

۲۵

Dr. Ali Shari'ati

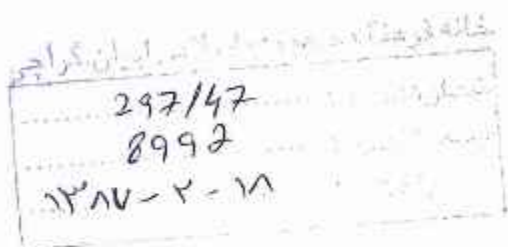
What Is To Be Done

THE ENLIGHTENED THINKERS
AND AN ISLAMIC RENAISSANCE



Edited and Annotated by
Farhang Rajaee

Foreword by
John L. Esposito



WHAT IS TO BE DONE:

The Enlightened Thinkers and an Islamic Renaissance

WHAT IS TO BE DONE:

The Enlightened Thinkers and an Islamic Renaissance

Dr. Ali Shari'ati

Edited and Anotated by Farhang Rajaei

Foreword by John L. Esposito



The Institute for Research and Islamic Studies
(IRIS)

© 1986 The Institute for Research and Islamic Studies

All rights are reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. For information contact The Institute for Research and Islamic Studies, P.O. Box 35844, Houston, Texas, 77235, U.S.A.

Published in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sharī'atī, Ali.

What is to be done.

"Collection of three lectures . . . delivered in the 1970's"—

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Islam—20th century. 2. Shī'ah. 3. Koran.

Sūrat al-Rūm—Criticism, interpretation, etc.

I. Rajee, Farhang, 1952—

II. Title.

BP163.S5164 1986

297'.09'04

86-82499

ISBN 0-932625-04-5



















ISBN 0-932625-01-0 (pbk.)

Cover design: Husayn Ava

Contents

A Note from the Institute	vii
Foreword	ix
<i>by John L. Esposito</i>	
Preface	xiii
<i>by Farhang Rajaee</i>	
An Outline of Dr. Ali Shari'ati's Life and Career	xvii
<i>by Farhang Rajaee</i>	
I. Where Shall We Begin?	1
<i>translated by A. Alidust and F. Rajaee</i>	
II. What Is To Be Done?	29
<i>translated by A. Alidust and F. Rajaee</i>	
III. Sūrah al-Rūm ("The Romans"): A Message to Enlightened Thinkers	71
<i>translated by Ali A. Behzadnia and Najla Denny</i>	
IV. What Is To Be Done: A Practical Plan for the Husayniah Irshād	103
<i>translated by A. Alidust and F. Rajaee</i>	
Appendix: Arabic Text of Sūrah al-Rūm	161
Bibliography	171
Index	173

Transliteration

Letter	Transliteration	Short Vowels
<p>ا ب ت ث ج ح خ د ذ ر ز س ش ص ض ط ظ ق ک ل م ن ه و ی</p>	<p>ʾ b t th j h kh d dh r z s sh ṣ ḍ ṭ ẓ q k l m n h w y-i t</p>	<p>  a  u  i Long Vowels  ā  ū  ī Diphthongs  aw  ay  iyy  uww Persian Letters  P  ch  zh  g  v Persian Short Vowels  e Persian Diphthongs  ow  ey </p>

A Note from the Institute

Students of Islam and of the related area studies are well acquainted with the name of Dr. Ali Shari'ati. He is one of the leading figures of the new generation of Islamic revolutionary thought which in Iran began in the nineteen-forties. The activists of this period included intellectuals as well as traditionally trained religious scholars, members of the *ulamā*. The work of these activists led to the emergence of an environment in Iran which was filled with enthusiasm for Islam, for reform, and for revolution. Ali Shari'ati joined this movement when he was very young, and contributed to its evolution after he finished his education at the Sorbonne in Paris. When he returned to Iran, Dr. Shari'ati lectured at the Ḥusayniyah Irshād, where he outlined his vision of an Islamic renaissance. This volume not only presents the ideals of its author with regard to reform in the Muslim world, but in virtue of the wide popularity of the lectures, is a testament to the idealism of the Shi'ite audience to whom they were addressed. The Institute for Research and Islamic Studies hopes the publication of this text will serve to familiarize the English-speaking readership with the hopes and aspirations of Iranian Muslims in the period leading up to the Islamic revolution.

The task of editing this volume was graciously accepted by our colleague, Farhang Rajaee, the author of a penetrating study of the thought of Ayatullah Khomeini and an expert on Islamic political thought generally, to whom we hereby express our gratitude for his work of translating parts of the text, and for annotating and editing the text. IRIS would also like to express its thanks to A. Alidust, who prepared the initial translation of two of the lectures included in this volume. We especially thank Fathullāh Marjani for his help with the translation of the first lecture in this volume. We should also thank Mehdi Abedi for his thoughtful suggestions and preparation of the index. We are grateful to Ali Behzādnia and Najlā Denny for

translating the chapter on "Sūrah al-Rūm." Thanks are due to Jack Schriver for detailed copy-editing and for innumerable suggestions on grammar and usage, and for the help with transliteration and editing of Yusef Yazdi. We are also grateful to Prof. John Esposito for his informative foreword to the text. We should also thank the president, Thomas Deveraux, and board of directors of FILINC, our parent organization, which provided IRIS with financial support to complete this project.

Finally, it is important to mention that although some of the discussions contained in this work pertain to sensitive issues in the interpretation of Islamic history, the members of IRIS hope that such discussions will not offend the adherents of any school of thought in the Islamic faith. The views expressed are not intended to belittle any faith, but to illuminate issues underlying the foundations of the different schools within Islam. We hope that our readers will excuse such statements, and see past them to the important points Dr. Shari'ati makes which are central to the progress of the entire Muslim *ummah*. The members of IRIS believe that truth can be approached only through the free expression of various points of view.

We pray that God may accept this endeavor.

Mehdi Noorbaksh
February 1987

Foreword

Ali Shariati has often been described as the ideologue of Iran's "Islamic Revolution." If for no other reason, this would merit the translation and study of his writings. However, Shariati's importance goes beyond Iran for he is an example of a new generation of Islamically oriented intellectuals and political activists who are to be found throughout much of the Muslim world today. Ali Shariati has become an international Islamic personality whose ideas and writings are studied, debated and emulated far beyond the borders of Iran.

The 1970's brought profound changes in the Muslim world. From Sudan to Sumatra, religion re-emerged as an important factor in Muslim politics. In contrast to the post World War II period which was dominated by forms of secular nationalism and socialism and the training of Western oriented elites, voices were now raised to warn of the dangers of cultural as well as political domination by foreign systems and values. An increasing number of secular and religious intellectuals and leaders questioned the penetration and seemingly pervasive presence of the West (politically, militarily, and socioculturally) and thus, the threat of becoming its progeny. Young people in particular found themselves torn between their traditional roots and values and the contrasting ideas and lifestyles associated with modern education and upward mobility. The choice often appeared to be between two polar opposites: a traditional, religious past and a modern, secular future. This dilemma reflected the bifurcation of Muslim societies which accompanied the process of modernization in general and its impact upon education and society in particular.

Modernization in the Muslim world brought the adoption of western political, legal and educational systems. Many countries, like Iran, introduced secular education alongside the traditional system of religious schools. The existence of two parallel systems caused a bifurcation in Muslim society. Government funded secular schools

provided the "new" training and academic degrees for prestige positions in a modernizing society (engineering, law, medicine, government service). Religious schools, with predominantly traditional educations, were no longer the primary educational institutions, but instead served more as seminaries for the training of religious leaders or teachers. Differences in training produced two orientations or mind sets. On the one hand, many of the clergy, while grounded in traditional learning, were unable to provide the creative leadership and reinterpretation of traditional values required in modern society. On the other, modern elites, trained in western oriented schools, while well versed in modern disciplines, were generally lacking in the true awareness of their tradition necessary to implement changes that were sensitive to the history and values of their cultural milieu. Too often, western systems and presuppositions were adopted uncritically by modern elites regardless of their appropriateness. Opportunities to render change with some continuity with the past went unrecognized and unrealized. Both traditional and modern elites failed to provide a new synthesis capable of supplying continuity in the midst of modern change. The younger generation, in particular, coming from traditional backgrounds but now at state schools and universities, were caught in the middle. The mentors and actors of modernizing societies implicitly accepted an approach to development that was both Western and secular in its assumptions and approach. However, a vanguard of religious and lay intellectuals, such as Jalal Al-e-Ahmad, foresaw and responded to the impending identity crisis:

We're like a nation alienated from itself, in our clothing and our homes, our food and our literature, our publications and, most dangerously of all, our education. We effect Western training, we effect Western thinking, and we follow Western procedures to solve every problem.¹

Increasingly throughout the late 1960's and early 1970's a new generation of leaders sought to fill the ideological vacuum in Muslim societies and bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. They condemned blind dependence upon the West and its concomitant loss of identity and roots. They wished to reclaim and reassert a third option, Islam. It was an alternative to Western capitalism and Marxist socialism, to the Westernization of society and to the

rejection of modernization. These Islamic ideologues proclaimed the need for Muslims to take hold of their heritage and carve out a future that was modern, but more firmly rooted in and guided by their own Islamic history and values. In reasserting that Islam offered a comprehensive way of life for both the individual and community, for state and society, Islamic ideologues and activists drew both upon the Quran and the example of Muhammad and the early community. They have also been the heirs to the legacy of modern Muslim reformers: Jamal al-Din Asad Abadi (al-Afghani), Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, Muhammad Iqbal, Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood and Mawlana Mawdudi of the Jamaat-i-Islami. The net result has been a proliferation of Islamic leaders and organizations calling for the implementation of more Islamically oriented societies. They display a broad diversity of interpretations and orientations. Among the more prominent and well known have been Hassan Turabi, Sadiq al-Mahdi, Mehdi Bazargan, Ali Shariati, Taleqani, Khurshid Ahmad and Anwar Ibrahim.

Ali Shariati's life, thought, and widespread following provide an excellent example of the contemporary resurgence of Islam: the sense of cultural and societal crisis and the quest for a more authentic identity. In common with other contemporary Islamic activists, Ali Shariati believed that the doctrine of Divine Unity (*tawhid*) was the foundation for all the affairs of Muslim society. Like the majority of Islamic activists, he combined a traditional upbringing with a modern education; he was a layman rather than a member of the ulama. Shariati was a creative thinker whose thought stood in sharp contrast to the traditional religious interpretations of many of the ulama and to the Westernized, secular outlook of many university professors and intellectuals. Reflecting the influence of al-Afghani and Iqbal, he emphasized the dynamic, progressive, and scientific nature of Islam and the need for a thoroughgoing reinterpretation of Islam to revitalize the Muslim community. Shariati maintained that he was reclaiming the original, true, revolutionary message of Shi'i Islam: "Original Shi'ism was an intellectually progressive Islamic movement as well as a militant social force, the most committed, most revolutionary Islamic sect."² Shariati preached what may be termed a liberation theology, which combined a reinterpretation of Islamic belief with modern sociopolitical thought. His Islamic ideology was for the liberation of Iranians, as individuals and a community, from political oppression and cultural assimilation. It emphasized national

identity/unity and socio-economic justice. This accounted for the enormous success of his lectures and his widespread following in Iran. It also constitutes his legacy and explains its attractiveness not only to Iranian Muslims but to like-minded Muslims throughout the world. For these reasons, Ali Shariati remains an important figure in Muslim history, and thus, students of Islam and of Muslim politics will especially welcome the translation and publication of Ali Shariati's *What Is To Be Done*.

John L. Esposito
College of the Holy Cross
Worcester, Mass.

NOTES

1. Jalal-Al-e-Ahmad, *Garbzadegi* (Weststruckness), translated by John Green and Ahmad Alizadeh (Lexington, Ky.: Mazda Press, 1982), p. 11.
2. Ali Shariati, *Intizar Madhab-i-istiraz*, translated by Mangol Bayat, in John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, eds., *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 297.

John L. Esposito is Professor of Islamic Studies at the College of the Holy Cross. Among his publications are: *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse University Press), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (Oxford University Press), with John J. Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (Oxford University Press) and *Women in Muslim Family Law* (Syracuse University Press).

Preface

Dr. Ali Shari'ati Mazināni is one of the most prolific and controversial thinkers and pamphleteers of twentieth-century Iran. Although his public career inside Iran lasted only for a little over ten years (from 1964 when he returned to Iran from France until 1977 when he left Iran), he has had the strongest influence of all thinkers over the present generation of Iranians.

What Is To Be Done: the Enlightened Thinkers and an Islamic Renaissance is a collection of lectures Dr. Shari'ati delivered in the 1970s, dealing with the definition of an intellectual, his role in the society and his responsibility towards his fellow men. According to Dr. Shari'ati, at present the intelligentsia have assumed the role which the prophets played in the old time and are the most significant force in every society for giving direction and providing guidance in the development of that society. In Shari'ati's mind, the intelligentsia are divided into two distinct groups: the intellectuals and "the enlightened thinkers." Unlike the former, who simply utilize their theoretical or practical know-how, the latter, because of a sense of social responsibility, play the role of social prophets. One can argue that, in these lectures, Shari'ati presents a portrait of himself and the way in which he perceives his own role in his society, the Islamic world. The lectures speak for themselves eloquently and are in no need of an interpretive introduction.

A few words should be said, however, about the organizational arrangement of this collection. The volume contains three lectures, one of which has been divided into two parts; together they constitute Shari'ati's response to what he perceives as the crisis facing the Islamic world. According to him, Muslims today are in need of an "Islamic renaissance" brought about by the enlightened Muslim thinkers. The lecture "Where Shall We Begin" deals with the characteristics of such thinkers. "What Is To Be Done" has two

distinct parts, one theoretical and the other practical. In the first part, Shari'ati lays out his reasons why an Islamic renaissance is called for; the second part offers a practical program for the initiation of an Islamic renaissance in the form of a plan of action for Husayniyah Irshād, a religious and educational institution he helped to establish in 1967. The remaining lecture of the collection, "Surah al-Rūm ("The Romans"): A Message to Enlightened Thinkers," gives a case study of the power of Islam and the way in which it was able to overcome the superpowers of the day, the Sassanid and the Byzantine empires. Because this case study so well illustrates Shari'ati's theoretical considerations in the first part of "What Is To Be Done," it seemed logical to order them accordingly. Hence, the second section of "What Is To Be Done" appears as the concluding chapter of the collection. Since it deals with practical issues, it nicely serves as a complement to the theoretical issues Dr. Shari'ati raises in the remaining three lectures.

In translating the texts included in this volume, the translators have done their utmost to be faithful to the author's original tone and style. It is not uncommon to encounter long and repetitious sentences in Dr. Shari'ati's works. The translators of chapter I, II, and IV have sought to preserve Shari'ati's stylistic idiosyncrasy as much as possible. The somewhat freer attitude of the translator of chapter III, however, has in no way compromised the original message of Shari'ati's lecture.

Shari'ati's numerous quotations from other thinkers, particularly from Fanon, Sartre, and Chandell, occurring in the texts, are often approximate paraphrases, hence making the identification of their precise sources impossible.

The notes accompanying the text are those of the author as well as the editor and the translators. Those of the latter are followed by (Tr.), or (Ed.).

The Qur'anic quotations are taken from Marmaduke Pickthall's translation, *The Glorious Qur'an* (Albany: the State University of New York Press, 1976).

Persian and Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions employed by the Institute for Research and Islamic Studies. The more common Islamic names or concepts, however, are transliterated as they appear in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

In preparation of this volume, I have enjoyed the support of many people. I would like to express my appreciation to the staff of the

Institute for Research and Islamic Studies, particularly Mr. Mehdi Noorbakhsh, as well as the staff of Free Islamic Literature, Inc. Thanks also to Dr. Fatemeh Givechian for her assistance in reading the manuscript. And special thanks to my daughter, Bita Mehrin, who was deprived of time with her father, but tolerated it. Finally, Ms. Fiona M. Chappell helped in typing the manuscript.

Farhang Rajaei

Charlottesville, Virginia
Khordad A.H. 1365 (Solar)
Shawwal A.H. 1406 (Lunar)
June 1986 C.E.

1892

1893

1894

1895

1896

1897

1898

1899

1900

1901

1902

1903

1904

1905

1906

1907

1908

1909

1910

1911

1912

1913

1914

1915

1916

1917

1918

1919

1920

1921

1922

An Outline of Dr. Shari'ati's Life and Career

- 1933 Born near Mashhad, Iran.
- 1940s Joined "The Movement of God-worshipping Socialists", and "The Center for Propagation of Islamic Truth" (founded by, his father, Muhammad Taqi Shari'ati, himself a high school teacher, a scholar and a Islamologist).
- 1950s Student at Primary Teacher's Training College while teaching.
In cooperation with the God-worshipping socialists, wrote *Maktab-e Vaseteh* ("The Median School"). (Mashhad, 1332/1953).
Active in the popular and nationalist movement for nationalization of Iranian oil industry.
Established "the Islamic Students Association" in Mashhad.
Jailed in Tehran for political activities.
Translated into Persian *Khoda Parast-e Sosialist: Abudhar-e Ghaffari* ("The God-Worshipping Socialist Abudhar"), by Hamid Juwdat al-Sahar. (Mashhad, 1335/1956).
Began studies at the University of Mashhad.
Married.
- 1958 B.A. in Arabic and French.
Translated *Dar Naqd va Adab* ("On Literary Criticism"), by an Egyptian author Dr. Mandur, as his thesis.
Won state scholarship to study in France.

- 1959 Began Graduate work in Sorbonne, Paris.
- 1959-64 Studied with or the works of Henry Bergson, Jack Berque, Albert Camus, A. H. D. Chandell, Franz Fanon, George Gurwitsch, Louis Massignon, Jean Paul Sartre, and Jacques Schwartz.
Translated *Niyāyesh* ("La Priere"), by Alexis Carrel. (Paris, 1338/1960).
Be Kōja Takiye Kunīm? ("What Shall be Our Support?"). (Paris, 1961).
Active political life in France: established, with Mustafa Chamran and Ebrahim Yazdi, the Freedom Movement of Iran, Abroad (Nehzat-e Azadi-e Iran, Kharij Az Keshvar); participated in the formation of the Second National Front (founded in 1962); joined the Algerian movement; jailed for lecturing to the revolutionary students of Congo; edited Persian journals of *Iran-e Azād* and *Nameh-e Pars*.
Translated Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare*; Sartre's *What is Poetry?*; and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*.
- 1963 Submitted an annotated translation of the medieval Persian text *Faḍā'il al-Balkh* ("Les Merites de Balkh") as his Doctorat de l'Universite, letters.
- 1964 Return to Iran; arrested at the border and jailed for six months.
- 1964-69 Held various temporary teaching posts at high schools and the College of Agriculture. Travel to Tehran for the establishment of the Husayniah Irshād.
Translated *Salmān Pak*, by Louis Massignon. (Mashhad, 1344/1965).
Rahnamaye Khurāsān ("A Guide to Khorasan Province"). (Tehran: Sazeman-e Jalb-e Sayāhān, 1344/1966).
Joined the faculty at the University of Mashhad.
Islam Shenāsi ("Islamology"). Vol. 1 (Mashhad, 1347/1968). Based on lectures given in a course on the history of Islam.
Tarikh-e Tamaddun ("The History of Civilization"). Based on lectures given in a course on the civilizations of the world.

- Kavir* ("The Salt Desert"). An intellectual autobiography of sort which provides insights into Shari'ati's most inner feelings. (Vol. 13 of the *Collected Works*).
Soon was sent to forced retirement.
- 1969 Lectureship at the Husayniah Irshād. The most productive years in terms of initiating what he calls an "Islamic Renaissance."
First pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca.
- 1970 Second pilgrimage to Mecca and travel to other countries of the region.
- 1972 Husayniah Irshād ceased its activities.
Arrested for his activities.
- 1975 International organizations, Parisian and Algerian intellectuals flooded Tehran with petition for his release.
Released from prison.
- 1975-77 House arrest.
- 1977 May, left Iran for England.
June, mysteriously died in his relative's home.
Buried in Damascus, Syria.
- 1979- Posthumous publication of his collected works. So far (1986) thirty five volumes have been published.

Where Shall We Begin?

A lecture delivered at the Technical University of Tehran, Āzar 1350/November 1971. The text is found in *Collected Works*. (Tehran: Daftar-e Āthār-e Shari'ati, 1360/1981), pp. 249–294.

In the tradition of Abūdhār, who is my mentor, whose thought, whose understanding of Islam and Shi'ism, and whose ideals, wants, and rage I emulate, I begin my talk with the name of the God of the oppressed (mustaḍ'afān).¹ My topic is very specific.

Often people who do not approach issues with scientific method and language criticize me for not including certain issues which they think have direct bearing on the topic of my speech. But you are well aware that once a speaker or an author chooses a particular topic, his sole responsibility lies in his staying within the scope of his topic, and doing his best to provide an accurate analysis or substantiation of the thesis he has put forward. For example, when the topic is Islam with special concentration on the charges brought against it by its enemies or those who are not familiar with it, a speaker or an author who wants to respond to those charges logically and scientifically must limit himself to the subject matter at hand, i.e., those specific issues to which he has raised objections. Such a discussion logically should not be concerned with providing an introduction to Islam in which every conceivable Islamic topic comes within the scope of the discussion. Our imaginary author claims only that, in some specific instances, Islam has been misunderstood, and he sets as his goal to correct those mistakes. Should he succeed in his endeavors, he has performed his responsibility.

With that in mind, the subject of my talk is a very specific subject and aims to answer an explicit and narrow question, one which is ever present in the minds of the masses in general, and the "enlightened

souls" (*rūshanfekrān*)² in particular. That question is: Where Shall We Begin? This is a universal, pertinent, and fundamental question. It is not a question that I have put forward based on my own understanding or as a result of my own contemplation; rather it is the question of our time, to which I have tried to provide an answer. When one looks at the history of social development in the world, one encounters certain historical epochs during which numerous works were published entitled "Where Shall We Begin?" or "What Is To Be Done?" At least five such works immediately come to mind. Most of them have been published at the times when the societies of their origin were in a particular state of social transformation. For example, no book with similar titles appeared during the Middle Ages. Such questions are raised when a society is in the process of evolving from one state to another. The social conscience warrants that certain steps be taken to free the society from the domineering effects of the existing social order and the status quo on the actual, intellectual and religious life of its members, and to replace that order with another. The question of where to begin, then, is a matter of 'social strategy' and not of 'ideology.' Therefore, I do not need to talk about the nature of a doctrine, a religion or a particular scientific theory. Rather, I want to draw attention to where one should begin in terms of strategy in our society in a given period of time in order to achieve our shared objectives and to protect our values which are at present subject to cultural, intellectual and social onslaughts.

The gravest tragedy in traditional societies in general, and in the Muslim societies in particular, is that there is a lack of communication and a difference of outlook between the masses and the educated class. Due to the broad extension of the mass media, literacy, and education in the industrial countries of the West, the masses and the intellectuals understand each other rather well and share a relatively similar outlook. In Europe, a university professor can easily communicate with the 'uneducated' masses. Neither does the professor see himself as of higher stature nor do the masses treat him as an untouchable person wrapped in a piece of cellophane.

Even in the early history of Islamic societies, the present large gap between the intellectuals and the masses did not exist. The great Muslim traditional intelligentsia, the 'ulamā—including the jurisconsults (*fuqahā*), the dialectical theologians (*mutakallimūn*), the interpreters of the Qur'an (*mufasssīrūn*), the philosophers, and the literalists (*'udabā*)—had close bonds with the general public through

religion. Despite teaching and studying in their seemingly isolated seminaries (*hawzah*), they successfully avoided losing touch with the people. Such rapport between the *'ulamā* and the people exists even today. The majority of our uneducated masses, who have never even heard of a night class or an adult course, can sit next to the *'ulamā*, who have achieved prominent scholarly stature, and discuss their problems. They feel comfortable enough with the *'ulamā* to discuss their needs, complaints, their personal or family problems, and to settle religious taxes or to ask for bibliomancy³ or legal opinion.

Unfortunately, under the modern culture and educational system, our young people are educated and trained inside invincible and fortified fortresses. Once they reenter the society, they are placed in certain occupational and social positions completely isolated from the masses. In effect, the new intelligentsia live and move alongside the people, but in a closed "golden cage" of exclusive circles. As a result, on the one hand, the intelligentsia pursue life in an ivory tower without having any understanding of their own society, and, on the other hand, the uneducated masses are deprived of the wisdom and knowledge of the very same intellectuals whom the masses have sponsored (albeit indirectly) and for whose flourishing they have provided.

The greatest responsibility of those who wish to rebuild their society and bring together the unintegrated, and at times, antagonistic elements of the society into a harmonious whole is to bridge the gap between these two poles—the pole of theory and the pole of practice—and to fill this great abyss of alienation between the masses and the intellectuals. For any responsible enlightened soul who wants to achieve something, regardless of his ideological conviction, it is a duty to build a bridge between the beautiful, valuable, and the mysterious (in the mind of the masses) island of the intellectuals and the land of the masses; a bridge across which both the intellectuals and the masses can interact. Regardless of my answer to the question "Where shall we begin?" and regardless of your agreement with my answer, we cannot help but accept and agree with this fundamental principle: the first step is to build such a bridge.

Implicit in the question "Where shall we begin?" there is an understanding on the part of the audience and the person who poses such a question that two prior questions—namely, "Who should begin?" and "For what purpose?"—have already been answered. Obviously, the question of where to begin is asked by those who have

a sense of responsibility with regard to their time and society and wish to do something about it. Undoubtedly, they are the enlightened souls, for only such individuals feel a social responsibility and have a sense of social mission. One who is not enlightened is not responsible either.

Note that I stress enlightened souls and not those who have obtained degrees. Enlightened does not mean "intellectual". The latter, which has incorrectly been translated into Persian as enlightened (*rushanfekr*), refers to a person who does mental (as opposed to manual) work. Such an individual may or may not be an enlightened soul. Conversely, a person may not be an intellectual if he works in a factory for example—but he may nevertheless be an enlightened soul. The relation between the two is not that of two interrelated concepts. Not every intellectual is enlightened but some are and vice versa. Very few are both. For example, Sattār Khān⁴ was an enlightened man but was not an intellectual, while Allāmah Muḥammad Qazvīnī⁵ was an intellectual but not enlightened; (Ali Akbar) Dehkhudā⁶ was both. Many are neither and among these are the "honorable and great politicians!"

Who is an enlightened soul? In a nutshell, the enlightened soul is a person who is self-conscious of his "human condition" in his time and historical and social setting, and whose awareness inevitably and necessarily gives him a sense of social responsibility. And if he happens to be educated he may be more effective and if not perhaps less so. But this is not a general rule, for sometimes an uneducated individual may play a much more important role. A study of the societies that have leaped forward from the oppressive colonial state to a very progressive, aware and dynamic state, demonstrates that their leaders and those who assumed leadership in the revolution and the scientific and social movements have often been unintellectual. This principle, which has very few exceptions, is easily proven by the social movements in Africa, Latin America and Asia. One can safely conclude that revolutionary leaders have rarely belonged to the educated classes.

In the modern time, when man has reached a dead end in his evolving society, and when the underdeveloped countries are struggling with numerous difficulties and shortcomings, an enlightened soul is one who can generate responsibility and awareness, and give intellectual and social direction to the masses. Accordingly, an enlightened person is not necessarily one who has inherited and

continues the works of Galileo, Copernicus, Socrates, Aristotle, and Ibn Sinā (Avicenna). Modern scientists such as Einstein and Von Braun complement and continue their achievements. In principle, the responsibility and the role of contemporary enlightened souls of the world resembles that of the prophets and the founders of the great religions —revolutionary leaders who promoted fundamental structural changes in the past. Prophets are not in the same category as philosophers, scientists, technicians or artists. The prophets often emerged from among the masses and were able to communicate with the masses to introduce new mottoes, project new vision, start new movements, and beget new energies in the conscience of the peoples of their time and places. The great revolutionary, uprooting and yet constructive movements of the prophets caused frozen, static and stagnant societies to change their directions, life-styles, outlooks, cultures and destinies. These prophets, therefore, are neither in the category of the past scientists or philosophers, nor are they in the category of unaware common people. Rather, they belong to a category of their own. They neither belong to the commoners, who are usually the products and also captives of ancient traditions and social molds or structures, nor do they belong to the community of the scientists, philosophers, artists, mystics, monks or clergymen, who are captives of abstract concepts and are overwhelmed with their own scientific or inner explorations and discoveries. Similar to the prophets, the enlightened souls also neither belong to the community of scientists nor to the camp of unaware and stagnant masses. They are aware and responsible individuals whose most important objective and responsibility is to bestow the great God-given gift of "self-awareness" (khud-āgāhī) to the general public. Only self-awareness transforms static and corrupt masses into a dynamic and creative center which fosters great genius and gives rise to great leaps, which in turn become the springboard for the emergence of civilization, culture and great heroes.

Clearly then, it is the enlightened soul who should begin. Now we should turn to the question of "for what purpose?" This question deserves an independent inquiry. Here, I will look only at one interpretation of it and let the audience, which is familiar with this topic, ponder about it on its own. Although not a prophet, an enlightened soul should play the role of the prophet for his society. He should preach the call for awareness, freedom and salvation to the deaf and unhearing ears of the people, inflame the fire of a new faith

in their hearts, and show them the social direction in their stagnant society. This is not a job for the scientists, because they have a clear-cut responsibility: understanding the status quo and discovering and employing the forces of nature and of man for the betterment of the material life of the people. Scientists, technicians, and artists provide scientific assistance to their nations, or to the human race, in order to help them to improve their lot and be better at what "they are." Enlightened souls, on the other hand, teach their society how to "change" and toward what direction. They foster a mission of "becoming" and pave the way by providing an answer to the question, "What should we become?"

A scientist justifies, explains, and creates the conditions for producing as affluent, comfortable, strong, and leisurely life as possible. At most, he discovers the "facts," whereas an enlightened person identifies the "truth." A scientist produces light, which may be utilized either for right or wrong objectives; an enlightened person, analogous to a "tribal guide", (rā'id)⁷ and as the vanguard of the caravan of humanity, shows us the right path, invites us to initiate a journey, and leads us to our final destination. Since science is power and enlightenment light, from time to time, the scientist serves the interests of oppression and ignorance; but the enlightened person, of necessity and by definition, opposes tyranny and darkness.

The word "ḥikmat" (wisdom)⁸, which is used in the Qur'an and within the Islamic cultural milieu, conveys the same meaning we have attributed to enlightenment. Even when there is discussion of knowledge ('ilm), it does not refer to technical, scientific or philosophical learnings. It means neither "religious knowledge" (those disciplines which a religious student studies, i.e., jurisprudence, tradition, life of the Prophet, the Qur'anic interpretation, ethics, theology, etc.) nor "temporal knowledge" (those disciplines which are pursued by a social or natural science student, i.e., physics, medicine, sociology, literature, psychology, history, etc.). These are collections of specialized information and cultural knowledge which are taught as particular courses in a specific educational system. While religious and secular knowledge can be helpful for enlightened awareness (āgāhī-e-rūshanfekrī), and may serve as valuable tools at the disposal of the enlightened individuals, they are not "in and of themselves" the desired "light" or awareness. That kind of knowledge ('ilm) which is emphasized in Islam is an awareness unique to man, a divine light and a source of consciousness of the social conscience. As the famous

tradition puts it, "Knowledge is a light which God shines in the heart of whomever He desires." It is this awakening, illuminating, guiding and responsibility-generating knowledge which we call the "divine light," not the teachings of physics, chemistry, literature, jurisprudence, etc. The former begets faith and responsibility of the kind the uneducated Abūdhār possessed but Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and Mullā Ṣadrā did not. That is why sometimes an uneducated person emerges and energizes life in a static society and leads it toward an objective, while numerous scientists do not even take the first step toward generating changes, self-awareness and the formation of a common ideal, a new faith and love in the conscience of their society. On the contrary, by utilizing their scientific power, the scientists may act as forces hindering the progress of their own national societies as well as that of humanity.⁹ Therefore, the goal of the enlightened souls is to bestow upon their contemporary fellow men a common and dynamic faith and to help acquire self-awareness and formulate their ideals.

Now, we turn to the question of the "how". First, an important explanation is in order. Lack of a precise definition of "enlightened", coupled with the ambiguity of the ensuing responsibilities, have cost the human race in general, and the Easterners, in particular, dearly. To begin with, unless there is a universal man, there cannot exist a universal enlightened prototype with common values and characteristics. Man is far from the age when the earth will be one human society or one nation with common language, culture, ideals and common problems. As a corollary, whereas one can speak of the universal scientists with common characteristics and fixed values, there is no group of enlightened individuals in some universal mold with a common trait. After studying in a university, whether he has studied engineering, medicine, or astronomy, an educated person acquires the stature of a scientist, regardless of whether he is from an African tribe, the Islamic world or a Buddhist country; whether he is from the white, whether yellow, or the red race, whether he is a member of a capitalist society or a socialist one, whether a member of the old merchant class or the new bourgeoisie; in short, regardless of whatever background he comes from. The reason is that science is based on general laws which govern man as well as nature, and whoever learns these can be useful and effective in any setting or environment. In short, a scientist learns a set of fixed principles which are applicable in all cases irrespective of time, place or political regime. The same cannot be said about the enlightened person.

An enlightened person is not a man who has gone to Europe, has studied a specific school of thought, has passed a specific course, or obtained a diploma. The fact is that our assumption that the "enlightened," "scientist," and "intellectual," are synonymous has confused us so that we are not able to understand who is enlightened. Nor do the enlightened individuals know to what category they belong. The virtues of being enlightened cannot be learned in a prestigious university. If there is an exception in which an enlightened individual is also an educated one, his enlightenment is not due to the university education; rather, the individual was an enlightened soul even before his university education.

Another misunderstanding stems from the fact that, more often than not, people think that if a person has gone abroad and studied various social, political, ideological and philosophical schools of thought, he has become enlightened. This is not the case. Granted that he has studied Marx, Sartre, Rousseau, St. Simon, etc. (i.e., the founders of the social theories and the ideologies that have played a constructive and revolutionary roles in European societies, and the source of inspiration for European enlightened individuals of the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries), this only makes him a specialist, analogous to his counterparts in medicine and natural sciences. He is a social scientist who can teach these schools of thought and ideologies at the universities. It does not follow that merely because one has studied these ideologies, he is capable of playing the role as accepting the responsibility of being an enlightened person in his society. The university education of such an individual makes him a scientist and enables him to teach wherever he goes. But it does not necessarily enlighten him to the point of understanding the inner pains of his society or enabling him to generate self-awareness in the people or help the masses fashion their common objectives and ideals.

In short, there is no universal prototype for being "enlightened." There are different types of the enlightened. One may be an enlightened soul in Black Africa, but the same person is not one in an Islamic community. Or one may be considered enlightened in France or in post-war industrial Europe, a genuine and honest enlightened person who has made a difference in his own society, but the same person in India will not be enlightened and may be unable to perform the role of an enlightened one there. More concretely, take Jean Paul Sartre, whose philosophy and personality I have great respect for and

would never condemn based on my ideological convictions. In industrial Europe with its advanced capitalist system and its peculiar social stratification, and where there has been for several hundreds of years a turning away from its religious history of the Middle Ages, Sartre can be called an enlightened soul. Would a person who emulates Sartre's philosophy and practices his world-view of existentialism or methods of social and economic analysis—in short, who is a carbon copy of Sartre—still be considered enlightened if he went to a different country? It would depend on where such an individual went. In France, Germany, England or the United States he would be enlightened because the problems, attitudes, ideals, people, political system, and the historical conditions are similar. The Western societies in general are in need of a "Sartrean" revolution.¹⁰ Thus, Sartre or those who emulate his philosophy are enlightened only in the West where man has become the victim of consumerism and where all human dimensions and potentials have become restricted and limited by the production of goods, excess in consumption and the freedom of sex. It is thus in need of a savior who will free it from this hedonistic lust of consumerism: Sartre is such an enlightened savior.

Having a Sartre-like savior in Asia, Africa or Latin America, where people are struggling to eradicate poverty, hunger, ignorance and other shortages, and where they suffer from lack of industrialization, would simply be a catastrophe. In these societies, a Sartrologist or a follower of Sartre's philosophy would not be enlightened. In practice, his well-intentioned sacrifice would translate into disservice. Only the contemporary post-Medieval industrial societies face a philosophical impasse; hence they are in search of some kind of explanation of their being and in need of spirituality, or a religious mysticism to break their confined and restricted materialistic world view. A Western enlightened person is one who, understanding the situation, feels the urgency to provide appropriate slogans, objectives, and directions for his people in promoting a moralistic, monastic, and anti-consumeristic life-style. Such a person should adopt Indian spirituality and philosophy of illumination, and even rebel against automatism and Cartesian rationalism.

Now, imagine a follower of Sartre in India. His words and deeds would invite the poverty-stricken people of India to stop consumerism, do away with the material things they possess and direct their attention to their inner spiritual instincts and needs. For the people who are being eliminated by famine and hunger, and whose religion

or philosophical outlook calls upon them to retreat from the material world, such prophecies are nothing but tragic comedy. One may also see the actual cases in our own society. A preacher may be an excellent communicator in the Tehran region but not so in other regions. Sometime ago, I heard of a preacher from a small town who, emulating a successful preacher in Tehran, delivered the latter's sermon word by word. He repeated, "Ladies and gentlemen, O you who ride in your big Cadillacs and drive in these streets, don't you know that there are people who do not even have a decent pair of shoes? If you do not help them, at least be careful not to bother them. O you who attend big parties and eat ducks cooked in whiskey, be aware that there are people who have only read in story books about eating a hot meal." These words are striking, but they only make sense in Tehran and not in a small town. The man who delivered this sermon in the town turned his pulpit into a comic tragedy.

A preacher is an enlightened individual and should act as one. But when the same enlightened individual takes the sermons which are effective in Tehran to a different geographical location, he becomes an alienated person who cannot communicate with anyone. In other words, there is no universal preacher. We have to ask, the preacher of what location? By the same token, there is no universal enlightened individual. In short, enlightenment is directly related to time, place, social environment and historical conditions. For example, we all know that Francis Bacon is one of the greatest figures in the history of human thought. He strongly propounded the notion that superstition must be done away with, and science be separated from subjectivity and eschatology. Moreover, he maintained that science should enhance material life by seeking to understand nature and thus improve people's lives.

At his time, Bacon was an enlightened person. In his era and society, science was but abstract ideas and analysis, justification, and substantiation of religious texts and clerical postulations. Under such circumstances, by liberating science, reason, and the masses from the restriction (of the church), Bacon served humanity greatly. If Bacon were alive today, however, he would have to say almost the opposite of what he said then (if he wished to be considered an enlightened individual). In contemporary Europe, those who follow Bacon's footsteps and say that science should focus solely on economic and material production and that human potential should be used to promote consumerism and generate more power are not enlightened

at all. Although they propagate and exercise Baconian philosophy, they are at best scientists in the service of the status quo. The reason is that times have changed, needs are different and contemporary problems and crises are such that any savior in Europe today must begin from a different angle and take a different approach.

Third World countries, and particularly Islamic societies, have witnessed mistakes and deviations committed by the so-called enlightened thinkers. [An unfortunate development], which I call the history of "confusing the issues" ('awaḍī gereftanhā) constitutes the story of the fundamental errors committed by the educated Muslims as well as those of other Eastern societies. Like a scientist who imports medicine to his country, these people believed that enlightenment could be imported to their home while they themselves played the role of enlightened persons. The tragic result was that the Eastern and Islamic societies were deprived of their best minds, individuals who could help their countries to recover from their backwardness. For years the feelings, consciences, and thoughts of our people were directed by the so called "enlightened," who delivered the wrong messages while thinking they were showing the path to salvation. Following their incorrect diagnoses, struggles and strivings, opportunities were lost, and people's potentials were wasted. The end result was hopelessness, desperation, hatred, evasion of responsibility, isolation, mysticism, and various games of existentialism. This continued until it was gradually replaced by another wrong direction, inappropriate objective, or mistaken diagnosis. The cycle repeated itself with the result that the people wasted their talents gathering around these social prophets.

Take the example of Peter the Great. He studied in the Netherlands and then returned to Moscow to work for the welfare of his people. He was enlightened, but in the wrong way. Russia was a backward country which had continuously suffered defeat by her neighbors. For example, Iran had defeated that country many times. Peter the Great asked himself why the Netherlands should rule the world and the oceans but Russia be so backward. After long contemplation, he saw the root cause in the beard! When he took over the government he ordered everyone to shave because, he argued, the reason Danish people are advanced is that they shave every day. The Russians began to look like the Danes but no fundamental change occurred. The beards were gone but that did not take the Russians even one step forward.

Another example goes back to my high school years. In the city of Mashhad, we had a teacher who thought of himself as an enlightened social philosopher. He taught us drawings. He used to argue that the only solution to our problems lies in drawing. He believed that drawing could show us the difficulties of our society as well as their solutions. To demonstrate his point, he would provide special models. His themes dealt with encouraging co-education in Iran. He thought that the cause of backwardness in Asia lay in lack of co-education, and he pointed to European school system for proof. Moreover, he said that Iran should encourage mixed schools, clubs, and organizations where men and women would interact freely. It appeared that he was projecting his failure in his love-life on the society as a whole.

Even today there are thinkers and authors who try to convince parents and youngsters that the cause of the misery in Islamic societies lies in sexual restrictions. If these barriers are removed and men and women interact freely, they argue, Eastern societies will be free from all miseries. Note how deep the tragedy is and how the attentions of the young generation is directed to this. While parents resist and the young generation insists on this issue, the society is afflicted with sexual wars. Parents consider sexual freedom the root of all misery, while their sons and daughters see it as the cause of salvation, progress, civilization, independence and freedom. It is assumed that these "achievements" strike serious blows to colonialism! In reality, the war of sexual freedom, which suddenly has assumed paramount importance in Africa, Asia, and especially in the Islamic societies, is a sham to prevent the occurrence of the war that ought to be taking place, the anti-colonialist war. This war of sexual freedom is waged in order to prevent the waging of a struggle which would be dangerous to the powers that be in the world. Sexual freedom is used as a substitute for the other kinds of freedom by diverting the attention of the young generation and discouraging them from thinking about and pursuing economic or political freedom.

Sexual freedom is indeed freedom of the "bottom" in place of the freedom of the "top" (head). In African and Asian countries, this kind of freedom has been achieved, but social problems remain unresolved. The effect is felt in the cosmetics industry where, from 1955 to 1965, cosmetic consumption increased five hundred fold. But why? The answer lies in the fact that after a youngster goes to school, reads books, enhances her knowledge, and acquires a degree of social

and human awareness and an understanding of the responsibilities of contemporary man—and just at the time when human ideals begin to blossom in her mind—her intellectual development is stopped and her ideals are all directed toward the “bottom” only. Her energy is wasted in delivering talks on or writing articles about sexual freedom. A group who also has only sex to worry about then emerges in the other side of the issue to oppose her. The result is that the society may waste ten or even twenty years.

Another example is related to the Persian alphabet. During the peak of the Iranian political struggle in Iran, 1941–1953,¹¹ a group of intellectuals propagated the following: “O people of Asia, O Muslims, O Iranians, and O you who feel backward, decadent, miserable, hungry, and sick, beware that first you have to understand the root cause of your misery!” But what did they consider to be the root cause? The answer was the Persian alphabet! Their main objection was that the spelling of certain words is confusing and time consuming. Is our time so precisely allocated that spending a little time in writing could bring such disastrous results? I am not saying that the Persian alphabet is flawless. What I am saying is that to consider the flaws in the alphabet as the root of our misery and backwardness would be like attributing the illiteracy of our population to the potholes in the streets. This does not mean that potholes should be tolerated, but it means that our intellectuals have wasted their energies on the wrong subjects and “confused the issues.” Besides, suppose we did change our alphabet, then we might become another Turkey. Is Turkey in a better condition than we are? Are we too far behind Turkey? And, supposing we are, is it because of our alphabet? In short, if the alphabets were the cause of backwardness, Japan and China should be the most backward countries in the world.

Someone even suggested that, if it is not the root of all our problems, our alphabet is at least the root cause of illiteracy in Iran. I argue that illiteracy is caused by those who have a vested interest in keeping the people illiterate. There are languages with more than a thousand characters but that has not been an obstacle in the way of literacy. Take the example of Islamic history during the third through the ninth centuries when Islam ruled over Spain. Illiteracy was uprooted altogether. Thus, those who blame the complexity of an alphabet for their misery are trying to divert the attention of the people from the real cause, i.e., those who benefit from illiteracy.

Another example was the problem of “bookburning,” an issue

which afflicted our society for some time.¹² There were intellectuals who used to argue that none of our miseries were caused by feudalism, external conditions or internal degeneration; rather, they were caused by the ways in which poets described their mistresses. They reasoned that our poets', particularly Hāfiz's, descriptions of their feelings had led our society toward nonchalance, lyrics, poetry and literature. To remedy this, these people and their followers congregated once a week and burned selected books in a ceremony accompanied with speeches, excitement and fanfare. It is not my aim to defend Iranian traditional poetry. My intention is to point out that this issue was brought to the fore as a way of setting a false direction so that the real causes of the problems in Iran would be pushed into oblivion. The best opportunities and the best talents were wasted on defending or condemning bookburning, while the real criminal lived in peace and security.

Once, someone asked my opinion about Mr. Kasravi.¹³ In my answer I told him that I have a thesis. I do not discuss the content of these people's ideas. I do not ask whether Kasravi's criticism of the sixth Shī'ī Imam, Ja'far Sādiq, of Shī'ism, of Islam and its history and literature is valid or not. I even assume they are valid. The question is that, given the particular historical epoch in our society, 1941-1949, and given the deep impact of Kasravi's works on our youth, were his words warranted and were the topics he raised of the most pressing and the most fundamental issues? Why was it that during that particular time, (after 1949), all attacks were directed against religious materials and Hāfiz's paramour, identifying them as the most tragic problems facing our society, but no mention was made, for example, of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company? During this relatively democratic era, what was the most pressing and fundamental issue to raise? Was it identifying Hāfiz as the root of all Iran's misery, or was it elaborating on the economic, political and colonial conditions which prevailed in the world? The opportunity to analyze political and economic problems does not present itself often.

A general principle may be deduced from the above discussion. In academic settings debate on scientific, philosophical, technical and even artistic issues affords the luxury of logical evaluation and revision. Everyone may express his particular opinion, but the view which is substantiated by experimentation and stands the test of scientific laws will prevail and be acknowledged. For theories on social issues, however, logical consistency does not suffice. The

context of the argument or the thesis should be taken into account. A valid and true statement expressed at an improper time and place will be futile. Conversely, an unsubstantiated argument may be of significant consequence in a particular atmosphere. For example, during the recent struggles in Africa, the African leaders and the enlightened persons relied on much mass folklore in order to achieve their goals. They capitalized on the popular notion that if one strikes one's enemy but only injures him, the enemy's soul would get revenge and kill the person who had struck him. Naturally, to avoid the revenge of enemy souls, an African would try his best to kill the enemy. This belief certainly lacks scientific basis and is logically "false"; yet, in the African struggle against colonialism, the enlightened persons utilized it as an effective weapon. Another example is nationalism. It played a very positive role in European countries toward the end of the Middle Ages, but now it plays the opposite role in Africa. There, nationalism is like a dagger which, in the face of colonialism, chops up Black Africa, a continent which faces a common destiny and thus should be united. In contrast, towards the end of the Middle Ages, nationalism emancipated European society from the yoke of the Popes who had used Christianity to dominate Europe.

In Algeria in the 1950s, in order to divide and factionalize the people and in turn to inflict a great disaster in North Africa, the colonial powers propagated the progressive views of thinkers such as Rousseau, Voltaire, and Morris Dubare, which are scientific and emphasize nationalism. The central thesis of nationalism that each nation should have its own state was used to divide the Arabs and Berbers, who had until then been united by their belief in Islam—thus they became victims of French colonialism. Now, in place of fighting the common enemy, Arab and Berber nationalists were facing and fighting one another.¹⁴ In short, when presented with a social theory, before evaluating its positive or negative contribution, one should understand the context and consequences of its presentation. Another example in my discussion is what I call "false bonds" or "fake common denominators." Just as it is possible to create animosity between two related groups, it is equally possible to establish spurious or false links between two enemies. This is a tactic which has been used in Africa, Latin America and the Islamic East, by misusing the theses of common religion, nationalism, and humanism. These three schools of thought are legitimate ways of thinking, but if

utilized in the wrong time and place, they can easily turn into the tools of creating unity among people who should be fighting one another. Humanism is a school of thought which is used to combat nationalism, because today the latter has become a progressive anti-colonialism front in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In the Third World, particularly Africa, it is even more progressive than Marxism. It has taken the leadership away from official Marxism in the struggle for independence.

Humanism is a thesis utilized by the powers that be in the world which control the destinies of other nations to establish superficial and false relationships between the colonizer and the colonized. It aims to eliminate the natural state of enmity, struggle and rancor between these two opposing poles and to create a mystical, humanistic and general peace between them. Obviously, I am not talking about the scientific and philosophical aspects of humanism, for certainly, the oneness of the human race is a sacred truth. The questions I am raising here are those of by whom, for what purpose, and at what time this sacred truth is being utilized. Are East and West and the colonized and the colonizer the members of the same camp?

Referring to a particular nation, when used in the wrong place, nationalism serves as a camouflage, a way of establishing an artificial blood-based unity and relationship, but only by and for those who do not truly believe in this idea, in order to suck the blood of the people under the banner of nationalism. Ironically, such a relationship really is based on blood because, after all, the blood of a leech is the same as that of its victim.

Under the disguise of the existence of common religious conviction and rituals, religion has also been used to create a false and spurious relationship between the exploited and the exploiter. Religious rituals, slogans, and false indoctrination are easily misused for the attainment of this purpose. As a result, people who in actuality should be enemies are linked together with the false presumption of "religious brotherhood."

Having said all this, the greatest responsibility of the enlightened soul is to identify the real causes of the backwardness of his society and discover the real cause of the stagnation and degeneration of the people of his environment. Moreover, he should educate his slumbering and ignorant society as to the basic reasons for its ominous historical and social destiny. Then, based on the resources, responsibilities, needs and suffering of his society, he should identify the

rational solutions which would enable his people to emancipate themselves from the status quo. Based on appropriate utilization of the resources of his society and an accurate diagnoses of its suffering, an enlightened person should try to find out the true causal relationships between misery, social illness and abnormalities, and the various internal and external factors. Finally, an enlightened person should transfer this understanding beyond the limited group of his colleagues to the society as a whole.

Contemporary "intellectuals" generally believe that dialectical contradictions, at work in any society, of necessity move the society forward toward freedom and revolution, and give birth to a new state of being. According to this logic, mere "poverty" or "class differences," which symbolize the existence of social conflicts, inevitably lead to a dialectical contradiction, which in turn creates motion in the society. In reality, however, this is not more than a big illusion. No society will be mobilized and obtain its freedom merely because of the existence of class differences or tragic disparity between rich and poor. Poverty and class conflict may exist in a society for thousands of years without causing any structural transformation. Dialectic has no intrinsic motion.

Considering that motion in any given society is the product of transformation of the social conflict from within the society into the conscience of its members, the responsibility of the enlightened person is obvious. Briefly, it is "to transfer the shortcomings and abnormalities of his society into the mind and conscience of the members of that society." Then, the society will take it from there. Another definition of the enlightened person is that he is one who is aware of the existing social conflicts and their real causes, who knows the needs of his age and his generation, who accepts responsibility for providing solutions as to how his society can be emancipated, who helps his society to shape and define its collective goals and objectives and, finally, who takes part in mobilizing and educating his static, ignorant society. In a word, a contemporary enlightened person should continue in the path of the prophets. His mission is to "guide" and work for justice, his language is compatible with his time, and his proposed solutions conform to cultural values of his society.

Therefore, "Where shall we begin?" is an irrelevant question. One should ask, "Where shall we begin in our society?" Our greatest and most pressing responsibility is to see, historically speaking, where the Muslim society is. Do Muslims live under the same conditions as those of twentieth century Europe, and is it thus possible for

European solutions, ideologies and writers to be useful? Do Muslims live in an industrial age, and so experience the same problems as those of industrial societies? Have Muslim societies reached the modern bourgeois era? Have they passed the era of the rule of religion? Are they experiencing some kind of religious reform? Are Muslims living under the same conditions as were the Europeans during the Renaissance or during the French Revolution? How does one characterize Muslim culture? Once the historical condition and the culture of the society are understood, both the enlightened and the general public will know what their responsibilities and duties are.

Historically speaking, the present condition of Muslims, as compared to that of the West, is where the latter was at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance. Similar to that time, Muslims are in a period of social and intellectual transformation. Economically, the dominant system in the Islamic societies is an "agricultural market" or the intermediate bourgeoisie. In other words, the largest and the basic foundation of the economy is agricultural production and not urban-market economy and bourgeois capitalism, as commonly understood. The reason is that European bourgeois, which contributed greatly to the French Revolution, was completely different from that of the present Iranian or other Islamic societies. The bourgeoisie in the Islamic societies includes the bazaar merchants and not the modern industrial and banking capitalists. To be more exact, the bazaar merchants lack the vigor and dynamism of the modern bourgeois. They only act as a mediator between the agricultural sector and the consumer. There is, no doubt, a newly evolving bourgeoisie resembling that of eighteenth century Europe, but it has not had the same influence that the latter had. The new bourgeoisie in Iran has replaced the old shops with modern ones, only to become a middleman in spreading Western culture in these traditional societies. Unlike its counterpart in eighteenth century Europe, which prompted urban production at the expense of rural production, the Iranian bourgeoisie has only enhanced urban consumption without contributing to urban production. Of course, there are individuals who have begun urban production, but they are simply scattered enterprises which cannot be called a national modern bourgeoisie.

We also need to know our "cultural taxonomy." For example, Greece has a philosophical culture, Rome a militaristic and artistic one, India a spiritualistic one; and our societies have a religious and Islamic culture. By "cultural taxonomy" I mean the prevalent spirit

that governs the body of knowledge, characteristics, feelings, traditions, outlooks and ideals of the people of any given society. The common spirit which connects the said characteristics of the society and gives meaning to them is culture, by which people breathe, get nourishment and grow. As such, to know the culture of a society is to know its inner truth, its inner sensitivities and its inner feelings. For instance, it is hardly possible to claim that one knows the Greek culture without having a philosophical understanding and knowledge. Similarly, one cannot claim to be an expert in Indian sociology without knowing Buddhism and Vedanta. It is also unacceptable for one to claim to be an enlightened person without having a profound knowledge of and a presence in the conscience of the masses of his society. For instance, if one is an enlightened Indian, he must have complete knowledge of Vedanta and Buddhism. Indian culture being Vedic, a modern Western educated sociologist has very little relevance in India. A Gandhi, because he knew his society and the mind of his fellow Indians, could move the society far greater than others. The same is true of an enlightened Muslim. He must know that the Islamic spirit dominates his culture and that the historical processes of his society, as well as its moral codes, have all been shaped by Islam. To fail to understand this, as the majority of our "intellectuals" have, limits and restricts a person to his own irrelevant atmosphere. Also, since generally such an individual has no religious belief and behaves within the bounds of his European educational background and experience, he fails to establish any relationship with his own people. Conversely, he is never accepted in the community.

Franz Fanon, whom I knew personally and whose books I translated into Persian, was pessimistic about the positive contribution of religion to social movement. He had, in fact an anti-religious attitude until I convinced him that in some societies where religion plays an important role in the culture, religion can, through its resources and psychological effects, help the enlightened person to lead his society toward the same destination toward which Fanon was taking his own through non-religious means. I added further that Fanon's anti-religious feeling stemmed from the unique religious experience of Europe in the Middle Ages and the ensuing freedom of European society in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One cannot extend this experience to the Islamic world, because the culture of an Islamic society and the tradition which has shaped that society is utterly different from the spirit which under the name of religion ruled Europe in the Middle Ages. Logically, therefore, one cannot judge

and condemn both religions on the same ground. A comparison between the role of Islam in Africa and that of Christianity in Latin America illustrates my point.¹⁵

Thus, to fight Islam the same way that the enlightened individuals of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe fought Christianity would be the gravest error, because religious feelings and the religious culture of Iran are completely different from what existed in the Middle Ages under the name of religion. To draw the same conclusion after comparing Christianity with Islam is a mistake. For a historian or a philosopher to see all religions in the same light is tolerable, but not for an enlightened person. He has to identify the kind of society in which he lives, understand its people, and at the same time, appreciate the historical condition they are in. An enlightened person in the Islamic world can commit a great error by mistaking the religious feeling that exists among the Muslim masses today as their true historical and cultural religion, thus fighting it as a source of calamities. He may then invite his society to accept an ideology compatible with nineteenth century German industrial society, thereby playing a deviant role in his society. Such an "intellectual" will frighten the masses by alienating them from the educated class, which in turn will force them to take refuge with the reactionary, deviant and colonial element in order to escape the anti-religious educated group. This may, in fact, be the central cause of the estrangement of the intellectuals from the masses in Islamic societies. A strictly formal and proper intellectual has no place among the masses and cannot communicate with them. It is as though they share no common language or culture.

An enlightened person should be aware that the deviant and reactionary elements—which have always been against the masses and have always played with their destiny and exploited them—misuse religion as an effective weapon to divert the feelings and the attention of the masses from their present affairs and make them think about past problems only. They divert people's attention from the present as well as the actual and material problems while, in the name of religion, keeping the people preoccupied with the afterlife as well as abstract and subjective issues, so that Muslims are prevented from striving for a comfortable, affluent, and free life. Even their ideals and thinking regarding these matters are focused on the hereafter. As a result religion, which had been the greatest source of energy and aspiration, and the guide to a meaningful life on earth, becomes distorted to such an extent that the eyes, ears and hearts of

its followers are focused on the hereafter. Paying attention to life on this earth is considered a source of corruption while mysticism and eschatology are greatly encouraged.

Most contemporary enlightened individuals are aware and feel these issues, but their appreciation is not deep enough to draw the right conclusion. They think that religion [i.e., Islam] plays a negative role in the society by causing the masses to neglect their actual and material lives. Secretive and reactionary elements along with invisible foreign hands take advantage of this erroneous conclusion and use this crucial force against both the masses and the enlightened alike. An enlightened Muslim should avoid imitation and superficial understanding of social problems, and appreciate the fact that the corrupt role which, at present, religion plays among the masses has no relationship to the true Islamic culture and religion which constitute the philosophical foundation of his society. Moreover, the anti-religious experience of Christianity in the Middle Ages cannot be extended to the Islamic world, whether its past or its present. An enlightened person in an Islamic society, regardless of his own ideological convictions, must, of necessity, be an Islamologist. Having understood Islam, he will in astonishment realize the grave and disastrous waste of the intellects and the efforts of the people due to "wrong start," misunderstanding, irrelevant appreciation and irrational connections.

The tragedy [in Iran] is that, on the one hand, those who have controlled our religion over the past two centuries have transformed it into its present static form and, on the other hand, our enlightened people who understand the present age and the needs of our generation and time, do not understand religion. As a result, our Islamic society, despite Islam with its rich culture and history which would have otherwise enabled it to emancipate itself, could not acquire the religious awareness necessary for its salvation. The intellectuals erroneously fought Islam and the reactionaries used it to narcotize the masses and to maximize their own gains. Meanwhile, true Islam remains unknown and incarcerated in the depths of history, the masses buried in their own static and restricted traditions, and the intellectuals isolated from the masses and disliked by them.

Western and Eastern "intellectuals" know that, in principle, Catholicism, Buddhism, Vedaism and Taoism are individualistic schools of thought which divert people's feelings from this life, with its actual and objective issues, to the hereafter and other abstract and subjective concerns. Furthermore, they realize that their task is to

bestow upon their societies power, responsibility and objectivity. What they do not recognize, however is that our religious culture—particularly Shī'ism, which is a unique interpretation of Islam—is completely the antithesis of those schools of thought and religions. The enlightened person who sees that the present condition of Muslims resembles that of Christians in the Middle Ages commits the error of fighting Islam, just as the nineteenth century intellectuals fought Christianity. The reactionaries referred to earlier have caused this confusion.

What was an enlightened Christian, a Protestant, doing during the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries? He was pointing out that by ignoring and neglecting the progressive elements of Christianity, the established church and priesthood had caused malice and misery. Moreover, they had encouraged monasticism, introversion, individualism and metaphysical beliefs and prayers. Thus, the enlightened knew that, in order to implement religious reform and a Christian Protestantism, he should revitalize and revive the awakening and motivating elements of his religion.¹⁶ In Islam, however, such is not the case. Islam has never ignored the progressive, awakening and motivating elements. In a very clear manner, the two slogans of "blood and sword" and "leadership and justice," which embody all the relevant dimensions of the process of generating movement and awareness, have been adopted as the symbolic essence of Shī'ism. These slogans have endured in Islamic history. Indeed, of all aspects of Islamic ideology and culture, people preserve most dearly the uprising of Husayn.¹⁷ It is his martyrdom that they mourn and commemorate yearly. On the other hand, the Prophet of Islam and other religious leaders have always invited people to wage struggle (jihād). Yet, in actuality, one sees little effect. Why? The reason is that although slogans are authentic and genuine, their interpretation has been negative. The form has been kept intact but the content has been distorted. It is as though a numbing mechanism is at work to transform the rage of Husayn's blood to mourning tears. To be sure Karbalā is not forgotten, but the sword of Islam is. The sword is now used only for beating oneself on the days of mourning.

An enlightened Muslim, thus, should not be easily deceived.¹⁸ He should be fully aware of the fact that he has a unique culture which is neither totally spiritual, as is the Indian culture, nor totally mystical, as is the Chinese, nor completely philosophical, as is the Greek, and nor entirely materialistic and technological, as is the Western culture. His is a mixture of faith, idealism and spirituality, and yet full of life

and energy with a dominant spirit of equality and justice, the ideology that Islamic societies and other traditional societies of the East are in desperate need of. Therefore, instead of being a translator of the works of foreign authors—which are useless to the masses anyway—a Muslim enlightened person should engage himself in discovering, extracting, and refining the life-giving and powerful spirit of his society. He exists in the context of a dynamic culture and society as well as in the conscience of his people.

One characteristic of this spirit is that, unlike other religions which justify poverty, Islam condemns it. A great student of Islam, Abūdhār, says, "When poverty enters a home, religion exits from the window." The prophet of Islam and the founder of that religion declared: "Whoever is not able to provide for himself will not have a good life in the hereafter." These are contrary to the contemporary understanding of Islam which claims that "one who is caught in poverty and misery has a cleaner and humbler heart and is, thus, more amenable to receive unseen inspirations." An empty stomach lacks everything. A society which has economic problems also lacks spiritual wealth. Whatever is called ethics in a poor country is nothing but deviant customs and habits, not spirituality.

One way that the dynamic aspects of Islamic culture can be understood is through comparing Imam Ali's way of life with that of the Pope. When Ali assumed power he ordered all existing pay scales to be cancelled, and began paying equal salaries to everyone whether the highest ranking military officer, who was at the same time an important social and political figure in the society, or the slave of the same officer. Is there any government in the contemporary world which is committed to the principle of equality as much? Is there any contemporary socialist system which would be ready to implement such a measure? We ought to state and express the outlook, the objectives and the inclinations that make up Islam and tell the enlightened persons that, in the context of their society and culture, in order to be able to obtain mutual understanding with the masses and in order not to be separated from the masses not only must they rely on religion (i.e., Islam) but also honestly believe that the elements of this religion do not invite people to think of the past instead of the present. These elements are based on constant striving (jihād) and justice ('adālat). Islam pays attention to bread, its eschatology is based on active life in the world, its God respects human dignity and its messenger is armed.

'Adālat is not simply a religious principle but the spirit that

governs all aspects of Islam, and is considered the very objective for which all the prophets were sent. One day Imām Ali noted that Maytham, one of his companions, had divided the dates that he was selling into two different categories and was selling them at two different prices. He angrily reminded Maytham that he was not allowed to categorize God's people into different classes by dividing the fruits into various types. Then, he mixed the dates with his own hands and ordered Meytham to sell them for one price to everyone. Or, note the practices of Abūdhar as compared with those of St. Paul. If one passes identical judgements about the two, it is not enlightenment but in fact the exercise of absolute ignorance and injustice. Abūdhar, who devoted all his life to the struggle against exploitation and eventually died in the process cannot be compared with St. Paul, who claimed that "the temples of God are built upon hunger," and that "hunger is accompanied by inspiration."

A philosopher or a historian can study religion any way he wishes. An enlightened person, however, is not allowed to consider religion, either scientifically or subjectively, as an absolute phenomenon. Every enlightened person must find out for himself what the social role of his religion is. This is extremely important because the mistake of an enlightened person is not similar to that of an ordinary writer. It is the mistake of a social leader, of a social savior, of an heir to the prophet of Islam as well as other prophets in the history of mankind.

Let us summarize the points raised here. Given our culture and specific definition of "enlightened" as a person with a prophetic mission, the objectives and responsibilities of such a person are to transform the existing social conflicts from the context of the society into the feelings and self-consciousness of its members. An enlightened person should obtain the raw materials from his contemporary society and social life. There exists no universal type of enlightened person, with common values and characteristics everywhere. Our own history and experience have demonstrated that whenever an enlightened person turns his back on religion, which is the dominant spirit of the society, the society turns its back on him. Opposition to religion by the enlightened person deprives society of the possibility of becoming aware of the benefits and the fruit of its young and enlightened generation. Due to their unique world views and awareness, enlightened individuals can play the most effective and long-lasting role in educating and mobilizing the masses of their society. With great intensity, the society expects its enlightened persons to educate it concerning various elements of danger, reactionism, corruption,

anachronism and confusion. The dominant spirit of the Islamic culture is that of justice and leadership. Islam is a religion unlike other religions. It challenges other religions, expresses lack of belief in them and declares them void.¹⁹ Our society is based upon a religion and outlook which is the ideal of all contemporary men, because our religion has the "tradition of martyrdom." None of the holy leaders of Islam have died of natural causes in isolated caves or monasteries; rather, they have all been martyred in prisons or on the battlefield.

To emancipate and guide the people, to give birth to a new love, faith, and dynamism, and to shed light on people's hearts and minds and make them aware of various elements of ignorance, superstition, cruelty and degeneration in contemporary Islamic societies, an enlightened person should start with "religion." By that I mean our peculiar religious culture and not the one predominant today. He should begin by an Islamic Protestantism similar to that of Christianity in the Middle Ages, destroying all the degenerating factors which, in the name of Islam, have stymied and stupefied the process of thinking and the fate of the society, and giving birth to new thoughts and new movements. Unlike Christian Protestantism, which was empty-handed and had to justify its liberationist presentation of Jesus, Islamic Protestantism has various sources and elements to draw from. Such a movement will unleash great energies and enable the enlightened Muslim to:

1-Extract and refine the enormous resources of our society and convert the degenerating and jamming agents into energy and movement;

2-Transform the existing social and class conflicts into conscious awareness of social responsibility, by using artistic, literary and speaking abilities and power as well as other possibilities at hand;

3-Bridge the ever-widening gap between the "island of the enlightened person" and the "shore of the masses" by establishing kinship links and understanding between them, thus putting the religion, which came about to revive and generate movement, at the service of the people;

4-Make the weapon of religion inaccessible to those who have undeservedly armed themselves with it and whose purpose is to use religion for personal reasons, thereby acquiring the necessary energy to motivate people;

5-Launch a religious renaissance through which, by returning to the religion of life and motion, power and justice, will on the one hand incapacitate the reactionary agents of the society and, on the other

hand, save the people from those elements which are used to narcotize them. By launching such a renaissance, these hitherto narcotizing elements will be used to revitalize, give awareness and fight superstition. Furthermore, returning to and relying on the authentic culture of the society will allow the revival and rebirth of cultural independence in the face of Western cultural onslaught;

6-And finally, eliminate the spirit of imitation and obedience which is the hallmark of the popular religion, and replace it with a critical revolutionary, aggressive spirit of independent reasoning (*ijtihad*). All of these may be accomplished through a religious reformist movement which will extract and refine the enormous accumulation of energy in the society, and will enlighten the era and will awaken the present generation. It is for the above reasons that I, as a conscientious teacher who has risen from the depth of pains and experience of his people and history, hope that the enlightened person will reach a progressive self-awareness. For whereas our masses need self-awareness, our enlightened intellectuals are in need of "faith."

NOTES

1. A Qur'anic term, *istid'af* does not mean "weakness and desperation". It is a derivative similar to *istibdād* (despotism), *isti'mār* (colonialism), *istithmār* (exploitation) and so on. In fact the latter are various forms of *istid'af* (oppression) which have occurred in various epochs of history. Whenever people are kept weak economically (exploitation), politically (despotism), nationally (colonialism), and culturally (stupefaction), whether in one of those respects or in combination, then *istid'af* has taken place and its victims are *mustad'afān* (the oppressed). The Qur'an speaks of the negation of oppression on the earth and the salvation of this class, hence its message is eternal. If instead it had spoken only of one manifestation of oppression, that is, only of slavery, colonialism, or despotism, its message would have lost its vitality following the establishment of independence, democracy, and liberalism (or the negation of slavery), and so would have had historical value only. The masses would have been afflicted by other miseries such as class exploitation and intellectual stupefaction by art, philosophy, literature, ideology, propaganda, gnosticism, individualism, subjectivism, materialism, realism, idealism, narcotics or other means which undermine people's responsibility and awareness. Moreover, the Qur'an's message could not be used in a different era. The intellectuals would have been in need of a new ideology that could interpret and fight inhumane systems and structures.

A friend once warned me that I was being criticized by the orthodox religious leaders for calling God "the Lord of the oppressed," thereby implicitly suggesting that the aristocracy and rulers have a different God. I responded that I wished these critics had been alive during the time of the Prophet and Imām Ali (peace be upon them) so that they could have given them these "insightful" suggestions. Now that they have lost their opportunity, they should correct the book of God and Imām Ali's *Nahj al-Balāghah* and cleanse them of this polytheism (*shirk*). Particularly, they should correct the last chapter of the Qur'an, which exclusively relates God to the masses. "Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the masses. The King of the masses. The God of the masses" (CXIV: 1-3). They should replace the word "masses" with "the heavens and

earth." [It should be pointed out that most translators and interpreters of the Qur'an render the Arabic word al-Nās as "mankind" and not "the masses" in its twentieth century connotation. Ed.]

2. The Persian word *rushanfekr* is an ambiguous concept. Originally, it came from the Arabic word *munawwar al-fekr*. (see Jalāl Al-e-Ahmad, *Dar Khedmat va Khtyanat-e Rūshanfekrān*. Tehran: Ravāq, 1358/1979). The usual practice has been to equate this word with the English word "intellectual", but as the text shows, Dr. Shari'ati attributes to it two different meanings. Sometimes he takes it to mean intellectual, but often he considers it to be the attribute of a "social prophet." Thus, it has been translated as "intellectual" or "enlightened" individual or person depending on the context. (Ed.).

3. A common cultural category among the Persians is the practice of bibliomania, which is usually done either by the Qur'an or by the collection of the poetry of Hāfiz, the great twelfth century Iranian poet. Upon facing a serious dilemma or decision, one opens one of these books; the contents of the random page will either give reassurance or discouragement. (Ed.)

4. Sattār Khān (d. 1292/1913) was one of the two leaders of the resistance movement in Tabriz against the soldiers of Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh, the penultimate of the Qājār kings. Sattār was the son of Hājī Hasan Qarachadāghī, a poor merchant in Tabriz. (Ed.).

5. Allamah Muhammad Qazvīnī (1256/1877-1328/1949) is one of the significant scholars in twentieth century Iran in the field of letters and history. He was trained in both Islamic and European type schools. His teacher in jurisprudence was Shaykh Fadhullāh Nūri, the leader of *anti-constitutionalist* movement. (Ed.).

6. 'Alī Akbar Dehkhudā (1259/1880-1334/1955) was a scholar, philologist, encyclopedist, journalist and an active member of the constitutionalist movement. He studied in Tehran and Vienna. Upon his return to Iran, he found himself in the midst of the constitutional revolution. His satirical essays published in the leading newspaper *Sur Israfīl* not only were influential politically but also initiated a new style of journalism. Later, Dehkhudā was elected to the parliament. Disenchanted with politics, he retreated to work on his great contribution, the encyclopedic dictionary, named after himself, *Lughat Nāmāh*. (Ed.).

7. A *rā'id* is a person who is commissioned by a tribe to proceed ahead in search of fertile ground for future migration. Not only is he to find a fertile area, but he must also evaluate the degree of security and distance from possible danger and hostile tribes.

8. In the Islamic world view, the word *ḥikmat* "means foundation for all human knowledge." In his treatise on the classification of the sciences, Ibn Sinā (Avicenna) takes *ḥikmat* to denote the whole field of the sciences then explored. He then divides it into theoretical and practical parts. It is assumed that when one acquires *ḥikmat* one has become enlightened and is conscious of his own existence. (Ed.).

9. Elsewhere, in *Islāmshenāsi* [Mashhad, 1347/1968], I have shown how the Abbasids depoliticized the masses and diverted their attention from actual political problems and the issues of "right and wrong" by encouraging the growth of science, art, literature, scientific discovery, philosophical arguments, and translation as well as the imitation of other peoples' heritage and culture. The growth of "religious sciences" forced the vital issues of religion into obscurity.

10. Interestingly enough, Sartre feels that the Europeans need people like Franz Fanon in the West. In his preface to Fanon's work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Sartre says: "This book written by an African is a bomb. I have taken this anti-Western work to drop it over the heart of capitalist civilization and bourgeoisie warehouse, Paris. The base man of the West is in need of such an explosion."

11. The years between 1320-32/1941-53 are known in Iran as the years of the revitalization of constitutionalism (*chya-ye mashrūtiyyat*), during which Iran experi-

enjoyed a high degree of democratic freedom. The Iranian autocrat, Rida Shah (ruled 1921-1941) was forced out of Iran by the Allied Forces and his son was too young and weak to establish any control. Shari'ati is referring to this period. (Ed.).

12. This is a reference to the practice of Ahmad Kasravi (see below) and his followers, who used to burn what they considered as superfluous books once a week. (Ed.).

13. Sayyid Ahmad Kasravi is one of the most highly influential scholars, jurists, historians, and essayists of twentieth century Iran. He was born in Tabriz in 1269/1890 and was assassinated for his anti-Shi'i views in 1324/1946 by a follower of Fada'iyan-e Islam (the Devotees of Islam). He knew Arabic, French, English and Russian. In addition to almost seventy titles on Iranian history and socio-political life, including the classic *Tarikh-e Mashrutah*, he published a newspaper, Parcham, and a journal, Payman. (Ed.).

14. Nationalism during the Caliphdom of the Ottoman Empire was the sword of colonialism to destroy Islam. Its leaders were the Englishman Lawrence of Arabia (1888-1935) and (King) Faysal (ruled 1921-1923).

15. Apparently, Dr. Shari'ati was not aware of the way in which Catholicism has been interpreted by the intellectuals of Latin America. In fact, as one scholar has shown, Shari'ati's approach to Islam resembles those of the proponents of "Liberation Theology" in their interpretation of Christianity. See Bahman Bakhtiyari. "Religion and Politics: the Middle East and Latin America," Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Virginia, 1984. (Ed.).

16. The Protestant leaders were simply saying, "O people, Christianity never wants you to ignore material aspects of life and merely pay attention to its inner essence and absolute asceticism. God will be pleased if we have power and social welfare." In short, while the reactionaries brushed aside the progressive aspects of the religion, the reformists highlighted and propagated those aspects of the religion which are this worldly.

17. The life story of the Shi'i third Imam, Husayn, (martyred 680 c. e.) at the hands of the army of the Umayyad Caliph, Yazid, has become the central element in Shi'ism. His heroism is the greatest source of aspiration for Shi'i revolutionaries. For scholarly analysis of that story see the following works: Mahmoud Ayoub. *Redemptive Suffering in Islam*. (The Hague: Mouton, 1978); S. H. Jafri. *Origin and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*. (New York: Longman, 1979); and Salihi Najaf-Abadi. *Shahid-e Javid*. (Tehran: Kanun-e Enteshar, 1349/1970) and Mahmud Taleqani, et al., *Jihad and Shahadat*. (Houston: IRIS, 1986). (Ed.).

18. If the story of another Imam, whose life has little to do with the issues of uprising, justice, and war, should be the topic, and praying should be emphasized, as intellectuals we have to emphasize the positive aspects of the events. If it is said that the pillars of religion are praying, asceticism, love, and worship, the enlightened souls should counter by saying that the pillars of religion are justice, leadership, and struggle.

19. In the Qur'an, "kafir" and "areligious" are not synonymous. Note this verse: "They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom." (IX: 34); or "Lo! those who disbelieve the revelation of Allah, and slay those of mankind who enjoin equity: announce them a painful doom." (III: 20). This is the Islamic view of "kufr." One can see the continuity. On the one side, there are those who work hard to continue the tradition of the prophets among the people and establish equity and justice, and on the other side, there are those who are against the equity and justice of the prophets. This is the historical and class-oriented understanding of Islam from religion and "kufr." "Hast thou observed him who belieth religion? That is he who repelleth the orphan, and urgeth not the feeling of the needy." (CVII: 1-3).

II

What Is To Be Done?

Revised edition of a lecture delivered in Husayniyah Irshād, (Collected Works). Vol. 20, pp. 333–472.

Those who are familiar with the present time—who know the story of the history of thought, culture, and especially of the great religions in contemporary civilizations—are aware of the spiritual and intellectual direction of contemporary man. In particular, the true and committed enlightened individuals of Eastern and non-European, and finally Muslim nations—which, more than anyone else, have been victimized by economic and, still more tragic, intellectual and moral colonization—observe and recognize that the modern exploitative order and the economy-worshipping structure, along with the prevailing “base materialistic spirit” and the “philosophy of consumerism” which respectively constitute the “religion” and “moral order” of the existing economic system—equipped with the power of science, philosophy, technology, art, literature, sociology, history and psychology, and armed with every means of making war, peace, and politics—utilize every possible trick and inhumane plan to transform countries the world over into market places for goods and products. To that end, all human beings must become “consumer animals” and all nations must be stripped of their authenticity. They must lose their spiritual, historical, religious, and ethnic characteristics—qualities which shape their personality and independence. Moreover, all human beings must be molded uniformly and shaped after a single imposed design so that they all—Easterners as well as Westerners, Asian Muslims as well as Oriental Buddhists, Africans as well as Christians from Latin America—become slaves dependent upon the manufacturing machinery of the “world empire.” People must become a single type (physical appearance), a single soul, have

similar needs, a similar life-style, and a uniform manner of thought and imagination so as to become "equal" consumers of the Croesusian world order. All existing towers on this earth must fall, all the fortresses must crumble, all the strong barriers which resist the looting of the West must be taken away, and in short, all that which bestows a human society with superior character and with a solidified independence as well as all that which makes a society ready to defend its values vis-a-vis the surprise attacks of contemporary "civilized barbarism" must either be eliminated or distorted.

Historical, scientific, psychological and sociological experience has taught the colonialists that before a society becomes incapable of "economic productivity" and before it becomes a complete and permanent consumer of material productions of others, it must cease its own "intellectual productivity." It must become a total consumer of "the intellectual productions" of others. And, finally, it must lose its human independence vis-a-vis the enemy. Historical experiences have also taught the colonialists that religion is the most powerful factor which bestows upon a society, when confronted with aliens, its distinct identity, self-reliance, faith and independence.

As such, in their universal onslaught, the colonialists have identified religion as the biggest barrier in the way of their cultural and political penetration among other nations—particularly among nations with non-primitive forms of religion. Moreover, they appreciate better than the people of the colonized areas the fact that "cultural authenticity," "historical peculiarities," and "strong traditional foundations" are the greatest factors that resist, protect and provide human energy and nutrition in fighting the rapid transformation of the society into a new consumer market, in preventing people from changing drastically into creatures whose only function is to be helpless and greedy mouths dependent upon Western production, and in slowing down the imposed and forced spread of such diseases as "hollow consumerist civilization," "manufacturing of a uniform universal spirit," and "one standard for all men."

As we all know, the history, culture, and traditions of nations are intertwined with their religious spirits. Moreover, sometimes the history of a nation, its culture, and its tradition are formed and shaped by its religion; hence its people live according to the religious mores and way of life. Colonial powers, particularly at their early stages, under the guise of "attacking fanaticism" fought religion, under the name of "condemning reactionism" attacked history, and,

using the pretext of "hacking away at superstition and old beliefs," assaulted tradition in order to produce a people without history, without tradition, without culture, without religion, and without any form of identity. In the face of colonialism, people have become monkey-like. They take pride in practicing "extreme modernism in the form of new consumerism," and deny their own cultural tradition by displaying "exuberant imitation" and "assimilation."¹ As a result, they will enthusiastically submit to the fate that others have determined for them. In the age of modern barbarism, they will open all the gates for their enemy, will suddenly be left unarmed and defenseless, and will be victims of technology, the trickery of science, the sorcery of art, the fraud of philosophy, and the hypocrisy of democracy and humanism (all of which have become the hirelings of the "religion of money" and the "philosophy of consumerism").

It was for this purpose that as soon as the bourgeoisie established its foothold in Europe—at the outset of the new era, namely the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries—in the name of "open-mindedness" and "scientism," it began opposing religion. When it entered the colonization phase and set foot in the East, its first aim was to attack the great religions under the guises of nationalism, liberalism, modernism, and humanism. Specifically, the bourgeoisie wanted to eliminate and uproot religion from amongst the elites and encourage the most reactionary and corrupt possible form of religion among the masses so that it could not be used as a means of resistance, consciousness and movement, but instead would function as a narcotizing and benumbing agent which would keep people busy, without their knowing what was really happening to them while they were preoccupied with meaningless and lifeless rituals and actions, and with illusions, imaginary thoughts and foolish superstitions. The objective was to distort religion so that, when necessary it could be used as a means to create divisions, generate fake fights, paralyze open-mindedness and contaminate any attempt aimed at enlightening and awakening the masses—particularly those aimed at reviving the true spirit of religion.

To make religion operate in these two conflicting manners, the colonizers were in need of two principal groups who would appear in seemingly contradictory roles, who would confront each other from seemingly opposing poles and who would start a false and spurious fight against one another. In such a sham war, the opposing parties are in reality under a unified command, and the booty that each side

acquires and the lands each side conquers go to the same commander. Further, in this sham quarrel—which has already started under the leadership of the world imperialists, whose objective is collecting wealth—one group of actors has worn the costumes, make-up, masks, accents, and assumed the role of the “enlightened,” and the other group has worn the costumes, make-up, masks, accents, and assumed the role of the “clergy.”

The role played by the pseudo-enlightened has been the easier of the two. Their function is to dispense hand-picked and selected European thoughts and ideas, and disseminate the Western life-style, social relations, and moral and behavioral patterns. The pseudo-intellectuals are supposed to make people “modern” and assimilate the elites and the progressive and educated youth of non-European societies into European culture inside their own traditional societies and, hence, establish a base for Western penetration and arrival. Moreover, they may serve as a bridge for facilitating communication with and understanding of the strangers by the West. The ultimate result of this mission has been the cultural, political, and economic conquest of the invincible “fortresses of fanaticism.”

The colonial movement of “assimilation,” which was set under phony titles such as enlightenment, modernism, and progress, started by stipulating that the first and foremost condition of industrialization, or becoming like progressive Europe and acquiring the new scientific outlook, was to rebel against one’s own history and culture. In particular, it meant total elimination of one’s artistic, traditional and moral values. Fighting religious faith and disseminating an absolute indifference or “lack of cultural prejudice”² was taken to be the first necessary step. It was said that, in principle, contemporary sciences had proven that religion was a thing of the past, despite the fact that an overwhelming majority of the greatest Western geniuses, scientists, explorers and inventors, whose contributions have helped and elevated contemporary human knowledge enormously, had been religious men. In Islamic countries today, as soon as our semi-intellectual youth reach the stage of reading newspapers or the stage of using European furniture, clothing or cosmetics—particularly if they have studied some mathematics and biology—they deny God. While Einstein used to say that religious feelings are the backbone of scientific research, and Max Planck, the pride of modern physics, used to cry that, “It should be written upon the entrance of the temple of science that he who has no faith should not step inside,” in Islamic

countries our "modern" generation—precisely because they have heard the names of these two scientists—will not submit to any religious belief. In the name of contemporary science, they announce that, from a scientific standpoint, the question of [the existence of] God has been totally answered in Europe!

The main function of this pseudo-European generation, which came into being through actors playing the role of enlightened modernists, as Sartre put it, was that of broker for the oppressive European colonialists.³ And, as Chandell put it, their role was to act as a guide for those thieves who have stopped killing people so as to have a free hand to rob them.⁴ Their main job was to disrupt their own authentic society; to destroy, by their own hand, whatever they had and whatever they had inherited from the past; and to impose upon their traditional society the European life-style as well as her political, administrative, economic, moral, cultural, and ideological forms for the benefit of the colonizers. What needs to be pointed out, however, is that these traditional countries came to know the new and modern European man, civilization, science and culture through these internal colonial brokers, and what they taught was a vulgar modernism and civilization that did not even exist in Europe. This explains the increasing number of pseudo-modern and Westernized intellectuals.

Who were the vanguards of the movement of the pseudo-enlightenment and modernism in Islamic countries? The first member of this group of actors who appeared in Iran in the stage of that sham-quarrelling, playing the role of pseudo-modernist intellectual, was Mīrzā Malkum Khān (1833–1908)⁵, who advocated vigorously the following: "Let the European Banks open their branches in Iran and let foreign companies come into Iran and improve the country . . . do not be afraid of them." Another was [Sayyid] Ḥasan Taqīzadah, who claimed: "Our only way to make progress is to become thoroughly, from head to toe, Europeanized. I was the one who, for the first time, dropped the bomb of submission to Europeans in the Iranian society in those days . . ."⁶

Surely, religion must be eliminated so that the bomb of submission can be dropped in the heart of the Muslim society. Islam is portrayed as reactionary, anti-progressive, anti-modernization and anti-civilization by contemporary Malkums, so that foreign banks, companies, cartels and trusts can step in without facing any barrier, problem, or prejudice! At the same time, the old-fashioned Ayatullāh Mīrzā

Hasan Shīrāzī, with all his religious power and understanding, resisted the Regie Company—which was the sister of the East India Company—and by proclaiming that “from this moment on using tobacco is tantamount to fighting the Imam of the Age (Mahdī)” mobilized the “fanatic” religious masses against the company to the extent that even the wives of the Qājār King—who himself had granted the concession—became bold and courageous enough to refuse to serve tobacco to the king in his own palace!⁷ And it is that other “religious fanatic and intruder,” Jamāl al-Din Asadābādī, who senses the menace and cries “They want to establish a bank here! Oh, pity, a bank, and do you know what a bank is?”⁸

Yes! Religion must be wiped out from the memories of the elites, nobles and progressive groups of society so that there will be room for the “religion of the market place” and for the “new slavery,” and so that the nation whose creativity and genius dazzled the world during the darkness of the Middle Ages will grow introverted, fall very deep, and become shiny from without but hollow from within. At present, our nation is unable to build its own houses, wear its own clothing, decorate its own living rooms and, on par with primitive societies, it does not even dare to choose the way it wants to eat its own food!

At this very same time and in this very same theater, on the opposite stage there are other actors who, with a different kind of make-up, perform a different kind of play. On this stage, all the faces are the faces of saints, all the costumes are religious costumes and the conversations are centered around God, the hereafter, heaven, hell, good deeds, sin, revelation, the Prophet, the Qur’an, Imāmat [leadership], holiness, piety, spirituality, morality, puritanism, asceticism, . . . and turning away from this world’s material allurements. The role of these actors is a more difficult one. Theirs is a dialectical role. These actors must destroy religion by propagating it! Under the guise of observing and honoring religious rites, in the name of glorifying great religious personalities, and behind the facade of seeking blessings and sanctification from the holy Qur’an, these actors hide the true essence of the Qur’an and the true teachings of the leaders of Islam by preventing people from understanding them. While maintaining the form and the content, they want to eliminate religion by turning it face to face against itself with the help of imported anti-religious thoughts. These latter players, however, play a role in which there is a contradiction between the form and the content. Their role is to bring together two contradictory elements—

an impossibility that the magic of these experienced and skilled actors has made possible!

In this respect, the history of Islam, as compared to other religions, is a distinctly more tragic one. The enemies of Islam have put all their genius, labors and knowledge to work in order to confront Islam by another Islam; their objective is the destruction of the truth of Islam by false glorification of its rites and rituals. They want to fight Islam with Islam because, since its inception, the history of Islam has proven that whenever it has been involved face to face with its enemies—even when Islam was at the nadir of its power and its enemies at the zenith of their strength—Islam has always come out victorious. However, whenever the enemy has clad itself in the attire of a friend and when polytheism and corruption have worn the robe of virtue and piety, then even at the apogee of its outward glory and in the outer grandeur of its rites and rituals, Islam has been distorted from within. It has lost its truth and vitality and has sacrificed with its own sword the purest and sincerest of its supporters and leaders.

For example, as long as the Umayyads were holding the idols of Lāt and Hubal in their hands, while drawing their swords against the Prophet and shooting arrows at the Qur'an, their destiny was the defeat at the battle of Badr and the disgrace at the battle of the Ditch (Khandaq). Moreover, following each blow that Islam received from its enemies, it became stronger, brighter, and moved one more step forward. Take the story of Abū Sufyān. His home, which for twenty years had been the center of plots against Islam, became a place of refuge for Islam. One of his two sons, Yazīd, became a great soldier of Islam (mujāhid) and the man who raised the flag of Islam in Shām (Syria) and the other, Mu'awīyah, became a companion of the Prophet and an inscriber of the Qur'an. When they changed strategy and faced their enemies in the garb of friends, they were able to make up in the battle of Şiffayn for their defeat in the battle of Badr. In Badr, by their swearing to Hubal, they had been recognized as enemies; but in Şiffayn they swore allegiance to Allah—and became enemies in friends' attire. Formerly they had been shooting at the Qur'an, but now they were raising the Qur'an on top of their flags. Thus in the battle of the Ditch, while the Umayyad were on the "other side" of the water, they suffered a defeat. But after they had crept to "this side of the water," in Euphrates (Karbalā), they were easily able to get their revenge against the very man who had handed them that defeat at the Ditch.

Anyone who is familiar with the Prophet and with the Qur'an knows well that they foresaw the most important danger to Islam and Muslims as being neither polytheist, nor unbeliever, nor idol worshiper, nor materialist, nor atheist, nor naturalist, but "the hypocrite." None of the former posed the most important danger because Islam has always been victorious in its intellectual as well as its military wars against them. The most dangerous enemy is the oppressor who is clad in the attire of Islamic justice, an idol worshiper, human worshiper, money worshiper and power worshiper whose slogans are those of *tawhīd* (unity); a slave merchant who has put on the make-up of a devout saint, an element which is a tool in the hands of polytheism but uses Islam as a tool; an individual who is the guardian of ignorance and narcotizing, the propagator of superstition, lies, and illusion, the agent of social stagnation, and baseness, one who deceives people and, in the name of Islam, asks people to forget their destiny, poverty and wretchedness, and to ignore the danger of their enemies' conspiracy; one who, in order to please the deities of the earth, in the phony attire of piety for the pleasure of Allah persuades people to accept the status quo. A hypocrite is a person who portrays the God of Islam as a phenomenon that rewards only toleration of ignorance, oppression, weakness, poverty, backwardness, and disease, in actuality the God of Islam respects "dignity," the Qur'an (which considers wealth a good thing), and Islam, which is the religion of "science, justice and beauty". The hypocrite does all this so that he himself will be rewarded by those who have always benefited from the ignorance, poverty, backwardness and superstition of the Muslims. It is no accident that the Qur'an speaks with more hatred and anger about Muslims who have hypocritically accepted Islam than about polytheists who have openly defied it. In fact, an independent Sūrah in the Qur'an is devoted to such Muslims.⁹

It is no surprise that while surrounded in the city of Mecca by polytheists, or in the city of Medina by enemies, the Prophet yelled at the idols without any fear, or dug the Khandaq (ditch) with a calm and confident face and full of certainty. On the other hand at the time when his religion had taken over the entire peninsula, after he had eliminated the danger of barbarians and polytheists in the vicinity, had effectively incapacitated the two great empires to his north and south—empires which were toying with the whole world—and after he had scored victories against his enemies in all of the unbalanced wars that he had fought against larger forces: in short, at the zenith of

his power—when he wanted to say farewell to his followers, the Prophet was worried and he spoke very cautiously.¹⁰ He knew that "Islam would never suffer a defeat because of its small following."¹¹ He knew that Islam would neither kneel down in defeat in an open battle, nor would the swords of polytheists and unbelievers tear it to pieces. He knew that his house would be destroyed by the "official" supporters and protectors of his own religion. The Prophet knew that his great companions would force Ali to withdraw from public life, and that it would be the holy men, those who pray, those who fast, and the pious ones, who would withdraw their support from Ali in the war of Šiffayn. They would draw their swords against him in the war of Nahrawān; and finally, they would kill him at the altar (mihrāb) [661 A.D.].

The Prophet knew that Abūdhār would be killed not during the conquest of Cyprus and not with the sword of polytheism, but that he would die alone and hungry in exile in the desert of Rabadhah, following the religious decree of the "official" Jurisconsult of Islam, Ka'b al-Aḥbār, and by the order of one of the Prophet's great companions, 'Uthmān. He knew that the testimonies of the nobilities of Islam along with the religious decrees of the official religious muftis would justify the killing of his brave friend, Ḥujr.¹² The Prophet knew that 'Ashūrā (the tenth day of Muharram), the day that his family would be massacred and taken captive, would take place not in Qādisiyah, nor in Yarmūk¹³, neither by the sword of a Khusrow, nor the sword of a Caesar, neither by the judgement of a Zoroastrian magi, Christian priest, Jewish rabbi, nor Brahman monk. He knew that the massacre would take place upon the religious decree of the Jurisconsult of Islam and the order of the "leader of the believers," the Caliph of Islam, 'Ubaydullāh, the man who was the ruler of the religious government, the son of a famous and victorious soldier of Islam! The Prophet knew that his family would be massacred by the army of Islam, the same army which had been conquering the lands of the infidels everywhere, had been building God's mosques in place of churches, synagogues and temples, had been spreading the heavenly call to prayer (adhān) all over the world from East to West, and had been compiling, duplicating, and propagating the Qur'an. Ironically, upon its victory of 'Ashūrā, to show its appreciation to God for saving the religion of Islam from the danger "of these foreigners who rebelled against the religion of Muhammad, sinned against God, revolted against the Caliph of the

God's Prophet, and have split the Muslim community," the same army fasted and even built hundreds of mosques. No other history is as amazing and as tragic as that of Islam—the religion which has always been victorious against external enemies, but has always suffered defeats at the hands of its friends. Who could have imagined that the true leaders of Islam would all have been either poisoned or otherwise murdered by its fraudulent leaders?¹⁴

The history of Shī'ism is the history of the spirit of Islam, the soul which has been the victim of its own body. All of the household of Muḥammad were killed with swords engraved with āyāt of the Qur'an about jihād, and with swords engraved with slogans about monotheism. They were killed by rulers who were known as builders of mosques, as religious warriors, and as conquerors for Islam. They were killed by those who were the official compilers, propagators and protectors of the Qur'an. It is common knowledge that the true Islam was turned into the mockery we have today, not by the philosophical or military opponents of Islam, but by its supporters, the traditionalists such as Abū-Dardā and Abū-Hurayrah, judges such as Ka'b al-Ahbār, Abū-Mūsa and Shurayḥ, Muslim jurisconsults, speculative theologians, interpreters of the Qur'an, religious judges, rulers, preachers, theosophists and the caliphs. These guardians of Islam who were responsible for the glorification of the Islamic rites and rituals for propagating the traditions of Islam, who were entrusted with enhancing its power, and who attempted to expand and inseminate its civilization, sciences, culture and mysticism—and not the infidels and the materialists—destroyed Islam from within and made it lifeless, directionless and motionless.

No history is as cyclical as that of Islam. Even today, the situation is the same as it was in the past, and even worse! Modernists, pseudo-intellectuals and pseudo-Europeanized Muslims, who want to wipe out Islam, are open and known enemies of Islam. To paraphrase the beautiful and humane phrase of the pious and liberated son of Ali, Ḥusayn, "If these people are irreligious at least they are free and 'liberated' people."¹⁵ The very fact that they do not hide themselves, their identity, their objectives, and their desires heralds their free spirit. These people are not a genuine threat to Islam. On the contrary, it is in direct battle with these people that Islam becomes stronger and gains more vitality. The reason is that these people have started an intellectual battle with Islam and in such a circumstance Islam can always fight back with its more powerful and crushing

logic. At no point in time has a materialistic book, an anti-Islamic translator or an irreligious intellectual been able to advance even one step in an attack against Islam. Whenever Islam and blasphemy have confronted each other, the battle became an ideological and logical one, with Islam always the victorious force—even in our own time, which is the period of our weakness, division and decline. In Africa, for example, Islam is directly in competition with the gigantic materialistic propaganda apparatus on the one hand, and with Christian missionaries on the other. Yet, as Professor Vincent Monti has shown, of every five people who change their religion there, more than four of them convert to Islam and less than one converts to Christianity; most of those who join Christianity are local employees of Western hospitals, companies and organizations, or the missionaries. These figures are striking in the face of the fact that every year billions of dollars and pounds are spent in Africa to propagate Christianity, and for the study of history, languages, cultures, religions, tribes, social, political and economic institutions, racial characteristics, psychology and geography of this continent. The Bible has been translated into every local language and the missionaries, as they themselves put it, “know the black continent as well as they know their own pockets” and are completely familiar with every remote tribe and every forgotten social tradition.¹⁶

If the irreligious and pseudo-intellectuals have been able to gain some success in “destroying Islam” and if they have been able to lure a considerable number of our educated youth, they owe their entire success to the “pseudo-religious leaders” who have dispersed the youth from Islam through the distorting of Islam. On the other side, their counterparts, the pseudo-intellectuals, hunt them. This is what the director [colonialist] ultimately wishes. Those who play the role of “religious leaders” and whose function is to distort Islam, are successful in attracting a huge number of people; by utilizing their artistic magic and juggling, they bewitch people and mesmerize them. They poison people’s souls by entertaining them with imaginary, fabricated and politically expedient sentiments, hopes, loves, rancors and hates. They employ various names, delusions and incantations to preoccupy people’s minds and waste their time with hollow, meaningless and lifeless actions, habits, traditions and rituals. The masses are kept busy with something called religion, certain useless abstractions such as love, hope, hatred, dislike, and with weeping and incidents that they know very little about. The people are habituated

to a life of infatuation with the idea of the hereafter, while forgetting their own present condition as well as that of their enemies. Islam is turned into a tool by which Muslims are distracted from their fate. Shi'ism has become a short and express way to heaven, and the religious leaders' main task is to make their audience forget this world. Their principal task is to convert their audience to "Islam," i.e., to attract them only to the past. Why? In order to prepare them for the life of the hereafter! But what about one's present life? What about Islam prior to one's death? Cannot Islam be useful to me now? Can it not have any benefit for our people in the present time? What can it do for our present ignorance, hunger, and decadence? What can it do for our friends and against our enemies, for our pains and for our needs? Religious leaders would reply that these belong to this-worldly attractions, that this world is not worth a penny, and that "not to be in need of a shirt, one should ignore one's body."

This is a sort of religious nihilism, a philosophy of absurdity under the name of religion. It is utilizing religion for the benefit of those who rule the world. Naturally, when people do not think about this world, the men of wealth (Croesusian) and power (Pharaonic) worry little about their positions. When religion took the riches of the earth, that is, the blessings of God, away from the hands of the masses and branded such things unclean and called them dirty corpses, and when it threw those same riches away, it was obvious who would grab them.

In sum, the task of the cast in this "religious theater" is to turn the masses away from the present and hypnotize them. Their task is to transform earthly, everlasting and pertinent Islam of life, motion, responsibility and struggle (jihād) into an Islam that attracts the soul to the past or to the hereafter. The directors of this theater, needless to say, neither care for the past nor for what exists after death. Their whole objective is solely limited and focused on the present and this world. On their behalf the "religious actors" propagate the claim that Islam is too valuable to limit itself to this world.

It is this Islam, presented by the "religious actors," which puts the people to sleep and makes its audience forget the present. In such a mystical ecstasy, in such a romantic bliss and amidst such an ascent toward the chimerical world, a Muslim does not realize that the hands of the carcass-eating imposter are in the Muslim's pocket. And suppose he should find out. What can he do? He has neither the stamina nor the time to protest. Nor does he think it worth the

protest! Because, in the imposter's opinion, Muslims, in the highest heavens with the love of their leaders, having their wings attached to those of cherubs, are flying as close to Allāh as possible. Moreover, with every tear that Muslims shed under stress in this world, the imposters tell them they are building themselves palaces of ruby and topaz in heaven. Thus to a Muslim, the materialist, who spends all his life struggling, lying, fighting and deceiving only to buy a barrel of oil three cents cheaper, is a wretched person who does not understand the constant spiritual pleasures of being a Muslim.

It is possible that a number of intelligent people among the imaginary audience have stared at the skilled religious actors and refused to be lulled to sleep. Suppose that as they listened to the incantations, they understood the actors' spell, read their hand, figured out the role that religion plays in the society, and realized why it is that there is so much insistence and pleading to Muslims to throw away the red apple they hold—presumably because it stinks and because it is full of worms—only to have a group from the other side grab it in the air. What must happen then? What would the intellectual who thusly apprehends the situation do? Disgusted by religion and the anti-human, anti-life roles that it plays, aware and alert, he would run away. Where would he go? To the other side of the theater, to the pseudo-intellectual theater, where he would become a spectator of the processes of Westernization.

As far as the principal director is concerned, it does not make any difference, for the objective and the main theme of the two seemingly contradictory sides are identical. The end is to prevent the wayfarer from his journey. Whether the means utilized is religion or not is irrelevant. Of what value in themselves are names, titles and slogans? It all boils down to what William Ewart Gladstone [1809–1898], one of the prime ministers of England, angrily shouted in the British Parliament in the early days of the British colonial penetration into Islamic societies: "As long as this Qur'an is among them nothing can be accomplished." Whenever there is a discussion concerning the animosity between Islam and Western colonization, some pseudo-intellectuals protest by stating that the relationship between the East and the West is economic exploitation, resulting in political and military problems, with very little role for religion. Why do we analyze this relationship in terms of spiritual issues and religious animosity?

First, it seems that these individuals do not have a scientific and

sociological understanding of the phenomenon of colonization—particularly as it has happened between the East and the West in the past few centuries. The pseudo-intellectuals' knowledge of colonization solely comes from newspapers and mass media, and thus, they do not know that culture and economics are related logical determinants; a mutual cause and effect relationship binds them together. Such new pseudo-intellectuals, like traditionalists, view materialism/spiritualism or objectivity/subjectivity as two separate and independent entities. They do not understand that when they reiterate ready-made clichés such as "religion is the opiate of the masses," they admit of necessity that religion is not exclusively a simple superstructure—a product of the mode of production and economic relations of a society. Rather, it is the base and the first cause of everything. In other words, they have attributed a causal role to religion, a role which enables it to find its way into the economic infrastructure of the society.

Max Weber has shown that even in Christianity, an individualistic religion totally spiritual and moral, confined to the relationship between one's heart and God, the Catholic and Protestant sects have played two contradictory roles as far as materialist civilization, economic progress, the emergence of capitalism and the technical progress of the West are concerned. One has played a positive role while the other a negative one. In other words, if we look at a geographical map of the West, we will see a concomitance between religion and economic conditions. Interpreted in light of the Durkheimian principle that two concomitant phenomena have a causal relationship, Protestantism is a worldly, positive and rational Christianity. This is so because all Protestant countries, materially speaking, are advanced industrial capitalist countries (e.g., the U.S.A. and Germany). On the other hand, we have to accept that Catholicism is an other-worldly, negative and aristocratic Christianity and that is why all Catholic societies, as far as industrialization and capitalism are concerned, are, relatively speaking, backward societies (e.g., Spain and Italy). Moreover, countries where both religions are practiced can be located somewhere between these two poles in a positive correlation to their Protestant/Catholic ratio (e.g., France, England, etc.).

If the religion of monasticism is considered a powerful element in determining and shaping the material and economic lives of its followers, the same would be definitely true of the religion whose

monasticism is struggle and holy war; the religion whose founder is an "armed messenger" and whose follower is Ali; the religion whose history began amidst politics and struggle (jihād); the religion whose taxation is on par with praying; and the religion which—along with moral purification, spiritual and mystical dissemination and cultural progress—has built societies, political and economic systems and a civilization. If Monastic Christianity is a force in shaping the material life of its followers, so is the Islam whose slogan has always been to fight oppressors on the earth, the Islam that aspires to the formation of a universal government, the Islam that considers this world to be the cultivating ground for the hereafter, the Islam that invites the oppressed to rebellion, to armed struggle and even to yelling and swearing, the Islam whose symbol of piety and purity and whose prototype of spiritual refinement and mysticism, Ali, similar to the contemporary leaders of anti-exploitation movements, considers economics to be an infrastructure of morality and materialism to be a ladder toward spirituality. If Christianity has a voice in how its followers live, so does the Islam whose Prophet announces in a clear manner that "he who lacks economic means lacks the day of judgement as well," the Islam whose Jesus-like follower, the pious Abūdhār, gave his life in the struggle against a religious government and Islamic Caliphate for the principle that "all capital should be redistributed among the people and the treasure that some people have hoarded be confiscated"¹⁷, so that the principle of equality of people would be held as binding not only before God but also before governments, not only in the hereafter but in this life as well, and finally, not only before "God's just scale" but also before the public treasury. It is this Islam whose product, Abūdhār, is surprised when he sees a hungry person who, though he has nothing to eat at home, yet does not revolt with an unshielded sword. Contrary to the teachings of other pious, moral and religious leaders who claim that poverty is the twine of religion and helps it flourish, the teachings of Islam announce that "when poverty enters a home from one door, faith exits from the other door." I speak of the Islam whose leader equates poverty with blasphemy, and the Islam whose Imam openly states that "the person who sacrifices this world for his religion is the same as the one who sacrifices his religion for this world, and neither are members of our circle." Islam is a realistic religion and loves nature, power, beauty, wealth, affluence, progress, and the fulfillment of all human needs—so much so that its God swears to provide

beautiful and useful material phenomena and things, and praises honor, joy, and comfort in a human's life. Its Prophet is a man of life, politics, power, and even beauty. Its book, more than being concerned with metaphysics and death, speaks about nature, life, world, society and history. Instead of talking about praying, it talks about struggle and discusses the fate of "the few who have domination over the life of the many." It invites people to submit themselves to God, and urges revolt against oppression, injustice, ignorance and inequality. It asks people to fight against the functionaries of cruelty and money as well as against rabbis and priests. Islam is not simply a superstructure, because it has made leadership (Imāmat) and justice its two most outstanding characteristics and slogans and because it is a religion whose "beginning and title is of blood." Its history has been written with rebellion and struggle against distortion of reality, as well as against oppression of the masses. All its leaders have given their lives in the path of resistance and struggle.

As Chandell put it, Islam is the faith that brought religion back to this world from the hereafter in the same manner that Socrates brought philosophy down to earth from the sky. Muslims carry the heavy burden of social responsibility, and even the universal mission, of fighting the evils and trying to bring about the victory of humanity, freedom, justice, and goodness. Moreover, the Muslim societies are rich with civilization, power, intellectual, scientific and artistic creativity, honor, victory, and freedom. Their culture is brimming with spiritual, idealistic, life-giving, motion-generating, constructive and enlightening as well as independence-breathing resources. It is a sea full of stormy waves of logical, aesthetic and sentimental genius that contributes to the purity of soul and to the perfection of morality and human sensibilities. In short, the Islamic culture bestows upon human beings self-awareness, independence, personality, generosity and humane power. Nevertheless, in the view of the colonizers, Islam is an abstract and limited religious entity on par with such religions as the nirvana of Indian Buddhism, the sorcery of China's Taoism, the monasticism of Latin America's Catholicism or the semi-religious native and local traditions of Australian and African totemism, tabooism, animism and fetishism.¹⁸

Prior to reaching the threshold of universal colonization and economic imperialism, the West knew Islam very well. Islam had built one of the greatest civilizations of the world in Europe itself, in Spain. In addition, over several hundred years, on numerous occa-

sions, Europe had encountered Islam in both the East and the West. Even during the period in which Islamic society was suffering from social weakness, religious divisions and political disintegration (i.e., the period of the Crusades), Europe received devastating wounds from Islam. It had forever driven her religious influence from Iran, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and even Asia Minor and Anatolia. Moreover, even in more recent centuries, Europe witnessed the dominance of Islam and its intimidating and assailing power over the Eastern European countries, Italy and Austria. In fact, Muslims lay siege to Vienna twice during the nineteenth century. History had taught Europe that Islam was not a religion confining its followers to the isolation of its temples, without paying attention to the world and what happens in it, keeping them busy with mystical incantation and sacrosanct mortification. Islam is a religion which swiftly generates motion, creates power, provides self-awareness and enlightenment, and incites political sensitivity and social responsibility relative to one's own destiny. Finally, Islam is not the chandelier of the mosque, but rather it is a force which raises the mind, invites the oppressed to revolt and bestows upon the battleground a spirit of faith, hope and bravery. How could the Western colonizer enter the Islamic land, penetrate the heart of its society, disturb the life of its followers and their traditional organizations, plunder their resources, turn their cities into markets, make Muslims hollow, absurd, worthless and inhumane imitators, without any serious consideration of the "danger of Islam" that it had experienced in the past? It succeeded by either removing Islam altogether by the pseudo-religious leaders (shibh-e mullā) or by keeping Muslims preoccupied with imaginary things.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

If a society in which half the population knows nothing about religion and the other half knows it only in a distorted manner is to have an intellectual and spiritual revolution; if it is to begin a religious renaissance; if it is to revitalize the dead, rotten and disfigured skeleton of a culture; if it is to generate progressive characteristics and dynamic, guiding and enlightening elements—be they elements which have been hidden in the past and which the new generation does not know about, or elements which have hitherto been mixed with external, imaginary, fabricated, or poisonous ingredients, or

elements which under the unthinking glorification of rites and rituals have been emptied of any spirit, meaning, motion and objective, and thus, with the help of ignorant friends or hypocritical and unjust authorities, have been buried and forgotten—and if such a society is to rediscover and discuss these vital elements, allowing them to flow in the context of time; then to anyone who has even a minimal scientific background through modern or traditional education it should be obvious that the only necessary condition is the cooperation of all honest and responsible enlightened persons who have a good grasp of the tragedy. If the life-giving, dynamic and creative spirit of Islam is to be revived, it is necessary for all aware and responsible enlightened persons who are familiar with the tragic history of Islam in their contemporary time to come to the understanding that the only way out of this situation is to resolve the existing “ominous contradiction” and “fraudulent duality” from which their society suffers. I have in mind those individuals who view the distortion of realities to be as destructive, demeaning and menacing as the annihilation and elimination of them, and those who understand and feel social, human and ideological responsibility when they observe that at one place religion is severely attacked as paving the way for the enemy, and in another place it is superficially glorified to keep the masses in the dark. By the life-giving and creative spirit of Islam, I refer to the spirit which instigated, in a short period of time, a revolution, a culture, a history and a man who was full of movement and awareness, in the midst of decadence, ignorance, division, weakness, capitulation, poverty, wretchedness, discrimination, semi-religious and stupid bigotry, superstition, and barbarism. I refer to the spirit which started a bonfire out of lofty loves, thoughts and aspirations, and the spirit that fomented powerful revolutions based on constant struggle (jihād) and martyrdom (shahādat). I refer to the spirit which built a civilization full of wealth and power and the spirit which gave birth to a culture brimming with new and amazing thoughts and genius, and sentiments full of purity of soul and depth of intellect as well as illumination of heart. Finally, I refer to the spirit that bequeathed to humanity a literature overflowing with human beauties, with ideals of justice, human equality and human unity, with virtue, with sincerity, and with a literature which reflects the inner feeling of humanity.

With such a background, it is the sham quarrel between the pseudo-intellectuals and the pseudo-religious leaders that has split

our society into two groups, one preoccupied with nonchalance and the other with fanaticism. It is the same quarrel that has put much distance between our contemporary common man and scholars, between merchants and university people, between old and young, between those who are educated in the old system and those who are educated in the new system, and between *ulamā* and non-religious scientists. This fraudulent duality has caused the two arms of the same body and the two wings of the same bird to fight one another instead of facing the aggressive, deceitful and powerful enemy in unity. It has made us fight the ridiculous war of modernity versus traditionalism and old-fashioned versus chic, when the real war is between the East and the West, producer and consumer, colonizer and colonized, owner and owned, and decadence and progress. Finally, it has kept us busy with "religious" fighting "non-religious" and with ignorant pseudo-religious fanatics fighting more ignorant anti-religious fanatics. In order to deflect attention from the objective realities, objective pains and serious questions which are threatening our faith, our society and our present as well as our future destinies, the creators of the said sham quarrel have laid out secondary abstract problems and problems of devotion, and have thus kept our new intelligentsia busy under the guise of intellectualism and our traditional intelligentsia busy under the name of "defending the religion."

The only solution is to incorporate the Messianic Islamic spirit into this skeleton, half of which is paralyzed and corrupt while the other half is hollow and without soul, so that the wandering generation which is alienated from itself and which is separated from all its spiritual and cultural roots—roots that give solidarity and strength to the individual as well as social personality to the people—may return to itself, to its cultural heritage, to its historical and moral self, and to "self-awareness." It is only then that the lost generation may be saved from the danger of nihilism, absurdity, hollowness, spiritual emptiness, quandary, and intellectual and philosophical despair, and may enter into an open and bright, responsibility-generating unitarian (*tawhīdī*) world-view. Returning to one's self is the only hope which can enable the wandering generation to stand tall against the intimidating monster of the West which both butts and bewitches and has placed it under an intense and total cultural, intellectual, aesthetic and moral bombardment so that after conquering its spiritual and mental abilities, after emptying it of its humane

qualities, after incapacitating the power of its logical resistance as well as its ability to criticize, understand, judge, evaluate, test, "choose" and invent—and in one word, after its spiritual fall—the West can conquer it economically and politically. Reviving the cultural and spiritual lives of the wandering generation and returning it to its true self is the only course which will enable it to stand on its own feet, walk on its own, restore its broken pride, and finally resist and destroy the Western monster.

As for the masses, religion as it is often preached is an agent that paralyzes reason, congests the mind, degenerates the will, causes social pessimism and despair, justifies and asks for absolute submission to and tolerance of the status quo, encourages superstition, makes irrational repetitions acceptable, demands performance of unintelligible actions and rituals, raises baseless fears and hesitations, advocates fruitless love and hatred, busies people with non-existent or unknown friends and enemies, and finally, amuses people with what does not exist or unnecessarily prevents them from paying attention to what does exist or need to be attended to. As a result, popular religion is a religion that only three groups benefit from—the Pharaohs (political powers), the Croesuses (economic powers), and the Bal'am-e-Ba'ūrā (pseudo-religious intelligentsia)—while one group is victimized, the people.¹⁹

In such a tragic situation, the miraculous factor that can eliminate the narcotizing religion—the religion of ignorance, poverty and absolute submission—from the soul and from the context of life is solely "true religion." Religion is an amazing phenomenon which plays contradictory roles in the life of human beings. It destroys and revitalizes, puts to sleep and awakens, enslaves and emancipates, teaches docility and revolt, etc. In short, the history of mankind is the history of the struggle of "religion against religion" and not of religion against atheism. The history of Islam itself is the story of these contradictory roles of religion among various social classes. It is the history of the war of Islam against Islam and even the war of the Qur'an against the Qur'an (as in the war of Siffayn). As it is true that always and everywhere the logical and progressive Islam and the Islam of motion and movement, has been outmaneuvered and defeated by the deviant and decadent Islam and by the Islam of stagnation and compromise, a truly enlightened and realistic person knows that the only way to outmaneuver the latter and eradicate it from the minds and lives of people is to substitute the true, life-giving,

and primordial Islam for it. At this juncture, we see that neither the intellectuals, who do not know Islam, nor the pseudo-religious people, who are unaware of their own time, can fulfill our immediate needs. Only enlightened Islamologists are able, on the one hand, to give self-awareness to the hollow, alienated and disenchanting generation, and recouple them to their own society from which they have separated themselves and, on the other hand, to extract and refine, with the help of the miraculous revolution that exists in the very nature of the spirit and thought of the true Islam, the vast religious energies which are entrapped now. I am referring to the endless power of faith which is presently either buried and unknown, or wasted. When utilized, this energy will mobilize and inspire our history, spirit, civilization, thoughts and lives.

What is needed is an intellectual revolution and an Islamic renaissance, a cultural and ideological movement based on the deepest foundations of our beliefs, equipped with the richest resources that we possess. In a word, we need Islam. Undoubtedly, only those who are the children of their age and, as Chandell put it, can revitalize the history of their people—the history which is fossilized in the past, is dead or frozen and rigid, and has ossified the life of its society and prevented it from being alive, and the history which, with all its dynamism, must be made to flow once again in the course of the present time—can march on this road and take under their strong leadership our aimless time, which, far from the motion of history, has gone astray and become a toy in the hands of contemporary power holders.

The question is where one can find such people. Our difficulty is that our universities not only were born and grew outside of and alienated from our traditional educational system, but in opposition to it. Our new educational system did not evolve as complementary to, or as a continuation of, our old one. It started with its back to our culture and its face towards the West. This explains why the two educational systems function in such isolation from one another. Our universities are on par with European educational institutions as though they had been built in some African or Latin American country in a land with no history. No one feels that they are the continuation of the heritage of at least one thousand years of constant university education. At the same time, traditional educational centers (*hawzāt*) have kept their doors tightly shut without even having one window open in the direction of the new intellectual and

scientific waves. There is no sign that they have been active alongside the universities for half a century. They have never felt besieged by the West, for they have maintained their traditional approach to schooling. This distance and alienation between the modern universities and the traditional schools has had a profound impact upon the cultural training and social structure of our intelligentsia. It has created two alienated and even contradictory intellectual and scientific atmospheres and groups in our society, and has confined each group to the limits of its own culture and world view. Islamology is still taught only at traditional schools. Therefore, our educated people are either only equipped with the new European culture and do not know Islam, or else they have studied Islam but are not familiar with the contemporary outlook, world view, methodology, and world situation. Generally speaking, neither of these two groups can originate the changes whose objective is to outline the true Islam in our contemporary age. For such an objective to be realized, we are in need of people who understand both cultures.

Fortunately, however, among both of these groups (those educated in the traditional schools and those educated in the universities) there are individuals who do not accept the prevailing spirit of their environment. They are not mere products of social factors, but are people who build and shape their environment. They include university scientists who have studied either in Europe or in Iran. They know the new culture. They are experts in one area of scientific field, but they are not like those repetitious and molded intellectuals who are manufactured after a European prototype, who think alike, and who uncritically consume and disseminate every imported Western cultural product. These scientists are not happy to become assimilated and Europeanized, in Taqizādah's words "from their heads to their toes." Rather, they are among those enlightened people whom Sartre describes thus: "In the Third World and in the backward societies where no one opens his mouth without European permission, they speak their minds and have something to say against the imported European views." They are people who can think for themselves, see for themselves, understand by themselves and finally, choose by themselves. They do not repeat whatever they are told to say. They are not mediums for transmitting Western concepts and do not function as translating machines for their own people. They are enlightened, not pseudo-European, people who have passed the stage of imitation and have reached the state of scientific and intellectual maturity and independence. They have learned contemporary

research methodology and acquired a scientific outlook from European civilization, but utilize these in order to understand their own society, history and culture. Feeling responsible for the destiny of their religion and people, on the one hand, and being familiar with the contemporary age and world, on the other, they try to open a new way for a new independent and creative movement based upon the true and rich Islamic culture and faith. Their goal is twofold: a) to bring the new educated generation from its monkey-like following of the West and from its intellectual and spiritual enslavement by the colonizers to the right path, and b) to mobilize and free the old stagnant and static religious masses from their reactionary chains, from their old frozen traditions, from their unaware and pseudo-religious fanaticism, and from their superstition and degenerate, acquired and inherited habits of mind. Further, it is their objective to extract and refine the vast religious power which is buried in the depths of our society—the power which at present is in the form of a static and frozen energy and buried under thick layers of ignorance and distortion—and transform it into a constructive and dynamic energy whereupon our intellectuals can become faithful and our religious masses can acquire self-consciousness.

Fortunately, today a movement has emerged among the intellectuals who have heretofore lived outside the context of the society and been consumers of thought and opinion packaged by cultural colonialism. This movement can be characterized as a struggle for the transformation of pseudo-Europeans and modernists into enlightened and civilized people. It is a movement in which West-struck people (*gharb zādah-hā*) rescue themselves from the chains of intellectual slavery and imitation of foreigners—the very technique in which cultural colonizers have invested so heavily in this century in order to produce middlemen and in order to fill the vacuum of alienation and conflict between the “natives” and the “Europeans.” The objective of this movement is to eradicate the disease of “worshipping others” or “resembling the Westerners” from the minds and hearts of the people. It has spread in societies all over the Third World, particularly among black Africans who have been victimized more than anyone else by the new cultural colonialism. Genuine intellectuals such as Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Julius Nyerere, Kenyatta, and Umar Muwluḍ are the leaders of this movement, whose aim is to return the pseudo-European and pseudo-intellectual modernists of the colonial societies of the world to themselves.

This movement has created a revolution in cultural grounds,

religious understandings, political outlook, social insight, literature, history, poetry, art, morality, human relations and even in modes of reasoning and of perceiving life. It has suddenly transformed a generation the world over—a generation which has been the victim of culture-removing and spirit-suffocating Western colonization; a generation which was proud to be Westernized; a generation which was alienated from its "self," a blind imitator of Europeans; a generation which was destroying, with a tough and ruthless fanaticism, all its religious values, historical causes of glory, cultural and moral characteristics and whatever was "its own," so that there would be room for imported Western values; a generation whose members would sit together and enjoy self-belittling, ridiculing their own religions, nations and moral systems, disgracing their own values and sacred things, accepting any European's utterance, action and even mischief as proof; a generation of people who were unpaid slaves of foreigners, and who, in confrontation with the stranger and more glorious Europe, lost their self-respect and felt such inferiority that even great personalities such as Gandhi and Tagore were also praising their executioner-occupier. Out of this changed generation have risen new faces which have broken the darkness of centuries of colonization with their bold and dazzling glow and have illuminated the Third World.

The struggle for freedom and independence from cultural colonization has started in Islamic societies also. Under the influence of the movement for "return to the self" that exists among intellectuals, writers and artists of the Third World, growing waves have been created among the new Westernized and educated groups in Islamic countries. Under the influence of pioneering leaders who, years before such men as Fanon and Cesaire, had begun their cultural dominance and had recognized the cultural dimension of the political and military colonization of this "civilized" European aggressor and plunderer, early movements were incited among the aware religious thinkers. These movements were in the same direction as Sayyid Jamāl-al-Dīn Asadābādī's, which took the form of "the return to the predecessors" (Salafiyyah) movement, with Muhammad 'Abduh, who advocated the return to the Qur'an, and with Allamah Iqbal, who proposed the philosophy of "selfhood" and invited all religious thinkers to The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. [Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1962]. The aim of these thinkers was to awaken their bewildered Islamic societies.

Contrary to what pseudo-intellectuals and those who are out of touch with the reality may understand from these words, the movements founded by Sayyid Jamāl, 'Abduh, Iqbāl and others were not reactionary and regressive movements that wanted to turn the clock backward. These individuals were the first people who welcomed the new sciences and introduced into the closed environment of religious studies and Islamic sciences the spirit of their age, the new outlook and the new European civilization. They were the progressive and modernist leaders of the old cultural and educational centers, thereby starting the movement for "return to the self" among religious intelligentsia as well. This movement which started a century ago among the Islamic intelligentsia and the one among the new intellectuals seems to have originated from two different and distant poles. However, at present both movements are marching on the same path and toward the same destination. This is why the enlightened people who, from these two distant poles, have reached an identical and common awareness, and naturally feel the same intellectual and social responsibilities, have realized more than ever the necessity of cooperation and coordination with one another. Their common objective is to revive the life and motion which were victimized by "internal reaction" in cooperation with "external cultural colonization". In Islamic societies whose history, culture, social spirit, institutions and human values are shaped by Islam, it is a new way of looking at Islam which should be revived.

Islam is what we must return to, not only because it is the religion of our society, the shaper of our history, the spirit of our culture, the powerful conscience and the strong binder of our people, and the foundation of our morality and spirituality, but also because it is the human "self" of our people. Naturally, when mounting a cultural and spiritual struggle against the Western cultural colonization; when seeking to escape from "worshipping others," lack of personality and lack of spiritual independence; and when trying to stand on our own feet and build our own human awareness and revive our own historical culture and intellectual authenticity, we must return to Islam. We must take refuge in Islam, if only because it is a religion that transcends history and nationality. We must return to Islam in order to fill our present cultural vacuum with its rich culture and spirituality. In fighting the culture-removing techniques of colonizers, we must arm ourselves with Islam because of what it is to us. We must also return to Islam because in our opinion and in the

opinion of many non-Muslim Islamologists who have studied Islam only from the viewpoint of their humanistic values, it is the religion of humanity, and because Islam, as the political and military leaders of European colonization themselves have admitted, is the greatest of anticolonialist factors in that it not only resists colonization but revolts against it and seeks independence from it.²⁰

Thus, not only in the interest of revival of our decadent society, mobilization of our stagnant masses, and independence of our nation, and not only to rejoin our historical traditions as a means of finding our true cultural and historical "selves", but also to be able to survive the ruthless aggression of imported Western values as well as their encroachment from all sides, we must rely on Islam because we understand it to be the truth which can satisfy our human needs, answer our philosophical questions, and provide refuge for our dangerous and agitating ideological uncertainties, the contemporary instability in our moral values as well as our social pains, contradictions, discriminations, and shortcomings. Not only must we "hold fast to the cable of Allah" [III: 103] to withstand the immediate dangers directed at us, but we must also rely on Islam because, given the burning and craving of this century for spirituality, given man's contemporary crisis of conscience along with the dreadful philosophical deadlock of today's civilization, and given the results of the struggle of contemporary man—who, at the zenith of his power is paralyzed; who, despite the fact that his techniques have taken him into outer space, on this earth has reached absurdity, despair and uselessness; who, while losing his faith in all old and new schools of thought, more than ever finds himself in need of faith; and who, at the apogee of the power of science looks, distressed and thirsty, for an ideology—Islam has demonstrated its ability, as an open, profound and realistic doctrinal world view and as a progressive and changing legal, structure to be extremely useful and adaptable to different times and environmental conditions. Islam has shown itself to possess a scientific philosophy of history based on unity, general scientific determinism, and positive humanistic and historical optimism based on the notion of the inevitable victory of the weak and the oppressed classes. It has a populist and progressive social outlook which believes in the fundamental values of justice, equality and committed leadership. It believes in the inevitable conflict between the two social poles of truth versus usurpation, in originality versus ownership and in society versus the individual. Finally, Islam has proven to be a

progressive anthropological philosophy which is based on humanism and believes in man's God-like essence, his ultra-material aptitude, and his divine, universal responsibility and truth. It also believes in man's everlasting and infinite evolution, and thus invites him to ascension to God through nature and reality, and through dominion over matter as well as through employing the forces of nature. In short, Islam believes in the negation of all racial, ethnic, tribal, and traditional values and in establishing one giant human society (ummah) on the face of the earth which is based on economic and humane equality and on lofty and divine ideals. Thus, Islam can be presented as "ideology," "direction," "guidance," "faith," "spiritual interpretation of the world," and as an answer to the most fundamental questions that occupy the volatile soul of contemporary man. So, what is to be done?

The intellectual atmosphere of our society, namely the environment which is peculiar to our modern intelligentsia, continues to be intensely under the influence of Western thinking and taste. Cultural and scientific independence from the West is still not more than a remote desire. Our universities, our scientific and educational institutions, the media, the ideological, spiritual and moral environments of our writers, translators, poets, artists, sociologists, and experts on the natural sciences and humanities have still retained two old characteristics: a) their alienation from, and sometimes hatred toward, themselves, their religion, their culture, their outlook, and their own spiritual character; and b) their intense fascination with and dependence on the West and even their arrogant demonstration of Westernization and of uprooted and ugly modernism. In such an atmosphere everyone breathes the air of the West, everyone consumes only those intellectual, moral and artistic products imported from the West, and everyone sits defenseless against the onslaught of the alien culture. Although suffering is enormous, only a few people resist and sincerely try to do something to arm their defenseless and unarmed generation. They aim at generating in the people a powerful and young faith and a progressive and independent outlook, and at filling with their own true spiritual cultural resources the existing cultural and creedal vacuum. To challenge the commodities of the Western machine, which reach and are consumed in our society without interruption in different forms—books, films, radio and television programs, theater, art and clubs—and to stop the pseudo-intellectuals and assimilators, these few want to instigate a deep-rooted revolution of awakening and

personality building which would generate intellectual and ideological innovations, mental power and intellect, power of choice and, in short, shape true enlightened individuals.

The question is whether such truly enlightened souls who have attained consciousness and who feel they have a prophetic mission will not remain isolated. Will their message be heard in the presence of the golden calf of the present century that keeps people preoccupied? Will not the range of their thought and ideologies be limited to the closed walls of their classes and the few pages of their books, articles or conferences? Can these enlightened souls make a difference while they are so scattered, and lack any means or program? One should particularly bear these questions in mind in light of the fact that these modern intellectuals live basically in the margins of their society. They have no connections with the masses. They are confined within their own subjective, intellectual, artistic and even social worlds, and have their own language, slogans, art, literature, spirit, culture, social behavior, sensitivities, and ideals which do not resemble those of the common people.

Of course, a creative and self-aware thinker who tries to create a fundamental revolution in their society's mode of thinking, outlook, social and ideological conscience could be satisfied with having a limited impact upon the small stratum of the intelligentsia and educated. He could feel successful because he has stated his thoughts through the materials presented in his classes, and hence has changed his students' way of thinking. He might be happy because he has published a scientific article in a journal which is devoted to intellectuals and readers who a) are educated and b) read such articles and understand them, or he may have published a book for the benefit of those who read it, or delivered a lecture; or finally, he could be satisfied because he has written a poem with the truth hidden under numerous symbols, ambiguities, contradictions, metaphors, sarcasms and allusions so that only a few people can understand it. But such a thinker is not enlightened. An enlightened person is not merely a philosopher, scientist, artist, or expert on literature, although he may often be one of them. As Chandell put it, "Enlightenment is a form of prophecy." After the last Prophet, Muhammad, it is the enlightened person who continues the mission of prophecy in history. An enlightened person is an aware individual who is sent on a mission among his people to guide them towards awareness, freedom and human perfection, and to assist them in saving themselves from

ignorance, polytheism and oppression. To be social, to be among people and to feel responsible for the destiny of enslaved and oppressed people is an intrinsic characteristic of enlightenment. An enlightened man, as Chandell would say, is a prophet who does not receive revelation but carries its burden and responsibility.

Enlightened people, like the prophets of old, are different from philosophers, men of letters, scientists, mystics, pious people, and artists, who live with like-minded people, isolated, away from the common people and in the margins of their own societies, in the mountains, in monasteries and temples, in universities, schools, libraries, or their private homes. These latter do their work without knowing anything about the destiny of the history of the people, or their sufferings or needs, and attain the stature of great philosophers, pious monks, God-worshipping mystics, or geniuses at art. In contrast, as soon as a prophet received his mission, he went without delay to the heart of his society in search of the people. The early revelations, for example, order Muḥammad to get out of his individual isolation, to leave his personal, private, familial and group life and stand among the people, to give them hope, to warn them, to attack the symbols of lies, ignorance, and superstition, to shatter the false gods that people themselves had created, to tell the masses of slaves, deprived and hopeless, that there had been many instances where a small group has overcome a large group, to promise the weak and the condemned that the decision of Almighty God had guaranteed them the leadership and inheritance of this earth, to enjoin people to do good and discourage them from wrongdoing, to save the enslaved people from the dominion of the oppressors, the Pharaohs, the Croesuses, the magicians and the hypocrite monks, to guide them toward freedom, the promised land, glory and justice, and finally, to invite the people to ascend to the heavens from the baseness of the earth, to pray to God instead of individuals and to accept the justice of Islam in place of the injustice of other religions.

Being of the people, rising from among them and being with them is one of the meanings of the adjective 'Ummī ["The Prophet who can neither read nor write" II: 156]. Being of the people is the distinctive social feature of the prophet and the enlightened, who are the heirs of prophets. Thus, they cannot live in isolation, hidden from the people and, as the Europeans put it, in their "ivory towers," or as the Qur'an says, wrapped in their mantles and minding their own business. Thus, Plato can close the door of his academic garden to people, announce

that "whoever does not know geometry should not enter this garden," converse only with a few genius scientists who know geometry, and meditate on the republic, utopia, poetry, truth, falsehood, morals, justice, and bravery. He can ignore the fact that in Athens several thousand slaves have been substituted for mules for thirty aristocratic families who, according to Plato, from amongst all human beings all over the world, are the only ones who have a mixture of nobility and virtue in their blood. On the contrary, Muḥammad could not do so. He lived his early life alone either in deserts as a shepherd, in the home of Khadjjah (his wife), or in the Hīrā' cave in meditation. But, as soon as he was appointed a Prophet, from the height of his lonely and silent mountain, he hurriedly descended and went to the heart of the city of Mecca. He delivered his message at the top of the Safa height, the opposite of Dār-al-Nadwah which was the gathering place (majlis) of the nobility, and in direct opposition to the false gods of his society. Muḥammad left the confines of his home and resided in the mosque and opened a door from his room into the mosque—which is the home of the people. That meant that, since he had become a trustworthy and 'ummi prophet and since he was now a messenger who carried a message, he had come out of the blanket, the cloth, in which he had wrapped himself, like other people had.

Today, a scientist, a philosopher, or a pious man, without paying attention to what happens in the world, can bury himself in his work in the corner of his office, his school, his laboratory, his class or in the sanctuary of his own home. However, a man like Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī could not satisfy himself with schools by worshipping or unraveling mystical intuitions, by conducting mortification of the flesh or by conducting hair-splitting research in jurisprudence, literature, philosophy, etc. Or upon obtaining his Ph.D., Muḥammad Iqbāl could not wrap himself in the attire of a universal philosopher, accept a university post and gather his students and other elite scientists around himself, occupying a corner under the dark canopy of British imperialism over India and ignoring the social problems of his society. Considering his genius and knowledge, he could not fly about with Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Ibn Sīnā, Mullā Sadrā and Jalāl al-Dīn Mawlawī in the infinite and lofty domain of philosophy and take pleasure that he challenged Aristotle, criticized Ibn Sina, wrote an interpretation of Mullā Ṣadrā's works, and grasped a truth that no one had previously understood. Suppose he thought that the illiterate people of India and the backward Muslims were incapable of

understanding his ideas; what were his options? He could either have isolated himself, depriving himself of communication with his own people and vice versa, but remaining preoccupied with philosophical, ecstatic, and mystic intuition, or he could have left his country and taken his jewels to sell to another buyer. It is true that his backward compatriots did not understand him; but because he was an enlightened thinker, he sought neither escape nor isolation. He realized that he had been sent on a mission to his people. His "selfhood" (khudi) philosophy was not a specialized theory. It was a revolutionary spirit that he wanted to blow into the skeleton of his society. An intellectual transformation can never be confined to the limited, fortified position of the intelligentsia. An enlightened individual must descend from his "ivory tower" to the masses, for as Chandell says, speaking of and about people where there is nobody is either a fraud or futile. Those who speak about the people, society, colonialism, the Third World, etc., while sitting in fancy cafes in Northern Tehran or other places, might call themselves sociologists, politicians, scientists, philosophers, writers, artists, etc., but they are not enlightened individuals.

Those few individuals among our educated elites who have acquired self-consciousness no longer remain within the bonds of their specific social group. The very social responsibility which is an inherent part of being enlightened makes them go beyond their individual and group interests and causes them to tear apart the cloak of being a professor, a writer, an expert, a scientist, a researcher, a translator, a philosopher, or an artist. Such attire wraps one in oneself in order to protect academic integrity and one's scientific reputation, and to prevent one from joining the masses. But this social responsibility causes self-aware intellectuals to descend from their isolated caves and from high and prestigious social status, just as did the Prophet of Islam, to the level of the people and makes them realize that they are only human. It compels them to associate with common people, those who are called "lay unsophisticated animals," despite the fact that from among them the most decent heroes have arisen. The feeling of social responsibility forces the self-aware enlightened individuals to ally themselves with common people and tolerate dishonor, swearing, accusation, belittling, insult, fabrication, and conspiracy which actors of both conflicting sides of the above-mentioned sham quarrel will aim at them. Moreover, they must tolerate numerous criticisms from the sick people who suffer from anonymity and jealousy, people who could not even reach the state of

assuming the apprenticeship of the intellectuals, as well as the illiterate people, those who have not even heard of the common vocabulary of a scientific field and do not have the capacity to read even one paragraph of a simple children's book.²¹ The enlightened hear criticisms and the "scientific" and "documented" views of the critics, but do not answer them, for they have to fulfill more important social responsibilities.

These enlightened individuals want to foment an intellectual and creedal revolution in their society, to transform the world-view, scientific outlook and spiritual direction of their generation in the face of the existing vacuum and even hatred of faith, to mobilize a powerful, logical, and rational wave of religious belief, to depict true Islam in the present alienated and forgotten environment, to deliver the message of their prophet to their people, to begin an Islamic renaissance and a logical, progressive religious reform in their society and in their time. The question is, how can they achieve all this while they are scattered, unorganized, and alienated from the masses? How can they focus their uncoordinated activities? Where can they direct their various services? What plan do they have to propagate their ideology among the young generations? What exit will they use to descend from their ivory towers and what kind of bridge will they construct over the large and deep gap that separates them from the masses? Finally, what do they want to do? What is their program? What resources do they have at their disposal? On whom do they want to rely? Where do they want to begin and how? And most importantly, what can they do about the experienced actors who play the role of the intellectuals, who are directed by the wealthy and powerful hands of cultural colonialism and who expertly perform the attractive and multifarious "new ways of stupefaction?" On the other hand, how do they want to deal with the ignorant masses and the skillful actors who play the role of religious leaders and utilize "the old ways of stupefaction?"

Those individuals who have attained self-consciousness and have become enlightened through Islamic sciences and through their powerful, responsibility-generating religious beliefs, as well as those individuals whose progressive understanding of their Islamic culture and whose logical outlook of Islam have given them the mission to guide and enlighten (i.e., the Islamic scholars), have a more difficult responsibility. Just as the role of the pseudo-religious intellectuals is more difficult than that of their counterparts in the opposite theater,

the responsibility of the religious enlightened individuals of the traditional schools (hawzāt) is tougher and more difficult than the work of their counterparts in the other side of the theater. They operate in an environment not empty of Islam but filled with a false and distorted Islam. The task of the intellectuals is to struggle in the land of blasphemy, whereas the task of religious enlightened individuals is to struggle in the heart of Islam. The enemy of the intellectuals is either empty-handed or carries an obvious idol. The lines are clear, the borders well defined, and a river separates Islam from irreligiosity. In Islamic schools, however, the religiously enlightened who have the Qur'an in their hands must fight people who use the Qur'an over their flags and bayonets as shields. They must face people from whose quarters like from bee-hives, one hears the hums of praying and recitation of the Qur'an. And this is a very difficult task. So, what is to be done?

AIMS

1. The religious and free-spirited people of this society must get together. I have in mind those to whom awareness and humanism have given the crucial responsibility of "awakening and guiding" and those to whom the redeeming Islam of Muhammad and the justice-seeking school of Ali (Shī'ism) have given the heavy responsibility of protecting the true and divine values of Islam and humanity.

2. People must be saved from the two deceitful traps (two theaters) which have been put in their way by the same hands. They must be saved so that the masses will not in the name of religion fall prey to ignorance, superstition or emotional, abstract, detrimental or useless traditions, and so that the religion of honesty, alertness, motion and glory will not become a vehicle for lying and a stupefying, belittling agent. People must be saved so that our younger generation and our intellectuals will not be led by observing such lopsided realities to run away from religion and, in the process of escaping, fall in the trap of West-struck hunters and monkey-like imitators, that is, fall into the complex webs of the cultural colonizers and the trap of the propaganda machinery of the dominant world powers; so that they will not be led to turn hollow and vain, to lose their ability to distinguish, choose and resist, to lose their human and cultural originality, and become creatures without identity who are docile and

consume whatever subjective and material products are offered them.

3. Up till now the West has been teaching our intellectuals and intelligentsia about the world. It has been telling us about what civilization or culture is. It has been explaining to us the East, the West, sciences, religions, philosophy, education, social systems, economic systems, political leadership, ways of living, new morality, literature, art, aesthetics, etc., and in short, all aspects of man's living, personally and with regard to society. The West has interpreted and depicted things for us the way it thought of them and wanted us to think of them. Even our own religion, history, literature, art, historical figures and humanistic values have been explained to us by the West. To learn about ourselves and to apprehend our historical, Islamic and spiritual selves, we have waited to see what this "absolute teacher" had to say first. Our thinkers, our scientists, researchers and even writers who are working with Islamic subjects and with Persian poetry, all are consumers of the imported products of the Western cultural machinery, thereby turning researchers, in fact, into mere translators of Western works. This is what Sartre means, in his introduction to Fanon's book, when he says that the West used to bring some people from Africa, Asia, and Latin America to Europe and give them a tour around Paris, London and Amsterdam, and teach them enough European mannerisms so that they could act as middlemen and be transmitters of what the West wanted to import to the Third World. Once they returned to their respective native lands, they would repeat as "mouth pieces" things they had learned from the West in the remote places of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The time has come for us to show courage and speak our mind. As Sartre puts it, we should find the courage not to regurgitate the European ideas and experiences in our homelands.

4. We must "return to ourselves."²² This does not mean that we should reject the present, turn our back on the future, fanatically reject everything which is new and anxiously turn to the past. Rather I mean, we should return to "our own human, cultural and creedal selves." This slogan does not recommend a reactionary movement. Contrary to what the pseudo-intellectuals assume, "the return to ourselves" is not a superficial and imitative revival of certain local traditions, customs and rites. It is not the regurgitation of the past. It is a progressive movement for saving ourselves from "self-alienation" through the "elimination of the alien in our human condition and in

our cultural and spiritual essence." It is a movement for finding lost truth and plundered values. It is a call for reliance upon our own roots. It is a movement to prevent talking with other people's tongues and walking with other people's feet.

5. We must extract and refine the vast spiritual and cultural resources which have been buried and even forgotten under the dark layers of history, resources which their inheritors have lost the ability to utilize; as a consequence of this loss, we are witnessing that on the top of these vast and endless treasures which are unmatched in the history of humanity, their inheritors live hungry, poor, empty and in need of foreigners.

6. We must fight scientific and intellectual superstitions and challenge anti-human and anti-Islamic beliefs and traditions which have poisoned and paralyzed the spirit and thought of the society. This can be accomplished through scientific research and logical analysis of the political, religious, and philosophical ill-motives and class factors which have been at work throughout our history as well as through diagnoses of religious innovations, deviations and negative justifications that have occurred throughout history plus their negative social effect and ominous ideological and practical consequences in the lives of the Muslims. Historical experiences which often include the war of contending ideologies (madhhab 'alayhe madhhab)²³ teach us that the most powerful factor in eliminating "the degenerate and narcotizing religion" from the hearts and minds of the people in a society is "the progressive and awakening religion." The history of Islam is no exception. It is the story of the two types of Islam facing one another. We must resist the powerful and continuous onslaught of poisonous and deviant thoughts which have aimed to ruin the ideals of our society and its intellectuals by creating confusion in our belief system, causing cultural divisions and rupturing the spiritual bonds which give us human character and independence vis-a-vis the West. We can resist only by creating an independent intellectual movement, by providing the needed intellectual and ideological resources, by enhancing and improving critical ability, the level of understanding and accuracy of diagnosis, and by strengthening the power of ideological resistance among our youth and among our intellectuals.

8. We must fight the various schemes, plots and processes whose objective is to bring about the moral collapse of our society, particularly among the younger generation and among intellectuals, so that

they may lose not only their power, but even the opportunity to think, to acquire human commitments and responsibilities. In turn their faith, ideology, self-awareness and human values are all drawn into the quagmire of corruption. This fight can be won by creating a sharp current of thinking, expanding the scope of consciousness, discussing intellectual problems and social responsibilities and hence forcing people to think about their status and making the younger generation join the strong foundations and guiding ideological elements. In short, this objective can be accomplished through creation of "goals" among the intellectuals, for to paraphrase Alexis Carrel, pleasure seeking is a mire in which only individuals who do not have a goal in life will be submerged.

9. We must accurately understand the world, modern civilization, Western culture, the colonial powers, and the apparent and hidden relationships between the East and the West. In particular, we must understand the specific aims of Islam—as a religion, as a culture and as a history that affects a large segment of human society. We must discuss all intellectual issues, schools of thought and ideologies which constitute the prevailing trends of the world, ideologies which whether we like it or not influence our own thoughts and feelings, and particularly those of our intellectuals. We must also comprehend the objective international realities, factors and powers involved, the available resources and the existing conditions. In short, we must grasp all those problems that constitute "our time" and of necessity, touch our destiny, faith, culture and life, either positively or negatively. The reason is that today, in a world where mass media and mass communication is rapidly expanding, closed traditional fortresses are tumbling down, and the West—through formal homogenization of all men and nations and through the imposition of its dominant culture upon other religions and national or religious cultures all over the globe—hastens this process. Only "knowing oneself," and the "conscious return to one's culture", or as Iqbal put it, "the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam" constitutes a possible course of action for that group which has an open and broad world view, and which has a precise and accurate understanding with regard to its time and human condition.

10. We must initiate an "Islamic Renaissance," that is, a rebirth of Islam, that awakening and revolutionary spirit, lucid, pure, humane, with its honor-giving and responsibility-generating faith. The "original Islam" posed a logical, realistic and social outlook, and

projected humane ideals. We must reintroduce this message, the message which immediately created a lasting and radical revolution in the withered, feeble and dark heart of the history of humanity, the message which fomented a deep wellspring for people's morals, thoughts and feelings, the message that made geniuses bloom in the desert, civilizations grow out of savagery and motion begin out of stagnation, and finally the message which created power out of weakness, glory out of baseness and freedom out of slavery. We must reintroduce that message which created the spirit of justice-seeking and self-awareness among the oppressed and destitute classes.

At this point, of necessity, the question to be asked is, what should be done in order to achieve these goals? To put it more precisely, "Where shall we begin?"²⁴ Naturally, the answer to this question cannot be a universal and fixed formula. Because, first, every individual will answer this question according to his world view and his particular school of thought. Second, due to the fact that people's responsibilities are often determined by their social classes, the answer to this question will vary depending on whether the audience is an individual or a group or a particular class. Thus, in order to provide an answer here, we must identify both our outlook and our social class. That is, we have to determine according to what school of thought and from which class viewpoint we are speaking. Our answer is that we speak as "enlightened Muslims."²⁵

As a common principle, we must all believe that in traditional societies with "unaware masses" the primary responsibility of the enlightened individuals is to give awareness to their own people.²⁶ Accordingly, to provide an answer to the question "Where shall we begin?" we propose the following final slogan: "The rebirth of Islam."²⁷ The question remains as to how can one achieve this rebirth of Islam. The answer is provided by Islam itself. It teaches its followers that whenever they lose their path in history, are divided into contentious sects in the darkness of centuries, or are scared and feel baffled in the sea of ideas, they should not stop marching, should not tolerate divisiveness and sectarianism, should not waste their energies. Instead they should return to the Qur'an.

Undoubtedly, from the present situation when each of the various groups of Muslims considers itself to represent the true Islam, we must return to the condition of the early Muslims in the dawn of Islam. They were able to understand the message of Islam without the aid of philosophy, mysticism, or other religious, traditional and

historical elements, which grew only after the message was revealed. Even if by a revolutionary mutation, however, we were able to eliminate the barriers of time and reach that condition, still another question remains, namely which Qur'an should we return to?²⁸ Are we to return to the Qur'an which was used in the palace of 'Uthmān, the third Caliph—the man who revived the Quraysh aristocracy and killed Abūdhār? Or are we to return to the Qur'an which was used in the small clay house of a silent man who resided in the corner of the Prophet's mosque, Imam Ali? Or are we to return to the Qur'an which was raised by the bayonet of 'Amr ibn 'Ās, in defense of racial kingdom, aristocracy, and in support of the class-based Umayyad dynasty? To which of these Qur'ans should we return?

When the right answer is discovered then we can understand why the Iranian people rushed to embrace collectively the call of Islam in its early days. No doubt responding to any call is a function of need and suffering. Suffering from class discrimination, the oppression of the Sassanids and the stupefaction of the Zoroastrian clergy, the Iranian people found "faith, justice, and leadership" in the message of original Islam. These three elements of the original Islam constitute the mottos of all people even at the present time. In fact, the ongoing struggle in our contemporary world revolves around these same principles and also aims at the main objectives of the Muslims today.

To leave no ambiguous points, some examples of "ideal types" is in order. The first is Imam Ali, whose Islam is based on "faith, justice, and leadership." "Being Ali" means a manifestation of the true leadership of the people. His career heralds this claim: the first twenty-three years he struggled for the faith, the following twenty-five years he tolerated for the "unity of Muslim community," and during the last five years he fought for justice. The second example is Imām Ḥusayn, "the light of guidance," "the vessel of salvation," and "the living martyr" for all times and generations. He is the man who lived and interpreted Imam Ali's Islam through his exemplary life, to be adopted by whoever feels the responsibility with regard to his contemporary time and place.²⁹ A "Muslim intellectual" measures his time, place, life, and career according to Imām Ḥusayn's standards. An intellectual who has accompanied us up to now has become aware that we are in need of an Islamic renaissance, a doctrine of return to ourselves and in need of reviving the true Islam. We hope that he is convinced that in an Islamic society to achieve any goal one has to return to the Qur'an—the Qur'an as Imam Ali

understood it. Finally, our intellectual friend will agree that to return to the Qur'an of Ali, given our contemporary age, the most fundamental maxim should include "faith, doctrine, unity, justice, and leadership." Thus, the responsibility of the enlightened intellectual, whose life is "ideology" and "struggle" and whose mission is enlightenment of the people, has clearly been identified.

NOTES

1. The prophet of Islam said, "Whoever likens himself to a group is one of them." Both the form and the content of this tradition pertains to what the sociologists and the enlightened anti-colonialists call assimilation. The European colonizers quickly and accurately divided the colonized people into two categories. To put it differently, the people of the colonized areas are of two kinds in terms of their attitudes towards the European powers: Either they are traditional, old fashioned natives who remain loyal to their own value systems, or else they assimilate the value system of others. The latter are interchangeably referred to as modernizers, modernists, Westernized or even intellectuals, but a more accurate appellation is "assimilated".
2. One recurrent issue in Dr. Shar'ati's works is the notion of "cultural distinctness," which he conveys with the concept Ta'assub-e-Farhangi (cultural zeal). To him, the debate over tolerance and less emphasis on cultural distinctness is simply another means by which the West wants to encroach on the identity of the non-Western people. (Ed.).
3. See Jean Paul Sartre's Preface to Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. [Translated by Constance Farrington. (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1963)].
4. See "Conversation in the Prison in Paris." (n.p., 1966).
5. For the life and work of Mirzā Malkum Khān in English see, Hamid Algar. *Mirzā Malkum Khān: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), and the sources cited therein. (Ed.).
6. He was lying even on this issue. This shows that Taqizādah was not authentic even in infamy and disgrace. The first individual who said this was Mirzā Malkum Khān and not Taqizādah.
7. The author is referring to that period of Iranian history known as the Tobacco Protest (1891-1892) during which people voiced their objection to the tobacco concession, granted to a British company. The religious leader whose edict stopped the smoking of tobacco was Mirza Hasan Shirāzi. (Ed.).
8. A noted African poet and a revolutionary used to say that French colonialism does not end in Africa when African countries gain independence and the French army is vacating but only when foreign banks leave the region.
9. Shar'ati is referring to Sūrah LXIII of the Qur'an entitled "The Hypocrites" (Munafiqūn). This Sūrah was revealed in Medina in 4 A.H./626 A.D. The name is taken from the first verse which begins as follows: "When the hypocrites come unto thee (O Muhammad)." (Ed.).
10. In his last sermon, delivered in the mosque, the Prophet said, "O People, portents of dark times are coming one after the other."
11. This is the Prophet's utterance upon his march along with 12,000 armed men to fight the Huwāzan tribe.
12. Hujr ibn 'Adī was an important companion of Imām Ali and Imam Hasan who was brutally murdered during the rule of Mu'āwiyah for his opposition to the policies of the Umayyads (Trs.).
13. The armies of Islam and the Sassanids clashed in Qādisiyah, which resulted in

the defeat of the Sassanids and their demise. Yarmūk is the place where Muslim army confronted that of the Byzantine Empire. (Ed.).

14. There is a tradition from one of the Shi'ī Imams which says, "There is no death for us save with poison or the sword."

15. It is reported that Imām Husayn told his enemies on the day of 'Ashūrā the following: "If you do not have faith and religion, at least be free-spirited people in this world." (Trs.).

16. Even today we read in our religious books that the million tons of meat which is being sacrificed annually on the day of pilgrimage in Mecca should not be given to the hungry Sudanese but be buried en masse. When one asks why should it not be given to the Sudanese while the meat of religious sacrifices, in principle, could be distributed even to the polytheists, one gets the feeling that the authors of such books do not even know that the Sudan is a country with a Muslim majority.

17. Abūdhār did not speak of lawful (ḥalāl) or unlawful (ḥarām) wealth. He did not discuss whether the wealth was obtained by a religiously sanctioned means or not. This kind of discussion was a common occurrence in the court of 'Uthmān by people like Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Abū Hurayrah. In Abūdhār's view, any sort of wealth is but a burning scar in its owner's face, because it has been stolen from the people through religious or non-religious tricks. In Ali's opinion also, any accumulated wealth is an indication that someone's rights have been violated. In the Qur'an, having a personal treasury or capital is a crime: juridical tricks (kulah-e shar'i) were later inventions.

18. Colonialism was concerned with these religions as well. Although they were not concerned with social and political issues, nevertheless, religions have been the protectors of the social traditions and collective and family life-styles of the regions in which they were dominant. Against the onslaught of colonialism which wanted, for its own benefit, to eradicate everything, destroying society, life, the economy and polity with an amazing speed, and substitute for them its own uniform model, these traditional religions had a conscious and unconscious potential for resistance.

19. These four groups (the powerful, the rich, the pseudo-intellectuals, and the masses) play important roles in Shari'ati's thought. The first three are united against the fourth. A constant struggle between them is the motor behind the movement of history. (Ed.).

20. See my "Pedar, Mādar mā Muttahamim," in *Collected Works*. Vol. 22 (Tehran: Sabz, 1361/1982), pp. 55-170.

21. In his description of these types of characters Shari'ati clearly has his own critics in mind, for whom he had great contempt and a very low opinion. (Ed.).

22. The slogan that many black (African) intellectuals have recently proposed is the following: "A return to self and reliance on national and historical tradition." This is a way of resisting the West, which portrays the black race as one with no cultural creativity and one which has never been the creator of its own culture, thus suggesting that blacks have no alternative but to work today for the European and be cultural imitators of the West. The slogan of return to one's indigenous culture by African intellectuals is therefore a progressive motto. It is comparable to the prescription of the late Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad in his book *Gharbzadegi* (West-struckness), within the context of Iranian society.

In our opinion, however, in its confrontation with Islam and Iran, the West has not denied the existence of our traditional culture. Instead, the West not only accepts our culture, but it does so in an exaggerated manner. It utilizes our culture by highlighting only selected aspects of it. To glorify our cultural past, as the West wants us to do, not only solves none of our problems, but may also create new ground for the abuses by the West. In the name of reviving our ethnic traditions and customs and under the guise of restoring our native heritage and habits, the West may push us to a new "reactionary" phase. In fact, certain features of this new reactionary phase are already apparent in the forms of coquettish and imitative old-fashioned behavior, and the expansion of

Western-like and insipid communism, all of which are contradictions indicative of the stupidity and naivete of West-struck individuals. This artificial Easternization reminds one of the type of individuals who regurgitate whatever their "absolute teacher," the West, demands of them. It reminds one of an Easterner who would taste the "sweetness" of vinegar if he is told by a Westerner that vinegar is sweet. In short, this sort of return to one's tradition in Iran or other parts of the Islamic world, which may be called "American reactionism," is a new form of stupefaction and is extremely ugly.

When we say a return to ourselves, we do not mean a return to reactionary past. We do not mean a return to the early ancestral myths and the glorification of their rotten bones either. Islam rejects all returns of this kind, "Return back on your heels?" [III: 144]. Rather we mean a return to "our human selves" in order to find our personality and character, our doctrinal and historical selves, and a revival of our creative soul and our sublime spiritual values. Thus, in the slogan, "a return to ourselves," we should ask, which self? Are we talking about our legendary and mythological selves, ethnic and racial selves, historical selves, traditional and native selves, ancient selves, or religious selves? If we are talking about our religious selves, which religion do we mean, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, . . . or Islam? If we are speaking of Islam, which Islam, Sunni or Shī'i, and which Shī'ism, Alawī or Ṣafavī?

In my essay "Return to Which Self" [*Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 35-40], I have stated that a return to self means a return to that particular human self which has been formed throughout history, has given us spiritual personality and cultural identity, and has shaped our intellectual direction. I mean that continuous true spirit which, although buried under historical debris, events, scenes and incidents and although covered with the burden of the past and the troubles of the present, has an "uninterrupted motion" that reaches the contemporaries. I mean that reality which carries with it our essential humanity, our sublime moral and ideological spirit and our spiritual resources and facilities. It is a past which is present and a history which is alive and moving. It is not returning to a dead religious or ancient self which has stopped in the past or is buried in the depths of centuries or inside ruined palaces which historians and scientists remember in the pages of their books, documents and antiques. It is not a corpse in the graveyard of the past that archeologists must exhume and force to life and motion. The self that I have in mind is an "eternal man." It is an old person who embodies and personifies those millions of human beings who have lived in many centuries and have experienced changes, revolutions, various cultures, and ideologies. At the present we are that person.

With all these experiences, this "self" has assumed a distinct identity and possesses a great spirit, vast and brimming resources and facilities as well as Jesus-like miraculous powers! At the same time cultural colonizers and their supporters are afraid of him and try to destroy or incapacitate him! The West does not deny his existence, but it wants to introduce him in a distorted and disfigured manner so that we will not be able to recognize him. The West is afraid that we might recognize him and instead of worshiping him take refuge in him. He is the person who in the last chapter of his life, has converted to Islam, the Islam of Imam Ali. He is our own "self," us against the West, cultural colonialism, reactionism, distorted religion, ignorance, weakness, blind imitation of traditions, fanaticism and finally false modernism. It is "us" against all these aliens whom we have to confront. It is that self on which we must rely, and it is that self to which we must return.

23. See my "Madhhab 'Alayh-e-madhhab" in *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 3-54.

24. See chapter I in the present volume. (Ed.).

25. See my "Rushanfekar va Mas'uliyat-e 'Ū," [in *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 49-108.

26. Depending on the social conditions, historical stage and the culture of each

society, this awareness may take the form of "national," "cultural," "class," or "political" movements. For example in Latin America it takes a social or a political form whereas in colonized societies and in places where racial discrimination is a norm, it has a "national" overtone. In Black Africa, it has taken the form of "cultural consciousness."

27. This is the reason why in the traditional Islamic society where the responsibility of every committed intellectual, whether religious or secular, is to rely on Islam, the religious intellectuals should see it as an ideology while the secular ones should take it as a culture.

28. Shari'ati's rhetorical question is directed at various interpretations of the Qur'an. He does not mean to suggest that there is more than one Qur'an. (Ed.).

29. Imām Ali and Imām Husayn are two of the most important heroes of Dr. Shari'ati. His portrayal of the first is found in volume twenty-six of his *Collected Works* and that of the second in volume nineteen. (Ed.).

Sūrah al-Rūm ("The Romans"): A Message To Enlightened Thinkers¹

A lecture delivered in the auditorium of Husayniyah Irshād in Ābān 1351/October 1972. (Collected Works). Vol. 20, pp. 1-47.

In the name of Allah, the God of Muḥammad, the last messenger of awareness, ability and liberty;

God of Imam Ali, the example of a true Muslim, the victim of oppression, the leader of mankind;

In the name of Allah, the creator of the house of Fāṭimah in whom one's hopes for freedom are placed, that small house which is as large as the universe . . . ;

In the Name of Allah, the God of Abūdhār, the example of the mustaḍafīn, the oppressed people of the past and the present; the God of those who throughout history have suffered and experienced torture and of those who today continue to endure pain until the reappearance of the twelfth Imam;² Allah of those who have been deprived of worldly possessions throughout history. Although poor, they always followed the path of Ibrahim and inherited the quality of fighting to achieve freedom from the time of Ādam to that of Ḥusayn, and from the latter to eternity they will continue to struggle to save humanity;

In the Name of Allah, the God of the martyrs (shuhadā) who gave their lives for the cause of truth and justice.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

While waiting for the program to commence, I listened to the splendid presentation by the young man.³ It prompted me to think about Ali's character and how enlightening it is to love him. Therein

may lie the answer! If only a spark-emitting understanding of Ali's character can be ignited in this corrupt environment which has caused the deterioration of our generation, and if that spark can be caught by the hearts of our youth, the darkness of the lagoon will be overcome by love. Such an approach may yield freedom and understanding.

Throughout the world, plots have been devised to preoccupy and destroy the young generation. Instead of being presented with the genuine justice and freedom that they need and expect, our youth are given "the freedom of sex." All areas of communication (radio, television, the press, art, etc.) are attempting to satisfy "sexual needs." On the other hand, if we would expose our youth to "Ali's school" and endow them with a flame of the everlasting fire from the quiet and abandoned house of Fāṭimah, we could ignite fire in them. Furthermore, our stagnating, silent and divided society would be confronted with a new ray of hope, energy, movement and aim. A bright and conscious generation could then be raised according to those principles practiced by Ali and left behind for mankind through his patience, silence, pains, and struggles.

I hope soon to see the day when the present state of affairs, which is colored by pessimism, cursing and evil-teaching perpetuated among Muslims by the enemies of Islam in order to instigate trouble between them so that they can forget the real enemy, will be transformed. Instead of wasting their energy on differences as well as accusing, cursing, humiliating, rejecting and condemning one another, all Muslims should follow the true Islamic teachings and enjoy friendship and understanding. I hope this day is not too far away! It will be a day when our modern university students along with those of the religious schools, ḥawzāt, our professors along with the 'ulamā, our illiterate believers along with the intellectuals, our youth along with the elderly, our modernized along with the traditionalists, our daughters along with their mothers, our sons along with their fathers will all be able to sit together and defend each other in a united struggle against the plots facing Muslims. It will also be the day when Muslims enhance their knowledge of true Islam. Let us pray to witness such a day soon.

In this presentation, I will attempt to delineate a common goal and strategy which should be adopted by Muslims throughout the world. It is based on the only scripture available to Muslims, the Glorious Qur'an, whose teachings are capable of transcending all sects, divisions, and scattered factions of Muslims and simultaneously is

capable of producing the re-union of Muslims and a revival of Islamic brotherhood.

To date, the Qur'an is the only document that has been safe from (major or minor) changes or distortions by the enemies of Islam. Although the internal and external enemies, which included the ruthless superpowers, the caliphs, the kings and the evil 'ulamā did everything in their power to counteract or destroy the Qur'an, their attempts failed. Their fear of the Qur'an persisted until they resorted to distorting the interpretation of the Qur'an for the Muslims. Furthermore, the enemies of Islam have tried to remove the Qur'an as a frame of reference from the Muslim's way of life and pattern of thinking (even for the theology students). For those who were steadfast in their interest in the Qur'an, the enemies wholeheartedly sought to attract attention to the beauty of the cover, print or proper recitation of the Qur'an, but not to its contents.

Regardless of past plots to undermine the Qur'an or the endurance of the differences among Muslims, all Muslims of the world—old or young, illiterate or literate, Shi'i or Sunni, Eastern or Western and from every cultural background—all firmly agree that the Qur'an is the foundation of Islam. And, in spite of centuries of efforts to prevent the Qur'an from being exposed and considered, the holy book has survived and remained uncorrupted. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the conscientious Muslims to focus on reintroducing the Qur'an to the Muslim society. Where should they begin? It is highly recommended that concerned Muslims, wherever they may be, meet in a nearby mosque, a Ḥusayniyah,⁴ any religious, scientific or cultural center, a city or village, an office, or even a factory, in order to establish a center for Qur'anic studies. In initiating such a project, any level of classes may be established. The ultimate goal will be to have the mosques, Ḥusayniyah and religious gatherings concentrate on the contents of the Qur'an. However, for a better understanding of the Qur'an, attention to the traditions and history of the Prophet and his righteous followers must accompany Qur'anic study.

The holy Qur'an should always remain with Muslims to the degree that its light may pulsate and enlighten the heart. Under such circumstances, sects and differences will disappear, and unity will emerge under the shade of the Qur'an. In the final analysis, the language and arbitration of the Qur'an will cause pessimism and misunderstanding to be replaced by optimism and understanding.

Because of the occasion (the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Ali), it would be most appropriate to talk about the morals and

characteristics of Imam Ali. However, as a substitute, I have decided to select a part of the Qur'anic text for discussion. My intention is not to claim that I am a qualified exegete of the Qur'an nor that I am very knowledgeable of its contents, but rather to present an example and evidence supporting the contention of those who believe that the Qur'an is alive. Such an assertion is not due to prejudice on the part of the believers but results from what is clear and observable to every Muslim or non-Muslim who is fair, conscientious and open-minded.

A study of Surah XXX of the Qur'an, al-Rūm, will be made. This surah could have been revealed just today to the Muslims, so precisely does it reflect their present conditions. Furthermore, it is an unusual, motivating and living message to all contemporary, responsible individuals, especially those enlightened Muslims who energetically and persistently struggle to bring knowledge and awareness to the afflicted members of their society; and regardless of frustrations and oppositions, responsible Muslims remain firm in their efforts to overcome oppression.

As already mentioned, this surah is an example used to confirm the fact that the Qur'an is always living while other things are changing. For example, some beings die while some others are born. Moreover, even man's pains, needs, thoughts and fate in societies are constantly transformed. Nevertheless, the Qur'an, the word of Allah, remains constant throughout all reforms and evolutions. It is applicable to all times and places; irrespective of political, cultural, and social class, the Qur'an will lead to the freedom of every conscious individual. Lastly, before pursuing the commentary on the Surah al-Rūm, I wish to take this opportunity to apologize for introducing a surah of the Qur'an in the form of a lesson instead of the detailed and interpretive fashion which is the traditional practice in religious gatherings.

SŪRAH AL-RŪM

Because of time constraints, the complete text of the sūrah will not be discussed. Emphasis will be placed mainly on those āyāt that relate to the central message of the sūrah. The audience is urged to study, at its convenience and with the assistance of available interpretations, the whole sūrah. Through undivided attention and concentration, the great meaning of the surah will be discovered. Only then will the call "to return to the Glorious Qur'an" be understood. If responsible enlightened souls in Muslim societies who are searching for a method,

an ideology and a solution to the problems of their nation would return to the greatest book, they would learn the best lessons from it. They would actually feel the uniqueness and wondrous nature of the Qur'an and its teachings:

In the name of Allah, the merciful, the beneficent, Alif, Lām, Mīm. The Byzantines (Romans) have been defeated in the nearer land, and they, after their defeat, will be victorious within ten years—Allah's is the command in the former case and in the latter—and on that day believers will rejoice. (XXX: 1-4).

These āyāt are the core and the essence of the sūrah. The Qur'an makes a prediction of which no one is aware. It gives an accurate description of when "something" will happen. What, when and where will it be? As revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad, the āyāt state that the Byzantines will be victorious ten years after their defeat in the nearer land. Remember, such a prediction was not the Prophet's personal opinion; if he doubted the genuineness of the prediction, he would never have mentioned it. Consider the fact that the Prophet Muḥammad did not say that the event would occur in the "near future" so that it could be interpreted as the next thirty or even hundred years (even though this is also less than a wink in comparison to the length of history). Without ambiguity, he defined the period after defeat and before victory within the range of ten years.

History attests to the validity of the prediction made in the sūrah. Like others throughout the Qur'an, the statement causes one to believe in pure miracles which are beyond human comprehension. Certain concepts may appear illogical, but when a phenomenon is revealed throughout the Qur'an and repeated by the Prophet, people begin to believe and admit that the Qur'an and prophet Muḥammad are unique sources of knowledge.

To achieve recognition by the ordinary people, the prophets had to perform miracles, especially physical ones like those rendered by Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad and all other prophets. The ability to perform miracles persuaded the illiterate people that the knowledge and power of these prophets originated from a source beyond physical reality (i.e., the unseen). An illiterate person was one who expected the Prophet to change a pebble into gold before he could believe in his prophethood. In contrast, the conscious person who commanded awareness accepted the prophets not as a result of their miracles, but rather because of the essence of their message.

An insightful believer knows the value of the Qur'an by its meaning, rhythm, phonetics and harmony of words, which are rare and very different from words used by mankind. Even without predictions or miracles, a literate and conscious individual realizes the uniqueness of the Qur'an. Consequently, the Qur'an is the greatest miracle of the Prophet Muḥammad. It was sent for the time of the Prophet as well as future times when man would reach a much higher level of awareness, comprehension and logic, when he would readily acknowledge the Qur'an as the word of Allah and recognize it as the best proof of the Prophethood of Muḥammad.

The early Muslims (Ali, Abūdhār, 'Ammār, Salmān, etc.) never demanded any miracle from the Prophet. As soon as the Prophet spoke, they recognized the merit of his message. For instance, upon returning from the desert and meeting the Prophet, Abūdhār asked him about his prophethood and message. The simple reply of the Prophet convinced Abūdhār that he was "the one that the living souls were awaiting." Motivated by faith and sincerity, Abūdhār spent his wealth and life to support and disseminate the Prophet's message. Likewise, when at the age of eight Imam Ali (who was living with the Prophet because of his family's misfortune) saw the Prophet and his wife Khadijah praying and prostrating, he inquired about their behavior. Once again, the Prophet provided a simple response by stating that he had been chosen by Allah to address the people and make them aware of two essential principles. They were, firstly, that Allah is one and the only truth while all other gods were false, and secondly, that Muḥammad was his messenger. Ali reacted strangely; he told the Prophet that he wished to consult his father. The Prophet agreed that Ali should do so. Following the dialogue, Ali immediately went to his room. He was awake all night pondering over the invitation and the message the Prophet referred to. The next morning, before leaving the Prophet's home or any consultation with his father, Ali met with the Prophet and requested to be introduced to Islam. Ali explained how he had carefully thought about their discussion and concluded that since Allah did not consult Abū Ṭālib, Ali's father, before creating him, so it was not necessary to seek his father's permission to worship Allah. Ali repeated his request that the Prophet introduce him to Islam. The Prophet fulfilled Ali's wish. Shaking the Prophet's hand, Ali pledged allegiance. The famous historian Thomas Carlyle comments: "When this small hand was placed in the strong hand of the Prophet, the path of history changed." This was how the conscious people believed: they did not

expect to witness physical miracles.

And now, back to Sūrah al-Rūm. Those who were cognizant of the surah were fascinated by its prediction, which later materialized. The defeat of the Byzantine Empire and its victory ten years later was a miracle which attested to the prophecy of the Prophet Muḥammad and the fact that the Qur'an was in fact Allah's word. However, does the sūrah mean only to predict the future? Does it talk only about something which occurred once as a miracle and is no longer significant? Is there no other underlying message in the āyāt for those who are confronted with today's corrupt conditions and who, out of a sense of responsibility toward the future, try to identify their problems? Is there no other message for those enlightened souls who feel obligated to find an ideology, a communication or a way to fulfill their promises and duties toward mankind?

Can it be that the Qur'an is only a Holy Book whose predictions have been proven valid with time? Certainly not. Behind the great miracle lies a great message. It may be compared to the sunrise. When watched daily, the sunrise appears the same but, in reality, it crosses over the changes of civilizations, systems and generations. Emitting life, warmth and knowledge, the sunrise appears as if it lasts forever. Mankind needs the Qur'an as it needs sunshine, irrespective of the era in history, genealogical considerations or cultural, agricultural, economic and political conditions. Furthermore, the Qur'an should not be compared with the words of an author, a poet, a philosopher or a sociologist. The following discussion of Byzantium will show how the Qur'an is still very much alive. Hypothetically speaking, if today there were a prophet delegated to receive a new revelation for the Muslims, without any doubt it would be again the Sūrah al-Rūm.

For clarifying the meaning of the sūrah and the occasion when it was revealed, a review of the relevant geography and history is warranted. Although the geography of the region has been altered, a look at any contemporary map of the Fertile Crescent will be of help. The regions to note are the Arabian Peninsula, particularly the cities of Mecca and Medina, and the regions of the ancient Persian and Byzantine empires. In terms of the position of the Prophet in the scenario, he was born during 570–571 C.E. and became a prophet at the age of forty; the peak of his prophethood occurred around 622 C.E.

What was the world's situation as well as the Prophet's position in 622 C.E.? The sūrah was revealed in Mecca before the Prophet

migrated to Medina. At that time, the number of the Prophet's companions and followers and Muslims was minimal. Except for a few, they were all very poor and suffered torture at the hands of the non-believers. Most of the early Muslims were homeless foreigners and were alienated from the rich families and rulers of Mecca. Deprived of tribal relations, capital and the pride of wealth, they were a group of weak, unarmed and impoverished people whose faces reflected pain and suffering. Moreover, the early Muslims such as 'Ammār, Yāsir and Sumayyah were exploited by the existing masters, criminals, and landowners of Ta'if as well as the Qurayshi caravan owners.

A black Abyssinian female slave from Mecca, Sumayyah was married to Yāsir, a poor Arab who immigrated to Mecca from the desert of Yemen. Prior to his marriage, Yāsir had been a poverty-stricken, homeless, and lonely man. Upon finding a job as a servant in Mecca, Yāsir had asked Sumayyah to marry him and she had accepted. 'Ammār was the first product of their marriage. The family's racial ties and social class were quite obvious. Nevertheless, the three of them were among those who demonstrated interest in Islam during the first year of its proclamation. As a result, they were surely the best candidates to be tortured by their masters (the Quraysh) in order to serve as a warning to other people, lest they do the same. Everyday, Abū-Jahl, a prominent member of the ruling Meccans, took the couple and their son to the hot desert on the outskirts of Mecca where he would torture them under the burning sun until the day ended. During each torture session, Abū Jahl introduced a new torture device. His goal was to make them curse the Prophet, but Yāsir, Sumayyah and 'Ammār resisted in spite of the severe torment. Abū Jahl declared he would cease the torture only if the family rejected the Prophet and his message. To show their sincerity towards the Prophet and their ardent belief in Islam, the victims patiently tolerated the torture. Poor and helpless, the Prophet was unable to protect his followers from the wrath of Abū Jahl. Although the Prophet was a member of a powerful family, he was all alone and without any means of defense. To alleviate the misery of Yāsir, Sumayyah and 'Ammār, the Prophet could only go to the torture site, watch the family being tortured, and offer moral support and sympathy.

Since conventionally one thinks of "men of the sword" as merciless and insensitive, it may be difficult to imagine how the courageous and powerful Prophet could possess such a high degree of affection and

sympathy, a quality that even Jesus did not have, and which was manifested throughout the ordeal. The Prophet of Islam was the only one who simultaneously carried the sword of Caesar in his hand and the heart of Jesus in his chest. A sensitive person, he was forced to witness the best models of love and faith subjected to the torturous hands of Abū Jahl and his associates. Unfortunately, the Prophet could not protest such actions nor initiate measures to curtail them. Every day as he stood by the victims, he observed the sadistic reactions of those who inflicted the torture. As if drunk with their performance, the torturers happily encouraged each other to more extreme torture of the followers of the Prophet. As already noted, the Prophet was there but could only give the victims moral support during such a situation of weakness, desperation and universal ignorance. Praying that Allah's help and victory should soon arrive, the Prophet encouraged the victims to be patient and steadfast in their resistance.

Day after day, the Prophet of Islam watched the old and faithful black woman, Sumayyah, the old, poor, loving, faithful and courageous man, Yāsir, and last but not least, the growing young man who was totally overcome by the love for his Prophet, 'Ammār. Although continuously tortured, these victims were the bleeding symbols of uprightness and righteousness. Whenever they noticed the Prophet's arrival, the victims tried to conceal their pains and desperation and would project an image of strength, self-control, happiness and dedication to and love for the Prophet. After sharing his sorrow with those being tortured, the Prophet would depart.

Day after day this event was repeated, until one day the Prophet came but saw neither Sumayyah, nor Yāsir, nor the torturers. The shouts of Abū Jahl and Umayyat Ibn Khalaf (Abū-Jahl's associate) no longer filled the air. Amidst the vacant and silent valley of Mecca, the Prophet saw 'Ammār—who possessed the sincerity of an Abyssinian, the emotions of an Arab and the awareness of a Muslim—standing all alone. Unlike in the past, 'Ammār's arms and legs were not tied. Nobody was watching him; 'Ammār was actually free. Why was he still at the site? As the Prophet approached 'Ammār, he noticed 'Ammār was in an unusual position, one which he never assumed even under severe torture. Bowing his head over his chest, 'Ammār tried to conceal his face from the Prophet. In light of 'Ammār's previous demonstration of strength, the Prophet was surprised to see him in a state of weakness. The Prophet tried to hold 'Ammār's head in an upright position by grabbing his curly hair. He

asked 'Ammār to look at him. He repeated his request, but then he noticed tears falling from 'Ammār's face as 'Ammār tried even harder to conceal his face. The Prophet realized 'Ammār must have experienced the severest torture; he concluded that 'Ammār must have witnessed the torture and death of his parents.

Although the bodies had been removed, 'Ammār remained. Why didn't 'Ammār want to return to the city? As 'Ammār cried, the Prophet tried to calm him and eulogized his parents. Surprisingly, 'Ammār was not concerned with the destiny of his parents. He was suffering a more severe pain. 'Ammār said: "O messenger of Allah, I finally said what I have always been loath to say." It was evident to the Prophet that 'Ammār had lost consciousness after watching his parents tortured to death. Like any other human being, 'Ammār had feelings and emotions which limited his capacity for resistance. Consequently, when 'Ammār lost consciousness, he pleased Abū Jahl but displeased himself by rejecting the Prophet. In return, 'Ammār was freed. As he regained consciousness, the pains of torture subsided and the shouts of Abū Jahl as well as his associates were no longer heard. Upon achieving total consciousness, 'Ammār wondered why he had been freed. He quickly realized that he had succumbed to the enemies of Islam, and could not tolerate the torture of his shame, which was much more painful than Abū Jahl's torture. 'Ammār's state of mind caused him to forget about the death of his parents. He was preoccupied with the anxieties of his return home and facing the Prophet. Standing alone in the desert, 'Ammār experienced sadness, homelessness, and helplessness. Sympathetically, the Prophet addressed 'Ammār and said: "'Ammār, do not worry if you said something you did not believe, because Allah is forgiving." 'Ammār was relieved.

'Ammār went on to lead his life, which included thirteen years before Hijra⁵ and forty years afterwards, in defense of Islam. Throughout the life of the Prophet until the time of 'Uthmān (the third Caliph), 'Ammār participated in numerous battles. Despite his old age and diminished combat abilities, 'Ammār remained dedicated to the cause of Islam. Forty-three years after being exonerated for making a statement he did not believe in (i.e., rejecting the Prophet), and although aged and weak, 'Ammār was making up for it. He participated in the battle of Şiffayn.⁶ He remembered what the Prophet had told him: "'Ammār, you will be killed by a group of oppressors." (Many people had witnessed the Prophet uttering this statement). Anxious to do his best and aware of his inability to fight

holding a sword alongside Ali, 'Ammār decided to fight bare-handed. He felt that if he were killed by Mu'āwiyah's army, the truth would be revealed and people would identify the oppressors. Mu'āwiyah's army was eager to see Ammār dead, but many were aware of the Prophet's statement and therefore kept away from 'Ammār. Nevertheless, 'Ammār wholeheartedly sought to reach the forefront of the battle and finally did. When he died, the followers of Mu'āwiyah not only cried that 'Ammār was killed but also recalled what the Prophet had said regarding 'Ammār's death. The members of Mu'āwiyah's army began to argue and became hesitant, which strengthened the convictions of Ali's followers. This account shows that 'Ammār died in a manner reserved exclusively to him.

Another victim of torture, inflicted by Umayyat Ibn Khalaf, was a slave called Bilāl. Everyday at a site near Mecca, a barrel of water was heated under the burning desert sun. The torturer would then submerge Bilāl's head under the water almost to the point of suffocation. Whenever the torturer released his hand, Bilāl would grasp his breath and say "Aḥad" (Allah is One). Regardless of the continuous torment, Bilāl repeated "Aḥad, Aḥad." Later, when he became semi-conscious and was about to die, Bilāl was left exposed to the whims of ignorant people and children. Without mercy, they teased him, cursed him, spat on his face and dragged his body on the ground. Bilāl's responses of "Aḥad, Aḥad," did not go unheeded. Because of its significance, "Aḥad" became a slogan which Muslims repeated during their battles when they were at the peak of victory. It was the exclusive legacy of Bilāl.

These stories illustrate the status of the early Muslims in Mecca and the strength of those who supported the poor and lonely Prophet, a man deprived of the rights of an ordinary Arab in Mecca. He could not even pray at Masjid al-Ḥarām, which was open to everyone. Subject to all forms of harassment by non-believers, the Prophet was cursed, stoned, showered with the contents of the stomach of a lamb (on his head) and attacked with ashes as he went to the mosque. During such a difficult situation only a small group of poor, lonely and homeless individuals stood behind the Prophet. In this atmosphere of weakness, desperation and helplessness, the Prophet informed his companions: "You will be the victors of history. Neither the superpowers, the great kingdoms nor the great Caesar, but Muslims, will dominate the world. Not only will you rule Arabia, Mecca or the Quraysh, but you will also conquer Persia, Byzantium, Yemen and Egypt (i.e., the contemporary East and the West)."

Those were the words of a lonely leader whose followers had either died helplessly under torture or emigrated to Abyssinia to escape Quraysh oppression. Not only did the leader of the small and weak group of supporters speak with strong determination, but he also informed his followers that they would rule the world.

The Prophet assured them that although the intellectuals of his time would ridicule them, the Muslims would eventually control the great civilizations of the East and the West. Who were the intellectuals of the Prophet's time? They included wealthy businessmen who were the farm-owners of Ṭā'if, or importers of goods from Iran, Byzantium, Yemen, and Syria (Shām), those who were exposed to other religions or had accepted other faiths, and finally, those who had become familiar with foreign countries and foreign relations through commercial dealings with Persia. Claiming that the Qur'an was nothing more than a collection of old stories for which they had better substitutes, they would go to the Masjid al-Ḥarām, and relay the stories of Rustam, Esfandīār, and Ashkabūs to the Arab audience.⁷ Through such entertainment, the intellectuals would preoccupy the people so as to stop them from thinking about the Prophet's message.

In contrast to the "intellectuals," who knew about the world and the universe, the Prophet was a lay person. With the exception of a few times when he visited the neighboring areas, he rarely had gone beyond the vicinity of Mecca. The Prophet had neither seen nor studied other holy books. He was not familiar with other existing civilizations, empires, faiths, and politicians. Furthermore, not knowing their armies or the type of weapons they used, the Prophet did not estimate the capabilities of the great powers. The companions of the Prophet were in a worse condition. They lacked not only social and cultural class but also scientific qualifications and distinction. The intellectuals singled out the son of Abdullah and the poor people around him (i.e., his companions). They asked if the Prophet was deceiving his followers or fooling himself. Was he assuring the companions that if they strived hard and believed in Allah, they would rule the world? According to the intellectuals, because the Prophet did not know the geography of the world, he thought the world was limited to Mecca, Medina and the few Arab tribes. They also claimed that the Prophet was not aware of the fact that the Arab legion of the Byzantine army numbered almost one hundred thousand, and were equipped with the best weapons. This was only their northern division. Their southern one had an equal number of armed

cavaliers. If both squadrons were called to a battle, two hundred thousand soldiers would quickly appear, armed with sophisticated weapons. As for the Persians, they had commissioned seven hundred thousand soldiers to Greece, and had five hundred thousand soldiers in their northern army and three hundred thousand well-equipped soldiers based in Isfahan. Each horse in the Persian army had a saddle and ornaments which were more expensive than the total cost of the Arab army's weapons. Yet, although unfamiliar with contemporary international affairs, the Prophet told Bilāl, Khubāb, 'Ammār, Sumayyah, Salmān and others that if they worked hard and lived a righteous life, their generation would rule the world.

The Prophet did not know that all of Arabia and the Arab tribes (not in Mecca and Medina) plus Yemen were not valuable enough for the Persians or Byzantines to conquer. This position implied that the Arabs were not even worthy of being slaves or of being colonized by the Empires. The Persians invaded Greece and Egypt. (To reach Egypt, the Persians had to encircle the Arabian Peninsula). They conquered Egypt. Considering that today's Iraq, the Red Sea, Turkey and Greece were all parts of the Byzantine Empire, when the Prophet declared his message in the seventh century the entire known world was divided between the Persian and Eastern Roman empires, which were both civilized and heavily armed. All the world's wealth belonged to the two powers. It was in Constantinople or Ctisophon, the capital of Byzantium and of the Sassanids respectively, that the fate and future of all races, nations and civilizations were decided and planned. If there were lands or nations which were not ruled by the Byzantines or the Persians, it was not because they were strong and independent, but because they were not important to either power from a historical, political or economic point of view. In other words, it was not worth the superpowers' time and effort to conquer such areas.

During the seventh century, Mecca was midway between the world's two most powerful civilizations, ideologies, philosophies, social systems, public relations systems, military structures, and civil systems. The most sophisticated and modern weapons of the day were in the possession of the Persians and the Byzantines. Persia occupied most of the East while the Byzantines had most of the West. Mecca and Medina were two small villages that neither the Byzantines nor the Persians bothered to capture. The Byzantines were not interested in experiencing the hardships of crossing the northern desert to reach Medina. Likewise, the Persians did not want to cross Rab'-al-Khālī

and the hot desert of Najd in order to capture Mecca. After all, what was in Mecca? It housed a simple temple (Ka'bah), its inhabitants were groups of caravan owners or herders, and it lacked fertility and vegetation. What was in Medina, save a few palm trees, two major tribes of Aws and Khazraj and tribesmen engaged in agricultural projects, and some Jewish families carrying on their usual practices of shopkeeping and business. One might wonder which era is being described, today's world situation or the seventh century.

The Prophet resided in Mecca, a small village whose main attraction was the temple even though it was becoming a city because it was on the caravan route. The "Silk Road" was one of the most important economic lines that extended from China to Rome: it passed through Persia and crossed northern Arabia (Turkey today). However, because of the war between the Persians and the Byzantines, traders had to avoid the "Silk Road" and use the desert route in their effort to carry Chinese and Persian goods to Europe. The desert was an uninhabitable hot place where nothing grew. While its stones were granite, the sand hills and pebbles were formed and reformed by the winds. Since camels were the only means of getting across, businessmen negotiated deals with the camel owners or Arab caravan men whereby goods would be taken across the desert. (Mecca and Medina are located on the western side of the desert).

Historians incorrectly refer to the "Quraysh aristocracy" and claim that there were many aristocrats in Mecca. They probably do not realize that Mecca was little more than a temple. How much was the property of Abu-Sufyān worth? What was the criteria for being a member of the aristocracy those days? Those who owned a few camels or acted as brokers were most likely considered aristocrats. Interestingly enough, if one examines the seventh century of Persian or Roman books, one will rarely find the word "Arab" or "Arabia Felix." Only in some Greek books does one find these terms. And even these are references to Yemen, which was mentioned because of its fertility and its significance as the bone of contention between Persia and Abyssinia.

It was in this area, to which the Persians and Byzantines attached so little import and which was deemed unworthy of conquest, that the Prophet was born, received the revelations, proclaimed the message and initiated the Islamic revolution. In light of the circumstances, it would not have been abnormal to expect that such a movement, like a desert storm, would be short-lived and would soon disappear. The world beyond Mecca could not hear about the movement since it had

no access to that area. It seemed that the power of the movement could hardly extend beyond Mecca. At most the threat of the revolution went as far as Mecca itself, where the Prophet and his companions might gain ascendancy. So what? What would happen if they did?

During the desperate conditions in which a group of poor, exploited, illiterate, homeless, alienated, tortured and helpless people could do nothing to stop the torturers from tormenting them or their friends, the Prophet of Islam tried to comfort them. He assured his followers that if they believed in Islam, they would rule the world. The so-called intellectuals ridiculed the Prophet's prediction. They raised doubts. Do these people know anything about the world? Do they know what power means? Do they know who has the greatest amount of weapons? Do they know who alone is able to defeat the Romans? They answered that it could only be the Persians who were capable of defeating the Byzantines.

For over eleven hundred years (i.e., 550 B.C. to 622 C.E.) the Persians and the Romans controlled the world and fought one another. The Arabs are hardly mentioned in the history of that era. They became visible as a result of some trade activity via the bypass road when a few camel owners and Arab caravan men encountered some business dealings. At that time a homeless man who lived in his uncle's house, unable to defend himself from even the camel owners, experienced numerous hardships throughout his life and married the woman he worked for, and who was much older than himself, when he decided to establish a family. It was this man who claimed that the Muslims would conquer the entire world. The surah confirms his utterance, "Alif-Lām-Mīm, The Romans were defeated" (XXX: 1-2).

Even with this geographical and historical clarification, it is still unclear as to whether what is being discussed appertains to the contemporary world situation or the situation of fourteen hundred years ago. Conditions today are very similar. In fact not even the terminology has changed. The same polarization exists, while the geographical positions have undergone minor transformations. The Muslims are in the same, if not a worse, predicament. East and West rule the world while the Muslims, who are in the middle, are considered part of the Third World. Unfortunately, many intellectuals who have been overcome by the present superpowers believe that the survival of the Third World nations depends on their allegiance to one of these powers. Of course, such a position is

contrary to the Islamic belief that Allah is the Almighty and Omnipotent.

The Byzantines and the Persians reached an agreement about how most of the world should be divided between them but disputed over a few issues, such as the status of the Armenians and the area of Mesopotamia. Depending on who controlled them, the East or the West, the rulers of each area shifted. Another area of contention was Georgia. This dispute was solved in a foolish way: the governor was elected by the Persians, but he had to follow the procedures and regulations set by the Byzantines.

The Near East was the major trouble spot during the seventh century. At times, the main roads were controlled by the East (Persians) and at other times by the West (Byzantines). The Westerners reached as far as Ctesiphon on certain occasions while the Easterners reached the heart of Byzantium. And, in a state of affairs that bears a striking resemblance to world politics of today, the people of Arabia were urbanized and had close contacts with one of the superpowers of the day, the Persians, and imitated their way of life. On the other hand, those who lived in the north were highly influenced by the Byzantines. The allies of the East concluded military agreements with the Persians which guaranteed their protection from aggression by the tribal Arabs who attacked their villages. A group of Arabs were hired to defend the urbanites from unanticipated aggression by the East. The Arabs in the North, the Ghassanites, were pro-Byzantine. They were supposed to protect themselves from aggression by the central tribes, but their army could not operate in the desert. Therefore, they used the northern Arabs to fight the central Arab tribes. Consequently, the Middle East was the battleground of the East and West.

At the time of the revelation of *Sūrah al-Rūm* in the seventh century, the Arabs in general were impoverished. The followers of the Prophet were in still worse conditions. Yet, even under such circumstances, the Prophet told Muslims that if they had strong faith, were righteous and fought for the cause of Allah, they would conquer the world. He was not alluding to the Quraysh or Mecca, but to the entire world (including the governing powers). Ridiculing his claim, the intellectuals asked which world, which power the Prophet referred to. They argued that Mecca was situated in the middle of the superpowers, which had divided the world between themselves and controlled everyone. In addition, they maintained that even if all Arabs supported the Prophet and acted as weapons, they could not do

anything to harm the Eastern or Western powers. The intellectuals wondered how Muslims who could not even resist Abū Jahl and Umayyat Ibn Khalaf expected to stand any chance against the powers of the East and the West.

The message of the Qur'an was for both the careless and sophisticated intellectuals who were well-acquainted with the East and West as well as the responsible enlightened souls who were among the followers of the Prophet.

The enlightened Muslims were forced to endure severe torture, but they nevertheless undertook the responsibility of defending the rights of the poor and deprived people who were the prisoners of the East and the West. The Qur'an addresses both groups: "Alif, Lām, Mīm. The Romans have been defeated in the nearer land." (XXX: 1-2). It was during 624-625 C.E. that the Persians fought and defeated the Romans. They occupied the Middle East. Due to the death of their emperor and changes in their internal system and external affairs, the Romans lost the battle with the Persians. In turn, they had to retreat and leave the areas of dispute for the Persians. The surah predicted the victory of the West over the East in a period of less than ten years. It happened when the Eastern Roman Empire once again attacked the Near East and recaptured the lost territories; the soldiers reached the vicinity of Ctesiphon.

"And they, after their defeat, will be victorious within ten years. Allah's is the Command in the former case and in the latter" (XXX: 3-4). Āyah 4 was revealed immediately after the prediction in Āyah 3 in order to warn the intellectuals and dogmatists who considered themselves to be experts in international politics, capable of analyzing and commenting on the causes and consequences of world affairs. The Qur'an says: "Allah's is the command." Neither the East nor the West rules the world, but Allah does. Authority is not the responsibility of the Western Empire (Caesar) or the Eastern Empire (Khusrow).⁸ The superpowers do not control the strength, life, death, future and fate of nations. "Allah's is the Command" in all cases. It has never been and will never be that superpowers control the world. Everything is dictated by Allah; He is the Omnipotent.

Although the West was defeated by the East, it was predicted that the West would soon be victorious. How? Because the power to rule the world lies in the hands of Allah. (This has always been and will continue to be the case). The Qur'an states: "And on that day, believers will rejoice." (XXX: 4). But, what did the success or failure of the superpowers have to do with the poor believers who were being

tortured in Mecca? Some commentators on the Qur'an have interpreted the verse to mean that it was better for the Byzantines to be victorious since they were Christian, or "the people of the book" (ahl al-kitāb) than the Persians who were Zoroastrian. What a misleading explanation! After all, what would the believers who were dying under the tortures of Umayyat Ibn Khalaf gain if the Byzantines were victorious? Why should they feel happy? Their happiness would have been like the delight of certain Iranians over John Kennedy's election in 1960.⁹

Another example of misleading comments was the account regarding the birthday of the Prophet: "The Prophet was born during the time of the 'just king'." Do people really know how "just" king Anūshīrvān was?¹⁰ After all, he was the king of Persia both when the Prophet was born in Arabia and later when his followers were tortured by Abū-Sufyān. Besides, what kind of privilege was it for the Prophet to be born when there was a just king in some other part of the world? This coincidence lacks any significance. Some commentators considered the Byzantines to be the "believers" because they were Christian and had a divine book. Such commentators, too, make a mistake by overlooking the fact that after the Prophet and the declaration of Islam, Christianity, which until then had been genuine and respected, became outdated. This development was applicable to the Byzantine-Christians who were called polytheists (mushrikūn) by Islam and the Prophet. How could the Byzantines be true believers (Mu'minūn) when they believed in the "Trinity?"

The Qur'an addressed the poor and oppressed followers of Muḥammad in Mecca. Unable to migrate, they had nowhere to go, not even to Medina, their hometown. Nevertheless, it assured them that they would be free and happy. Clearly, the Qur'an presented a universal law, a law that was lettered in the surah. It included God's Command (amr), that is, a declaration that Allah's will would prevail. That was to be the destiny of history. The latent effect of imperialistic schemes of the superpowers to oppress others, expand areas of control and confiscate the natural resources of other nations is self-deterioration and decadence. It is inevitable that imperialism and colonialism will breed their own enemies. The more oppressive and aggressive the exploiting powers become, the closer they get to self-decay and destruction. Eventually, but shamefully, they will release what they have captured and will escape. Remember what happened to the United States, a contemporary superpower, not too long ago in Vietnam. It was forced to withdraw and abandon all of its interests in

the area.

Because of their size and their competition, the two superpowers are in conflict constantly. Their pride and military strength force them into militarism, exploitation and savagery. Such a direction causes their productive qualities and capacities to deteriorate internally. As a result, the youth of these nations, who should be involved in productivity and building the economy, are obliged to fight in distant foreign lands. There, they will kill or be killed and contribute to mutual weakening and destruction.

History reveals that Khashāyārshā (Xerxes), one of the kings of Achaemenid dynasty, sent thousands of young Persian troops to Greece to destroy Athens. Motivated by the pride of militarism at its peak, the Persian youth sailed on the Mediterranean Sea in order to set Athens ablaze and conquer the capital. It is hard to imagine the amount of energy, money, art and technology the Persians employed to achieve their goal. But alas, they were all wasted. Thousands of young, productive farmers who had been expected to support the older family members, and many thousands more who had to work hard to finance those fighting in the battlefield (eight or nine individuals for each fighting soldier), were all diminished. Their energies and potentials were converted into weapons which were destroyed in the distant foreign deserts. What emerged was a confrontation between enemies who did not know each other, nor did they know the cause of their fighting. (Max Weber has a special and unusual definition for armies. He describes them as "groups of individuals who do not know each other but fight one another for the sake of those who know each other but do not fight one another".) Beside the hundreds of thousands of human resources, Khashāyārshā (Xerxes) sent along thousands of boats and ships to transport them across the Mediterranean Sea. Most of them encountered a major storm which interrupted their journey and drowned the young soldiers. Upon receiving the report of the disaster, Khashāyārshā (Xerxes) ordered other soldiers "to go and punish the storms for not being polite with the Persian soldiers." Imagine—even though the best human resources, energy and techniques were buried deep in the sea, the king demanded a repetition of the previous disaster.

Another king who abused thousands of Persian youth was Nādirshāh [the founder of Afshār dynasty]. He sent them to conquer India and dethrone Muḥammad Shāh [the Mogul emperor]. However, Muḥammad Shāh's crown was soon returned and the Persians bade him farewell. The venture was undertaken solely for the purpose of

demonstrating Nādirshāh's power. What a high price to pay just to show one's power and prestige! One man, Nādirshāh, was responsible for the loss of so many human lives.

The Byzantines were not in a better position. They had invested great time and energy in the East in order to prove that they could reach Ctesiphon. What were their losses? What was the level of degeneration that the Byzantine youth experienced during their battles in foreign lands? Did they know what they were fighting for? They were in the same category as the Persians. And finally, the soldiers returned home with many psycho-emotional disturbances.

Exactly thirty years after the events relating to the Byzantines, the same poor Arabs, organized in groups of a few thousand, circled the Arabian Peninsula and attacked the Persian bases. Before the [Persian] Royal Army could complete its preparatory measures for war—including organizing its weapons and armaments, as well as repairing the golden ornamentation for their combat horses—the Arab army conquered the Persian Empire. The same destiny befell the Byzantine Empire also. Before the Byzantine army could arise from its slumber to consider its logistics and assign officers to its ranks, the Arabs entered and conquered their empire.

The circumstances of the two great powers were such that thirty to thirty-five years after the revelation of the *Sūrah al-Rūm*, Muṣallib ibn Khārijah, along with the limited assistance he received from 'Umar of Medina, was able to defeat the Persian Empire.¹¹ One of the world's greatest bases, near Isfahan, was the central camp of the Persian army. According to al-Ṭabarī, the officer in charge of the camp came out of his tent and appeared before the Muslim army, which consisted of about three thousand soldiers dressed in simple white shrouds and carrying swords. The commander of the world's most advanced army, which possessed the most sophisticated contemporary weapons and technology available, confronted the Muslim army and demonstrated his readiness to fight. The officer of the Muslim army volunteered to start the dual but the Persian officer, who was in no condition to accept the offer, refused. Instead, he suggested that each of them should count his or his forefathers' victories, and whoever had the higher number starts the dual. The Muslim officer accepted the proposal. Addressing the poor Muslim officer, the Persian officer asked him who he was. The Arab replied that he was "the son of his father." Then, the Persian officer proudly recalled the long line of most of his ancestors and traced his ancestors back to old Persian warriors. It was obvious that the Persian should

be the one to begin the dual.

The Persian officer threw his spear toward the Muslim. Although the Arab fell off his horse, he immediately stood up and grabbed his sword. He jumped back onto his horse and announced that it was his turn to fight. The Persian officer retorted that both of them should sit down and negotiate their differences. He claimed that the problem could not be solved by warfare, and therefore advocated a political solution. The Arab consented to the Persian's suggestion. Two hours later, the Persian officer met with the Islamic army and signed an agreement which was unique in history. When was the agreement concluded? Only eighteen or nineteen years after hijrah, which was also about eight years following the death of the Prophet. How fascinating! The great Eastern empire yielded to a group of poor Arabs who had been of no significance during those days.

One side of the agreements related to the Eastern Empire, while the other related to the same poor people mentioned in the surah. Ironically, those poor people, not knowing where the East or West were, had laughed when they heard about such places. It would be worthwhile to mention some of the articles of the agreement. The Arabs demanded that if they attacked a Persian village, the Persian army was obligated to assist them since they had a shortage of people and arms. The Persian officer politely agreed. The Arabs demanded that when their army needed horses, the Persians would have to provide them. The officer once again politely agreed. And something funnier. The Arab officer demanded that if one of his officers, while traveling through a Persian city, saw a Persian officer who was riding a horse, the Persian would have to dismount and give the horse to the Arab. The Persian commander agreed to all the demands and concluded the agreement with the Arabs.

Arabs concluded a similar agreement with the Western empire. At the same time that the Muslims confronted the Persians, another group of a few thousand others had entered the Byzantine territory. Under the leadership of 'Amr ibn 'Āṣ they attacked the fortress of Babylon which was the world's greatest military castle, controlled by the Byzantines.¹² It is not clear how such a sturdy and well-protected fortress was conquered by a group of poor and hungry Muslims who reached its heart like a bullet.¹³ After losing Babylon, the Roman army lost any hope of resisting the Islamic army.

Consequently, a million well-trained soldiers with modern weapons could not confront the well-disciplined Islamic army. East and West were conquered by the Muslim believers. In the case of Persia in the

battle of Dhāt al-Salāsīl, King Yazdegerd ordered his well-trained army to be confined with heavy chains so as to stop them from deserting. How could a soldier fight under such conditions? He did not know why he had to fight or with whom. Was the enemy the person who had tied his legs with chains or the one who confronted him on the battlefield? Every soldier was confused about the battlefield. As a result, the Persian and the Byzantine armies yielded to the Muslim army as soon as they were confronted.

Alif-Lām, Mīm. The Romans have been defeated, in the near land, and they, after their defeat, will be victorious within ten years. Allah's is the command in the former case and in the letter—and in that day believers will rejoice. (XXX: 1-4).

It is inevitable that the superpowers will confront one another, to the degree that factors such as corruption, prostitution, depression and lack of productivity will decay and destroy their administrative systems, social networks and spirit to fight. They will be so weak that minor attacks by poor and hungry Muslim soldiers will destroy them. The impoverished and miserable believers will be free and rejoice on the day when they, with the help of God, are victorious. Allah grants victory to those who deserve His help and qualify for the victory. "He helps to victory who He will. He is the Mighty, the Merciful." (XXX: 5). Allah will bless the weak group of people who struggle for His cause. Furthermore, the attributions made in the above āyah are confirmed by the events discussed. "It is a promise of Allah. Allah fails not His promise, but most of mankind know not." (XXX: 6).

Allah promises that every group which struggles for its rights will be victorious over the powerful masses. This is a universal law. The promise of Allah, which is applicable to all times and places, is never false, but the majority of people do not realize this.

The so-called intellectuals do not know that Allah's promise is the real fact of nature. What do they know? "They know only mere appearances of the life of the world." (XXX: 7). They only know about superficial considerations including who has better administration, where the most sophisticated arms are and where the bulk of the wealth is located. In addition, the intellectuals evaluate and appraise situations, but in a superficial and short-sighted manner. "They only know mere appearances of the life of the world, and are heedless of the Hereafter." (XXX: 7).

They do not know how the situation will end, because they cannot see beyond the obvious. The Qur'an calls upon politically frustrated

intellectuals to adopt a better way of thinking in order to have a more optimistic outlook. It tells them not to rely heavily on their conjectures, evaluations and political analyses. To achieve a better and deeper analysis, the Qur'an calls upon the individual to think about humanity in general, the existing world system and the world's sovereignty. Instead of interpreting world news on a daily basis (i.e., "intellectualizing"), mankind should try to discover and understand the source of the world's destiny, Allah's will.

Have they not pondered upon themselves? Allah created not the heavens and the earth, and that which is between them, save with truth and for a destined end. But truly many of mankind are disbelievers in meeting with their Lord. (XXX: 8).

In the first part of āyah 8 (above), the following phrases should be emphasized: "save with truth," which means based on facts, and "a destined end," which means a determined period.

Obviously, Allah created the earth, heavens, mankind, races, classes, societies, systems and powers for a specific purpose. In other words, each of Allah's creations has a role to play in this life. When pondering over the universal laws of creation, the sovereignty of societies and existence in general, one can conclude that the creation of the universe is based on certain facts. Therefore, the fate and future of mankind are subject to the same facts. The claim that an oppressor always remains in power and the fate of mankind lies in the hand of the Caesars and the Khusrows is false. They are temporary powers and the subject of daily news; they exist today and are gone tomorrow. If one appreciates the essence of "a destined end," one discovers that the ruling powers will only survive for a short period of time. Let them declare their eternity, masters of mankind and owners of the world! They are oblivious to the destiny of history whereby every power will deteriorate and perish eventually. As for the state of affairs today, even though the Western and Eastern Empires have divided the world between themselves, this situation will not last long. They are destined to decay and destruction; thus, the Muslims should be assured and hopeful of a future victory. The following āyah refers to such a destiny: "But truly many of mankind are disbelievers in meeting with their Lord." (XXX: 8).

After a philosophical discussion, the Qur'an reminds mankind of historical realities. It states that the world is not limited to the Arabian Peninsula nor only to the Eastern and Western empires. It

advises man to study history in order to see beyond the geographical limitations of the seventh century. "Have they not travelled in the land and seen the nature of the consequences for those who were before them?" (XXX: 9).

What a surprise! The Qur'an asks the half-enlightened souls and pseudo-intellectuals why they do not travel on the earth. Are they not familiar with the end of those who lived before them? Do they not realize the destiny of history and the fate of creatures? What actually happened to those superpowers? The so-called intellectuals should remember what became of the previous superpowers, and compare it to the conditions and the end of contemporary ruling powers. Not limiting themselves to Mecca, Medina and Constantinople, they should evaluate the situation and reach a conclusion. "They were stronger than those in power." (XXX: 9).

There were powers which had been much stronger than the Persian and Byzantine empires but nevertheless, they had perished. An examination of history and archeology (in terms of the era and status of their colonies) reveals that ancient powers were much stronger than the contemporary superpowers. "They were stronger than these in power and they dug the earth and built upon it more than these have built." (XXX: 9). Even more than contemporary colonialists, the powers of the past searched most of the earth and whenever possible acquired colonies. Because of their might, they were able to exploit numerous areas. "Messengers of their own came unto them with bayyināt (clear proofs of Allah's Sovereignty)." (XXX: 9).

As indicated in the verse, however, they were presented with "clear proofs." Such an insightful phrase! It shows the way to distinguish good from bad and right from wrong and to make people aware of their society and the era which they are living in. During the time when the majority of the people were living in darkness, lacked direction, were aimless and overcome by the rumors and propaganda of the oppressors, the "clear proofs" were revealed. While the oppressors were occupied with their selfish and false belief in their undivided authority, the prophet's message initiated enlightenment. Amidst an environment of darkness, confusion, shortsightedness, submissiveness by and oppression of the masses, and superpowers being overcome by their illusions, the messengers appeared with their clear guidance for mankind. "Surely Allah wronged them not, but they did wrong themselves." (XXX: 9).

In spite of Allah's gift of guidance, the people were heedless. Of course, this was not the fault of Allah but of the people, since He did

not leave them alone and helpless. By sending them His clear guidance through the messengers, He laid down the rules, and to the masses He sent hope, light and awareness. Allah addressed both the oppressor and the oppressed. He told the rulers that their power would perish. As for the masses, He informed them that their weakness would be temporary and that they would soon gain power. Furthermore, if people remained oppressed, it was their own fault. He who is oppressed has himself helped the oppressor. "But they did wrong themselves. Then Evil was the consequence to those who dealt in evil, because they denied the revelations of Allah and made a mockery of them." (XXX: 9-10).

The following Qur'anic verse is as genuine and permanent as the natural phenomena. It clearly states that if a group of impoverished and oppressed people became aware of their situation, recognize the correct path and decide to free themselves, Allah guarantees their success. "... In Allah's help to victory. He helps to victory whom He will. He is the Mighty and the Merciful." (XXX: 5). Allah will help them. Whoever is associated with Allah will be victorious over any power. These are Allah's words and will definitely be actualized. The Qur'an goes on to say: "Allah produces creation. . . ." (XXX: 11).

Allah wants to raise the position of the poor and miserable hostages of the Third World (the dwellers of Mecca, for example, whether then or now) and get rid of their inferiority complexes. They will no longer feel helpless, weak, depressed and humiliated when comparing themselves to the superpowers, who are technologically and militarily more advanced. Allah will humiliate and destroy the superpowers; Allah is the only power to be considered and relied upon. The contemporary superficial powers are to be rejected. "Allah produces creation. Then he reproduces it. Then unto Him ye will be returned." (XXX: 11). Throughout the Qur'an, the destiny of mankind which gives hope and encouragement to the oppressed groups of all eras and systems is reiterated. "So set thy purpose (O Muḥammad) for religion. . . ." (XXX: 30).

People should not be confused by the various leaders, parties and powers that exist. They should not idolize a leader for many years, investing their faith and aspirations in him and then, when that person disappears, find themselves devoid of all hopes and goals. Had they filled their hearts with love and relied on their faith (instead of having love for and faith in the individual), they would have been heroes themselves. No, they chose to be puppets and worshippers of powers whose god was dead long ago and who pledged allegiance to

Satan. "So set thy purpose," rise and get rid of the false hopes and fruitless expectations that exist as a result of relying on the East or the West. "So set thy purpose for religion. . . ." (XXX: 30). Furthermore, move toward the religion which is the genuine source of faith. Which faith? Which belief? The one that saves mankind from all the false faiths and leads it to the truth. Return to such a faith. But which one is it? ". . . Religion as a man by nature upright—the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He has created man." (XXX: 30). Instead of being the hostage and puppet of the superpowers, man must return to his human nature. He must be himself, have self-respect and discover all the internal hidden powers. Allah exists in man, so rely on Him since He is the real source of hope and happiness.¹⁴ But which nature should mankind resume? ". . . In which He has created men." (XXX: 30).

It is based on nature that Allah created all of mankind, that is, human nature and not the nature of those who rely on Eastern or Western empires and favor one ruler or class over the other. It is a nature that considers humanity to be Allah's representative and guardian of the earth. It is a nature that gives mankind sovereignty over the world and freedom from being a hostage.

So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright—the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He has created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's Creation. That is the right religion. . . . (XXX: 30).

All the phenomena in the world (i.e., whatever Allah created) abide by the rules of creation. Mankind must rely on those rules and regulations, which no law or person can change. Even the superpowers which claim to be capable of changing the direction of the entire world, as well as history, are totally impotent when their power is compared with that of Allah. "There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation. That is the right religion. . . ." (XXX:30).

Man can always depend on this powerful and everlasting ideology. It will never fail. ". . . But most men know not" (XXX: 30). Suddenly the Qur'an speaks of rain:

And of His signs is this: He shows you the lightening for fear and for hope and sends down water from the sky, and thereby quickens the earth after her death. Lo! Herein indeed are portents for folk who understand." (XXX: 24).

(Due to the shortage of time, only a brief explanation will be presented). The rain falling from the clouds is symbolic; it may refer to ordinary rain as well as the descent of consciousness, love and the true faith which enters the heart of a dead nation to revive it just as the spring rain gives life to the dead trees.

He brings forth the living from the dead and He brings forth the dead from the living and He revives the earth after her death. And even so ye be brought forth. Corruption does appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done. That He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return. (XXX: 40-41).

Corruption appears all over. What causes it? Man's own hands. And now, man witnesses and tastes the fruits of his actions (i.e., poverty and humility). Perhaps humanity will arise from its slumber and change its way of life. "Allah is He who created you and then sustained you, then causes you to die, then gives life to you again." (XXX: 40). Mankind is then reminded of history: "Say (O Muḥammad to the disbelievers): Travel in the land, and see the nature of the consequences for those who were before you. Most of them were idolators." (XXX: 42).

It is apparent why they had misfortunes. Their bodies are buried under the demolished palaces of power and treasures of wealth. Their power is gone with the wind. After commanding mankind carefully to study history, the Qur'an again reminds: "So set thy purpose resolutely for the right religion . . . Allah is He who sends the winds." (XXX: 43 and 48).

The same source that rules nature rules human societies. The same principles that affect the earth, agriculture, animals, and plants similarly will affect the psyche and fate of societies, classes, groups, intellectuals, devoted individuals and nations in general. Allah wants man to think about nature and draw conclusions. An examination of history is not sufficient; nature must also be examined: "Allah is He who sends the winds so that they raise clouds and spreads them along the sky as pleases Him. . . ." (XXX: 48).

Allah sends the winds, that is, the breezes of wisdom and awareness to a generation or a nation, "so that they raise clouds." (XXX: 48). He raises the clouds full of sensation, affection, love, awareness and determination, "and spreads them along the sky." These little "potentials" rise upward toward the sky, join together and establish a

heavy mass which stretches from one horizon to the other. Then, it will start to rain. The drop of rain will fall from the hearts of these clouds. "And when He makes it to fall on whom He will of His bondsmen. . . ." (XXX: 48). Once the rain touches those whose hearts are ready to accept it, they will be revived and grow, "then they rejoice." (XXX: 48). Those people are the ones who will receive the good tidings and become hopeful. The cold and gloomy days of their lives will be transformed into warm and refreshing days. "Look, therefore, at the prints of Allah's mercy (in creation). . . ." (XXX: 50).

Man must observe the signs of Allah's mercy. Even if he is tortured today, he must remain hopeful of the future, "Look therefore at the prints of Allah's mercy (in creation): How He quickens the earth after her death. Lo! He verily is the Quickener of the dead, and He is able to do all things." (XXX: 50). Allah can do anything He wishes. Surely He can revive a dead nation, that is, shower it with the rains of awareness, love and faith. But, on the other hand, the Qur'an does not want to present the situation in an idealistic fashion. It does not want to portray a utopia or use baseless slogans to make people happy. Considering the facts, analyzing problems and being realistic are extremely important and not to be ignored. The Qur'an says: "For verily thou (Muhammad) can not make the dead to hear. . . ." (XXX: 52).

The Prophet and the liberators who wished to motivate the poor and oppressed people who were humiliated by the two superpowers succeeded in certain areas. They encouraged the people, helped them gain their honor, freed them from Eastern or Western slavery and enlightened them about their duty to determine their own fate and future and finally become the rulers of the world. But the Prophet could not force the dead to hear him. The dead are the ones who are like cadavers or statues, devoid of the senses and energies of life. They cannot realize anything. Even if they are presented with countless pieces of evidence, they will not believe and will follow their own whims. Their own jealousy, self-centeredness and narrow-mindedness causes their death. Those who listen to no one cannot be forced to hear. Therefore, it is impossible for them to hear any message. How fascinating! Is the Qur'an talking about the people of the seventh century or addressing humanity today? Pay attention to the Qur'anic wisdom. One cannot make the dead listen. One cannot make the deaf or those who do not want to hear listen. Even if they do, they cannot understand.

Regardless of the fact that they read, listen, think and remain objective, such people cannot hear the message since they lack their senses and consciousness. The message will not be absorbed unless the person is ready to listen and wants to hear what is being said, "For verily then (Muḥammad) can not make the dead to hear." (XXX: 52). Such a clear message and true fact! Who would guess these words are fourteen hundred years old? Was this said to the few Meccan desert tribes or is it for the civilized people of the twentieth century? Can any conscious individual today say anything more factual and effective than what is being said?

For verily then (Muḥammad) can not make the dead to hear, nor can thou make the deaf to hear the call when they have returned to flee. Nor can thou guide the blind out of their error. Thou can make none to hear save those who believe in Our revelations so that they surrender (unto Him)." (XXX: 52-53).

The blind will not see in any case. Only those who can see, feel lost, and search hard to escape the darkness can receive guidance. Those who are blind and do not even want to listen cannot be led or saved from being lost. Only those who believe in and respect the sign of Allah (i.e., Muslims who yield to the will of Allah because they possess instincts which enable them to realize that fact and logic direct them to the truth) can be saved.

Allah is He who shaped you out of weakness, then appointed after weakness strength. . . . But those to whom knowledge and faith are given will say: The truth is, ye have tarried, by Allah's decree, until the Day of Resurrection. This is the Day of Resurrection, but ye used not to know. (XXX: 54 and 56).

Man should not feel desperate. Allah created him out of weakness. Those who are endowed with knowledge, love and faith would suggest paying closer attention to the last āyat of Sūrah al-Rūm, in order to understand the conclusion. "Verily we have coined for mankind in the Qur'an all kinds of similitudes and yet if thou came unto them with a miracle, those who disbelieve would verily exclaim: Ye are but tricksters!" (XXX: 58).

Throughout the Qur'an, Allah sent humanity all the true signs, examples and proofs for any situation or process. Man's way was enlightened while his responsibilities were designated. The principle of existence was created around faith and hope. So many examples,

including the study of natural phenomena, the study of history, the destruction of the powers which thought they were eternal and the victory of the poor, weak, oppressed and homeless groups of people who thought they would always be oppressed and lacked hope for freedom were presented to mankind.

The genuinely conscious individuals who exhibited understanding were not impressed by the glory of the superpowers, nor were they cheated by false and baseless slogans—regressive slogans which talked about humanity and human rights but in reality destroyed mankind by making people believe they were so weak and powerless that their affairs had to be determined by others who were more capable. Those fortunate ones who possessed awareness were able to return to the true faith (i.e., from falsehood to the truth, to the real source of all powers, to the sovereignty of the world, to the philosophy of creation, to the destiny of time, to society, to matter, to nature, to the natural laws and to the blooming flowers in spring and the falling leaves in autumn). They did not consider the happenings of only one or two centuries as the basis for their analysis and beliefs. Instead, they were more clear headed and analytical. They examined history, not limiting themselves to their immediate environment (considering it the whole world), but investigating all times and places. They understood the fate of the previous powers, who were even more oppressive and colonialist than the contemporary superpowers. They saw that the latter had perished, leaving behind ruins so that humanity would learn a lesson. They also saw how a small and impoverished group of people were victorious over strong powers. This was how they discovered themselves and found the Almighty's power, the power of God. They found faith and hope in themselves and realized that the East is a wild wolf while the West is a rabid dog. They realized that because the East and the West were overwhelmed by the desire for additional colonies, aggression, selfishness, fascist behavior and exploitation, they inevitably gave birth to corruption, nihilism, aimlessness, worthlessness. Eventually, those "great" superpowers were overthrown by a group of poor and oppressed people who came from a deserted area of the earth and had not dared to say a word when tortured by Abū Jahl and Umayyat Ibn Khalaf.

The present generation of Muslims can rule the world if they know Allah, understand the world and discover the great values that Allah has bestowed upon them. With a strong spirit, they can overcome the powers and become the world's leaders during this generation. But how is that possible in light of the existing hardship, poverty,

deprivation, desperation, inability, pessimism, misunderstanding and improper education? The Qur'an tells mankind: "So have patience (O Muḥammad)! Allah's promise is the very truth, and let not those who have no certainty make thee impatient." (XXX: 60). The believers must be patient and show resistance. The promise of Allah is true. The believers should not allow non-believers to change their minds or alter their positions.

NOTES

1. Each sūrah is composed of several or many āyat (sing: āyah). One hundred and fourteen sūwar (sing: sūrah) comprise the Qur'an. (Tr.). "al-Rūm" refers to the Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantium. (Ed.).
2. According to Shi'ism the twelfth Shi'i Imam is in occultation and will reappear at the end of time to establish justice and equity. See Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi'ism*. (Albany: the State University of New York, 1981) and the sources cited therein. (Ed.).
3. This lecture was delivered on the night of commemoration of Imam Ali's martyrdom. The young man Dr. Shari'ati refers to was a student who read a piece describing some of the characteristics of Imam Ali. (Tr.).
4. Traditionally Husayniyah is a place for commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn during the month of Muharram. Presently, there are certain permanent lecture halls or cultural centers known as Husayniyah throughout Iran. (Ed.).
5. Hijra refers to the migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D., which marked the beginning of Islamic calendar. (Tr.).
6. The troops of Mu'āwiyah and those of Ali clashed in a place called Siffayn in 658 C.E. (Tr.).
7. Exegetes of the Qur'an have argued that Q.31:6 refers to Nadhr ibn Harith, a contemporary of the Prophet of Islam who had learned the stories of Rustam and Esfandiar from Persian folklore. The stories of these heroes are set to verse in the *Shahnamah* of Firdawsi. (Ed.).
8. A Persian word, "Khusrow" was the title of the Sassanid kings. (Ed.).
9. When John F. Kennedy was elected president in the United States, some Iranian intellectuals rejoiced. They hoped that the situation in Iran would improve as a result of Kennedy's reformist attitudes.
10. Anūshīrvān was the Sassanid king when the Prophet was born. He was generally referred to as Anūshīrvān 'Adil, the Just Anūshīrvān. Many scholars have disputed such an appellation. (Ed.).
11. Before converting to Islam, Muṣallib Ibn Khārijah had been a thief. Living in the eastern border of Iran, he would attack and rob the nearby villages.
12. Babylon fortress is located in Egypt. It was built on a sturdy hill. Although some parts of it have been turned into a tourist attraction, it is still being used by the Egyptian army. One French writer observed that it is so large that it was breathtaking, and difficult to see all parts of it on foot. Nowadays people visit the fortress by car.
13. Similar to Dien Bien Phou in Vietnam.
14. For Dr Shari'ati's account of Islamic view of man see his *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, subtitled "man." In English, consult his *On the Sociology of Islam*, translated by Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1979), pp. 70-82 and 121-125, and his *Man and Islam*, translated by Fatollah Marjani (Houston: FILINC, 1981), *Man Without Self*, edited by IRIS (Houston: IRIS, 1987) (Ed.).

IV

What Is To Be Done: A Practical Plan for Husayniah Irshād

The second part of the revised edition of a lecture delivered in Husayniah Irshād, (Collected Works), vol. 20, pp. 333-472

Husayniah Irshād, whose purpose since its inception has been to provide guidance for intellectuals based on [Imam] Husayn's school of thought, outlook and policies, and based on an accurate understanding of contemporary time, society, religion, Islam and Shī'ism (as discussed earlier, Chapter II), having accepted consciously its responsibility, follows a program of action. For all responsible intellectuals and for all committed and aware Muslims who are seeking new ways to serve Islam and Muslims, its program will be outlined in the following. Our reason for announcing the program is two-fold. First, this program, which is proposed here as the "scientific Islamic program for the enlightened Muslims in Iran," is presented so that aware and thoughtful people may help us in its revision and completion through their suggestions and critical opinion.

Second, this program is presented so that enlightened Muslims in our society may implement—in whatever form appropriate, with whatever resources they have or conditions they are in, and wherever they are—part or parts of this huge program by one of the following means: mobilizing their material and spiritual resources; expending as much in the way of religious dues as possible; and devoting a large share of human and monetary resources which are spent in various Islamic activities in different institutions and gatherings, to those kinds of activities which familiarize people with the true and progressive spirit and meaning of Islam, revive the truths of Islam,

and introduce the true character of the family of the Prophet. Mosques, Husayniyahs, and formal and private religious gatherings must all be converted into activity centers for reviving the true Islam and enhancing people's religious awareness. All responsible people must implement, as far as they can or see fit, one of the research, educational or propaganda programs which are outlined in this proposal.

To implement this program, all individuals who want to serve their religion and their society, as well as big and small religious institutions the country over, should utilize all their means. If a group is unable to implement any part of this program in any formal gathering place, and if a group is unable to establish an organization to follow this policy, nevertheless, it can still do so among small groups of friends in private gatherings (dowrahs) and even in family circles. And even where this is not possible, every individual should commit himself to do as much as he can personally. It is in such a manner that little by little all unrelated efforts and all unorganized large and small waves will, in a natural and unavoidable way, join one another, and an Islamic movement, a widespread and powerful ideological trend encompassing the society as a whole, will be created. Only then will one be able to say that a new Islamic movement has engulfed the society and that the seething, constructive and awakening Islam, the reborn Islam, has come to dominate our time. . . . In implementing this comprehensive plan, more than anything else we are in need of help and guidance from the enlightened 'ulamā of the traditional schools as well as from the university professors, writers, scholars, translators, and specialists of the social sciences. We hope that those among the new generation who feel the lack of cultural and scientific research institutions and wish for an intellectual renaissance will accompany us on this path.

THE PROGRAM

At the present time, Husayniyah Irshād consists of three organizational units for the purposes of research, education, and propaganda and a fourth unit for support and logistics:

- I. Research (consisting of six research groups)
 - A. Islamology
 - B. Philosophy of History and History of Islam

- C. Islamic Culture and Sciences
- E. Islamic Countries
- F. Art and Literature
- II. Educational (consisting of five teaching groups)
 - A. Islamology
 - B. Qur'anology
 - C. Missionary Training
 - D. Literature and Art
 - E. Arabic and English Languages and Literature
- III. Propaganda
 - A. Religious Preaching and Speeches
 - B. Scientific Conferences
 - C. Scientific Congresses, Seminars, and Interviews
- IV. Logistical Organizational Units
 - A. Center for Books, Documents, and Statistics
 - B. Mobile Library
 - C. Printing House
 - D. Publications
 - E. Periodicals
 - F. Translation
 - G. Hajj and Religious Rituals

I. RESEARCH

Philosophy and Objectives of the Research Section

Observation, rationality and scientific research are the outstanding features of the Islamic cultural outlook and religion. Unlike some religious texts which have a domineering and commanding tone and present religious doctrines and principles as mysterious and beyond rational comprehension, in such a way as to leave no room for logic, reason, and science, and in a way that pretends to understand religious doctrines, the Qur'an (which is a divine book and speaks the language of revelation)—while it considers piety of soul, purity of heart, and sincerity of comprehension to be the basic conditions of accepting the "truth" and of being positioned in the direction of "guidance"¹—constantly calls upon its followers to think and ponder. Not only for understanding nature, history, and human societies does the Qur'an recommend that its followers observe, think, and do research, but it also recommends the understanding of the philosophy

of life, the ultimate reason for creation, the mysteries of existence, and even the nature of God. The Qur'an recognizes this methodology to be the path which saves people from the servitude of ignorance, from the old fables and from inherited and stagnant traditions and beliefs. It also maintains that this is the path that takes people to self-awareness, wisdom, and truth. It was these repeated commands of the Qur'an for thinking and research that suddenly elevated early Muslims from their preoccupation with primitive (bedouin) and tribal Arab culture; the traditionalist, stagnant, and past-worshipping Iranian customs; the philosophical abstractionism and idealism of Greek culture; the mystical introversionist, monastic puritanist, narcotizing spiritualist, and deviant and stagnant mortificationist Christian traditions; and finally, the illusionary anti-social and non-scientific and moral spirit of India, and moved them toward social progress. Despite political and military disturbances and the moral collapse of the institution of the Caliphate, and the revival of pre-Islamic Arab and Iranian aristocracies among the classes ruling the Islamic society, from the very first century of Islam the Qur'anic commands led to the establishment of various scientific centers and cultural and intellectual centers. They were filled with sacred and enlightening conversations, logical arguments, scientific, and rational dialog for independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) as well as studying, research, translation, and even travel in search of science. Various schools of thought flourished, numerous experts were trained and amazing advances were made in understanding various aspects of the Qur'an, traditions, religions, history, jurisprudence, language, literature and the arts. At the same time, understanding the history and people of other countries, extracting and utilizing all resources of past cultures and civilizations and researching and acquiring the spiritual and material legacies of human history became widespread over the newly established Islamic society, ranging from Spain to Tajikistan.

In short, Islam, as an ideology and a faith, created a civilized and dynamic ummah from among stagnant people and illiterate tribes. It created a civilization and science which are, in fact, the mother of today's civilization. The Islamic civilization and sciences were the basic causes of the collapse of feudalism; they resulted in the growth of the middle class; the demise of the spirit of the Middle Ages in Europe; the germination of the Protestant movement; the weakening of the black Papal dictatorship; the changes in the monastic spirit of Catholicism; the Renaissance movement; the beginning of the move-

ment for navigation, geographical discoveries and migration; and finally, the emergence of the worldliness and societal orientation of the new Western spirit. The Islamic civilization and sciences reached their apogee of glory and brightness in the third and fourth Islamic centuries (9th and 10th centuries C.E.). Its accomplishments nurtured geniuses among various races and nations, among civilized and uncivilized classes, and among the rulers and the ruled alike. It opened the doors of science and intellectual and cultural progress to all so as to make it possible for individuals from rural backgrounds and even alien slaves to attain the status of spiritual authority and religious leadership and to sit on the bench of judgment and to assume the intellectual and scientific leadership of the world (of Islam). Independent reasoning (*ijtihād*), which is the most outstanding feature of the scientific spirit and ideological outlook of Islam, not only prevented Islamic thinking from becoming static according to the stable molds of a particular time; not only prevented the religious thinking, laws and orders from becoming stagnant traditions, hereditary worshipping, and futile spiritless and repetitious actions; not only prevented Islamic thinking from becoming alienated with the passing of time and from stopping its motion in the process of changing social and economic conditions and in the process of death, birth, and other exigencies of life; and finally, not only caused Islamic thinking to remain new and progressive, but it also contributed to the flourishing of Islamic thinking and its progressive evolution. It caused Islamic thinking to grow, enrich itself, and evolve more fully throughout the course of history. Not only did *ijtihād* prevent Islamic thinking from falling behind the times, but also it moved ahead of the times. In short, the aim of independent reasoning was more than to adapt Islamic laws to new needs and to coordinate them with the new life and movement, but also to create needs and to encourage and guide life. This is the reason that in the past, the great Islamic 'ulamā were also the greatest naturalistic and humanistic scholars, and this is the reason why Islamic schools were at the same time the only centers for studying natural sciences and humanities. In fact, the separation of the spiritual (*rūḥānī*) from the non-spiritual, the separation of religious scientists from scientists who knew non-religious sciences, and, worse than that, the separation of "old sciences" (i.e., religious) and "modern sciences," are new phenomena incompatible with the mission of Islam and with its spirit and outlook.

In Islam, even in the mosque the distinction between religious and

worldly is not accepted, nor is the separation between religious sciences and non-religious sciences, nor the separation among science, worship, and politics. The Prophet's mosque was his home and that of his homeless supporters; a place to pray and worship; a hermitage; a place to teach and discuss sciences. It was also the center for governing and managing Muslims' political, social, and military affairs, as well as a free parliament where every individual was a representative member. At present, however, a disappointing tragedy has become the reality. Islamic culture is viewed as "old science," while natural and social sciences (medicine, astronomy, physics, chemistry, mathematics, history, geography, economics, law, politics, sociology, etc.) have taken over the heart and the mind of society and flourish at a distance and in isolation from Islamic culture.

Why did this happen? If we believe that the truth of Islam, in virtue of being the truth, is eternally relevant, it necessarily follows that Muslims are to be blamed for their lack of progress. Undoubtedly, one cannot deny the role that external factors and enemies played in this condemned fate. But, has Islam ever existed without enemies? Islam has demonstrated that whenever it has had to confront the challenges of a powerful external enemy, it has emerged more powerful and victorious, and whenever it has been defeated, it has been as a result of internal hypocrisy and weakness and the negligence of its friends. Was it not this same Islam which, with an army not more than a few hundred soldiers, easily crushed the powerful and united front of the Arab tribes? Was it not this same Islam which, in the same generation, with a few thousand poor Muslims demolished the two great empires of the world, the Byzantine and the Persian empires; and was it not a weak, ostracized and hated family, the Umayyads, which dominated that same Islam from within and slaughtered the very first generation of the Prophet's family, giving the reign of Islam to the pre-Islamic aristocracy of Quraysh? Therefore, we ought not to exaggerate the role of the external enemy and thereby relieve ourselves from the heavy burden of responsibilities which we have concerning our present situation. We ought not to incriminate our enemies in order to exonerate our friends. On the contrary, if the enemy has been able to play a role in our fate, it has been our weakness which allowed him to do so. No conqueror has ever been able to dominate a nation until the defeated people were ready and willing to accept defeat. As the great [Imam] Ali (whose own career and those of his children heralded such a

tragedy) put it: for oppression to take place in this world, the cooperation of two individuals is needed; the oppressor (zālim) and the one who accepts the oppression (maẓlūm).

At the present time, what has made the Islamic sciences the "old sciences" is the same factor which throughout history has prevented the Islamic outlook from marching with time. Without Islamic guidance, life has continued on a deviant course while the Islamic culture and outlook, which did not keep pace with time, became "old" and lost its heart and mind. Only faith and religious rituals remained, and these only among common people. The Islamic sciences lagged behind and stagnated at the stage where the sciences had been in the previous centuries. Consequently, Islamic science became obsolete and confined within the walls of old schools, imprisoned among its old books. The active and responsible brain of our contemporary social and scientific community and our intelligentsia became alienated from Islam, having embraced the "new sciences" and accepted the Western mode of thinking. Naturally, therefore, contemporary Islam is isolated from science; a "heart" separated from "mind;" a "feeling" deprived of "reason;" and precepts empty of soul, meaning and philosophy. As a result Islam, which had once been a profound, powerful and dynamic religious spirit and gnostic feeling; Islam, which had been equipped with the most current logic, philosophy, science, art, literature, mission for life, and social guidance; and Islam, which like an active and creative agent, had imparted life and motion to its contemporary civilization and society, was turned into an abstract spirit fossilized inside traditional forms of ancient mores, actions, ceremonies and rituals. It became the repository of popular bigotry, ignorance, and alienation from contemporary time and from the motion of history. Its followers became a degenerate group. As soon as their children read a few text books and became familiar with the lure of futile modernist behavior, they left their parents' religion or eventually revolted against it. The parent had no option but either to plead and cry out or, more desperately, to leave the children alone and, under the respectable name of freedom and modernity, accept their monkey-like and imitative behavior. . . .

How can we bring the mind of Islam back to its heart? How is it possible to make the "traditional Islamic sciences" dominate the scientific scene again? How is it possible to free the religious faith from its present traditional molds and give it self-awareness, scientific light and rational logic? How is it possible to reconstruct Islam

which presently is split into two halves, one of hereditary traditions and the other, anachronistic sciences? How can we revive and restructure the society whose head is separated from its body while its body is still warm from the heat and the blood of the hereditary religion and its head is full of alien sensations and thoughts? Finally, how can we bring out that life-giving, creative, revolutionary, enlightening, power-generating, wisdom-bestowing and civilization-making spirit which used to give its followers honor and independence, life and knowledge, faith and motion, spirituality and wealth, mysticism and the sword, hate and love, revenge and forgiveness, struggle (jihād) and peace, fanaticism and tolerance, freedom and leadership, realism and idealism, pride and modesty, servitude and revolt, humanity and awareness? How can this Islam be exhumed from the depths of history and from the old fortified and insulated places, and be reconstituted in the hollow skeleton of the contemporary age, in the pure conscience of this helpless and aimless generation, and among the dead, yet surviving, pseudo-Islamic societies in order to revive and reawaken them?

Indeed, the question is how can this be done? Whatever the answer may be, it is certain that addressing this question is the most urgent, vital and heavy responsibility, for each and every one of us. It does not matter who we are, what class we belong to and what our capabilities are, because what makes one responsible here is merely one's membership in the human race.

I believe that what has hampered the implementation of the Islamic spirit in the course of time, and has made the Islamic culture and world view anachronistic, is the death of the spirit of independent reasoning (ijtihād). In the Islamic religious, spiritual, and cultural domain, independent reasoning was the gate through which the caravan of time traversed, and a channel to the Islamic house of learning, constantly breathing in fresh air. Ijtihād is a free and independent endeavor aiming at obtaining a thorough and progressive understanding of Islam in all its dimensions. It is a tool by which a conscious mujtahid (the person who practices ijtihād) presents a new and changing interpretation of Islam according to his progressive and exalted outlook. It means understanding the multi-dimensional language of the Qur'an and discovering the inner meaning of the Qur'an which, like nature, has different aspects when looked upon from different angles. It means constant extraction of new truths of Islam parallel with the evolution of human thought and

science. And finally, it means deducing or inferring new legal standards and ordinances in accordance with changing needs and institutions involving principles as well as derivatives of the changing social systems and encompassing the evolutionary and deterministic motion of history and humanity. Therefore, *ijtihād* is a grand factor in creating motion, life, and a constant renewal of Islamic culture and spirit as well as practical and legal orders through changing of times.

Clear thinkers and intellectuals of the past centuries have predicted that a revolutionary movement and spirit will lose its validity and progressive dimension once it has gained power and status. It will become conservative and even resist, in a reactionary manner, any future social change. Differently put, every movement ultimately is transformed into an institution. For example, Christianity was a revolutionary movement in the Roman Empire but became a dominant conservative order later during the Middle Ages. Until the French Revolution, the bourgeoisie was a progressive and revolutionary movement within the stagnant feudal order of the Middle Ages. Now it has become a fanatic conservative and even reactionary order. The same is true of the "Islam of Imāmat" (Shī'ism), which is the true Islam. Throughout Islamic history, Shī'ism was an intellectual, social, and political revolutionary movement against the "Islam of the Caliphate" (which had transformed the dynamic and progressive Islam into a stagnant governing order). After the Safavids,² however, the Islam of Imāmat itself became institutionalized. Finally, socialism was a revolutionary movement in Eastern Europe until the Second World War. At present, however, it is a conservative and static order which resists, in a reactionary manner, any new intellectual and social movements.

Individuals are like movements also. There have been many revolutionary leaders who, after assuming power, have turned into conservative rulers and guardians.³ Based on these scientific and historical experiences, in order to prevent a revolutionary school of thought from changing into a conservative and stagnant order, a noted revolutionary thinker has proposed the well-known thesis of "permanent revolution." In Islam, *ijtihād* guarantees permanent revolution. One can understand how, given the termination of prophecy (*khātamiyyat*) with the Prophet of Islam,⁴ on the one hand, and the historical evolution of Muslim societies on the other, the spirit of *ijtihād* aids Islam by insuring its freedom from confinement in the

mold of any particular age or historical phase, so it remains compatible with society's historical evolution and change. Thus, it helps Islam to evolve with time. Juridical *ijtihad* helps to solve Muslim's social needs, while intellectual *ijtihad* helps Islam to acquire a new manifestation in the evolutionary and changing phase of history and, depending on the ability, comprehension, depth and level of scientific progress of the time, facilitates the acquisition of newer dimensions as more of the hidden inner essence of Islam becomes apparent. Needless to say, Islam's constant change and evolution and its different and varied manifestations and interpretations are no contradiction to its origin. Just as nature is a primordial and objective truth, so is Islam. However, understanding it, establishing a relationship with it, the degree of needing it, the angle through which one observes it and the picture of it which is reflected in the perception and face of those who study it are all relative phenomena that constantly change and undergo evolutionary transformations.

Thus, a profound scientific movement in our time, one based on research-oriented *ijtihad*, is urgently needed. The objective of such a movement would be to present the real truth and the original face of Islam; to raise the level of understanding and religious awareness in the society; and to familiarize the educated stratum and the young generation with that Islam from which cultural colonizers have made tremendous efforts to alienate them, by propagating their own values and culture.

Given their faith in Islam and given their awareness of their time, all enlightened Muslims feel responsible and believe that religious propagation must be coordinated with scientific research. Through constant nurturing from self-generating and innovative reservoirs of scientific research, religious preaching and sermons—which are often based on sensations, oratory, warnings and emotional inculcation—acquire scientific bases and intellectual depth, and thereby rid themselves from their present monotonous and repetitious forms. With the help of Islamic scientific research, the critical task of propagation (i.e., the greatest universal and human mission of Islam), the most basic objective responsibility of each Muslim and the secret of Islam's vitality and progress in contemporary times—which is the scene of a "battle for ideas"—ideological *jihad* and struggle can be pursued in a suitable manner.

Today in the West, among its pseudo-scientific, intellectual and religious circles in one way; in Black Africa where Islam is competing

with Christianity and Communism is growing, in another way; and in Muslim societies yet in another way, Islam has been turned into a defenseless base which is attacked from all ideological fronts. Opponents of Islam are all equipped with the latest scientific and philosophical techniques of art, sociology, and propagation. Moreover, the major colonial, economic and political powers of the world help the enemies of Islam indirectly. In such a crucial struggle, it is obvious to what extent mere admonition, advice, and simple moral and inculcative sermons in their present forms (which no doubt are useful) can assume the heavy responsibility of scientific and ideological defense of Islam. It is obvious further, that the existing propagation methods cannot do justice to Islam's lofty human values, which have been distorted, nor to its illuminating and life-constructing truths, which have been kept hidden and unknown under the depth of the historical ruins; and these methods cannot present the truths of Islam to its unaware and weak believers or to its powerful and aware opponents.

Let Us Open the Door of *Ijtihād*

The closed doors of scientific and intellectual *ijtihād* must be reopened. Fortunately, the greatest scientific pride and advantage of Shī'ism throughout the intellectual and cultural history of Islam has been the fact that it has kept the "door of *ijtihād*" open. The superiority of the Shī'ī jurisprudence over other schools of jurisprudence (which shut the door of *ijtihād* after the death of Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad-ibn Hanbal), is in that it has kept the door open indefinitely for new research, new inferences and even enactments of new ordinances and laws. Moreover, when the door of *ijtihād* is kept open, free expression of opinions and the evolution of science and intellect—which is possible only when there is freedom of scientific research and when thinkers' and researchers' ideas clash with one another—will become a reality.

Only in light of this discussion, can the real depth and value of the following utterance of the Prophet of Islam be appreciated: "The difference [of opinion] among the 'ulamā of my community is a blessing." And it is for this reason that Shī'ism believes that if a researcher makes a mistake in his scientific *ijtihād* and arrives at a wrong opinion he will still be rewarded, for according to a Shī'ī tradition, "the mujtahid who arrives at the right opinion receives two

rewards and the one who errs receives one."⁵ Accordingly, recognizing the value of scientific research since its inception and particularly having been aware of its urgency and necessity for acquiring a scientific understanding of Islam and for providing a methodical analysis of Islamic history, civilization, and culture, Husayniyah Irshād devoted some of its efforts (as much as its limited resources in its early years allowed) to this end. It invited a group of scholars and researchers from the hawzat to begin research into some aspect of Islamic culture and sciences. In addition, we asked them to help the Irshād Institute in its publication of various books, scientific and propaganda pamphlets by compiling, explaining and annotating the scientific conferences given in Irshād.

The Irshād Institute believes that in order for any ijtihādi research to be concluded on an advanced university level and in a scientific and methodological fashion, it is necessary that the resources and methodology of the social sciences and humanities, particularly history, theology, law, economics, sociology, orientology, and history of civilizations, in the contemporary world and in scientific and research centers be utilized. They should be employed for research and scientific analysis of the Islamic schools of thought, history, culture, society, philosophy, sciences, literature, art, and civilization. Islamic research would then be competing with the works of the Orientalists and Western and Eastern Islamologists, but stand above them because the work of the latter cannot be trusted either because those who have done it are not Muslims, or because they have political or colonial biases, or because they harbor religious, racial, ethnic or historical hatred and fanaticism. A new breed of Muslim scientists will take over, who feel Islam in their hearts and minds, who have scientific familiarity with Islamic culture, civilization, and schools of thought, who know scientific research methodology, know the progress of sciences in the contemporary world, and in short, know both cultures. The most important factor in our lack of scientific knowledge of Islam has been that those who know the Islamic culture often were not familiar with scientific outlook and new research methods, while those who were of the contemporary culture and knew the modern scientific research methods were alienated from Islam. Thus, at the outset of our Islamic and scientific research, our most important scientific and Islamic goal is to facilitate the cooperation of these two groups and open a path in which all scientific resources and all existing progress in contemporary research can be utilized in the service of understanding the truth of Islam and its true culture.

The Irshād Institute, thus, based its research program on the following:

1. The urgency and necessity which is felt concerning scientific Islamic research.

2. The need for observation, theory and research in the study of natural phenomena; of the history and destiny of other people and nations; and of historical changes in the past powers, past religions, past personalities, past thoughts and past actions which are mentioned repeatedly and emphatically in the Qur'an. Concepts such as observation, theorizing, reasoning, science, writing, teaching, understanding truths, awareness, and knowing the religion well, are among the sacred concepts which the Qur'an emphasizes. The Prophet of Islam more than any other religious, moral and social leader in the history of mankind, urged his followers to seek education throughout their lives. He made seeking education obligatory (wājib) for men and women and ordered his followers to seek knowledge ('ilm) in the farthest corners of the globe and obtain it from any source—even from the non-believers. Furthermore, the Shī'ī Imams and the great Islamic 'ulamā and leaders have been founders of large scientific centers and vanguards of intellectual movements which have made use of the scientific and cultural experiences of all advanced civilizations, religions and nations the world over.

3. The urgency to close the deep and dark gap which stands between us and the fountain of original Islam. Over the past fourteen centuries, Islamic spirit and thought has been contaminated by debris from various lands; by the streams of alien cultures and religions; and by external elements from ethnic tradition, myths, and the hereditary beliefs of various people who have converted to Islam. Moreover, it has lost its original purity through non-Islamic thoughts and opinions of philosophical, mystical and scientific schools of thought which have joined Islam in history and through beliefs, explanations, and opinions of Islamic 'ulamā who, under the influence of their contemporary sciences and beliefs or under the influence of their own ethnic and national upbringings, have shaped Islam according to their own particular molds of taste, feeling, or wisdom.

4. [The need for] ijtihād, which is the only factor guaranteeing the change and the evolution of the scientific and progressive understanding of Islam as well as the factor guaranteeing the life, motion and perpetual pertinency of the Islamic sciences and ordinances in an ever-changing human history and society; and which is one of the characteristics of the scientific spirit and social outlook of Islam, in

particular, one of the great distinctions of the Shī'ī culture and jurisprudence.

5. [The importance of] Islamic propagation at the present time, the era of the "battle of powerful ideas" and the instability of moral thoughts and values; the era of the collapse of past cultures and religions; the era of anxiety of the spirit, vacuum of intellect, and lack of faith. This is also the era of the crisis of the human conscience and man's apprehension over choice, his search for a new faith, his inclination toward the fountain of spirituality of the East. Through scientific extractions and inferences from the brimming resources and reservoirs of the vast truths of the Islamic school of thought and culture, Islam must be revived. It must be armed with the language and other means of contemporary sciences, taking into account man's pains and needs, particularly the needs of our young generation. It should address the changes, shortcomings and spiritual transformations dominating Islamic societies, and it must introduce Islam in the way in which Islam existed originally and yet in such a way as to be construable in contemporary time.

6. [The need to distinguish] Islam as an "ideology," that is, a belief system, a faith, an intellectual orientation, a social responsibility, and a particular world view, from Islam as a culture and a historical civilization; and to distinguish among the collection of sciences, theories, and philosophical, scientific, moral, literary, and mystical works. They have been mixed over the past fourteen centuries, by Islamic 'ulamā, thinkers and geniuses so much so that very few people can separate one from the other.

7. [The necessity of bringing] the masses of our society who have remained loyal to Islam closer to our educated people who are totally immersed in Western cultural values and characteristics, and hence are not familiar with Islamic scientific values, which are confined to the molds of the "old sciences" and are studied by a group of experts who have no commerce with these intellectuals. This duality has split our social unity and has caused the separation of our society's heart and mind from one another. The only solution for restoring the life and health of our society is for the religious faith of the masses to leave behind its unaware and traditional form and assume a vital and clear understanding and responsible form, and for the young generation and intellectuals to replace their hollowness of soul, their spiritually empty character, their collapse of originality, their self-alienation, their other-worshipping, and their imitation of personalities with the spirit of faith, with the scientific and logical familiarity

with Islam, and with the benefit of its rich culture and lofty original values. Moreover, the restoration of the unity and health of our society requires the Islamic sciences to leave their old fortresses and to become active agents in the present time, to familiarize themselves with contemporary man's spirit, pain, needs, language and knowledge, and to regain their innovative, creative, progressive and dynamic *ijtihad*.

[The Research unit of the *Irshād* Institute is to be administered] under the direct supervision and responsibility of a team composed of distinguished scholars, experts, and researchers in many branches of Islamic science, religious schools, history, culture and civilization and in many fields of modern science and culture. Human spirit and the clear outlook of Islamic faith and awareness, which is the main criterion for identifying a committed thinker, should be manifested in their scientific research. This group will be called the "Supreme Board of Research." Its members are of two types:

1) Outstanding individuals who are invited because of their distinguished scientific qualifications. They will participate in all discussions, in all decision making processes, and in the exercise of power.

2) The directors of the six research groups who are chosen for their positions because of their specialities in particular fields of research. Six research groups, each of which is under the directorship of one expert scientist, comprise the research units.

The "Supreme Board of Research" will determine the general objectives of each research group, coordinates the work of various groups, including their research projects and their scientific programs. The six research groups are:

- A) Islamology
- B) Philosophy of History and the History of Islam
- C) Islamic Sciences and Culture
- D) Social Sciences
- E) Islamic Countries
- F) Art and Literature

A) The Group for Islamology

The main objective of this group is to understand the true Islam as a religion. This requires the comprehension of Islamic beliefs and ideas; the study of the spirit, outlook and philosophy of Islamic precepts, and the preparation of documented and logical interpretations,

analyses and justifications for all elements which constitute the Islamic school of thought.

Undoubtedly, all Islamic sciences and all social sciences and humanities, such as analytical theology (*kalām*), biographies (*‘ilm al-Rijāl*), jurisprudence, history, sociology, philosophy, etc., are useful in understanding Islam. The principle sources of research in the group of Islamology, however, are the very five sources from which the original Islam sprang and in which it can be reidentified. These are: 1) Allah, 2) the Qur'an, 3) the Prophet, 4) the prototypical individuals produced and trained by Islam, and 5) the Islamic city (*Madīnah*).

1) Allah

a) The principle of worshipping in human spirit and its primordial nature: Here, psychological theories, the opinions of social scientists and the opinions of philosophers and thinkers should be studied.

b) The history of theism since the time of the descent of man to the earth: Here primitive tribes and religions, prehistoric people, primitive people, old tablets, signs and myths, historical cultures, civilizations and religions, and the history of the evolutionary change of the concept of God in various cultural epochs of history should be studied.

c) Comparative theism: Extraction and identification of those characteristics that Allah must have (*al-ṣifāt al-Thūbutiyah*) and those that He cannot have (*al-ṣifāt al-Salbīyah*) from the texts of the Qur'an and other original Islamic writings (traditions, narrations, and speeches of Islamic leaders). We will also conduct similar research about the gods of other great religions.

d) Unitarianism (*tawhīd*): Examination of its following aspects: the philosophical, scientific and religious aspects of *tawhīd*; its psychological, moral and humanitarian dimensions and its sociological, anti-class, anti-racist, anti-ethnic and anti-monopolist role, the inception, change, evolution and distinction of unitarian thought throughout history, from the primitive phase up to the present; and finally, unitarianism as a world view and as a moral order, and its comparison with other world views such as pantheism, dualism, trinity, polytheism, materialism, skepticism, absurdity, sufism, realism, naturalism, nihilism, idealism, scientism, humanism, consumerism, and so forth.

e) Translation and introduction of the works of the great Islamic scholars, scholars of other great religions, noted philosophers and

authors in the realm of the spiritual and religious or about gnostic feelings. Also we will introduce great literary and artistic works which have discussed religious feelings and culture. Particular attention will be paid to the introduction of the ideas of those who, through their research and studies have done an outstanding job in positive exposition of God, religious world views, faith, gnostic feelings, or in scientifically repudiating anti-religious schools of thought.

All the above-mentioned scientific and social research as well as the analysis of other schools of thought should be utilized for the sole purpose of introducing Allah to contemporary man as He was understood by those who obtained their knowledge about Islam first hand from its original source [the Prophet] and as He is introduced by the original Islam. That is, God should be presented so that, on the one hand, religious groups, who have a vague, and perhaps misleading, conception of Him, and who have religious feelings will be led to reconsider their beliefs; and, on the other hand, groups which are alienated from religion—those who either dislike it because they have a wrong understanding of it, or are indifferent toward it and have stayed away from it because they do not know anything about it, will familiarize themselves with an aware, progressive, and scientific religious faith. Particularly, Allah should be introduced in such a way as to present a profound, positive and complete understanding of Islam, with a thorough comprehension of the quality of the perception of faith, understanding God, worshipping, the relationship between man and God and the relationship between God and the universe; and also with a complete understanding of the way in which the Qur'an, through its unique scientific and intellectual method, presents God. It is necessary to present God because that is a way of presenting Islam as well; to understand the god of any religion is the best way of understanding that religion and of discovering its most outstanding constructive dimension. The deity of each religion is its heart and its direction. Moreover, the god of each religion is the foundation from which all its beliefs, principles, values, the true spirit of its book, and characteristics as well as personality of its prophets, take their meanings.

2) The Qur'an

a) We must prepare a precise and articulate Persian translation of the Qur'an so that Persian speakers, particularly our educated generation, can easily have access to the Qur'an. Such a translation should, on the one hand, have scientific precision and an accurate

representation of Qur'anic concepts and the usage of words and phrases, while on the other hand, it should possess a literary quality and style in the choice of words and the construction of prose. Various Islamic interpretations of the Qur'an, linguistic and literary research, historical narrations and stories, current studies of the orientalist and those who have translated the Qur'an into European languages should be utilized. Help should also be solicited from professional modern Persian writers.

b) We must translate and introduce all studies that non-Iranian Muslim and non-Muslim scientists and experts have conducted on the Qur'an or on some specific aspect of it (e.g., its form, style, or content). We must also make a comparison between the Qur'an and the religious books of other religions.

c) We must familiarize our religious and scientific circles with the text of the Qur'an so as to encourage the spread of its understanding, teaching and interpretation. Only then will the return to the Qur'an, which is the only way for our salvation and awareness and the only path toward an accurate understanding of Islam, be brought about.

d) [We must familiarize ourselves] with the many scientists and experts in our society who are conducting research or with those outstanding scholars who have conducted valuable and unique research on the Qur'an. These efforts are not organized and they do not follow a pre-established program. Also, due to the lack of resources and because of existing material and spiritual conditions, they either have stopped working or have been unable to put their research into writing. One of our main objectives here must be to encourage these great researchers, coordinate their studies and help them complete, write and publish their works. In this way, our society will acquire more scientific familiarity with various dimensions of the Qur'an.

e) We must understand the intellectual, scientific, moral, social, historical, artistic and literary values of the Qur'an, thereby creating an intellectual and scientific movement of Qur'anology; and we must publish research articles, theses and books in a language which speaks with the contemporary scientific spirit and outlook. This will cause this great book to step beyond the confines of being merely a good omen or a book that only a few of the 'ulamā and interpreters understand; and then it will permeate the conscience and the consciousness of the people.

From the totality of these efforts on various levels, we will be able to assemble the necessary ingredients and acquire the scientific

knowledge for preparing and writing a thorough, simple, precise and illuminating set of interpretations of the Qur'an, which will be very useful for our educated and intellectual citizens.

3) The Prophet

a) The Biography of the Prophet (sīrat al-Nabī)

i) We should translate and critically annotate all authoritative biographies of the great Prophet of Islam.

ii) We must translate, introduce, and evaluate the research done by non-Muslim orientalist, Islamic specialists and authors who have done outstanding works concerning life and character of the Prophet of Islam, while pointing out their religious prejudices and their anti-religious and colonial biases.

iii) We should conduct scientific, sociological, psychological and critical research and analyses concerning various dimensions of the Prophet's character while presenting a logical, rational, and historical discussion of the different instances which are not subject to consensus regarding his individual, social and political life. Moreover, we should refute the accusations and doubts that Christians cast on the Prophet, and erase the hostilities and the colonial, historical and ethical hatred people have toward the prophet of Islam.

iv) Finally, we should compile and publish an analytical, documented and comprehensive biography of the Prophet based on historical data and with the aid of research tools and scientific methods, free from sectarian and ethnic shortsightedness. It will be written in a contemporary, attractive style of Persian prose, so that the true picture of the Prophet of Islam will be presented from various angles, in such a way as to reveal dimensions and hitherto unknown aspects of his spirit and great personality. This will familiarize his followers with the life and thought, as well as the moral and human personality of this great leader.

b) Tradition (sunnat)

i) The history of the compilation of the aḥādīth (traditions), narrators of traditions (muḥādithūn), the role of tradition in Islam, and the issue of forged aḥādīth.

ii) The science of narration [of the aḥādīth], taxonomy of traditions, the method of research and inference of a tradition and critical evaluation of the traditions.

iii) The science of tradition, various schools of tradition-reporting, and its primary sources.

iv) Research on the main sources of traditions and their classifica-

tion according to subject, primary narrators and the chain of narrators.

v) The Akhbārī schools and that of the analogical approach (qiyas), the Prophetic and Imami aḥādīth, and Shī'ī and Sunnī approaches, and the four sources of law in Islam, namely the Qur'an, ḥādīth, consensus (ijmā') and independent reasoning (ijtihād).

vi) A reevaluation of the old methods of critical approach to ḥādīth, utilizing modern contextual and historical methodology.

vii) A scientific and historical evaluation of the validity (or lack thereof) of the aḥādīth in the collections of ḥādīth which are now available to the public and are quoted by preachers and the learned, in turn shaping the minds of the people.

viii) Critical and ijihādī study of all aḥādīth and their sources in order to compile an authoritative book encompassing most valid aḥādīth to be used for enlightening and awakening our present society. The book will have a clear and lucid translation and will be annotated, and its technical concepts will be fully explained. It would replace the existing books, which can be utilized only by highly trained students of Islamic sciences. These existing books often leave a bad impression in the minds of the believers, and also provide non-believers and hostile elements with ammunition to utilize in attempts to discredit Islam. In the past, our aware and meticulous Shi'ite 'ulamā who combined the most stringent religious precautions with scientific precision and standards, would issue "permission to narrate aḥādīth" (Ijāzah) only to a select few.⁶ At present, however, this necessary scientific restriction has been practically eliminated. Often those preachers who were not able to continue their education in Islamic sciences, and have failed in the traditional schools, begin to quote ḥādīth in their speeches. As a result, the most urgent and pressing task facing the conscious Muslim researchers, who are familiar with the spirit of Islam and are familiar with scientific and historical methods, is to begin compiling an authoritative collection of ḥādīth. Such a work should be organized according to subject matter, so that it would be useful for both scientific researchers educated in various fields and also for those who want to know about true Islam, its Prophet and his great ideas and revelations. It could also be used as a general reference for the words of the Prophet, making them available to everyone in a form free from the confines of the convoluted "old books" which are accessible exclusively to experts. Unlike in the past, knowledge and science have become common property now. Even in our own backward society the greatest literary,

philosophical, scientific, religious, and artistic works and masterpieces of literature are available to all literate people, and even elementary school children, in a simple language free of technical jargon. The lack of a lucid account of the thought of the Prophet of Islam continues to be a great ideological, religious and moral tragedy. It makes the responsibility of the researchers all the more grave and a course of action which would remedy this all the more urgent.

4) Archetypal and Exemplary Personalities

Every religion and ideological or moral school of thought is a factory of human development. The true value of a factory can be measured in two ways. Although unreliable, lengthy, complicated and difficult, one way is to study directly the factory itself, that is, to study the technical principles, mechanism of operation, and parts of its different components. This involves mathematical calculations in the evaluation of its functions, based on scientific and theoretical principles of the industry and mechanical and mathematical rules. This method is the prerogative of a few experts.

The second method, which is as reliable, clear and understandable as it is simple and easy to conduct, is to evaluate the technical and scientific precision of the factory and the validity of its claims by examining a few samples of its products. This can be done by comparing the products in question with the products of similar factories. This method is available to anyone who, without any scientific and technical expertise, save normal and sound sense of understanding and feeling, cares to use it. For example, an illiterate driver who does not have any technical knowledge of how to evaluate big, car-making factories can easily compare their products in the market. Similarly, the simplest way of understanding a religion is to see what kind of individuals it has produced. A look at the types of individuals that Islam has produced shows that they are the embodiment of the Qur'an. They are proofs that Islam is not an idealistic utopian religion without any regard for reality.

The prototypical individuals produced by Islam are those that the Prophet of Islam himself introduced as such. They are, also, those to whom history has borne witness of their exemplary life-style and those whom every aware and fair researcher must recognize for their human virtues and extraordinary values, spirit and morals. They are primarily members of the Prophet's family ('itrat), a family whose father is Ali, whose mother is Fāṭimah, whose sons are Ḥasan and Husayn, and whose daughter is Zaynab. The sacred and pious

personalities who descended from this family preserved the original direction of Islam and protected the tradition of Muḥammad with their blood, imprisonment, and scientific and intellectual struggles, at a time when Arab Jāhiliyah and aristocracy was revived; at a time when Islamic leadership was transformed into an imitation of the despotic reigns of the Sassanid dynasty and the tyrannical Byzantine Empire; at a time when schools of thought and religions were made subservient to politics and deceit, mixed with ethnic myths, fabrications, tribalism, hatred, and exploitation; and at a time when Islam fell deeply into the service of oppression, dictatorship, caliphate and the slave-owning and plundering classes. The prototypical individuals are those who, amid a storm of Greek philosophy, Indian mysticism, deviant monastic Christian piety, and Persian ethnic myths—all of which had been created by acts of fabrication performed by the “sold” religious ‘ulamā and by the court clergy—remained the “beacons” of the path, the supports of the cities, and the true politicians of the people; they were as steady and patient mountain tops resisting the torrent of blood, oppression, lies, and the looting of people’s bread and faith (this world and the hereafter).⁷ It is shameful that there are only a few books about but one or two of these great men in the Persian language—which is the language of the official followers of these noble men. And even these are translations, often works of Christian authors!

To love and to admire these noble men is not enough. Understanding them is what bestows spirit, light and humanity and shows the path. Thus, in order to help people understand them, scientists, researchers, authors, and experts on the history of Islam must use all their resources to introduce the school of thought, life-style, social direction and historical and cultural roles that these prototypical individuals have played. To achieve this, we must:

a) Provide a historical, philosophical, ideological, social and scientific analysis of ummat (Islamic community) and imamat (leadership).

b) Study the social, political, and intellectual role of Ali, as well as his life and personality. Translate works by foreign authors about him, in addition to beginning a historical investigation of numerous manifestations of his multi-dimensional spirit by experts and authors.

c) Set up a universal competition for writing the best work on elaborating Ali’s personality, and determine suitable prizes for the first and the second place winners.

d) Compile a thorough Nahj al-Balāghah [sayings of Imam Ali] with a precise and fluent Persian translation, with the help of several historians, authors and people well-versed in Arabic.

e) Prepare the biography of each and every Imam in a scientific and analytical manner, describing his social environment as well as his political, intellectual and cultural condition. Each will also contain the Imam's works, sayings, and political and ideological roles.

f) Conduct independent and exclusive research into the personality and ideas of the sixth Imam, his school of thought, his social and intellectual role, students, and scientific center (hawzah). Evaluate the great scientific movement which he created in the history of Islam.⁸

g) Set up an intellectual and scientific prize, "The Medal of Ali," with a fixed and adequate amount, for any poet, author, researcher, or man of service who has done an outstanding job in accordance with Ali's way of thinking. This prize, which can be given to anyone, regardless of his nationality or religion, will be awarded in a grand ceremony.

h) Prepare a detailed and precise program for compilation of the biography of each and every great companion of the Prophet and of the self-sacrificing and honorable pioneers of Islam in its early centuries.

The Supreme Board of Research will select these personalities and, upon approval, give the names to the relevant research group which, in turn, by inviting the scholars and authors who are qualified to conduct the research, will delegate the responsibility of writing the biography of each of these companions and pioneers to one or a group of researchers. In addition to signing the necessary contracts, each research group will assume the responsibility of providing scientific supervision, procuring documents and books, establishing the method of research and securing suitable material and non-material conditions for research.

5) The Islamic Utopia (al-Madīnah al-Fadilah)

The Prophet of Islam was the only prophet who succeeded in establishing an exemplary community based upon his own religious beliefs. Other prophets all stopped at the phase of delivering their messages and all their efforts were confined to either presenting their school of thought or delivering their books to selected apostles. Even Moses, who took arms and freed his people from slavery and spoke of

an ideal society in the "Promised Land," could not even begin the process of building that society; before the children of Israel reached Jerusalem, Moses died and it was his brother, Aaron who, continuing his path, entered the city and laid the foundations of the Jewish society. In short, a new religion had always been established in one of two ways: either the second generation of the followers of the new religion built their own society, or else an already existing and established society converted to the religion without radical transformation in its socio-political structure, as in the case of Christianity in the Byzantine Empire. The Emperor changed his religion without changing the Empire. The Prophet of Islam, however, while training his elite followers, and while in the process of receiving and completing the Qur'an and Islam, was also busy building a society. He did not speak of a "utopia," "city of God," or "promised land"; rather, he established the foundations of his ideal society himself. He did not speak of an abstract or future utopia, but of an objective state. He constructed his ideal community not with words but with mud, clay, law, and the people.

This objective utopia, the materialized Islamic community, was "the city of the Prophet," al-Madīnah. By studying this exemplary society, one can come to understand the Islamic social outlook, political philosophy and its notion of human society. It also reveals the Prophet's style and method in setting up a society, its manner of working, its infrastructure, classes, groups, relationships between individuals and groups, social and legal institutions, the position of individuals, the role of ideology, morals, religion, and government in society, the relationship between the government and the people, the relationship among politics, economics, and religion, and finally, the relationship between the society and religious minorities, and between it and other societies and foreign powers. To understand al-Madīnah as an exemplary Islamic society is to understand in Islam the same way that understanding the prototypical individuals of Islam is considered a way of understanding Islam. Understanding exemplary individuals is understanding Islam in the sense that Islam is a religion that tries to train human beings. Understanding al-Madīnah, particularly its first decade, is understanding Islam in the sense that Islam is a school of thought that seeks to build a human society based on ideology, motion and perpetual revolutionary leadership. In studying the city we must:

- a) Study the history of Mecca and the fundamental changes that took place in its economic and strategic position in the years

preceding the advent of the Prophet. Study the society of Mecca: its people, families, minorities, aliens, slaves, tribes, bazaars, poets and religions, Ka'bah and its social, religious and economic significance, and new ideas at the time of the advent of the Prophet.

b) Study the history of the Muhājirīn [those who migrated with the Prophet from Mecca to Medina]. Present every one of them and study the familial and class relations of each immigrant. Also study the migration (hijrah), its historical, psychological and intellectual roles in the history of civilizations and cultures as well as in the history of outstanding personalities of mankind.

c) Study the pre-Islamic Medina, the tribes of Aws and Khazraj,⁹ the Jewish families, traditions, tribal relations, the social and economic role of the Jews, the relationship between Jews and Arabs, the economic productivity of Medina, and the sociology and natural, economic and human geography of the city of Medina.

d) Study the arrival of the Muhajirin (migrants) to Medina, the demographic change of the city and its division into Muhājirīn and Ansar [native Muslims of Medina], the relationship between these two poles, and the similarities and differences between them.

e) Study the beginning of the construction of the new society, the announcements of the Treaty of Brotherhood (between Aws and Khazraj) as a replacement for the Treaty of Tribes (Ḥalf).

f) Study the preparation of the new constitution, the charter of Medina, the early lectures and contracts and the legal changes.

g) Study of the mosque as the home of the leader, the seat of political and military governance, the religious and spiritual center, the center of scientific and academic teachings and discussions, the free parliament of the people, the home of the paramilitary, the homeless, travellers, and the lonely immigrants, the place of consultation where important political and military decisions were made, the house of the people and the place to worship God.

B) The Group for Philosophy of History and the History of Islam

The Qur'an attaches considerable importance to history. In studying the subject matter of the Qur'an, one notes that history constitutes the largest portion. Moreover, paying attention to history and thinking, studying and learning from the history of people and powers, as well as from historical incidents, are recommended with great emphasis and firm tone. This command is expressed with an exclamation mark in order to convey amazement at people's reluctance to

travel around the world and to observe the history of those who lived before them and who were more powerful.¹⁰ The repetition of the phrase "travelled in the land" and "observe," in every verse dealing with history, demonstrates the great scientific truth that even for understanding and studying history the Qur'an suggests objective observation and analysis of the external and tangible reality. This shows that the Qur'an does not recommend Aristotelian-type generalizations based on syllogistic and abstract rational logic. Nor does it recommend the practice of many of our contemporary historians who, immersing themselves in sources and imprisoning themselves in libraries, go through the pages of the books of the previous scholars and rely solely on what "the experts of the past" have said or written. Instead, the Qur'an emphasizes that history must be used as a "means" for the contemporary man in enlightening the present and understanding the laws (sunan) of history, the laws of social change, and the laws of birth and death of powers which pretend that they and their tyrannical domination over people are a permanent phenomena.

Since the 19th century, history—which until that time meant knowledge about biographies of personalities and powers as well as events related to them—has changed drastically. It has been transformed from a "collection of information" into a "science" which analyzes, according to distinct and fixed scientific laws, the process of man's becoming, in the course of time and in the furnace of revolutions and change. It has gained credibility and has become closely associated with philosophy, literature, culture and sciences, psychology, sociology, economics and even geography and archeology. In some ways, history comprehends all sciences under its wings—so much so that when Emerson was asked, "What is history?" he replied, "What isn't history?"

Throughout the history of Islam, many nations and races over the past fourteen centuries have been in the process of creating—with a common and powerful spirit and faith—a culture; sciences and great artistic works; and amazing events, thoughts and feelings; therefore, in the process of training geniuses, outstanding personalities and new orders, the history of Islam provides the largest laboratory for examining human experience, analyzing sociological problems, and studying the relationship between religion and civilization. It is also the most important link between the old and the new worlds. Moreover, a scientific analysis of the history of Islam is the only way

to gain access to the original springs of Islam. It is only history that can show contemporary man the elements which have been added to Islam in the course of its historical changes and clashes. And it is only history that can identify the conditions under which Islam changed its spirit and direction until it reached where it is now.

It is with such an outlook and objective that, with the help of all researchers in the field of Islamic history, the Group for History includes in its program the study of the following topics:

- 1) The importance of history and the emphasis that Islam and Qur'an give to the historical outlook.
- 2) The inception of historical recording, various schools of historiography and great Muslim historians; translation, introduction and critique of historical sources and documents as well as non-Islamic sources of Islamic history.
- 3) The conditions of the world at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad's designation, including the situation in and the condition of Iran, Byzantium, Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, Greek philosophy, the Alexandrian school of thought, monasticism, literature, morals, mysticism, science, social orders, economy, political regimes, class, ethnic and racial conflicts, pre-Islamic Arabs, etc.
- 4) The Rightly Guided Caliphs: (a) Abū-Bakr; a critical analysis of his career and political regime; a social, ideological, political, and class analysis of the gathering at Saqīfah;¹¹ the transformation of Islam into a universal offensive military force, and the beginning of geographical conquests; and a political, moral and social critique of Abū-Bakr. (b) 'Umar; his election, biography, personality, and political regime, as well as his political and military role in geographical conquests, and the new organizations with their strength and weaknesses. (c) 'Uthmān; his biography, personality, class and family origins and relationships, and his political regime; the Council of 'Umar [which elected 'Uthmān], a political and class analysis of the Council (shūra), the relationship between its members of the anti-Ali camp, the revival of aristocracy under 'Uthman, the emergence of monarchy [in place of Caliphate], the revival of the Umayyads, formation of a new class and intensification of class differences; the political, social and religious innovations, the transformation of the companions of the Prophet into a new aristocracy, the victims of the changes in the Islamic order (Abūdhār and 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd), and the first revolution by the people.¹² (d) Ali; his biography and

multidimensional personality; the class origin of his supporters and opponents, the three distinct periods in his life—the period of struggle and heroism for God, the period of patience for unity of the people and the period of hard work for justice, respectively.¹³

5) The Umayyads: their racial and family roots, their role in Islam, their domination, the political, racial, religious, social, economic and cultural aspects of their rule, their conquests, their socio-economic order and the changes and innovations (heresies) that they introduced in Islam; the role of the Shi'ites in challenging the dominant order, the struggle for the establishment of justice and for protection of Islamic thought, and their objectives and spirit; the role of the Iranians during the Umayyads' rule, the condition of racial and religious minorities during that period, the Umayyads' relationship with Christianity and the Byzantine empire, the influence of the Byzantine empire on Islam and the political, intellectual and military revolts against the Umayyads.

6) [The role of] Iran, Spain, and Egypt [in the history of Islam].

7) Nahdat al-Riḍā, the Iranian revolts; the sixth Imam's political position, the role of the Abbasids in the history of Islam, the victory of the Iranian spirit in Islam, and the role of Iranians in Islamic politics, philosophy, art and sciences; also the study Shi'ites during the Abbasid dynasty, and their political, national, religious, sectarian, philosophical and scientific movement during that reign; political division in the world of Islam and the emergence of the Turks in the Islamic world.

8) The Crusades, their causes, their cultural and civil consequences, the influence of Islam upon the transformation of the West, the emergence of the Renaissance and the collapse of feudalism, the end of the Middle Ages, the victory of science and freedom in Europe and the emergence of the new civilization.

9) The beginning of degeneration in Islam, its process, and its political, external, internal, intellectual, economic, religious, racial and social causes.

10) The new Islamic Renaissance and awakening, the Islamic anti-colonial resistance and struggle against the West; the role of Islam in modern freedom movements in Asia and Africa.

C) The Group for Islamic Sciences and Culture

1) The philosophy of science and the concept of science and its meaning in the Qur'an and in the thinking of the original leaders of

Islam; a comparison of the concept of science in various cultures of China, India, Iran, Athens, in the previous historical epoch, the Middle Ages, and the New Era.

2) The reliance of Islam on science and its role in the great scientific movement of the Islamic Golden Age.

3) The emergence of the sciences in the history of Islam, the first scientific fields, such as history (e.g., the Prophet's conduct and his Jihād), tradition (ḥādīth), the exegesis of the Qur'an, literature and linguistics, jurisprudence, dialectical theology, mysticism, geography, economics, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, etc.

4) The scientific value of Islamic hard (exact) sciences (mathematics, natural sciences); the role of Muslim scientists in creating and completing each branch of the sciences and what contemporary Europe inherited from them.

5) The contribution of the Shi'ites and Iranians to the Islamic culture and the Islamic sciences (religious and non-religious, alike).

6) Detailed research in the field of Islamic philosophy, the beginning of philosophical thought and its evolution, various philosophical schools, great philosophical thinkers and the universality of the opinions and theories of Muslim philosophers, particularly the great philosophers since Ibn-Rushd [d. 595/1198], who are mostly Iranians but as yet are not known worldwide.

7) The intellectual trend of Islamic mysticism and gnosticism, their emergence, changes and their various schools; Islamic and non-Islamic roots of this trend and its social and political role; and the positive and negative effects of mysticism on thought, belief, literature, art and social life.

8) Islamic art, architecture, music, painting, gilding, etc., and evaluation of their contemporary value.

9) Shi'ism as an independent ideological movement against both philosophy and Sufism.

10) The original sources of philosophy and science in Islam, Greece, Iran, India, China, Egypt, [and in other religions], Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, Buddhism, and so forth.

11) Publication of scientific and authentic books in contemporary Persian language about philosophy, philosophers, Sufism, jurisprudence, various schools of jurisprudence, art, literature, science, and about great Islamic geniuses. They should be accessible to our educated people and book readers in order to familiarize them with Islamic intellectual and cultural values and resources.

D) The Group for Social Sciences

Islam is a social and civil religion. From a sociological point of view, what is most important to note is that the Prophet of Islam only laid the foundations of a new society. Later, that society grew into a big community composed of various civilized nations and different races, from societies at different stages of "development" and diverging religious and socio-political systems. Moreover, given all the favorable resources and conditions available and because of Islamic attitudes toward urbanism, commerce, scientific curiosity, migration and particularly toward worldliness and the unitarian (tawhīd) world view, it was possible for Islam to act as a powerful agent in the rapid transformation of primitive, traditional, pastoral and agricultural orders into a more advanced urbanized bourgeoisie, and to play an important role in developing and completing organizations and institutions necessary for social progress. [In short, Islam made it possible for the creation] of one of the greatest civilizations in the history of Asia, Africa and parts of Europe. [Thus, the social science group will study the following subjects]:

- 1) Islamic political philosophy and its political systems in different historical periods.
- 2) Social and political organizations and institutions in Islamic societies, including the caliphate, government agencies, the judicial system, police, army, public treasury, taxes and so forth.
- 3) Urban institutions and organizations.
- 4) The institution of endowments (waqf), the ownership of conquered land, land distribution (tuyūl) and the ownership of various types of land.
- 5) Commerce, urban and industrial production, the marketplace, money, etc.
- 6) Social and economic groups and classes, sadats [the descendants of the Prophet], judges, jurisconsults (fuqahā), professionals, and merchants.
- 7) The production system and the economic geography of Muslim societies and the transformation of an agrarian based economy into an urban one.

E) The Group for Islamic Countries

Ever since its inception, the universal power of Islam has been in constant religious, political, military and economic clashes with

Christianity, particularly the Byzantine empire. After Islam defeated Christianity in the south of the Mediterranean and turned Constantinople into "Islampole" [Istanbul], forcing the Church to move to the other side of the Mediterranean sea, the West, whose new economic greed added to its historical and religious hatred of the East, initiated a long and protracted war with the world of Islam which continues even now. It began on the military front in the form of Crusades, and on the political front, in the form of covert relations with the Mongols and the incitement of the latter to stab Islam in the back.

Despite the fact that the fire of religious hypocrisy, and racial and political divisions was raging from inside, Islam had until the beginning of the nineteenth century successfully resisted the pillaging attacks of the West, and sometimes itself threatened the West to the point of destruction, having even laid siege to Vienna through domination of the Mediterranean Sea. The knowledgeable colonizers and their new orientalists finally succeeded in destroying "this dangerous and troublesome power" [Islam] from within. Through cultivating ethnic prejudice, and sectarian divisions, and by means of extremely skillful political tricks, the colonizer divided this huge social and cultural skeleton of Islam—which had once been alive and moving with one spirit, one idea, one history, and one faith—and then swallowed each piece very comfortably. In this way the Islamic countries, while adjacent to each other, were separated and alienated from one another and were kept far apart by enmity and hatred. The common language was forgotten, common culture disappeared; understanding, familiarity, kinship, the spiritual and ideological bonds which had inspired power, independence and self-reliance—all were quickly destroyed; and each country, alienated from itself and from other Islamic countries, struck a friendship with the West, accepted its political, economic and cultural values, became infatuated with it and lost itself. This led to the present situation where even intellectuals and educated elements of the Islamic countries who are familiar with ordinary authors, unknown poets and daily happenings of Europe and the United States are not aware of some of the greatest intellectual and social movements which are taking place in other Islamic countries. They do not know the thoughts and beliefs of progressive Muslim thinkers, do not understand social and cultural institutions, publications, authors, poets, reformists, and great literary, scientific and intellectual works of Muslims, and are totally unaware of the way in which neighboring Muslim nations live and what their destinies are. In fact, quite often, they have not even heard

the names of some Muslim countries and if they have, they do not know whether they are Muslim countries or not.

To familiarize our people, particularly our intellectuals and educated groups with each and every Muslim country, its history, geography, anthropology, beliefs, traditions, religious characteristics, political systems, intellectual and social movements, thinkers, authors and scientists, preparation of valuable ideological, scientific and literary works, historical and artistic works is an important step. It will take them in the direction of returning to their own cultural identity. [This requires] reviving the spirit of ideological and intellectual independence in the present generation; fighting Westernization and moral, intellectual and cultural colonization; resisting the imposition of European values; reviving the spirit of understanding and kinship, and rejoining those links which were separated as a result of the deceit of the common enemy; expanding the Islamic sciences and the Islamic outlook; and strengthening the divided Islamic societies intellectually, 'spiritually, and socially, so as to resist the hegemonic spiritual, moral and social onslaught of the big cultural and economic powers of the contemporary Christian and capitalist worlds.

According to the program it is preparing, the Group for Islamic Countries should compile, with the help of researchers and translators who are familiar with these areas, a book about each and every Muslim country, in order to introduce a true picture of it to our people. Additionally, due to the necessity for a historical, geographic, social, intellectual and cultural understanding of the Islamic societies, this group should establish an "Office for Islamic Information and Relations" to perform the following:

- 1) Compilation of adequate information and statistics about all Islamic institutions, organizations, research centers, universities, and colleges in the world.
- 2) Gathering of precise information regarding universities all over the world which have devoted part of their educational or research curricula to Islam.
- 3) Obtaining the texts of papers presented at any outstanding seminar or scientific conference which deals with issues such as the religion of Islam, Islamic history, civilization, culture and art, or Islamic countries, regardless of where the meeting is held.
- 4) Collecting of the latest accurate statistics about Muslims all over the world, about various minorities and immigrants, including information about their living conditions, problems and their Islamic

and intellectual activities.

5) Preparation of a complete list of all contemporary Islamologists, their scientific activities and works, and a critique of their works, thinking, scientific stature and services.

6) Acquisition of a thorough and precise knowledge of all 'ulamā, researchers, thinkers, authors, and other contemporary outstanding scientific and religious personalities in Islamic countries; preparation of their profiles as well as a typology of scientific and Islamic activities which they are pursuing.

7) Invitation of outstanding authors, thinkers, scientists, and great researchers of Islamic societies to participate in Islamic scientific seminars and conferences and establish intellectual, scientific, and research exchange relations between Islamic centers (ḥawzāt) and Islamic researchers and thinkers.

8) Helping and guiding students, researchers and scientists who visit Iran to observe and get to know the Islamic society of Iran, or to do research about Islamic sciences, or prepare their Ph.D. theses in relation to Islamic issues; this help should be given to those who travel from Iran to other Islamic countries as well.

9) Granting of research scholarships to qualified students and researchers who want to work on various branches of Islamology.

10) Establishment of a universal scientific prize entitled "Ali's Medal" to be granted to anyone who has studied the life and career of Imam Ali, to be administered by a special committee.

F) The Group for Art and Literature

Art is the manifestation of man's creative soul. It has a long-lasting affinity with religion. Throughout history, in all civilizations, in all cultures, in all religions and in all phases of all societies—primitive as well as advanced—these two have had an extremely close and enduring relationship. In principle, art has a mystical nature and a religious essence. Even though art has now moved away from religion, whenever it transcends mere entertainment, due to its essence it assumes a religious and gnostic form. This can be seen both in modern and "avant-garde" art, as well as in the intolerable and strange image of "restricted art" which is at the service of parties and governments in the Communist world, where every artist must limit himself to the confines of the government's ideology and where in the name of "committed art," an artist produces "restricted art," one of the restrictions of which is to be anti-religious.

Aristocrats, ruling classes and affluent people, who are preoccupied with entertainment, hedonism, filling the vacuum of their affluent lives and their futile existences, creating deviant feelings and false needs, incapacitating the spirit and will and blinding the awareness of the masses, have tried to separate religion from art. Instead of creating faith and motion, such art becomes an agent that deceives the mind, incapacitates the masses and fulfills the artificial and sick needs of the old and new aristocracies. Further, they want this separation so that religion will lose its most powerful and effective means of expression and influence. Art then becomes absurdity¹⁴ and religion loses its clarity, art becomes meaningless and aimless while religion loses its attractiveness and beauty, and finally, art becomes corrupt and religion ugly.

Note that religious manifestations and appearances, maxims, signs and icons, rites, ceremonies, and mannerisms of expression have lost their attractiveness and beauty as well as their effectiveness in moving people. Religion has become like a garment which is worn inside out.¹⁵ Religious programs, songs, prose and poetry, figures, gestures, manners and traditions, sermons, preaching, and rituals and, in general, the religious "types" are presented in a dull and unattractive fashion. Only religious-minded people tolerate them, either because of their respect for their beliefs and faith, because of the sublime reality of religion, or because of the religious importance or dignity of the personalities and events involved.

Consider radio and television programming as another example. As soon as a program is devoted to religious matters, its beauty and attractiveness are lost and one can only tolerate it for the blessing of the other world. In accordance with the tradition that "the best deeds are the most arduous ones," one must view religious programs on radio and television as a mortification to be undertaken so that, in tolerating the pain and difficulty involved, one's sins may be forgiven.

This distortion is presented so skillfully that in the public's mind beauty is a twin of blasphemy and ugliness is a twin of religion. So deep is this deviation that if an event is presented in an ugly manner, even if it contradicts religion, it will be seen as an exclusively religious phenomenon, something that personifies the dearest of realities, the most glorious of events, and the most sacred of God's epiphanies. On the contrary, if that same event was presented in an artistic and beautiful manner, it will be seen as blasphemy and the mentioning of

it in religious environments is considered inappropriate. For example, if a play were unique in its ugliness and superficiality, and if its music wrecked one's nerves, then it could depict Karbala with all its characteristics, personality and incidents. In such plays, even the person of Imam Ḥusayn, Zaynab, and the family of the Imam appear in the scene. Moreover, their appearances and conversation are direct, clear and without metaphor, and they are accompanied with drums and horns and any other musical instrument which does not sound good and is poorly played. Those who play the roles of these sacred people can be anyone as long as they are not clean or beautiful. The totality of their cheap movements, disgusting acts and ugly figures constitutes "the simulation of the Ashura uprising." In the public's mind, there is nothing wrong with it; it is even good. If, God forbid, however, this same simulation were to become a little bit like the reality it represented and if the personalities and truth of the events involved should come to life through the power of art, then not only would it not allowed to portray the movement of Husayn, the captivity of Zaynab and her family, but you could not even show the lonely death of Abūdhār in the desert of Rabadhah. It would be heresy, deviation, blasphemy and corruption!

It was in such a manner that little by little, our religion became divorced from art; a religion which had devoted itself to the most beautiful and outstanding manifestations of art, and in which even the mosque, which is God's house and the place of worship, became the house of beauty and art and a place where qualified Muslim artists could demonstrate their miraculous artistic creativity, and fill the house of God with such a mixture of mysterious and revealing artistic grace that when one entered it to pray, one would be relieved from outside tensions and daily affairs, and be drawn toward Allah, the "Absolute Beauty."¹⁶

Islam dislikes the absurd and deviant type of art and literature—"art for the sake of art" and "free art" (i.e., irresponsible art)—and clearly condemns it, insisting that it not be allowed flourish. At the same time, it is a patron of "responsible art."¹⁷ Despite the fact that the Qur'an calls poets misled liars, those who talk but do not act, and whose followers are only aimless, deviant individuals, and despite the fact the the Prophet of Islam himself describes the poet in the worst manner by saying that "the heart of a poet is polluted," he praised Ḥassān Ibn Thābit and Zuhayr—the two poets who wrote for the cause of Islamic ideology—in the manner of the great patrons of art

and poetry throughout history.

Ḥassān Ibn Thābit, who was one of Prophet's companions, used his poetry as a sword against poets of the Qurayshi tribes and against other pre-Islamic Arab poets who ridiculed Islam, its ideals, the new revolution and the new school of thought. He used his poetry to fight those who supported racial and tribal distinctions and claims to superiority, those who propagated the pre-Islamic myths and their ancestral traditions, and those who narrated songs of the individualistic, self-centered and anti-social lusts, pleasures and temptations. Parallel with the mujahidūn [warriors], who used their swords, the poets too attacked the enemies of Islam, albeit in a different way, and received compliments and praise from the Prophet that no martyred mujahid had received before. The pre-Islamic (jahilī) poetry which was filthy, served aristocracy, and was in the vanguard of deception, corruption of thought and feeling, and the poisoning of society's blood could not be eliminated with the sword of Sa'd ibn Abī-Waqqāṣ;¹⁸ it had to be overcome by the poetry of Ḥassan, an aware, responsible and committed artist, which was able to undo this corruption, disarm these poets, and bring awareness to those infatuated and sick people who were misled and redirect them to the right path.

If art has today become a vehicle for spreading corruption; if theatres and films have become the agents of degeneration and deviation; if painting, music and poetry have become the language of sex, darkness and narcosis; and if it is necessary to challenge them, the only means for doing so is to establish a true constructive artistic movement, to employ art in the service of people's faith and awareness and to eliminate from the context of the society by means of responsible and committed art and literature, irresponsible art and literature. In this way one can disarm the anti-human, anti-moral and anti-Islamic powers which are armed with art and literature to corrupt people, undermine the spiritual foundations of human beliefs and virtues, paralyze the will and the feelings of responsibility, and narcotize the sick and diseased nerves of the society. And it is in this way that one can arm religion and faith with art and literature to accomplish what they are supposed to do.

Both as an ideology and a civilization and culture, Islam respects artistic, literary and aesthetic values. The God of Islam, Who is the manifestation of Absolute Beauty, likes beauty. Natural and human beauty are constantly mentioned in the Qur'an, and praised so much that sometimes God swears by them. As the revealed text and the

words of God, the Qur'an itself is the manifestation of beauty, in expression and the miracle of speech. Every prophet has displayed a miracle; Moses' was his transformation of his cane into a snake, and that of Jesus was giving sight to the blind and life to the dead. The miracle of the Prophet of Islam, however, is a literary one: the eloquence and articulation of the Qur'an. The extraordinary emphasis that the Qur'an places upon the artistry of syntax, the technical structure and musical beauty of words, the miraculous power of the message, and the portrayal of imagination is apparent from the style of the Qur'an's speech.

From a musical standpoint, the Qur'an is a rhythmical text and a poem-like verse, as though it is meant to be chanted. In fact, God clearly orders the believers to read it slowly and rhythmically.¹⁹ Some studies have shown that the Qur'an is a precise scientific symphony, consciously composed of a combination of miraculous and artistic songs. The fact that those who recited the Qur'an gained considerable prestige even during the Prophet's lifetime,²⁰ and the fact that throughout the history of Islam, reciting the Qur'an in different tones and manners has been a great artistic field in all Muslim societies, are indicative of this very characteristic.

[Note also the story of Bilāl.] He was an Abyssinian with a foreign accent. His pronunciation was not proper: He would pronounce "sh" as "s." But, he had a good voice. Despite the presence of companions whose pronunciation was better, the Prophet chose Bilal as the official spokesman of his religion and kept him in that post throughout his life. Some people objected on the ground that Bilal's pronunciation would undermine God's words. But the Prophet responded that God, Who is more interested in beauty than proper pronunciation, accepts Bilal's "s" in the place of "sh."²¹

The artistry of the sayings and prose of Imam Ali—who was the talking Qur'an and the personification of Islam—are examples of the miracles that can be performed with words. Moreover, the text of most Shī'ī supplications are like hymns in which the music and the prose have used artistry and literary style to express grand truths and inspire divine sentiments.

Contrary to the opinions of some Westerners and fanatics or of people who are neither aware of the religious texts nor of Islamic history and culture, and who think that their traditional, hereditary and environmental tastes and beliefs constitute the true Islam, the rich civilization and culture of Islam provides ample opportunity for

artistic genius to blossom and be trained and also for the spirit of aesthetic beauty to manifest itself. This is the reason why Islam possesses rich and valuable artistic, literary and aesthetic resources which must be discovered and extracted by those who have inherited them. They must be uncovered because humanity, and specifically the Muslims, whose ideology and culture stem from them, are in need of them.

In addition, art is a surprisingly powerful and influential force. It can build or destroy. On the one hand, at its best it can be the guardian and the reminder of those highly esteemed human values, superior desires and spiritual virtues which have been demolished under the heavy and ruthless attacks of the economy and industry in the spirit of profit-seeking, of the bourgeoisie scientific outlook with its dry, rational, and calculating logic, and of contemporary subservient and expediency-governed science. On the other hand, art is often made an ally of these same plunderers, and the most powerful agent in deceiving, misleading, narcotizing, and preoccupying intellectuals, providing pleasure for the powerful, incapacitating the youth, and benumbing the masses.

In the past it was religion which played these conflicting roles in religious societies. It was religion which was both the agent of awakening, guidance, enlightenment, constructiveness and the support of spiritual and sublime values and virtues of man, but also the agent of sedation, stagnation, deceit, and distraction, preventing thoughts and feelings from being focused on objective realities, shortcomings, pains and abnormalities. Today religion does not have a determining power in the existing order; art and literature play these two conflicting roles. This is the reason that in colonized societies, art has become the new tool of stupefaction.

At present, with unprecedented power, art and literature are growing, expanding, and diversifying. They play the most profound roles in the evolution of the intellect; in propagation; in motivation; in changing "types," cultures, tastes, feelings, and beliefs; in public relations; and in altering moral values and spiritual, social, and religious tendencies. This is why governments, powers, social, economic and political systems, as well as ideologies have all employed art and literature in their most advanced and varied forms. And this is the reason that, having been mixed with the enormous power of science and technology, and having increased their effectiveness and influence many times over, the magical power of art and literature, as

the most effective means of struggle and as the most profound and powerful language of expression and inspiration, are taking the territories of thought and spirit away from all religions, cultures and traditions. Art is particularly enterprising in contemporary Islamic societies—especially the aimless ones where faith and new and powerful hopes have not yet created among their people, especially the young generation, any direction, commitment, and movement. In the name of religion, the masses are benumbed and kept busy with spiritless traditions, fruitless repetitions, and old, imaginary feelings, inclinations, hatred and love. The intellectuals are also kept busy with modern art, new superstitions, imaginary feelings, artificial and unreal needs, pains and inclinations, ridiculous imported mannerisms, and imposed a la mode contentions. They are kept busy with the philosophies of absurdity, "art for the sake of art," nauseating and artificial existentialism, nihilism, extreme modernity and imitative traditionalism. If one is religious, faithful and pious, there is one set of concerns to keep one busy; and if one is a modernist and an intellectual, there is another.

At present, art excites the masses by capitalizing on a filthy and whore-like sexuality and has preoccupied the intellectuals with a sickly imitative, pseudo-philosophical, and anachronistic subjectivism. It has caused intellectuals to cease thinking about their own time, and to refuse any responsibility regarding the destiny of their society. It has also encouraged them to take refuge in a spiritless and false monasticism and sufism and, finally, has isolated and unconsciously imprisoned them in their own imaginations and in the "false internal world" which has been built for them. Still worse, those who have total control over contemporary art and have employed it for moral and intellectual corruption and for the collapse of all human values, have tried to (a) pass off this hollow and corrupting role as the true and natural mission of art, and (b) prevent the resisting force of their opponent, which is religion, from arming itself with art, thereby preventing any preventive strike against them. This is the reason that religious people are scared whenever the word "art" is mentioned. But in confronting art, religion merely condemns it, which is self-assuring to those who control art because that means that Islam, whose followers and society, culture and beliefs are all victims of the nonchalant, sexual, deviant and anti-human art, will never be armed with this most effective means of expression in modern times and will never be equipped with the evolving power of art. It is a great victory

for those who control art to know that Islam will continue to perform **its duties with the anachronistic language**, expression, means of propagation, means of research and of inculcation—means that are either useless or of very little effect and scope in the contemporary world. In turn, Islam will be defeated and eliminated whenever confronted with the widespread and powerful onslaught of contemporary forms of art. [The Group for Art and Literature, thus, is organized for the following reasons]:

First, to combat irresponsible, corrupting and deviant art, which ruins all values, disrupts order, infects the society, poisons the blood and attacks Islam directly and indirectly.

Second, to equip Islam—as a school of thought, as a message, as an intellectual and ideological movement and as a great culture and civilization—with contemporary language and means of expression, namely art. In turn the Islamic message will attract, influence, motivate and spread beyond the limited confines of the old generation and traditional groups which are loyal to their ancestral religion. Ultimately, Islam may conquer time and become the primary subject of discussion and interest in contemporary society among the young generation and among intellectuals.

Third, to discover the vast literary heritage and artistic treasures in the Islamic faith, civilization, culture and history and make them available to contemporary generations. In this way, valuable manifestations of Islam and the genius of Muslims will become known, and also an opportunity will be provided for humanity to come to a new understanding of, and a new relationship with the spirit and varied capabilities of Islam.

At this time, the program of the Group for Art and Literature consists of organizing research groups in the following areas:

- 1) Islamic Art and Literature
 - a. Literature
 - i. Committed and free literature in accordance with the Islamic world view
 - ii. The literary and artistic aspects of the Qur'an
 - iii. The literary value of Nahj al-Balāghah
 - iv. The literary schools
 - v. Writing styles and great writers
 - vi. Ideological and mass poetry and the poets
 - vii. The political, social and intellectual roles of poetry in the history of Islam

- viii. The various schools of poetry, styles and different kinds of poems
- ix. The literary techniques (rhetoric, figures of speech, etc.)
- x. Committed poetry and literature as opposed to irresponsible and court poetry
- xi. Religious poetry and literature
- xii. Revolutionary poetry and literature
- xiii. The Shī'ī literature
- xiv. Ghadīr, 'Ashūrā, (and other events in Islamic history and literature)

b. Islamic Art

- i. Islamic architecture
- ii. Decorative arts
- iii. Religious and non-religious music
- iv. Drawing and miniatures
- v. Urban planning
- vi. Clothing, cosmetics and fashion
- vii. Calligraphy and calligraphers
- viii. The art of bookbinding
- ix. Commercial arts
- x. Folk art
- xi. Religious art

2) Modern Art and Literature

a. Modern Literature and Poetry

- i. Modern writers, modern style and the great contemporary Iranian writers
- ii. Modern poetry and modern poets in the Persian language
- iii. Literary movements and changes, literary events and the great contemporary writers in the Islamic world (Arab and non-Arab, African and Muslim minorities)
- iv. Contemporary Arab poetry (modern and classical)
- v. Islamic literature and poetry
- vi. Social and anti-colonial literature and poetry
- vii. Palestine in contemporary literature and poetry of the Islamic world
- viii. Great poets and authors in today's Islamic societies
- ix. Introduction of the outstanding works in other Islamic nations

b. Modern Art

- i. Iranian art, various artistic schools and movements and outstanding Iranian artists
 - ii. Islamic art, various artistic schools and movements and outstanding Islamic artists
 - iii. Great artistic schools, philosophy of art and various types of art
 - iv. Modern art and outstanding contemporary artists
 - v. The relationship between art and society, art and religion, and the philosophy and mission of art
- 3) Artistic Activities
- a. The Film Corps
 - i. Selecting, preparing and showing documentary historical, scientific, intellectual, and moralistic films
 - ii. Dubbing
 - iii. Directing
 - iv. Acting
 - v. Film making
 - b. The Theater Corps
 - c. The Corps for Translating and Writing Intellectual, Historical, and Islamic Plays and Scenarios
 - d. The Drawing Corps
 - e. Arranging photographic and other artistic exhibitions
 - f. Teaching the technique of acting
 - g. Arranging scientific and research conferences about artistic issues

I-1 Research Programs of the Irshād Institution

In order for those who want to do Islamic scientific research to be able to choose research subjects, various topics have been identified and their scope, meaning, objectives and scientific value have been discussed in detail below. The research topics and projects for volunteers are:

- A. Islamology
- B. Shī'ī study, including Shī'ī Imams, their Environment and Personalities
- C. Political and Social History, including companions of the Prophet—understanding their personalities and social role (in detail)—and colonization and anti-colonial movements in Islamic societies
- D. Revolutionary Movements and Revolutionary Figures

- E. Schools of Thought and Great Thinkers, including recent religious movements and religious innovations (bid'at)
- F. Research and accumulation of reference books, documents, and other works (which includes: primary sources, new research, and collecting what is written on Islam in various languages)
- G. Islamic Art
- H. Studying Islamic societies in order to understand all Muslim countries, nations and minorities in the world.

Organization of a general library in which books are classified according to subject, author, and title, and establishment of a research library are also necessary. Moreover, a program of translating valuable works from other languages into Persian and translating Islamic texts and quality research works of Iranian scientists into other languages should be established.

In order for volunteers to be able to choose based on their ability, scientific background, resources and personal taste, a particular research topic, the scope of the studies in each of the above areas has been defined as follows:

- A. Islamology (here we will study)
 - 1. Economy and ownership
 - 2. Caliphate or rulership
 - 3. Ethics
 - 4. The rights, characters, and roles of women
 - 5. Islamic education, its philosophy, world view, systems, method, and history
 - 6. Beliefs
 - i. The basic elements which, according to the Qur'an, form the foundations of the principal ideological concepts in Islam
 - ii. The ideological concepts of the Qur'an
 - 7. Philosophy of the creation of man and Islamic humanism
 - 8. Sociology of Islam and Islamic sociology
 - 9. The emergence of early sciences in the Islamic civilization
 - 10. Classification of the Prophet's aḥādīth and Imam's narrations based on subject
 - 11. Islamologists and Islamology in the world
 - i. Islamology in the Middle Ages (Christianity and its prejudices)
 - ii. Islamology after the Renaissance (politics and colonization)

- iii. Contemporary Islamology (a new wave of fairness and scientific work)
 - 12. Metaphysics in the language and outlook of early Islam, as stated in the Qur'an, as stated by the Prophet, by Ali, by other Imams and their companions, and comparison with contemporary views and characterizations of it
 - 13. Islamic realism with regards to:
 - i. Philosophy
 - ii. Anthropology
 - iii. Ethics
 - iv. Law
 - 14. The causes of Islamic progress in the world
 - 15. The world prior to the Prophet's mission (Arabia, Iran, Rome, Greece, India, China, etc.)
 - 16. Forged and authentic aḥādīth
 - 17. Historical distortions in Islam
 - 18. Religious innovations (heresy)
 - 19. Dictionary of Islamic ideological and scientific terms
 - 20. Sects in Islam
 - 21. Elements which have affected religious belief and traditions of Muslims
 - 22. The Ja'farī (Shī'ī), Hanafī, Shāfi'ī, Malikī, and Ḥanbalī schools of jurisprudence
- B. Shī'ī Studies:
- 1. The issue of Imāmat (leadership)
 - 2. The issue of authority and guardianship (wilāyat) among: (a) Shī'īs; (b) Ghulāt [extremist Shī'īs]; (c) Mystics; (d) Hindus and Buddhists
 - 3. Righteousness ('adl)
 - 4. The concept of Mahdī (a) in various religions (Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism). (b) In sociology (Messianism), (c) in philosophy of history (the end of history), (d) among various sects of Islam, (e) the concept (principle) of awaiting the return of the Mahdi (Intizār), and (f) the return of the Mahdī and the signs of his return (conduct a sociological study and a social critique of the revolutionary spirit and ideas which are contained in the scheme of the "signs of the return" of the Mahdi and provide an explanation of "the end of the Age"
 - 5. The concept of shafā'at (intercession)

6. The stations (homes) and stages after death and their comparison with all Greek philosophers and others until the seventeenth century
 7. Administration in Islam after the Prophet (Wiṣayat)
 8. The Shī'ī research methodology and comparing it with those of: (a) Akhbaris (b) Mu'tazilites (c) Sufīs and (d) Philosophers
 9. Independent reasoning (ijtihād)
 10. Text of prayers and ziyārat nāmahs [pilgrimage prayers], which are special to Shī'ites
 11. The school of the sixth Imam from the viewpoint of the Shī'ī education and cultural movement
 12. The concept of taqīyyah (dissimulation)
 13. The concept of Ghaybat (occultation) of the twelfth Imam
 14. The concept of niyābat (deputyship) of the twelfth Imam
 15. The concept of Iṣmat (immunity from committing sins)
 16. The various sects in Shī'ism
- C. Political and Social History (research topics include)
1. The event of Saqīfah (understanding it methodically and collecting and analyzing all arguments for or against it)
 2. Abū-Bakr and his two years of Caliphate, his personality and his governing regime
 3. 'Umar, his personality and regime
 4. The Council of 'Umar; a sociological, political and ideological analysis of it
 5. 'Uthmān, his personality and regime
 6. The revolution against 'Uthmān; analyzing the causes of the revolution, the factors involved and its background
 7. The Umayyads and Banī-Hāshim (the clan of the Prophet); study the social, political, economic and family conflicts between them before and after the inception of Islam
 8. The beginning of the ascendance of the Umayyads to power in the Islamic system, analyzing the element of those counter to the Islamic revolution
 9. Abū Sufyān, his personality and social role
 10. Mu'āwīyah, and his fundamental role
 11. From Mu'āwīya to 'Umar Ibn-Abdul Azīz and his period
 12. From 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz to the end of the Umayyads
 13. The movements of Khurāsān, Abū-Muslim and Ibrāhīm al-Imām

14. Political, social, intellectual, human and class analysis of the military, political and cultural resistance of Iranians against the Caliphate
 15. The philosophy of racial supremacy during the Umayyads
 16. Studying the causes of decay and collapse of the Umayyads
 17. The revival of the religious, ethnic, social, political and class traditions of Rome and Iran during the Umayyads and the Abbasid periods
 18. The Crusades
 19. The Mongols
 20. Disintegration of power inside the Islamic nation
 21. The beginning of the decline of Islam, its reasons and the present profile of Islam
 22. The history of contemporary Islam
 23. Western modernism in contemporary Islamic societies
- D. Islamic Revolutions
1. Abūdhār-Ghifārī
 2. Ḥujr Ibn-'Adī
 3. The movement of Imām Husayn
 4. The movement of Mukhtār and his Iranian supporters
 5. The movement of Tawwābīn (people like Sulayman Ibn-Ṣurd-al Khuzā'ī)
 6. 'Abdullāh-ibn Zubayr
 7. The Alawites
 8. The revolution of Zayd ibn 'Alī and Yaḥyā ibn-Zayd
 9. The Zanj revolution
 10. The movement of the descendents of Imam Ḥasan (al-Sādāt al-Hasaniyah)
 11. The Imami Shī'īs
 12. The Ismā'īlī movements; (a) Their philosophical, scientific and religious aspects; (b) Their military and political aspects; (c) Their class and rural aspects; (d) The structure of their well-ordered organizations; (e) Their supporters and allies; (f) Their decline and downfall
 13. Ghulāt [Shī'ī extremists]; study their political and intellectual viewpoints and their social and political role
 14. The *Sarbedārān* movement, both from a Shī'ī point of view and from the Iranian perspective
 15. The Islamic Renaissance. Here, the intellectual and revolu-

tionary movements of the past two centuries will be studied. Among others, they include: (a) Seyyed Jamāl, 'Abduh, Kawakibi, Sir Seyyed Aḥmad Khān, Hasan Al-Banna, Iqbal, etc.; (b) The "Return to Self" Movement (Salaḥīyah); (c) The Muslim Brotherhood Movement; (d) The Caliphate Movement in India; (e) 'Abd al-Qādir in Algeria, Sanusi in Africa, the Society of Islamic 'ulamā in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania, the Party of the Star of North Africa, the anti-colonial movement of Muslims in India; the Liberation Front of Algeria, etc.; (f) Religious innovations (bid'ats), including (i) Wahhabism, (ii) Babism, (iii) Bahāism, (iv) Qāadianism, (v) Kasravism

E. Philosophical, Mystical, and Religious Schools of Thought

1. The philosophers

- a. From Ibn-Sīnā (Avicenna) to Ibn-Rushd (the 16th century, the last phase of the supremacy of the Islamic philosophy over Western philosophy)
- b. From Ibn-Rushd to Hajj Mulla Hādī Sabzavārī
- c. Great Islāmic philosophers of the past and present

2. The Sufīs

- a. The period of ecstasy Sufism (practical)
- b. The period of scientific and educational Sufism (theoretical)
- c. Various personalities, the basic principles of their schools of thought, and analysis, comparison, and critique of those schools of thought

3. The schools of thought

- a. Itizāl (Mu'tazilah)
- b. Ash'arī (Asha'irah)
- c. Sufism
- d. Hikmat (philosophy)
- e. Akhbārī (school of thought)

4. Dialectical Theology (Kalām)

- a. Classical Kalām (from Islamic philosophy)
- b. The new Kalām (from Greek philosophy)
- c. The modern Kalām (contemporary Western outlook)

F. Research and Compilation of Resources and Reference Books

1. Arabic

- a. Collection of reference books

- b. Collecting research works (the works of all contemporary researchers about various Islamic issues)
 2. French, English, German, Russian, Italian, and Spanish works
 3. Persian, Turkish, Armenian, Kurdish, etc., works: (a) Collecting the works from the Middle Ages and more recent centuries; (b) Collecting all works on contemporary issues, in the forms of books, annual reports, memorial papers, magazines, encyclopedias, Ph.D. theses, conferences, seminars, and international or national congresses
- G. Islamic Art
1. Understanding Islamic Art, (a) Artistic and cultural aspects; (b) The ideological viewpoint (philosophic, intellectual and social justifications of art); (c) The technical side; (d) The aesthetic viewpoint; (e) The religious viewpoint (forbidden art, allowed art, accepted art, positive and negative positions of Islam and Islamic thinkers vis-a-vis various kinds of art)
 2. Islamic architecture
 3. Commercial (industrial) arts
 4. Religious arts
 5. Decorative arts
 6. Performing arts and sculpture
 7. Folkloric arts (in different historical periods and among different Muslim societies and peoples)
 8. Modern art in Islamic societies and the clash between Islamic artistic values and those of the West
- H. The Islamic Countries and Societies
1. Classic Muslim societies which are formally known as such
 2. Societies where Muslims, as large or small groups, reside (e.g., India and Yugoslavia)
 3. Muslim minorities in the world, such as in the U.S. or Africa
- To conduct geographic research about Islamic countries and societies, one can consult the Islamic atlas. For social aspects of the research project, we may take the following steps: (a) Compile a brief history of a country or society, particularly since that country or society's conversion to Islam—this is useful in making general information available on demand; (b) Investigate linguistic, racial, and religious groups in that country or society; (c) Study the productive, economic, and class structure of that country or society; (d) Survey the social

and political changes of that country or society in the following phases: i) In contemporary centuries (the last 100 years); ii) In post-World War I; iii) In post-World War II; iv) Any anti-colonial movement; v) After independence; (c) Analyze its religious, intellectual, and cultural movements with respect to the following two dimensions: i) All of its intellectual, social and political works which were the results of the Western cultural onslaught; ii) All movements which are the results of religious renaissance, national renaissance, or both; (f) Study the outstanding religious, intellectual and social personalities of each society and their works.

II. THE EDUCATION SECTION

At present, the educational division of Husayniyah Irshād pursues five distinct major areas. It is hoped that with the help of Allah, the contributions of the great Islamic 'ulamā, intellectuals and scientists, and the assistance of ambitious Muslims of this country, this will be the first step toward establishing a "Free Islamic University" in which education will be based upon the Islamic philosophy of education and training. In that university, the very humane and progressive educational style of the past Islamic universities will be adopted and the thirteen hundred years of valuable experience of our hawzāt (from the time of the sixth Imam to the present) will be utilized. It will have an educational curriculum appropriate to our time, our Muslim society and our young generation. It will keep pace with the latest scientific research and it will be equipped with modern facilities. Moreover, the life-giving Islamic truths, culture, sciences, beliefs, history as well as the lives of great Muslim personalities will be taught there. As a result, our Shī'ī society in Iran will have an advanced universal Islamic university.

At present, in the following five educational areas four thousand students (each with university educations) are to be registered:

1. Islamology: committed to the study of Islam as an ideology
 - a. Unitarian world view (tawḥīd)
 - b. Philosophy of history
 - c. Sociology
 - d. Anthropology
 - e. Ideology

- f. The ideal society
- g. The ideal man
- h. The philosophy and objective of the creation of man
- 2. The Qur'anic Studies
 - a. The classes for teaching proper reading of the Qur'an
 - b. Interpretation and analysis of the text of the Qur'an
 - c. Research on the various aspects of the Qur'an
- 3. Training of preachers (muballighūn)
 - a. Teaching Arabic: i) Grammar, with modern methods of teaching languages; ii) Conversation, conducted by an Arabic-speaking teacher; iii) Arabic literary texts such as Nahj al-Balaghah, al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah...and the works of contemporary Arab authors and men of letters
 - b. Teaching English: i) Grammar; ii) Conversation, conducted by English-speaking teachers; iii) Literary texts
 - c. Teaching the text and the translation of the Qur'an
 - d. Interpretation and analyses of the text of the Qur'an with scientific methods
 - e. Research conferences, seminars and conversation groups (free discussions)
 - f. Analytical and logical teaching of Islamic ideology and cardinal beliefs
 - g. Analytical comprehension of the socio-political history of Islam
 - h. Main contemporary philosophical schools in the world i. Social sciences
 - j. Comparative Islamic law
 - k. Terminology of the Islamic thought and sciences
 - l. Teaching the art of public speaking and delivering sermons
- 4. The Art Group (teaching)
 - a. Painting and drawing
 - b. Film and theatre (teaching, practicing and performing plays which are informative and enlightening regarding Islamic thought and history)
 - c. Art classes (teaching various artistic styles)
 - d. Group research in various artistic areas
 - e. Exhibitions of paintings and pictures
- 5. The Language and Literature Group
 - a. Arabic: i) Grammar; ii) Conversation; iii) Literary texts
 - b. English: i) Grammar; ii) Conversation; iii) Literary texts

III. THE DIVISION OF PROSELYTIZING (TABLIGH)

- A. Preaching and public speech
- B. Religious ceremonies, celebrations, mournings, etc.
- C. Films and theater productions
- D. Art shows
- E. Hajj: teaching the philosophy of Hajj, analyzing the rituals of Hajj, introducing and visiting the history and conduct of the Prophet on site (one month in Mecca and Madina)
- F. Scientific conferences in various areas
- G. Inviting great researchers, authors, thinkers and Islamologists of the world to participate in conferences seminars, and to deliver speeches
- H. Arranging seminars, memorial ceremonies and Islamic conferences
- I. Production and distribution of the text of all conferences, classes, reports and interviews conducted in the scientific Institute of Irshād. Also, production and distribution of the text of all speeches, scientific, religious and literary texts, poetry, etc., which have Islamic value

IV. THE DIVISION OF LOGISTICS

- A. Center for Statistics, Documents, and Research Sources
 - 1. Gathering of historical, juridicial, philosophical, literary and theological research sources
 - 2. Obtaining all the works that Muslim and non-Muslim authors and researchers have published in various languages
 - 3. Obtaining photocopies or microfilms of all handwritten books in private and public libraries and museums which are useful for Islamic studies
 - 4. Gathering of a complete collection of existing slides, photographs, maps and guides regarding Islamic art and architecture. Also, Islamic coins, artistry, archeological articles, antiques, calligraphy, and other Islamic paraphernalia from different periods
 - 5. Collect theses, newspaper and magazine articles which are published about Islamic issues
 - 6. Buy or subscribe to news magazines or research quarterly publications which are published about Islam by scientific and research organizations all over the world

7. Prepare geographical maps, guides and books about historical geography, history, anthropology, sociology, economics, intellectuals, literary, artistic and religious conditions of Muslim societies and Muslim minorities all over the world
8. Establish communication with statistical centers, libraries, scientific and orientalist institutions, universities, publishing houses and museums to obtain information and statistics about documents relevant to Islam
9. Acquire technical means needed for the research, study and protection of handwritten books, microfilm, slides, maps, stamps, coins and antiques
10. Collect all tapes made in Islamic congresses or global congresses about Islam, scientific research, audio-visual classes and a collection of scientific, historical, moral, religious and Islamic films
12. Compile a scientific and methodical list of all the works, books, articles and handwritten books in different languages classified according to their subjects. This is needed so that research and access to different sources by different people becomes easier
13. Obtain complete sets of the Shī'ī historical and scientific documents, books, articles written about Shī'ism in various languages, and whatever will facilitate research about Shī'ism, its culture, history and sciences

B. Mobile Library

Unlike the past, books today do not exclusively belong to the scientists and learned people. They are part of the daily diet and the basic necessities of all families, and everyone who returns home from work, if he lives in this century, carries a book or magazine the same way that he carries bread, meat, fruit or beverages.

Our society however, still suffers from the tragedy of illiteracy, and even the literate often do not feel the need for books. In fact, our advanced intelligentsia in both the "old" (religious) and "modern" systems of education are prisoners of the limited confines of their fixed course-work texts and do not believe they need to read "miscellaneous" books.

Consequently, books have not been able to free themselves from the prisons of official and personal libraries of the world of the "elite" and, stretching their wings, enter into the streets, factories and farms

to provide an intellectual blanket for the whole society. Obviously, to these cultural and educational factors, one must add the economic factors. The low levels of income, the constant sharp price increases coupled with the progressive increase in the consumption of imposed imitation and non-essential luxury items, as well as consumption which is designed to undo the "backwardness" complex, have all combined to rush everyone into the debris of "false life" where there is no room left for books. For, individuals who are overwhelmed economically by debts and installment payments, and who spiritually enjoy a silk tie more than a philosophical, or even poetic book, and people who, as far as their intellectual and human personalities are concerned, have become corpses in the teeth and claws of greed—people who are too involved in running around and in cunning, apple-polishing, faking, asking for favors, pleading, fears, anxieties, sorrows and pettiness (for money)—these are not people who "read books."

Despite all the negative factors which were mentioned, the necessity of the times has brought books to the attention of our society. The relative expansion of secondary and higher education, the expansion of the mass media, the growth of urbanization, the collapse of the traditional order and the establishment of the new class structure (the growth of the bourgeoisie, the middle class and the new intelligentsia), the ideological crisis, increasing intellectual clashes, the increase of the scope and depth of social, political and religious awareness, the emergence of new ideological issues, the influence of contemporary philosophical and social schools of thought, anti-colonial, political and intellectual revolutions, crises in and movements of the Third World, and the opening of the closed traditional fortresses to the artistic, literary and ideological waves of the world—through radio, television, theater, magazines, translation, travel, economic and cultural exchanges, studying abroad and learning other languages—have made "reading" an inevitable necessity and an urgent need.

The more pressing problems facing contemporary religious believers, particularly those religious people who are familiar with today's world and its intellectual, scientific, social and cultural processes, are that, first, they have felt the necessity for books in their personal, family and collective lives. They recognize that there is no way that one can prevent the influence of books and that if they do not bring "good" books home, "bad" books will force their way inside instead and the current "thought" and ideas will penetrate the most hidden

corners of their private lives.

Secondly, they know that there is no reliable and enlightened guide or any other means which allow them to distinguish the "good" books from the "bad" ones. This is particularly true in light of the fact that in today's world of magazines and books, only experts and specialists are capable of making any judgement. Moreover, a book is not merchandise which, if chosen carelessly, will inflict only monetary loss, and the extent of damage is not limited to having bought a counterfeit product instead of the original. The damage is not that we will not be able to consume what we have bought and we have to throw it away. It is much more serious. A book is like food, but for the soul and mind. It is medicine for the pains, diseases, and shortcomings of the feeling and thought of mankind. Thus, if it were poisoned, if it were a counterfeit, there would be the grave danger of corruption.

In industrialized societies, there are many ways through which one can identify good books. There are technical libraries, committed publishers, distinctly identified scientific, religious or intellectual institutions, and more importantly, there are magazines, newspapers, libraries, along with special radio and television programs in which critics introduce and evaluate published books in an accurate and aware manner, in an impartial environment free from personal opinions or biases. As a result, regardless of their religious, political, philosophical, literary or scientific inclinations and expertise, people can identify the right type of publishers and critics, and, with their help, easily and with a degree of certainty and assurance, chose the books they want and desire to have.

Unfortunately, however, these kinds of possibilities and facilities are not available in our society. Thus, the person responsible for each family is suffering more or less from this dilemma of how to provide his family with healthy and uncontaminated spiritual and intellectual nutrition. He must provide himself, his spouse and particularly his children with good books. Yet he does not know how, from where and with what mark or criterion he should choose books or magazines, and he has no means at his disposal which can help him make that decision.

Moreover, there is also another important problem, i.e., the economic factor. The high cost of living, on the one hand, and the high cost of books, on the other, reduce the possibility of buying books. If we add to this list the difficulty of going to public libraries,

something which is a common problem for the majority of families, then we can understand why our people are so deprived of good books to read.

Keeping these factors in mind, Ḥusayniah Irshād has a plan for establishing a "mobile library." With the help of all aware and faithful people who feel some responsibility regarding the destiny of belief, thought, morals, religion, and particularly the destiny of the young generation in this society, the mobile library will soon be opened. The most important objectives of this library are the following:

1. To accustom people to reading and, particularly, to create the attitude that today, books are among of the basic needs of each family. Whoever is responsible for the family should not view his house as a chicken coop for which he should provide only water and bread; rather, he should view his family as a human unit which is also desperately in need of intellectual nutrition, and he, as the person responsible for the family, must think about and provide for this need.
2. To prepare healthy and reliable intellectual, scientific, literary and ideological food for the families.
3. To dispose of the poisoned and corrupt books and other publications in a logical and human manner, that is by distributing in their place good works and clean, constructive, and enlightening books.
4. To strengthen the spirit of faith, reliance upon moral values and to expand the religious and Islamic outlook and understanding.
5. To raise the level of public knowledge, understanding and consciousness and to train the youth, both intellectually and emotionally, who are at different ages and education levels.
6. To raise the level of the societal, scientific, and logical powers of resistance, particularly of the young and the educated people, through strengthening and enriching our own spiritual and intellectual resources as well as our religious and historical self-awareness, against the cultural, intellectual and moral onslaught of the West.
7. To make up for the spiritual shortcomings which come about as a result of the lack of financial ability to buy all the needed books for the family, by making the necessary books available to families and by preventing economic poverty from causing cause intellectual and scientific poverty
8. To remedy the grave cultural inadequacy of our society which has brought about the difficulty of distinguishing good books from

among the enormous number of suspicious, unknown and poisonous foreign and domestic books.

To fulfill these objectives, the mobile library will operate in the following manner:

1. Register a representative of each family, which will be sufficient for the issuance of a membership card for the entire family.
2. Prepare a list of "useful" books in different subjects from among publications in Iran (and as far as possible from those published outside of Iran) on a monthly basis, under the supervision of a committee of scientists and enlightened and committed thinkers of various literary and scientific fields. This list will then be divided into sections relative to the age groups of the readers, educational backgrounds, and desired subjects. Husayniāh Irshād will purchase these books and make them available to the mobile library.
3. Keep a complete list of all its books for loan to the public; make available to all the members of the library.
4. Lend books to members through long distance order or correspondence.
6. Review requests on a daily basis, deliver the requested books directly by special car, and collect previously withdrawn books and take future orders. In this manner all members of the family can, with a single membership card and payment of just ten Rials per month [approximately fifteen cents], have access to the best of what has been published in all areas of the country, and selected under the supervision of the most outstanding, aware and enlightened experts.

C. Publishing

1. Printing what the Husayniāh wishes to publish
2. Transcribing from cassette tapes, organizing and publishing the contents, which could include class lectures, scientific conferences and research reports
3. Distribution: This unit will distribute, sell and exchange the works of the Husayniāh

D. Press

1. Magazines
2. Anthologies
3. Quarterlies
4. Newspapers (dailies)

E. Translation

1. The Arabic group
2. The English group
3. The French group
4. The German group

F. Organization of Hajj and Islamic Rituals

NOTES

1. Piety of soul, purity of heart and sincerity of comprehension are recognized as the prerequisite of truth by the great contemporary scientists and enlightened intellectuals also. Even common people can see that lack of these fundamental attributes leads science and thinking to bloody disasters.

2. The Safavid dynasty which made Shī'ism the official religion of Iran presents a unique case for Shari'ati. He argues that the root of conservative Shī'ism and non-revolutionary spirit is due to the Safavids. See his "Shī'a Safavī wa Shī'a Alavī," in *Collected Works*, Volume 9. (Ed.).

3. As George Jurdāq put it "Among all the revolutionaries, only Ali was a man who never lost his revolutionary spirit whether in power or out." His removal of Mu'āwiyah and his refusal to compromise with Ṭalḥah and Zubayr are indicative of his revolutionary spirit.

4. According to the Muslims, Muhammad is the last Prophet appointed by God. (Ed.).

5. This mode of thinking shows the degree to which scientific research is respected in our religion. Islam believes in what is today referred to as "scientific spirit" or "research curiosity."

6. Permission (ijāza) is equivalent to an advanced diploma, indicating the existence of a formal rules in our religious educational institutions (hawzāt). Later on, the Europeans translated ijāzah into "license" and ijtihād into "Ph.D."

7. The reference here is primarily to Shī'i Imams and their followers and companions. (Tr.).

8. The significance of Imam Ja'far, the sixth Shī'i Imam, lies in his systematization of the Shī'i school of jurisprudence. (Ed.).

9. Aws and Khazraj were two large tribes of Medina before the Prophet migrated there. (Tr.).

10. "Have they not traveled in the land and seen the nature of the consequence for those who were before them? They were more numerous than these and mightier in power." [XL: 82]. This command with the same tone and emphasis, with minor changes in wording, is repeated in the Qur'an many times. [See for example III: 132; XVI: 39; XXII: 44; XXX:9; XXXV: 44; XL: 21; XLVII: 10].

11. The gathering in Saqifah following the Prophet's death is one of the most critical events in the early history of Islam. The newly established Islamic community gathered in Saqifah to decide on the successor to the Prophet. While the Shī'is believe that the Prophet had already designated Imam Ali as his successor, the Sunnis decided on the respected member of the community. (Ed.).

12. Shari'ati considers the assassination of 'Uthmān (656 C.E.) as a revolution by the people. (Ed.).

13. According to Shari'ati the first period starts from Ali's conversion to Islam until the death of the prophet (?610-632 C.E.), the second is the reign of the first three rightly guided caliphs (632-656), and the final period is Ali's own rule (656-661). (Ed.).

14. It is no coincidence that nowadays the slogan of "art for the sake of art" has currency, and that "the meaningless, futile, and absurd" is considered as an important school of art.

15. "Islam is like a garment worn inside out." This is a beautiful and profound saying of Ali, who knew Islam and his own time very well. Here, Ali is speaking of both the spirit and the objective of Islam which had been inverted and of its beauty which had become tarnished and hidden.

16. "O my God, I beseech You for the most eloquent and beautiful of Your qualities. All of Yours are the most exalted and beautiful. O my God, I beseech you for all Your qualities." [A Shī'ī prayer].

17. Sartre believes that there is a difference in kind between art and literature. Here, we do not wish to get involved in that debate. Art is used here in its common usage which includes literature also.

18. Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās was one of the military leaders of early Islam and one of the companions of the Prophet. He took part in many of the battles including those of Badr and 'Uḥud. He led the Islamic army against the Persians and defeated them in 637 A.D. (Ed.).

19. "And chant the Qur'an in measures." [LXXIII: 3].

20. The Prophet himself used to recite the Qur'an in a very loud, beautiful and effective voice. His recitation would attract non-believers around him. During the sad silence and loneliness following the massacres of Karbala and Medina, when oppression had reached its highest level, the fourth Shī'ī Imam, 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn, would recite the Qur'an either in the Prophet's mosque or in his own home (which was near the mosque). His recital was so beautiful that hearts would be involuntarily drawn toward it. The beauty of the miraculous words of the Qur'an was so effective that it penetrated the heart, reached the spirit and affected hearers' primordial nature.

21. According to a Prophetic tradition, "In God's view Bilal's 's' would be accepted as 'sh.' "

Appendix:
Arabic Text of Surah al-Rūm

- 1 أَلَمْ
2 غَلَبَتِ الرُّومُ
3 فِي آدَانِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ
4 فِي بَعْضِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ
يَفْقَرُ الْكُفْرِيُّونَ
5 بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ
6 وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ
7 هُمْ غَافِلُونَ
8 أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا
مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُونَ

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَنَارُوا الْأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَا
 أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ
 اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ 9

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ آتَاكَ وَالسُّوَاىِٕ أَنْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ
 اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ 10

اللَّهُ يَبْدُوا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ 11

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُبْلِسُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ 12

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ شُفَعَاءُ وَكَانُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ
 كُفِرِينَ 13

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِتَفْرِقُونَ 14

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَهُمْ فِي رَوْحَةٍ
 يُحْبَرُونَ 15

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ
فَأُولَئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُخَصَّرُونَ 16

فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ 17

وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ
تُظْهِرُونَ 18

يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِي
الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَكَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ 19

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ
تُنْتَبِرُونَ 20

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا
وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ 21

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ
وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ 22

وَمِنَ آيَاتِهِ مَنَّا مُكِّمٌ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاءُكُمْ مِّنْ فَطْرِهِ
 إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ 23

وَمِنَ آيَاتِهِ يُرِيكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
 مَاءً فَيُخْرِجُ بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
 يَعْقِلُونَ 24

وَمِنَ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ بِآمِرِهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ
 دَعْوَةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُونَ 25

وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلِّ لَهٍ قَانِتُونَ 26

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
 الْحَكِيمُ 27

صَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ
 مِّنْ شُرَكَاءَ فِي مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ تَخَافُونَهُمْ
 كَخِيفَتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ 28

بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَ هُمْ يَخْبِرُونَ عِلْمٌ فَمَنْ يَهْدِي
مَنْ أَمَلَ اللَّهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ تُصْرِيعٍ 29

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ
عَلَيْهَا لَا تَمْدِدْهُمْ إِخْلُقِ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ 30

مُنْهَبِينَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ 31

وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا كُلٌّ جَزِئًا
لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ 32

وَإِذَا مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى عَبْدٍ مِمَّا كَرِهَ النَّاسُ قَالَ اسْتَغْنَى
إِذَا أَذَقَهُمْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
يُشْرِكُونَ 33

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ 34

أَمْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا فَهِيَ أَتَكْتُمُونَهَا كَانُوا بِهَا
يُشْرِكُونَ 35

وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا وَإِن تُصِيبَهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ
بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ أَتَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَفْتَنُونَ 36

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْطِئُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَعْجِلُهُ
فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ 37

فَإِنَّ ذَا الْقُرْآنِ حَقٌّ وَالْمُشْكِبِ وَالسَّهْلِ ذَلِكَ عِبْرَةٌ
لِّلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ 38

وَمَا آتَيْتُم مِّن رَّبًّا تَبْتَرُوا فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا تَبْرأُوا
عِندَ اللَّهِ وَمَا آتَيْتُم مِّن زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُضْمِعُونَ 39

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ
هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَن يَفْعَلُ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ مِثْلَ شَيْءِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى
عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ 40

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ
لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ 41

قُلْ يَسِّرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
 مِنْ قَبْلُ كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُشْرِكِينَ 42

فَاقِمُوا وَجْهَكُمْ لِلدِّينِ الْقَدِيمِ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمْ
 بِكُفْرٍ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يُدْعَوْنَ 43

مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ طَائِعًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ
 يَمْتَدُونَ 44

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِنَّكَ
 لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ 45

وَمِنَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ يُزِيلَ الْوَيْحَ مَبَشِّرَاتٍ لِيُذِيقَكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ
 وَلِيُنَجِّيَ الْعَلْتُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِيَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
 تَشْكُرُونَ 46

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءَهُمْ
 بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَفْتَنَّا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آجَرُواوَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا
 نَسْفُؤُا أَمْوَالَهُمْ مِنْهُمْ 47

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ فَتُحْمَلُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُ فِيهَا
السَّمَاءَ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ فَنَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ
مِنْ غَلِيمٍ فَإِذَا أَصَابَهُمْ مِنْ نَيْشَاءٍ مِنْ عِبَادِهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ
يَسْتَشْفِرُونَ 48

وَلَوْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ كَمُبَلِّسِينَ 49

فَانظُرْ إِلَى آثَرِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَعَمَلِي الْمَوْتَى وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ 50

وَلَعَنَ أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا فَرَأَوْهُ مُطْفَرًّا الظُّلُمَاتِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
يَكْفُرُونَ 51

فَاتَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَى وَلَا تَسْمِعُ النَّمَّ الدَّمَاءَ
إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ 52

وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادٍ الْعَمَى عَنْ بِلَّاتِهِمْ إِنْ تَسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ
جَاءَ مِنْ بِلَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ 53

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ سَعْدِ قُوَّهِ ضَعْفًا
وَأَشَبَّهُهُ بَخَلْقِ مَا بَشَأْ وَهُوَ الْكَلْبُ الْقَدِيرُ 54

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقِيمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا عَشْرَ سَاعَةٍ
كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يَوْمَ تَكُونُ 55

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي كِتَابِ
اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ فَهَذَا يَوْمَ الْبَعْثِ وَلِكُلِّكُمْ كُتُبٌ
لَاتَعْلَمُونُ 56

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مُعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ 57

وَلَقَدْ مَرْبِنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَلَعَلَّ
حَقِّقْتَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ
إِلَّا مُبْطِلُونَ 58

كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ 59

فَأَمِيرٌ إِنْ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقٌّ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفَّتْكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ 60



Bibliography

- Abedi, Mehdi and Gary Legenhausen, ed. *Jihād and Shahādat: Struggle and Martyrdom in Islam*. Houston: IRIS, 1986.
- Al -e- Ahmad, Jalāl. *Gharbzadegi*, translated into English by John Green and Ahmad Alizadeh. Lexington: Mazda Publishers, no date.
- . *Dar Khedmat va Khyānat -e Roshanfekrān*. Tehran: Khwarazmi Publications, 1357/1978.
- Algar, Hamid. *Mirzā Mulkam Khān: A study in the History of Iranian Modernism*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973.
- Ayoub, Mahmoud. *Redemptive Suffering in Islam*. the Hague: Mouton, 1978.
- Bakhtiyārī, Bahman. *Religion and Politics: the Middle East and Latin America*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1984.
- Dehkhudā, Ali Akbar. *Lughatnāmah*. Tehran: Sazmān -e Lughatnamah -e- Dehkhuda.
- Carlyle, Thomas. *On Hero, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. Ginn & Company, Publishers, 1901.
- Fannon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Constance Farrington, New York: Grove Press, 1963.
- Firdawsi, Abu al-Qasim. *The Shāhnāma of Firdausi* A.G. and E. Warner, tr., 9 volumes. London: Kegan & Paul, 1905-25.
- Jafri, S.H. *Origin and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, New York: Longman, 1979.
- Jurdaq, Gerge. *al-Imām 'Alī Sawt al-'Adālah al-Insaniyah*, Beirut.
- Kasravi, Ahmad. *Tarikh -e- Mashrūtah*.
- . *Parcham* (Periodical).
- . *Paymān* (Periodical).
- Sachedina, Abdulaziz. *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi'ism*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1981.

Salih Najafābādi. *Shahīd -e Jāvid*, Tehran: Kanun -e Enteshar, 1349/1970.

Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs. *al-Shahīfah al-Sajjadiyah*, translated into English by Sayyid Ahmad Muhani, Islamic Propagation Organization, 1984.

Shari'ati, Ali. *Collected Works*, Daftar -e Tadwin va Tanzim -e Majmū'ah Athar -e Mu'allim -e Shahid Doktor Ali Shari'ati, Tehran.

———. *Man and Islam*, translated into English by Fatollah Marjani, Houston: FILINC, 1981.

———. *On the Sociology of Islam*, translated by Hamid Algar, Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1979.

———. *Pedar, Madar, Ma Muttahamim*, Collected Works #23.

———. *Man Without Self*, forthcoming from IRIS.

———. *Return to Which Self?*, Collected Works #4.

———. *Rūshanfekr va Mas'ūliyat -e 'U*.

Sharif al-Radi. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, edited by Subhi al-Salih, Beirut: 1387/1967. Translated as *Nahjul Balagha* by Sayed Ali Reza, Elmhurst: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an Inc., 1978.

Index

A

- Aaron (Moses's brother) 126
Abbasid caliphs 27, 130
'Abd al-Qādir of Algeria 148
'Abduh, Muḥammad 53, 148
'Abdullāh ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib 82
'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd 129
'Abdullāh ibn Zubayr 148
Abū-Bakr ibn Abī-Quhafah, the
first Caliph 129, 147
Abū-Dardā 38
Abūdhār al-Ghifārī 1, 23, 24, 37,
43, 66, 67, 71, 76, 129, 137, 148
Abū-Ḥanīfah, Imam 113
Abū-Hurayrah 38, 67
Abū-Jahl 78-80, 87, 101
Abū-Mūsā al-Ash'arī 38
Abū-Muslim Khurāsānī 147
Abū-Sufyān 35, 84, 88, 147
Abū-Ṭālib 76
'Adālat (concept) 23
'Adl (concept) 146
Ādam 71
Afghānī, see: Asadābādī
Africa 4, 8, 12, 14, 15, 19, 39, 62,
112, 130, 132, 143, 149, 150
African 7, 9, 12, 14, 15
Africans 29, 51
Afshār dynasty 90
Ahl al-Kitāb 88
Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Imam 113
Akhaemenids 89
Akhbari school of thought 122, 147,
149
Āl -e- Aḥmad, Jalāl 27, 68
Alavid Shi'ism 69
Alawites 148
Algar, Hamid 67, 102
Algeria 15, 149
Alī ibn Abī-Ṭālib, Imam 23, 26, 37,
38, 42, 43, 61, 66, 67, 69, 71, 72,
74, 76, 101, 108, 123, 124, 125,
130, 135, 146, 159
'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, Imam 160
'Alī's Medal, see: Medal of 'Alī
alienation 62
Allāmah Qazvīnī 4, 27
Allied Forces 28
'Ammār ibn Yāsir 76, 78-79, 83
'Amrw ibn al-'Āṣ 66, 91
Amsterdam 62
Anatolia 45
Anglo-Iranian Oil Company 14
animism 44
Anṣār 127
Anushirvan 88, 101
Arab customs 106
Arab poetry 143
Arabia 83, 84, 86, 146
Arabia Felix 84
Arabian Peninsula 83
Arabic language 125, 149, 152
Arabs 15, 85, 86, 90, 91, 127
Aristotle 4, 58
Aristotlian generalization 128

Armenians 86
 Armenian language 149
 Asadābādī. Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn 34,
 53, 58, 148
 Ash'arites 149
 Ashkabus 82
 'Āshūrā 37, 67, 137
 Asia 4, 9, 12, 13, 15, 44, 62, 130,
 132
 Asia Minor 45
 Asian 12
 assimilation 31, 32, 66
 Athens 89, 131
 Austria 45
 Avicenna, see: Ibn Sina
 Aws 84, 127, 159
 Ayoub, Mahmoud 28

B

Babism 149
 Babylon 91, 92, 102
 Badr, battle of 35, 159
 Bacon, Francis 10
 Baconian philosophy 10
 Bahā'ism 149
 Bakhtiyārī, Bahman 28
 Bal'am -e Ba'ura 48
 Banī-Hāshim 147
 Bayn al-Nahrayn, see:
 Mesopotamia
 Berbers 15
 Bible 39
 Bid'at (Innovation) 144, 149
 Bilāl 81, 83, 139, 160
 Brahman monks 37
 British Imperialism 58
 British Parliament 41
 Buddhism 19, 21, 44, 131, 146
 Buddhist 7
 Byzantine Empire 67, 75, 77, 82,
 83, 86, 87, 90, 91, 94, 108, 111,
 124, 126, 129, 130, 133

Byzantines 84
 Byzantium, see: Byzantine Empire

C

Cadillac 10
 Caesar 37, 81, 87, 93
 Caliphate Movement of India 148
 Carell, Alexis 63
 Carlyle, Thomas 76
 Cartesian rationalism 9
 Catholicism 21, 28, 42, 44, 106
 Catholic 42
 Catholic societies 42
 Cesaire, Aime 51, 52
 Chandell 35, 44, 49, 56, 59
 Children of Israel 126
 China 13, 84, 131
 Chinese 22
 Christian authors 124
 Christian priest 37
 Christian piety 124
 Christian Protestantism 25
 Christian traditions 106
 Christianity 15, 19, 20, 21, 39, 42,
 43, 88, 112, 126, 130, 131, 133,
 134, 146
 Christians 22, 88, 121
 Colonial powers 30
 Collected Works [of 'Alī Sharī'atī]
 1, 29, 68, 69, 71, 102, 103, 159
 Communism 112
 Communist world 135
 Constantinople 83, 94, 133
 Conversation in the Paris Prison
 (book) 67
 Copernicus 4
 Council of Umar 129, 147
 Croesuses 48, 57
 Croesusian world order 30, 40
 Crusades 45, 130, 133, 148
 Ctesiphon 83, 86, 90
 Cyprus 37

D

- Danes, see: Danish people
 Danish people 11
 Dār al-Nadwah 58
 Dar Khodmat va Khiyānat -e
 Rushanfekrān (book) 27
 Dehkhudā, 'Alī Akbar 4, 27
 Dien Bien Phou 102
 Dubare, Morris 15
 Durkheim, Emile 42

E

- East India Company 35
 Eastern Societies 11
 Egypt 82, 83, 102, 130
 Einstein 5, 32
 Emerson 128
 England 9, 41, 42
 English language 149, 152
 Ershad Institute, see Husayniyah
 Irshād
 Esfandiyar 82
 Ethiopia 82
 Euphrates 35
 Europe 2, 7, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 31,
 32, 33, 44, 50, 52, 62, 84, 130,
 131, 132, 133
 European 8, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 35,
 62, 66, 68
 Europeans 27, 51, 57

F

- Fanon, Franz 19, 27, 51, 52, 62, 67
 Farrington, Constance 67
 Fāṭimah 71, 72, 123
 Fayṣal I 28
 Fertile Crescent 77
 Fida'iyyān -e Islām 28
 Firdawsī, Ḥakīm Abu al-Qāsim 101
 France 9, 42
 French language 149

- French Revolution 18, 111
 fuqahā 2

G

- Galileo 4
 Gandhi, Mahatma 19, 52
 Georgia 86
 German 20
 German language 149
 Germany 9, 42
 Ghadir 143
 Gharbzadegi (book) 68
 Ghassanites 86
 Ghaybat (concept)
 Ghulāt (Shi'ite extremists) 146, 148
 Gladstone, William Ewart 41
 Greece 83, 89, 131
 Greek 22
 Greek culture 19
 Greek philosophers 146
 Greek philosophy 124

H

- Ḥabashah, see: Ethiopia
 Ḥāfiz, Shams al-Dīn Muhammad
 14, 27
 Hajj 105, 158
 Half (concept) 127
 Hanafi school of jurisprudence 146
 Hanbali school of jurisprudence 146
 Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, Imam 67, 123, 148
 Ḥasan al-Bannā 148
 Ḥassān ibn Thābit 137, 138
 ḥawzah (theological seminaries) 2,
 49, 61, 72, 114, 125, 135, 151,
 159
 Hijrah (concept)
 Hikmat (Islamic philosophy) 6, 27,
 149
 Hindus 146
 Hīrā Cave 58
 Hubal 35

Hujr ibn 'Adī 37, 67, 148
 humanism 15, 16
 Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, Imam 22, 28, 38,
 66, 69, 71, 103, 123, 137, 148
 Ḥusayniyah 104
 Ḥusayniyah Irshād 29, 71, 10, 103,
 104, 114, 117, 151, 153, 156, 158
 Huwazan tribe 67

I

Ibn Rushd 131, 149
 Ibn Sīnā 5, 7, 27, 58, 149
 Ibrāhīm al-Imām 147
 Ijazah (diploma) 122, 159
 Ijmā' 122
 Ijtihād 26, 106, 107, 110, 111, 112,
 113, 117, 122
 'Ilm al-Rijāl 118
 Imāmat (concept) 44, 124, 146
 India 9, 58, 90, 131, 150
 Indian culture 22
 Indian Mysticism 124
 Indian spiritualism 9
 Indians 19
 Intizār (Concept) 146
 Iqbāl, Muḥammad 53, 58, 148
 Iran 11, 12, 14, 21, 27, 28, 35, 45,
 50, 82, 103, 129, 130, 131, 135,
 146, 157
 Iranian 14, 18
 Iranian society 68
 Iranians 13, 65, 66, 88, 131
 Iraq 83, 86
 Iṣfahān 90
 Islam 1, 13, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 28,
 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44,
 45, 47, 48, 53, 57, 60, 63, 64, 68,
 73, 88, 103, (in most pages)
 Islamic 7, 12, 13, 19, 22
 Islamic civilization 107
 Islamic countries 32, 117, 133, 134,
 150
 Islamic culture 44, 50

Islamic philosophy 131
 Islamic Golden Age 131
 Islamic laws 107
 Islamic Messianism (book) 101
 Islamic Protestantism 25
 Islamic Renaissance 64, 65, 66, 130,
 148
 Islamic sciences 131
 Islāmpole 133
 Islāmshenāsī (book) 27
 Isma'īlī movements 148
 'Iṣmat (concept) 147
 Istanbul 133
 Istibdād (despotism) 26
 Istid'āf 26
 Istīmār (colonialism) 26
 Istithmār (exploitation) 26
 Italy 42, 45
 'Itrat 123

J

Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq,
 Imam 130, 159
 Ja'fari school of thought, see:
 Shi'ism
 Jafri, S. H. 28
 Jahili poetry 138
 Jahiliyah 124
 Japan 13
 Jerusalem 126
 Jesus 25, 75, 79
 Jews 127
 Jewish society 126
 Jewish rabbi 37
 Jihād 22, 23, 40, 42, 46, 110, 131
 Jihad and Shahādāt, 28
 Juda'ism 129, 131, 146
 Jurdāq, George 159

K

Ka'b al-Ahbār 37, 38, 67
 Ka'bah 127

- Kalām 118, 149
 Karbalā 22, 35, 137, 160
 Kasravī, Aḥmad 14, 28
 Kasrivism 149
 Kawākibī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān 148
 Kennedy, J. F. 88, 101
 Kenyatta 51
 Khadījah 58, 76
 Khazraj 84, 127, 159
 Khandaq, battle of 35, 36
 Khashāyārshāh 89
 Khātamiyat 111
 Khubāb 83
 Khud-āgāhī (self-awareness) 5
 al-Khulafā al-Rāshidūn 129
 Khurāsān 147
 Khusrow 37, 87, 93, 101
 Kurdish language 149
- L**
- Lāt 35
 Latin America 4, 9, 15, 19, 28, 29,
 44, 62, 69
 Lawrence of Arabia 28
 Liberation Front of Algeria 149
 Liberation Theology 28
 London 62
 Lughatnāmah (encyclopedia) 27
- M**
- Madā'in, see: Ctesiphon 83
 Madhhab 'alayhi Madhhab (book)
 69
 Madīnah (concept) 118, 126
 al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah 125-127
 Mahdī 34, 71, 101, 146, 147
 Malcolm Khan, see: Malkum Khān
 Mālik, Imam 113
 Mālikī school of jurisprudence 146
 Malkum Khān 34, 67
 Man and Islam (book) 102
 Manichianism 68, 129, 131
 Marjānī, Fatollāh 102
 Marx, Carl 8
 Marxism 16
 Mashhad 11, 27
 Masjid al-Harām 81, 82
 Mauritania 149
 Mawlawī, Jalal al-Dīn 58
 Maytham al-Tammār 24
 Mecca 36, 58, 67, 77, 78, 81, 83, 84,
 85, 86, 88, 94, 95, 127
 Meccans 78
 Medal of 'Alī 125, 135
 Medina 36, 67, 77, 78, 82, 84, 90,
 94, 127, 159, 160
 Mediterranean Sea 89, 133
 Mediterranean region 133
 Mesopotamia 45, 86
 Messianic Islamic Spirit 47
 Messianism 146
 Middle Ages 2, 9, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22,
 24, 34, 106, 111, 130, 131, 145,
 149
 Mirzā Malkum Khān: A Study in
 the History of Iranian
 Modernism (book) 67
 Mirzā Shirāzi 34, 67
 Monastic Christianity 43
 Mongols 133, 148
 Montī, Vincent 39
 Morocco 149
 Moscow 11
 Moses 75, 126, 139
 Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan 35, 67,
 81, 101, 147, 159
 mufasssīrūn 2
 Muḥaddithūn 121
 Muhajirūn 127
 Muḥammad, see: Prophet of Islam
 Muḥammad Shāh, the Mongol king
 90
 Mujtahid 110
 Mukhtār al-Thaqafī 148
 Mullā Ṣadra 7, 58

munawwar al-fekr, see:
 Rushanfekran
 Muşallib ibn Khrajjah 90, 101
 Muslim Brotherhood, movement of.
 148
 Muslims 13, 17, 20, 36, 41, 45, 63,
 72, 74, 77, 78, 81, 85, 87, 94, 103,
 108, 111, 114
 Muslim scientists 131
 Mustad'afün 1, 26, 71
 mutakallimün 2
 Mu'tazilites 147, 149
 Mystics 146

N

Nādirshāh 89, 90
 Nadhr ibn Hārith 101
 Nahdat al-Ridā 131
 Nāhj al-Balāghah (book) 125, 142,
 152
 Nahrawān, battle of 37
 Najd 84
 nationalism 15, 16, 28
 Netherlands 11
 New Era 131
 Niyābat (concept) 147
 North Africa 15
 Northern Arabia 84
 Nūri, Fadl Allāh 27
 Nyrere, Julius 51

O

Office for Islamic Information and
 Relations 134
 Orientalists 121
 Origin and Early Development of
 Shī'a Islam (book) 28
 Ottoman Empire 28

P

Palestine 45
 Papal dictatorship 106

Parcham (periodical) 28
 Paris 27, 62
 Paymān (periodical) 28
 Pedar, Madar Ma Muttahamim
 (book) 68
 Persia 82, 84, 86, 88, 91
 Persian Alphabet 13
 Persian Empire 90, 94, 108
 Persian language 124, 131, 145, 149
 Persian poetry 62
 Persian myths 124
 Persian writers 120
 Persians 27, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88,
 89, 90, 159
 Peter the Great 11
 Pharaoh 40, 48, 57
 Planck, Max 32
 Plato 57, 58
 Pope 15, 23
 Practical Sufism 149
 Promised Land 126
 Prophet of Islam 22, 26, 35, 37, 38,
 43, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 67, 75, 76,
 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85,
 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93 ... (in
 most pages)
 Protestant 22, 42
 Protestant countries 42
 Protestant movement 106
 Protestantism 42
 Pseudo-enlightened 32, 35, 38, 42,
 52, 68

Q

Qadiānism 149
 Qādisiyah, battle of 37, 67
 Qājār King 34
 Qarāchadāghī 27
 Qazvinī, Muḥammad, see: 'Allāmah
 Qazvinī
 Qiyās 122
 Qur'an 26, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36, 41,
 48, 57, 61, 65, 66, 72, 73, 74, 75,

- 77, 82, 87, 88, 93, 95, 101, 105, 106, 110, (in many pages)
 Quraysh 66, 78, 82, 86, 108, 138
- R**
- Rab'al-Khālī 83
 Rabadhah 37, 137
 rā'id 6, (defined) 27
 The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam (book) 52
 Red Sea 83
 Redemptive Suffering in Islam (book) 28
 Regie Company 35
 Religion and Politics: the Middle East and Latin America (Ph.D. dissertation) 28
 Renaissance 18, 106, 130, 145
 Return to Which Self? (article) 69
 Ridā Shah 27
 Rijal, see: Ilm al-Rijal
 Roman Empire, see: Byzantine
 Romans 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90
 Rome 18, 84
 Rousseau 8, 15
 Rūshanfekr wa Mas'ūliyat -e 'Ū (book) 69
 rūshanfekrān (enlightened) 2, 4, 7, 11, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 29
 Russia 11
 Russian language 149
 Russians 11
 Rustam 82
- S**
- Sabzavārī, Hajj Mullā Hadī 149
 Sachedina, Abdulaziz 101
 Sa'd ibn Abī-Waqqās 138, 159
 al-Sādāt al-Hasanī 148
 Šafā 58
 Safavid Shi'ism 69
 Safavids 111, 158
 al-Šaḥifah al-Sajjādiyah 152
 Salafiyah 148
 Šāliḥī Najafābādī 28
 Salmān al-Farīsī 76, 83
 Sanusī 148
 Saqīfah of Banī-Sa'īdah 129, 147, 159
 Sarbedārān 148
 Sartrean revolution 9
 Sartre Jean Paul 8, 9, 27, 35, 50, 62, 67, 159
 Sassanids 66, 67, 83, 101, 124
 Šafā'at (intercession) 146
 Sattār Khān 4
 Šafi'ī Imām, 113
 Šafi'ī school of jurisprudence 146
 Shahādāt 46
 Shahīd -e Jāvid (book) 101
 Šāhnāmah (book) 101
 Šām, see: Syria
 Šari'atī, 'Alī 27, 28, 67, 68, 69, 101, 158, 159
 Shi'ism 21, 28, 38, 39, 61, 69, 73, 103, 111, 113, 130, 131, 147, 154, 158
 Šūrā (Concept) 129
 Šurayh 38
 al-Šifāt al-Salbiyah 118
 al-Šifāt al-Thubūtiyah 118
 Šiffayn, battle of 35, 37, 48, 80-81, 101
 Silk Road 84
 Sir Seyyed Ahmad Khān 148
 al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah 120
 Society of Islamic ulama in 149
 Socrates 4, 44, 58
 Spain 13, 42, 44, 106, 130
 Spanish language 149
 Star of North Africa 149
 St. Paul 24
 St. Simon 8
 Sudan 67
 Sudanese 67
 Sufism 131, 149

Sulaymān ibn Surad al-Khuza'ī 148
 Sumayyah 78, 83
 Sunni Islam 69, 73, 159
 Supreme Board of Research 117,
 125
 Sur Isrāfīl (journal) 27
 Sūrah al-Rūm 71, 74, 77, 86, 90, 99
 Syria 35, 45, 82

T

ta'aṣṣub 67
 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr 90
 Tabooism 44
 Tabriz 28
 Tagore 52
 Ta'if 82
 Tajikistan 106
 Ṭalḥah 159
 Taoism 21, 44
 Taqīyah (concept) 147
 Taqizadah, Sayyid Hasan 35, 50, 67
 Tarīkh -e Mashrūtah (book) 28
 Tawwabīn 146
 Technical University of Tehran 1
 Tehran 1, 10, 27, 59
 Theoretical Sufism 149
 Third World 11, 15, 50, 51, 52, 59,
 62, 85, 95
 Tobacco Protest 67
 Totemism 44
 Tunisia 149
 Turkish language 149
 Turks 130
 Turkey 13, 83, 84
 Tuyūl (a land distribution concept)
 132

U

'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād 37
 Udabā (men of letters) 2
 Uḥud, battle of 159

'ulamā 2, 3, 73, 115, 116, 122, 134,
 151
 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second
 Caliph 90, 129, 147
 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz 147
 'Umar Mawlūd 61
 Umayyads 35, 108, 129, 130, 147,
 148
 'Umayyah ibn Khalaf 79, 81, 87,
 88, 101
 United States of America 9, 42, 89,
 102, 133, 150
 'Uthman ibn 'Affān 67, 80, 129,
 147, 159

V

Vedaism 21
 Vedanta 19
 Vedic 19
 Vienna 27, 45, 133
 Vietnam 89
 Voltaire 15
 Von Braun 5

W

Wahhābism 149
 Waqf (endowment) 132
 Weber, Max 42, 89
 Western culture 18, 22
 Westernization 55, 134
 World War I 150
 World War II 111, 150
 The Wretched of the Earth (book)
 27, 67

Y

Yahyā ibn Zayd ibn 'Alī 148
 Yarmūk, battle of 37, 67
 Yāsir 78
 Yazdegerd 92
 Yazīd 28, 35

Index

181

Yemen: 78, 82, 83, 84

Yugoslavia 150

Z

Zayd ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn 148

Zaynab 123, 137

Ziyaratnāmah 147

Zoroastrian magi 37

Zoroastrian clergy 66

Zoroastrianism 68, 129, 131, 146

Zoroastrians 88

Zubayr 159

Zuhayr 137





"Religion is an amazing phenomenon which plays contradictory roles in the life of human beings. It destroys and revitalizes, puts to sleep and awakens, enslaves and emancipates, teaches docility and revolt . . . The history of Islam itself is the story of these contradictory roles of religion among various social classes. It is the history of the war of Islam against Islam and even the war of the Qur'an against the Qur'an (as in the battle of Sifayn). As it is true that always and everywhere the logical and progressive Islam and the Islam of motion and movement has been outmaneuvered and defeated by the deviant and decadent Islam and by the Islam of stagnation and compromise, a truly enlightened and realistic person knows that the only way to outmaneuver it and eradicate it from the minds and lives of people is to substitute the true, life-giving, and primordial Islam for it. At this juncture, we see that neither the intellectuals, who do not know Islam, nor the pseudo-religious people, who are unaware of their own time, can fulfill our immediate needs. Only the enlightened Islamic scholar is able . . . to extract and refine, with the help of the miraculous revolution that exists in the very nature of the spirit and thought of the true Islam, the vast religious energies which are entrapped now."

—from "What Is To Be Done"
Dr. Ali Shari'ati

THE INSTITUTE
FOR RESEARCH AND
ISLAMIC STUDIES

P.O. Box 35844 • Houston, Texas 77235 • USA

