when ye behold it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling and every pregnant will be delivered of her burden, and thou (Muhammad) will see mankind as drunken, yet they will not be drunken, but the Doom of Allah will be strong (upon them). (22:2)

Here God Almighty is depicting the Doomsday. My friend, think yourself that, God forbid (*na'ūdhu billāh*), the Quran is neither a story book, nor is it making jokes with you. What sort of condemnation it will be that will make people abandon their dear ones, and relieve pregnant women of their burden? What a great calamity it will be about which God Almighty, Whose greatness knows no extent, Whose supremacy and authority has no limits and bounds, is commenting upon in such solemn terms. What is going to happen God alone knows. Our intellect is insufficient to measure the extent of its magnanimity. If we study the transmissions and writings of the infallible Members of the Holy Household, and think over them, we shall see that the sight of misery and agony in that world will be quite different from this world, and cannot be equated with the misfortunes of this world.

Here I would like to quote a tradition from the great Shaykh of the Imāmiyyah, al-Ṣadūq, for you to demonstrate the meaning and extent of the misery, mentioned above. Nevertheless, this tradition narrated by him refers to the hell of the evil deeds and is comparatively a cooler place than other severer hells. I consider it essential to point out that al-Shaykh al-Sadūq is the person who is held in great esteem and respect by all great religious scholars of *rijāl*. He was born as the result of the prayer of the Imam (A), and was the object of great favour of Imam Mahdī (A.F.), and was among great writers of Shi'ite religious books. I quote this tradition with reference to a chain of great Imāmiyyah scholars, all of whom are considered as authentic narrators of *ḥadīth*. Hence, if you are a true believer, you should have faith in the following tradition. The gist of the *ḥadīth* is as follows:

رَوَى الصَّدُوقُ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مَوْلَانَا الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، قَالَ: بَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ قَاعِدًا إِذْ أَتَاهُ جِبْرَائِيلُ، وَهُوَ كَثِيبٌ، حَزِينٌ، مُتَغَيِّرُ اللَّوْنِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: يَا جِبْرَائِيلُ، مَا لِي أَرَاكَ كَثِيبًا حَزِينًا؟ فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ فَكَيْفَ لَا أَكُونُ كَذَلِكَ وَإِنَّمَا وُضِعَتْ مَنَافِيخُ جَهَنَّمَ الْيَوْمَ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: وَمَا مَنَافِيخُ جَهَنَّمَ يَا جِبْرَائِيلُ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ تَعَالَى أَمْرَ بِالنَّارِ فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ، حَتَّى احْمَرَّتْ، ثُمَّ أَمْرَبَهَا فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ حَتَّى ابْيَضَّتْ، ثُمَّ أَمْرَبَهَا فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ حَتَّى اسْوَدَّتْ وَهِيَ سَوْدَاءٌ مُظْلِمَةٌ، فَلَوْ أَنَّ حَلْقَةً مِنَ السِّلْسِلَةِ الَّتِي طُولُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا وُضِعَتْ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا لَذَابَتْ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ حَرِّهَا، وَلَوْ أَنَّ قَطْرَةً مِنَ الزَّقُّومِ وَالضَّرِيعِ قَطَرَتْ فِي شَرَابِ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا لَمَا تَوَامِنَ نَتْنِهَا، قَالَ: فَبَكَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) وَبَكَى جِبْرَائِيلُ، فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهَا مَلَكًا فَقَالَ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ يَقْرَأُ كَمَا السَّلَامَ، وَيَقُولُ: إِنِّي قَدْ أَمْتَنْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَنْ تُذْنِبُوا ذَنْبًا اعْتَدِبُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ.

One day the Prophet (S) of God was seated when Gabriel came into his presence, with a sad face and changed complexion. The Prophet (S) asked as to why he was looking so sad and grieved. Gabriel answered, 'O Muḥammad (S), why should I be not grieved, while today I saw the bellows of hell being set in. The Prophet (S) asked him what the bellows of hell were. Gabriel told him that it referred to the hell-fire which according to the Commandments of God Almighty was ablaze for one thousand years. After it became red-hot He ordered it to burn for another one thousand years till it was white-hot. Then He commanded it to burn for one thousand years more till it turned black. Now that it was black and dark, if a slice of seventy cubits of it was to drop on this world, verily its heat would be sufficient to melt the whole world into fluid. If a single drop of its *Zaqqūm* (an infernal tree, mentioned in the Quran proverbial for its extreme bitterness) and *darī'* (something in hell more bitter than aloe, more fetid than carrion, and hotter than fire, which will be the food of the condemned) trickles down in the water reservoirs of the earth, everybody therein would die due to its stench. Thereupon the Prophet (S)

wept and Gabriel also wept with him. On seeing this, God sent His angel, who came to them and said that God sent *salāms* to them along with the message that He exempted them both from the committing of sins and the consequent punishments.

My friend, there are a number of *aḥādīth* in this regard. Existence of hell and its horrible chastisements are among the essentials of all the religions of the world, which bring forward many arguments in favour of their necessity. And the great mystics and saints have envisioned it even in this world. Try to imagine sincerely and contemplate the disheartening account of hell given in the tradition. If you consider it as probable only, even then should it not be sufficient to drive us to woods like the mad? What is the reason for our complacency and ignorance? Have the angels of God given us the tidings of being exempted from this punishment as they had given one to the Prophet (S) and Gabriel? Whereas the Prophet (S) and the friends of God could not be oblivious of the fear of God till the ends of their lives. They could not eat and sleep properly because of that fear. Look at the life of Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (A), whose weeping and moanings, lamentations and supplications melted human hearts. What is wrong with us that we do not feel ashamed? Even in our supplications to God, we so much violate and insult Divine principles, that a thousand pities on our thoughtlessness! Have pity on yourself and the extremity of the pangs of death. Again a thousand pities on our condition in Barzakh, the agonies of the Hereafter, and the Doomsday and its darkness! How pitiable are we who have to face the horrors of hell and its chastisement!

How to Cure Moral Maladies:

My friend! arise, awake from the slumber, be aware of your negligence and make an effort till there is time to repent. Consider this opportunity as valuable, until you are alive, your faculties and your powers are still under control, and you are young. Think about a cure before it is too late, and before moral maladies overpower your existence, and evils take deep roots in your existence and take you in the grips of their tentacles. Drive them away, find out a way of extinguishing the fire of your sensuality and passion. The best remedy prescribed by mystics and moralists is to concentrate upon each one of the evil habits that you detect in yourself, and offer an effective resistance against them. Fight bravely against your carnal self. Act unceasingly all the time against those vicious yearnings. Pray Almighty to assist you in this battle. Undoubtedly after sometime hideous habits would leave you, and Satan and his legions would vacate the fortress, and the battalions of heavenly armies would be installed in their stead.

One of the moral maladies, which may destroy one, cause torment of the grave, and plague man in this world, is the maltreatment of the people of his household, his neighbours, his colleagues and others around him. It is the product of passion and sensuality. If the *mujāhid* is determined on correcting himself, he can counter those impulses of indignation, resentment and vituperation with gentleness and kindness, remembering the Hereafter and the chastisements therein. He should curse the Devil in his heart and take refuge in God. I give you word that if you behave persistently like this, after some time you will realize that your nature is totally transformed and good habits have taken the place of the bad ones. But if you behave according to the propensities of your nature, it is possible that they consume you in this world itself. I seek refuge in God from the anger, which when present in an individual destroys him in both the worlds. At the same time it kills his spirit also, because possibly one may use some indecent words against Divine principles in a fit of anger, as so many times we hear people uttering words of heresy and being guilty of apostasy thus.

Philosophers say that the chances of being saved in a ship without a captain from the stormy waves of ocean are brighter than those of a man being saved in an outburst of wild passion. God forbid, that we should ever belong to that category of people who become aggressive during academic discussions, as some of our students suffer from this intemperance. You have to resist against this bad tendency. Act against it, especially on the occasions of formal functions, which are attended by a great number of scholars and common men. During the discussions, if you see that the other party is justified in its argument, you are expected to admit your fault and confirm what opponents say. God willing, these meannesses will be eliminated in a short time. God forbid, that the words of some scholars, who claimed to be divinely inspired and said that it was revealed that the quarrel among the inhabitants of hell, mentioned by God, is that of the scholars and transmitters of aḥādith, should ever be true. Even if you do not believe in the authenticity of this tradition, even then you should carefully try to get rid of this habit. See the following account:

رُوي عن عِدَّةٍ مِنَ الْأَصْحَابِ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا: خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) يَوْمًا وَتَخَنُ نَمَارِي فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَمْرِ الدِّينِ فَغَضِبَ غَضَبًا شَدِيدًا وَقَالَ: إِنَّ الْمُمَارِي قَدْ تَمَّتْ خَسَارَتُهُ، ذَرُوا الْمِرَاءَ فَإِنَّ الْمُمَارِي لَا أَشْفَعُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، ذَرُوا الْمِرَاءَ فَإِنِّي زَعِيمٌ بِثَلَاثَةِ آيَاتٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَرِبَاضِهَا وَأَوْسَطِهَا وَأَعْلَاهَا لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَهُوَ صَادِقٌ، ذَرُوا الْمِرَاءَ فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا نَهَانِي عَنْهُ رَبِّي بَعْدَ عِبَادَةِ الْأَوْثَانِ الْمِرَاءَ، وَعَنْهُ، لَا يَسْتَكْمِلُ عَبْدٌ حَقِيقَةَ الْإِيمَانِ حَتَّى يَدَعَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُحِقًّا.

It is narrated from many companions of the Prophet (S) that once as the Prophet (S) came to them they were engaged in wrangling over a religious issue. The Prophet (S) of Islam was greatly displeased and was indignant to this extent that they had never seen him before in such an anger. The Prophet (S) told them it was because of this habit of wrangling that their precursors were destroyed, and he added that a true believer would never wrangle. The Prophet (S) asked them to stop wrangling and told them that he would not act as an intercessor to any wrangler. Wrangling occupies the second place after idolatry among the things forbidden by God Almighty. The Prophet (S) is reported to have also said that unless a believer refrains from wrangling and altercation he cannot know the truth, in spite of his position being correct.

There are various traditions in this regard. How abominable it will be if we deprive ourselves of the intercession of the Prophet (S) for the sake of merely a trivial thing which has no value, no merit whatsoever. Intellectual discussions, which would otherwise be the highest order of service and worship if undertaken with sincere motives, end in such a catastrophe and wipe out all his good deeds and acts of worship. In all circumstances, man should focus his attention on each of his vices individually, and eradicate them from the domain of his soul by restraining his carnal self. Once the trespasser is driven out, the rightful owner of the house can readily come to take possession.

Conclusion:

Since the struggle of the self concludes here and man succeeds in driving off the legions of satanic armies from the empire of his soul, this land becomes the abode of angels of God and a place of worship of truthful servants of God. Thus the task of pursuing the journey towards God becomes easier, and the road to humanism is illuminated. The doors of blessings from heaven and their ascending steps are opened to him, and the doors of hell and the descending steps thereof are closed on him. God Almighty views him with mercy and benevolence and unites him with His faithful and His blessed servants. The path to divine knowledge, which is the ultimate purpose of creation of mankind and *jinn*, is opened to him. God Almighty guards him through this hazardous path.

I wished to refer to the third stage of self (*nafs*), wherein another struggle against the deceptions and temptations of Satan takes place. But, on later thought, this description seems to be out of place here, so I left it undiscussed.

To be continued—'in shā' Allāh.

Tarīq Istinbāt al-'Aḥkām* (The Method of Derivation of The Rules of the Sharī'ah)

by al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī

translated from Persian by 'Alī Qulī Qarā'i
rendered into Persian from the Arabic text
by Muhammad Bāqir Ansāri

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَبِهِ نَسْتَعِينُ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْفَتْاحِ عَلَى الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَلْفَتْحِ
الْمُبِينِ، الْمُبَيِّنِ الْمَسَالِكِ لِسُلُوكِ السَّالِكِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى السَّفِيرِ وَآلِهِ أَتَمَّةِ
التَّذْيِيرِ، أَمَا بَعْدُ...

Since the two of you—may God bestow upon you the capacity of obeying Him, inspire you to proceed on the path of guidance, and, by His grace, assist you in comprehending the method of research [employed for discovery and derivation of the rules of the Sharī'ah]—have asked me to explain briefly the method followed by the *mujtahidūn*¹ in deriving the *aḥkām*² of the Sharī'ah and their extraction from valid sources (*adillah*), I will explain them as I have learnt orally from great scholars. With my trust in God and with His assistance I resolved to undertake this task without delay.

* This is the translation of a short article *Tarīq istinbāt al-'aḥkām*, apparently written in answer to a query by two pupils, by Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-'Ālī al-Karakī al-'Āmilī, known as al-Muḥaqqiq al-Thānī and al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī, (d. circa 940/1533). He was the most eminent Shī'ah Jurist of the 10th/16th century and came from Jabal 'Āmil, Lebanon. After completing his studies in Syria and Iraq, he came to Iran during the reign of Shāh Ṭahmāsib, the Ṣafawid ruler. His famous book in *fiqh* is *Jāmi' al-maqāsid*, an exposition of al-'Allāmah al-Hillī's *Qawā'id al-'aḥkām*. An authority in *fiqh* and *uṣūl*, he has written more than thirty books, articles (*rasā'il*), and annotations (*ḥawāshī*), covering various *fiqhī* subjects. After coming to Iran, he established a centre of theological learning (*ḥawzah*) in Qazwin and then in Iṣfahān, trained eminent pupils in *fiqh*, and consequently made Iran the centre of Shī'ī *fiqh* for another time after the era of al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991-92) and his father (d. 329/940-41).

This is what I say: For us, the Imāmiyyah Shī'ah, there are four paths for the discovery of the *aḥkām* of the Shari'ah: the Book (the Qur'ān), the Sunnah (including the *āḥād* and the *mutawātir*)³, *ijmā'* (consensus)⁴, and the rational principles (*adillah 'aqliyyah*).

1. The Book:

A part of it consists of *naṣṣ* and *taṣrīḥ*, and another part of *zawāhir*.⁵ Both the kinds form grounds for rules of the Shari'ah.

It should be noted that in this case it is necessary to study such things as the characteristics of the signification of words (semiotics)⁶, the *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*⁷, *ḥaqīqah* and *majāz*⁸, *amr* and *nahy*,⁹ *'āmm* (general) and *khāṣṣ* (particular),¹⁰ *muṭlaq* (absolute) and *muqayyad* (restricted),¹¹ *mujmal* (brief, synoptic) and *mubayyan* (explained in detail),¹² *nāsikh* (abrogating) and *mansūkh* (abrogated).¹³

To understand these matters, we must study the *'ilm al-'uṣūl* (the science of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence), which studies such general issues.

For the details one must study each of the well-known five hundred verses of the Quran which form the axis of fiqh.

For an exposition and exegesis of these verses, one may refer to any one of these works on the subject: *Sharḥ al-'āyāt wa al-'aḥkām* by al-Rāwandī, *Minhāj al-hidāyah* of Aḥmad ibn Mutawwaj, *Kanz al-'irfān* by al-Shaykh al-Miqdād.¹⁴

Kanz al-'irfān is the best book on this subject, because it includes all the related discussions under every verse. However, in order to be able to select from among the various divergent opinions of the exegetes quoted in this book, the researcher must possess the necessary maturity of intellect and skills of inference.

If someone wants greater details about any of the above-mentioned verses, he may refer to the more elaborate works on exegesis. Our recommendation about *Kanz al-'irfān* is for beginners.

2. The Sunnah

Deduction of the rules of the Shari'ah from the Sunnah and study of its legal import, also, like the Quran, require the study of semiotics, and in this case, too, one must refer to works on *'ilm al-'uṣūl*.

There is no doubt that the *mutawātir ḥadīth* is one of the sources of the Shar'i *aḥkām*. However, the *mutawātir* traditions have varying status with different persons, depending on whether or not its *tawātur* has been established for someone.

The *akhbār āḥād* are of two kinds:

1. *Al-Mashhūr* (lit. well-known): It is a tradition whose narrators are more than three. It is also called *al-ḥadīth al-mustafīd*. Its legal status is like the *mutawātir*; i.e. it is obligatory to be acted upon. A *ḥadīth mashhūr* also stands differently in relation to various individuals, like the *mutawātir*. For knowing which traditions are *mashhūr*, it is sufficient to refer to various works on fiqh and ḥadīth.

2. *Ghayr mashhūr* (lit. not well-known): For the Imāmiyyah, it is of four kinds:

(a) *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (lit. sound): It is a ḥadīth whose narrator is 'ādil,¹⁵ *ma'lūm al-'adālah*,¹⁶ *ṣaḥīḥ al-madhhab* (of the correct creed)¹⁷, and which has been transmitted from the Ma'ṣūm¹⁸ by 'ādil transmitters.

(b) *Al-Ḥasan* (lit. good): It is a tradition whose narrator or one of the transmitters is *mamdūḥ* (of good reputation); that is, one about whom remarks about his good repute or in his praise do not expressly indicate his 'adālah.

(c) *Al-Muwaththaq* (lit. reliable): It is a tradition narrated by an 'ādil, non-Imāmi, though truthful, narrator, or one whose intermediary transmitter is such.

(d) *Al-Da'if* (lit. weak): It is a tradition received through an untrustworthy (*ghayr muwaththaq*) or *fāsiq*¹⁹ Imāmi Shī'i.

The Imāmiyyah scholars do not act on *mursal*²⁰ traditions, except when such traditions are narrated by someone who is known not to narrate except from reliable narrators, such as the traditions of Ibn Abī 'Umayr,²¹ Abū Baṣīr,²² Ibn Bazī²³, Zurārah ibn A'yan²⁴, Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bizantī,²⁵ and their like, whose names have been ratified by the scholars.

According to what I have directly heard from eminent scholars about the credibility of the *mursal* traditions of latter narrators, I may say that one may act on the *mursal* traditions transmitted by Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn,²⁶ his son,²⁷ of al-Shaykh al-Miqdād,²⁸ and of Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Fahd,²⁹ not on the *mursal*'s of al-Shahīd,³⁰ nor of Najm al-Dīn³¹

When the traditions are in conflict, the *ṣaḥīḥ* must be given priority; when there is no *ṣaḥīḥ* involved, then *ḥasan* has priority, and after it, the *muwaththaq*. One may not act on the *da'if* traditions.

For recognition of the above-mentioned characteristics, the method is to study the traditions and the biographies of the transmitters of ḥadīth. This is somewhat difficult for a beginner, although the scholars have explicitly said that it is permissible to trust the former *mujtahidūn*'s statements about the reliability (*ta'dīl*) or unreliability (*jarḥ*) of transmitters. Such scholars as al-'Allāmah al-Hillī, in his *Khulāṣat al-'aqwāl fī ma'rifat al-rijāl*, and Ibn Dāwūd al-Hillī, in his book known as *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, have confirmed this.

Here, there is an easier short-cut: one may refer to a book on this

topic by Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn (al-'Allāmah al-Hillī). Furthermore, he, in his books, and specially in *al-Mukhtalif* has characterized various traditions as "ṣaḥīḥ", "ḥasan", and "muwaththaq". (Therefore, for making a judgement about various aḥādīth one may refer to these works).

In *Khulāṣat al-'aqwāl fī ma'rifat al-rijāl*, he says that the *asnād* (chains of transmission) of such and such traditions of *al-Tahdhīb*, *al-'Istibṣār*, and *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, which end in such and such a narrator are "ṣaḥīḥ"; if leading to so and so are "ḥasan"; if to so and so are "muwaththaq"; and if leading to so and so are "da'if." He has adopted this method and considered it as reliable for helping the beginners recognize to which of the four categories (ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan, muwaththaq, and da'if) a certain tradition belongs. Others after him have also relied upon it, viz., al-Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn, the son of al-'Allāmah al-Hillī, in his book *Īdāḥ al-fawā'id*; al-Sayyid Diyā' al-Dīn, in his *Sharḥ al-qawā'id*; al-Shahīd Muḥammad ibn Makkī al-'Āmilī, in his works *al-Dhikrā* and *Sharḥ al-'irshād*; al-Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Fahd, in his *al-Muhadhdhib al-bāri'*; and al-Shaykh al-Miqdād, in his *al-Tanqīḥ*.

An unwritten principle of our 'ulamā' is emphasis on acting according to the traditions of the four books: *al-Kāfī*, compiled by al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941); *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, by al-Ṣadūq ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991); *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-'Istibṣār*, by al-Shaykh Abū Ja'far al-Tūsī (d. 460/1068).

Some of the important works of discursive jurisprudence are: *al-Mukhtalif* and *al-Tadhakkur*, by al-Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn (al-'Allāmah al-Hillī); *al-'Īdāḥ* by his son (Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn); *al-Muhadhdhib al-bāri'*, by al-Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Fahd; *al-Tanqīḥ*, by al-Shaykh al-Miqdād.

Some important works on 'ilm al-rijāl are: *Khulāṣat al-'aqwāl fī ma'rifat al-rijāl*, and *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*. Due to the approach adopted by al-'Allāmah al-Hillī in his *al-Khulāṣah*, this work allows one to dispense with other works on 'ilm al-rijāl.

3. Ijmā' (Consensus):

As to *ijmā'*, it is necessary to understand its requisite conditions and rules, as are discussed in 'ilm al-'uṣūl. As to whether *ijmā'* has occurred in any one of the *aḥkām* of the Shari'ah, is a question the answer to which (in positive or in negative) should be found in relation to every single *ḥukm*. This is exactly what the *fuqahā'* have pointed out when they say, "one of the prerequisite qualifications for *ijtihād* is knowledge of issues on which consensus exists and the issues under dispute, so that that which is contrary to consensus is ignored."³²

That which I have heard about *ijmā'* is that in order to discover *ijmā'* [that is, to find out whether it exists or not with regard to a certain *ḥukm*], it is sufficient to study the books of jurists where they have dealt with that particular *ḥukm*. So if we see that they hold a single uncontested viewpoint regarding the related *ḥukm*, we can take it as *ijmā'* and act in accordance with it [*ijmā'* confirmed in this fashion is called *al-'ijmā' al-muḥaṣṣal*].³³ Otherwise, we conclude that there is disagreement on the issue; that is, we either affirm the existence of disagreement or practise *wuqūf* (i.e. withhold judgement).

Another practice regarding *ijmā'* is that if the predominant number of (*mashhūr*) jurists report that consensus exists on a certain *ḥukm*, the statement is accepted. In fact this is a consensus which is proved by a single report (*khabar wāḥid*), and we know from *'ilm al-'uṣūl* that a *khabar wāḥid* is sufficient evidence (*ḥujjah*) [that is, it is obligatory to be acted upon; the latter kind of *ijmā'* is called *al-'ijmā' al-manqūl*; and the former kind, as mentioned, *al-'ijmā' al-muḥaṣṣal*).

A similar method is applicable to knowledge of the *mashhūr* (lit. well-known) among the traditions and *fatwā's*; i.e. whether a certain *ḥukm*, for instance, enjoys the consensus of the majority of *'ulamā'* or not. This *shuhrah* [called *al-shuhrah fī al-riwāyah* and *al-shuhrah fī al-fatwā* depending on whether it refers to a tradition or a *fatwā*]³⁴ is a criterion for weighing conflicting traditions.

4. The Rational Principles:

Before we recount the role of the rational principles (*al-'adillah al-'aqliyyah*) it is essential to note that in the method of deduction, occasionally, the argument is based on explicit literal meanings (*manṭūq*) and sometimes on the implicit meanings (*mafḥūm*).³⁵ And the explicit or implicit meanings, as explained in *'ilm al-'uṣūl*, are binding. However, the rational principles (which are also discussed in *'ilm al-'uṣūl*) are the following:

1. *Barā'ah*: It is resorted to when there is no traditional evidence regarding a certain *ḥukm*.³⁶

2. *Istiṣhāb*: It is applied when there is no textual evidence (*dalīl naqlī*) [to decide in a situation where doubt occurs] the validity of the previous state [of certainty] is extended and the [previously applicable] *ḥukm* is acted upon.³⁷

3. *Identity of approach in two problems*: This is a corollary of the principle of *istiṣhāb*, which differs from *istiṣhāb* in application to some problems, as discussed in *'ilm al-'uṣūl*.³⁸

4. *Qiyās*: It means extension of a *ḥukm* beyond the range of its explicit meaning (*manṭūq*) to an area not expressly mentioned in it (*maskūt 'anhu*). Its validity (*ḥujjiyyah*) is a matter of disagreement.³⁹

The earlier Imāmiyyah *fuqahā'* did not act upon any kind of *qiyās*. But the later ones have acted upon one kind of it which is called *manṣūṣ al-'illah*; that is, in cases where the reason (*'illah*) of legislation of a *ḥukm* is expressly mentioned or indicated, it is permissible to apply the same reason (*'illah*) to another case for deriving a *ḥukm*.

Of course, someone who wishes to act upon *qiyās* should completely understand this kind of it and also comprehend the factors which cause invalidation of the *'illah*. In addition, he should have found answers to all objections which apply to it, as is elaborately discussed in *'ilm al-'uṣūl*. However, someone who does not practise *qiyās* has no need of these *uṣūlī* discussions, as is also discussed in *'ilm al-'uṣūl*.

The basis of permissibility of practice on all these rational principles is a *ṣaḥīḥ* tradition of al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) quoted in his book *al-Tanqīḥ* by al-Shaykh al-Miqdād. It says:

قَالَ الصَّادِقُ؛ عَلَيْنَا أَنْ نُلْقِيَ إِلَيْكُمْ الْأَصُولَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تُفْرَعُوا.

Al-Ṣādiq (A) said: "To give you the [general] principles is our duty, and to deduce the secondary [*aḥkām* from the principles] is yours."

This tradition is also another evidence of the obligation and necessity of *ijtihād* in the religious *aḥkām*.

Now that these issues have been explained, it should be noted that some, not being able to distinguish between the *aḥkām* derived from the traditions and the *fatwā's*⁴⁰ of a *mujtahid*, have fallen into a confusion. As is well-known, it is not permissible to follow the *fatwā's* of a dead *mujtahid*, his *taqlīd*⁴¹ is not allowed, as stated by the *fuqahā'*: *الْمَيِّتُ لَا قَوْلَ لَهُ*: i.e. "The dead man has no opinion [or verdict]."⁴²

Here we should clarify that all things which are expressly stated in the Quran, or in the *mutawātir* Sunnah, or in *al-khabar al-wāḥid wa al-ṣaḥīḥ*, are binding (*ḥujjah*). They are different from *fatwā's*, in which *taqlīd* is required. Therefore, they are not among the things which pertain to the issue of dead *mujtahid's fatwā* (*taqlīd al-mayyit*). The same is true of all of other things which are *mashhūr*⁴³ among the *fuqahā'*, be it a tradition or the *fatwā* of the majority, which are, both, also outside the domain of *taqlīd al-mayyit*. If occasionally there is a difference of views about this *shuhrah* that too is derived from traditions, not the personal opinion of any *mujtahid*, so as to come under the heading of *taqlīd al-mayyit*. Similarly, that which pertains to the *ijmā'* of all Muslims or the *ijmā'* of the Shi'ah jurists, regardless of in whichever of the two ways it is established (*al-'ijmā' al-muḥaṣṣal* or *al-'ijmā' al-manqūl*) is also on the basis of traditions, not on the basis of any *mujtahid's fatwā*, so that it may fall under the heading of *taqlīd al-mayyit*.

Besides the ones mentioned above, there are other issues in which difference of opinion exists, such as the details of jurisprudential issues, most of which are mentioned in the *al-Mukhtalif* of al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī.

However some instances of disagreement of opinions pertains to rare and unique *fatwā*'s, the prevalent (*mashhūr*) *fatwā*'s being contrary to them. One can identify this kind of issues through study of books on argumentative and descriptive *fiqh*.

Some of the issues of *fiqh* proper as discussed by some scholars and jurists—such as the Shahīd [Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Makki al-‘Āmilī] and others that came after him—and regarding which they have issued *fatwā*'s, are things which are not binding for us (i.e. they are not of the kind of issues which enjoy *al-shuhrat al-fatwā'īyyah*); rather we are forbidden from acting upon them.

However, there is no prohibition on quoting these *fatwā*'s and opinions; rather the prohibition pertains to quoting them for the sake of practice upon them. There is no doubt that mentioning of *fatwā*'s and opinions is beneficial for someone studying a problem to know the various opinions expressed regarding it, and to know how their authors have argued about problems of *fiqh* proper. That also assists him in understanding the method of derivation of legal rules. However, it is not necessary for a *muqallid* to know these different *fatwā*'s and opinions. All that is essential for him is to refer to the *muftī* (*mujtahid*) for assistance in issues of religious practice.

Evidently the title “*muftī*”, i.e. one who gives *fatwā*'s, is not applicable to a dead person, neither literally, nor metaphorically. Accordingly, a *muqallid* cannot act in accordance with the opinions of the past *mujtahidūn*.

Therefore, there are not more than two⁴⁴ alternatives for the practice of the *aḥkām* of the Shari‘ah: firstly, to refer to a *mujtahid* in practical matters; secondly, to derive the *aḥkām* from the original sources. However, some hold that it is obligatory for every *mukallaf*⁴⁵ to be a *mujtahid* [in matters essential for him], i.e. he should himself exercise *ijtihād* for deriving the *aḥkām*.

As to the method of deriving the *aḥkām* regarding various events on which the *mujtahid* must give his verdict (*fatwā*), I will explain it as I have heard it.

If the event is one which occurred in the past and which the *mujtahidūn* have discussed and given their views about, it is sufficient for one to study those opinions, select the one which seems stronger and free of fault, and act upon it.

If it is not possible for him to prefer any of such differing opinions, he should suspend his decision; that is he should withhold his judgement until he finds new evidence on which to settle his

judgement. Such a situation is commonly called *wuqūf* or *tawaqquf* by the *mujtahidūn*.

However, if the event is of recent occurrence, it should be seen whether it is of a particular nature falling under some general category; then its *ḥukm* can easily be drawn from it. However, correlation of such kind of particular problems with the general issues requires meticulous care, and is possible for one who is familiar with the method of derivation (*ṭariq al-'istinbāt*) and possesses the minimum qualifications of *ijtihād*.

But if the said event does not fall within the scope of any of the general issues and is especial to the present times, it should be studied closely and its *ḥukm* should be deduced with reference to the principles in the same way as the *mujtahidūn* of former days studied the problems of their times and derived the relevant *aḥkām*. That is why it has been said that one who wants to derive the *aḥkām* of the Shari'ah from valid sources should possess the skill of deducing the *aḥkām* (or *furū'*) from the principles (*uṣūl*).

Here I conclude my discourse. This was a word about the method of derivation of the *aḥkām* of the Shari'ah and identification of events and problems, in the way I have heard orally from my teachers—may God be pleased with them and bequeath them the best of rewards. This is the well-known and widely accepted (*mashhūr*) method discussed in the books of the *fuqahā'*.

We confined ourselves to only this much of exposition because we had decided on brevity at the outset. Those who are inclined to study this subject in detail should refer to the elaborate works on *fiqh* and *uṣūl*.⁴⁶ God willing, they shall attain their objective.

وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا.

NOTES:

1. *Mujtahidūn* (sing. *mujtahid*) is derived from *ijtihād*, a legal term which refers to the capacity of an Islamic legist of deducing the commands of the Shari'ah from the four legal sources of the Quran, the Sunnah, *ijmā'* (consensus) and *'aql* (reason). '*Ijtihād*' is also used for the practice of such deduction by an Islamic legist. A scholar who fulfils the requisite qualifications for deducing the *aḥkām* of the Shari'ah is called a '*mujtahid*'. A legist who is qualified to express independent opinion in all the different spheres of the Islamic Law is called *mujtahid jāmi' al-sharā'it*, or simply *mujtahid*, *mufti*, *faqih* or *āyatullāh*.

2. *Aḥkām* (sing. *ḥukm*), in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) commonly means the rules or laws of the Shari'ah, which generally fall into the five categories (*al-'aḥkām al-khamsah*): (1) *wājib* or *fard*; i.e. actions the performance of which is rewarded

and omission punished; (2) *sunnah* or *mustahabb*; the recommended or voluntary meritorious actions the neglect of which is not punished, but the performance of which is rewarded; (3) *mubāh* or *murakhkhaṣ*; i.e. actions the performance or neglect of which is indifferent from the viewpoint of the Shari'ah; (4) *ḥarām*, i.e. prohibited, includes all actions and things whose performance or consumption is a punishable sin; (5) *makrūh*, i.e. reprehensible, actions or things whose performance or consumption is disapproved though not punishable. The *aḥkām* cover almost the entire spectrum of the life of a Muslim, from worships (*'ibādāt*) to business dealings (*mu'āmalāt*), social, economic and political behaviour and relations.

3. The term '*Sunnah*' refers to the practice of the Prophet (S), which is a source of Islamic Law, parallel to the Quran. For the Imāmiyyah Shī'ah, the term, in addition to the Prophet's *Sunnah*, also includes the *Sunnah* of the twelve Imams (A) of the Ahl al-Bayt, the Prophet's Household, who like the Prophet (S) are regarded as infallible (*ma'ṣūmūn*) and free from sin. Thus '*Sunnah*' for the Imāmiyyah Shī'ah is the *sunnah* of the *Ma'ṣūmūn*, i.e. the Prophet (S) and the twelve Imams (A). The *Sunnah* includes the recorded utterances (*aqwāl*), actions (*af'āl* or *a'māl*) and tacit approvals (*taqrīrāt*), and each is individually referred to as *al-sunnat al-qawliyyah*, *al-sunnat al-fi'liyyah* and *al-sunnat al-taqrīriyyah*. During the era of the Imams (A), there were four hundred Shī'i collections of *aḥādīth*, which were later compiled into the four early comprehensive works, which are: (1) *al-Kāfi*, compiled by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb Ishāq al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī (d. 329/940), which contains 16,099 *musnad* (documented) *ḥadīth*; (2) *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*, compiled by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381/991), which contains 9044 *ḥadīth*; (3) *al-Tahdhīb*, compiled by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Tūsī (d. 460/1068), which contains 13,590 *ḥadīth*; (4) *al-'Istibṣār*, also compiled by al-Tūsī, which contains 5,511 *ḥadīth*. Then, there are the three famous later compilations of Shī'ah *ḥadīth*, which are: (1) *Kitāb al-jāmi' al-wāfi*, by Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680), which contains commentary on difficult traditions; (2) *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥurr al-'Āmili (d. 1104/1692-3), which includes the four famous classical works of *ḥadīth* and also draws on other sources; (3) *Bihār al-'anwār*, by 'Allāmah Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisi (d. 1111/1699-1700), whose latest edition published from Beirut consists of more than 120 volumes. The Sunnī sources of the *Sunnah* are the famous six books jointly referred to as '*al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-sittah*,' which are: (1) *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhārī (194-256/810-870); (2) *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, by Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Nishābūrī (d. 261/875); *al-Sunan*, by Ibn Mājjah al-Qazwīnī (d. 273/887); (4) *al-Sunan*, by Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 275/889); (5) *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, by Muḥammad ibn 'Isā al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892); (6) *al-Sunan*, by al-Nisā'i (d. 303/914).

The epithet *al-mutawātir* is applied to a *ḥadīth* received through so many different chains of transmission that there can be no doubt as to its authenticity. *Al-'āḥād* (or *al-wāḥid*) is a tradition whose chains of transmission (one or more) are not so numerous as to guarantee its reliability by mere fact of its wide circulation. *Al-mashhūr* is a *ḥadīth al-wāḥid* whose status with respect to popular circulation lies between *al-mutawātir* and *ghayr mashhūr*. Whether *ḥadīth al-'āḥād* can be considered a valid authority (*ḥujjah*) for deduction of *aḥkām* is a question debated by the Shī'ah *mujtahidūn*. While the later authorities have generally accepted its validity citing evidence from the four sources, some of the early jurists, such as al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā, Abū al-Makārim ibn Zuhrah, Ibn Barrāj, Ibn Idrīs, rejected the *hujjiyyah* of *khabar al-wāḥid*.

Dalīl (pl. *adillah*) is something which forms the ground for deducing a *ḥukm*.

If the deduction relies on textual authority (Quran and Sunnah) it is called *dalil naqlī*, and if based on purely rational grounds, *dalil 'aqlī*.

4. *Ijmā'* (lit. consensus) in the terminology of fiqh means consensus of Islamic legists about some legal issue. For the Imāmiyyah Shi'ah, *ijmā'* is not an independent source for legislation of laws parallel to the Quran and the Sunnah; rather it is only a means for detection of the Sunnah of the *Ma'sūmūn* (A), and operates in series with the Sunnah. Thus *ijmā'* for the Imāmiyyah Shi'ah is an ancillary to the Sunnah. Moreover its relevance is traditional rather than contemporary. If a group of Imāmiyyah Shi'ah scholars of the era of the Prophet (S) and the Imams (A) were in agreement in holding a certain legal opinion in such a way that it leads to the conviction that such consensus was in agreement with the position of the *Ma'sūm*, such consensus is called *ijmā'*, since it serves as an indirect means for discovery of the Sunnah. The mere fact of consensus between fuqahā' without any indication of its being in accordance with the Sunnah of the *Ma'sūmūn* (A) is not binding (is not a *ḥujjah*) for the *mujtahid*. Such consensus which does not enjoy *ḥujjiyyah* is not called *ijmā'*.

5. *Nass* (lit. text; plural, *nuṣūṣ*) in the terminology of fiqh is used specifically for the explicit (*ṣariḥ*) text of the Quran, where the meaning of verses is completely clear and unequivocal. *Zawāhir* (lit. apparent meanings) is a term which is used for the apparent meanings of the Quranic verses from which, however, another meaning may also be derivable, but for which there is no support or indication (*qarīnah*) in the text. The first apparent meanings are called *zawāhir al-Kitāb*, and are considered valid and binding (*ḥujjah*) from the viewpoint of deduction of *aḥkām* from the Quranic texts.

6. The study of semiotics, which includes a semantic and syntactic study of the Arabic language in general, and the texts of the Quran and ḥadīth in particular, is an important part of *'ilm al-'uṣūl*, the theory of Islamic jurisprudence. Since the law of the Shari'ah is based on the Arabic texts of the Quran and ḥadīth, semantic and syntactic studies play the role of essential preliminaries to *ijtihād*, the science and art of deduction of the rules of the Shari'ah.

7. *Muḥkamāt* (lit. firm) is said of the Quranic verses which are explicit and unequivocal in meaning, and include the *nuṣūṣ* and the *zawāhir*. On the contrary, the term *mutashābihāt* refers to Quranic verses which being obscure stand in need of interpretation (*ta'wīl*) by the Prophet (S) or the Imams (A).

8. *Ḥaqīqah* refers to literal use of words, and stands in opposition to *majāz*, metaphoric usage.

9. *Amr* (lit. order, command) and *nahy* (lit. prohibition) in grammar refer to imperative sentences. In *'ilm al-'uṣūl*, imperative statements, since they command and forbid certain actions and things, are studied closely so as to elucidate their exact legal import and the relation of various categories of the *aḥkām* (*wājib*, *mustahabb*, *makrūh*, *ḥarām*, *mubāḥ*) to various types of imperative statements.

10. A certain Quranic verse may contain a general command applicable to all individuals of a class (e.g. all divorced women should wait for three menstrual periods, or *qurū'*, before remarriage). Such verses due to the generality of their legal import are called *'āmm* (lit. general). However, there may be other verses which restrict the generality of the *'āmm* by stipulating exceptions (e.g. women divorced without consummation of the marriage may remarry without waiting for three *qurū'*). The second kind of verses are called *khāṣṣ* (lit. particular). The stipulation of such exceptions to the general rule is called *takhsīṣ*.

11. The terms *mutlaq* (lit. absolute) and *muqayyad* (lit. restricted) are similar to *'āmm* and *khāṣṣ* explained in note No. 10, with the difference that while the latter two terms refer to individuals, the former two refer to conditions and

characteristics. Suppose the *muṭlaq* commands the performance of a certain action without specifying the exact manner of its performance. The *muqayyad* specifies the manner of its performance in an exact manner or the conditions relevant to it. The process of such specification is called *taqyid*. Both in the case of *takhṣiṣ* and *taqyid* the ḥadīth plays the role of *khāṣṣ* and *muqayyad* with respect to the 'āmm and *muṭlaq* of the Quran. Also, in the opinion of the majority of Shī'ah legists, there is nothing objectionable to *taqyid* of a *muṭlaq* command of the Quran through a *ḥadīth al-wāḥid* which meets certain criteria.

12. *Mujmal* refers to synoptic statements of the Quran or ḥadīth, or words which are vaguely general (e.g. the meaning of the word *ghinā'*). However, elsewhere in the Quranic text or ḥadīth there may be other statements which specify and qualify, bringing the intended meaning into sharper focus. Such statements which qualify and clarify the *mujmal* are called 'mubayyan'.

13. Some commands of the Quran were of provisional validity. In such cases, the former *ḥukm* was abrogated by a later one. The *ḥukm* abrogated and the verse which bears it are called *mansūkh* (abrogated), and the later *ḥukm* and the verse which conveys it are called *nāsikh* (abrogating). The ability to distinguish the *nāsikh* and *mansūkh* in the Quran and the Sunnah is an essential part of the skill of *ijtihād*.

14. Quṭb al-Dīn Sa'īd ibn Hibat Allāh al-Rāwandī (d. 573/1177), the author of *Sharḥ āyāt al-'aḥkām*; Aḥmad ibn Mutawwaj al-Baḥrānī (d. circa 830/1427), the author of *Minḥāj al-hidāyah*; al-Shaykh al-Miqdād ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Suyūrī al-Hillī (d. 826/1423), the author of *Kanz al-'irfān fī fiqh al-Qur'ān*. Other later works on the subject which are famous are: *Zubdat al-bayān*, by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Muqaddas al-'Ardebīlī (d. 993/1585); and *Qalā'id al-durar*, by Shaykh Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī.

15. 'Ādil (lit. just) in fiqh designates a person of good repute whose testimony is valid in a court of law; antithesis: *fāsiq*.

16. *Ma'lūm al-'adālah*: a person whose being 'ādil is known for sure.

17. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-madhhab* (lit. of correct creed) means an Imāmi Shī'ī with no doctrinal deviations.

18. *Ma'ṣūm* (lit. infallible) is derived from 'iṣmah, which technically means immunity from error and sin; ascribed by the Ahl al-Sunnah to the Prophet (S) and by the Shī'ah to the Imams (A) also.

19. *Fāsiq*: a person of bad repute whose testimony is not valid in a court of law; antithesis: 'ādil.

20. A tradition is called *al-ḥadīth al-mursal* (or *al-khabar al-mursal*) when the names of one or more transmitters are missing in the chain of *asnād*; e.g. a ḥadīth narrated by a *Tābi'i* from the Prophet without mention of the intermediate transmitters (a *Tābi'i* is one who belongs to the second generation after the Prophet [S]).

21. Ibn Abī 'Umayr, Abū Muḥammad, Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-'Azudī (d. 217/832), a companion of al-Imām al-Kāzīm (A), al-Imām al-Riḍā (A), and al-Imām Muḥammad al-Taḳī (A); considered a reliable (*thiqah*) narrator.

22. Abū Baṣīr, Yaḥyā ibn Abī al-Qāsim al-'Asadī (d. 150/767), a companion of al-Imām al-Bāqir (A) and al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A).

23. Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il ibn Bazī', a companion of al-Imām al-Kāzīm (A).

24. Zurārah ibn A'yan al-Shaybānī (d. 150/767), a companion of al-Imām al-Bāqir (A) and al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A).

25. Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Naṣr al-Bizantī al-Kūfi (d. 221/836), a companion of al-Imām al-Riḍā and al-Imām al-Taḳī (A).

26. Abū Manṣūr al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn 'Alī ibn Muṭahhar al-Hillī (d. 726/1326), well-known as al-'Allāmah al-Hillī; among his works are : *al-Qawā'id*, *al-Tahdhib*, *al-Muntahā*, *al-Khulāṣah fī al-rijāl*, etc.

27. Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan (d. 771/1369-70); among his works are: *Idāḥ al-fawā'id fi sharḥ al-Qawā'id*, *Hāshiyat al-'Irshād*, *Sharḥ Nahj al-mustarshidīn*.

28. See note No. 14. al-Shaykh al-Miqdād is also the author of *al-Tanqīḥ al-rā'i min al-mukhtaṣar al-nāfi'*.

29. Aḥmad ibn Fahd al-'Asadī al-Hillī (d. 841/1437); among his works are: *al-Muḥadhdhab al-bāri' fi sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfi'*, *al-Mūjaz*, *al-Taḥrīr*, *'Uddat al-dā'i*.

30. Al-Shahīd al-'Awwal, Muḥammad ibn Makki al-'Āmīlī (d. 786/1384); among his works are: *al-Dhikrā*, *al-Durūs al-Shar'iyyah fi fiqh al-Imāmiyyah*, *al-Bayān*, *al-Lum'at al-Dimashqiyyah*.

31. Najm al-Dīn, Ja'far ibn al-Ḥasan al-Hillī, known as al-Muḥaqqīq (d. 676/1277). Among his works are: *Sharā'i' al-'Islām*, *al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfi'*, *al-Mu'tabar*, *al-Ma'ārij fi usūl al-fiqh*.

32. **إِنَّ مِنْ جُمْلَةِ سَرَائِطِ الْأَجْتِهَادِ مَعْرِفَةَ مَسَائِلِ الْخِلَافِ وَالْوَفَاقِ لِئَلَّا يَعْتَنَى بِمَا يُخَالِفُهُ**

33. There are two ways of discovering whether *ijmā'* existed on a certain *ḥukm*. The first is by personally undertaking a research and survey of the writings and opinions of early Imāmiyyah Shī'ah scholars. When the existence of *ijmā'* is established in this manner for a *mujtahid*, it is called *al-'ijmā' al-muḥaṣṣal*. However, there is a short cut for him by accepting the report of one of the authorities of fiqh that *ijmā'* existed on a certain matter. Such a report, similar to *khabar al-wāḥid*, is considered by majority of shī'ah legists as being sufficient for believing in the existence of *ijmā'*. Knowledge of *ijmā'*, thus acquired is called *al-'ijmā' al-manqūl*. Both the kinds of *ijmā'*, or rather the ways of establishing it, provide valid ground for deduction of the rules of the Shari'ah by a *mujtahid*.

34. *Shuhrah* (lit. fame) is a technical term in fiqh by which is meant wide acceptability of a certain legal opinion (*fatwā*) or a ḥadīth. In *'ilm al-ḥadīth*, a ḥadīth widely circulated and transmitted through several chains of narrators, although not so widely as a *mutawātir ḥadīth*, is called *al-ḥadīth al-mashhūr* (or *al-ḥadīth al-mustafīd*). In the same way, if a particular legal opinion has been commonly held, but not as widely accepted as in the case of *ijmā'* that particular legal opinion is called '*mashhūr*'. Also, an opinion which has been held with rarity is called '*nādir*' (lit. rare) or '*ghayr mashhūr*' (lit. not famous). The wide circulation of a ḥadīth is called *al-shuhrah fi al-riwāyah*, and of a *fatwā*, *al-shuhrah fi al-fatwā*. In the case of a ḥadīth, its amount of *shuhrah* is a criterion for weighing it against another conflicting ḥadīth of the same class.

35. *Mantūq* is a term applied in *'ilm al-'usūl* to the literal meaning or denotation of a statement. *Mafhūm*, on the other hand, is applied to its wider connotation, which depends on the structure of the sentence and the wider context.

36. *Aṣālat al-barā'ah* (the principle of exoneration), as its name implies, is one of the four practical principles of fiqh, called *al-'usūl al-'amaliyyah*. These principles are applied in case of doubt, and as to which of them is applicable in a case depends on the nature of situation at hand to which the doubt pertains and also on the nature of the doubt. When the doubt is completely unresolvable about what the *ḥukm* may be in a certain case, the principle of *barā'ah* is applied to exonerate oneself from duty in that particular case. This principle although based on rational grounds, is also derivable from the first clause of the following ḥadīth of the Prophet (S):

رُفِعَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي تِسْعَةٌ: مَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ، وَمَا لَا يُطِيقُونَ، وَمَا اسْتَكْرَهُوا عَلَيْهِ، وَمَا اضْطَرُّوا إِلَيْهِ، وَالْخَطَأُ، وَالنِّسْيَانُ،
وَالغَيْرَةُ، وَالْحَسَدُ، وَالْوَسْوَسَةُ فِي التَّفَكُّرِ فِي الْخَلْقِ.

My ummah has been exonerated from nine things: that which they know not; that which they cannot; that into which they are coerced; that towards which they are forced by exigency; [that which they commit by] error, forgetfulness; [believing in] evil omen; envy [as long as it is not translated into action]; and [devilish] insinuations while reflecting upon the creation.

37. *Aṣālat al-ʿistiḥāb* in fiqh is another of the four practical principles, according to which, in case of doubt, the *ḥukm* applicable to the situation prior to the doubt is upheld. To give an example of its application, suppose one were to lie down to rest after making *wuḍūʿ*, and after some time he were to doubt whether he did fall asleep for a while or not. Applying the principle of *istiḥāb*, he brushes aside the doubt, considering his *wuḍūʿ* to be still valid (sleep, however short, invalidates the *wuḍūʿ* according to the Imāmiyyah fiqh).

38. Due to changes in the terminology of *fiqh* during the period of more than four and a half centuries since the writing of this essay, the intention of the author is not clear here.

39. *Qiyās* in fiqh is analogical reasoning applied to deduction of the rule of the Shariʿah, and is rejected by the Imāmiyyah Shīʿah as being invalid. To give an example of *qiyās*, suppose that we know from the Quran that wine is *ḥarām*; we speculate about the reason (*ʿillah*) of its prohibition (this is where *qiyās* begins) and say that it is because wine is an intoxicant. On the basis of our surmise about the reason of prohibition of wine we conclude that all other intoxicants are also *ḥarām*. *Qiyās* presupposes that it is possible for human reason to discover the exact reason behind legislation of Divine commands. The Imāmiyyah legists do not accept this assumption. They accept only that type of *qiyās* in which the reason (*ʿillah*) behind the *ḥukm* has been expressly stated by the Quranic text or ḥadīth. Such a type of *qiyās* is called *qiyās manṣūṣ al-ʿillah*.

40. *Fatwā* (pl. *fatāwā*) means the legal opinion or verdict of a *mujtahid* or *muftī* regarding the *ḥukm* of the Shariʿah in a certain matter.

41. *Taqlīd* in fiqh means following of the *fatāwā* of a *mujtahid* by a layman, the *muqallid*.

42. In Shīʿah Imāmiyyah fiqh the *taqlīd* of a dead *mujtahid* is forbidden. After his death, if one followed his *fatāwā* in his life, one must switch to the *taqlīd* of a living *mujtahid* and follow his *fatāwā*.

43. See note No. 34 on *shuhrah*.

44. The later fuqahāʾ have discovered a third alternative, which is called *iḥtiyāt*. One practising *iḥtiyāt* should act in such a fashion as to be certain of having performed his duties according to the Shariʿah. For example, if a group of *mujtahidūn* consider some action as *ḥarām* and some others as *mubāḥ*, he must abstain from that action. If some consider an action as *wājib*, and others *mustaḥabb*, he must perform it. Thus it is incumbent on an Imāmi Shīʿi who is not a *mujtahid* to practise either *iḥtiyāt* or *taqlīd* of some *mujtahid*.

45. *Mukallaf* (derived from *taklīf*, duty) is one who is charged with responsibility viz-a-viz the Shariʿah. In order to be *mukallaf*, one must be of adult age and sane.

46. Following is a list of some well-known Shīʿi works on *uṣūl al-fiqh*:

(1) *Al-Dhariʿah ilā uṣūl al-Shariʿah*, by al-Sayyid al-Murtadā (d. 436/1044-5).

(2) *ʿUddat al-ʿuṣūl*, by al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 540/1145-6).

(3) *Nahj al-ʿuṣūl ilā maʿrifat al-ʿuṣūl*, by Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim Jaʿfar ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd, known as al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d. 676/1277-8).

(4) *Tahdhīb al-ʿuṣūl ilā ʿilm al-ʿuṣūl*, by al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn Muṭahhar, known as al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1326).

- (5) *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, by Zayn al-Dīn ibn Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī Aḥmad al-Jabā'ī al-'Āmilī, known as al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 965/1557-8).
- (6) *Ma'ālim al-'uṣūl*, by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn (d. 1011/1602-3).
- (7) *Zubdat al-'uṣūl*, by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Jabā'ī al-'Āmilī, known as al-Shaykh al-Bahā'ī (d. 1031/1622).
- (8) *Qawānīn al-'uṣūl*, by Mirzā Abū al-Qāsim ibn Mawlā Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Gīlānī, known as Mirzā'e Qummi (d. 1231/1816).
- (9) *Al-Fuṣūl fī 'ilm al-'uṣūl*, by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm (d. 1261/1845).
- (10) *Farā'id al-'uṣūl*, by Shaykh Murtaḍā ibn Muḥammad Amin ibn Shams al-Dīn al-'Anṣārī (d. 1281/1864).
- (11) *Kifāyat al-'uṣūl*, by Ākhūnd Mawlā Muḥammad Kāzīm al-Khurāsānī (d. 1329/1911).
- (12) *Fawā'id al-'uṣūl*, by the same author.
- (13) *Fawā'id al-'uṣūl*, by Shaykh Muḥammad 'Alī al-Kāzīmī (d. 1324/1907).
- (14) *Durar al-'uṣūl*, by Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm al-Ḥā'irī al-Yezdī (d. 1355/1936).
- (15) *Ajwad al-taqrīrāt*, by Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'ī.
- (16) *Dirāsāt al-'uṣūl*, by Sayyid 'Alī Shāhrūdī.

Following are some well-known Shī'ī works on discursive fiqh.

- (1) *Al-'Intiṣār*, by al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā.
- (2) *Al-Khilāf*, by Shaykh Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī.
- (3) *Al-Mu'tabar*, by Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī.
- (4) *Al-Qawā'id*, by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī.
- (5) *Durūs*, by al-Shahīd al-'Awwal.
- (6) *Sharḥ al-Lum'at al-Dimashqiyyah*, by al-Shahīd al-Thānī.
- (7) *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-nādirah*, by Shaykh Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī al-Ḥā'irī (1107-1186/1695-1772).
- (8) *Jawāhir al-kalām*, by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan (d. 1266/1850).
- (9) *Al-Makāsib*, by Shaykh Murtaḍā al-'Anṣārī.
- (10) *Al-Mustamsak*, by Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm (d. 1390/1970).
- (11) *Sharḥ al-Sharāyi'*, Ḥājj Āqā Ridā al-Hamadānī.

Legislation in an Islamic State*

by *Āyatullāh Aḥmad Jannatī*

translated from Persian by 'Alī Qulī Qarā'i

There are six different issues that we shall investigate in relation to the subject of legislation in an Islamic State. The very first question which arises in this connection is: who has the authority to legislate laws which are binding for all individuals in a society, and a breach of which calls for punitive measures?

From the viewpoint of Islam and reason, all human beings have been created equal; no individual enjoys any inherent right of sovereignty and guardianship (*wilāyah*) over others. Race, nationality, geographical location, class—none of these factors confers any right of sovereignty on any individual or group. God, the Almighty, is the Master of the universe, and it is He Who is the Sovereign over all creatures. All are equal before Him, and none enjoys any preferential right of sovereignty over others. This idea finds a recurring echo in several Quranic verses such as the following:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا
يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ...

Say: 'People of the Book! Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate not aught with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords, apart from God....' (3:64)

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اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ...

They (the Jews and the Christians) have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords apart from God.... (9:31)

The right of authority and sovereignty, solely a Divine prerogative, is referred to as 'amr' in the Quran. This is the meaning of the word which occurs in such verses as the following:

... أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ...

...Verily, His are the creation and the command (amr).... (7:54)

... إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ...

... The command (amr) belongs to God entirely.... (3:154)

The same meaning of *amr* is meant in the phrase *ulī al-'amr* (those in authority) in the verse 4:59:

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

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

All mankind are of a single origin, and no race, nation or individual has any superiority over others, except on the grounds of piety and righteousness:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ...

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely, the nobler among you in the sight of God is the more God-fearing of you.... (49:13)

Accordingly, any law regardless of who legislates it, is not binding upon others. Only the Divine Law is valid and binding, on the basis of God's all-embracing mastery and sovereignty over all things:

... إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ...

...Sovereignty belongs only to God; He has commanded that you shall not serve any but Him.... (12:40)

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ...

Indeed, We sent forth among every nation a Messenger, [saying]: Serve God, and eschew the ṭāghūt.... (16:36)

The above Islamic principle has been incorporated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which declares: "The Islamic Republic is a system based on: (1) faith in the One God, and His exclusive prerogative of sovereignty and legislation, and the duty to submit before Him...."

Nevertheless, if God were to delegate His right of sovereignty to a human being, and bestow upon him the right to legislate and the authority to rule, then, as a consequence, within the scope of such delegated authority, he will have the licence to command and forbid and to enact laws. In that case, his authority will represent Divine authority, his commands will be considered the commands of God, and disobedience to him will amount to disobedience to God. This type of authority, which the Holy Prophet (S) enjoyed, is mentioned in this verse:

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ...

Whosoever obeys the Messenger, thereby obeys God.... (4:80)

All prophets have implemented and enforced Divine laws, and, within the scope of the *wilāyah* (i.e. guardianship or authority) delegated to them, obedience to them was obligatory for their followers. The following verse refers to the binding authority of the Prophet's judgements:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا*

It is not for any believer, man or woman, when God and His Messenger have decreed a matter, to have a choice in the affair. Whosoever disobeys God and His Messenger has gone astray into manifest error. (33:36)

The Prophet (S) was a sovereign and a lawgiver in his life, and after him the right of sovereignty and the authority to legislate passed on to his successors appointed to the office of *wilāyah* (i.e. *khilāfah* and *imāmah*) over the Muslim community, the Ummah. The Prophet's successor, while maintaining the authority of the Book and the Sunnah intact, possesses the right to legislate according to particular conditions and circumstances, and, on account of his *wilāyah*, deserves obligatory obedience, as stated by the verse 4:59. His *wilāyah* (like that of the

Prophet) is derived from and dependent on the absolute *wilāyah* of God.

However, since, on the one hand, the Quran does not specify any particular person for the office of *wilāyah* (of the *ulī al-'amr*), and on the other hand the Prophet (S) and his successors (the *awṣiyā'*, i.e. the Imams [A]) have determined its general transferability to anyone who possesses certain specified qualifications, the right to legislate is evidently also transferable to him. (This type of *wilāyah* is called *al-wilāyat al-'āmmah*, whereas the *wilāyah* of the Prophet [S] and the Imams [A], since it is conferred upon them specifically, is called *al-wilāyat al-khāṣṣah*). According to the Shi'ah ḥadīth, the office of *al-wilāyat al-'āmmah* has been assigned to any *'ādil* faqīh who fulfils the requirements of *ijtihād*. When there are several individuals who possess the requisite qualifications, an individual from among them or a group of them may be elected to take charge of this sovereign office.

It is on this basis that the Article 5 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran specifies that:

“During the time when the 12th Imam (may God expediate his appearance) is in occultation, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the leadership of the affairs and guidance of the people is the responsibility of a just and pious jurispudent, aware of the contemporary issues, courageous, of drive and initiative, whom the majority of the people know and accept to be their Leader. In case no such jurispudent enjoys confidence of such a majority, a Leadership Council consisting of jurispudents meeting the above requirements will assume the same responsibility.”

Whatever we have said until this point contains two points of difference between us and our brethren of the Ahl al-Sunnah. The first is about the *imāmah* or *al-wilāyat al-khāṣṣah* of the twelve Imams (A). The second relates to *al-wilāyat al-'āmmah* of the qualified jurispudent (*faqīh jāmi' al-sharā'it*) during the period of occultation (*ghaybah*) of the Twelfth Imam (A). A group of Shi'ah 'ulamā' have also not accepted the doctrine of *al-wilāyat al-'āmmah* of the faqīh (also called, *wilāyat al-faqīh*).

In the case of absence of a qualified faqīh, we are faced with the problem of proper governance and administration of the political affairs of the Muslim community. Does Islam offer any solution for this problem, or does it leave the people unguided, to grapple with the problem themselves? Is it conceivable that a religion which has meticulously specified duties in all minor and major affairs of life, should leave unsolved and neglect such a significant and vital affair of the Muslim society? This question is relevant to all these three groups: firstly, the Ahl al-Sunnah in relation to the post-prophetic era; secondly, the Shi'ah who do not believe in the institution of *wilāyat al-faqīh* in relation to the period of *ghaybah* of the Twelfth Imam (A); thirdly, for the Shi'ah who believe in *wilāyat al-faqīh* in relation to the

case when a qualified faqīh is absent or unavailable. A brief prelude is necessary before we answer this question.

It is evident that a society without a State and a system of laws cannot hope to survive, and even if it does, presumably, it cannot be a society of a high order that can cater to all the needs and demands of the human nature. The existence of social order is an essential need confirmed by all Divine religions. In an anarchic society devoid of any system of law and order, neither prophethood can fulfil the objectives of its mission of guiding the people, nor is there any ready ground for the worship of God and implementation of His commands. In a state of social and political chaos, the goals mentioned in the following Divine verse cannot be achieved:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ...

Indeed, We sent Our messengers with the clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may uphold justice....
(57:25)

The necessity of the existence of the State is a self-evident axiom, readily accepted by reason and also affirmed by the Shari‘ah. If there can be any argument about government and the State, it is with regard to their form and characteristics. Here, we arrive at the heart of our problem: In case of the absence of a God-appointed sovereign (*al-walī al-manṣūṣ*), who should occupy the office of the sovereign?

That which can be stated on rational (*‘aqlī*) and canonical (*naqlī*) grounds is that the office of the *wilāyah* of Muslims should be occupied by the following in the descending order of priority: the Prophet (S); the successor appointed by the Prophet to the office of *wilāyah* (i.e. *al-walī al-manṣūṣ*); an *‘ādil faqīh*; an *‘ādil* believer (*al-mu‘min al-‘ādil*); a *fāsiq* believer (*al-mu‘min al-fāsiq*). The last three types may hold the office of *wilāyah* of Muslims; after the requisite conditions are met by individuals, the individuals are selected for the office, and after they formally take official charge of their duties. Moreover, obedience to their commands which are not contradictory to the Divine commands is essential.¹ Accordingly, they have also the authority to legislate laws and regulations for fulfilment of the various objectives of the State—such as legislation about economic, financial and commercial matters, defence, creation and maintenance of security, administration of justice, recovery of the rights of the weaker sections of the society from the more powerful, and so on. These are some of the essential reasons for the existence of the State, as Imam ‘Alī (A) points out in one of the sermons of the *Nahj al-balāghah*:

... وَإِنَّهُ لَأَبَدٌ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ أَمِيرٍ بَرٍّ أَوْ فَاجِرٍ يَعْمَلُ فِي إِمْرَتِهِ الْمُؤْمِنُ، وَيَسْتَمْتِعُ فِيهَا الْكَافِرُ، وَيُبَلِّغُ اللَّهُ فِيهَا الْأَجَلَ وَيُجْمَعُ بِهِ الْفِيءُ، وَيُقَاتَلُ بِهِ الْعَدُوُّ، وَتَأْمَنُ بِهِ السُّبُلُ، وَيُؤْخَذُ بِهِ لِلضَّعِيفِ مِنَ الْقَوِيِّ...

Mankind cannot dispense with a ruler, good or bad. [As a consequence of the general conditions of law and order provided] by his rule, the believer performs his acts [of righteousness] and the unbeliever attains his [worldly] enjoyments. In it God eases things to reach their ultimate destinations. Through it tribute is collected, the enemy is fought against, the security of the highways is maintained, and the rights of the weak are wrested from the powerful.... (*Nahj al-balāghah*, sermon 40)

In another tradition, 'Alī (A) is reported to have said:

الْوَاجِبُ فِي حُكْمِ اللَّهِ وَحُكْمِ الْأَسْلَامِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ... أَنْ لَا يَعْمَلُوا عَمَلًا وَلَا يَقْدَمُوا يَدًا وَلَا رِجْلًا، قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْتَارُوا لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ إِمَامًا، عَفِيفًا، عَالِمًا، وَرِعًا، عَارِفًا بِالْقَضَاءِ وَالسُّنَّةِ، يَجِبِي فِيهِمْ، وَيُقِيمَ حَجَّتَهُمْ وَجُمُعَتَهُمْ، وَيَجِبِي صَدَقَاتِهِمْ...

In a Divine rule and an Islamic State it is an obligation of Muslims not to make any [collective] move before they select for themselves a chaste and knowledgeable leader who is pious, abstinent and well-versed in administration of justice, who may collect for them tribute, taxes and charities, and take care of their *hajj* and [prayers in] congregation. (*al-Hayāt*, vol.II, p. 421)

Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) says:

... وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ فِي وِلَايَةِ وَالِي الْعَدْلِ وَوِلَايَةِ، إِخْيَاءَ كُلِّ حَقٍّ، وَكُلِّ عَدْلٍ، وَإِمَانَةَ كُلِّ ظَلَمٍ وَجَوْرٍ وَفَسَادٍ. فَلِذَلِكَ كَانَ السَّاعِي فِي تَقْوِيَةِ سُلْطَانِهِ، وَالْمُعِينُ لَهُ عَلَى وِلَايَتِهِ، سَاعِيًا فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ، مُقَوِّبًا لِدِينِهِ...

... that, because the rule of an equitable sovereign and his officials ensures the revival of righteousness and justice in all their aspects, and promises the death of oppression, injustice and corruption of all kinds. For this reason, anyone who strives for the establishment of the power [of such a ruler] and assists him in enforcing his authority is one who endeavours for the cause of obedience to God and for the strength of His faith.... (*al-Hayāt*, vol.II, p. 421)

After admitting the need for a sovereign State in the Islamic society at all times and in all places, and accepting its right to legislate, we may now go on to deal with some other issues related with the subject of Islamic government which we mentioned at the outset. Presently we shall take up the two following problems:

A. Is legislation permissible? That is, may we legislate despite the

existence of the *aḥkām* (laws, rules) of the Shari‘ah and how?

B. What is the role of *ijtihād* in legislation in an Islamic State?

Basically, in view of the fact that the enforceable laws in an Islamic State must be in conformity with the fundamental principles of Islam, and in view of the fact that the Divine *aḥkām* are firmly embedded in the Book and the Prophet’s Sunnah, we have to conclude that there is no room for legislation (in the secular sense), and expression of any opinion contrary to the explicit teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah is tantamount to apostasy:

... وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ *

... And whoever does not judge according to what God has revealed—they are the unbelievers. (5:44)

There may not be any disagreement whatsoever between a law and the *aḥkām* of the Shari‘ah. However, what are meant here are not the variable but the fixed laws of Islam, such as those related to all the *‘ibādāt* (viz. issues relating to *ṣalāt*, *ṣawm*, *zakāt*, *khums*, *ḥajj*, etc.); the personal laws (e.g. the *aḥkām* related to birth, heredity, marriage, divorce, inheritance, will (*waṣiyyah*), death, etc.); and the penal laws (e.g. *ḥudūd*, *diyāt*, and *qiṣāṣ*). The possibility of legislation is absolutely precluded in such matters. But in cases where the Shari‘ah does not lay down any rule, or where the legal rules have been hitherto based on social acceptability, social habits and customs (*‘urf*) and certain demands of social welfare (as in the case of legal rules relating to business dealings [*mu‘āmalāt*]), or in cases where the Shari‘ah has given powers to others (such as in the case of *ta‘zīrāt*, or matters relating to the affairs of the State, regulations related to State administration, employment, relations with foreign governments, control over the borders and frontiers, etc.), the legislator has a licence and a free hand. He can, in conformity with the general and basic Islamic criteria, principles and objectives, and in accordance with the interests of public welfare, legislate laws. In other words, there are certain fixed Islamic principles and criteria which may be considered as constituting the ‘constitutional law’ of Islam, and all other laws and regulations are valid only when they do not negate any of such principles and criteria as: the duty to establish justice; respect for the right of ownership; the obligation to safeguard life, property, honour, faith and sanity; the duty to pursue goodness and benevolence and to refrain from evil and malice in all things; the duty to support the oppressed and to fight for the removal of *fitnah* (sedition, persecution) and *fasād* (corruption); the ban on consumption of illegitimate acquisitions (money, assets); the illegitimacy of the *khabā’ith* and the permissibility of the *ṭayyibāt*; the

obligation to honour all agreements and treaties; the principle of exemption from *'usr* and *ḥaraj* (hardship, difficulty); the principle of *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār* (invalidity of all dealings and arrangements which involve loss, harm or injury to any of the parties involved); joint social responsibility (*al-takāful al-ijtimā'ī*); public security, etc. Any legislation is valid only when it does not conflict with any of the above-mentioned general principles. This is exactly what the Article 4 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic affirms: "All laws—penal, financial, economic, administrative, educational, military, political, etc.—and legislation controlling natural resources should be based upon Islamic criteria. This article generally and universally controls all other articles of the Constitution, as well as other laws and regulations, by the judgement of the jurists of the Guardianship Council." Besides, the Article 170 states: "The judges of the courts of justice shall be obliged to refrain from implementation of any of the Government's decrees and regulations which should be contrary to the Islamic laws and criteria, or should lie beyond the jurisdiction of the powers of the Executive. All individuals are entitled to apply to the administrative courts for annulment of such decrees and regulations."

Here, the role of *ijtihād* in legislation also comes to light. Because, as mentioned, Islam has certain fixed laws which are not affected either by the passage of time or due to changes in the conditions of life or on account of differences of culture and region. Except in exceptional cases and within the limits of exigency, it is not permissible to violate them. Examples are, the ban on usury, on drinking of wine, gambling, and similar other cases mentioned earlier.

To legislate laws which are contrary to them is considered equivalent to belligerence against God.

Apart from these, there are the variable *aḥkām* which are changeable in accordance with changing conditions. This is the secret behind the perpetuity of Islam, its capacity to sustain until the Judgement Day, and its adaptability to varying conditions and situations. In many cases the Shari'ah gives the legislator a licence to frame laws and regulations with due observance of the welfare of the society, or provides general guide-lines for him. For instance, the following ḥadīth is quite explicit about the cases where Islam has on purpose left the Islamic State free to make an independent decision:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَفْتَرَضَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَرَائِضَ، فَلَا تُضَيِّعُوهَا؛ وَحَدَّ لَكُمْ حُدُودًا، فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا؛ وَبَهَا كُمْ عَنْ
أَشْيَاءَ فَلَا تَنْتَهِكُوهَا؛ وَسَكَتَ لَكُمْ عَنْ أَشْيَاءَ وَلَمْ يَدْعُهَا نِسْيَانًا، فَلَا تَتَكَلَّفُوهَا.

Indeed God has assigned you certain duties which you must not neglect. Then He has prescribed for you certain limits which you must not transgress, and has made certain things infrangible, which you must not infringe on.

There are certain things which He has passed over in silence, but not on account of oversight; therefore, do not impose them upon yourselves. (*Nahj al-balāghah*, aphorism 105)

In such cases, characteristic temporal demands may require, at times, absolute permissivity; at times, absolute restraint; and at other times, specific restrictions. The free hand given to the *ḥākim* (judge, legislator) in the case of *ta'zīrāt*, which cover a wide range of punishments in Islam and in which the quality and quantity of punishment depend upon the discretion of the judge, thus allowing for differences of culture, is yet another example of the legislative licence. (There is no difference here whether by "*ḥākim*" we mean the judge or the State, because if the judge is a State authority and possesses executive power, he may select some particular *ta'zīrāt* and issue a circular to the regional judges, and his directive shall be considered valid. Some jurists have explicitly confirmed this point.)

The principle of *lā 'usr wa lā ḥaraj*, and that of *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār* are other important bases for variation of the *aḥkām*.² Many of the *aḥkām al-khiyārāt* (that is, those *aḥkām* in which one of the parties is free to dissolve an agreement) have emerged in fiqh as a result of the principle of *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār*. The same is true of exigency (*iḍṭirār*) and the Secondary Laws (*al-'aḥkām al-thānawīyah*).

The primary role of *ijtihād* in law-making is to distinguish between the fixed and the variable *aḥkām*. This is not an easy job because of the presence of numerous ambiguities (*mutashābihāt*). Furthermore, the *mujtahid* has to undertake a close investigation, discriminating between the essentials and nonessentials of Islam in the *fatwā's* of the past *mujtahidūn*, and employ his deductive skills—which are evidently not free from the influence of his particular conditions and times³—to deduce the *ḥukm* of the Sharī'ah from the original texts and sources. In this way, he is able to confirm or deny the conformity of a certain proposed law with the Islamic principles. It is on this basis that the Article 19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran states that: "In order to ensure that the laws passed by the Assembly do not contradict the Islamic laws and the Constitution, a Guardianship Council shall be formed, consisting of : (1) Six qualified jurists who are aware of the needs of the time and contemporary problems. The nomination of such persons is the responsibility of the Leader or the Leadership Council. (2) Six lawyers qualified in various branches of jurisprudence from among Muslim jurists whose names are proposed to the Assembly by the Supreme Judicial Council. Their appointment is approved by the Assembly."

At the end of this discussion, it seems pertinent to call attention to certain points:

1. Some have considered legislation as exclusively a Divine prerogative, and deny that God has deputed any agent with legislative powers. Such legislative powers of a Divine agent are unacceptable to them even in the case of the Holy Prophet (S). The Prophet's Sunnah, or for that matter of all other prophets, is looked upon by them as fulfilment of the Law given in entirety by God. However, it is quite simple to accept this view with the explanation that the Sunnah of the prophets—and for that matter all the laws laid down by the *ulī al-'amr*—has a relation to the *aḥkām* revealed by God corresponding to the relation between ordinary regulations approved by the cabinet of ministers to the constitution. Or perhaps it would be more correct to compare this relationship with that between ordinary laws and the constitution, admitting that in some cases the Prophetic Sunnah may be comparable to the regulations approved by the Executive.

2. The legislative powers of the Imams (A) are more restricted than that of the Holy Prophet (S). Therefore, they did not allow themselves the right of *ijtihād* in the presence of *naṣṣ* (i.e. explicit Divine or Prophetic text), and recommended the criterion of conflict with the Sunnah as a valid ground for rejecting a ḥadīth as untrue. Nevertheless, some elements of the Prophetic Sunnah may be variable—an issue which in itself calls for an elaborate discussion.

3. The distinction between the law and *fatwā*'s of the *mujtahidūn* is also clear. The *fatwā* is a product of *ijtihād* and the faqīh's deductive endeavour. It is based on research in the four sources of fiqh, namely the Book, the Sunnah, reason and *ijmā'* (the last of which is again derived from the Sunnah), and giving of final verdict on the basis of various proofs (*adillah*). At the end of this process the faqīh declares his verdict that the *ḥukm* of the Shari'ah is such and such in such and such a matter. The issue may pertain to the *'ibādāt*, the personal matters (*al-'aḥwāl al-shakḥsiyyah*), or problems of political, economic, social or military significance. Of course, it is possible that such a *fatwā* may be proclaimed as a law by the State.

But the law, on the other hand, is approved by the State authorities with view to such factors as the needs of the time, demands of the welfare of the Ummah, and, occasionally, the requirements of exigency, with due observance of the general principles of Islam. The law derives its legitimacy from the power of the State. Of course, in an Islamic State the legitimacy of the State's authority is also derived from God. In other words, the distinction between the *fatwā*'s of the *mujtahidūn* and the law passed by the State with respect to the Divine *aḥkām* is similar to one between a recommendation and an order.

4. Another issue is that of the policy of the Islamic State in regard to the problem of the diversity of *fatwā*'s. In the Islamic State, like any other form of government, the sovereignty of the State laws should

extend over the whole of society. Plurality of law, of whatever kind and in whatever form, is equivalent to anarchy and chaos.

However, the diversity of *fatwā*'s, does not cause any difficulty as long as they are related to personal rituals and duties. But in relation to the affairs of the State where the law should ordinarily prevail, all citizens being obliged to obey it uniformly, if everyone followed a different *fatwā*, the affairs of the State would not only go out of the control of the authorities, but would also result in a general chaos on the level of the judicial and executive wings of the State itself.

Therefore, the only rational alternative is that all citizens should recognize the duty to obey one of the diverse *fatwā*'s which is selected by the supreme legislative body of the State on the basis of the criteria of superior jurisprudential soundness and completeness of conformity with the demands of public welfare, and proclaimed as law. Moreover, this duty of general obedience to the State laws is based on the obligatory duty of a Muslim to obey the *ulī al-'amr* (the legitimate authority) and the rational need for prevalence of general law and order.

Also, there cannot be any valid objection from the viewpoint of the Shari'ah against this; because there is no proviso for validity of legislation except absence of contradiction with the Islamic principles and criteria, and agreement with one of the reliable non-exceptional *fatwā*'s.

From the viewpoint of the problem of diversity of *fatwā*'s as far as I have knowledge at the moment, the late Sayyid Ismā'il al-Ṣadr has affirmed this position in his footnotes on *al-Tashrī' al-jinā'ī fī al-'Islām* ("Penal Legislation in Islam").

We may emphasize again that the consequence of following diverse *fatwā*'s is something which cannot be accepted by anyone. No State will allow the right to different sections of the public to reject government regulations regarding, for example, compulsory military training, payment of taxes, commercial and trade laws, etc. under the pretext that they do not agree with the *fatwā* of the *mujtahid* whom they follow (*marji' taqlīd*). This is especially true if we have on hand an anomalous faqīh who considers every modern phenomenon as *bid'ah* (heresy), who justifies smuggling and contraband transactions on the basis that *النَّاسُ مُسَلِّطُونَ عَلَىٰ أَمْوَالِهِمْ*. (the people have authority over their assets), who denies the right of ownership to the State, gives the right to legislate to none, and, ultimately, considering the State illegitimate and *tāghūtī* (non-Islamic) because it does not conform to his views, wants to see the Islamic Republic toppled in the same way as we overthrew the regime of the ex-Shah!

5. *Nationality*: Nationality is a kind of political relationship which connects an individual with a certain State or country, in a way that his

rights and duties are derived from this relationship.

Nationality is one of the issues of international law and has been incorporated in the constitutions and civil codes of countries. The Iranian civil code, in imitation of the French civil code, assigns its Articles 976 to 991 to the matter of nationality or citizenship. It recognizes certain rights and duties for the country's citizens which are not recognized for foreigners. In general, the bases for citizenship are blood and soil, that is, the country of birth and the nationality of the parents. In certain cases, the acquisition of citizenship on the basis of marriage is also allowed for. The Iranian civil code accepts both blood and soil in particular cases. Nationality in this sense is one of the notions accepted by all governments for exercising control over their country's frontiers and relations with other States.

However, citizenship or nationality in this sense is non-existent in Islam (although we, in the Islamic Republic, are compelled to accept it for reasons of need and advisability. It is one of the instances in which the legislator in the Islamic State can legislate laws with due observance of the Islamic principles and welfare of the Ummah. To respect such laws is a duty in accordance with the obligation to obey the *ulī al-'amr*).

Islam is a universal religion and is not limited to any particular tribe, nation, race or region. The earth belongs to God and mankind are all His creation. Accordingly, the laws of Islam are uniformly enforceable in all places. Islam addresses its message to all human beings, Muslims and non-Muslims, whether they live in Muslim lands or elsewhere; although, practically, its laws are enforceable only in relation to Muslims and that too only in the territories of an Islamic State.

From the viewpoint of Islam, the world is divided into *dār al-'Islām* (the House of Islam) and *dār al-kufr* (the House of *Kufr*). The *dār al-kufr* may be either *dār al-ḥarb* (the House of war) or *dār al-'amān* (the House of Amnesty). The *dār al-'Islām* is the territory under the sovereignty of an Islamic State, wherein the Muslims can freely perform their religious duties. The *dār al-kufr* is the territory under the control of non-Muslim States, where the Muslims are not free to exercise their religious duties and practise Islam. If the *dār al-kufr* should entertain hostilities with Muslims, it is called *dār al-ḥarb*. But if a treaty between it and the Islamic State exists, then it is called *dār al-dhimmah* or *dār al-'amān*.

The *dār al-'Islām* has its own specific laws. In it persons of doubtful religious identity are treated as Muslims, and, for example, a slaughtered beast of doubtful legitimacy is treated as *ḥalāl* (permissible). On the other hand, in the *dār al-kufr*, persons of doubtful religious identity are treated as non-Muslims, and a slaughtered beast of doubtful legitimacy is treated as *ḥarām* (forbidden). The Muslim,

whatever corner of the world he may inhabit, is treated as a citizen of Islam and its subject; he has the same rights and duties as other Muslims, regardless of wherever he may live—in the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. or China or somewhere else. However, if in the *dār al-kufr* it is not possible for him to fulfil his Islamic duties, it is obligatory for him to migrate to another place. Also, from the viewpoint of execution of the *ḥudūd* and *ta'zīrāt*, there is no difference whether the culprit is a resident of *dār al-'Islām* or of *dār al-kufr*. The non-Muslim, regardless of wherever he may live, does not enjoy the privileges of a Muslim, although in respect of the universal sovereignty of Islam he is obliged to perform the duties imposed by Islam on all mankind.

The non-Muslim is considered absolutely a foreigner regardless of whether he lives in a Muslim or a non-Muslim country. If he is a *dhimmī* and fulfils what is required of the *ahl al-dhimmah*, he enjoys the privileges of the *ahl al-dhimmah*. Then his life, property, and honour are to be respected, and he enjoys certain freedoms within the limits specified in the Islamic Law. In exchange for his commitments, he is under the protection of the Islamic State. If he does not accept the conditions of a *dhimmī*, or violates them, he is treated as a *muḥārib* (in the state of belligerence).

If he is a *musta'min*, that is, a *muḥārib* granted amnesty by the Islamic State—and in general such amnesty is provisional—he is under the protection of Muslims and no one has the right to offend him. If he is in a state of belligerence with Muslims, there being no agreement or pact between him and the Muslims, his life and property have no guarantee of security.

To be certain, the Islamic *ḥudūd* and *ta'zīrāt* in respect of criminals are the same for non-Muslims as for Muslims, except for the offences of the *ahl al-dhimmah* which are permitted by their canon.

To summarize, citizenship and nationality in Islam is on the basis of belief. Islam recognizes no other criterion except faith. Every individual acquires citizenship individually on the basis of faith. Even the husband and the wife do not derive their citizenship from each other. Children are subject to the parents' citizenship until maturity. If the parents are non-Muslims, the children are also considered the same. If one of the parents is a Muslim, the children too are considered Muslims.

NOTES:

1. It is essential to note here that accepting the *wilāyah* of a non-*ma'sūm* is a concession dictated by need; because only a *ma'sūm* may properly hold sovereignty

over people in his capacity as the vicegerent or deputy of God par excellence (*khalīfat Allāh*); his commands being indisputable commands of God. However, in the case of the absence of the *ma'sūm*, on the one hand, and the unacceptability of chaos and anarchy, on the other hand, we are forced to concede to the selection of a ruler in the descending order of priority mentioned here. At every level of choice, we are further forced to make concession in case of absence of a candidate with the desirable qualifications. Of course, the procedure and conditions for selection of the State authority call for an elaborate discussion in its own right—a matter which is beyond the scope of this article.

2. Al-Shahīd al-'Awwal (Muḥammad ibn Makki) in his work, *al-Qawā'id*, says:

السَّقَّةُ مُوجِبَةٌ لِلْيُسْرِ لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ...، يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ...، وَقَوْلِ النَّبِيِّ (ص): بُعِثْتُ بِالْحَنِيفِيَّةِ السَّمْحَةِ السَّهْلَةِ، وَقَوْلِهِ (ص): لَا ضَرَرَ وَلَا ضِرَارَ...، وَهَذِهِ الْقَاعِدَةُ تَعُودُ إِلَيْهَا جَمِيعُ رُخَصِ الشَّرْعِ.

The permission to choose an easier and more practicable alternative (*yusr*) when practice of a *ḥukm* involves difficulty and hardship is based on the Divine verses: "... He (God) has laid on you no impediment (*ḥaraj*) in your religion...." (22:78); and "... God desires ease (*yusr*) for you, and desires not hardship (*'usr*)...." (2:185); and also on such traditions of the Prophet (S) as; "I have been sent with an easy and lenient Islam...." and "*lā ḍarar wa lā dirār fī al-'Islām*". All kinds of licences authorized by the Sharī'ah are derived from this principle.

It is obvious that such cases of licence do not contradict, in the least, the *ḥadīth*:

حَلَالٌ مُحَمَّدٍ حَلَالٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَحَرَامُهُ حَرَامٌ أَبَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ.

The *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* of Muḥammad (S) are valid to the Judgement Day.

Or the statement of Imam 'Alī (A):

مَا أَبْدَعَ أَحَدٌ بَدْعًا إِلَّا تَرَكَ بِهَا سُنَّةً

No one ever started a *bid'ah* without thereby discarding a *sunnah* (of the Holy Prophet). (*al-Wāfi*, vol. I, pp. 59-60)

The above traditions relate to condemnation of *bid'ah* (innovation or heresy) in the faith; not to unchangeability of all the *aḥkām* of Islam.

3. One cannot deny the influence of such factors as social and geographical environments; personal temperament; major contemporary events and general conditions, such as war and peace; general and personal economic conditions such as plenty or famine, or prosperity or poverty; family background and education; degree of success or failure in life; the type of contemporary rule and rulers—whether oppressive or not, and scores of such other factors on the process of deduction of the *aḥkām* of the Sharī'ah by a *mujtahid*. A faqīh who has grown up in the dry and waterless deserts of Hijāz will not approach the issues of *ṭahārah* and *najāsah* (ritual purity and impurity) in the same way as a faqīh who comes from a place like Māzandarān (with plenty of rainfall, rivers, and streams—a region covered with green, dense forests). A faqīh used to poverty and destitution will differ in

his interpretation and application of the *ahkām* of the Shari'ah from one who grows up in the midst of prosperity and general welfare. Their views will not agree about the meaning of *istitā'ah* for the Ḥajj pilgrimage and they will hardly agree about what constitutes *isrāf* (wastefulness). A *mujtahid* of the days of Qājār rule may be expected to share few points of agreement with the faqīh who has lived through the days of Islamic Revolution, about the issues of *jihād* and the duty of *al-'amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*.

Unfortunately this point is not given sufficient attention. If due attention had been paid to this matter, it would have been much easier and simpler to revise many *fatwā*'s and to recognize one's right to be sceptical about the juristic conclusions and opinions of the past. In any case, it is one of the essential requirements for a living practice of *ijtihād* in every era to recognize the variability and relativity introduced into the *mujtahid*'s judgements on account of changing conditions and circumstances. It is as essential to understand the possibility that a later faqīh may understand the same original sources differently and find in them things which were not visible to the earlier fuqahā'. If we understand this issue, it will give a greater dynamism to the Islamic fiqh and allow it to be more answerable to the needs of times. It is also evident that the influence of conditions of environment by no means deprives the faqīh of the validity of his *fatwā*'s. Otherwise, no *fatwā* of anyone would ever be valid. However, realization of this point can awaken us to the need for a living study of various problems in every age and the need for courage to reevaluate the opinions of others.

Importance of the Problems of World-View

by *Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ**

translated from Persian by *Shahyār Sa'adat*

Introduction:

Every activity engaged in by man, whether on the level of individual or social life, is undoubtedly a result of particular psychological drives and inclinations, and is fashioned with the aid of sense perception and bodily skills and powers under different temporal and spacial conditions. For example, man is driven to eat and drink by his instinct to nourish himself, and is motivated to help the weak and the needy because of his emotions of sympathy for other human beings. Then, by using his sense organs, he identifies the desired foods or identifies the weak and needy to be assisted, and carries out the desired tasks through the use of his bodily faculties.

The above-mentioned activities could be said to possess the specific "human" characteristic when they are guided by his reason, in addition to his instinctive and emotional drives, which man shares with other animals. That is, the eating of food and the drinking of water should be done with the aim of maintaining one's health and strength, and the emotions and instincts must be satisfied within the framework of some rational principles and under the guidance of reason. In many

* Ḥujjat al-'Islām Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ is author of a number of books and collections of essays on ideological and philosophical topics. A pupil of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the eminent philosopher and the great exegete of the Quran and the author of the famous commentary *al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, his speciality is philosophy, Islamic as well as Western. For many years he has lectured on philosophy and *tafsīr* at Madrasedh Muntazerī and Dar Rāh-e Ḥaqq Institute at Qum. After the Islamic Revolution he has been actively involved in the movement aimed at mutual cooperation, rapprochement and dialogue between the university teachers and the teachers of theological centres, which among other things involved a chain of seminars on the subject of Islamization of the social sciences.

cases, however, reason is overwhelmed by emotion and instinct, and is unable to perform an effective role. When this happens, the activity is considered devoid of any human value.

The practical guidance provided by reason is itself controlled by the general notions and ideas which constitute the fundamental basis of man's existence as an intelligent being. For example, the belief in the necessity of maintaining one's health, or the urge to make sacrifices for the sake of a higher aim, is based on particular conceptions of the individual and society. It is these general conceptions and basic patterns of thinking that play the major role in giving shape and direction to man's efforts and struggles, and either make them meaningful and worthwhile in the human sense or deprive them of human meaning and worth. These basic patterns of thought are termed as 'world-view'. It is on account of the differences in world-view that fundamental divergence in personal behaviour and social outlook takes place.

Just as the guidance provided by reason on practical matters is ignored in acts lacking in the 'human' character, when it loses all its effective force, so also the theoretical decrees of reason are not always given the attention they require. Many people never think of the 'why' of their actions, and do not build their lives on the basis of well-thought-out ideas. Such people either content themselves with imitating others, or are simply indifferent to fundamental questions, although perceptive observers find their behaviour to conform to a particular type of world-view. For example, the conduct of an individual who thinks of nothing other than enjoyment of transitory pleasures and pursuit of selfish interest is consistent with an individualistic and materialistic world-view, even if he has not accepted materialism consciously as a reasoned philosophical viewpoint.

Therefore, our efforts and activities are 'human' and 'reasonable' when, firstly, they are performed not merely under the influence of animal instinct but on the basis of understanding and under the guidance of reason; secondly, when they are based on a logical and coherent system of thought and a correct world-view, not on raw adopted notions, or on an illogical and incorrect world-view.

In view of the above-mentioned principle, the necessity for the selection of a reasonable world-view capable of lending itself to rational justification is clear. Moreover, the existence of strong and conflicting currents in the realm of thought and belief, and the vulnerability of undefendable beliefs clearly indicates the need for learning logical arguments which confirm the chosen world-view and the necessity of acquiring the capacity to defend it.

The Fundamental Problems of World-View:

The world evidently consists of various kinds of phenomena, the study of whose characteristics has given birth to specialized fields of science. Moreover, despite the expansion in different spheres of knowledge and the vast number of wonderful and valuable discoveries made in various disciplines, there still remain, in our immediate surroundings and on this very planet, many things unknown, the effort to solve whose mystery has occupied our inquisitive scientists.

However, as already mentioned, man has always been confronted with a series of fundamental questions. The need to find correct and convincing answers to such questions is a pressing demand of his innermost nature. Furthermore, since these problems concern matters outside the realm of the senses and empirical experience, their solution cannot be expected from the experimental sciences and must be provided by reason and logic alone.¹

It so happens that the correct solution of the aforementioned problems is of fundamental importance in giving meaning and value to human existence, and directing man's voluntary activities into proper channels. The opposite of this is also true, in that giving wrong answers to these questions makes life empty, meaningless, and devoid of worthwhile goals, dragging man into the abyss of irreparable loss. Nor can man afford to ignore these fundamental questions, since by doing so he would, in addition to having to endure the pain of doubt, perplexity, and anxiety, deprive himself of the opportunity of attaining the ultimate aim of creation: perfection and everlasting felicity.

One of those fundamental questions which man must answer is whether the phenomena we encounter in our world owe their existence solely to material actions and reactions, without any participation or intervention of a nonmaterial power. Is there no nonmaterial power involved either in the emergence of the phenomena or in the existence of matter itself? Or, to put it another way, does matter constitute the totality of being, or does it constitute only a part of existence and relies on something beyond itself for its being?

The above question, which itself can be analysed into a number of other questions, is not limited to the properties and characteristics of any particular group of physical creatures, so that it may be answerable by some specific science through its own particular method. It is, on the contrary, a philosophical question, which must be studied by reason through intellectual speculation and analysis, even though the starting point for such speculation is empirical knowledge in its widest sense, which includes inner and direct experience as well.

The answer to the above question, whether in the positive or the negative, constitutes a part of one's world-view, plays an important role

in forming a basic aspect of a person's intellectual approach which may be called "ontology".

Another basic question is whether the life of each individual human being is limited to the few years he lives in this world, or whether there is another life for him after he passes away, much longer and probably even an everlasting one. And this question in turn raises another one: Does man, beside possessing a physical body, also possess a soul which can continue to live after the death of the body or not? Then, there is the last question, which is also related to the first ontological question, whether being is equivalent to material existence or is wider than that.

The solution to the above-mentioned problem also, whatever it may be, constitutes another aspect of an individual's world-view, which may be called here 'anthropology'.

And finally, the third fundamental issue to be settled before turning one's attention to the details and selecting a particular course for one's life is: What is the most certain way of knowing the best programme for individual and social life? Is there any fool-proof way beside the usual ways commonly adopted by most people which so often lead to contradictory results, which would guarantee the certainty of results?

The importance of the last question becomes more evident when the answer to the second question is in the affirmative; that is, when we conclude that man is immortal and that one must prepare beforehand for the felicity of afterlife through conscious effort during the limited period of this life. When such a belief is accepted, the need for a sure way of determining the relationship between the two lives, and an elaborate plan that would guarantee everlasting felicity becomes clearer. And the more the importance ascribed to the everlasting life, the greater is the significance of the path leading to felicity in it. This issue may therefore be called the problem of "methodology." Accordingly, the fundamental problems of world-view are: ontology, anthropology, and methodology.

Evaluating the Fundamental problems:

The solution of the aforementioned fundamental problems is of foremost importance, because it plays a basic role in shaping and giving direction to man's personal and social life, and, logically, should be taken up before any other issue. Also, it is of special significance because it involves unlimited gain and loss. In other words, if the answer to the fundamental questions raised is in the affirmative, the possibility is opened up for man of deriving infinite benefit from his life.

If it is proved that being is not coextensive with matter, and that the world has a supreme Creator who is the Maker, Sustainer, and Nourisher of all things, and possesses infinite power, knowledge, and mercy, and if it is proved that man's life is not limited to this short, worldly existence, but that it is followed by an everlasting life accompanied either by felicity or misery, and that our life in this world is a preliminary stage in which we determine the course of our life in the Hereafter through our voluntary actions, and if it is proved that there is a guaranteed method for obtaining the knowledge of a correct life-programme that can take care of our felicity in both the lives, and that this method has been communicated by the Almighty God through His chosen messengers to mankind in general, it will have a tremendous impact on man's life. In fact, the value given to the vital human activities by such a view of reality is incomparably greater than the combined worth of all the advancements made by science and the discoveries and inventions made by man. This is so because however great the value of these inventions and discoveries may be, it is still finite and limited, while the value of this view is unlimited since it makes it possible for man to attain unlimited and everlasting felicity. And it is obvious that the unlimited cannot be compared with the limited.

The objection may be raised here that the probability of the fundamental questions being answered positively is so small that it is not worth considering. It should be kept in mind, however, that however small this probability may be ($\frac{1}{n}$), it would still retain its positive value since its multiple is infinity; ($\infty \times \frac{1}{n} = \infty$). To put it in the language of economics, the 'expected value' of any investment depends on two factors: (1) the percentage of probability of success, and (2) the estimated amount of the profit. It is the product of these two that determines the 'expected value.' For example, if we want to see which of two business ventures is more profitable for investment, it is not enough to take into account the percentage of probability of each one alone. We should also consider the estimated amount of profit each venture is likely to yield. Thus, if the percentage of the probability of success in the first venture is 10%, while that of the second venture is 20%, but if the amount of the profit the first venture is likely to yield is ten times that of the second venture, then we must conclude that the expected profit in the first venture is five times greater than that in the second one, despite the fact that the probability of success in the first venture is half of that of the second one. This is so because the product of the two multiples in the first case ($0.1 \times 10 = 1$) is five times greater than that in the second case ($0.2 \times 1 = 0.2$).

The conclusion that may be drawn from the above example is that it is highly preferable to handle problems whose solution promises

unlimited benefit, even if our chances of solving them be very small. Furthermore, the value of insight into such problems cannot be compared to that of any other science, even if the results produced by these sciences be one hundred per cent certain and reliable. Thus, indifference to the various aspects of one's world-view and negligence of its fundamental problems is not a reasonable and rationally justifiable attitude. Answering these fundamental questions in the negative without any sufficient evidence is even more unjustifiable.

The Spiritual and Materialist Philosophies:

Although the fundamental questions facing man have been answered in different ways and the differences in these answers have created various philosophies and schools of thought, yet by taking into account the positive and negative answers, we can distinguish and divide the various philosophies into the two general categories of materialist and spiritual. Islam is a perfect example of the spiritual schools of thought², whereas the most prominent contemporary example of the materialist schools is Marxism.

The tenets of the Islamic world-view are none other than the well-known threefold doctrines of the faith.³ These are: the belief in the One God (*al-tawḥīd*); the belief in resurrection on the Day of Judgement (*al-ma'ād*); the belief in what God has revealed to His prophets (*wahy, nubuwwah*). In other words, Islam answers in the affirmative to each of the fundamental questions, and considers faith in them to be the real basis of man's happiness and felicity. It undertakes the solution of life's all other problems by relying on these three basic doctrines. In fact, it considers all solutions as the branches of a tree whose roots are these three principal beliefs. On the contrary, the materialist philosophies deny the existence of anything nonmaterial, do not believe that man has any life except this brief earthly existence, and deny the assurance held out by revelation.

Although the fundamental doctrines of the Islamic faith have been expounded and proven throughout the past centuries and on various levels, and there does not remain any doubt or uncertainty about any of them, this does not affect the basic fact that the contemporary strength of any set of beliefs hinges on two sorts of studies: one devoted to proving the validity of those beliefs, and the second, devoted to refuting contrary viewpoints. In other words, a double insight is necessary. In the case of Islam, unless the points of disagreement with other ideologies are identified, the areas that are made the targets of the opponents' criticisms and attacks are pinpointed, and a proper defence consisting of clear and logical answers is provided to the common Muslim individual, we cannot be sure of the stability of the

faith on the level of the general public, and be certain of the people's steadfastness in the face of the waves of challenging ideologies. Moreover, just as in the past ideological and theological books were written in accordance with the intellectual challenges of the times and with the aim of answering their prevailing doubts, so must the ideological discussions of today be formulated in accordance with the philosophies and schools of thought now current, and with the aim of repelling their ideological attacks.

What makes defensive discussions specially essential today is that materialist philosophies are not being set forth for the mere purpose of proposing solutions to the fundamental theoretical questions, but are, in fact, being propagated in order to serve the political interests of the superpowers who consider exploitation of the emotions of the world's hardworking and simple people as the best means of attaining their colonialist aims. Thus in order to disarm the people of their deep-rooted, liberating spiritual world-view, they have taken recourse in a philosophy tuned to the shallow understanding of the majority of workers and farmers. At the same time, they have tried to adorn materialism, which is one of the most reactionary and baseless of the ancient dogmas, with scientific embellishments, and pretend that it is a modern and "scientific" philosophy. Nor have they spared the use of all sorts of sophistry, paralogism, and misrepresentation to achieve this end.

The truth of the matter is that the superpowers have used materialism, which is based on empiricism, as a means of attracting the uneducated masses and as an excuse for sanctioning their propensities for improper and unethical conduct. In order to deceive the educated classes, they have borrowed some of the postulates of the experimental sciences and incorporated them into materialism. Moreover, to make sure that the probable rejection of these postulates does not destroy the foundations of their philosophy, they have taken refuge in "dialectical logic," presenting all truths to be relative and variable, so that scientific progress not only would not invalidate their doctrines, but would, on the contrary, appear to support them.

We may maintain, therefore, that defending the positions of Islamic ideology, clarifying any of its ambiguities which may lend themselves to misrepresentation, and exposing all those who have made spiritual philosophy the target of unfair and dishonest accusations, is not only an authentic philosophical and intellectual duty and a divinely ordained obligation in regard to guiding the Muslims and strengthening the foundations of their faith, but is also an Islamic social responsibility in regard to defending Islam and the existence of the Muslim countries, which have become targets of ideological, political, and colonialist attacks by the communist block.

It must be pointed out here that by emphasizing the necessity for 'double insight' and 'two-faceted defence' we do not mean to say that such insight and understanding is the 'sufficient cause' for creating faith and inclination towards the right path, or that the only reason for being drawn towards atheism and other devious paths is ignorance about correct, logical, and convincing answers to criticisms. Our purpose is simply to indicate the importance of defensive arguments alongside the affirmative ones, and to emphasize that these two activities are some of the necessary conditions for creating a stable faith, though are not the sufficient condition for it. There are other conditions necessary for the stability of faith, specially in regard to the masses of people, the most important of which is spiritual readiness and freedom from moral corruption. Just as hedonism and moral irregularities may be caused by belief in materialism, belief in materialist philosophies may also be occasioned by strong attachment to bodily pleasures and moral corruption; since one's love of pleasures and lusts may lead him, unconsciously, to search for and be attracted by philosophies which promote and sanction such conduct, and to avoid all schools of thought which teach abstinence from such endless pursuit of carnal pleasures.

It is, therefore, necessary that the real seeker after truth should cleanse himself of all moral impurities and all selfish and carnal desires, and, relying on nothing except logic and reason for guidance, liberate himself from the bondage of blind imitation of individuals, groups, or nations, simply because they possess some kind of social, political or technical superiority.

Spiritual Philosophy and Scientific Truths

A glance at the fundamental philosophical questions, to which spiritual and materialist philosophies give contradictory answers, clearly shows that the areas of contention between the two opposing points of view have nothing to do with experimental matters. Whatever the solutions found to scientific problems, they would not in any way affect the way these philosophical questions are answered. For example, accepting or rejecting Euclid's theory of space, holding to the view that mass is absolute or relative, or the validity or invalidity of the theory of mutation in biology, and other conflicting theories in the various sciences—none of these tell us anything about whether the divine or the materialistic philosophies are true; since the subject of discussion in philosophy is not the same as that of the experimental sciences, and the methods of investigation used in the two fields are completely different from each other.

It is wrong to imagine, therefore, that it is materialistic philosophy alone that accepts scientific facts and affirms the validity of the laws

governing the transformations and interactions of physical phenomena, while spiritual philosophy denies them and sets forth the theory of creation in their place. The materialists hold that belief in the theory of creation finds its genesis, in the distant past, in man's ignorance of the physical causes of phenomena. Therefore, now, when due to the advances in the experimental sciences, the system of physical causation has been fully discovered, there is no room left for such notions as that of creation or the dependence of phenomena on the will of the Creator.⁴

We know, however, that the dispute between the spiritual and the materialist points of view is not about affirming or denying the relationship between various phenomena, the nature of such relationships, or the laws which govern nature. What the dispute is about is whether the material world, with all the relationships existing between its various parts, be they known or as yet undiscovered by us, depends on a Being which transcends matter or not.

It is obvious that if such a dependence does exist, it would not be of the sort that exists between material bodies, and, therefore, cannot be studied by experimental methods; because just as the nonmaterial Being (if it exists) cannot be known through sense experience, the dependence of material phenomenon on it, also, cannot be studied through laboratory instruments. In order to make this point even clearer, we must briefly discuss philosophy and the experimental sciences, the fundamental differences between the problems with which they deal, and the methodologies which they employ.

Philosophy and Science

By the way of an introduction we would like to remind the readers that there are many words which have a number of meanings. At times one of them has a wider and more general signification than the others. Sometimes the use of such words may lead to misunderstanding, and it is necessary to make sure that one understands the exact sense in which a word is being used. In philosophy, there are a number of such terms; for example, 'potentiality,' 'possibility,' 'soul,' 'reason,' and so on.

Among the terms that share common significations are the words 'philosophy' and 'science.' In the past the word philosophy (*lit.* 'the love of wisdom') was applied to all branches of knowledge, including the natural sciences, mathematics, divinities, ethics, and politics. Every branch of knowledge had a special methodology of its own, although sometimes it happened that inappropriate methods were used; for example, a problem belonging to the natural sciences was investigated through a purely rationalist approach, whereas it should have been

studied through the experimental method.

In the Middle Ages other branches of learning were added to the aforementioned list, until it came to include almost all the thinking of that age.

After the Renaissance, and specially from the seventeenth century onward, those sciences whose method of enquiry was experimental, gradually separated from philosophy, and the term eventually came to be applied exclusively to that branch of learning the problems of which lay outside the realm of experiment and could be solved only through a purely rational, theoretical method. This branch of learning is called "metaphysics" or "the first philosophy". The term "philosophy" is also used to refer to the process of explaining the basic principles necessary for investigating the problems of a particular science, such as the philosophy of science and the philosophy of ethics.

The word "science," which literally means "knowledge," is technically used to mean systematized knowledge of problems dealing with a particular subject. According to this definition, the term "science" could also be applied to metaphysics. In recent centuries, however, the usage of the term has become more limited, and has come to refer to the experimental sciences alone, in opposition to philosophy.

According to the latter definition, philosophy and science each possesses its own distinct subject matter and methodology. That is, philosophy's subject of study consists of the general problems of existence, which are in the main part abstract and are also called, "secondary concepts,"⁵ and its method is rational and theoretical. Science, on the other hand, is concerned with the study of the accidental properties of particular objects the existence of which is taken for granted; its method is experimental. For example, physics deals with matter and energy and their interactions in the fields of mechanics, acoustics, optics, heat, electricity, magnetism, radiation, atomic structure, and nuclear phenomena; chemistry studies the composition, structure, and properties of substances and the transformations they undergo. Physiology investigates the organic processes and phenomena of living organisms, while psychology discusses mental conditions and characteristics. However, none of these sciences has anything to say about the essential nature of the subject it studies or the fundamental principles underlying its methodology. In other words, neither physics and chemistry express any opinions about the existence of matter, nor physiology and psychology discuss the reality of life and the soul. Nor does any of these sciences examine the principle of causality and its subordinate laws.

What philosophy concerns itself with are general abstract questions such as: cause and effect, permanence and change, the

material and the abstract, the contingent and the necessary, etc. And since these issues are not directly connected with sense perception, the problems related to them cannot be settled empirically. The key to their solution must be found in rational investigation and analysis. The way these rational investigations are carried out and the value of their findings constitute the subject matter of an important part of modern philosophy known as "epistemology." It follows then that we cannot expect scientific progress to help us in resolving philosophical disputes, and science to act as a referee in the quarrel between spiritual and materialist philosophies.

Unfortunately, there have been numerous attempts in the history of science and philosophy to invoke scientific laws or theories for help in the solution of philosophical problems, or to tip the scale in favour of a particular metaphysical position. On the contrary, others have sought refuge in the philosophical mode of reasoning and the rational method to help them solve a scientific problem. This, despite the fact that such intrusions are dangerous for both philosophy and science, and keep them from following the paths appropriate to their fields of study and solution of their problems through the use of methods prescribed by the nature of those problems.

As an example of such unjustified intrusion, we can mention the sort of argument some modern physicists have used to "prove" the existence of necessity in the relationship between cause and effect (determinism) by referring to findings in the field of macro-physics, while other physicists have pointed to certain phenomena observed in micro-physics as evidence that no such necessity exists. There is yet a third group that has endeavoured to reconcile the two positions by proposing that determinism is valid in the case of macro-physical phenomena and invalid in the case of micro-physical ones. All this while any philosopher knows that the law of causation is a general philosophical and metaphysical law which is, according to the definitive judgement of reason, fixed and unchanging.

What we must do is to search in nature for cases which would verify the law of causation through experimental investigations. What we definitely shouldn't do is to consider the discovery of a few examples of its applicability as a proof of its validity, or the inability to apply it in few cases as evidence of either its invalidity or lack of generality; since such failure is definitely a result of the inadequacy of our instruments. In fact, it is the self-evident principle of causality that has moved scientists to seek the causes of phenomena and to discover the laws and secrets of nature. To attempt, therefore, to prove this metaphysical principle through reference to physical phenomena and the discoveries of the experimental sciences is like trying to play the flute by blowing through its wrong end.

It should not go unsaid, however, that philosophy and science are related to each other in a number of ways, the most important of which is that philosophy proves the existence of the subject matter and the validity of the fundamental principles of the sciences, while the sciences provide a widening background for philosophical inquiry. In any case, there should be no mixing of either their problems or methods and no expecting of solutions to scientific problems from philosophy or of philosophical problems from science.

“Scientific Philosophy”

Admitting the existence of problems that must be investigated on a philosophical plane, Marxism has tried to pretend that these problems can be solved by using the discoveries made by the experimental sciences. The way Marxist writers go about doing this is that they first give an example from nature, and follow it with an example drawn from social or historical phenomena. Their third step is to draw a general conclusion by forcing a connection between these two examples, thereby, in their own imagination, proving the philosophical principle in question. Supposedly, the whole exercise authorizes them to call their philosophy as “scientific” and as based on discoveries made by the experimental sciences. Although this procedure may have some effect on those who are unfamiliar with philosophical problems and scientific methodology and are, therefore, unable to distinguish the weak points and fallacies hidden in this line of reasoning, it has no philosophical value and is considered a form of sophistry and public fraud by those who are knowledgeable in such matters.

We do not deny that there has been a fragmentation in the sciences caused by the extensive specialization of the various fields, and there is, therefore, a need for synthesizing the results of their investigations and bridging the gaps separating the numerous fields of science. Nor do we have any objection to such an endeavour’s being called “scientific philosophy,” since there is no ethical or legal injunction against coining new terms and names. What we do object to, however, is the abuse of terms and covering up of facts under misleading labels. This, we believe, is reprehensible and must be fought against.

It should be kept in mind that Marxist writers have not created their so-called “scientific philosophy” in order to serve the world of science and scholarship, by making a synthesis of the results of the investigations of the different sciences, and by connecting the endeavours of the diverse fields with one another. Far from such altruistic aims, their real motivation is to provide a justification for their baseless ideology and a philosophical foundation for their immature and inconsistent ideas. Moreover, even though the very

notion of relying on scientific findings for finding solutions to metaphysical problems is incorrect and unfruitful—and as it has been stated before, philosophical issues cannot be settled in such a manner—the Marxists are not even loyal to this misguided approach, since they ignore many irrefutable scientific facts, and rely, instead, on weak and unproven theories lacking any scientific value whatsoever. And when the fallacy of these theories is proven, instead of learning a lesson from all the wasted effort and recognizing the futility of their approach, or having recognized it, admitting it, they move on with undaunted courage to grasp at another theory, and through peculiar intellectual acrobatics at which they are so adept, set it forth as further proof of the validity of dialectical materialism.

We shall leave an examination of the fumbings and public deceptions of the Marxists to some future occasion and simply state the fact that the notion of a “scientific philosophy”—in the sense of a philosophy that attempts to solve philosophical problems through the application of the methodology of the experimental sciences with reliance on scientific discoveries alone—is an anomaly unacceptable to any competent thinker. And the adjective “scientific” for philosophy not only does not add anything to its worth, since it ascribes to it a characteristic inappropriate to philosophy, but it simply exposes the bankruptcy of its originators which proves that they were unable to distinguish the boundaries separating science from philosophy and the correct method of tackling philosophical problems. It seems that our Marxist wizards justify this blatant contradiction as an example of “dialectical contradiction,” and set it forth as a highly advanced philosophical phenomenon to the credulous devotees of “dialectics.”

Another point to be noted here is that just as ascribing the term “scientific” to discussions of philosophical issues is caused either by ignorance, or intentions to deceive the public, to denigrate and condemn them as “unscientific” is also a form of distortion and abuse of the prestige of the word “scientific”. And just as being characterized as “scientific” adds nothing to the value of metaphysical investigations, their being labelled as “unscientific” does nothing to bring down their value either. Since, as we mentioned before, being “scientific” means that a subject must lend itself to empirical verification, whereas the quality that purely theoretical problems transcend the realm of sense experience is essential to them, and is not a shortcoming or defect on their part. In other words, just because something is outside the realm of sense experience and cannot be proved through experimental methods, it does not mean that it is worthless or unverifiable. It means, rather, that it should be analysed with the help of the rational method and by the means of the self-evident axioms of reason. Moreover, as shall be demonstrated later, scientific problems themselves are in need

of metaphysical and rational principles.

Metaphysics

We said earlier that the word "philosophy" has a number of meanings one of which is synonymous with "metaphysics". It should be kept in mind, however, that the word "metaphysics" itself has various meanings—a fact that may give rise to confusion and misunderstanding.

Derived from the Greek term *meta physika*, [lit., the (works) after the physical (works)], metaphysics is the name given to that part of philosophy which concerns itself with the general principles of existence, and it appears that the ancient philosophers dealt with this subject after the section dealing with the natural sciences (physics) as a matter of didactic convenience. Thus it came to be called "after physics." As we said earlier, when all the other fields of learning separated from philosophy, what was left behind was metaphysics.

Since metaphysics deals with nonmaterial existence, a misunderstanding has arisen that metaphysics deals with supernatural phenomenon, and this misunderstanding has in turn caused spiritual philosophies to be branded as "metaphysical." The fact of the matter is that metaphysical considerations are not limited to theistic philosophies; the materialist schools are in as much need of metaphysics as others. This is the case because anyone who wishes to discuss the general and fundamental principles of existence—principles which do not fall within the exclusive domain of any particular science—must enter the realm of metaphysics, irrespective of the sort of conclusions he might reach. For example, a discussion of the principle of causality is a philosophical and metaphysical one, and although it is considered to be an axiom and used as such by all the experimental sciences, they cannot investigate it through the use of the scientific method and prove its validity. This is so even though their investigations are based upon it, and the formulation of universal scientific laws is possible only because of the law of causation. Even if someone wants to reject the principle of causality or any of its subordinate laws, he would still have to engage in a metaphysical discussion, and as they say, "philosophy can be refuted only through philosophy."

Recently an English philosopher, Robin George Collingwood, has written a treatise on metaphysics in which he has described it as a series of presuppositions which can neither be proved nor disproved. He says that these presuppositions are accepted unconsciously under certain conditions and rejected under a different set of conditions.⁶

Mr. Collingwood's treatise is a jumble of confused ideas, a product, according to one commentator of his works, of his days of

illness. It represents a subjective statement or hypothesis devoid of any philosophical value, and cannot be counted as an inquiry into the nature of metaphysics.

Considering what has been said above, it becomes clear that issues of importance in the First Philosophy are also relevant to the physical sciences, and whatever general issues fall outside the framework of science, would be considered as metaphysical. Moreover, even if the doctrine of dialectical materialism should be proven to be true, it would also be a metaphysical principle; since dialectical materialism, as its adherents claim, is not limited to any specific sphere or science, but applies to all natural, social, political, historical, or intellectual phenomena. Therefore, there is no opposition between dialectical materialism and metaphysics. There would, however, be opposition between materialism and metaphysics if the latter is taken to signify the 'realm of the supernatural.' Thus the opposition assumed by the Marxist writers between dialectics and metaphysics is completely groundless and without foundation.

Certain Aspects of Metaphysics

The nature of metaphysical problems is such that they have given rise to differing and even contradictory judgements regarding them. And even though man's nature thirsts for answers to them and, as said before, the human character of man's existence depends on correctly solving some of these problems, yet some European thinkers have judged them as insoluble, while others have considered them useless and even meaningless.

It is obvious that a thorough examination of the aforesaid characteristics of its problems and the numerous opinions expressed on the subject of metaphysics, is outside the scope of this work, requiring far more space. I hope to undertake such an attempt in the future, when I shall examine in detail the misunderstandings that have given rise to such judgements, and explain the issues in simple terms. Here, I shall content myself with mentioning the following points:

A. Since man's immediate and ordinary perceptions are acquired through the medium of the senses, shallow thinking people imagine that there is nothing beyond the perceived world, or, more precisely, beyond the range of our sense perceptions. And if, supposedly, such a thing did exist, it cannot be verified. It was this kind of shortsightedness that caused the Children of Israel to say to Moses:

... لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً...

...We shall never believe in you [and affirm your prophethood] until we see

God manifestly [with our eyes] (2:55)

The position of those who say that the soul does not exist since we cannot find it through surgery is similar.

In answer to such shortsighted views, it would suffice to say that there are many things in this very physical world that cannot be perceived through the senses, such as electricity, electromagnetic waves, and other things, whose existence is considered certain by the concerned sciences. People who deny the existence of anything beyond the range of our senses must either deny all these realities, or admit that knowledge is not limited to that gained through direct sense perception; and that reason can apprehend the existence of the supersensible through the knowledge of its perceptible effects.

B. Exclusive reliance on sense perception (despite its errors and shortcomings) can justify only abstinence from making any judgements regarding the supersensible world. It certainly cannot justify any categorical denial of the supersensible world. It follows, then, that the empiricists have no right to deny the existence of a world lying beyond the range of senses. They must adopt an agnostic attitude towards the subject, allowing the probability of its existence, and act in accordance with the demand of such a probability.

C. There is a set of metaphysical principles the validity of which cannot be denied by any reasonable man although they cannot be verified by the senses. The nature of these principles is such that even if someone does try to deny them, he will end up by unconsciously affirming them. For example, the law of contradiction is a metaphysical conception, which cannot be perceived through any of the senses. Not even the individual concepts which constitute it can be apprehended through any of the senses. That is, the idea of contradiction is not 'perceived' by the senses. Despite it, however, no reasonable person can deny the validity of this self-evident principle, and even the claim that it is invalid proves its validity.

If someone says that contradiction is possible, can he, at the same time, believe that it is impossible and that it is possible? And if he is told that his claim, although one hundred per cent correct, is also one hundred per cent wrong, would he accept it? Of course not. It is thus proven that the very claim that this principle is invalid proves its validity.

It is clear that all those who have stated the view that contradiction is possible or necessary, either had some other meaning of "contradiction" in mind, or have not understood the meaning of the concept correctly. Otherwise, the impossibility of contradiction—if its meaning is correctly understood—is far too obvious to be questioned by any reasonable person.

The existence of such principles as mentioned above proves that man possesses a faculty of apprehension other than the senses, a faculty that can apprehend certain realities independently. Thus we cannot say that the content of a particular proposition is unknowable or unverifiable just because it is outside the range of perception.

It follows, therefore, that the solution to metaphysical problems must be found through the rational method; that is, through the application of self-evident axioms, solutions to nonempirical problems are found. Moreover, if used correctly, this method can lead to results even more definite than those attained in the empirical sciences. In fact, as already pointed out, the certitude of the results attained by the empirical sciences and their generality depend entirely on metaphysical principles.

Empirical Sciences and Metaphysical Principles

Every human being, throughout life, perceives things both inside and outside himself. Mostly these perceptions are attained through natural means, and sometimes through artificial devices. In any case, neither an isolated perception nor all of them could be said to constitute a "science," in the sense of a set of general principles. Perception acquires scientific value only when it transcends the limits of the particular and the personal and enters the realm of generality. Moreover, these generalities cannot be in the form of simple concepts, but must take the composite form of postulates consisting of a number of concepts possessing a special relationship amongst them.

For example, the seeing of different colours and shapes, the hearing of various sounds, and other sense-data, give man some knowledge about objects existing in his environment; but this knowledge is not what is meant by the word "science." In other words, the particular bits of information thus obtained do not constitute the science of physics or chemistry, or any other science, even though they are more or less connected with scientific issues. Such postulates, for instance, as "the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles," "metals expand when exposed to heat," and "the atoms of one element can be changed into those of another element," etc. are scientific statements. As it can be clearly seen, these notions do not represent particular perceptions of any particular individual, and are not subject to any limitation of time or space. That is, just as they are true of the triangles, metals, and atoms of the past and the present, they are also true of the triangles, metals, and atoms of the future. Nor are these truths in any way affected by spatial considerations. This is the characteristic which distinguishes scientific concepts from particular perceptions.

Now we have to see how man can come to possess the faculty of being able to pass judgement equally on past, present, and future. It is obvious that none of the senses has the ability to look into the past and the future in the manner mentioned above, and the sense perceptions, if they be in accordance with reality, can portray only such phenomena as exist at the time of perception, not those which have long ceased to exist or have not yet come into existence.

There is no doubt that these general postulates, which are based on particular perceptions and are abstracted from them, are transformed through a certain intellectual process into general, definite, and necessary laws. This being so, the next question that presents itself is: how and according to what laws does the human mind extend particular perceptions and turn them into general postulates, and that too in a definitive form, invulnerable to scepticism?

In answer we can say that whenever we perceive two phenomena either together or following one another, we realize that there exists a relationship between them called "the causal relationship," and thus foresee that whenever the cause is present the effect would also be present. For example, whenever heat is produced in metals, their expansion would also follow.

However, without going into meticulous philosophical considerations, it can be said that what we can perceive through the senses is either the simultaneous existence of two phenomena or the fact that one of them follows the other. But by what means do we perceive that the existence of one phenomenon depends on that of another? And, secondly, even if we determine that such a dependence does exist in a particular case, how do we know that such a dependence has existed in the past and will exist in the future, in all locations?

Of course, we admit that all scientists do understand the things just mentioned, and it is on the basis of this understanding that they pursue scientific research and seek for the causes of various phenomena and their interrelationships. We should know, however, that this understanding is not the work of sense organs and the perceptual faculties related to them, but is the work of another inner faculty called "intellect" which is capable of comprehending fixed realities unconditioned by spatial and temporal limitations. One such unchanging reality is the law of causality and its corollaries to which all scientific laws owe their generality and certainty. Moreover, since these perceptions (rational truths) have not been apprehended through the medium of sense and experience and cannot be verified by any of the experimental sciences, they are therefore metaphysical truths.

In conclusion we can say that not only man's knowledge is not limited to perceptions gained through sense and experience, but the laws of the empirical sciences are themselves in need of nonempirical

knowledge and metaphysical principles.

NOTES

1. This matter shall be discussed in greater detail later on.
2. This is not to say that Islam is one kind of philosophy; what is meant is that the basic principles of Islamic faith concern issues which fall into the same category as philosophical ones. To put it another way, Islam has philosophical foundations just as Marxism does.
3. The two other principles of Islamic belief, that is, 'adl (justice) and imāmah, are in fact implicit in the doctrines of *al-tawhīd* and *nubuwwah* (prophethood).
4. This is one of the most notorious fallacies propagated by the Marxists.
5. That is, concepts that are formulated as a result of rational analysis; such as, necessity, contingency, and causation.
6. See 'Abd al-Karim Sorūsh, *Tadādd-e diyālektiki* (Dialectical Contradiction), p. 125.

Introduction to Imāmiyyah Scholars: Al-Kulaynī and His Works: * Part 1

by Dr. Waḥīd Akhtar

The Prophet (S) said that 'ulamā' of his ummah were equal to the prophets of Banū 'Isrā'il. Imam Khomeini is of the view that: 'History is full of evidences that since the death of the Prophet (S) till this day the only people who took care of Islam and defended the faith from the attacks of unrestrained critics were the Islamic scholars.' In another context, he says that: 'From whatever we know of the past, from the times of the Prophet (S) upto this date, it is evident that Islam, in all its dimensions, is saved through the efforts of the *rūḥāniyyūn* (the Muslim scholars); they preserved all Islamic knowledge, morality, philosophy, jurisprudence, political laws and all other sciences, and for this they made all conceivable efforts. Now that you are in possession of such a rich fiqh—a body of law with elaborate explanations and branches, the richest in the world, as a legal system and jurisprudence—it is constructed through the painstaking efforts of the Shī'ī 'ulamā'.¹ The Quran in the form of a question emphasizes the importance of the labour of 'ulamā' in the following words:

أَمَّنْ هُوَ فَا نِتُّ اِنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ
يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ اِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اُولُو الْاَلْبَابِ *

Is he who prays in the late hours of night, prostrating and standing, beware of Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, (to be counted equal) with a disbeliever? Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Are those who know be treated

*The article, so far as the basic information is concerned, is based upon the introduction by Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī to the Persian translation of *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* and Razzāqī's *Gāmi dar jihat-e shināsā'i-ye 'ulamā-ye Islām*. This article is the first of the series of articles on al-Kulaynī's contribution to ḥadīth literature.

Dr. Waḥīd Akhtar, an eminent Urdu poet and literary critic, is professor of philosophy at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India.

equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed. (39:9)

In a way this verse of the *Sūrat al-Zumar* makes a clear distinction between the wise and scholarly persons and those who are ignorant. This distinction in particular is made in view of the hardships which the Muslim experts of Islamic sciences undergo for the sake of preserving and developing knowledge pertaining to the ultimate realization of truth. Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq reiterates this view in an elaborate manner:

إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُورَثُوا دِرْهَمًا وَلَا دِينَارًا وَإِنَّمَا أُورِثُوا أَحَادِيثًا مِنْ أَحَادِيثِهِمْ فَمَنْ أَخَذَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْهَا فَقَدْ أَخَذَ حِطًّا وَافِرًا فَانظُرُوا عِلْمَكُمْ عَمَّنْ تَأْخُذُونَهُ؟ فَإِنَّ فِيْنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ فِي كُلِّ خَلْفٍ عُذُولًا يَنْفُونَ عَنْهُ تَحْرِيفَ الْغَالِينَ وَأَنْتِحَالَ الْمُبْطِلِينَ وَتَأْوِيلَ الْجَاهِلِينَ.

Verily 'ulamā' are successors of the prophets in the sense that prophets do not leave inheritance in the form of wealth, what they leave behind are aḥādīth, i.e. their sayings or works. Everybody who takes anything from them is necessarily much benefited. Hence, you have to think from whom you (need to) learn (knowledge). Verily in our midst are Ahl al-Bayt (members of the Prophet's lineage), who in every period are the rightful successors of the Prophet (S), and who remove from the *Dīn* all distortions made by extremists, self-seeking opportunists and alterations caused by the ignorant.²

Of course, they are the ones for whom the Prophet (S) said:

عُلَمَاءُ أُمَّتِي كَأَنْبِيَاءِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ.

'Ulamā' of my ummah are like the prophets of Banū 'Isrā'il.

It is also said that:

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ التَّجُومِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ.

"A scholar is superior to an ascetic in the same way as the moon, on full-moon nights, is brighter than all stars."³

It further reiterates the superiority of scholars by declaring:

النَّظَرُ فِي وَجْهِ الْعَالِمِ عِبَادَةٌ

'Looking at the face of a scholar is (equal to) worship.'⁴

النَّظْرُ فِي وَجْهِ الْعَالِمِ خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنْ عِتْقِ أَلْفِ رَقَبَةٍ

'A glance at the face of a scholar is better than setting free one thousand slaves.'

The most emphatic is the following tradition attributed to 'Ali (A):

مَنْ وَقَرَ عَالِمًا فَقَدْ وَقَرَ رَبَّهُ

'One who respects a scholar respects God.'⁵

The Prophet (S) enhanced the value of visit to a scholar by saying:

زِيَارَةُ الْعُلَمَاءِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنْ سَبْعِينَ طَوَافًا حَوْلَ الْبَيْتِ، وَأَفْضَلُ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ حَجَّةً وَعُمْرَةً مَبْرُورَةً مَقْبُولَةً وَرَفَعَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لَهُ سَبْعِينَ دَرَجَةً وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الرَّحْمَةَ، وَشَهِدَتْ لَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ وَجِبَتْ لَهُ.

'Meeting a scholar, in God's estimation, is more dear than seventy pilgrimages to the *Ka'bah* for *hajj* and *umrah* blessed by Divine approval. And God because of the visit to a scholar raises one's status by seventy higher grades, and He showers His blessings on him, and angels stand witness that he ought to be admitted to the Heaven.'⁶

The Prophet says further that, 'the 'ulamā' on the Day of Judgement are judged as equals of prophets and martyrs.'⁷

As Islam holds scholarship in high esteem and regards learning as a form of worship, believers pursued knowledge with great fervour. All Muslims are unanimous that the main source of knowledge is the Quran, and after that traditions of the Prophet (S) form the main body of knowledge. These two main sources contain basic laws and guiding principles for all areas of learning. In view of the importance of the Quran and ḥadīth, Muslims from the very beginning devoted themselves to the study of the Quran and paid attention to the collection and scrutiny of the traditions. They developed many allied disciplines that were essential for the study of ḥadīth, and evolved a sophisticated and meticulous method of scrutinizing aḥadīth for determining their authenticity. Shi'ah Muslims include the sayings of the fourteen Infallibles (*ma'ṣūmūn*) in the main corpus of ḥadīth, i.e. the traditions of the Prophet (S), his daughter Fāṭimah (A.S.) and the twelve Imams (A). Broadening the scope of ḥadīth by Shi'ah has some justifications; firstly, the twelve Imams and Fāṭimah (A.S.) are the persons most near and dear to the Prophet (S), who inherited all his knowledge received from the Divine source; secondly, they were first among Muslims who

realized the importance of collecting the Prophet's sayings; thirdly, they never said or ordered anything to be followed or abstained from without support from the Prophetic tradition; and fourthly, all their *ijtihādāt* were in conformity with the Quran and the Prophet's tradition. They continued the tradition of the Prophet (S) and always extended the scope of the application of ḥadīth to the changing conditions of the Muslim society and state.

The history of the Shī'ah scholarship of ḥadīth is much older than that of other Muslim sects. Some Shī'ī traditions emphasize the necessity of recording and preserving the Prophetic traditions. The Prophet (S) himself instructed Muslims "to preserve knowledge in writing." Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said:

Heart gets satisfaction from writing. Preserve your writings so that you make use of them in future.⁸

He told Mufaḍḍal, 'Write (what you know) and thus spread your knowledge among your friends; at the time of death transfer your knowledge as inheritance to your children, for when times are hard nothing gives you company and consoles you more than a book.' All the infallible Imams took keen interest in recording and compiling ḥadīth. The first collection of aḥādīth is said to be in the writing of 'Alī (A), which was passed from one generation to the other among the Imams of the Prophet's family. Another oldest collection is said to be compiled by the daughter of the Prophet (S), Fāṭimah (A), which is known as *Muṣḥaf-e Fāṭimah*. Apart from these two collections of aḥādīth, the first book of ḥadīth was written by Abū Rāfi', a slave set free by the Prophet (S), who recorded the sayings, rulings and judicial judgements of the Prophet (S), and compiled them in the book form. He is included among the Shī'ī writers in *al-Fihrist* by al-Najāshī. Salmān al-Fārisī, who after Abū Rāfi' was assigned the task of recording aḥādīth, is also mentioned as a compiler of ḥadīth. This role of Salmān is evident from the ḥadīth narrated by al-Jāthliq al-Rūmī, parts of which are quoted in *al-Tawḥīd* of al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq. In this context the names of Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah are also mentioned. Sulaym ibn Qays, a disciple of 'Alī (A), compiled a collection of ḥadīth, that has been published recently. *Al-Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādiyyah*, known as *Zabūr-e Āl-e Muḥammad*, is the most authentic collection of an Imam's invocations, written in the second half of the first century of Islamic calendar. It contains the prayers of Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (A). The first half of the second century was favourable for work in the field of ḥadīth and other Islamic sciences, therefore Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A) and al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) could guide their pupils in recording

aḥādīth. Four thousand persons have narrated aḥādīth from al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A), and his and Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm's companions wrote or compiled four hundred books in ḥadīth, known as *al-'Uṣūl al-'arba'-mi'ah*. The work started by the Imams of the Prophet's family was continued by the Shī'ī *Muḥaddithūn*. Among them the first and the most important name is that of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, famous as *Thiqat al-'Islām*, the author of *al-Kāfi*.

LIFE AND WORKS:

The details of al-Kulaynī's life are not available. His date of birth is not ascertained with certainty. He died in 329 A.H. (941 A.D.), and spent major part of his life in the third century Hijrah and is, therefore, called the *mujaddid* (reviver) of the third century. He was born in a small town Kulayn, situated in the vicinity of Ray near Tehran, where his father Mullā Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī's grave is known to exist. He belonged to a family of *muḥaddithūn* and *fuqahā'*, among whom we know the names of Mullā Ya'qūb, his father, and 'Allān, his maternal uncle. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī received early religious instruction in his native place, and went to Ray for further education, where he attended the lectures of famous contemporary scholars. He got all his formal education there and mastered the Islamic sciences. In a short time he acquired fame as an eminent scholar, and students from far and near came to him. Al-Kulaynī is counted among the *muḥaddithūn* of a special class known as the '*Riḥlah-ye ḥadīth*'. *Riḥlah*, an Arabic word, means travel or journey, and those who travelled much to gather aḥādīth were called by this name. Al-Kulaynī travelled to different places in order to collect aḥādīth and meet the persons considered to be authority in the field of ḥadīth. He also travelled to Baghdad and lived there for twenty years. There he was engaged in teaching and pursuing academic work. He died there in 329 A.H. (941 A.D.).

Al-Kulaynī lived during the period of the deputies (*nuwwāb*) of the Twelfth Imam (A.F.). Shaykh 'Abbās al-Qummi, with reference to Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs, writes that al-Kulaynī lived in the times of the *wukalā'* and *sufarā'* (deputies and emissaries) of the Twelfth Imam (A.F.), 'Uthmān ibn Sa'id al-'Amrī and his son Abū Ja'far Muḥammad, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Rūḥ, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Samarī.⁹ No body except al-Kulaynī among the Muslim theologians had this very special privilege of receiving direct guidance from the most authentic source of ḥadīth during the occultation (*ghaybah*) period. He could solve all his difficulties by referring to the special emissary of the Imam (A.F.).

Al-Kulaynī has another distinction which confers upon him a very

especial status. He is acknowledged as the *mujaddid* of the third century. It is believed among Muslims that God chooses an *‘ālim* in every century for the task of reviving and revitalizing Islam, who takes up the responsibility of preaching and strengthening the teachings of Islam. The concept of *mujaddid* is based on a tradition quoted in the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the most authentic book of ḥadīth in the view of Sunnis. According to the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the Prophet (S) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ عِنْدَ رَأْسِ كُلِّ مِائَةٍ سَنَةٍ مَنْ يُجَدِّدُ لَهَا دِينَهَا

‘God sends a person in every century with the responsibility of revitalizing and spreading His *Dīn*.’

Ibn al-‘Athīr, in his book *Jāmi‘ al-‘uṣūl* in the part *kitāb al-nubuwwah*, quotes this tradition and gives the names of the persons who are regarded as *mujaddidūn* among Shī‘ah. According to him Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A) was the *mujaddid* of the first century, who preached and propagated Shī‘ism, while the *mujaddid* of the second century was Imam ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (A), and Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī was the *mujaddid* of the third century. ‘Alam al-Hudā al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā was the *mujaddid* of the fourth century.... Shaykh Āqā Buzurg in the *Nuqabā’ al-bashar* (vol. 1, footnote, p. 440) writes, ‘This ḥadīth ... in the Shī‘ī tradition also is narrated by a number of narrators.’¹⁰ Al-Kulaynī is described as a *mujaddid* by many authors on the authority of the ḥadīth quoted above. In the book *al-Kunā wa al-‘alqāb*, Shaykh ‘Abbās al-Qummi, under the entry 1368 about al-Kulaynī, has given the full list of the *mujaddidūn* of Shī‘ism:

First century: Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (57-114/676-733); second century: Imam ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (148-203/765-818); third century: Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941); fourth century: ‘Alam al-Hudā al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī (355-436/967-1044); fifth century: ‘Allāmah Muḥammad ibn Shahr Āshūb (d. 588/1192); sixth century: al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī, Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1273); seventh century: ‘Allāmah Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf (d. 726/1325-26); eighth century: Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Fahd al-Ḥillī (d. 841/1437-38); ninth century: al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī, Nūr al-Dīn Shaykh ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-‘Alī (d. 949/1445); tenth century: Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-‘Āmilī al-Bahā‘ī (d. 1031/1621-22); eleventh century: ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1111/1699-1700); twelfth century: Waḥīd al-Bahbahānī, ustād al-kul Āqā Bāqir (d. 1206/1791-92); and thirteenth century: Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā al-mujaddid Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Shīrāzī (d. 1312/1894-95).¹¹

Al-Kulaynī is known as *Thiqat al-Islām*, which is a title not

prefixed with the name of any other Shi'i scholar. *Thiqah* is a term used in *'ilm al-rijāl* for a narrator of the tradition who is accepted as reliable. Al-Kulaynī is acknowledged as one of the most authentic relators of ḥadīth by all Muslims. Many eminent 'ulamā' have referred to him by this title. Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī (*Mir'āt al-'uqūl*, vol. 1) and Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Shūshtarī (*Majālis al-mu'minīn*, vol. 1) are among the eminent Shi'i writers who remembered al-Kulaynī by this special title.

Al-Kulaynī lived through the period of *ghaybat-e ṣughrā* (the period of the Twelfth Imam's minor occultation), and, as mentioned earlier, was greatly benefited by the living source of the Divine teachings. For this distinction he is greatly respected among the 'ulamā' of succeeding generations. Some of the tributes paid to him by the later scholars, who mentioned his name with rich epithets and appellations, may be quoted here:

1. Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan (460/1067-8), in *al-Fihrist* and *al-Rijāl*, describes him as a reliable, highly respected scholar, with accurate and perfect knowledge of the traditions (*'ārif bi al-'akhbār*).

2. Al-Najāshī, Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Alī (d. 450/1058) says: "He was a great leader of Shi'ah of his times and compiled aḥādīth more than any other person, and most of them are authentic."

3. Ibn Ṭāwūs, Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far (d. 673/1274-75), writes: 'Al-Kulaynī is a man of eminence' who is unanimously considered by all scholars to be an honest and reliable (scholar)....'

4. 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-'Athīr (555-630/1160-1232-33) regards al-Kulaynī as a great theologian and scholar who led Shi'ah to attain new vigour and vitality.

5. Al-Dhahabī, Shams al-Dīn, 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān (d. 748/1347-48) and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī (852/1448) consider al-Kulaynī to be one of the leaders of Shi'i scholars during the reign of Al-Muqtadir al-'Abbāsī (295-320/908-932).

6. Shaykh Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Ḥārith al-Hamadānī says: 'In his age he was one of the greatest and most distinguished men in the scholarly world, and was the most knowledgeable scholar of ḥadīth.'

7. Mawlā Khalīl ibn al-Ghāzī al-Qazwīnī (1001-1089/1595-1678), says that all the Shi'ah and Sunnī scholars acknowledge his superior knowledge and greatness.

8. Al-Majlisī (al-'Awwal), Muḥammad Taqī ibn Maqṣūd 'Alī (d. 1070/1659-60) writes: 'In reality no person among the Shi'ah scholars can be compared with al-Kulaynī, and any person who studies *al-Kāfī* critically comes to the conclusion that he was guided by God, the Almighty.'

9. Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Nu'mān ibn 'Abd al-Salām (336-413/947-48-1022) considers *al-Kāfī* to be one

of the greatest and most useful books of Shi'ah.

10. Muḥammad ibn Makki al-Shahīd (the martyr), in his testimonial (*ijāzah*) given to Ibn al-Khāzin, holds *al-Kāfi* to be unprecedented in 'ilm al-ḥadīth, like of which no Shi'i could write.

11. Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī, in his testimonial given to Qāḍi Ṣafī al-Dīn 'Isā, writes that '*Al-Kāfi* is a great work in the field of ḥadīth, like of which cannot be found anywhere; it is a collection of the Shari'ah traditions and religious mysteries (*asrār*) that are not available in any other collection.'

12. Muḥammad ibn Murtaḍā Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680) says, '*Al-Kāfi* is the noblest and most comprehensive of books, which covers the fundamentals (*uṣūl*) and is free from defects and irrelevant matters.'

13. Al-Shahīd al-Thānī, Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad (911-965/1505-6-1557-58), writes: '*Kitāb al-Kāfi* is a fountainhead of pure water; I can swear by my life that no writer has compiled a book comparable to it, and the worth and calibre of al-Kulaynī is manifest from it.'

14. Mawlā Muḥammad Amīn al-'Astarābādī (d. 1021/1612), in his book *Fawā'id al-madaniyyah*, says, 'We have learnt from our teachers and scholars that in the Muslim world no book was written that could be compared with or reach somewhere near to *Kitāb al-Kāfi*.'¹²

15. Martyr Murtaḍā Muṭahharī (1919-1979 A.D.) regards *al-Kāfi* as the most authentic book of Shi'ah ḥadīth.¹³

Usually six works of al-Kulaynī are mentioned by scholars, but probably he wrote many other books which were not referred to by the Shi'ah scholars and did not reach us. It may be conjectured with justification that perhaps the scholars of 'ilm al-rijāl (a discipline developed by Muslim scholars for ascertaining the authenticity of the narrators of ḥadīth, and therefore aims at a critical study of the lives of the narrators) had access to his other works of importance also which were lost afterwards. However, his major works are as follows:

1. *Al-Kāfi*, consisting of three parts, *Uṣūl*, *Furū'* and *Rawḍah*, and each part consisting of more than one volume, is his magnum opus. We shall discuss the scope and subject matter of this book in detail later.

2. *Tafsīr al-ru'yā* (interpretation of dream).

3. *Kitāb al-rijāl* (a critical research in the lives of the narrators of ḥadīth and the Muslim 'ulamā').

4. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-Qarāmiṭah* (refutation of a sect of Khawārij).

5. *Kitāb al-rasā'il*—treatises by the Imams (A) of the Prophet's family.

6. *Kitāb mā qīla min al-shi'r fī Ahl al-Bayt*—on the verses written in praise of the eminent personalities of the family of the Prophet (S).

There is a difference among researchers regarding the date of

al-Kulayni's death. Some say that he died in 328 A.H. and others hold that he died one year later in 329 A.H. Some historians assert with certainty that al-Kulayni died in 329, same year in which Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Samarī the last of the *sufarā*' (emissaries) of the Twelfth Imam (A.F.) died. There are some evidences to conjecture that he lived throughout the period of *ghaybat-e ṣuḡhrā* (minor occultation), and the early period of his life coincided with a part of the life of Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askari (A), who expired in the year 260 A.H. Majority of scholars is in agreement with this view, but a few do not accept this. Al-Najāshī, in *Kitāb al-rijāl*, al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, in *al-Fihrist* and Ibn Ṭāwūs in *Kashf al-Muḥajjah*, maintain that al-Kulayni expired in 328. However, all are agreed that he died in Baghdad and was buried at Bāb al-Kūfah. Today his tomb is on the east side of the river Tigris (Dijlah) near Bāb al-Jisr al-'Atiq, also known as Jisr al-Ma'mūn. If a traveller comes from East and heads towards Karkh, he will find al-Kulayni's tomb on the left. For centuries his tomb has been a place of pilgrimage for Shī'ah and is also revered by Sunnis. Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī says: 'Al-Kulayni's tomb is situated at Mawlawī Khānah Baghdad, and is known as Shaykh al-mashāyikh, and all Muslims hold it in veneration. A group of Shī'ah told me that it was Maqbarah-ye Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulayni and I visited this place.'¹⁴ Sayyid Hāshim al-Baḥrānī writes in *Rawḍat al-wā'izīn*: 'When one of the rulers of Baghdad noticed that the tomb of a Shī'ī 'ālim, al-Kulayni, is visited by a large number of pilgrims, he ordered its demolition. But after his order was carried out he realized the greatness of his personality and ordered rebuilding of the tomb and constructed a large dome on it. The ruler's tyrannical act and later on his repentance as a consequence of some warning spread near and far and people were attracted to al-Kulayni's tomb in greater number than before.'

AL-KĀFĪ:

Hājj Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī, translator of the Persian version of *al-Kāfī*, in his introduction to the book, has dealt with the criterion of the authenticity of a ḥadīth. In the light of the brief introduction to *al-Kāfī*, written by al-Kulayni himself, he elaborated the issue under a separate sub-title. Here we present the gist of his views:

Not only in *al-Kāfī* but also in other collections of aḥādīth there are found many aḥādīth which are hard to understand for they apparently seem to be against reason. Should we accept them or discard them? If we accept them, it will cause submission to something unintelligible, and will also require us to follow it, though reason does not accept any injunction that calls for a duty beyond the power of comprehension and performance, and rationalistic interpretation of

Islam holds that such a duty is not imposed upon human beings, and, hence, a tradition seemingly incompatible (*ghayr mashrū'*) with the laws of Shari'ah should be rejected as false. On the other hand, rejection of such aḥādith entails another difficulty, which is again against the dictates of reason that tends to reject them. It is an evident fact of reason that unless we understand all the conditions and different aspects of an idea we cannot reject it. Every judgement of affirmation or negation concerning an idea requires a conclusive proof, and in the case of negation it is harder to find a conclusive proof. Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq addressed himself to an atheist, saying: 'You have not visited the highest Heaven and have not explored the infinite space, and you have not traversed whole of the earth and all its layers; how do you dare to negate the Existence of God?' He meant to say that if God were a physical thing (*al-'iyādhu bi-Allāh*) and like human kings, even then you could not refute His Existence. How can you negate Him, Who is over and above the material world and human perception?' The man was convinced and embraced Islam.

In *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* a tradition is referred to Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (A), who is reported as saying: 'Angels drop their tiny feathers in my courtyard which I collect.' This tradition can be interpreted in many ways, and there is no reason to reject it as irrational, for none of us has seen angels and has no idea of their physical form ... Such traditions are similar to the Quran's *Āyāt-e mutashābih*, which are usually considered to be obscure. The third verse of the Quran and the 89th *khutbah* in *Nahj al-balāghah* can be combined together with a number of the Prophetic traditions in order to understand their significance. In connection with such traditions, Imam 'Alī (A) holds, it is enough to have merely non-detailed faith (*īmān-e ijmālī*) and one should refer them to God and His Prophet (S), and keep silent, i.e. one has neither to affirm them (dogmatically) nor reject them blindly. Reason tells us that the speaker of such a tradition is truthful, knowledgeable and has a vision of reality, and he cannot utter words without understanding them, it is, therefore, advisable not to refute him, for we cannot fully comprehend the meaning of such utterances. Ibn Sinā says, 'Every time one hears something wonderful and unbelievable, he should not negate it without any proof against it; he should always regard it as a thing belonging to the category of 'possible'.'¹⁵ Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī (A), in his letter to his son, al-Imām al-Ḥasan, which provides the best programme for both the material and spiritual life of man, with reference to the issue of the origin and Resurrection (*mabda' wa ma'ād*), says, 'If any matter is unintelligible to you, regard it as beyond your power of understanding, for you were born ignorant and later acquired knowledge; there are many things which you don't know and are anxious to learn, hence, be aware and try to understand things.'¹⁶ The point is that any thing that

is incomprehensible to a person ought not to be rejected blindly. It is only ignorance to deny a thing without understanding it. The Quran declares: *بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيظُوا بِهِ*....

One has to keep certain points in mind:

1. Traditions that are in obvious contradiction with the Quran are excluded from our discussion, and they should be rejected outright. The authentic traditions ask us to throw them away.

2. What is said about unacceptability applies to those traditions which do not apply to obligatory part of worship. But with regard to the traditions concerning derived laws and obligatory duties in Islam, strict obedience to them is called for and is supported by sound and irrefutable arguments.

3. Some of the naive scholars of our age, in their anxiety to reconcile the Quranic verses and aḥādīth, are over-ambitious, and they try to derive the (theory and) method of the breaking up of atom and making modern aircrafts from the Quran and ḥadīth, and thus, in their own imagination, enhance the importance and status of the Prophet (S) and the infallible Imams (A). They quote the verse: *إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ* * to prove the Quranic theory of splitting the atom. Similarly they make an attempt to prove correspondence between all *āyāt-e muḥkamah* (obvious or explicit Quranic verses) occurring in the speech of the Prophet (S) and mathematical formulae of electricity. They are not aware that such naive and vulgar interpretations, instead of enhancing the prestige of our spiritual leaders, amount to atrocity against them and are insulting with respect to their knowledge of Arabic language, as if they were themselves unconscious of what they said. We accept that the Quran and the tradition of the Prophet (S) are immortal and are eternal guide for ensuring human felicity, but, however, it does not necessitate from it that they are books of science containing knowledge of all human inventions. In addition to it, the Quranic teachings are unchangeable, while human knowledge and all its branches are modifiable and changeable. The sacred Shari'ah of Islam provides guidance for all the people of the world, irrespective of time and place, and does not depend on the modern age and its requirements. We accept that some sciences, having firm foundations in the Quran and the tradition, can be understood in their light, but only to the extent of keeping within the confines of the grammar and literature of Arabic language, i.e. this correspondence should not violate three conditions: correspondence, implication and necessary corollaries. The interpretations and explanations of aḥādīth should be neither less nor more than what the words convey. I sincerely request these brothers in faith that it is better to accept their ignorance in these matters rather than attributing lack of

knowledge to our religious leaders.

4. The above-mentioned points lead us to conclude that a general (*ijmāli*) faith in *mutashābihāt* of the Quran and similar type of ḥadīth, avoiding unreasonable interpretations, would not hurt our spirit of enquiry. However, it is always within the scope of human intellect to contemplate and interpret the traditions, provided it observes the rules of Arabic grammar and syntax. With regard to other traditions, which are beyond our comprehension and are seemingly deviant from Arabic grammar, a Muslim should keep quiet and express a general faith in them and leave their meaning to God and His Prophet (S), for they are those who know.

5. Whatever has been said so far concerns the text and implication of a tradition, and is relevant to the second stage of the study of ḥadīth. The first step requires a critical study of the authenticity of the persons narrating a ḥadīth from the Prophet (S) or the pious Imams (A), but it needs separate discussion in details. The scholars of *‘ilm al-rijāl* have discussed this issue in an exhaustive manner, and each one of them has suggested a particular course to follow. *Al-Kāfi* fortunately has benefited greatly from these rules, its narrators are regarded as the most authentic ones in the area of ḥadīth. We need not deal with this aspect.¹⁷

Dr. Ḥusayn ‘Alī Maḥfūz, in his introduction to *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, on the basis of one hundred books written about *al-Kāfi* and al-Kulayni, enumerates four main characteristics of the book which distinguish it from other collections of aḥādīth.

1. The compiler of *al-Kāfi* lived during the period of the Twelfth Imam's minor occultation (*ghaybat-e ṣuḡhrā*) and had access to the emissaries (*nuwwāb*) of the Imam (A.F.). In the view of Sayyid Ibn Tāwūs, this fact in itself is sufficient for us to consider al-Kulayni's writings to be closest to the truth.

2. Al-Kulayni, with the exception of a few traditions, has traced back the whole chain of narrators reaching some Imam (A). In case a tradition is narrated by a person who directly reported it from an Imam (A) or the chain of narrators has been already recorded earlier in relation to some tradition, al-Kulayni does not repeat it.

3. An authority on al-Kulayni says that al-Kulayni arranged aḥādīth in the order of their authenticity; he has recorded the more authentic traditions in the beginning of every chapter, and proceeding accordingly has put the weakest traditions at the end, for they may have some ambiguity.

4. In most of the cases he has not referred to contradictory reports and remained content with reporting only those traditions that were directly relevant to the chapter. This shows that only those aḥādīth are recorded by al-Kulayni which he accepts as preferable to others.

Abū al-Qāsim Razzāqī has given a more elaborate account of the same features and has added to them another distinguishing characteristic.

5. In *al-Kāfi* are collected the traditions that cover all the branches of faith and ethics, and all the fundamentals of fiqh. No collection of ḥadīth is comparable with it, even all the collections of *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* contain lesser number of traditions. For instance, *al-Kāfi* contains 16199 ḥadīth, while the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, including repetitions, has 7275 ḥadīth. If repetitions are deleted the former has 15176, and the latter has 4000 traditions only. The number of aḥādīth, mentioned here, covers all traditions recorded in both the *Uṣūl* and *Furū'* according to the calculation of 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī.

Razzāqī, with reference to Khalīl al-Qazwīnī, author of *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, writes: '*Al-Kāfi*, whose author is Muḥammad al-Kulaynī, is respected for its superior status even by his opponents; he compiled these collections in a period of twenty years with great care.' During the period of the minor occultation, which spreads over sixty-nine years, all the questions raised by the believers were answered by the Twelfth Imam's *nuwwāb*, four in number, who had direct access to the Imam (A.F.). The last emissary of the Imam (A.F.) died in 329 Hijrah year. Al-Kulaynī means to refer to the authority of the Twelfth Imam (A.F.) whenever he begins a tradition with "*qāla al-'ālim*" or likewise.

Some theologians believe that the book was presented to the Imam (A.F.) himself and was approved by him with the remark that *al-Kāfi* was sufficient for our Shi'ah الكافي كافٍ لشيعةنا

The *Kitāb al-Kāfi*, as mentioned above, consists of three parts: *Uṣūl*, *Furū'* and *Rawḍah*. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* is published in two volumes by the Kitāb Firūshī Islāmiyyah, Tehran, in 1388 A.H. We give a brief account of its contents on the basis of this edition. Each volume consists of several chapters and each chapter is divided into many parts, each part records a number of aḥādīth.

First Volume:

A brief introduction of 6 pages beginning with the praise of God and the description of the attributes of His Beauty and Power, deals with the purpose of creation, particularly of man; after that the mission of God's messengers ending with the last Prophet (S) and the significance of the Quran and Amīr al-mu'minīn (A) is discussed and the need for a continuous chain of infallible Imams (A) is substantiated with the support of the traditions. In the following paragraphs the importance and necessity of the knowledge of Divine Laws is emphasized, and al-Kulaynī wonders how people of his age are satisfied with their ignorance and rely upon the current customs and their ancestors'

traditions without bothering about the real teachings of Islam. He also complains against the people's complacency with regard to the capacity of human intellect. It seems that an over-confident rationalism was predominant in those days, which ignored the guidance provided by the tradition. Al-Kulaynī took up the work of compilation of the traditions for the sake of arming the believers with sufficient body of ḥadīth that could serve as a guide. He himself did not write any commentary on the traditions he compiled, but his preference for the traditions emphasizing the importance of reason and knowledge in placing them before all other traditions shows his own inclination towards rationalism. He was a *muḥaddith*, and it is generally believed that *muḥaddithūn* were anti-rationalist, but in the case of al-Kulaynī this yard-stick is not applicable. He tried to save the faith from the arrogance of rationalism, which refused to accept any other authority except intellect. He aimed to strike a balance between dogmatism and extreme type of rationalism. We shall discuss his view of reason in a separate section of our article. Here it would suffice to mention that al-Kulaynī's discourse on the duties and responsibilities of human beings prescribed by the law of Shari'ah is based on his rationalist approach to the problem, underlying the principle that God does not saddle human beings with impossible duties. The lack of this realization has led Muslim Ummah to accept many ideas and beliefs that are alien to Islam. Even in his brief introduction he emphasized the significance of knowledge and reason.

So far as the confusion created by different and sometimes contradictory traditions is concerned al-Kulaynī adopts a balanced view. He writes:

You have brought to my notice that the meaning of the traditions were difficult for you to understand due to the conflicting records in various books, and it was even more difficult to ascertain whether differences arose because of difference in the reasons and motives; you also complained of having no access to a reliable scholar (of Islamic sciences) with whom through dialogue and discussion you could arrive at a conclusion, neither you had any book that could cover all the branches of *'ilm-e Din* to save a seeker of truth from the labour of referring to many books and which could suffice as a guide and source of spiritual light in the matters of theology and the traditions of the rightly guided true Imams (A). You expressed urgent need of such a book, and I hope that the present book would serve this purpose... Nobody is able to distinguish between one and the other tradition received from the Imams (A) except with the guidance of an Imam (or the rule laid down by an Imam). There are three ways to do this: (1) Compare a tradition with the Quran, if it is contrary to the Quran, reject it. (2) A tradition that is reported on the basis of a popular belief, do away with it. (3) A tradition that is generally accepted, select it, for unanimity is undisputable. According to this rule, only a few traditions can be specified (as authentic). In the matter of traditions that are conflicting, the easiest way is suggested by the Imam (A), i.e. any one of the two you are free to choose.¹⁹

Besides the introduction, the first volume consists of four books in the following order:

The first book is *kitāb al-'aql wa al-jahl*, which has one chapter consisting of thirty-four traditions. Among them one tradition deals with the accompanying forces of reason ('aql) and ignorance (jahl).

The second book *kitāb fadl al-'ilm* is divided into thirty-two chapters and contains 176 traditions on the whole. Some of the chapters deal with the following issues: significance of knowledge and distinguishing features of wise men; three meanings of 'ilm; three types of useful knowledge; types of human beings; characteristics of scholars; reward for scholars and students; the place and rights of a scholar; death of a scholar; forbiddance from speaking without knowledge; devotion to knowledge; distributors and guardians of knowledge; heresies and opinions; virtues and importance of writing; reference to the Quran and ḥadīth; the problem of differences in the traditions; four types of the narrators of tradition; how to derive truth from the sayings of the Prophet (S); four meanings of the word sunnah.

The third book *kitāb al-tawḥīd* consists of thirty-six chapters and 212 traditions. This book deals with the problems that form the main body of 'ilm al-kalām. Some of the basic issues are as follows:

Contingent nature of the world; nature of Divine Essence and Personality; God's Knowledge of Himself; stages of the realization of God; existence and space; refutation of the visibility of God; forbiddance from defining God; absence of plurality in God; Divine Attributes; Attributes of Essence and Attributes of Divine Action; Divine Will is an Attribute of Divine Action; Divine Names and their nature; motion and transference; Seat of God ('arsh wa kursī); soul; origin (*mabda'*) and its meaning; intention and will; examination and test; contraction (*qabḍ*) and expansion (*bast*) in relation to God; felicity and vice; good and evil; free will and determinism (*qadar wa jabr*) and intermediate stage ('*amr bayna al-'amrayn*); belief in determinism, freedom and delegated freedom (*tafwīd*); meaning of Divine permission; grace (*luṭf*); Divine proofs; Divine guidance.

The fourth book consists of two parts, the first part having 110 chapters, and the second part having histories of the lives of the Prophet (S) and Fāṭimat al-Zahrā' (A) and the twelve infallible Imams (A), at the end of which four discourses are included that sum up the general issues related to the role and place of the Imams. This book is entitled *kitāb al-ḥujjah*, i.e., 'Arguments or proofs of God'. This is the longest and the most detailed book of the first volume of *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, and deals with man's need for Divine guidance in the form of prophets and Imams. Some chapters deal with the nature of the prophets' guidance and their role in human society, describing their specific characteristics and virtues. The first part of this book contains

arguments for the presence of a Divinely guided prophet or Imam in the earth, which can never remain without such guidance. The later chapters describe the signs of the Imam and necessity of following him. The topics that are emphasized are: explanation of the Quranic verse "...*wa ulī al-'amr minkum*"; Imams are trustees of Divine Command, His vicegerents, His Light, they are signs of God and they are embodiment of all the virtues and excellences; the Quran and the Imams are inseparable; the Quran leads us to know the Imams; Divine origin of 'Ali's *wilāyah* (trusteeship); comprehensive nature of the Imam's knowledge. The second part, as mentioned above, gives brief account of the lives of the fourteen Infallibles (*ma'ṣūmūn*). This book consists of 1015 traditions.

Second Volume:

It also consists of four books. The first book is *kitāb al-'īmān wa al-kufr* (the book of belief and unbelief), and is the most exhaustive and the lengthiest book of the whole compendium, which covers two-third part of the second volume. It contains 209 chapters, in which a total number of 1609 traditions are recorded. The issues discussed in this book can be summarized under the following general headings: nature of belief (*īmān*) and unbelief (*kufr*), meaning of *tawḥīd* (Divine Unity) and *shirk* (dualism or polytheism), nature of *Islām* (faith) and *nifāq* (hypocrisy), *yaqīn* (firm conviction), the problem of individual and collective belief and unbelief and unity and disunity, praiseworthy or desirable and cursed or undesirable qualities and habits etc. The last topics are dealt with in details. In short it may be justifiably said that no issue related with various forms and signs of belief and unbelief is left undiscussed in length.

The second book is *kitāb al-du'ā'* (book of invocations), consisting of four chapters and covering 409 traditions.

The third book is *kitāb 'aḥzamat al-Qur'ān* (the book concerning the virtues and greatness of the Quran), which consists of fourteen chapters and covers 124 traditions. This book deals with different aspects of the Quran and serves as a key to the understanding of the Holy Book.

The fourth book, that is the last part of *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, concerns with social issues, and is entitled as *kitāb al-mu'āsharah*. It deals with the most profound problems of the Islamic ethics and social philosophy. The issues paid special attention are: an individual's responsibilities towards others, Muslims in particular and non-Muslims in general; obligations and rights of Muslims in relation to each other and to the enemies of Islam. The discussion about these issues covers all major aspects of a Muslim's individual and social life. This book consists

of thirty chapters and 464 traditions in all. The total number of aḥādīth of the second volume is 2346. If we add to this 1437 ḥadīth of the first volume, total number of the traditions recorded in *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* is 3783.

FURŪ' AL-KĀFĪ

The second part of *al-Kāfī* is *Furū' al-Kāfī*. It is compiled after the pattern of *Uṣūl*. While *Uṣūl* deals with the fundamentals of Islamic belief concerning various tenets of the faith, *Furū'* serves as a guide to Islamic jurisprudence, covering all aspects of life from *ṭahārah* (cleansing) to *diyāt* (blood-money). Al-Kulaynī has arranged the traditions according to the main issues concerning fiqh, and classification also is in conformity with the natural order of the problems of fiqh. He has neither expressed his own views nor reported others' judgments in order to preserve impartiality of the book, so that a scholar should remain free to form his own opinions. He did not want to prejudice others' minds with a biased explanation of aḥādīth. This approach is aimed at preserving the purity of the traditions and is a clear sign of his objectivity. A brief resume of the contents of all the five volumes of *Furū' al-Kāfī* is given below:

First Volume:

1. *Kitāb al-ṭahārah* deals with all general and particular issues concerning the prescribed process of cleansing one's body, the basic rules and their derivations, in three parts. (A) *Ṭahārah wa najāsah* and related issues in 64 chapters covering 360 traditions. (B) *Ḥayḍ* (menstruation) in 24 chapters covering 93 traditions. (C) *Mayyit* (dead body) in 95 chapters covering 412 traditions.

2. *Kitāb al-ṣalāt* is a detailed discussion of legal (*fiqhī*) issues concerning *ṣalāt* (prayer). It consists of 103 chapters and covers 927 traditions.

3. *Kitāb al-zakāt* is the third and last part of the first volume and contains only a part of the traditions regarding the laws of alms-giving or poor-due. This part of the book consists of 47 chapters and 277 traditions.

Second Volume:

This volume begins with the second part of *kitāb al-zakāt*, consisting of 43 chapters and 251 traditions. On the whole this book contains 528 traditions.

2. *Kitāb al-ṣawm* is the second book of this volume dealing with

the issues concerning fasting and consists of 452 traditions divided into 83 chapters.

3. *Kitāb al-ḥajj* consists of 1485 traditions divided into 236 chapters.

The second volume of the *Furū'* contains total number of 2188 ḥadīth.

Third Volume:

This volume contains three books that deal with the issues concerning *jihād* (struggle in the way of God), trade and commerce, and marriage.

1. *Kitāb al-jihād*: The word *jihād* is usually translated as holy war, but no English word can communicate the true sense of the term, for *jihād* covers very wide range of connotations. The term can be roughly defined as covering all the acts that promote the Divine cause as well as welfare of human individual and society. It embraces in its fold another principle of Islam, i.e. *al-'amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, which in itself embraces almost all the areas of human activity, both physical and intellectual or spiritual. *Jihād* and the other principle 'enjoining good and forbidding evil', if elaborated in details and stretched to their logical corollaries, cover the whole socio-political system of Islam. *Kitāb al-jihād* consists of 149 traditions divided into 23 chapters. Al-Kulaynī has taken great care in compiling the relevant traditions in such an order that the fundamental rules governing Islamic state and society are laid down in unambiguous terms.

2. *Kitāb al-tijārah* provides the key to understanding and following the rules laid down by Islam with regard to economics. All the issues of jurisprudential significance compiled under *ma'īshah* (economy) concern with different aspects of economic activity at individual and social levels, such as, means of livelihood, just earning, forbidden earnings (*makāsib muḥarramah*), contracts, dealing in money matters, loan (*dayn*), mortgage (*rahn*), farming, trade, renting (*ijārah*), something found by chance (*luqṭah*), right of pre-emption (*shuf'ah*), surety or guaranty (*ḍamān*), etc. This book consists of 1061 traditions divided into 159 chapters.

3. *Kitāb al-nikāḥ* deals with the permissible forms and conditions of marriage and marital relations, covering all the aspects of man-woman relationship: social, economic, psychological, dower, legal rights of husband and wife etc. This book consists of 1191 chapters and 990 traditions.

The third volume contains a total number of 2200 ḥadīth.

Fourth Volume:

1. *Kitāb al-'aqīqah* deals with the issues related to child-birth, education and upbringing of children, and the rights of sons and daughters. It covers 223 traditions and 38 chapters.

2. *Kitāb al-ṭalāq*, divided into 82 chapters, deals with the issues concerning *ilā'*, a form of divorce in which a man vows not to have connections with his wife for more than four months; *ḡihār*, a kind of divorce which results from likening one's wife to the husband's mother or other immediate female kins with whom one is not permitted to marry; *li'ān*, mutual cursing—in which a man accuses his wife of adultery and the wife swears for her chastity. These issues are usually discussed under separate headings by *fuqahā'*, but al-Kulaynī has brought them under one topic. This book consists of 499 traditions.

3. This book deals with the rules of *'itq*, manumission (freeing) of slave, *tadbīr*, management (of individual affairs), and *kitābah* (writing), and consists of 114 traditions divided into 19 chapters.

4 & 5. *Kitāb al-ṣayd* and *kitāb al-dhabḥ*: These are two separate books which deal with the issues related to hunting and slaughter or sacrifice of animals. *Kitāb al-ṣayd* covers 119 traditions under 17 headings, and *kitāb al-dhabḥ* contains 74 traditions under 15 different headings.

6. *Kitāb al-'aṭ'imah*, dealing with the rules of eating, consists of 503 ḥadīth under 290 chapters.

7. *Kitāb al-'ashribah*, dealing with the issues related to drinking (permissible and prohibited), covers 62 traditions under 11 sections. As an appendix to this book *abwāb al-nabā'idhah* (wines and alcoholic drinks) is added, which consists of 24 chapters, of which the last two chapters are devoted to the issues dealing with *ghinā'* (music), *nard* (gambling with dice) and *shaṭranj* (chess). The total number of traditions of this book is 268.

8. *Kitāb al-libās wa al-tajammul wa al-zīnah*: This book covers the traditions concerning the matters related to dress, make-up, ornament and decorations under three heads, *libās*, *tajammul* and *zīnah*. It covers 553 traditions divided into 69 chapters.

9. *Kitāb al-dawājin* deals with issues pertaining to the domesticated and pet animals, under 13 chapters and records 104 traditions.

The total number of traditions of this volume is 2655.

Fifth Volume:

1. *Kitāb al-waṣāyā* deals with various forms of bequest, testament, last will and legacy. It consists of 240 traditions under 42 chapters.

2. *Kitāb al-'irth* deals with the issues of inheritance. It is the most detailed book of this volume, and covers 310 traditions under 72 headings.

3. *Kitāb al-ḥudūd* deals with the punishments prescribed by the Quran and Sunnah. It covers a long range of crimes and sins which invite the prescribed punishments. It consists of 448 traditions divided into 66 chapters.

4. *Kitāb al-diyāt*, a natural sequel of *kitāb al-ḥudūd*, deals with the prescribed amount of cash or kind payable to the victim or the victim's heirs as compensation for the atrocity committed against a person. This book contains 369 traditions under 67 heads.

5. *Kitāb al-shahādah* deals with the laws and rules of making witness or testimony in the matters of legal importance. It consists of 119 traditions under 23 sections.

6. *Kitāb al-qadā' wa al-ḥukūmah* deals with the most important aspect of jurisprudence, for it deals with the problems of social and political justice and lays down the fundamental principles of governance and implementation of the Islamic laws. This subject has various dimensions and multiple facets, and is dealt with in 19 chapters consisting of 78 traditions.

7. The last book of the *Furū'* is *kitāb al-qasam* (oath or swearing), *wa al-nadhr* (offering or vow) *wa al-kaffārāt* (atonement or expiation). These issues are usually treated as separate issues by most of the Islamic jurists, but al-Kulayni has put them together in this book, and divided the book into 18 chapters covering 140 traditions. With this book the *Furū'* ends.

The total number of traditions recorded in this volume is 1704.

The total number of aḥādīth of the *Furū'* is 11156 (first volume: 2409, second vol. 2188, third vol. 2200, fourth vol. 2655, and fifth vol. 1704). Added to this number 3783 traditions (first vol. 1437, and second vol. 2346) of the *Uṣūl*, both the books have together 14939 ḥadīth, all of which are properly authenticated and meticulously checked and scrutinized.

RAWDAT AL-KĀFĪ:

This is the last of the series of *al-Kāfi*, a book that contains the *khutab* (sermons or speeches) and the letters of the Infallibles. As the *Uṣūl* and the *Furū'* were meant to be compendium of the fundamental principles and rules of Islamic jurisprudence, morality and socio-political laws, many letters, sermons, *waṣāyā* and *sunan* of the Imams could not find place in them for they could not have been placed under any of the above-mentioned heads or sub-heads. Al-Kulayni compiled them under the name of the *Rawḍah*, a garden embracing a variety of flowers

and fruits picked up and gathered from the fields cultivated by the Imams. In all, 636 issues are covered, which range from the tenets of belief to the highly sophisticated and complex problems of ethics and sciences. This volume contains also the utterances, sermons and letters of the Prophet (S).

TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARIES:

Al-Kāfi is not only the first comprehensive Shi'ah compendium of ḥadīth, but also occupies the highest position among the Shi'ah collections of ḥadīth. Though al-Kulaynī did not express his own viewpoint anywhere on the issues of fiqh, *al-Kāfi* has been always regarded as the most authentic source of Shi'i fiqh. Al-Kulaynī never claimed to be a *mutakallim* or *falsafi*, but he adopted a particular approach to ḥadīth; and his way of arranging aḥādīth indicates his line of thought that is undoubtedly rationalist, a thing very peculiar to a compiler of ḥadīth, for *muḥaddithūn* are considered to be dogmatic, who give importance to authority or tradition more than they pay to reason. It is because of the originality and at the same time methodical and systematic way of research and writing that *al-Kāfi* has been regarded as one of the most important works of ḥadīth, and is translated into Fārsī, Urdu and other languages of the Muslim world. Many commentaries also were written on it by very distinguished scholars and thinkers. According to Āqā Buzurg Tehrānī twenty-two detailed commentaries on *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* have been written so far. Ḥasan 'Alī Maḥfūz says that twelve of them are detailed. A selected list of them is given below:

1. *Al-Rawāshih al-samāwiyyah fī sharḥ al-'aḥādīth al-'Imāmiyyah*, Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād Ḥusaynī (d. 1040/1630-31), 1311, Tehran.
2. *Al-Shāfi*, Shaykh Khalīl ibn Ghāzī al-Qazwīnī (d. 1089/1678-79), still in manuscript form.
3. *Sharḥ al-Kāfi*, Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī (d. 1050/1640-41).
4. *Sharḥ al-Kāfi*, Muḥammad Amin al-'Astarābādī al-'Akḥbārī (d. 1036/1626-27).
5. *Sharḥ al-Kāfi*, Mullā Muḥammad al-Māzandarānī (d. 1080/1669-70), considered to be one of the greatest *fuqahā'* and his commentary is regarded as one of the best. It is recently published.
6. *Mir'āt al-'uqūl fī sharḥ akḥbār al-Rasūl*, Muḥammad Bāqir ibn al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī (d. 1111/1699-1700), 1321, Tehran, in four big volumes. Recently it is being published by Ākhūndī, Tehran, and twelve volumes of it have so far come out of press.
7. *Al-Wāfi*, Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1091/1679-80), first edition, 1310, second edition, 1324, in three huge volumes.

Apart from these, numerous authors have written footnotes and brief commentaries on *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, whose number is estimated to be

twenty-one by Ḥusayn 'Alī Maḥfūz with reference to *al-Dhari'ah*.

Among the Persian translations of *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, *Tuḥfat al-'awliyā'* by Muḥammad 'Alī ibn Ḥājj Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ardakānī, known as Naḥwī, is still preserved in the form of manuscript. The book *al-Ṣāfi fī sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfi* by Shaykh Khalīl ibn Ghāzī al-Qazwīnī was published from Lucknow (India) in 1308 A.H. The latest Persian translation, in four volumes, is by Ḥājj Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī and Sayyid Hāshim Rasūlī, which is published by Intishārāt-e 'Ilmiyyah Islāmiyyah, Tehran. Three of its volumes are translated by the former, while the fourth volume is translated by the latter. This translation, at some places, is accompanied by a short but highly suggestive commentary.

An Urdu translation of *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* by Zafar Ḥasan Amrūhawī has been recently published from Pakistan; but in all probability some earlier Urdu translation of the book can be traced in India, for before the partition and independence thousands of religious and philosophical works from Arabic and Persian were translated into Urdu. A translation in Urdu was published in instalments in a monthly journal published from Meruth (India) about forty years ago, but it cannot be said with certainty if it was completed. An English translation of some books of *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* has appeared recently. This work was undertaken by World Organization for Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, who are also publishing the English translation of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'i's commentary on the Quran, *al-Mizān*. So far only first two books of the first volume of *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* are published. Despite some ambiguities in translation, it is good on the whole. We wish that translation of all the books of *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* would be published soon. It is a stupendous work, and the translators and the publishers would render great service to Shī'ah Islam by completing the English translation.

In the above-mentioned English translation, a word of caution regarding different groups of the narrators of tradition referred to in *al-Kāfi*, is added for the benefit of the readers. As this note is highly instructive, we reproduce it:

I. Wherever the author (al-Kulaynī) says in the book of *al-Kāfi* "A group of our associates", quoting from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā, the group here means the following five persons:

1. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-'Aṭṭār al-Qummi;
2. 'Alī ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far al-Kamandānī;
3. Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn Kawrah al-Qummi;
4. Abū 'Alī Aḥmad ibn Idrīs ibn Aḥmad al-'Ash'arī al-Qummi;
5. Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim al-Qummi;

II. Wherever the author (al-Kulaynī) says in the book of *al-Kāfi* "A group of our associates" quoting from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī, the group here means the following four persons:

1. Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim al-Qummi;

2. Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Udhaynah;
3. Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Udhaynah;
4. 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sa'dābādī;

III. Wherever the author (al-Kulaynī) says in the book of *al-Kāfi* "A group of our associates," quoting from Sahl ibn Ziyād, the group here means the following four persons:

1. Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ābān al-Rāzī, also known as 'Allān al-Kulaynī;

2. Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Abd Allāh Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Awn al-'Asādī al-Kūfī, a resident of Ray;

3. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Farrukh al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī;

4. Muḥammad ibn 'Aqīl al-Kulaynī;

IV. Wherever the author (al-Kulaynī) says in the book of *al-Kāfi* "A group of our associates," quoting from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad who quoted from al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Faḍḍāl, one of them is Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Imrān ibn Abī Bakr al-'Ash'arī al-Qummī.²⁰

If one reads *al-Kāfi* in the light of this note, he can understand which narrators are referred to by al-Kulaynī.

To be continued—'in shā' Allāh.

NOTES:

1. Abū al-Qāsim Razzāqī, *Gāmi dar jihat-e shināsā'i 'ulamā-ye Islām*, Intishārāt-e Awj, Tehran, 1363, p. 11.

2. Al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, Persian translation by Ḥājj Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī, Intishārāt-e 'Ilmiyyah Islāmiyyah, vol. 1, *Kitāb faḍl al-'ilm, ḥadīth 2*, p. 35.

3 & 4. 'Allāmah Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Hayāt al-qulūb*, Sāzmān-e chāp wa Intishārāt-e Jāwidān, Tehran, vol. 2, (cf. *Gāmi dar jihat-e shināsā'i 'ulamā-ye Islām*, p. 22).

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Bihār al-'anwār*, vol. 1, p. 205 (cf. *Gāmi dar Jihat-e shināsā'i 'ulamā-ye Islām*, p. 23).

7. *Hayāt al-qulūb*, vol. 2, p. 221 (cf. *Gāmi dar jihat-e shināsā'i 'ulamā-ye Islām*, p. 23).

8. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, pp. 66-67.

9. *Ibid.* (English translation by Sayyid Maḥmūd Ḥasan Riḍawī), World Organization for Islamic Services (WOFIS), vol. 1, part 1, pp. 41-42.

10. *Gāmi dar jihat-e shināsā'i 'ulamā-ye Islām*, p. 31.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35, *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* (Persian translation), introduction, pp. 8-9.

13. Murtadā Muṭahharī, *Khadamāt-e mutaqābil Islām wa Irān*, Shirkat Offset Sahāmi 'Āmm, 1360, vol.2, p. 97.

14. *Gāmi dar jihat-e shināsā'i 'ulamā-ye Islām*, p. 37.

15. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, introduction (Persian translation), p. 13.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-16.

18. *Gāmi dar jihat-e shināsā'i 'ulamā-ye Islām*, pp. 45-47.

19. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* (Persian translation), p. 9.

20. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* (English translation), p. 47.

Glimpses of the Nahj al-Balāghah* *Part 1*

by Martyr Muṭaḥḥarī

translated from Persian by 'Alī Qulī Qarā'i

INTRODUCTION:

Perhaps it may have happened to you, and if not, you may still visualize it: someone lives on your street or in your neighbourhood for years; you see him at least once every day and habitually nod to him and pass by. Years pass in this manner, until, one day, accidentally, you get an opportunity to sit down with him and to become familiar with his ideas, views and feelings, his likes and dislikes. You are amazed at what you have come to know about him. You never

*This is the first part of Martyr Muṭaḥḥarī's book *Sayrī dar Nahj al-balāghah*, and consists of the introduction and the first section of the book. The introduction, which the author, presumably, wrote before giving the book to the publisher, is dated Muḥarram 3, 1395 (January 15, 1975).

The book consists of seven sections. In the first section he discusses the two main characteristics of the *Nahj al-balāghah*; its literary excellence and its multidimensionality, quoting various opinions expressed about Imam 'Alī's eloquence in general and about the *Nahj al-balāghah* in particular. In the second section, the author discusses the theological and metaphysical ideas propounded in the *Nahj al-balāghah* and compares them with the parallel notions familiar to the Muslim *mutakallimūn* and philosophers. The third section deals with 'ibādah (worship) and its various levels. The fourth section deals with Islamic government and social justice. The fifth, dealing with the controversial issue of caliphate (*khilāfah*) and the superior status of the Ahl al-Bayt (A), has been deleted in this translation. The sixth and the seventh sections discuss the *Nahj al-balāghah*'s ethical teachings, in particular the Islamic concept of *zuhd* (abstinence); the meaning of the 'world' (*dunyā*), so often condemned in the *Nahj al-balāghah*; and the meaning of the contradiction between the 'world' and the Hereafter, which is also a recurring theme.

imagined or guessed that he might be as you found him, and never thought that he was what you later discovered him to be.

After that, whenever you see him, his face, somehow, appears to be different. Not only this, your entire attitude towards him is altered. His personality assumes a new meaning, a new depth and respect in your heart, as if he were some person other than the one you thought you knew for years. You feel as if you have discovered a new world.

My experience was similar in regard to the *Nahj al-balāghah*. From my childhood years I was familiar with the name of this book, and I could distinguish it from other books on the shelves in my father's library. Years later, during my studies, first at the theological school of Mashhad, and later at Qum, when I was finishing the last stages of the preliminary education in theology called "*suṭūḥ*", during all those days the name of the *Nahj al-balāghah* was heard more often than that of any other book after the Quran. Some of its sermons on piety I had heard so many times that I almost remembered them by heart. Nevertheless, I must admit, like all of my colleagues at the theology school (*Hawzah 'ilmiyyah*), I was quite ignorant of the world of the *Nahj al-balāghah*. We had met as strangers and passed by each other in the manner of strangers. This continued until the summer of 1325 (1946) when in order to escape the heat of Qum, I went to Iṣfahān. A trifling accident brought me into contact with a person who took my hand and led me somewhat into the world of the *Nahj al-balāghah*. When this happened, I realized that I knew little about this book until that time. Later I wished that I would also find someone who would introduce me into the world of the Quran.

Since then, the countenance of the *Nahj al-balāghah* was transformed in my eyes. I became fond of it, and gradually my fondness grew into love. It was now a different book from the one I had known until that moment. I felt as if I had discovered an entirely new world.

Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, the former mufti of Egypt, who edited and published the *Nahj al-balāghah* with a brief commentary, and for the first time introduced this book to the Egyptians, says that he had no knowledge of this book until he undertook its study far from home in a distant land. He was struck with wonder and felt as if he had discovered a precious treasure trove. Thereupon, he immediately decided to publish it and introduce it to the Arab public. The unfamiliarity of a Sunnī scholar with the *Nahj al-balāghah* is not surprising; what is amazing is that the *Nahj al-balāghah* should be a stranger and alien in its own homeland and among the Shī'ah of 'Alī (A) and that too in the Shī'ī theological schools, in the same way as 'Alī himself has remained isolated and a stranger. Evidently, if the contents and ideas of a book or the feelings and emotions of a person do not

harmonize with the mentality of a people, that book or person practically remains isolated as a stranger in an alien world, even though the name of such a person or book may be mentioned with great respect and admiration.

We, the theology students, must confess our estrangement from the *Nahj al-balāghah*. We have built a mental world of our own which is alien to the world of the *Nahj al-balāghah*.

As I write this preface, I cannot abstain from recalling with sorrow the memory of that great man who introduced me for the first time into the world of the *Nahj al-balāghah*, and whose acquaintance I treasure as one of the most precious experiences of my life, which I would not exchange for anything. No day or night passes without my remembering him or mentioning him with feelings of gratitude. I dare say that he was a divine scholar (*‘ālim-e rabbānī*) in the true sense of the word, though I dare not claim that I was “a learner of the path of deliverance” (*muta‘allim ‘alā sabīl al-najāt*)¹. I remember that in my meetings with him, I was always reminded of the following verse of Sa‘dī:

عابد وزاهد و صوفی همه طفلان رهند
مرد اگر هست به جز «عالم ربانی» نیست

*The devout, the ascetic, and the Sūfī,
All are toddlers on the path;
If there is any mature man,
It is none other than the ‘ālim-e rabbānī.*

He was a *faqīh* (jurisprudent)², a philosopher, a man of letters and a physician, all at once. He was well versed in *fiqh* (jurisprudence), philosophy, the Arabic and Persian literature and the traditional medicine, and was considered a specialist of the first order in some of these fields. He was a masterly teacher of Bū ‘Alī’s *al-Qānūn*, the treatise of Ibn Sīnā in medicine—which does not find a teacher these days—and many scholars of the theology school attended his lessons. However, it was not possible for him to confine himself to one field and his spirit revolted against any kind of restrictions. Of his lectures the most that interested him were those on the *Nahj al-balāghah*, which threw him into ecstasies. It seemed as if the *Nahj al-balāghah* had opened its wings and he, having mounted on its wings, was taken on a journey through strange worlds which were beyond our reach.

It was evident that he lived by the *Nahj al-balāghah*; he lived with it and breathed with it. His spirit was united with that book; his pulse throbbed and his heart beat in harmony with the *Nahj al-balāghah*. Its

sentences were always on his lips and their meanings had been engraved upon his heart. When he quoted its passages, tears would flow from his eyes and soak his white beard. During lessons, his encounter with and involvement in the *Nahj al-balāghah* would make him totally oblivious of his surroundings. It was a very educative as well as an attractive spectacle. Listening to the language of the heart from someone whose great heart is full of love and wisdom has altogether a different affect and attraction. He was a living example of the saints of the bygone days. The words of 'Alī fully apply to him:

وَلَوْلَا آلاَءُ الْجَلِّ الَّذِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ لَمْ تَسْتَقِرَّ أَرْوَاحُهُمْ فِي أَجْسَادِهِمْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ،
شَوْقًا إِلَى الثَّوَابِ وَخَوْفًا مِنَ الْعِقَابِ. عَظُمَ الْخَالِقُ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَصَغُرَ مَا دُونَهُ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ،...

Had it not been that the Providence had decreed the years of their life, the passionate earning for Divine reward and fear of chastisement would not have permitted their souls to remain in their bodies even for a moment. Their realization of the greatness of the Creator has made everything besides Him insignificant in their eyes.³

This refined man of letters, the speculative philosopher, the great *faqīh*, the adept man of medicine and the excellent master of theology was the late Ḥājj Mirzā 'Alī Āqā al-Shirāzī al-'Iṣfahānī, sanctified by God, a man of truth and wisdom, who had attained deliverance from the finite self and selfhood and had merged with the Infinite Truth.

In spite of his high scholarly status and eminent social standing, his sense of commitment to society and his burning love for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn (A) had impelled him to deliver sermons from the *minbar*.⁴ His sermons, since they came from the heart, had a deep effect on the hearts. Whenever he visited Qum, the scholars of the first rank would persuade him to deliver sermons from the *minbar*. His sermons were charged with a passionate purity and sincerity that made them profoundly effective. They were not just words to be heard, but a spiritual state to be experienced.

However, he abstained from leading prayers. One year, during the holy month of Ramaḍān, after much persuasion, he accepted to lead prayers at the Madrasedh-ye Ṣadr for that month. In spite of the fact that he did not come regularly and refused to stick to any regular schedule, unprecedented crowds of people would come to attend the prayers led by him. I heard that strength declined in the *jamā'āt* in the neighbourhood mosques and he, too, did not continue.

As far as I know, the people of Iṣfahān generally knew him in person and liked him. He was also loved at the theology school of Qum. The 'ulamā' of Qum would go forth eagerly to see him at the news of his arrival in the city. Like all other restrictions, he also refused to be

bound by the conditions set for having *murīds* and followers. May Allah shower His infinite mercy upon him and raise him with His *awliyā'* on the Day of Resurrection.

With all his merits, it is not my claim that he was familiar with all the worlds that the *Nahj al-balāghah* embraces and had set his foot in all the domains encompassed by it. He had explored only a portion of its realms and that part of the *Nahj al-balāghah* had been incarnated in his person. The universe of the *Nahj al-balāghah* includes numerous worlds: the world of *zuhd* (abstinence, piety) and *taqwā* (God-fearing), the world of *'ibādah* (worship, devotion) and *'irfān* (mystic knowledge), the world of *ḥikmah* (wisdom) and philosophy, the world of moral preaching and guidance, the world of eschatology (*malāḥim*) and mysteries (*mughayyabāt*), the world of politics and social responsibilities, the world of heroism and bravery...; too many worlds to be conquered by any individual. Ḥājj Mīrzā 'Alī Āqā al-Shīrāzī had explored only a part of this great ocean and knew it well.

Nahj al-Balāghah and the Present-Day Islamic Society:

The alienation from the *Nahj al-balāghah* was not confined to me or others like me, but pervaded through the Islamic society. Those who understood this book, their knowledge did not go beyond the translation of its words and explanatory notes on its sentences. The spirit and the content of the book were hidden from the eyes of all. Only lately, it may be said, the Islamic world has begun to explore the *Nahj al-balāghah*, or in other words, the *Nahj al-balāghah* has started its conquest of the Muslim world.

What is surprising is that a part of the contents of the *Nahj al-balāghah*, both in Shī'ite Iran and Arab countries, was first discovered either by atheists or non-Muslim theists, who revealed the greatness of the book to the Muslims. Of course, the purpose of most or all of them was to utilize the *Nahj al-balāghah* of 'Alī (A) for justifying and confirming their own social views; but the outcome was exactly opposite of what they desired. Because, for the first time the Muslims realized that the views expressed grandiloquently by others had nothing new to offer and that they cannot surpass what is said in the *Nahj al-balāghah* of 'Alī (A), or translated into action through the character (*sīrah*) of 'Alī and his disciples like Salmān al-Fārisī, Abū Dharr, and 'Ammār. The result of it was that instead of supporting the pretentious views of those who wished to exploit the *Nahj al-balāghah*, 'Alī and his book defeated their purpose. Nevertheless, it must be accepted that before this occurred, most of us had little knowledge of the *Nahj al-balāghah* and it hardly went beyond appreciation of few sermons about virtues of piety and abstinence. Nobody had yet

recognized the significance of the valuable epistle of Mawlā 'Alī to Mālik al-'Ashtar al-Nakh'ī; nobody had paid attention to it.

As mentioned in the first and second chapters of this book, the *Nahj al-balāghah* is a collection of sermons, precepts, prayers, epistles and aphorisms of 'Alī (A) compiled by al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Raḍī about one thousand years ago. However, neither the recorded words of Mawlā 'Alī are confined to those collected by al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, nor was he the only man to compile the sayings of Amīr al-Mu'minīn. Al-Mas'ūdī, who lived a hundred years before al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, in the second volume of his work *Murūj al-dhahab*, writes: "At present there are over 480 sermons of 'Alī in the hands of the people," whereas the total number of sermons included by al-Sayyid al-Raḍī in his collection is 239 only.

There are, at present, two kinds of work that must be accomplished with respect to the *Nahj al-balāghah*, so that 'Alī's thought and his views on various important issues expressed in the *Nahj al-balāghah*, which are still relevant and are direly needed by the present-day Islamic society, may be brought to light. The second kind of work required in relation to the *Nahj al-balāghah* is research on the sources (*asnād*) and the documents related to its contents. Fortunately, we hear that Muslim scholars in various parts of the Islamic world are devoting themselves to both of these important tasks.

This book is a collection of a series of articles that originally appeared in the journal *Maktab-e Islām*, during 1351-52 (1972-73), now presented to the learned readers in the form of the present book. Formerly, I had delivered five lectures on this topic at the Ḥusayniyah Irshād.⁵ Later, I took up with the idea of writing a series of articles to deal with the subject in greater detail.

From the outset, when I chose to call it "*Sayrī dar Nahj al-balāghah*" ('A journey into the *Nahj al-balāghah*'), I was aware that my attempt does not deserve to be called more than a journey, or a short trip. This work, by no means, can deserve to be called a research study. I neither had the time and opportunity for a research study, nor did I consider myself fit for this task. Moreover, a profound and comprehensive research study of the contents of the *Nahj al-balāghah*, exploration of the thought of 'Alī, and, besides it, research about documentation of its contents, is the job of a group and not of a single individual. But as it is said, that which cannot be attained in entirety is not to be abandoned in entirety.⁶ And since humble attempts open the way for great tasks, I started on my trip. Unfortunately, even this journey was not completed. The project that I had prepared for—and which the reader shall find mentioned in the third chapter—remained unaccomplished on account of many preoccupations. I do not know whether I will ever get the opportunity to continue my journey through the *Nahj*

al-balāghah. But it is my great desire to be able to do so.

1. A LITERARY MARVEL

The *Nahj al-balāghah* is a magnificent collection of the inimitable sermons, invocations (*du'ā'*), wills or advices, epistles and aphorisms of Amīr al-mu'minīn, Imam 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (A), compiled by al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (may God be pleased with him) about one thousand years ago. Time and years have not only failed to diminish the impressive freshness of this work, but have added constantly to its value as new concepts and ideas have emerged.

'Alī (A) was undoubtedly a man of eloquence and delivered a large number of speeches that became famous. Likewise, numerous sayings containing philosophic wisdom were heard from him. He wrote many letters, especially during the days of his caliphate, which his admirers recorded and preserved with remarkable interest and zeal. Al-Mas'ūdī (d. 346/955-6), who lived almost a hundred years before al-Sayyid al-Raḍī (d. 406/1115), in the second volume of his *Murūj al-dhahab*, under the heading "*Fī dhikr luma' min kalāmihī, wa akhbārihī, wa zuhdih*", says:

وَالَّذِي حَفِظَ النَّاسُ عَنْهُ مِنْ خُطْبِهِ فِي سَائِرِ مَقَامَاتِهِ أَرْبَعَمِائَةٍ خُطْبَةٍ وَتَيْفٍ، وَثَمَانُونَ
خُطْبَةً يُورِدُهَا عَلَى الْبَدِيهَةِ، وَتَدَاوَلَ النَّاسُ ذَلِكَ عَنْهُ قَوْلًا وَعَمَلًا.

That which has been preserved by people of 'Alī's sermons, delivered on various occasions, exceeds 480 in number. 'Alī (A) used to deliver his sermons extempore without any previous preparation. The people recorded⁷ his words and practically derived benefit from them.⁸

The testimony of an informed researcher and scholar like al-Mas'ūdī bears out the large number of 'Alī's speeches that were extant during his time. Only 239 of these have been handed down to us in the *Nahj al-balāghah*, whereas their number, as mentioned by al-Mas'ūdī, was more than 480. Moreover, al-Mas'ūdī informs us about the extraordinary dedication and ardour of various groups of people in recording and preserving 'Alī's words.

Al-Sayyid al-Raḍī and the Nahj al-balāghah:

Al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, or al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, as he is commonly called, was an ardent admirer of 'Alī's speeches. He was a scholar, a poet and a man of cultivated taste. Al-Tha'ālibī, his contemporary, says of him:

He is the most remarkable man among his contemporaries and the noblest amongst the sayyids of Iraq. Family and descent aside, he is fully adorned and endowed with literary excellence. He is the most remarkable poet among the descendants of Abī Ṭālib, though there are many distinguished poets among them. To say that of all the Quraysh no poet could ever surpass him would not be an exaggeration.⁹

It was on account of al-Sayyid al-Raḍī's earnest love of literature in general, and admiration for 'Alī's discourses in particular, that his interest was mainly literary in compiling 'Alī's words. Consequently, he gave greater attention to those passages which were more prominent from the literary point of view. This was the reason why he named his anthology "*Nahj al-balāghah*",¹⁰ which means the 'path of eloquence', giving little importance to mentioning his sources—a point rarely ignored by compilers of ḥadīth (traditions). Only at times does he casually mention the name of a certain book from which a particular sermon or epistle has been taken. In a book of history or ḥadīth, it is of primary importance that the sources be precisely specified; otherwise, little credence can be given to it. The value of a literary masterpiece, however, lies in its intrinsic beauty, subtlety, elegance and depth. Meanwhile, it is not possible to assert that al-Sayyid al-Raḍī was entirely oblivious of the historical value and other dimensions of this sacred work, or that his attention was exclusively absorbed by its literary qualities.

Fortunately, after al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, others took up the task of collecting the *asnād* of the *Nahj al-balāghah*. Perhaps the most comprehensive book in this regard is the *Nahj al-sa'ādah fī mustadrak Nahj al-balāghah* by Muḥammad Bāqir al-Maḥmūdī, a distinguished Shī'ah scholar of Iraq. In this valuable book, all of 'Alī's extant speeches, sermons, decrees, epistles, prayers, and sayings have been collected. It includes the *Nahj al-balāghah* and other discourses which were not incorporated by al-Sayyid al-Raḍī or were not available to him. Apparently, except for some of the aphorisms, the original sources of all the contents of the *Nahj al-balāghah* have been determined.¹¹

It should be mentioned that al-Sayyid al-Raḍī was not the only man to compile a collection of 'Alī's utterances; others, too, have compiled various books with different titles in this field. The most famous of them is *Ghurar al-ḥikam wa durar al-kalim* by al-Āmudī, on which Muḥaqqiq Jamāl al-Dīn al-Khunsārī has written a commentary in Persian and which has been recently printed by the University of Tehran through the efforts of the eminent scholar Mir Jalāl al-Dīn al-Muḥaddith al-'Urūmawī.

'Alī al-Jundī, the dean of the faculty of sciences at the Cairo University, in the introduction to the book *'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, shī'ruhu wa ḥikamuh*, cites a number of these collections some of which have

not yet appeared in print and exist as manuscripts. These are:

1. *Dustūr ma'ālim al-ḥikam* by al-Qudā'i, the author of the *al-Khutāt*;
2. *Nathr al-la'ālī*'; this book has been translated and published by a Russian Orientalist in one bulky volume.
3. *Ḥikam sayyidinā 'Alī*. A manuscript of this book exists in the Egyptian library, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah.

Two Distinctive Characteristics:

From the earliest times, two distinct merits have been recognized as characterizing 'Alī's discourses: firstly, literary elegance (*faṣāḥah*) and eloquence (*balāghah*); secondly, their characteristic multi-dimensional nature. Any of these two qualities is sufficient for estimating 'Alī's words as valuable, but the combination of these two qualities (i.e. matchless eloquence, literary elegance, and their multi-dimensional nature—in that they deal with diverse and occasionally incompatible spheres of life) has made it almost miraculous. For this reason, 'Alī's speech occupies a position in between the speech of the human being and the Word of God. Indeed, it has been said of it that "it is above the speech of creatures and below the Word of the Creator."¹²

Literary Beauty and Elegance:

This aspect of the *Nahj al-balāghah* requires no introduction for a reader of cultivated literary taste capable of appreciating the elegance and charm of language. Basically, beauty is a thing to be perceived and experienced and not to be described or defined. The *Nahj al-balāghah*, even after nearly fourteen centuries, has retained the same attractiveness, freshness, charm, and beauty for the present-day audience that it possessed for the people of earlier days. Here we do not intend to give an elaborate proof of this claim. Nevertheless, as a part of our discourse, we shall briefly describe the marvellous power of 'Alī's words in moving hearts and infusing them with the feeling of wonder. We shall start with 'Alī's own times and follow the effect of his discourses through the changes and variations in tastes, outlooks, and modes of thought during different successive ages up to the present day.

The companions of 'Alī (A), particularly those who had a taste for language and literary grace, greatly admired him as an orator. 'Abd Allāh ibn al-'Abbās is one of them, who himself, as al-Jāḥiẓ points out in his *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*¹³, was a powerful orator. He did not conceal his passion for listening to 'Alī speak or the enjoyment he derived from it. Once, when 'Alī was delivering his famous sermon

called *al-Shiqshiqiyyah*¹⁴, Ibn al-‘Abbās was also present. While ‘Alī (A) was speaking, an ordinary man of Kufah handed him a paper containing some questions, thus causing ‘Alī to discontinue his speech. ‘Alī, after reading the letter, did not continue his speech in spite of Ibn al-‘Abbās’ urging him to continue. Ibn al-‘Abbās later expressed the deep regret he felt on that occasion, saying, “Never in life was I ever so sorry for interruption of a speech as I was for the interruption of this sermon.”¹⁵

Referring to a certain letter that ‘Alī had written to Ibn al-‘Abbās, he used to say: “Except the speech of the Holy Prophet, I did not derive so much benefit from any utterance as from this one.”¹⁶

Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, ‘Alī’s most contumacious enemy, also acknowledges his extraordinary eloquence. When Muḥqin ibn Abī Muḥqin forsook ‘Alī and joined Mu‘āwiyah, in order to please Mu‘āwiyah, whose heart surged with ill-will and bitterness towards ‘Alī, he told him, “I have left the dumbest of men and come to you.” The flagrancy of this kind of flattery was so obvious that Mu‘āwiyah himself reproached him, saying: “Woe to you! You call ‘Alī the dumbest of men? The Quraysh knew nothing about eloquence before him. It was he who taught them the art of eloquence.”

Influence of ‘Alī’s Oratory:

Those who heard ‘Alī speaking from the *minbar* were very much affected by his words. His sermons made hearts tremble and drew tears from the eyes. Even today, who can hear or read ‘Alī’s sermons without a tremor passing through his heart? Al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, after narrating ‘Alī’s famous sermon *al-Gharrā*¹⁷, says:

As ‘Alī delivered his sermon, tears flowed from the eyes of the listeners and hearts quivered with emotion.

Hammām ibn Shurayḥ, one of ‘Alī’s companions, was a man with a heart full of God’s love and a soul burning with spiritual fire. At one time, he requested ‘Alī to describe the qualities of pious and God-fearing men. ‘Alī, on the one hand, did not want to turn down his request, and on the other, he was afraid that Hammām might not be able to bear what ‘Alī would say. Therefore, he eludes this request giving only a perfunctory description of piety and the pious. Hammām is not only unsatisfied with this, but also his eagerness is heightened and he beseeches ‘Alī to speak with greater elaboration. ‘Alī commences his famous sermon and begins to describe the characteristics of the truly pious. He enumerates about one hundred and five¹⁸ qualities of such human beings and goes on to describe more. But as ‘Alī’s words flow in

fiery sequence, Hammām is carried to the very extreme of ecstasy. His heart throbs terribly and his spirit is driven to the furthest limits of emotion. It advances in eagerness like a restless bird trying to break out of its cage. Suddenly, there is a terrible cry and the audience turn around to find that it came from no other man than Hammām himself. Approaching, they find that his soul has left its earthly mould to embrace everlasting life. When this happened, 'Alī's remark, which carries both eulogy and regret, was: "I feared this would happen. Strange, yet this is how effective admonition affects sensitive hearts."¹⁹ This is an example of the kind of influence 'Alī's sermons had over the minds and hearts of his contemporaries.

The Opinions of Ancient and Modern Scholars:

After the Holy Prophet (S), 'Alī (A) alone has the distinction of being one whose speeches and sayings were recorded and preserved by the people with particular care.

Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd quotes 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib, the great master of Arabic prose²⁰ who lived during the early part of the second century of the Hijrah, as saying, "I learnt by heart seventy sermons of 'Alī, and from that time onwards my mind always overflowed [with inspiration]."

'Alī al-Jundī also relates that when 'Abd al-Ḥamīd was asked about what had helped him most in attaining literary excellence, he replied, "Memorizing of the discourses of the 'bald one'."²¹

In the Islamic period of history the name of 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Nubātah is proverbial for oratory among Arabs. He acknowledges that his intellectual and artistic attainments are indebted to 'Alī. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd quotes him as saying:

"I committed to memory about a hundred discourses of 'Alī; since then this has served me as an inexhaustible treasure [of inspiration]."

Al-Jāhīz was a celebrated literary genius of the early third century of the Hijrah, and his book *Al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn* is regarded as one of the four main classics of Arabic literature.²² Often, in his book, he expresses his great wonder and immense admiration for 'Alī's discourses. From his remarks it is evident that a large number of 'Alī's sermons were commonly known to the people of his day. In the first volume of his *Al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*²³, after mentioning that some people praise precision in talk or rather prefer silence and disapprove profusion in speech, al-Jāhīz writes:

The profuseness of speech that has been regarded with disapproval is futile talk not that which is fruitful and illuminating. Otherwise, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib

and ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-‘Abbās were men of prolific speech.

In the same volume of his work, he quotes this famous sentence of ‘Alī (A):²⁴

قِيمَةُ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ مَا يُخْسِنُهُ

The worth of a man lies in what he has mastered.²⁵

Al-Jāhiz then devotes half a page to expressing his admiration for this sentence, and writes further:

If our book did not contain anything but this sentence, it would suffice it. The best speech is one little of which makes you dispense with much of it and in which the meanings are not concealed within words but are made manifest.

Then he remarks:

«وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ قَدْ أَلْبَسَهُ مِنَ الْجَلَالَةِ وَعَشَاهُ مِنْ نُورِ الْحِكْمَةِ عَلَى حَسَبِ نِيَّةِ صَاحِبِهِ وَتَقْوَى قَائِلِهِ».

It appears as if Allāh the Almighty has enveloped it with His glory, and covered it with the light of wisdom proportionate to the piety and *taqwā* of its speaker.

Al-Jāhiz, in the same work, where he discusses the oratory of Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah ibn Ṣūhān al-‘Abdī²⁶, says that:

No greater proof of his excellence as an orator is required than the fact that ‘Alī occasionally came to him and asked him to deliver a speech.

Al-Sayyid al-Raḍī’s following remarks in appreciation and praise of the speech of Imam ‘Alī (A) are famous:

كَانَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مَشْرَعِ الْفَصَاحَةِ وَمَوْرِدَهَا وَمَنْشَأَ الْبَلَاغَةِ وَمَوْلِدَهَا. وَمِنْهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ظَهَرَ مَكُونُهَا، وَعَنْهُ أَخَذَتْ قَرَائِنُهَا، وَعَلَى أَمْثَلِيَّتِهِ حَدَا كُلُّ قَائِلٍ خَطِيبٍ وَبِكَلَامِهِ اسْتَعَانَ كُلُّ وَاعِظٍ بَلِيغٍ. وَمَعَ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ سَبَقَ وَقَصَّرُوا. وَتَقَدَّمَ وَتَأَخَّرُوا. لِأَنَّ كَلَامَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ الْكَلَامَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ مَسْحَةٌ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ الْأَلَهِيِّ وَفِيهِ عِبْقَةٌ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ النَّبَوِيِّ.

Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī (A) was the reservoir and fountainhead of eloquence, which derived its principles from his speeches and revealed its secrets through him. Every orator of mark tried to imitate him and every preacher learned

from him the art of eloquence. Nevertheless, they lagged far behind him while he excelled them all. His speech (alone) bears the imprint of Divine Wisdom and the fragrance of the Prophet's eloquence.

Ibn Abi al-Ḥadīd is a Mu'tazilite scholar of the 7th/13th century. He was a masterly writer and an adept poet, and, as we know, was an adorer of 'Alī's discourses. Accordingly, he expresses his profound admiration for 'Alī recurringly throughout his book. In the introduction to his famous commentary on the *Nahj al-balāghah*, he writes:

Rightly has 'Alī's discourse been regarded as being only inferior to that of the Creator and superior to that of all creatures. All people have learnt the arts of oration and writing from him. It suffices to say that the people have not recorded even one-tenth or one-twentieth from any other Companion of the Prophet (S) of what they recorded and preserved of 'Alī's discourses, although there were many eloquent persons among them. Again, it is sufficient that such a man as al-Jāḥiẓ is all praise for 'Alī in his book *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*.

Ibn Abi al-Ḥadīd, in the fourth volume of his commentary, commenting on Imam 'Alī's letter to 'Abd Allāh ibn al-'Abbās (written after the fall of Egypt to Mu'āwiyah's forces and the martyrdom of Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, in which 'Alī (A) breaks the news of this disaster to 'Abd Allāh, who was at Baṣrah) writes:²⁷

Look how eloquence has given its reins into the hands of this man and is docile to his every signal. Observe the wonderful order of the words coming one after the other to bow in his presence, or gushing like a spring that flows effortlessly out of the ground. *Subḥān Allāh!* An Arab youth grows up in a town like Mecca, has never met any sage or philosopher, yet his discourses have surpassed those of Plato and Aristotle in eloquence and profundity. He has no intercourse with men of wisdom, but has surpassed Socrates. He has not grown up among warriors and heroes but amongst traders and merchants—for the people of Mecca were not a warrior nation but traders—yet he emerges as the greatest warrior of supreme courage to have walked upon the earth. Khalīl ibn Aḥmad was asked: Of 'Alī, Biṣṭām, and 'Anbasah, who was the more courageous? Replied he, "Biṣṭām and 'Anbasah should be compared with other men; 'Alī was something superior to human beings."

He came from the Quraysh, who were not the foremost in eloquence—for, the most eloquent among Arabs were Banū Jurhum, though they were not famous for wisdom or wit—yet 'Alī surpassed even Ṣaḥbān ibn Wā'il and Qays ibn Sa'dah in eloquence."

Modern Perspectives:

During the fourteen centuries that have passed since 'Alī's times, the world has seen innumerable changes in language, culture and taste, and one may be led to think that 'Alī's discourses, which although

might have invoked the adoration of the ancients, may not suit the modern taste. But one would be surprised to learn that such is not the case. From the point of view of literary form and content, 'Ali's discourses have the rare quality of transcending the limits imposed by time and place. That 'Ali's discourses are universal in their appeal to men of all times we shall discuss later. Here, after quoting the views of the classical writers, we shall quote the relevant views expressed by our contemporaries.

The late Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, formerly Mufti of Egypt, is a man who came to know the *Nahj al-balāghah* by accident. This preliminary acquaintance grew into a passionate love for the sacred book and led him to write a commentary on it. It also prompted him to endeavour to make it popular amongst the Arab youth. In the preface to his commentary, he says:

Among all those who speak the Arabic language, there is not a single man who does not believe that 'Ali's discourses, after the Quran and the discourses of the Prophet (S), are the noblest, the most eloquent, the most profound and the most comprehensive.

'Ali al-Jundī, the dean of the faculty of sciences at the Cairo University, in his book *'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, shi'ruhu wa ḥikamuh*, writing about 'Ali's prose, says:

A certain musical rhythm which moves the innermost depths of the soul is characteristic of these discourses. The phrases are so rhymed that it can be called 'prose-poetry'.

He then quotes Qudāmah ibn Ja'far as saying:

Some have shown mastery in short sayings and others in long discourses, but 'Ali has surpassed all others in both of these, even as he has surpassed them in other merits.

Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, the contemporary Egyptian writer of renown, in his book *'Alī wa banūh* ('Ali and His Sons), recounts the story of a man during the Battle of al-Jamal. The man is in doubt as to which of the two sides is in the right. He says to himself, "How is it possible that such personalities as Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr should be at fault?" He informs 'Ali (A) about his dilemma and asks him whether it is possible that such great personalities and men of established repute should be in error. 'Ali answers him:

إِنَّكَ لَمَلْبُوسٌ عَلَيْكَ، إِنَّ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ لَا يُعْرَفَانِ بِأَقْدَارِ الرِّجَالِ، إِعْرِفِ الْحَقَّ تَعْرِفِ

أَهْلَهُ، وَاعْرِفِ الْبَاطِلَ تَعْرِفِ أَهْلَهُ.

You are seriously mistaken and reversed the measure! Truth and falsehood are not measured by the worth of persons. Firstly find out what is truth and which is falsehood, then you will see who stands by truth and who with falsehood.

What 'Alī means to say is that you have reversed the measure. Truth and falsity are not measured by the nobility or baseness of persons. Instead of regarding truth and falsehood as the measure of nobility and meanness, you prejudge persons by your own pre-conceived notions of nobility and meanness. Reverse your approach. First of all find out the truth itself, then you will be able to recognize who are truthful. Find out what is falsehood, and then you will identify those who are wrong. It is not significant which person stands by truth and which sides with falsehood.

After quoting 'Alī's above-mentioned reply, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn says:

After the Revelation and the Word of God, I have never seen a more glorious and admirably expressed view than this reply of 'Alī.

Shakīb Arsalān, nicknamed "amīr al-bayān" (the master of speech), is another celebrated contemporary writer. Once in a gathering held in his honour, in Egypt, one of the speakers mounted the rostrum and in the course of his address remarked: "There are two individuals in the history of Islam who can truly be named *amīr al-bayān*: one of them is 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the other is Shakīb." At which Shakīb Arsalān (1871-1946), irritated, left his seat and walked to the rostrum. Deploring the comparison his friend had made between 'Alī and himself, he said: "What comparison is there between 'Alī and me! I am not worth even the strap of 'Alī's sandals!"²⁸

Michael Na'imah, a contemporary Lebanese Christian writer, in the introduction to the book *al-Imām 'Alī* by George Jurdāq, also a Lebanese Christian, writes:

'Alī was not only a champion on the battlefield but was also a hero in all other fields: in sincerity of heart, in purity of conscience, in the spell-binding magic of speech, in true humanitarianism, in the firmness and warmth of faith, in the height of tranquility, in readiness to help the oppressed and the wronged, and in total submission to truth wherever it may lie and whichever form it assumes. He was a hero in all these fields.

I do not intend to quote more from those who paid tributes to 'Alī, for the above-quoted remarks are sufficient to prove my point. One who praises 'Alī extols his own merit, for:

مداح خورشید، مداح خود است

كِه دو چشم روشن و نامرداست

He who admires the Sun's brilliance extols himself:

"My two eyes are bright and my vision is not clouded."

I conclude my discourse with 'Ali's own statement about himself. One day, one of his companions attempted to deliver a speech. He couldn't as he found himself tongue-tied. 'Ali told him:

أَلَا وَإِنَّ اللِّسَانَ بِيضَةٌ مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِ، فَلَا يُسْعِيهِ الْقَوْلُ إِذَا أَمْتَعَ، وَلَا يُنْهَلُهُ النَّطْقُ إِذَا اتَّسَعَ. وَإِنَّا
لَأُمْرَاءُ الْكَلَامِ وَفِينَا تَشَبَّتْ عُرُوقُهُ، وَعَلَيْنَا تَهَدَّلتْ عُصُونُهُ.

You should know that the tongue is a part of man and under the command of his mind. If the mind lacks stimulation and refuses to budge, his tongue will not assist him. However, if the mind is ready his speech will not give him respite. Indeed we (the *Ahl al-Bayt*) are the lords of (the domain of) speech. In us are sunk its roots and over us are hung its branches.²⁹

Al-Jāhiz, in the *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, relates from 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Alī that 'Alī (A) once said:

We (the *Ahl al-Bayt*) are superior to others in five qualities: eloquence, good looks, forgiveness, courage, and popularity with women.³⁰

Now we shall take up another characteristic of 'Alī's discourses, which is in fact the main theme of this book; that is, their multi-dimensionality.

The Nahj al-balāghah Among Literary Classics:

Most nations possess certain literary works which are regarded as 'masterpieces' or 'classics'. Here we shall limit our discussion to the classics of Arabic and Persian literature whose merits are more or less perceptible for us, leaving the other classics of the ancient world, Greece and Rome and so on, and the masterpieces of the modern age from Italy, England, France and other countries, to be discussed and evaluated by those who are familiar with them and qualified to discuss them.

Of course, an accurate judgement about the classics of Arabic and Persian is possible only for scholars who have specialized in the classical literature; but it is an accepted fact that every one of these masterpieces is great only in a particular aspect, not in every aspect. To be more precise, every one of the authors of these classics displayed his mastery only in a single, special field to which their ingenuity was confined, and occasionally if they have left their special field to tread other

grounds they failed miserably.

In Persian there are numerous masterpieces in mystical *ghazal*, general *ghazal*, *qaṣīdah*³⁰, epic, spiritual and mystical allegorical verse, etc.; but as we know, none of the Persian poets of world renown has succeeded in creating masterpieces in all these literary forms. Ḥāfiẓ is famous for mystical *ghazal*, Sa'dī for anecdotes and general *ghazal*, Firdawsī for epic, Rūmī for his allegorical and spiritual poetry, Khayyām for his philosophic pessimism and Niẓāmī for something else. For this reason it is not possible to compare them with one another or prefer one over the other. All that can be said is that each one of them is foremost in his own field. If occasionally any of these poetic geniuses has left his special field to try another literary form, a visible decline in quality is readily perceptible. The same is true of Arab poets of the Islamic and pre-Islamic periods. There is an anecdote in the *Nahj al-balāghah* that once 'Alī (A) was asked the question, "who is the foremost among Arab poets?" 'Alī replied:

إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ لَمْ يَجْرُوا فِي حَلَبَةٍ تُعْرَفُ الْغَايَةَ عِنْدَ قَصَبَتِهَا، فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا بُدَّ فَالْمَلِكُ

الضَّلِيلُ.

To be sure all poets did not tread a single path so that you may tell the leader from the follower; but if one were forced to choose one of them, I would say that the foremost among them was al-Malik al-Dillīl (the nickname of Umru' al-Qays).³¹

In his commentary, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd cites with *asnād* (authentic sources) an anecdote under the above-mentioned comment. Here is what he writes:

During the holy month of Ramadān, it was 'Alī's custom to invite people to dinner. The guests were offered meat, but 'Alī himself abstained from the food which was prepared for the guests. After the dinner, 'Alī would address them and impart moral instruction. One night, as they sat for dinner, a discussion commenced about the poets of the past. After the dinner, 'Alī in the course of his discourse said: "The faith is the criterion of your deeds; *taqwā* is your shield and protector; good manners are your adornment; and forbearance is the fortress of your honour." Then turning to Abū al-'Aswad al-Du'alī, who was present and moments ago had taken part in the discussion about poets, said, "Let us see, who in your opinion is the most meritorious of poets?"

Abū al-'Aswad recited a verse of Abū Dāwūd al-'Ayādī adding the remark that in his opinion Abū Dāwūd was the greatest among poets. "You are mistaken; such is not the case," 'Alī told him. Whereupon the guests, seeing 'Alī taking an interest in their discussion, pressed him to express his opinion as to whom he considered the best among poets. 'Alī said to them: "It is not right to give a judgement in this matter, for, to be certain, the pursuits of the poets are not confined to a single field so that we may point out the forerunner amongst

them. Yet, if one were forced to choose one of them, then it may be said that the best of them is one who composes not according to the personal inclinations or out of fear and inhibition [but he who gives free rein to his imagination and poetic inspiration]. Asked as to whom this description would fit, 'Alī replied, "Al-Malik al-Dillil, Umru' al-Qays."

It is said that when inquired as to who was the most eminent poet of the Jāhiliyyah (the pre-Islamic period), Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb al-Dabbī (d. 798 A.D.), the famous grammarian, answered:

أَمْرُو الْقَيْسِ إِذَا رَكِبَ؛ وَالنَّابِغَةُ إِذَا هَرَبَ؛ وَزُهَيْرٌ إِذَا رَغِبَ؛ وَالْأَعْشَى إِذَا طَرِبَ.

The greatest of poets is Umru' al-Qays when he mounts his steed, [i.e. when he composes epic poetry motivated by the feelings of courage and bravery, the passions roused on the battlefield]; al-Nābighah al-Dhubyāni when he flees in fear [i.e. when he expresses himself on the psychological effects of danger and fear]; Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā when he takes delight [in something]; and al-'A'shā, when he is in a gay and joyful mood."

Yūnus meant to say that every one of these poets had a special talent in his own field in which his works are considered to be masterpieces. Each of them was foremost in his own speciality beyond which his talent and genius did not extend.

'Alī's Versatility:

One of the outstanding characteristics of Imam 'Alī's sayings which have come down to us in the form of the *Nahj al-balāghah* is that they are not confined to any particular field alone; 'Alī (A), in his own words, has not trodden a single path only, but has covered varied and various grounds, which occasionally are quite antithetical. The *Nahj al-balāghah* is a masterpiece, but not of the kind which excels in one field such as the epic, the *ghazal*, sermon, eulogy, satire or love poetry; rather it covers multifarious fields, as shall be elaborated.

In fact, works which are masterpieces in a particular field exist, nevertheless their number is not great and they are countable on fingers. The number of works which cover numerous subjects but are not masterpieces is quite large. But the characteristic that a work be simultaneously a masterpiece without restricting itself to any one particular subject is an exclusive merit of the *Nahj al-balāghah*. Excepting the Quran, which is altogether a different subject to be dealt with independently, what masterpiece is comparable to the *Nahj al-balāghah* in versatility?

Speech is the spirit's envoy and the words of a man relate to the sphere in which his spirit dwells. Naturally, a speech which pertains to multiple spheres is characteristic of a spirit which is too creative to be

confined to a single sphere. Since the spirit of 'Alī is not limited to a particular domain but encompasses various spheres and he is, in the terminology of the Islamic mystics, *al-'insān al-kāmil* (a perfect man), *al-kawn al-jāmi'* (a complete microcosm) and *jāmi' kull al-ḥaḍarāt*³², the possessor of all higher virtues, so his speech is not limited to any one particular sphere. Accordingly, as we should say, in terms current today, that 'Alī's merit lies in the multidimensional nature of his speech, that it is different from one-dimensional works. The all-embracing nature of 'Alī's spirit and his speech is not a recent discovery. It is a feature which has invoked a sense of wonder since at least one thousand years. It was this quality that had attracted the attention of al-Sayyid al-Raḍī a thousand years ago, and he fell in love with 'Alī's speeches and writings. He writes:

Of 'Alī's wonderful qualities which exclusively belong to him, nobody sharing in it with him, is that when one reflects upon his discourses regarding abstinence (*zuhd*), and his exhortations concerning spiritual awakenedness, for a while one totally forgets that the speaker of these words was a person of highest social and political calibre, who ruled over vast territories during his time and his word was command for all. Even for a moment the thought does not enter the reader's mind that the speaker of these words might have been inclined to anything except piety and seclusion, anything except devotion and worship, having selected a quiet corner of his house or a cave in some mountain valley where he heard no voice except his own and knew nobody except himself, being totally oblivious of the world and its hustle and bustle. It is unbelievable that those sublime discourses on asceticism, detachment and abstinence and those spiritual exhortations came from somebody who pierced the enemy's ranks and went fighting to the very heart of their forces, with a sword in his hand, poised to sever the enemy's head, and who threw many a mighty warrior down from his steed, rolling into blood and dust. Blood drips from the edge of his sword and yet he is the most pious of saints and the most devoted of sages.

Then, after this, al-Sayyid al-Raḍī adds:

Frequently I discuss this matter with friends and it equally invokes their sense of wonder.

Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, too, was profoundly moved by this aspect of the *Nahj al-balāghah*, and it made him marvel at its swiftly changing scenes, which take the reader on a journey through different worlds. He makes a note of it in the introduction to his commentary on the *Nahj al-balāghah*.

Aside from his speech, in general, 'Alī (A) had a spirit that was universal, all-embracing, and multidimensional, and he has always been eulogized for this quality. He is a just ruler, a devotee who remains awake all night worshipping God; he weeps in the niche of prayer

(*miḥrāb*) and smiles on the field of battle. He is a tough warrior and a soft-hearted and kind guardian. He is a philosopher of profound insight and an able general. He is a teacher, a preacher, a judge, a jurist, a peasant, and a writer. He is a perfect man whose great soul envelops all spheres of the human spirit.

Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (1277-1349 A.D.) says of him:

وَلِهَذَا عَزَّتْ لَكَ الْأَنْدَادُ	جُمِعَتْ فِي صِفَاتِكَ الْأَضْدَادُ
فَاتِكَ نَاسِكٌ فَقِيرٌ جَوَادُ	زَاهِدٌ حَاكِمٌ حَلِيمٌ شَجَاعُ
وَلَا حَازَ مِثْلَهُنَّ الْعِبَادُ	شِيمٌ مَا جُمِعْنَ فِي بَشَرِقَطُ
وَبَأْسٌ يَذُوبُ مِنْهُ الْجَمَادُ	خُلُقٌ يُخْجِلُ النَّسِيمَ مِنَ اللَّظْفِ
الشَّفَرُ وَيُخْصِي صِفَاتِكَ الثُّقَادُ	جُلٌّ مَعْنَاكَ أَنْ يُحِيطَ بِهِ

*Opposites have come together in thy attributes,
And for that thou has no rivals.*

*A devout, a ruler, a man of forbearance, and a courageous one,
A deadly warrior, an ascetic, a pauper, and generous to others,
Traits which never gathered in one man,*

And the like of which none ever possessed;

A gentleness and charm to abash the morning breeze,

A valour and might to melt sturdy rocks;

Poetry cannot describe the glory of thy soul,

Thy multifaceted personality is above the comprehension of critics.

Apart from what has been said, an interesting point is that in spite of the fact that 'Ali's discourses are about spiritual and moral issues, in them his literary charm and eloquence have attained their peak. 'Ali (A) has not dealt with popular poetic themes such as love, wine and vainglory, which are fertile subjects for literary expression in prose and poetry. Moreover, he did not aim at displaying his skills in the art of oratory. Speech for him was a means and not an end in itself. Neither did he intend to create an object of art nor he wished to be known as an author of a literary masterpiece. Above all, his words have a universality which transcends the limits of time and place. His addressee is the human being within every person, and accordingly, his message does not know any frontier; although, generally, time and place impose limits on the outlook of a speaker and confine his personality.

The main aspect of the miraculous nature of the Quran is that its subjects and themes are altogether at variance with those current during the time of its revelation. It marks the beginning of a new era in

literature and deals with another world and a different sphere. The beauty and charm of its style and its literary excellence are truly miraculous. In these aspects too, like in its other features, the *Nahj al-balāghah* comes closer to the Quran. In truth it is the offspring of the Holy Quran.

The themes of the Nahj al-balāghah:

The variety of topics and themes discussed in the *Nahj al-balāghah* unfolds a wide spectrum of problems that give colour and hue to these heavenly discourses. The author of this dissertation has no pretension to possessing the capacity to do the book full justice and analyse it in depth. I just intend to give a brief account of the variety of its themes, and it is my firm belief that others will come in the future who shall be able to do justice to this masterpiece of human power of speech.

A Glance at the Varied Problems Covered by the Nahj al-balāghah:

The various topics found in the *Nahj al-balāghah*, every one of which is worthy of discussion, can be outlined as follows:

1. theological and metaphysical issues;
2. mystic path and worship;
3. government and social justice;
4. the Ahl al-Bayt (A) and the issue of caliphate;
5. wisdom and admonition;
6. the world and worldliness;
7. heroism and bravery;
8. prophecies, predictions, and eschatology;
9. prayers and invocations;
10. critique of contemporary society;
11. social philosophy;
12. Islam and the Quran;
13. morality and the discipline of self;
14. personalities;

and a series of other topics. Obviously, as the titles of the various chapters of the present book indicate, this author does not make any claim that the topics cited above are all that can be found in the *Nahj al-balāghah*. Neither does he claim that he has done an exhaustive study of these topics, nor has he any pretension to being considered competent for such work. That which is offered in these chapters is no more than a glimpse. Perhaps, in future, with Divine assistance, after deriving greater benefit from this inexhaustible treasure, the author

may be able to undertake a more comprehensive study; or others may be blessed with the opportunity to accomplish such a job. God is wise and indeed His assistance and help is the best.

To be continued—'in shā' Allāh.

NOTES:

1. This is a reference to the following words of 'Alī (A), taken from the *Nahj al-balāghah*, (ed. Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, Beirut 1387) *Hikam*, No. 147:

يَا كُمَّيلُ، النَّاسُ ثَلَاثَةٌ: فَعَالِمٌ رَبَّانِيٌّ، وَمُتَعَلِّمٌ عَلَى سَبِيلِ نَجَاةٍ، وَهَمَجٌ رَعَاغٌ....

O Kumayl, the mankind consist of three kinds of people: the sage adept in the knowledge of the Divine (*ālim rabbānī*), the novice of the path of deliverance (*muta'allim 'alā sabīli najāt*), and the vulgar populace..

2. 'Faḳīh' means an expert in the Islamic Law, the Shari'ah, whose study is called *fiqh*. Equivalent terms are *mufti*, *mujtahid*, and *āyatullāh*. (Tr.)

3. *Nahj al-balāghah*, *Khuṭab*, No. 193.

4. *Minbar* is a raised platform with steps, the Islamic pulpit. Traditionally, as a rule, the function of speaking at mourning gatherings, the *majālis*, has been performed in Iran by the Mullahs, or *rūḥāniyyūn*—as they are called in Iran, of the lower or junior scholarly grades. There has been some change in this pattern since the Islamic Revolution in Iran. (Tr.)

5. Husayniyyeh Irshād is a building in Tehran, formerly an institution founded by the late Dr. 'Alī Shari'ati. Martyr Muṭahhari, among others, was one of those who were invited to deliver lectures at the Irshād. (Tr.)

6. This is a reference to the Arabic maxim:

مَا لَا يَدْرَكَ كُلَّهُ لَا يُتْرَكُ كُلَّهُ

That which cannot be attained in entirety is not to be abandoned completely.

7. Here it is not clear whether al-Mas'ūdi means that 'Alī's sermons were recorded in writing, in books, or if he implies that people preserved them by memorizing them, or if he means both of these.

8. Al-Mas'ūdi, *Murūj al-dhahab* (Beirut, 1983), Vol. II, p. 431.

9. Al-Tha'ālibī quoted by Muḥammad 'Abduh, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāghah*, "Introduction," p. 9.

10. 'Nahj' means 'open way,' 'road,' 'course,' 'method,' or 'manner'; 'balāghah' means 'eloquence,' 'art of good style and composition,' 'rhetoric,' etc.

11. Here, the author adds that "till now four volumes of this book have been published."

12. The Arabic is: فَوْقَ كَلَامِ الْمَخْلُوقِ وَدُونَ كَلَامِ الْخَالِقِ

13. Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, vol. I, p. 230.

14. *Nahj al-balāghah*, *Khuṭab*, No. 3.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, *Rasā'il*, No. 22.

17. *Ibid.*, *Khuṭab*, No. 83.

18. According to my own counting, if I have not made a mistake.

19. *Nahj al-balāghah*, *Khuṭab*, No. 193.

20. 'Abd al-Ḥamid was a scribe (*kātib*) at the court of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān ibn Muḥammad. Of Persian origin, he was the teacher of the famous Ibn al-Muqaffa'. It was said of him that "the art of writing began with 'Abd al-Ḥamid and ended with Ibn al-'Amīd." Ibn al-'Amīd was a minister to the Būyids.

21. The original Arabic is *حَفِظْ كَلَامَ الْأَضْلَعِ*. *Aṣṣla'* means someone whose frontal portion of the head is bald. 'Abd al-Ḥamid, while confessing the greatness of Imam 'Alī (A), mentions him in a detracting manner due to his attachment to the Umayyad court.

22. The other three being: *Adab al-kātib* of Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Kāmil* of al-Mubarrad, and *al-Nawādir* of Abū 'Alī al-Qālī; quoted from the introduction to *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* by Ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddamah*.

23. *Al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, vol. I, p. 202.

24. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 83.

25. *Nahj al-balāghah*, *Hikam*, No. 81. See also al-Sayyid al-Raḍī's comment on this aphorism.

26. Ṣa'sa'ah ibn Ṣūḥān al-'Abdī was one of the eminent companions of Imam 'Alī (A). When, after the death of the third Caliph, 'Alī (A) became the Caliph, it was Ṣa'sa'ah who said to him:

زَنْتَ الْخِلَافَةَ وَمَا زَانَتِكَ وَرَفَعْتَهَا وَمَا رَفَعْتِكَ وَهِيَ إِلَيْكَ أَخْوَجُ مِنْكَ إِلَيْهَا.

You [by assuming the caliphate] have given it beauty, while caliphate has not added lustre to your personality. You have raised its worth, and it has not raised your station. It stands in greater need of you than you need it.

Ṣa'sa'ah was one of the few individuals to take part in the clandestine funeral of 'Amīr al-Mu'minin 'Alī (A) in the dark of the night. After the burial, standing by the side of 'Alī's grave and with one hand on his heart heaving with sadness, he picked up a handful of soil from 'Alī's grave, smeared his head with it, and delivered a moving address before the members of 'Alī's family and his friends. 'Allāmah al-Majlisī, in the Vol. IX of the *Bihār al-'anwār*, on the chapter about Imam 'Alī's martyrdom, has quoted the text of that excellent speech.

27. *Nahj al-balāghah*, *Rasā'il*, No. 35. The letter opens with this sentence:

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ مِضْرَقِي أَفْتِيحَتْ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ—رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ—قَدْ آسْتَشْهَدُ،...

28. This anecdote was related by Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyyah, a contemporary Lebanese scholar, at the occasion of a reception party given in his honour at the holy city of Mashhad.

29. *Nahj al-balāghah*, *khutab*, No. 230.

30. *Al-Jāhiz*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 99.

31. A poetic form much popular in classical Arabic and Persian poetry. *Ghazal* is also another poetic form.

32. Umru' al-Qays (500-540 A.D.) the famous poet of the pre-Islamic era (*Jāhiliyyah*), the author of the first of the *Mu'allaqāt*. Al-Malik al-Dillil is his nickname.

Islam and Christianity: A Review Article

by *Alī Qulī Qarā'ī* *

W. Montgomery Watt

Islam and Christianity Today—A Contribution To Dialogue

London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983; pp. 157; \$ 8.95

Islam and Christianity Today is the rather vague title of a book which consists of the "inner dialogue" of an Orientalist who has been engaged in the study of Islam (mainly Sunnite) for almost forty years. His study and appreciation of Islam caused him to ask searching questions about his own beliefs as a Christian. W. Montgomery Watt has a sympathetic regard and respect for Islam and presumably for all religions. "All religions are true," he seems to declare with Gandhian generosity, though he finds Christianity more congenial and, implicitly, "truer," though he may not say it explicitly in the interest of the "outer dialogue" with Muslims. In any case, he is not, apparently, a secular student of religion. Consequently his inner dialogue originates from an effort to defend his religious consciousness in the midst of the West's predominantly secular (the modern epithet for "pagan") scientific culture.

This somewhat inconclusive defence is undertaken in the second chapter of the book entitled, "The Affirmation of Religious Truth Against Scientism." Watt is conscious that by undertaking this exercise he is also doing some service to his Muslim friends, the study of whose religion has been the ground for his expertise. He says, "The meeting of Islam and Christianity at the present time takes place in a situation in which both... are subject to attack from many quarters; and the Christian who defends his own beliefs against such attacks find that he is at the same time defending some of the beliefs of his Muslim friend"

* The reviewer 'Alī Qulī Qarā'ī is the editor of *Al-Tawhīd* (English). Soon after the Islamic Revolution of Iran he brought out a monthly journal in English, *The Message of Peace*, from Qum. Montgomery Watt is one of the leading living Orientalists, who has written and compiled a large number of books on various aspects of Islam, Muslim history and Islamic thought.

(p. 6).

In this chapter Watt, basing his argument on the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, John Macmurray, Michael Polanyi and Peter Berger—as he himself acknowledges—undertakes the defence of religion. If not his conceptual structure, the conclusions he reaches are basically close to those of the pragmatists. After a somewhat sociological, philosophical dialogue, which winds through such notions as the sociological theory of the social construction of reality advanced by Berger and Luckmann, a discussion of the common-sense view of the world, the correspondence and coherence theories of truth, and the centrality of action, it finally lands in the precincts of pragmatism—though without making any undue fuss of it—with the conclusion: “The satisfactory quality of life claimed for the members of religious community normally includes an adequate level of material well-being and harmonious social relationships, but the ultimate criterion of satisfactoriness is that life should be meaningful” (p. 21). Though the sufferings and sacrifices of some for the cause of faith are a difficult problem from the viewpoint of a pragmatic justification of religion, “it does not disprove the contention that true religious belief is accompanied by a more satisfactory quality of life” (p. 21). Watt defends religion and religious pluralism in one breath by asserting that, “all the great religions over a period of centuries have enabled vast number of people to lead a satisfactory life” (p. 22). Either Watt is a pragmatist and does not need deeper spiritual reasons for confirmation of the truth of religion, or since his audience is the modern Western educated man, he is forced to base his ‘defence’ on pragmatic grounds. The satisfaction and meaning obtained from various religions by their followers do not mean “that each statement of each religion is to be regarded as true in isolation, but that the symbolic system of each religion, taken as a whole, presents a view of reality which is sound in many or most relevant aspects”. (p. 22)

This belief provides the grounds for religious pluralism taken for granted by Watt, but it swiftly runs into obvious difficulties. What is a satisfactory life? What is the criterion of a meaningful life? How should one know for certain what the “relevant aspects” are? Is the aim of religion deliverance or satisfaction? Is it sufficient to lead a satisfactory life to have the surety of salvation? Does it not amount to making complaisance the test of truth? Moreover, even if one were able to identify most of the “relevant aspects,” is it sufficient for one’s salvation? A similar criterion would not be applicable in case of physical well-being. Of course, a physician may not ignore the serious condition of heart disease for the reason that many or most bodily organs are functioning normally. A primary condition of perfect health is that not most but *all* organs must function normally and perfectly.

The advocates of religious pluralism, on the basis of the contention that most religions contain elements of truth and no religion the entire truth, preach religious complaisance. Such complaisance may serve the worthy purpose of religious tolerance but does no service to religious truth. If religiosity in the highest sense is the passion for unadulterated truth in its totality and entirety, its purpose is by no means served by subjective and egocentric criteria, and the terms like "satisfaction" and "meaning" fall short of desired objective.

In this light one may say that for Watt the truth of religion is established statistically. With reference to Islam and Christianity he says: "In the particular cases of Islam and Christianity to say that they are verified in general implies accepting their central doctrines as true" (p. 22). These words, surprisingly similar to the definition of the 'verification theory of meaning' of the modern logical positivists, reveal Watt's inclination towards positivistic empirical approach to religion. However, Watt is conscious of the difficulties of reconciliation between the two sets of doctrines, when he says: "Also included among the doctrines to be accepted because of this verification must be the Islamic doctrine of the prophethood of Muḥammad and the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus. Superficially neither of these is acceptable to the other religion but, when the doctrines are looked at more closely, the reader will probably find that the divergences are lesser than they appeared at first sight".(p. 23)

Watt proposes to bridge this doctrinal gap (a bridging which apparently amounts to making Muslims believe in the divinity of Jesus (A) and inducing the Christians to agree to recognize Muḥammad (S) as a true prophet, which in turn amounts to negation of Christ's divinity) by undertaking an aerial journey over the chasm on the magic carpet of his abstract analysis of symbolic uses of language. Accordingly the next subheading in this chapter is "Symbolic Language as an Expression of Reality." He goes about proving that symbolic usage of words is common in the language of daily use also, in science, as well as in poetry. It leads him to conclude that "the fact that in non-religious matters symbolic language does not imply unreality suggests that the same should be true in religious assertions" (p. 28). In the same chapter, while discussing symbolic uses in the Bible and the Quran, he refers to the issue of the use of anthropomorphic terms in the Quran with relation to God. After mentioning the stand of Sunnī theologians that "the anthropomorphic terms applied to God were to be understood *bi-lā kayf*, 'without (specifying) how' or 'amodally', that is, without asking whether they were literal or metaphorical," concludes that "this is an entirely rational approach to the problem, and one of great subtlety... this attitude might be called one of 'sophisticated naivety' " (p. 30). Watt is aware that a similar kind of 'sophisticated

naivety' is required for belief in many Christian doctrines. An educated Westerner must perhaps have the satisfaction of being sophisticated at all costs. Watt does not notice that what he calls 'sophisticated naivety' is just an intellectual way of saying "shut up." Some knowledge of Shī'ite *kalām* might have saved him from much credulity in this regard. Nevertheless, it is a pity that a learned defendant of religion like Watt should be so everready to bargain healthy rationality for any kind of 'naivety', no matter how much its 'sophistication'. Furthermore, it does not suit the purpose of a world-view, in the words of Watt, as a "total view of reality" into which must "fit all the truth in the various sciences." Watt does not seem to have understood well the spiritual meaning or function of prayer when he carelessly remarks that "Many Christians, I believe, show this sophisticated naivety when they engage in prayer" (p. 31). Muslims also pray, and perhaps as naively according to Watt. Though he needs not mention them and is careful to avoid any possible misunderstandings in the interest of the dialogue; the praying Christian, he seems to guess, will not take offence at 'naivety' as long as it is accompanied with 'sophistication'.

The rest of the chapter is devoted to refutation of some assumptions of scientism: "(1) that the objects studied by the sciences are the sole reality; (2) that the account of the original form of a thing shows what it really is; (3) that analysis of a thing into parts shows what it really is" (p. 31). Watt, wisely without going into philosophical abstrusities, points out that there is more to reality than atoms and molecules. He points out the extreme complexity—if not the utter absurdity—of any attempt to reduce such statements as 'Alan kicked the goal which won the cup for the Blues' into its physio-chemical constituents. His healthy common-sense, which is unaffected by any philosophical or scientific myopia, allows him to conclude without wasting time or ink that "meanings are just as real as molecules, since they are part of the reality in response to which we act." With a lesser dexterity he disposes of the reductionist fallacy of trying to assess things by their origins: "The philosophy of a great thinker is not just the intellectual outpourings of a neurotic child, but has to be judged by the philosophical quality of his mature publications and not by his infantile tendencies" (p. 37). Of course, Mr. Watt is not implying that the thought of lesser thinkers may be judged that way. At the end of the chapter he deals with the "serious and difficult question of the relationship of living things and human beings in particular to the physio-chemical basis of their life." However, "in this somewhat technical matter it seems best" for him "not to attempt any independent discussion." Accordingly, he resorts to quotations from Polanyi to prove his belief in "the rule that in normal functioning the higher controls the lower." With reference to the Gestalt theory

which suggests an alternative opposed to that of reductionism, he points out that "different patterns may be found in the same complex object." Unexpectedly, this matter is related by him to the issue of religious pluralism (and later in the book to historiography) to speculate that,

At some primitive period people in a certain region of the earth discovered certain patterns in the world around them, and made use of these patterns in working out a general world-view. In other regions other people used slightly different patterns. In the course of time the great world religions worked out their world-views in terms of different categories of fundamental patterns; and this makes communication and 'dialogue' between them a matter of great difficulty".(p. 42)

One wonders about the role of God in the midst of this religious chaos. The textual criticism of the Bible may have forced many Christians to adopt a humbler opinion of their scriptures; but it is less than humility to expect others, the Muslims in this case, to participate in the chorus of the advocates of pluralism. For the Muslim the diversity of religions is not derived from discovery or evolution of patterns by peoples in various regions of the world but from men's insolence against one another. The path of God is not a network of zigzags but a straight path:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ*

Mankind were one nation, and God sent unto them prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the Scripture with the truth, that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed concerning it. And only those unto whom (the Scripture) was given differed concerning it, after clear proofs had come unto them, being insolent one to another. Then God guided those who believed to the Truth, touching which they were at variance, by His leave; and God guides whomsoever He will to a straight path. (2:213)

The author devotes the six remaining chapters of the book to a study of some common points between Islam and Christianity. They are : "The Names and Attributes of God;" "Scripture as the Word of God;" "God the Creator;" "God as the Lord of History;" and "Humanity in Relation to God." In "The Names and Attributes of God", Watt remarks that "to say that Muslims worship *Allāh* and

Christians worship God is...like saying that the Germans worship Gott and the French Dieu." He points out that "there are several million Arabic speaking Christians in Egypt, the Lebanon and elsewhere who have no other word for God than *Allāh*." Though the theological conceptions of God differ between Jews, Muslims and Christians, "worship and service is a relation to a Being, not to a conception; and Jews, Christians and Muslims, though their conceptions differ, worship the same Being".(p. 46)

We may admit what Watt says only with certain qualifications. Firstly, there are two concepts involved in the idea 'worship of God.' The Muslims differ with the Christians not only in the conception of 'God' (which includes the ideas of Trinity, incarnation and divinity of Christ), but also in the conception of what constitutes 'worship'. The Arabic verbs *'abada*, *ya'budu*, and the noun *'ibādah* for worship, are used in the Quran in the sense of service. Though God is the Lord, the Master and Sustainer (*al-Rabb*) of all creatures and they are His *'ibād* (slaves, servants, creatures), the good servants of God, the *'ibād Allāh* proper, are referred to with additional epithets such as *mu'minun* (believing), *mukhliṣūn* (sincere), *ṣāliḥūn* (righteous), *shakūr* (grateful), *munīb* (penitent), or simply as *'ibādī* (My servants) in the Quran. Therefore, *'ibādah* or 'worship' is man's service of God as his Master and Lord, and includes the idea of obedience. The English term 'worship' conveys only a devotional sense, and does not imply obedience to God's legal and ethical commands. It is, moreover, in the sense of service not merely of devotion that the Quran prohibits the *'ibādah* of the Satan (36:60) or the non-God or *tāghūt* (39:17), where it is entirely independent of the ritualistic sense of devotion. The Christian 'service' is also loaded with ritualistic and devotional connotation. Therefore, to say that all who believe in God—in the common religious sense—or worship Him—in the sense of prayer and devotional rituals—do not necessarily do the *'ibādah* of God, in the Islamic sense. *'Ibādah* refers to the realization of the *'abd-Rabb*, (slave-Master, servant-Lord) relationship in one's life. Therefore, in the Islamic sense a 'worshipper' of God is one who serves Him and obeys Him and carries out His Will as given through the revelation. Accordingly, it is highly inaccurate to say that Jews, Christians and Muslims "worship the same God." The expression can be accepted only as a very crude approximation on the level of daily usage. The best way out seems to be that we may continue to use the terms 'God' and 'worship' for '*Allāh*' and '*'ibādah*' and leave it to God to judge who worships Him in actuality and how well.

In the same chapter while discussing the "Oneness or Unicity" of God, Watt remarks:

Christians also believe in the unicity of God [not the unity], one of their main statements of belief, the Nicene Creed, opening with the words, 'I believe in one God.' At the same time, however, they also believe that God is in some way threefold. The doctrine of the Trinity, as it is called, is subtle and abstruse, and most ordinary Christians simply accept it without being able to explain it fully".(p. 49)

The doctrine of the Trinity is a necessary corollary of the belief in divinity of Christ and the Holy Ghost. Of the two only divinity of Christ is of greater emotional and doctrinal significance for the Christians. Islam rejects incarnation, whether in the case of Jesus or someone else. The Creator cannot be incarnated in a creature, though all creatures manifest His Creativity, Mastery and Sovereignty. According to Islam, the Essence of God is free of distinctions and divisions. It is, from the Islamic viewpoint, no more than play of words to say that most Christians believe in three hypostases in the Divine Essence not three separate divine entities. It does not matter whether three different things are packed separately on the level of conception as 'gods,' or whether all three are put inside one package labelled 'God'. As long as we have a Son distinct from the Father as two different essences with a peculiar relationship, the unity of or the unicity of Godhead is like an external and conventional unity of a triumvirate, not an internal and essential unity. Moreover, the New Testaments, while they clearly support the idea of Christ's incarnation, also strongly imply that the 'Father' is somewhat more divine than the 'Son', who says to the former 'yet not what I want, but what you want' (Matthew 27). The Father has greater authority and in fact he is more often referred to as being the 'God' who sent 'his only Son' into the world to forgive sins of men. The doctrine of Trinity was framed after the belief in Christ's incarnation had become fixed among a large group of Christians. The Church had to shield itself from the blames of polytheism while preserving the divinity of Christ intact; hence the 'sophisticated incoherence' of the Nicene Creed. But the belief in Christ being the Son of God had become so prevalent in Christendom, and Christianity had become so irrevocably saddled with the idea of his divinity that the doctrine of three hypostases (*lit.* substances) was the best that theological expertise could achieve. There is some 'sophisticated naivety' in this statement of Watt when he says:

It is commonly thought that the Quran criticizes the doctrine of the Trinity, but this is not necessarily so. Any statement about the matter requires to be carefully qualified. One of the verses dealing with the points is 5:73: 'disbelieved have those who say God is the third of three; there is no deity except one deity'. Taken literally this verse is criticizing belief in three gods, not in three hypostases; and from a Christian point of view belief in three gods is a heresy, tritheism. Throughout the centuries there have probably

been simple-minded and badly instructed Christians whose effective belief may in fact have been tritheism, and there may well have been some such people in Arabia in Muhammad's times. In so far as this is so and the Quran is attacking tritheism, it is attacking a Christian heresy and orthodox Christians would agree with its criticisms (p. 50).

Watt here has tried to cast doubt on the Quranic disapproval of the doctrine of Trinity. However, even if it were possible to cast (though unjustifiably) any doubt on the Quran's rejection of Trinity, it is impossible to question the Quran's repeated rejection of the divinity of Christ and his incarnation (see the Quran, 4:172, 5:17, 5:72, 5:75, 9:30, 3:59, 4:171, 5:116). Moreover, if we view the Old Testaments, the New Testaments and the Quran as scriptures related to one religious tradition (which Watt is inclined to admit), it is somewhat difficult to accept that God should have maintained complete silence about a Son for two thousand years ago in the first instance, and again forgets that He had sent His son into the world six hundred years after sending him. It is somewhat difficult to accept that God should have stressed upon His Unity in His teachings conveyed to all prophets from Noah to Abraham and up to Moses, and then from Moses to John the Baptist, and then should become a Trinity for sometime, and then should disavow His Trinity in the Book revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S). The Muslims may not but consider the Christian doctrine of Trinity but as a relapse into polytheism on the part of the Jewish and non-Jewish followers of Christ. The Jews, as the Old Testament bears testimony, were prone to relapse into polytheism and idolatry throughout their national history. However the relatively firm establishment of monotheism by the time of Jesus precluded any overt regression into idolatrous and polytheistic beliefs. Perhaps the limited polytheism disguised in the doctrine of Trinity was all that was possible for the polytheistic temperament to achieve within the monotheistic climate of the Hebrew culture, which was already subject to the stresses imposed by the pagan Romans' cultural, political, and religious influences.

Watt is aware of the responsibility inherent in belief (p. 135), which is parallel or even prior to the responsibility for one's actions, and is upheld in the Islamic and Christian teachings. This is because our world-views, irrespective of whether we are theists or atheists, play a fundamental role in the organization of our entire scheme of life. Beliefs are inherited by children from parents or "from the view of reality current in the social milieu," together with other behavioural patterns, and one is, therefore, responsible at least partially for how the future generations shall believe, live and act. In order to judge any belief or act we must also take into consideration the consequences for the entire humanity if such a belief were held and practised world-wide

by all human beings. If one were to apply Watt's pragmatic criterion to the Christian belief in Trinity and speculate what would be the consequences for the entire mankind if the belief in the incarnation of Christ had not become prevalent among Christians—a belief which resulted, not to speak of the Jew's alienation from Christ, in the denial of the prophethood of Muḥammad (S) by millions of human beings since the period following Christ to the present day, and deprived them of the spiritual, intellectual and moral benefits of Islam, not to speak about the centuries of distrust if not hostility it has caused between two major sections of mankind—one may wonder about the contribution it might have made to the satisfactoriness of human life" on this planet. Perhaps it could have saved mankind from the crucial loss of meaning which has assumed cosmic dimensions in the modern world for some decades.

In the same chapter, while discussing the Attributes and Names of God, Watt remarks:

So far as names and words go there would seem to be little difference between Islam and Christianity. Nevertheless, many Christians would claim that God as conceived by Christians is *more* loving than God as conceived by Muslims. For Christians, He is not merely benevolent towards those who obey and love Him, but He is like a shepherd who goes out to look for and rescue sheep that have gone astray....Many items of news in recent years have given Westerners the impression that Muslims are sterner and more rigorous in their punishment of offenders. Undoubtedly, however, there are many other Muslims whose attitudes are much more liberal.(p. 53)

Watt's attitude is fairer than that of some Orientalists and scholars of Semitic religions who regard the Old Testament and the Quranic conceptions of God as being sterner or less loving than the Christian conception¹. Watt is willing to admit that there is "little difference" between the Islamic and Christian conceptions "so far as names and words go²." However, there is something true in the statement that the Christian conception projects God as being more loving and lenient in comparison with the Jewish and Islamic notions. There are two reasons for this: firstly, the emphasis on love, more than in the Gospels, is found in Paul's letters; secondly, the absence of any system of legislation in Christianity comparable to the Mosaic Law or the Islamic Shari'ah³. God in the popular Christian conception is no more the authoritative lawgiver that He is in the Quran and the Torah. In the Christian conception, 'one is put right with God' solely through faith in God and Jesus Christ. Voluntary morality substitutes the compulsory Divine Law. God, to Paul and his followers, no longer seems to make any of the following demands:

Whoever hits his father or his mother is to be put to death. Whoever kidnaps a man, either to sell him or to keep him as a slave, is to be put to death. Whoever curses his father or his mother, is to be put to death. Whenever a man gets angry and deliberately kills another man, he is to be put to death, even if he has run to My altar of safety (Exodus 21:14-17). If a thief is caught breaking into a house at night and is killed, the one who killed him is not guilty of murder (Exodus 22:4). Put to death any woman who practises magic. Put to death any man who has sexual relations with an animal. Condemn to death anyone who offers sacrifices to any god except Me, the Lord (Exodus 22:18-20). If a man is caught having intercourse with another man's wife, both of them are to be put to death (Deut. 22:22). Whoever does not keep it (the Sabbath), but works on that day, is to be put to death (Exodus 31:14).

Similarly, Christianity is not 'encumbered' with the laws regarding *qiṣāṣ*, and *ḥudūd* as in Islam. This banishment of Law from the predominant Christian religion which has survived until today, reduces God, *na'ūdhu billāh*, to an easygoing, indulgent and negligent sovereign who is no longer bothered about how men may regulate their lives and social affairs, as long as they have faith in Him and His Son, whose death on the cross exempts the believers from the jurisdiction of the earlier Law given to Moses. To the Muslim it appears that the Christian or rather the Pauline emphasis on love is a plea to compensate the guilt caused by the rejection of Mosaic Law in the interest of Paul's ambition for proselyting among the Gentiles. The Mosaic Law, with its all-embracing nature covering all the individual and social affairs, would have reduced the acceptability of the Christian doctrine for the Gentiles used to liberal life styles.

Watt is referring to the much publicized cases of implementation of the Islamic penal laws in the latter part of his above-quoted statement. When he refers to the "many other Muslims whose attitudes are much more liberal", he is indeed referring to the "moderate" Muslims who, like Paul, consider religion as voluntary ethics and a matter of individual's inner faith that would not tolerate the Law of the Shari'ah to invade all spheres of individual and social life. While they are delighted with the abstract idea of loving God and all mankind and the rest of creation, they are put off by any suggestion that God should be obeyed (at least as much as their office's regulations or the traffic rules) and not merely loved. They are liberal indeed in the sense that they liberally appropriate all control over their individual lives or the affairs of the society to themselves. Faith and love, they are convinced, are sufficient to satisfy and placate God, and compensate for their rejection of the Law, without which, they are certain, it is possible to regulate individual life and socio-political affairs of their society 'satisfactorily.'

Actually in a sense Watt's present work is aimed to reassure and perhaps guide these Muslim liberals in the light of the Christian

experience, as the note on the book's flap candidly suggests:

In the Islamic world today there are many liberal-minded Muslims who feel threatened by their own fundamentalists, and who are likely to see in the positions adopted and defended in this book a possible way forward for themselves.

In the fourth chapter of the book "Scriptures as the Word of God", writing on the revealed law, Watt admits that "Jesus accepted the Mosaic Law" (p. 72). In the same paragraph earlier, he somewhat misleadingly states that "Christians accepted the commands given by God to Moses, of which the main ones are those in the Ten Commandments." The Ten Commandments constitute a prelude to the detailed text of Mosaic Law as stated in several books of the Pentateuch. This statement may mislead many Muslim readers who are not well-acquainted with the Christian attitude towards Mosaic Law. Watt, without making any reference to the obvious role of Paul and his followers in dissociating Christianity from the Mosaic Law, states:

Unlike the early Muslims the early Christians did not constitute a political entity or state, and so they had no responsibility for framing or administering laws. What they found, however, especially those of them who lived outside Palestine, was that in the Roman empire there was a system of law owing nothing to revelation, and yet roughly in accordance with the ethico-legal parts of the Mosaic law. When the Roman empire became officially Christian in the early fourth century, it already had a system of law which was in general acceptable to Christians, and there was no need to create a new system of law based solely on the Mosaic law as modified by the teaching of Jesus. Living in the Roman empire made it clear to Christians that sound human reason, apart from revelation, could reach a satisfactory system of law. Thus in medieval Christendom and in modern Western Christendom until the present century, although the laws of the various states were expected to be in accordance with biblical teaching, it was not considered necessary to show how a particular law was derived from scriptural texts (p. 73).

The deliberate neglect of Mosaic Law by early Christianity, or rather the majority sects of Christians, contrasts sharply with the attitude of Jesus Christ himself who, in the words of Watt, "criticized certain aspects of its contemporary application, notably the attaching of great importance to ritual matters and the like and the comparative neglect of some of the main ethico-legal conceptions." The Gospel of Matthew reports about Jesus' attack on the Hebrew teachers of the Law for their hypocrisy. In the course of his discourse, Jesus says:

You hypocrites! You give to God a tenth even of the seasoning herbs, such as mint, dill, and cumin, but you neglect to obey the really important teachings

of the Law, such as justice and mercy and honesty. These you should practise, without neglecting the others. (Matthew 23:23)

Jesus attacks the partial and selective practice of the Law by the Jewish priests, who ignored the teachings of paramount social significance such as justice, honesty and mercy. His words are comparable to a similar condemnation of the *ahl al-kitāb*, the Jews in particular, by the Quran:

... أَفْتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَوْمٌ الْقِيمَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ...

... What, do you believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in part? What shall be the recompense of those of you who do that, but degradation in the present life, and on the Day of Resurrection to be returned unto the most terrible chastisement?.... (2:85)

If, according to Watt, the Christians “did not constitute a political entity or state” in the beginning, neither did the non-Christian Jews, who were politically and culturally under the Roman domination. It is much of naivety on the part of Watt to expect the reader to be gullible enough to believe that “within the Roman empire there was a system of law... roughly in accordance with the ethico-legal parts of the Mosaic Law.” The fact is that Christianity was so much liberalized and secularized by the third century by its predominant sect—as is the case today with the ‘Islam’ of the Westernized Muslim intelligentsia and statesmen—and so much cut off from the practice of the Mosaic Law that it did not matter how roughly the Roman law agreed with the law given by God to Moses. The Christians readily adopted the ways of Roman society and “when the Roman empire became officially Christian in the early fourth century, it already had a system of law which was in general acceptable to Christians, and there was no need to create a new system of law based on the Mosaic Law.”

The Sunnī and Shi‘ah jurists accept, with some difference, the role of reason in derivation of the rules of the Shari‘ah; but to consider reason as a substitute for revelation (or as Watt cleverly states, “as a source parallel to revelation”) would be a flagrant infringement of the explicit text of the Quran:

... وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ*

... And whoever does not give a ruling according to what God has revealed—they are the unbelievers. (5:44)

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا *

It is not for any believer, man or woman, when God and His Messenger have decreed a matter, to have the choice in their affair. Whosoever disobeys God and His Messenger has gone astray in manifest error. (33:36)

Reason in Islamic jurisprudence is usually applied as a tool only in no case considered to be parallel to the Quran and the Sunnah. Only when there is no guide-line offered by the Quran and the Sunnah the reason can assume an independent parallel role. Such instances are neutral to the Shari'ah. It would be naivety to expect the Islamic jurist worth his name to take the Shari'ah as lightly and nonchalantly as Pauline Christianity treated the Mosaic law. In Islam, legislation of any laws conflicting with the Shari'ah is a kind of apostasy and *shirk* (polytheism). It is this kind of departure from the revealed law on behalf of the Jewish doctors and Christian priesthood that the Quran disapproves in the following verse, likening their behaviour to polytheism:

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ...

They (the Jews and the Christians) have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords apart from God.... (9:31)

Watt knows well this difference between Muslim and Christian attitudes, as he remarks:

The contrast between the Islamic belief that all laws should be based on God's commands and the Christian readiness to accept sound human reason as a source of law parallel to revelation is one of the greatest differences between the two religions, and raises the question whether in the future it will be possible for Muslims to cooperate in the field of law with Christians, or at least to have some degree of mutual understanding.(p. 74)

However, no man of sound reason, who has also read the Pentateuch, will accept Watt's remark which indirectly casts doubts upon the death penalties legislated in the Mosaic Law:

Even if it is accepted that the commands are God's commands, it is proper to ask whether human beings have correctly understood the fundamental principles implicit in them. One of the Ten Commandments is 'you shall not kill', and this may be said to inculcate the fundamental principle of 'respect for life'. What may be asked, however, is whether this command forbids the judicial execution of criminals. For nearly twenty centuries most Christians have agreed that it does not; but that appears to be a human interpretation of the command.(p. 76)

Watt's attitude exemplifies the nonchalant attitude of most Christians towards the revelation and the Law of the Old Testaments, an attitude which may not be emulated by any Muslim jurist.

In general, the Christian scholars of Islam have striven to diminish the Muslim's respect for his law and scriptures. Under the heading "The human element in revelation," Watt takes some pains to prove that there is 'some human element' also in the Quran. While as a Christian he apparently believes that God may become incarnate in a man born of a woman, eat, drink, speak, move about and die, it is interesting to see him making the following remark about the Muslim belief that the Quran constitutes the speech of God. He says:

There is something paradoxical in the idea that written or spoken words may be the word or speech of God. Because God is eternal and transcendent He can be known to man only in so far as He reveals Himself to man. (p. 61)

The textual criticism of the Bible has deflated the traditional Christian views about the 'Divine' origin of the books of the Old and New Testaments. Some Western scholars of Islam have also taken great pains to prove that discrepancies, as are replete in the Bible, exist also in the Holy Quran. Others have tried to call its literary excellence in question. Arther J. Arberry refers to the Quran's literary critics as men "ambitious to measure the ocean of prophetic eloquence with the thimble of pedestrian analysis."³ One of the allegations made by such critics has been in relation to the Quranic story of Mary, Jesus' mother, in which she is addressed reproachfully as 'sister of Aaron' (19:28) by the people who accuse her of adultery. The critics allege that the Quran confuses between Mary, Jesus' mother, and the sister of Aaron, Moses' brother, of the same name. The Quran is perfectly clear about its historical perspective from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to the time of Christ. This fact is obvious to any reader of the Quran. It is nothing less than deliberate malice on the Orientalists' part to make such absurd allegations against the Quran⁴. Also, it is naivety on Watt's behalf to use it to inculcate doubt about the irrefutably firm Islamic belief born out by the Quran and reliable ḥadīth that Jesus did not die upon the cross⁵. This is what Watt says:

... There is a slight mathematical mistake in the Bible, where it speaks of a large circular basin, called a 'sea' which is ten cubits across and thirty cubits round (2 Chronicles 4.2); actually a circle which is ten units in diameter has a circumference of over thirty-one units. Presumably the people for whom this was written were accustomed to work with this low degree of accuracy, and it was not part of the purpose of scripture to change their outlook in such matters. In similar fashion, some of the verses in which Western scholars have

alleged that the Quran has made mistakes, should be regarded as being expressed in terms of mistaken views current among the people of Mecca and Medina. Examples are the address to Mary, mother of Jesus, as 'sister of Aaron', and the apparent denial of the crucifixion of Jesus (4:157). It is probable that there were people in Arabia who had such ideas, and it was not part of the purpose of revelation to correct them. With regard to the crucifixion it is known that there were certain Christian heretics, called Gnostics, who denied that Jesus died on the cross. The primary purpose of S. 4:157 appears to be not to deny the death as such, but to deny that the bringing about of his death by the Jews was triumph for them (a point with which Christians could agree). (p. 63)

In the fifth chapter entitled "God the Creator", Watt deals with the belief that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and handles the 'not easy task' of understanding it 'in the light of what we know about the universe.' Since there is no established or even emergent cosmology capable of reconciling religious beliefs about the relation of God to the universe with the results of science, he takes upon himself the task of providing "the rudiments of a philosophical cosmology by drawing on ideas from such thinkers as Polanyi and Teilhard de Chardin" (p. 79). He implicitly accepts the Marxian views on the relation of the individual to society and holds that "persons cannot be persons except through and in a society, they cannot act except in accordance with the meanings implicit in the world-view of the society." Accordingly, Watt's generous attempt to provide Christians and Muslims with a philosophical cosmology is also based firmly upon the secular Western world-view which he shares with other Westerners. For him the unity of the human race is a potential unity, 'and that this unity is in the process of being realized' presumably through world-wide acceptance of the secular Western world-view, which according to him "is bound to be universally accepted before long by all educated persons." (p. 83) Watt despite his earlier feeble protest against scientism is, visibly, perfectly at home with the secular Western world-view and his suggested cosmology which deals with religious conceptions is aimed at proposing only minor modifications to it so as to incorporate religious beliefs in the secular world-outlook.

In this cosmological scheme, God is an 'orientation' in matter which, if we may say, develops in an evolutionary fashion from the simplicity of the 'geosphere' and 'biosphere' to the complexities of the 'nousphere' and 'theiosphere'. God is reduced in it, though implicitly, to a mode of matter. Watt only vaguely understands the mathematical notion of boundary conditions or constraints, and follows Polanyi in the claim that "higher-level entities somehow impose boundary conditions on lower-level entities." In his suggested cosmology,

the cosmic process is controlled by (a) setting of boundary conditions, and

(b) the presence in matter of an orientation, also spoken of as 'radial energy' [a concept taken from Teilhard]. The suggestion that first springs to mind is that it is God who sets the boundary conditions, and He is somewhat identified with the orientation in matter, or at least works through it. (p. 93) To say that it is God who sets the boundary conditions for the universe [presumably its laws] and who is present in the constituents of the universe as an orientation covers the main assertions of the scriptures. (p. 94)

God's immanence and His transcendence are reduced to two different modes of matter:

The boundary conditions might be described as the more explicit and external form of the implicit and internal orientation. As applied to God, this latter symbol expresses His immanence, the other His transcendence.

Watt's metaphysics makes theology an appendage of physics and biology, and incorporates God into the universe with results not much different from Spinozistic pantheism.

But how is a believer in the God of the scriptures to react to this inane and abstract conception of the Deity rehabilitated in the secular Western world-view? Watt anticipates the question and readily prescribes 'sophisticated naivety' once again:

The devout believer may well ask: How can I worship an orientation or a setter of boundary conditions? The question is a perfectly proper one, and the answer is simple. The believer must keep in mind what has already been said about 'sophisticated naivety'. By all means he may —indeed he must— go on using the familiar scriptural terms with naive simplicity [i.e. God and Creator for Orientation and Setter of boundary conditions]. (p. 95)

He accepts evolution, namely, that "*Homo sapiens* is descended from 'lower' forms of life," as a scientific fact, man being the best result so far obtained by the 'orientation':

Certainly God created man, but has brought him into existence by controlling the direction of the evolutionary process. God is not to be thought of as having had some kind of blueprint of human nature; rather humanity is the highest example so far of that towards which the immanent orientation is tending. (p. 95)

Since there is no room in the Western secular world-view for miracles and God's 'interference with the laws of nature,' Watt tries to explain away biblical miracles related to Noah, Moses, Joshua, and Jesus as allegories, imitations of earlier 'models' or imaginative distortions of perfectly natural events. The story of Adam and Eve, since it does not fit with the theory of evolution, is for him a "folk-myth". The Virgin Birth of Jesus and his resurrection, though posing difficulty to the modern Christian believer, are "to be accepted with sophisticated

naivety as containing symbolic truth." For Watt 'symbolic interpretation' is a cure-all, a magic lamp by which all scriptural afflictions are healed, theological knots are untied, and doctrinal pitfalls are safely left behind one's back. This can be noticed throughout the book.

Though God does not permit miracles, He may arrange things in a way that the believers are naturally helped and disbelievers destroyed. Here is a wise explanation which also does not tax secular imagination:

Although God cannot be said to interfere with the laws governing natural events, yet the total situation (including the characters of the human beings involved) may be such that certain events prove disastrous for unbelievers or, in other cases, advantageous for believers. Since God is ultimately behind everything, one is justified in saying that He has helped the unbelievers and helped the believers. (p. 116)

In the sixth chapter called "God as the Lord of History", Watt opens a very interesting discussion on the issue of sacral and secular views of history. Historical events, he explains,

may be written about in several different ways, according to the interests of the writer and of his potential readers. The essential work of the historian may be said to be to discover significant patterns in that great and complex chaos which is the course of events.... Sacral history presents the course of events in the historical process as controlled by God. (p. 105) The secular historian is chiefly concerned with those patterns which we describe as political, economic, social and intellectual factors, and the like, whereas sacral history deals with the patterns which are relevant to the Godward aspect of events. (p. 110)

But how does God control the course of history in the light of Watt's statement that 'there is no overt interference with natural law' on His part? In addition to the 'boundary conditions' and 'inner orientation,' there are two other ways in which God may control events:

(1) He may initiate a series of events by 'calling' individuals to undertake some task or project, as He called Abraham, Moses and Muhammad; (2) He may strengthen men to fight in battle and gain victory and to carry on in adverse circumstances, and conversely He may weaken the opponents of those He favours by causing them to lose confidence, to entertain false beliefs and the like. (p. 107)

A prophet's consciousness of his prophetic mission is made to appear like a deep-seated psychological compulsion, called by Watt 'inner prompting', which "on the one hand constitutes an initiative by God; but on the other hand does not destroy or override a man's freedom since it is for him to decide whether to respond to the call or

not, whether to follow the prompting or not." Watt forgets to mention the case of Jonah who had tried to escape the dictates of, what he would call, Jonah's 'inner prompting.'

Watt has a characteristically Christian view of history which is divisible into secular and sacral compartments. This split view of reality is unacceptable to the Muslim, particularly the Shi'ah⁶, for whom not only two different views of history characterized as sacral and secular are unacceptable, but also there cannot be more than one sacral historical perspective for all mankind. Man, according to Islam, is a sacral creature. The purpose of his creation and life are intrinsically sacral:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ *

I have not created the jinn and mankind except to serve Me. (51:56)

The creation of Adam was realization of a sacral Divine plan, the wisdom of which even the angels could not readily see. They thought that man was unfit for the fulfilment of the sacral objective for which God wished to create him, and he would degrade himself to the level of the beast and cause corruption and bloodshed upon the earth.⁷

The Quran views the entire history of humanity, the past and the future, in a single sacral perspective, as can be seen from the verse 2:213, quoted earlier and the following verses:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ *

It is He Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may uplift it above every religion, though the polytheists be averse. (61:9)

... وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ *

... and there is not a nation but a warner has passed among them. (35:24)

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّىٰ بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ... وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ...

He has laid down for you as religion that He charged Noah with, and that We have revealed to thee [Muhammad], and that We charged Abraham with, Moses and Jesus, [saying]: "Establish the religion, and scatter not regarding it... They scattered not, save after knowledge had come to them, being insolent one to another.... (42:13-14)

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا
بَيْنَهُمْ..

The religion near God is Islam. Those who were given the Book were not at variance except after knowledge came to them, being insolent one to another.... (3:19)

The Quran condemns the 'chosen-people syndrome' of the Jews and the Christians, which led to an unreal partitioning of sacral histories as an incurable disease lasting until the Judgement Day, and warns the Muslims against doing the same thing.

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ *

The Jews say, 'The Christians stand not on anything'; the Christians say, 'The Jews stand not on anything'; yet they [both] recite the [same Divine] scriptures. So, too, the ignorant say the like of them. God shall decide between them on the Day of Resurrection touching their differences. (2:113)

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَىٰ تِلْكَ آمَانِيهِمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ *

And they say, 'none shall enter Paradise except that they be Jews or Christians.' Such are their fancies. Say: 'Produce your proof, if you speak truly.' (2:111)

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ ...

Be not as those who scattered and fell into variance after the clear signs came to them; (3: 105)

وَمَنْ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَىٰ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَهُمْ فَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا دُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ *

And with those who say 'We are Christians' We took compact; and they have forgotten a portion of that they were reminded of. So We have stirred up among them enmity and hatred, till the Day of Resurrection; and God will assuredly tell them of the things they wrought. (5:14)

فِيمَا نَقَضُوا مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا

ذِكْرُوا بِهِ...

So for their breaking their compact We cursed them (the children of Israel) and made their hearts hard, they pervert words from their meanings; and they have forgotten a portion of that they were reminded of ...; (5:13)

In the above verses of the Quran, one can discern the emphasis on this point: the proneness of a people to distort their sacral perspective of history due to collective sinfulness, negligence, ambition, prejudice, and malice. The Quran partially affirms the biblical sacral history, but it rejects the Jewish and Christian sacral perspectives of the future as mass hallucinations.

The development of secular history, from an Islamic viewpoint, is a result of blindness to the sacral pattern of life which envelops all aspects of life, ethical, social, political, economic, etc. Man's view of the past sacral history is internally distorted and clouded by the accumulated prejudices of past generations. Divine revelation plays a role of an objective corrector of sacral perspective, as the Quran does in regard to history, the past and the future, for all nations of mankind. The Quran encourages human beings to view history in a sacral perspective with the help of the revealed truth, without which they can neither understand the past, the present or the future. There is no place in it for the secular history which is an unrealistic, partial, and schizophrenic picture of the past based on ignorance or neglect of the essentially sacral pattern of all reality. Secular history, therefore, may be compared to an attempt to explain psychological and biological phenomena in exclusive terms of chemical reactions.

Moreover, the Quran offers certain general guide-lines for putting events in a correct sacral historical perspective, as can be seen from the following verses:

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً اَنْعَمَهَا عَلٰى قَوْمٍ حَتّٰى يُغَيِّرُوْا مَا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ...

That is because God would never change His favour that He conferred on a people until they changed what was in themselves.... (8:53)

... اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتّٰى يُغَيِّرُوْا مَا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ...

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

Frequently the Quran asks believers to undertake a study of the past peoples and civilizations and find out why some nations perished without a trace (3:137, 16:36, 37:69, 30:42). There are also frequent

references to the unchangeable Sunnah of God governing the character and historical fate of nations (33:62, 35:43, 40:85, 48:23, 17:77). In all these verses, the Quran asks Muslims to develop a sacral view of the entire history of mankind, and reminds them that they are no exception to the Sunnah or the sacral laws which control the destiny of nations, and whose neglect caused many a nation to perish without leaving any trace. In this fashion, the Quran lays the foundations of a sacral historiography of mankind, a subject which was paid some attention by Muslim historians,⁸ who laid the foundation of a philosophical and sociological study of history, but unfortunately they could not make much advance in the direction of developing a specifically Quranic view of historiography in the strict sense of the term 'sacral'. They actually contributed to the development of modern secular outlook of history.

Modern historiography owes much to Muslims but not from the sacral viewpoint. Modern historians and archeologists who study the relics of past cultures approach the subject with a secular outlook, and, therefore, their research, though not entirely unproductive, fails to obtain desirable results. Also it suggests the role of revelation as a corrector of sacral perspectives, as in the case of the Jewish and Christian sacral histories.

From an Islamic viewpoint, the Christendom, lacking the proper sacral criteria necessary for viewing post-scriptural history in a proper perspective, and as it flourished in the cradle of Rome's pagan environment, had to accommodate considerably the secular or sacral view of social reality and history. The post scriptural Christianity gradually lost its sacral thread of history and could no longer see a sacral pattern in the events. It seemed to ordinary Western Christian as if God no longer controlled the course of history and that it has lost sacral meaning for contemporary life. Didn't Nietzsche proclaim at the turn of the last century that "God is dead"?⁹ The Christian malaise also spread to the Muslim world and increasingly greater number of educated Muslims came to see the world and their own destiny through the Western-made glasses of a secular socio-historical perspective.

Perhaps among the Muslims the Shi'ah, more than other Muslims, have tended to see sacral patterns in historical events. The Shi'ah view the history of the post-Prophetic period in a different perspective. In this perspective there are some events which have great significance for the Shi'ah, which have lesser or no sacral significance for most Sunni Muslims. One of those events is the martyrdom of al-Imām al-Husayn (A) and his relatives and companions in Karbalā' in the year 61 A. H. The same event is seen in an altogether different light by some Sunnis and most Western scholars of Islam, who, viewing it through the secular glasses, see in it no more than a ruler's response to a challenging rival.

Of the contemporary events of significance in the Islamic sacral perspective are the revolution in Iran, the war imposed on the Islamic Republic by Iraq, and the Islamic resistance in Lebanon against the Zionist forces and their Western allies, especially the U.S. The occupation of the U.S. embassy at Tehran by the Muslim Students was another event, whose 'sacral' significance for the Iranian Muslims perhaps went unnoticed except by R.W. Carlsen in his books on that crisis.¹⁰

That the distortion of the sacral perspective may entail dangerous political results causing much conflict, turmoil and bloodshed is confirmed by the contemporary example of the formation of Israel. It would be interesting to apply the criteria of 'satisfactory' results and 'positive achievements' to the Zionist interpretation of the Jewish sacral history in the light of the decades of conflict and turmoil in the area and the exile, homelessness, oppression and bloodshed of Palestinian and Lebanese Muslims at the hands of the Zionists.

There are many other views expressed by Watt in this chapter, which, if critically examined, will require an entire book. For reasons of brevity we will refer only to one or two of these.¹¹

Watt briefly refers to what he calls 'axes of anthropogenesis,' by which is understood "the process by which people become thoroughly human." He confronts the stupendous claim of Teilhard de Chardin that "during historic time the principal axis of anthropogenesis has passed through the West" with the suggestion that there may have been "other axes of anthropogenesis, at least in India and China, parallel to the Western or Christian axis." However, with a mixture of Western pride and Christian generosity he adds that "there are some grounds for thinking that from about AD 900 to AD 1300 this axis swung away from the Christian West to the Islamic Middle East."

From a purely Islamic viewpoint, anthropogenesis cannot be described on a regional or racial basis. From a spiritual viewpoint, according to Islam, God is the source of anthropogenesis, and revelation is its means:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ
الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ يُحْشَرُونَ *

O believers, respond to God and the Messenger when he calls you unto that which will give you life; and know that God stands between man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be mustered. (8:24)

However, if one were forced to identify a historical landmark in human history, there is the unique figure of Abraham, who through his whole-hearted devotion to God changed the course of human history. The Quran refers to Abraham as *ḥanīf* (3:67, 3:95, 4:125,

16:123), *khalīl* (4:125), *ummah* (16:120), *imām* (2:124), and His chosen one (3:33), in whose descent God promised to bless all nations of mankind according to the Bible. If we may talk of an axis of anthropogenesis, here we may locate it, in the light of both the Bible and the Quran.

In the book's seventh chapter "Humanity in Relation to God," Watt at length deliberates over the Muslim and Christian terms used for description of the relationship of human being with God. Earlier we have referred to such terms as *'abd* (servant, slave, worshipper), and *'ibādah* (service, servitude, worship) used by the Quran, and saw that the two terms were interrelated. With reference to the issue of secular and sacral history we have quoted the Quranic verse 51:56, according to which *'ibādah* of God is the primary objective of the creation of human beings. Not only human beings, but all the beings in the universe are *'ibād* or servants of God:

إِن كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتَى الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا*

None is there in the heavens and earth but he comes to the All-merciful as a servant. (19:93)

Thus, *'ibādah* or service being the goal of all creation, it is quite fitting that human beings should be generally described as *'ibād Allāh*, the 'servants of God.' Let us see what Watt has to say on this point. At first he mentions the modern Western Christian's allergy towards the term 'slave' "because of the connotations of the word in Western society since the sixteenth century." Here Watt may be referring to the Western experience of slavery which has left behind a deep sense of guilt embedded in the European and American White man's conscience, and which makes the term 'slave' highly detestable. He points out that although the Islamic depiction of man's relationship with God by the term *'abd* may "seem strange to the Western Christian, there is much in the Bible which is parallel to it. When Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David and the prophets are referred to as 'servants of the Lord,' the word for 'servant' is *'ebed*, which is the Hebrew equivalent of the Arabic *'abd* and is often represented in the Septuagint by the Greek *doulos*, 'slave'."

Watt, too, is not free of the Westerner's allergy to the word, for he considers the status of the *'abd* of God as something below human dignity, or at least improper to the contemporary man's sense of dignity. He remarks:

"The chief way in which the modern Muslim rises above the status of slave is when he becomes God's agent or steward in this world. In the Quran

(2:30-33) there is an account of how God informed the angels that He was about to establish Adam as His *khalifah* (successor, deputy) in the earth.... In recent centuries, however, Muslims in general have come to interpret the passage about Adam as implying that God has given humanity a position of stewardship in His world. In some respect this would seem to be an advance on the status of slave. (p. 127)

This 'recent'¹² improvement in the status of the Muslim from being 'a slave of God' to His 'deputy', as envisioned by Watt, does not help him in catching up with the Christian (Watt is not bothered with the Jew), who has been already the 'son of God' for nearly two thousand years; for Watt further remarks that,

In the New Testament the possibility is also presented of man rising above the status of slave to God [which he was throughout the era of the Old Testaments, neglecting of course the presumptuous self-promotion of the Jew to the status of 'sonship', whom Watt quotes from John 8:41 as saying to Christ, "God Himself is the only father we have, and we are His true sons."], since it is repeatedly affirmed that the Christian believer has been raised to the status of 'son'. The essential distinction seems to be that the slave or servant does not know what the master is about, whereas the son does. (p. 129)

Watt agrees, therefore, that the modern Muslim's promotion (a rise of which the Muslim has become conscious, according to him, only lately, after nearly fourteen centuries after the Quran was revealed) to the place of God's deputy "at least slightly" raises him "above servile status, since one who acts for God as His 'agent', or 'steward' is more than a mere slave."

Watt goes on to imply that the Quran's rejection of God's having sons or daughters was perhaps due to the lack of training on the part of the Prophet's contemporaries in the symbolic uses of language, 'sophisticated naivety' being, of course, a later invention. In another remark which is obliquely aimed to insinuate 'the presence of human element' in the Quran, he speculates:

As is well-known, the Quran denies the possibility of God having sons and daughters (6:100, etc.), and this applies both to pagan beliefs and to Christian belief about Jesus. Presumably the Quran made these assertions because many of Muhammad's contemporaries understood these terms literally.

The Quran, contrary to what Watt imagines, perfectly knows what it is talking about and what the Christians and the Jews believed. It rebukes all attempts to claim any special proximity and relationship with Him, which in reality boils down to a claim of inherent superiority over other human beings. The 'sonship' complex like the 'chosen people' theory, according to the Quran, is rooted not in spirituality but in communal and national pride. The Quran carefully avoids any

vocabulary which may become the cause of such collective afflictions as pride and prejudice, such as afflicted the Jews in Christ's time, to whose claim that "we are God's true sons," Jesus replies, "If God really were your father, you would love me, because I came from God and now I am here.... You are the children of your father, the Devil, and you want to follow your father's desires." (John 8:42-44) It is not logical to assume that Jesus would sanction for his followers a vocabulary which he condemns the Jews for using, because to permit the Christians to consider themselves the 'sons of God' would be equivalent to exposing them to the same kind of dangers of spiritual prejudice and blindness which afflicted the Jews who opposed Jesus.

In any case, even if the 'son-father' terminology were considered to be a permissible substitute for the *'abd-Rabb* terminology used by the Quran for true believers, it cannot be applicable indiscriminately to any group of a religious community, whether Jew, Christian, or Muslim, which includes all kinds of good and bad people, from the time of Moses to the present. The Quran rejects such supercilious claims made by the Jews and Christians in these words:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ...

The Jews and Christians say, 'We are the sons of God, and His beloved ones.' Say: 'Why then does He chastise you for your sins? No; you are men of His creation [like other human beings]; He forgives whom He will, and He chastises whom He will.' (5:18)

The Quran refrains from using anthropomorphic terms in relation to God-man relationship, which may be adversely misinterpreted, especially when they have connotations related with biological relationships among members of a species. The 'Father-Son' relation when applied to God with regard to Jesus, one of His eminent prophets according to Islam, perhaps led the early Christians to interpret God and Jesus as members of one species, sharing the same specific characteristic, namely, divinity. Probably the early Christian usage of the Father-Son allegory was derived from the Jewish people's earlier eschatological hopes of a king in David's lineage "who would break the nations of the whole earth with an iron rod; and shatter them in pieces like a clay pot," (Psalms 2:8-9) which either represented the impotent agony of a people in political slavery or exile or the imperialist fantasies of a nation clothed in a sacral and religious form. When Jesus appeared, he became the focus of all the high hopes of the Jews. They saw in him, "the Lord" of Psalms 110, "who sat at the right hand of God," under whose feet God would put his enemies, the "greatest king"

and the 'first-son' of Psalms 89 who says to God, "You are my father and my God," and the "son of David" of 2 Samuel 7, where God is alleged to have told David, "When you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will make one of your sons king and keep his kingdom strong. He will be one to build a temple for me, and I will make sure that his dynasty continues for ever. I will be his father, and he will be my son."

Watt presumes that the Quran rejects the 'Sonship' of Christ because many of the Prophet's contemporaries understood these terms literally. This is a usual plea put forth by Christian writers. First of all there is little in the Gospels which precludes the notion that Christ was *not* regarded as the 'Son of God' in the literal sense at least by a large group of early Christians of the era in which the Gospels were written. In the letter of Paul to the Galatians (4:4), Paul refers to Jesus as "God's own son." There is no indication that the word is used in a metaphorical sense, at least for Christ, who is also referred to elsewhere as God's first-born. The idea of sonship by procreation is not refuted explicitly by the New Testaments. Secondly, it is sonship in the non-literal sense, also, that the Quran refutes at several places (2:116, 10:68, 18:4, 19:88, 23:91, 72:3). The verb used to state that God has not *taken* (or adopted) anyone as a 'son' is *ittakhadha*, which expressly implies that God does not adopt any sons, either in the literal or symbolic or metaphorical sense. Thirdly, there are strong reasons for assuming that the 'Sonship' of Christ is something more than symbolic for Christians, for it carries the idea, if not of procreation, at least of belonging to the same genera or species, as is true of all fathers and sons, and in this case that species is represented by 'divinity.' The latent Christian thinking can be put in a syllogistic form: (1) All fathers and sons belong to the same species; (2) Christ is the 'Son' of a/the Deity; (3) Christ is also divine. Both the minor premise and conclusion of the implicitly polytheistic syllogism are refuted by the Quran:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ..

God has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god with Him;....
(23:91)

Though at certain places in the New Testament it is stated that the 'Son' is the same as God (John 1:1, 10:30), at other places it is also made obvious that the 'Son' may die (something impossible to assert or even imagine about the Father), and once dead is powerless to rise again, as Paul states in his letter to the Romans (6:4): "Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father...." From the

viewpoint of a Muslim, the Christian doctrine probably became a prey to the political fantasies of Jewish scribes who wrote them back into their books. Such fantasies formed the groundwork for the political hopes of the Jewish community throughout the five to seven hundred years that elapsed between the fall of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the appearance of Jesus. They find obvious reflection in this statement from Luke (1:32-33) where it is said of Jesus that "he will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord will make him a king, as his ancestor David was and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob for ever; his kingdom will never end." Obviously Jesus never became a king "as his ancestor David was." However, despite it, for those who believed him as a prophet, he continued to remain the "Son of the Most High God" — a belief which found further encouragement in the many miracles of Jesus and the later belief in his resurrection. The terms 'king' and 'son of God' had, before Christ, come to be inextricably coupled together in the Jewish imagination, as can be seen in the exclamatory statement of Nathanael who, before meeting Jesus, had been told by Philip, Jesus' disciple, "We have found the one whom Moses wrote about in the book of the Law and whom the prophets also wrote about" (John 1:45). On meeting Jesus, Nathanael is reported to have said to Christ: "Teacher, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Evidently Nathanael's remark was a product of his Jewish religious background, for about him Jesus says: "Here is a real Israelite" [i.e. a real Jew] (John 1:47). Obviously, to Nathanael, one brought up in the Jewish monotheistic tradition, the term 'son of God' could not have signified the divinity of Christ, as it did for many Christians later. 'Son of God' most probably meant to him the privileged station of the Israeli king puffed up by Jewish nationalistic hopes. However, the Jewish political hopes were not realized in Jesus. Though it became difficult to call him the 'King of the Jews,' he remained for some Jews who embraced Christianity the 'son who sat at the Father's right hand'. Still some others clung to a hope in the 'Kingdom of God,' which in the Islamic terms could have meant the 'Hereafter,' though for many of the Christians it continued to signify a terrestrial kingdom.

The Christian conception of 'sonship' as a higher status seems to be derived from the arguments used by Paul to overthrow the 'burden' of Mosaic Law. Paul, on his own authority, argues that Mosaic Law was for 'slaves,' then "God sent his own Son ... to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God's sons" (Galatians 4:3-5). Elsewhere, he warns the converted Jews who entertained scruples about the retention of the Mosaic Law in these words: "Freedom is what we have—Christ has set us free! Stand, then, as free people, and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again" (Galatians 5:1). From the

Islamic viewpoint Paul had no authority to abrogate the Mosaic Law. For such an important step he should have had—besides his own ingenuous arguments— some textual authority from Jesus himself. This he never cites, nor claims that Jesus had recommended such a step. All that motivates him in this respect is a proselytizer's zeal. Discussing the problem of retention or rejection of the Mosaic Law with Christ's apostles, who were all of Jewish background, he tells them, "My brothers, you know that a long time ago God chose me from among you to preach the Good News to the Gentiles, so that they could hear and believe.... Why do you want to put God to test by laying a load on the backs of the [new] believers which neither our ancestors nor we ourselves were able to carry [being born-Jews]?" (Acts 15:7-10)

Thus we see that the idea of 'sonship' in Christianity is connected on the one hand with the religio-political fantasies of the Jews and on the other with the need felt by early Christian leaders to liberalize the faith by downplaying the significance of the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:19). What we have stated here is irrefutably supported by the Christian scriptures.

In Islam (i.e. in the Islamic doctrine, not the Muslim history), on the other hand, the racial or communal prejudices and ambitions of the Arabs did not play any part whatsoever. The Quran declares that no individual, nation or community has any special relationship with God. All are His servants and creatures. Jesus though a great prophet is still a creature, a servant, and a slave of God; he will not disdain to be God's servant:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ...

O mankind! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Certainly, the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you.... (49:13)

This verse does not address itself only to the Muslims but to all mankind in general.

لَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ...

The Messiah (Christ) will not disdain to be a servant ('abd) of God, neither the angels who are near-stationed to Him...(4:172)

The term 'abd' is used in the Quran in two meanings, such as our use of the word 'human' for all human beings and for good people in

particular. Although potentially every man is an 'abd or slave of God, only those who have served God as He should be served, becoming selfless instruments of the Divine Will, really deserve to be called 'ibād. Though all are potentially 'ibād, only those who are servants *par excellence* really deserved to be called 'ibād. That is, a potential 'abd becomes a real 'abd through 'ibādah, the worship and service of God. Only then he is fit to join the heavenly community of God's servants —what Watt erroneously calls the 'theiosphere.'

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ * اِرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً * فَأَدْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي * وَادْخُلِي
جَنَّتِي *

O soul at peace, return unto thy Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing! Enter thou among My servants! Enter thou My Paradise! (89:27-30)

Of course, Watt may not accept that 'sonship' exempts the 'sons' from 'ibādah. Even Paul, whatever his ideas about the Mosaic Law and the necessity of circumcision, will not grant such an exemption. Whoever does the 'ibādah of God, recognizes that he is an 'abd.

There is a reference in this chapter to Jesus' speech to his disciples, from which a Muslim—or anyone else—would draw conclusions entirely different from those deduced by Watt. In John 15:15, Jesus is reported as saying to his disciples:

I do not call you servants any longer, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. Instead I call you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.

Apparently Jesus' disciples differentially called him 'master' or 'lord', which implied that they considered themselves as his servants or slaves. So Jesus tells them that he will treat them as his friends and equals now that he has taught them all that he had been taught by God, and now that their spiritual instruction has been completed. This is a common practice in any institution of higher learning. Senior pupils, when after undergoing long years of training attain approximately the same degree of knowledge as their teachers, are treated by their teachers as equals and friends. Watt, however, with the purpose of detracting the Islamic usage of the term 'abd at the back of his mind, draws another kind of conclusion; he says: "This implies that the slave or servant does not know what the plans and purposes of his master are whereas the son [i.e. Christ] does, and shares his knowledge with his friends [the Christian believers]." The inference: 'son of God'=divinity of the son, whose literal correlation seems inevitable, also surreptitiously creeps into the 'sonship' of the believer. This is obvious

from the following statement of Watt, which is made easier for him by the vocabulary of the lines in Psalms 82:6, but which reduces monotheism to a mere verbal game:

Jesus was a pioneer in this field [i.e. sonship], and his followers became more fully sons and daughters of God as, following him, they understand God's purposes more fully and seek to realize them. It might even be suggested that in so far as one comes to understand God's purposes and is committed to realizing them one enters into a sphere above the nousphere, perhaps to be called the theiosphere [the sphere of divinity], and Jesus would then be the one who first found the way into this. (p. 137)

Watt makes the reader aware of the fluidity of symbolic language. At one place dealing with the problem as to how the 'sonship' of Jesus differs from that of his followers, he suggests two explanations which do not harmonize with each other; then adds, "These suggestions do not harmonize with one another, though this does not matter when we are dealing with symbolic language." (p. 136) One would expect that he would dismiss the difference between the Islamic 'servant-Lord' vocabulary and the Christian 'Son-Father' vocabulary in the same spirit, especially since he recommends that we should view religious differences in an eirenic spirit and adopt a conciliatory approach to apparent divergence in religious symbolism. One may say that with substitution of the words 'servant' or 'prophet' in place of the word 'Son' in the New Testament (whenever used for Christ) and the word 'Lord' throughout for the word 'Father', nearly ninety-nine per cent of doctrinal differences between Islam and Christianity will evaporate like mist. But despite his frequent harping on the theme of symbolism in religious language, he turns out to be a staunch literalist at the end, where he, perhaps unknowingly, gives vent to a self-contradictory idea:

In the light of what was said earlier about symbolic language, the conception of 'son of God' is to be regarded as expressing, in the best way possible for us, something real about God. The symbol of Divine sonship implies that a human being may have insight into His purposes and into His relationship with humanity, and may be able to do something towards realizing the purposes. (p. 137)

According to Islam, God imparted the knowledge of His aims and purposes to man not just two thousand years ago, but at the time of the creation of Adam, who was designated to fulfil the role of God's deputy and vicegerent (*khalifah*) on the earth. Whereas according to the Bible, God forbade Adam and Eve from eating the fruit of the 'tree of knowledge of what is good and what is bad' (Genesis 2:17) and expelled them from paradise, saying "Now the man has become like one of us and has knowledge of what is good and what is bad" (Genesis 3:22), according to the Quran God gave all knowledge to Adam before

everything—even before he was given a spouse to live with (2:31)—and made all angels prostrate themselves before Adam in respect for his superior knowledge (2:31-34). At least twenty times the Quran speaks of God as the teacher of men (2:32, 96:4,5, 5:110, 12:101, 4:113, 2:239, 18:65, etc.). The Holy Prophet (S) is asked to constantly pray to God for the increase in his knowledge (20:114). The abstract noun *'ilm* (knowledge) occurs about a hundred times in the Quran. The various derivatives of the root *'alima* (he knew) occur more than seven hundred times in the Quran. In fact it may be stated that no religious scripture talks of knowledge so often and profusely as the Holy Quran. It indeed requires a lot of naivety to hold on the one hand that God expelled Adam jealously—*na'ūdhu billāh*—for attempting to share His knowledge, and on the other hand to profess that He later became so indulgent as to adopt human beings as sons and offer them “insight into His purposes and into His relationship with humanity,” which ultimately turns out to be no more than ‘insight’ into the ‘sonship’ and ‘divinity’ of Christ; because ‘sonship’ and ‘divinity’ may signify power, but do not add to Christ’s character reflected in his words and deeds.

The phrases “King of Israel, Son of God,” or the idea contained in them, which recurs in several places in the Old and the New Testaments with different wordings and, as we said, expresses the nationalist and political hopes of the Jews embodied in the fantasies of an Israeli super-king. What these phrases meant to the common Jew of Christ’s times may be said to be something like this: “God will send a king of David’s descent who will reestablish the Jewish self-rule. He will regain not only the independence of the Jews now lost for almost five hundred years, but also will defeat and subjugate all other nations to the Israelites. That super-king of the future will be an undefeatable and irresistible potentate backed by the power of the Almighty. He will be a man ‘well-connected’ and one who enjoys much influence at the ‘top’ (connections with the most powerful had an irresistible charm and prestige for the Jews, who were for generations used to slavery and second-class citizenship, as is apparent from many passages of the different books of the Old Testaments). He will have great temporal power, and his dynasty will rule for ever. This will be on account of the great favour and protection of the Superpower that he will enjoy (the mightiest ‘superpower’ was God in the Jewish religious imagination, who, unlike other terrestrial powers, who were enemies of the Jewish self-rule, was sympathetic to the Jews and considered them His own people). The idea contained in “King of Israel, Son of God” neatly sums up the passionate political hopes conceivable for the Jewish religious imagination. It recurringly echoes through the Bible and had acquired great importance for the Jews during the days of political turmoil that preceded and followed the times of Jesus Christ. Moreover,

the office of prophethood had lost all charm for them, and the prophets were considered to be obstructive holy men who had nothing to offer except moral admonition and threatening prophecies of greater evils and sufferings. Jesus, in the Gospels, is reported as accusing the Jewish priesthood of killing many prophets. At another place, after the cold reception he had by the people in his own hometown of Nazareth, Jesus remarks that a prophet is not well received in his own town. Familiarity breeds contempt, it is said, and perhaps the Jews were so much used to ignore the reproaches of the prophets that many followers of Christ thought it necessary to propagate his message by dubbing him something else than as a "prophet", a term which had lost its prestige with the Jews. On the contrary, such terms as "King of the Jews" and "Son of God", because of their political significance and connotations of power, were more welcome to the prevailing Jewish taste and, certainly, to the Hellenic mind of the Gentiles, who were more familiar with such ideas as they were common in Greek and Roman mythologies.

In our own times, the religious belief in God having become almost an anachronism and the modern Jews being more at home in modern terminology, new terms are substituted for ancient fantasies and ambitions. One may say that the same idea contained in "King of Israel, Son of God" is reflected in the contemporary phrases: "the Greater Israel, the special friend of the U.S." These contemporary phrases represent the ancient Jewish ambitions and fantasies, which have been realized through the efforts of the Western powers through the formation of the Zionist state in Palestine. The state of Israel now takes the place of the ancient fantasies about the "promised king of the Jews", who failed to keep his appointment. Moreover, adoption of the Western secular view of reality and history has led the Zionists to look forward to the more tangible "sonship" and "fatherhood" of a terrestrial superpower, the U.S. in this case. However, ancient fantasies linger with obdurate tenacity and the ancient relationship of "sonship" is considered fulfilled in the "special relationship" between the U.S. and Israel. In fact several U.S. officials, including presidents, on innumerable occasions, have referred to "the special relationship" of the U.S. with Israel. The 'special relationship' idea is also reflected in the writings of anti-Zionist Muslims when they call Israel "an illegitimate child of the U.S. imperialism."

Therefore, from the Muslim viewpoint, Christian religious terminology, on which the characteristic Christian doctrines are based, is a continuation of the religio-political vocabulary of the pre-Christian Judaism, and a transference of the political vocabulary which was given a spiritual and theological import by the majority of Jewish followers of Christ who, having separated from traditional Judaism and the

practice of the Mosaic Law, continued to hold on to the ancient fantasies in the coming of the "kingdom of God" and the rule of the Son. Those fantasies were also not abandoned by the traditional Jews and have survived until the modern times.

In the final analysis, therefore, the doctrine of incarnation or 'Sonship' is a doctrine of power under the cloak of spirituality. In this sense Nietzsche, who extolled power, was a Christian despite his condemnation of the Christian morality, which he called 'slave morality.' In Islam, on the other hand, even though God is Omnipotent, even the worship of God is the worship of the Divine Character signified by the oft-repeated Names such as *Rahmān* and *Rahīm*. Its Prophet, in the first place, is an 'abd before he is a rasūl (Messenger): *أَشْهَدُ أَنْ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ*; he represents *rahmah* (mercy), although he enjoyed temporal power. The Prophet (S) was a ruler, but his temporal power is overshadowed in the Muslim's mind by his spiritual station. He preferred the humility of a slave and despised the power and pomp of kings.

Finally, in the book's last chapter, Watt, very briefly, comes to deal with the contemporary issues and problems indicated in the title of the book. His viewpoint is not different from that of the Western media regarding the contemporary resurgence in the world of Islam. About the motives underlying the Islamic revival, he says:

The old religious intellectual class of the 'ulamā' or jurists has tended to resist change and as a result its power and influence has greatly declined. Since about 1950 the speed of change has greatly accelerated, and this has left the masses of ordinary people utterly bewildered and feeling anxious and insecure, as they saw the disappearance of familiar objects and ways of acting and their replacement by things strange and new.... It is chiefly out of this feeling of insecurity that the Islamic resurgence or revival has developed.... People looking for security think of 'the good old days' when the old religion was properly observed. One aspect of this insecurity is the fear of being, as it were, drowned in Western culture and losing one's traditional identity. Consequently in turning to the old religion they tend to emphasize those features which make it culturally distinct from the West, such as prohibition of alcohol and usury and the use of the veil and similar coverings by women.... This type of response can indeed be traced back for centuries. A not so distant example comes from the India of about one hundred and fifty years ago, where the Hindus were eagerly getting Western education for their children, while the Muslims remained aloof; and the not surprising result was that the best government posts open to Indians nearly all went to Hindus, while the Hindus also benefited in other ways. (p. 142)

As is obvious from these remarks, Watt is disposed to view the Islamic revival in a negative light and elsewhere refers to it as being a manifestation of "extreme conservatism." This shows that Watt is entirely out of touch with the contemporary world reality. He fails to

notice many aspects which are very significant in the present Islamic movement. His reference to "the good old days" of the British rule in India and the attitude of Muslims towards the alien rulers is totally irrelevant in the context of the present world-wide Islamic revival. He does not say anything about the prominent aims and objectives of the present Islamic resurgence.

The goals of the present Islamic resurgence are multifarious and embrace a wide range of activities from politics to education. In the political domain, which represents a very important facet of the Islamic resurgence, the aims might be stated to be: (1) replacement of the present so-called secular regimes, most of which are oppressive dictatorships controlled by pro-Western military juntas, by purely Islamic states in which the participation of the people in their country's destiny is ensured; (2) ending foreign political, military, and economic interference in the affairs of Muslim countries; (3) political and economic justice, independence, and self-sufficiency; (4) harmonization of all political, economic, social and educational policies with the Islamic Shari'ah. The social and educational objectives must be stated as: (1) revival of the true social and ethical values of Islam; (2) emphasis on the unity of the world-wide Muslim community; (3) the need to reorient the educational infrastructure in the Muslim countries in accordance with the Islamic goals and values; (4) the need to raise the level of scientific and technological education and research in the Muslim countries; (5) the need to dissociate modern technology and industrial practice from the undesirable cultural accretions of the West, and to give a human and Islamic direction to the application and use of science and technology; (6) the need to subordinate the entire legal structure in the Muslim countries to Islamic Shari'ah. In the sphere of economics, the objective may be stated as: (1) the need for development of economic, fiscal and commercial policies which are in agreement with the Islamic teachings; (2) the need to promote trade and mutual cooperation between Muslim countries in the fields of industrial production and scientific research; (3) the need to make the Muslim world economically self-reliant and self-sufficient. Apart from these, many more objectives can be mentioned which are stressed by the so-called Muslim fundamentalists. More than anything else, the Islamic revival is not motivated by a desire to recreate a past or to bring back 'the good old days' as Watt remarks. There is indeed a sense of anxiety among the Muslims, for they feel that the Islamic values are threatened and challenged, but not an anxiety caused by 'disappearance of familiar objects and ways of acting.' Indeed, there is a strong desire to obliterate the hitherto familiar and hated idols in the field of politics and their dictatorial ways of administering affairs and to substitute them with hitherto forgotten and forsaken ideals and 'ways of acting' at the level

of political and communal life, ideals which are deeply ingrained in the Muslim consciousness in the form of the Sunnah of the Prophet (S). There is no resistance to change in the Muslim world, in the sense familiar to Western sociologists, for such resistance would have come from the elderly and the aged. The contemporary Islamic revival, on the contrary, is centred around the revolt of the Muslim youth against the social conditions to which the members of the senior generation have already adapted, but which are not acceptable to the young. Therefore, it is ignorance to say that the Islamic resurgence represents resistance to change. In fact it is a call for a drastic change and a socio-political, ethico-legal, economic and cultural revolution.

Furthermore, it is the secular West which feels insecure and threatened by the kind of fundamental changes demanded by the Muslim revivalists. It is the West which is bewildered and feels anxious and insecure when confronted with such a phenomenon as the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and strives to maintain the status quo. It is the Western powers which are plunged into depths of insecurity and anxiety at the spectacle of disappearance of the familiar pawns who have assisted them in keeping the Muslim world under Western control since a long time. In the present world situation, it is the capitalist West and the socialist East which represent the forces of reaction and conservatism, and strive to keep intact their respective domains of hegemony which fell into their hands during and after the Second World War.

The Islamic resurgence is not a negation of the positive changes brought about by the technological and industrial advancements, but a negation of the political and cultural appendages which have accompanied the indiscriminate introduction of technology and industry into the Third World by unthinking governments and negligent vested interests. 'Modernization,' which in the Western terminology means introduction of Western secular patterns of life into Muslim countries, in this special sense has been considered to be an attendant of the Western technological and highly sophisticated industrial methods. The Islamic revival negates the assumption of necessary correlation between technology and the so-called modernization, which has proved to be an attending evil.

Watt, like a bad physician, makes a wrong diagnosis of the contemporary problems of the Muslim world, and prescribes a worse remedy. He cites the example of al-Ghazālī as a model of "creative response" to the crucial contemporary problems. He describes a "creative response" as the response of a person "who tries to effect a degree of harmony between these [the central religious doctrines] and the current scientific and philosophical outlook, and in so doing to provide a basis for dealing with social and political problems." This

definition is quite convincing, but it is inappropriate to cite al-Ghazālī as an example of it. Al-Ghazālī, despite his greatness as a thinker, represents a great reactionary force in the history of Muslim thought. His was a reactionary response to the challenge of his age. By discouraging the pursuit of philosophy and natural sciences, he provided a negative or rather destructive solution to the challenge that was invading the Muslim society, and caused much damage to the progress of Muslim science and philosophy. To project and recommend him as an archetype of "creative response" is equal to prescribe poison as a life-saving drug.

Watt is deeply infatuated with the desire to defend the Christian doctrines by diluting Islamic disapproval of them. In this chapter also, where one would expect him to deal with the contemporary issues of Islam and Christianity, he relapses into a discussion of the Christian belief in Christ's crucifixion. He regrets that,

... because Muslims have not accepted the historical fact of the crucifixion of Jesus, they have failed to understand most of the Christian teaching about the meaning of his death and resurrection and the nature of his work of 'salvation'.

By the standards of modern historiography the crucifixion of Jesus is one of the most certain events in past history, as certain—dare one say it?—as the fact that Muhammad proclaimed the religion of Islam in Mecca about the year 610. (p. 144)

Then he goes on to argue that the Quranic verses which (apparently, according to Watt) deny that Jesus underwent crucifixion do not necessarily refute crucifixion "when looked in an eirenic spirit." But as we said, the Quranic denial of Jesus' crucifixion was firmly corroborated by reliable ḥadīth. According to Islamic ḥadīth, it was Judas Iscariot, the traitor, who was crucified, his appearance having been changed to resemble that of Christ. The fact of crucifixion of Judas, whom all Jews, including the disciples and Christ's own mother, took for Christ, is accepted by the Quran and the ḥadīth. Islam denies Jesus' crucifixion and all the other Christian doctrines and beliefs which are based on the belief in his death on the cross, such as the doctrine of atonement, the doctrine that the Mosaic Law became inoperative with him and that the believer in the resurrected Christ need not—in fact should not—follow the Mosaic Law, and other related beliefs. Moreover, the Islamic belief that Jesus did not die upon the cross and that the Mosaic Law with small modifications was made obligatory for Christians to follow, and that Jesus was just a man and a prophet, not the 'Son' of God or God—all are confirmed expressly by one of the Christian gospels, the Gospel of Barnabas, which is, however, included by official Christianity among the writings conveniently dubbed as

'apocrypha'. There have been Christian sects who held identical beliefs, but who are also, as conveniently, branded 'heretic' or 'unorthodox' by the majority, the 'orthodox' Christians. Watt, as we pointed out earlier adopts a statistical criterion of truth, a criterion which has been considered by the statistical majority, in the history of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as the criterion of orthodoxy.

NOTES.

1. The Islamic and Christian conceptions of God are primarily conditioned by the different approaches of the followers of the two religions towards their faith. The Christian conception of God is appropriate to the liberal approach, first popularized by Paul, towards the Mosaic Law. In Islam, though Divine Mercy envelops and embraces all creation (7:156, 40:7), God's love is conditional; that is, it is conditional to man's possession of certain positive attributes. The most decisive of those attributes is submissiveness to God's Will, His commands and those of the Prophet (S). In the Quran, God declares to the Prophet (S):

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ * ... فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ *

Say: 'If you love God, follow me, and God will love you and forgive you your sins; God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.' ... But if they turn their backs, God loves not the unbelievers. (3:31,32)

2. In fact, there is no religious scripture which speaks of the various Attributes of God so often and with so much clarity as the Holy Quran. In its about 6236 verses, one of the most recurring themes of the Quran is the all-embracing nature of Divine mercy and compassion. The epithet *al-Rahmān*, which is usually translated as 'the Beneficent' or 'the Compassionate' occurs about 170 times in relation to God. The epithet *al-Rahīm*, usually translated as 'the All-merciful' occurs at least 247 times. The word *rahmah* (lit. mercy, compassion), in relation to God, occurs more than 150 times. Divine forgiveness, including various derivatives of the verb *ghafara* (he forgave), occurs at least 230 times. References to God as one Who mercifully welcomes the repentant when they turn to Him, in the form of various derivatives of the root *tāba*, occur nearly 100 times. The epithets *Walī* (friend, protector, guardian), *Naṣīr* (helper), and *Ra'ūf* (kind, merciful) together occur more than sixty times. Hundreds of other instances of direct or indirect mention of Divine love and compassion can be cited. According to the Quran, God is an absolutely free actor; He does whatever He wishes. However if God has imposed upon Himself anything, it is compassion and *rahmah* (6:54, 4:175). The objective of the mission of the Holy Prophet (S) is to reveal God's love and

compassion for mankind. The Prophet (S) has been sent into the world as representing the *rahmah* of God for mankind (21:107). The Quran itself is *rahmah* as well as guidance for all mankind (16:89, 17:82, 27:77, etc.). In addition there are those unforgettably intimate and loving verses of the Quran such as 39:53, 2:186, and 89:27-30 which convey an untranslatable warmth and reassuring love. The Quran also makes it clear that although God's mercy and compassion are universal and embrace all creatures, the good as well as the evil, His love is selective. God, the Quran tells us, loves (*yuhibbu*) the good-doers (*muhsinun*), the repentant (*tawwabun*), the pure (*mutatahhirun*), the patient (*sabirun*), the just and the equitable (*muqsitun*), the God-fearing, the pious (*muttaqun*), and those who fight in the way of God (61:4). God does not love (*la yuhibbu*) the aggressors (*mu'tadun*), those who cause corruption (*mufsidun*), the unjust and the tyrants (*zalimun*), the sinful and the ungrateful (*kaffarun athim*), the proud and the boastful (*mukhtalun fakhur*), the traitors (*khainun*), the wasteful and the prodigal (*musrifun*), and the unbelievers in God and His Prophets (*kafirun*). God loves the righteous believers and they love God more than anything else; they love God with a love which cannot be compared to the love of the polytheists for false deities:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ...

Yet there are men who take to themselves associates apart from God, loving them as God is loved; but those that believe love God with a more ardent love.... (2:165)

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَبِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ *

Say: 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your clan, your possessions that you have gained, commerce you fear may slacken, dwellings you love—if these are dearer to you than God and His Messenger, and to struggle in His way, then wait till God brings His command; indeed God guides not the ungodly. (9:24)

The love of God is of so fundamental significance in Islam that all other social, emotional, psychological and spiritual attachments, loyalties, relations and preferences are only secondary and derived from it. The believers not only love God ardently, they are compassionate and kind to one another like brethren (48:29, 49:10). Their love of one another and sternness towards unbelievers is derived from this great love of God. To love and hate for the sake of God, not from selfish personal or communal motives, is the most sublime and precious trait of human character and deed. One may say that more than anything else it is the ardent love of God which characterizes the Islamic faith and lies at the heart of the vitality and power of the Islamic religion. Such love and devotion is the appropriate outcome of such a book as the Holy Quran.

3. If one closely examines the emphasis on love in Paul's epistles it will be seen that it is aimed to supplant the Mosaic Law. See Paul's arguments which aim to undermine the Christian's respect for the Mosaic Law in these passages: Romans 4:26-31; 4:13-15; 2:25-29; 6:4-14; 7:4-6; 8:32-34; Galatians 3:1-14; 4:4,5; 5:21; 6:5-15). Paul's enthusiastic rejection of the Law is contradictory to Jesus' own position on the Mosaic Law as shown by his statements recorded in Matthew 5:17.

Paul's zeal to convert Gentiles bears a strong contrast to Jesus' own approach indicated by the anecdote of the Canaanite woman mentioned in Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 7:24-30.

Paul's conscious and calculated annulling of the Mosaic Law is aimed at liberalizing Christianity to make it acceptable for pagans for whom it would have been difficult to accept the life-style implicit in the Mosaic Law. Throughout his arguments aimed at annulling the Mosaic Law, Paul offers no textual authority from Christ. All he offers is what to a Muslim jurist would appear as no more than sophistry. All that seems to matter for Paul is the fulfilment of the 'vision' which he saw on the road to Damascus and his mission to convert the Gentiles at all cost, even at the cost of the religion of Jesus Christ himself.

4. This is an example of the kind of absolutely groundless and mischievous allegations made by some Orientalists with respect to the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran and the Islamic tradition are perfectly aware of the length of period (more than a thousand years) which separates Moses' times from those of Jesus Christ. At least in two places, the Quran expressly indicates that between Moses and Jesus God sent a number of prophets to the Children of Israel, who called the people to the teachings of the Torah. Consider the following verses:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ....

And We gave to Moses the Book, and after him sent succeeding Messengers; and We gave Jesus son of Mary the clear signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit.... (2:87)

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ آسَلَمُوا لِلَّهِ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ....
*... وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ *

Surely We sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light; thereby the prophets who had surrendered themselves judged the Jews and the rabbis and the priests....

We sent, following in their footsteps (i.e. in the footsteps of the prophets who came after Moses), Jesus son of Mary, confirming the Torah before him; and We gave to him the Injil, wherein is guidance and light, and confirming the Torah before it, as a guidance and an admonition unto the God-fearing. (5:44,46)

Moreover, the ḥadīth explicitly bears out the Prophet's awareness of the more than twelve centuries of interval between the times of Moses and Jesus. Accordingly, the insinuation that the Quran considers Jesus to be Moses' nephew is preposterous. Such naive allegations serve no purpose except that of proving the Orientalists' prejudice and malice towards Islam and its Scripture.

5. It is impossible for anyone with some knowledge of the Quran and ḥadīth to entertain any doubts about the Islamic belief that Jesus did not die upon the cross. The Gospel of Barnabas, which is from the point of view of ethical teaching a work much superior to the four Gospels of the New Testament, also supports the belief that it was not Jesus but Judas the traitor who was crucified by the Jewish priesthood, who took Judas for Christ after the treacherous disciple's resemblance was miraculously changed to resemble that of Christ.

6. A divided view of reality, unfortunately, became prevalent early in the history of Muslims. The Muslims, as a community, never quite learnt to view the world from the eyes of the Holy Quran. As a result, even this divided view of reality gave way to an almost secular vision. Ibn Khaldūn, the famous Muslim historian, is the culmination of this departure from the sacral. On the other hand, the Shi'ah have adamantly resisted the trend towards the split view and have criticized the Sunnī scholars for their tendency to view even the personality of the Holy Prophet (S) as an amalgam of sacral and secular. In general, the Sunnīs have inclined to view the Prophet (S) as a personality divisible into its prophetic and ordinary human components. The Shi'ah, on the contrary, view the Prophet (S) as an indivisible personality, and as an infallible prophet in all walks of life. The Prophet (S) is a prophet at all times and in all phases of his life. There can be no division between the personality of Muḥammad (S) as a prophet and as a man.

7. The Quran, 2:30.

8. According to the Quran, God is the 'Light' of the heavens and the earth (24:35). In many places, the Quran refers to itself as a light and guidance. From this one may deduce that all efforts to view the universe and in particular human life which do not harmonize with the outlook of the Quran are destined to fail, because they do not correspond with reality or *ḥaqq*. That is why the Quran often refers to the unbelievers as being blind, deaf, and dumb. Those who do not see themselves in the light of God, not only fail to understand the meaning of life and its purpose, they do not comprehend their own actions and their real meaning and import. Basically, according to the Quran, the believers are those who know the reality of life and understand its purposes *in this life* and act accordingly; the unbelievers are those who live through their life without understanding anything, without even understanding the meaning of their actions, but who will understand the evil nature of the life they have lived only after death (29:8, 31:15, 10:23, 41:50, 31:23, 5:105, 6:60, 9:94, 9:105, 39:7, 62:8, 5:14, 6:108, 6:159, 24:64, 58:6-7, 64:7). Obviously, if a secular historian doesn't even understand his own life and his present deeds, it is absurd to expect him to reveal the meaning of the life and events of past peoples and civilizations. Therefore, in the light of the Quran, secular historiography is no more than a grotesque view of reality.

9. This statement of Nietzsche is a conformation of the completion of a process in the history of the West: the irrelevance of belief in God and Christian teaching to the main current of intellectual life in the West, and the transformation of the Western culture into a pagan one.

10. Robin Woodsworth Carlsen, *Crisis in Iran: A Microcosm of the Cosmic Play*, and *Seventeen Days in Tehran: Revolution, Evolution and Ignorance* (Snow Man Press, Canada).

11. On page 118, discussing sacral and secular historiography, Watt makes these remarks:

... We may look at two cases where there is a serious conflict between sacral history and secular. The New Testament has a story of how three 'wise men' or Magi came to worship the baby Jesus and offer gifts to him (Matthew 2:1-12). From the point of view of the secular historian it is almost certain that nothing resembling this ever happened. With this may be combined a passage in the Quran (2:125-7) where Abraham and Ishmael are reported to have founded the sanctuary of the Ka'bah at Mecca. In this case the secular historian (assuming he allows the existence of an individual called Abraham) will claim that there are strong reasons for thinking that Abraham never visited Mecca, even though he cannot absolutely prove this.

Here and in what follows it, what Watt is suggesting is that the Christian and the Muslim, instead of taking the two stories as historical events, should take them as 'symbolic myths' or, in Watt's words, as "iconic truths." In other words, the believers should, with 'sophisticated naivety', of course, should take the story of the three Magi "as showing that Gentiles or non-Jews also acknowledge Jesus as Christ," while the visit of Abraham to Mecca, as narrated by the Quran, may be taken as indicating "that Islam has deep roots in the biblical tradition." (p. 119)

There can be many answers to Watt's naive suggestion. First of all, there is absolutely no reason for a believer, Muslim or Christian, to accept the presumptuous conjectures of the secular historian, which are based on his *belief* in the validity of his secular world-view. What may appear to be "almost certain" or based on "strong reasons" to the secular historian is, to the believer, no more than a self-righteous exercise in conjecture. If the believer believes in these stories on the basis of revelation, the secular historian has absolutely no basis at all for questioning their veracity, except his belief in the empirical world-view. Secondly, Watt's "iconic" interpretation enters the domain of *ta'wil*, an activity strongly prohibited by the Quran and *hadith*. Watt, in the tradition of the Orientalists, using sophistry, is naively attempting to shake the Muslim's belief in the absolute veracity of the historical statements of the Quran. Lastly, it is appropriate to answer such arguments aimed at diluting the Muslim's respect for the Quran from the Quran itself:

هَآ أَنتُمْ هُوَآءِ حَآجَجْتُمْ فِيمَا لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَآجُّونَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ * * يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ * يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ
لِمَ تَلْبُسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ *

Ha, you are the ones who dispute on what you know; why then dispute you touching a matter of which you know not anything? God knows and you know not.... People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in God's signs, which you yourselves witness? People of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with falsehood, and conceal the truth and that wittingly? (3: 66,70-71)

12. To say that Muslims have recently come to interpret the Quranic passage about Adam as implying that God has given humanity a position of His *khilāfah* or stewardship, is inaccurate. The idea is already there in al-Zamakhshari's exegesis, *al-Kashshāf* (d. 538/1144), where under 2:30 he explains why the singular *khalīfah* is sufficient for its application to all children of Adam. See also Khwājah 'Abd Allāh al-'Anṣārī, (b. 396/1005) *Kashf al-'asrār*, the commentary under the verse 2:30, where he uses the word *ādam*, not only for Adam but for mankind in general. Moreover, the angels' objection to Adam's *khilāfah* is stated in such terms as to clearly indicate that to the angels it did not signify just the *khilāfah* of an individual but of an entire species, the mankind. Therefore, Watt's irresponsible remark that the above interpretation is a recent one is absolutely baseless.



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