



**Understanding the
Uniqueness of the
Qur'an**

Author

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History and Human Evolution (Lecture 1)



The subject of our discussion is the meaning of evolution in history, or in other words, man's social evolution and progress. Men of science assume two types of evolution for man: one of which is biological evolution, about which you may have read in biology and know that man is considered as the most perfect animal and the last link in the natural evolution of animals. The meaning of biological evolution is clear: it is an evolution that the process of nature has produced without the intervention of man himself and without his asking for it. In this respect

there is no difference between man and other animals; since every animal has reached a stage of evolution by a natural and coercive process. The same process has brought man to the stage that we call him a human being, and consider him a specific kind of species as distinct from other species.

But the historical or social evolution means a new process of evolution in which nature does not play the role it played in man's biological evolution. This evolution is an acquired one, namely, an evolution that man has secured by his own effort, and in every period has transferred it to the next generation through teaching and learning, and not through heredity. The biological evolution has taken place without man's will power and initiative, and has been achieved through a series of laws of heredity.

But the social or historical evolution, being acquired by man's effort, has not been handed down from one generation to another, or from zone to zone through heredity, and there is not even a possibility of its being such. It has been accomplished through education, teaching and learning, and primarily through the art of writing. We see that the Quran swears in the name of the pen and tools of writing¹, and addresses the Prophet thus: "Read in the name of your God, Who created man from clotted blood. Read, and your God is the most exalted; He, who taught with the pen."² This means that God taught man how to use the pen; that is, He granted him the power to make progress in his historical and social evolution.

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

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

What is Evolution?

We must first define evolution. Many matters seem at first so obvious as to require no definition. But when one tries to define them, he finds it very hard and is faced with difficulties. I have no intention of quoting all the definitions which philosophers have given for evolution. There is a fine point in Islamic philosophy which is subject to argument from the viewpoint of the Quran, and that is the difference between "complete" and "perfect". We use the word "complete" as the antonym of "defective", and again we use "perfect" as the antonym of the same word "defective". But does "complete" mean "perfect"? No. There is a verse in the Quran which is related to the question of Imamah and wilayah. It says: "Now We made your religion perfect, and completed Our blessings on you and were content for Islam to be your religion." (Quran, 5:3)

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

Is progress the same as evolution, and is evolution identical with progress? They happen to have a difference and you may consider their usage. We sometimes speak of a sickness which is progressing, but we do not say it is evolving. If an army which is fighting in a land occupies a part of it, we say that the army is advancing, but we do not say that it is evolving. Why not? Because there is a sense of exaltation in evolution: evolution is an upward movement, a vertical movement, from a lower level to a higher plane. But progress and advance is always on a horizontal level. When an army has occupied a territory and added some land to its own possessions, we say that it has advanced, which means that it has moved ahead but on the same plane that it had before.

Why do we not say that it has evolved? Because, there is the idea of exaltation in evolution. So, when we speak of social evolution, it means man's social exaltation and not just progress. Many things may be considered progress for man and society without being evolution and exaltation for the human society. We say this to show that if some scholars have expressed doubts about such progress' worthiness to be called an evolution, their view is not without foundation. Although we do not confirm their view, yet what they have stated is not entirely pointless. Therefore, there is a difference between evolution on the one hand and progress and development on the other; for progress and development are almost similar in meaning.

But the difference between perfect and complete can be explained in this fashion: If something consists of a number of parts, such as a building or a car, as long as all the necessary parts do not exist in it, we say that it is imperfect. But when we place the last part

in it, then we can say that it is "complete". In comparison, evolution has many phases and stages. When a child is born with some defect in his limbs, we consider him defective; but even when he is born with all his limbs complete, it is still considered defective from another point of view; he must pass through many stages of evolution in his education which are for him a form of exaltation and ascension by degrees and steps. So far our discussion was about the definition of evolution in the social and biological sense. But now we deal with other matters in this connection, the most important of which may be stated in three questions:

1. Has man, in his social life and throughout history, achieved evolution and exaltation?
2. Is human society undergoing evolution and will reach a fully evolved state in future?
3. If it is undergoing evolution, what is that ideal society, or, as Plato would say, that utopia of man, and what are its peculiarities?

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

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

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

and Destiny), may be considered one of the most sublime of Islamic teachings.

The Problem of Bada' (Revision)

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

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

The Evolution of History in the Past

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

You may call it whatever you like, either "progress" or "evolution", there can be no doubt that man has made tremendous progress in making tools, and it may be expected to continue in future too, on condition, however, that it is not, checked by a historic catastrophe, a calamity which is again predicted by some men of learning. They consider it probable that man's

technical and industrial progress will reach a point when man may destroy himself and all his achievements in science and technology, his books, his learning and civilization and all its vestiges. A new type of human being may appear to start life from the beginning. If no such catastrophe occurs, there is no doubt that the creation of tools may further advance to a stage which may not be imaginable today. This evolution is produced by the evolution of man's experience and his knowledge, for man has made so much progress in his experimental understanding and knowledge of nature that he has been able to conquer nature and turn it into a docile servant. This was one aspect of human progress.

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

Some have defined evolution as a process involving two stages: at first, there is an accumulation, that is, a multiplication of parts followed by division, characterized by a movement from homogeneity towards heterogeneity, or, in other words, movement towards organization between parts and organs interconnected by a unifying relationship. For example, we know that in the process of fertilization, a cell which is formed by the combination of male sperm and female ovum has a simple form at first; then it begins the process of division (accumulation); one cell divides into two, the two into four, the four into eight, the eight into sixteen, and this division goes on.

But it is only a question of quantity until a stage is reached when there takes place another form of division; this is, one part becomes the nervous system, another emerges as the heart and system of blood circulation, and so on, and all these organs are interrelated forming an organized unity which is the human body. In this respect, human society, too, has progressed, whether you may choose to call it 'evolution' or not. That is, the structure of human society has changed from a simple state into something complex. The structure of primitive and tribal societies was very simple. Someone was the chief of a tribe consisting of a number of people, and the chief divided the tasks between them, and these tasks were few in number. But you see that with the progress of science and technology, such division of work has become complicated because there are more tasks and more people to perform them. Compare the existing variety of jobs, tasks, professions and crafts of modern day with those of the societies of a hundred years ago. Or look at the degree of specialization at the administrative and scientific levels.

In the past, a man was able to master all the sciences of his own time. He could become an Aristotle or an Ibn Sina. But now the system of education has undergone such subdivisions, that we have hundreds of the like of Aristotle and Ibn Sina, each a specialist in his own field, who are not the least acquainted with other branches of science and quite unaware of even their existence in the world. This is a characteristic of our time, a quality that removes uniformity and homogeneity from among human beings and replaces it with differences and distinctions. For, as man creates work, work too builds up man.

As a result, although all are human beings living in one society, but they seem to possess different natures, since everyone is dealing with a task which is unknown to another who is engaged in another task. Every one of them seems to live in a different world of his own. The result is that human beings vary from one another. If we speak of progress or evolution in connection with society and its organization and division of labour, skills and talents, again the structure of human society has changed from a simple into a complex and extremely entangled one.

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

Human Relationships

Has man made progress in the quality of relationships of human beings with one another in the same way as he has made progress in the creation of tools, and in the complexity of social structure? If he has, then we may call it evolution and exaltation. Have human beings progressed in the sense of co-operation? Does a human being of today feel more co-operative towards others than in the past? Has he made a proportionate advance in the sense of responsibility towards other human beings?

Has man's exploitation of other human beings been really effaced? Or is it that only its form

has been altered and that it has increased in degree? Has man's aggression against the rights of others diminished? Have human relations improved in proportion to the advances made in building tools and with the complexity of social structure? Or have these problems remained the same as before? Or there may be some who claim that not only no progress has been made in this connection, but also there has even been a retrogression? In other words, can it be said in general that human values, and everything that is the criterion of the humanity of man, have advanced proportionately?

Different views have been expressed in this connection; some cynically deny it totally that man has made any progress whatsoever in this respect, for, they say, if the criterion of progress is welfare and happiness, we may hardly call it progress. For example, even in the case of tools, it is doubted whether they have provided man with welfare. As an example, speed is one of the things which has greatly advanced as exhibited by the telephone, airplane and other such things. But can this improvement in speed be called progress when measured by the criterion of human welfare? Or, since speed is a means, it has produced comfort in one respect, in other respects it has deprived man of welfare:

it carries a good man promptly to his destination, but it also carries a wicked man as quickly to his goal and as promptly in his evil purpose. A sound and honest man has found stronger hands and quicker legs. A wicked man, too, has the same advantages. These means have made possible the transfer of a criminal from one part of the world to another part in a few hours, to kill thousands or even millions of people at once. What, then, is the final conclusion? Though I am not in favour of this cynicism, yet I wish to explain why it has been expressed by some.

For example, is the progress in medicine a true progress? In appearance, it is, for I see that when a child suffers from diphtheria, right drugs and proper medical treatment are readily available. This is progress. But some people like Alexis Carl who measure these things with the criterion of humanity, believe that medicine is gradually weakening human species. They say: In the past, human beings had resistance against diseases; the weak were destroyed and the strong remained alive, and this made successive generations stronger and resistant to diseases, and also prevented the unnecessary increase of population. But now, medicine is artificially preserving weak persons who otherwise would have perished and were really condemned to death by nature. Therefore, the successive generations are not fit to survive, and so every generation becomes weaker than its predecessor.

A child born in the seventh month of pregnancy is by the law of nature condemned to death; but now medicine, with its progress and means, preserves this baby. But what will become of the next generation? Moreover, there is the question of over-population. It happens that those who are fitter for the improvement of the human race are destroyed and those who are

not competent to bring about this improvement somehow manage to survive. This is the reason for doubt in this matter.

Another Example

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

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

The Relation of Man with Himself

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

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

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

The problem here is of self-purification, which means not being captivated by greed and

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

So far we have discussed four points:

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

The Role of Prophets and religion on the Historical Evolution

Has man of today overcome his animality more than his ancestors in the past, and have the higher human values been realized in his existence? Or, has the quality of human existence been better in the past? The role of the prophets in the historical evolution, their role in the past and in the future, becomes clear in this connection. Here we can discover the role of religion in the past and thereby find out its role in the future, and on the basis of scientific and sociological evidence, we can guess whether man requires religion in future for his evolution or not; because, the survival or annihilation of every thing is subject to its being able to fulfil human need. This principle has been stated by the Quran and is affirmed by science. The Quran says:

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

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

The question whether religion will survive in the future is related to its role in human evolution, that is, in the evolution of his essence, his spirituality and humanity and the

evolution of good relation of man with himself and with other human beings-something which cannot be replaced by anything else, either now or in future.

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

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

The Causes Responsible for Materialist (Lecture 1)

The topic of the present study are the causes that lie behind materialist tendencies. Before we proceed with the discussion it is necessary that we first define the word 'materialism,' as a term current in common usage, and specify its exact meaning for the purpose of the present discussion.

The word 'materialism' has various usages and all of them are not relevant to our study while studying the cause for materialist inclinations. For example, at times 'materialism' is used to refer to the school of thought which asserts the principality of matter in the sense that matter is something fundamental (asil) and real in the realm of existence and not something imaginary and mental, an appearance and a product of the mind. In this sense it is opposed to 'idealism' which negates the real existence of matter and considers it a mental construct.

In this sense of materialism, we would have to categorize all theists, both Muslims as well as non-Muslims, as 'materialists,' because all of them consider matter-as a reality existing in space and time and subject to change, transformation, and evolution, and which is also perceivable and tangible-as an objective reality existing externally and independently of the mind and having its own properties. Being a 'materialist' in this sense does not contradict with the concept of God or monotheism. Rather, the material world and nature as a product of creation constitute the best

means for knowing God. The workings of Divine will and wisdom are discovered in the transformations which take place in matter, and the Holy Qur'an, too, refers to material phenomena as the 'signs' of God.

Sometimes this word is used to imply the negation of supra-material being, as an exclusivist school of thought which considers existence and the realm of being as confined to matter, confining being to the realm of the changeable and limiting it to space and time. It negates the existence of all that does not fall within the framework of change and transformation and is not perceivable by the sense organs.

Our present discussion centres around the causes for inclining towards this exclusivist school of thought, and the reasons why a group of people became protagonists of this exclusivist and negative theory, negating God and imagining anything outside the ambit of the material world as non-existent. Is Man by Nature a Theist or a Materialist?

This manner of posing the issue, i.e with the question 'What are the causes for inclining towards materialism?', suggests that we claim that man by nature would not incline towards materialism, and that materialism is an unnatural tendency opposed to human nature (fitrah). And since it goes against the rule, it is necessary to seek its cause and to investigate the reasons which have led to the violation of the rule.

To put it more simply, it implies that faith in God is equivalent to the state of health, and the materialist tendency is equivalent to disease. One never asks about the reasons of health, because it is in accordance with the general course of nature. But if we come across a person or a group which is sick, we ask as to why they are sick. What is the cause of their illness?

This viewpoint of ours is completely opposed to the view usually expressed in books on history of religion. The writers of these books generally tend to pursue the question, 'Why did man develop the religious tendency?'

In our opinion, the religious tendency does not need to be questioned, because it is natural; rather, the question that needs to be examined is why do human beings develop tendencies towards irreligion?

Presently we do not intend to pursue the argument whether being religious is something natural and the lack of religion unnatural, or if the converse is true, because we see no need for doing so from the point of view of the main topic of our discussion.

However, it is worth noting that we do not mean that, as the monotheistic tendency is natural and innate (fitrah), no questions arise when the issue is dealt with at the intellectual and philosophical

level. This is certainly not meant. This matter is just like every other issue that naturally- and despite affirmation by natural instinct-gives rise to questions, objections and doubts in the mind of a beginner when posed at the rational level, and satisfying answers to them are also available at that level.

Therefore, we neither intend to disregard the doubts and ambiguities which do in fact arise for individuals, nor do we consider them consequences of an evil disposition or ill-naturedness. Not at all. The emergence of doubts and ambiguities in this context, when someone seeks to solve all the problems related to this issue, is something natural and usual, and it is these doubts that impel human beings towards further quest. Accordingly we consider such doubts which result in further search for truth as sacred, because they constitute a prelude to the acquisition of certitude, faith, and conviction.

Doubt is bad where it becomes an obsession and completely absorbs one's attention, as with some people whom we find enjoying the fact that they are able to have doubt concerning certain issues and who consider doubt and uncertainty to be the zenith of their intellectual achievement. Such a state is very dangerous, contrary to the former state which is a prelude to perfection. Therefore, we have said repeatedly that doubt is a good and necessary passage, but an evil station and destination.

Our present discussion concerns the individuals or groups who have made doubt their abode and final destination. In our opinion, materialism, although it introduces itself as a dogmatic school of thought, is in fact one of the sceptic schools. The Qur'an also takes this view of the materialists, and according to it they are, at best, beset with a number of doubts and conjectures, but in practice they flaunt them as knowledge and conviction. [2] The Historical Background:

This mode of thinking is not new or modern. It should not be imagined that this mode of thought is a consequence of modern scientific and industrial developments and has emerged for the first time during the last one or two centuries, like many other scientific theories which did not exist earlier and were later discovered by man. No, the materialist thinking among human beings is not a phenomenon of the last few centuries, but is one of the ancient modes of thought. We read in the history of philosophy that many ancient Greek philosophers who preceded Socrates and his philosophical movement, were materialists and denied the supra-material.

Among the Arabs of the Jahillyyah contemporaneous to the Prophet's ministry there was a group with a similar belief, and the Qur'an, while confronting them, quotes and criticizes their statements:

They say, 'There is nothing but our present life; we die, and we live, and nothing but time destroys us.' (45:24). This statement, which the Qur'an ascribes to a group of people, involves both the

negation of God as well as the Hereafter. Materialism in Islamic History:

The word 'dahr' means time. Due to this verse and the term dahr occurring in it, those who negated the existence of God were called 'dahriyyah' during the Islamic period. We encounter such people in Islamic history who were dhari and materialists (maddi), especially during the reign of the Abbassids, when various cultural and philosophical trends entered the Islamic world.

Due to the freedom of thought which prevailed during that period with respect to scientific, philosophical and religious ideas (of course, to the extent that it did not contradict the policies of the Abbassids), some individuals were formally known as materialists and atheists. These individuals debated with Muslims, with the adherents of other religions, and with believers in the existence of God, and presented their arguments and raised objections concerning the arguments of the monotheists. Thus they did enter into dialogue and freely expressed their beliefs, and we find their accounts recorded in Islamic works.

During the lifetime of Imam Sadiq, may Peace be upon him, there were certain individuals who used to gather inside the Prophet's Mosque and express such views. The book al-Tawhid al-Mufaddal is a product one of such episodes.

A companion of Imam Sadiq ('a) named al-Mufaddal ibn 'Umar narrates: "Once I was in the Prophet's Mosque. After prayer I became engrossed in thought about the Prophet (S) and his greatness. Just then 'Abd al-Karim ibn Abi al 'Awja', who was an atheist (zindiq), came and sat down at some distance. Later another person holding similar views pined him, and both of them started uttering blasphemies. They denied the existence of God and referred to the Prophet (S) simply as a great thinker and a genius and not as a Divine emissary and apostle who received revelations from an Unseen source. They said that he was a genius who presented his ideas as revelation in order to influence the people; otherwise there was no God, nor any revelation or resurrection."

Mufaddal, who was greatly disturbed on hearing their talk, abused them. Then he went to Imam Sadiq, may Peace be upon him, and narrated the incident. The Imam comforted him and told him that he would furnish him with arguments with which he could confront them and refute their views. Thereafter Imam Sadiq ('a) instructed Mufaddal in the course of a few long sessions and Mufaddal wrote down the Imam's teachings. This was how the book al-Tawhid al-Mufaddal came to be compiled. Materialism in the Modern Age:

As we know, during the 18th and 19th centuries materialism took the form of a school of thought which it did not have earlier. That which is ascribed to some schools of ancient Greece does not have a proper basis. Usually the writers of history of philosophy do not know philosophy, and when they come across certain statements of some philosophers concerning the pre-eternity of

matter or some other opinions of the kind, they imagine that this amounts to the negation of God and the supra-natural. It has not been established for us that there existed a materialist school of thought before the modern age. Rather, what did exist earlier in Greece and elsewhere were individual tendencies towards materialism.

However, this is what has led many people to suppose that perhaps there is some direct relation between the emergence of materialism as a school of thought and science and scientific advancements.

Of course, the materialists themselves make a great effort to present the matter as such, and they try to convince others that the cause of the growth and prevalence of materialism during the 18th and 19th centuries was the emergence of scientific theories and that it was the spread of science which resulted in mankind being drawn towards it. This observation resembles a joke more than any noteworthy fact.

The inclination towards materialism in ancient times existed both among the educated as well as the illiterate classes. In the modern age, too, the case is similar. Materialists can be found in all classes, and likewise there are theistic, spiritual and metaphysical inclinations in all classes and sections, especially among the learned. If what the materialists claim were true, in the same proportion that advances are made in science and great scientists are born in the world, there should be an increase in the inclination towards materialism among the scholarly class, and individuals possessing more scholarship should be greater materialists, while in fact this is not the case.

Today, we see on the one hand some well well-known personalities like Russell, who, to a large extent, present themselves as materialists. He says, "Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms." [3] Thus Russell rejects the existence of a conscious and intelligent power ruling the universe, although at other places he avers to be a skeptic and an agnostic. [4]

On the other hand, we find Einstein, the twentieth century scientific genius, expressing an opinion opposed to that of Russell; he says "You will hardly find one among the profounder sort of scientific minds without a religious feeling of his own ... His religious feeling takes the form of rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. This feeling is the guiding principle of his life and work, in so far as he succeeds in keeping himself from the shackles of selfish desire. It is beyond question closely akin to that which has possessed the religious geniuses of all ages." [5]

Can it be said that Russell is familiar with the concepts of modern science whereas Einstein is ignorant of them? Or that a certain philosopher of the 18th or 19th century was familiar with the scientific concepts of his age whereas the theist Pasteur was unaware and ignorant of them?!

Or can we say that William James, the monotheist or rather the mystic of his time, Bergson, Alexis Carrell and other such thinkers were ignorant of the scientific ideas of their time and their thinking was in tune with the ideas of a thousand years ago, while a certain Iranian youth who does not possess a tenth of their knowledge and does not believe in God is familiar with the scientific ideas of his age?!

At times one sees two mathematicians, one of whom believes in God and religion while the other is a materialist, or for that matter two physicists, two biologists, or two astronomers, one with a materialist and the other with a theistic bent of mind.

Therefore, it is not that simple to say that the advent of science has made metaphysical issues obsolete. That would be a childish observation.

We need to centre our discussion more on the question as to what were the factors that led to the emergence of materialism as a school of thought in Europe, attracting a large number of followers, even though the 20th century, in contrast to the 18th and 19th centuries, saw a decline in the advance of materialism and in it materialism even met with a kind of defeat?

This large-scale drift has a series of historical and social causes which require to be studied. I have come across some of these causes during the course of my study which I shall mention here. Perhaps those who have done a closer study of social issues, especially in the area of European history, would identify other reasons and factors. Here I only intend to discuss the results of my study. Inadequacies in the Religious Ideas of the Church The Church, whether from the viewpoint of the inadequacy of its theological ideas, or its inhuman attitude towards the masses, especially towards the scholars and freethinkers, is one of the main causes for the drifting of the Christian world, and indirectly the non-Christian world, towards materialism.

We will analyze this factor in two sections:

1. Inadequacies in the ideas of the Church relating to God and the metaphysical.
2. The violent conduct of the Church. Section 1:

In the Middle Ages when the clerics became the sole arbiters of issues relating to divinities, there emerged amongst them certain childish and inadequate ideas concerning God which were in no way consonant with reality. Naturally, these not only did not satisfy intelligent and enlightened individuals, but created in them an aversion against theism and incited them against theist

thought. Anthropomorphic Conceptions of God:

The Church painted a human picture of God and presented Him to the people in an anthropomorphic form. Those who were brought up to conceive God with these human and physical features under the influence of the Church, later, with advances in science, came to find that these ideas were inconsistent with scientific, objective, and sound rational criteria.

On the other hand, the vast majority of people naturally do not possess such power of critical analysis as to reflect over the possibility that metaphysical ideas might have a rational basis and that the Church was wrongly presenting them.

Thus when they saw that the views of the Church did not conform to the criteria of science they rejected the issue outright.

There is a book titled *The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe*, consisting of forty articles by forty scientists belonging to various fields of specialization, wherein each scholar has presented arguments proving the existence of God in accordance with his own specialized area of study. This book has been translated into Persian.

Among these scholars is Walter Oscar Lundberg, who presents a scientific argument for the existence of God. In the course of his study he examines why some people, including scholars, have developed a materialist tendency.

He mentions two causes of which one has been already mentioned by us, inadequate ideas taught on this subject to the people in the church or at home.

Our singling out the churches in this regard does not mean to imply that those who give instruction on religious issues from our pulpits (manabir) and mosques have always been informed and competent individuals who know what is to be taught and possess an in-depth knowledge of Islam. One reason why we mention only the church is that our discussion is about the causes behind materialist inclinations and these tendencies existed in the Christian world and not in the Islamic environments. Whatever materialism is found in Islamic societies has been, and is, the result of copying and imitating the West. Secondly, there existed in the Islamic milieu a school of thought at the level of philosophers and metaphysicians, which satisfied the intellectual needs of the researchers and saved the scholars from the fate of their counterpart in Europe, while there existed no such school within the Church.

In any case this is what Walter Oscar Lundberg says There are various reasons for the attention of some scholars not being drawn towards comprehending the existence of God while undertaking scientific studies; we will mention just two of them here. The first (reason) is the general presence

of oppressive political and social conditions or governmental structures which necessitate the negation of the existence of God. The second (reason) is that human thinking is always under the impact of some vague ideas and although the person himself may not undergo any mental and physical agony, even then his thinking is not totally free in choosing the right path. In Christian families the children in their early years generally believe in an anthropomorphic God, as if man has been created in the image of God. These persons, on entering a scientific environment and acquiring the knowledge of scientific issues, find that this weak and anthropomorphic view of God does not accord with scientific concepts. Consequently, after a period of time when the hope of any compromise is dashed, the concept of God is also totally discarded and vanishes from the mind. The major cause of doing so is that logical proofs and scientific definitions do not alter the past sentiments and beliefs of these persons, and it does not occur to them that a mistake had taken place in the earlier belief about God. Along with this, other psychic factors cause the person to become weary of the insufficiency of this concept and turn away from theology. [6]

Summarily, that which is observable in certain religious teachings-and regrettably is also found amongst ourselves, to a more or less extent-is that a characteristic concept is projected in the minds of children under the name and label of 'God.' When the child grows up and becomes a scholar, he finds that this concept is not rational and such a being cannot exist, whether it be God or something else.

The child on growing up, without reflecting or critically concluding that perhaps there might exist a valid conception, rejects the idea of divinity altogether. He imagines that the concept of God he is rejecting is the same as the one accepted by theists, and since he does not accept this creature of his own mind, which is the product of popular superstition, he does not believe in God. He does not notice that the concept of God which he is rejecting is also rejected by the theists, and that his rejection is not the rejection of God but is the rejection of something that ought to be rejected.

Flammarion in the book *God and Nature* observes: "The Church presented God in this manner: 'The distance between his right and left eye is 12000 leagues.' " It is obvious that persons with even a meagre knowledge of science cannot believe in such a being. Auguste Comte's Conception of God:

Flammarion quotes a statement of Auguste Comte, the founder of positivism and what is known as scientism, which offers a good view of the way God was pictured by such scholars as Auguste Comte living in the Christian environment of that time. Flammarion says: Auguste Comte has said: "Science has dismissed the Father of nature and the universe from his post, consigning him to oblivion, and while thanking him for his temporary services, it has escorted him back to the frontiers of his greatness."

What he means is that earlier every event that took place in the world was explained by relating it

to God as its cause. For example, if someone got a fever, the question why the fever had come about and from where it came had the answer that God had sent the fever. That which was commonly understood by this statement was not that it is God who governs the universe and that to say that He had caused the fever implied that He was the real and ultimate mover of the world. Rather, this statement meant that God, like a mysterious being, or a magician engaged in sorcery, had all of a sudden decided to cause fever without any preparatory cause, and so the fever came about. Later science discovered its cause and it was observed that fever was not brought about by God, but by a certain bacteria.

Here God retreated one step. Henceforth the theist was forced to say that we will shift our argument to the bacteria: Who created the bacteria?

Science also discovered the cause of bacteria by identifying the conditions in which they come to exist. Again God had to retreat one step, and the argument proceeded by asking the cause of that cause. God's retreat continued, and, at last, with the spread and expansion of science the causes of a large number of phenomena were discovered. Even those phenomena whose causes were not yet discovered were known for certain to possess causes belonging to the category of causes already known. Thereat man had to dismiss God for good with an apology, because there no longer remained any place and post for Him.

The state of God at this stage was that of an employee in an office in which he was initially given an important post, but with the recruitment of more competent individuals his responsibilities were gradually taken away, and eventually, when he was divested of all his earlier responsibilities, there remained no post and place left for him. At this time the manager of the office approaches him, thanks him for his past services, and with an excuse hands him the dismissal orders and bids him farewell once and for all.

Auguste Comte uses the term 'Father of nature' for God. His use of this term for God shows the influence of the Church in his thought. Although he was against the teachings of the Church, his own concept of God was derived from the Church's ideas, from which he was not able to free himself.

Taken together, the observations of Auguste Comte suggest that in his opinion God is something similar to a part and factor of this world, albeit mysterious and unknown, by the side of other factors. Moreover, there are two types of phenomena in the world, the known and the unknown. Every unknown phenomenon should be linked to that mysterious and unknown factor. Naturally, with the discovery of every phenomenon and its becoming known as a consequence of science, the domain of influence of the unknown factor is diminished.

This mode of thinking was not characteristic of him, but it was the thinking that prevailed in his

environment and era. The Station of Divinity:

Hence the main thing is that we ascertain the station of Divinity and comprehend the place, position and 'post' of God. Is the position of God and the Divine in the realm of being such that we may consider Him to be one of the beings in the world and a part of it? May we allot Him a certain function among the various functions that exist in the world, thereby affecting a division of labour, and then, for determining God's special function, examine the various effects whose causes are unknown to us, so that whenever we come across an unknown cause we have to attribute it to God? The consequence of such a mode of thinking is to search for God among things unknown to us. Naturally, with an increase in our knowledge, the area of our ignorance will continually diminish and the domain of our theism, too, will diminish to the point where if some day, supposedly, all the unknown things become known to mankind, there would remain no place for God or any theism.

In accordance with this line of reasoning, only some of the existing realities are signs of God and manifest and mirror His existence, and they are those whose causes are unknown. As to those things whose causes have been identified, they lie outside the realm of signs and indications of the Divine Being.

Hallowed be God! How wrong and misleading this kind of thinking is, and how ignorant it is of the station of the Divine! Here we should cite the words of the Qur'an, which observes in this regard:

They measured not God with His true measure. (6:91)

The ABC of theism is that He is the God of the entire universe and is equally related to all things. All things, without any exception, are manifestations of His Power, Knowledge, Wisdom, Will, and Design, and are the signs and marks of His Perfection, Beauty and Glory. There is no difference between phenomena whose causes are known and those whose causes are unknown in this regard. The universe, with all its systems and causes, is in toto sustained by His Being. He transcends both time and space. Time and time-bound entities, and similarly space and spatial objects, irrespective of their being finite or infinite—that is, whether they are temporally limited or extend from pre-eternity to eternity, and regardless of whether the universe is limited in its spatial dimensions or infinite, and, ultimately, whether the entire expanse of existents is finite or infinite in time and space—all these are posterior to His Being and Existence and are Considered among His emanations (fayd.)

Hence it is extreme ignorance to think in a Church like manner and to imagine, like Auguste Comte, that while looking for the cause of a certain phenomenon in some corner of the universe we would suddenly discover the existence of God, and then celebrate and rejoice that we have found God at a certain place. And if we do not succeed and are unable to so find Him, we should

become pessimistic and deny God's existence altogether.

On the contrary, it is precisely in this sense that we must reject the existence of God, that is, a God who is like any other part of the world and is discoverable like any other phenomenon in the course of inquiry into the world's phenomena is certainly not God, and any belief in such a God is aptly rejected.

In more simple terms, we should say that this kind of quest for God in the universe is like the conduct of someone who when shown a clock and told that it has a maker wants to find its maker within the wheels and parts of the clock. He searches for a while and on finding nothing except its different parts, says: 'I did not find the maker of the clock and this proves that he does not exist.' Or it is like one who on being shown a beautifully stitched dress and told that this dress was stitched by a tailor, says, 'If I find the tailor in the pockets of this dress I will accept his existence, otherwise I won't.'

This kind of thinking is totally wrong from the Islamic point of view. From the viewpoint of Islamic teachings, God is not on a par with the natural causes so that the question should arise whether a certain external entity has been created by God or by a certain natural cause. This kind of dichotomy is both wrong and meaningless, because there cannot be a dichotomy or an intervening 'or' between God and natural causes for such a question to be posed. This form of thinking is anti-theist. Theism means that the whole of nature in its entirety is a unit of work and an act of God in its totality. Hence it is not correct to ask concerning a part of it whether it is a work of God or nature, and then to consider it to be a work of God on failing to identify its cause, and as related to nature and with no connection with God when its natural cause is known. Auguste Comte's Three Stages of Human History:

Auguste Comte suggests a classification of the stages of the historical development of the human mind, which, most regrettably, has more or less been accepted, though from the point of view of those acquainted with Islamic philosophy it is mere childish talk. He says that mankind has passed through three stages:

1. The Theological Stage:

In this stage man explained phenomena by resorting to supernatural forces and considered God or gods to be the cause of every phenomenon. In this stage man discovered the principle of causality, but was not able to identify the causes of things in a detailed manner. Since he had grasped the principle of causality, he considered the cause of every event to lie within Nature. In this stage he postulated the existence of forces in Nature with the judgement that certain forces exist in Nature which are ultimately responsible for the occurrence of phenomena.

2. The Metaphysical Stage

In this stage, in view of the fact that man thought in metaphysical and philosophical terms, he could not go beyond the assertion that a certain event had a cause without having any answer to the question about the nature and character of the cause itself.

3. The Positive Stage:

In this stage man identified in detail the causes of things in Nature. During this stage, man turned away from thinking in general philosophical terms and adopted the experimental approach to the study of phenomena, discovering the causal links between them. It became completely evident to him that the phenomena are related to one another in a chain. Today science considers this approach to be correct, and, therefore, we call this stage 'the scientific stage.'

These three stages suggested by Auguste Comte could be possibly correct when viewed from the angle of the common people and the masses, in the sense that at one time the common people considered the cause of an event, such as a disease, to be some invisible being such as a demon or a jinn, and there are such persons and groups even today among educated Europeans. At a later stage they were able to recognize the order present in Nature and henceforth they attributed the cause of illness to the causes surrounding the sick person, believing that natural factors were responsible for it. Also, all those who have not studied medicine and have no medical knowledge but believe in the general order of nature have a similar kind of understanding.

During another stage the relationships between the various phenomena was discovered by the means of scientific experiments. This was not a new thing in itself and existed in the ancient period as well, although the eagerness to study natural phenomena and their causal relations is greater in the modern era.

However, this manner of classification of human thought is incorrect, because if we were to divide human thought into stages, our criterion should be the ideas of thinkers and not the thinking of the masses and common people. In other words, we should take into consideration the world view of outstanding individuals. Here it is that we find the classification of August Comte to be wrong through and through. Human thought, whose real representatives are the thinkers of every age, has certainly not passed One of the eras or stages of thought is the stage of Islamic thought. From the standpoint of the Islamic method, all these ways of thinking can possibly be present simultaneously in a certain form of thought.

That is, in the form of thought which we call 'Islamic,' all these three kinds of thought are capable of coexisting. In other words, a single person can at the same time have a mode of thought which is theological, philosophical, and scientific. From the point of view of a thinker cognizant with

Islamic thought, the question does not arise as to whether the cause of an event is that which science tells us, or that which philosophy explains in the form of a force, or that which is named God. Hence, those like Auguste Comte need to be reminded that there exists a fourth mode of thought in the world of which they are unaware. The Violence of the Church:

To this point we have pointed out the role of the Church in the process of inclination towards materialism from the point of view of the inadequacy of its theological concepts. Yet in another way, which was more effective than the inadequacy of its theological ideas, the Church has played an important part in driving people towards adopting an anti-God stance. This was its coercive policy of imposing its peculiar religious and scientific doctrines and views and depriving the people from every kind of freedom of belief in both these areas.

The Church, apart from its peculiar religious beliefs, had incorporated a set of scientific doctrines concerning the universe and man, which had mostly their philosophical roots in Greece and elsewhere and had gradually been adapted by major Christian scholars into its religious dogma. It not only considered any dissent in regard to the 'official sciences' impermissible, but also vehemently persecuted those who disagreed with these dogmas.

Presently, we are not concerned with the issue of freedom of religion and religious belief and that religious beliefs should inevitably be studied freely because otherwise that would go against the very spirit of religion, which is to guide to the truth. Islam supports the thesis that belief in religious doctrines ought to be based on research and not on conformity or compulsion, in contrast to Christianity which has declared religious dogma a prohibited zone for reason.

There were two other aspects in which the Church committed a major mistake. Firstly, it placed certain scientific notions inherited from the earlier philosophers and Christian theologians in the rank of its religious tenets, considering opposition to them to be heresy. Secondly, it did not stop at exposing the heretics and excommunicating those whose heresy had been proven and confirmed, but instead, like a violent police regime, it investigated the beliefs and convictions of persons by employing various tactics and tried to detect the faintest signs of dissent to religious beliefs in individuals and groups and persecuted them in an indescribably ruthless manner. As a result, scholars and scientists did not dare entertain any ideas opposed to what the Church considered as science; that is, they were constrained to think in accordance with the Church's thinking. This intense repression of ideas which was a common thing from the 12th to the 19th century in countries like France, England, Germany, Holland, Portugal, Poland and Spain, naturally resulted in the development of a general extremely negative reaction towards religion. The tribunals held by the Church and known as the Inquisition were initiated with an objective reflected in the very name given them. Will Durant says:

The Inquisition had a special procedure of inquiry and prosecution. Before the inquisition held its

tribunal in a city, the summons of faith were communicated from the church pulpits. The people were asked to inform the inquisitors of any heretics or pagans that they knew of. They were encouraged to denounce and accuse their neighbours, friends and relatives. The informers were promised total secrecy. Anyone who knew a heretic and would not denounce him or hid him in his house faced denunciation and excommunication ... The methods of torture varied from time to time and from one place to another. Sometimes the accused was left to hang with his hands tied behind his back. Or he would be bound in say a way that he could not move, then water was poured into his throat so as to suffocate him. Or his arms and fists were so tightly bound with ropes that they cut into his flesh and reached the bones. [7]

He also says The number of victims between the years 1480-1488, that is in eight years, exceeded 8800 burnt on stakes, and 96,494 condemned to severe punishments According to estimates, from the year 1480 to 1808 more than 31,912 were condemned to death by fire and 291,450 were condemned to severe penalties. [8]

George Sarton, the distinguished scholar and famous authority on history of science in his book *Six Wings: Men of Science in the Renaissance*, has a discussion under the caption 'witchcraft,' where he relates the crimes committed by the Church in the name of campaign against witchcraft: Divines and religious scholars, consciously or otherwise, considered apostasy to be the same as witchcraft. Men quickly conclude that those who disagree with them are bad people. Magicians were men and women who had sold their souls to the Devil. On the assumption that heretics and irreligious persons also communed with the Devil, their persecution and torture were readily permitted and those who were orthodox in their faith could say to themselves: These trouble-making and disruptive people are magicians and they should be dealt with in this way, because they are neither capable of a straight faith nor eligible for pardon.

George Sarton refers to the book *Hammer of the Magicians*, which was written by two Dominican priests on the instructions of Pope Innocent VIII (r. 1484-1492) and which was, in fact, a practical manual on how to conduct the Inquisition of those accused of heresy and witchcraft. He says: The book *Hammer* is a practical handbook for the Inquisitors and in it are found the details of the methods of detection, prosecution and punishment of magicians.... The fear of the magician was the real cause for killing them and these killings themselves became the reason for a heightened fear. In that period, a psychic epidemic had developed the like of which has not been seen until the present age of enlightenment.

The proceedings of some trials of the Inquisition recorded in precise detail have survived. The Inquisitors were not bad people. They imagined themselves to be better at least than the ordinary people, because was it not that they were ceaselessly striving to uphold the word of truth and the name of God?! Nicolarmy, the inquisitor of Lourn was the cause of 900 magicians being burnt to death during a period of fifteen years (1575-1590). He was a conscientious man, and during the

last years of his life he had a sense of guilt for having overlooked to kill some children. Has anyone the right to desist from killing the young of a viper? Bishop Tersepeter Binzfold issued verdicts for the death sentence of 6500 people.

He goes on to observe:

When the Inquisitors arrived in a new region, they used to announce that anyone suspecting someone of being a magician should provide information about it. Anyone concealing information was liable to exile and fine.

Providing information in this regard was considered a duty, and the names of those who provided information were not disclosed. The accused-among whom were possibly persons whose enemies had slandered them-were not informed of the crime they were accused of and were kept in the dark concerning the evidence of their culpability. It was assumed that these people were sinners and criminals, and the burden of proof lay upon them to prove their innocence. The judges adopted all kinds of mental and physical means for exacting a confession of sin and identifying collaborators. For encouraging the accused to confess, they were promised pardon or extenuation. But the judges imagined that honouring a promise given to magicians and heretics involved no moral obligation and the promise was kept for the short time which the accused took to say what had to be said. Every act falling outside the limits of honourable behaviour was committed against the accused and was justified as it was done for a holy cause. The more they tormented and tortured the people, the more they thought it necessary. What we have said can be easily confirmed by referring to the Hammer and other books and can also be pictured more vividly by studying the proceedings of the trials, of which there are plenty. [9]

After discussing this issue for three or four pages, George Sarton observes:

Belief in magic was truly a mental illness more dangerous than syphilis, and was the cause of the terrible death of thousands of innocent men and women. Apart from that, an attention to this matter reveals the dark side of the Renaissance, less appealing than other things which are usually said about this period, but knowing which is necessary for a correct understanding of the events of this age. Renaissance was the golden age of art and literature, but at the same time it was also a period of religious intolerance and cruelty. The inhuman character of this period is such that, excepting the present age, it has no parallel in history. [10]

Religion, which should have been a guide and a harbinger of love, acquired this kind of countenance in Europe. The very notion of religion and God came to be associated in everyone's mind with violence, repression, and tyranny. Obviously, the reaction of the people against such an approach could hardly be anything except the rejection of religion and the negation of that which constitutes its very basis, God. The severest blow is struck on religion and to the advantage of

materialism whenever religious leaders, whom the people consider as the real representatives of religion, put on a leopard's skin and wear a tiger's teeth and resort to excommunication and accusations of heresy, especially when private motives take this form.

Notes:

[1] That which appears here is a translation of 'Ilal e gerayesh beh maddigari, 8th edition (Qum: Intesharat e Sadra, 1375 H. Sh.) There is a long introduction, dated rajab 1, 1398 H by the author written for the 8th edition of the book titled 'Materialism in Iran', this will appear at the end of the serial.

[2] ... they follow only surmise, merely conjecturing. (6:116)

[3] Irving William Knobloch, The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe, cf. Russell, Mysticism and Logic (Penguin Books 1953), "A Free Mans Worship"

[4] See Russell, Mysticism and Worship, (Penguin Books 1953), "A Free Mans Worship", pp.50-59

[5] As the original source of Einsteins statement quoted by the author was not accessible to the translator, a parallel statement of his has been cited here from Ideas and Opinions by Albert Einstein (Calcutta: Rup & Co, 1984, first published by Bonanza Books, New York), based on Mein Weltbild, edited by Carl Seerling, trans and revised by Sonja Bargmann, pp. 40 (Tr.)

[6] Irving William Knobloch, op. Cit, the article by Walter Oscar Lundberg

[7] Will Durrant, The Story of Civilization, Persian transl. Tarikhe Tamaddun, v18 p350

[8] Ibid., p360

[9] George Sarton, Six Wings: Men of Science in the Renaissance (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), Persian transl. Shish Bal, pp296-8

[10] Ibid, p303

History and Human Evolution (Lecture 2)

Our former discussion was about the meaning of the historical or social evolution of man in the past. We-examined the question whether the processes which man and his society have undergone may be called evolution or at least progress, or whether there is a third alternative explanation that in some aspects of social life considerable progress has been made, while in other aspects there has been no progress or evolution. Or we may, at least, say that if there has been progress it has been very slow and out of harmony with the rate of progress in technical matters and evolution of social structure. The dimension in which man has not been able to make proportionate advance is the human dimension of social life.

If we liken man's social life to an individual human being, technical progress and social development may be thought of as the body of society, while the human aspect of social life is the ethos of the individual. We may conclude, therefore, that humanity has physically overgrown, while its spirit and human ethos have made very little headway. The divergence between various views concerning the future is rooted in this matter. Man's Future from Different Viewpoints Some people are doubtful about the fact as to whether man has a future at all. They are uncertain because man is threatened with self-destruction. Such an uncertainty is evident among the enlightened and learned men of the West. Another group go a step further, and in addition to uncertainty, they are extremely pessimistic about humanity's future and openly cynical about human nature. They believe that man's nature consists of animality, lust, selfishness, egoism, deceit, cunning, falsehood, tyranny and such things, and since times immemorial when man began his life and social existence, this familiar scene of life has been always as full of evil and mischief, both in the days of barbarism and in the age of civilization.

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

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

some of the books which I have come across.

What is amazing in what they say is that man, after having reached cultural maturity, should commit suicide. Why? Because, they explain, when we find that human nature is beyond remedy, every person has the right to kill himself, and encourage others to commit suicide too. This is the logic of the type of writers such as Sadegh Hedayat. Such a kind of thinking is prevalent in various forms in Europe, and statistics show that in spite of all the welfare that exists in the civilized world, the number of suicides is increasing daily. By comparing the figures published in our newspapers we see this steady increase between the years 1955 and 1975.

The Hippie movement was a social phenomenon, which was a reaction that took the form of dislike of civilization. It meant that civilization has failed to do anything for man, and that it has failed to change his nature. Do not compare this Western hippyism with our own hippyism, which is only a superficial imitation. But those who had originated this way of thinking in the West, had in fact a philosophy for it: the philosophy of disgust for civilization, and despair on account of its inability to do something to solve human problems. And this difficulty, too, is considered insoluble, a knot that by no means can be disentangled.

You may have read the reports coming from the UNESCO and elsewhere, as well as the articles written by our own experts, about the urge for taking refuge in narcotics. This trend in Western countries is the result of despair and cynicism about the future of mankind. When man reaches the stage where he finds no remedy, when he thinks that reform and revolution have, both, failed to change man, when regimes and systems of government and economic and non economic solutions have only changed their form without changing the content, then some people say: let us drop this matter once for all.

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

They offered science as the remedy for all these pains There may be some truth in this view. Science remedies ignorance, and weakness, helplessness and abjectness in front of nature, and the pain of poverty-in so far as it is related to nature. But not all human suffering comes within bounds of his relation with nature. What about the suffering produced by the relation of man with man, namely, greed, tyranny and oppression, which are derived from man's own nature, his feeling of loneliness, fear and anxiety? Science has not been able to remedy these. Therefore, this

view that science can remedy all human pains has been abandoned in those countries. But in the countries which follow on the trails of the West, there are still individuals who think that science can really remedy all pains and sufferings.

Do not misunderstand me; my intention is not to negate science: for, as I said before, half of human pains find no remedy except through science. But man has other pains which constitute his 'human' suffering, the suffering which relates to his human dimension. Here science provides no help, and the scientists, when they reach this point, declare that science is neutral and indifferent; it is a means and it does not prescribe any goal for mankind. Science does not elevate human objectives, and does not provide a direction. Rather, it must be said that man uses science as an aid in the direction which he selects in life. Today we observe that most of the human suffering is caused by human beings, by those who are well-informed, and not by the ignorant. In the problem of colonialism in the world of today and since the last few centuries, were it the ignorant who exploited and plundered the resources of others, the ignorant and the learned alike? Or were it the learned and well-informed men who exploited both the ignorant and others?

Therefore, this supposition that science and education are the remedy for all pains and suffering of humanity is unacceptable. What I mean by 'science' or 'education' is that which makes man aware of the world; and awareness or understanding is something which is necessary, and nothing else can take its place. Again, do not misunderstand me: understanding is not enough to remedy all the pains of humanity. The Viewpoint of Marxism There is a third viewpoint here which says that the problem lies somewhere else, and that we should not be cynical of man's nature and despair on its account. The answer as to why the past has been disappointing, is that you have not been able to discover the roots of human suffering. These roots lie not only in ignorance, helplessness and such things, but in the type of ideology ruling over mankind.

There is another problem for man which is independent of science, education and technology, and that is the problem of the ideology prevalent in society. To enable man, with all his human weaknesses, to start his struggle to change his situation, his ideology must be changed.

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

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

There are many objections against this theory. One of them is: if an ideology is merely a system of thought or a philosophy, does it possess the power to change man's nature? Why, then, science couldn't change the nature of man? If all the elements of an ideology consist only of understanding without possessing the element of faith or belief, how can it influence human nature?

Is the ruling ideology derived from the nature of human beings in power? Or is it ideology that shapes the nature of the rulers? If you believe in the priority of objectivity over subjectivity, can you say that the dominant classes oppress others because they possess that ideology? Do they possess this tyrannical ideology because their nature is tyrannical? This means that their self-seeking nature requires it in so far as it is human nature to pursue selfish interests to the greatest extent possible. Then, according to this view, the quality of seeking profit has created this tyrannical ideology, and not that the ideology has produced that nature in man. Ideology is a tool in man's hand, and not vice versa. It is sheer idealism to say that man is a tool in the hands of his own thought and the ideology created by himself.

If that is true, when the ideology is changed while human beings remain unchanged, has man then reached a dead end to the effect that the greatest exploitation of man by man and the extreme suppression of man by man should be perpetuated by those in the name of a classless ideology? The heart of the matter is that, no matter what form the social system may have taken in the past, man has remained unchanged and used that system as his own tool. How can we guarantee that it would not be repeated again? Do people have freedom in the countries where such an ideology is followed? There may be equality, but not in happiness; it is an equality in misfortune

. There are classes there, but not economic classes. Out of a population of two hundred millions, ten millions control everything in the name of the communist party. Why do they not allow the other 190 millions to share the same privileges provided by the communist ideology? Because, if they do so, then there would be an end to those privileges.

The severest repression and gravest misfortunes and miseries have been inflicted in the name of a classless ideology. A new class has emerged without bearing the name of a class. This is because when an idea or philosophy is related to the mind and based on an abstract understanding of mankind, such an understanding by itself cannot influence his nature. Understanding clarifies the way for man to distinguish his interests better and to be more farsighted. But it does not offer him any higher goals. If I lack a higher goal intrinsically, in my nature, how can I find it? Do the Marxists

not say that thought does not have any fundamental reality for man? If thought has no fundamental reality, clearly it cannot control human behaviour.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The goal must possess a reality beyond imagination and assumption. One cannot assume something for himself as a goal, and then think it to be real. The value of an assumed thing is only within the limit of its being a means and a tool. Therefore, it is an illusion to say that man creates his own values. It is here that Islam asserts the existence of its absolutely coherent ideology. The View of Islam Islam to begin with, does not regard the past with total pessimism. Secondly, it is not so cynical of human nature. It says: This testimony that man of today gives against human nature, to the effect that it is based on wickedness and mischief, is similar to the ignorant verdict that the angels gave about man before he was created, and God rejected it.

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

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

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

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

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

God says to the angels, "You paid attention only to one aspect of man: his natural and animal side, and are unaware of his spiritual and Divine aspect. I have placed something in his nature which

makes him intrinsically free of any ideology. I have planted in him an inclination for exaltation. I have granted him an ideology, one of whose pillars is this natural and rational inclination. I have planted in his nature the seeds of love of truth, love of justice, and love of freedom. His essence is not totally selfishness, animality and class interests, or tyranny. He is a creature made of both light and darkness and this combination of qualities has lifted him above every other creature, above you who are angels and others besides you."

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

O man, know yourself!
O man, teach yourself properly!
O man, train yourself!
O man, know your goal!
O man, recognize the path of your evolution!

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

Those who have failed in this combat, have formed the group of means, bestial and degenerate beings. As the Quran says, the most magnificent struggle of man has been the combined between the supporters of Truth and the followers of falsehood. Who are these two groups? Supporters of Truth are those who have been liberated from the captivity of external nature and of other human beings and from the clutches of their own inner beast. They are those who have attained belief, faith and ideal, and rely on them. They are different from those human beings who seek material gains and are mean and corrupt.

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

And relate to them truly the story of the two sons of Adam [Abel and Cain]-when they offered an offering, and it was accepted of one of them, and not accepted of the other. 'I will surely slay thee,' said one. 'God accepts only of the God-fearing,' said the other. 'Yet if thou stretches out thy

hand against me, to slay me, I will not stretch out my hand against thee, to slay thee; I fear God, the Lord of all beings. I desire that thou shouldst be laden with my sin and thy sin, and so become an inhabitant of the Fire; that is the recompense of the evildoers.' Then his self prompted him to slay his brother, and he slew him, and became one of the losers. (5:27-30)

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

This story should not be mistaken for a parable of the class conflict, which is a Marxist idea. While the Quran speaks of the oppressed on the one hand and oppressors on the other (mala' and mutrafun), it always tries to show that the progressive wars in history are those which are waged between men who have realized belief and faith and the profit seekers—a point which I have explained more fully in my book *The Rise and Revolution of Mahdi (A)*.

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

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

In this school of thought, which believes in the love of truth and love of justice as ingrained in the human nature, in this school which trusts in man and in human values, and which unlike Marxism does not negate them or consider them mere idealisms, these things are regarded as an inherent inclination towards the existence of discoverable truths, and not something conventional or imaginary created by man himself.

The Quran says: O man, know yourself, and your own reality; these values exist within yourself as they exist in the great world, and you are a microcosmic model of the entire macrocosm: Mould yourselves in accordance with Divine norms. These are Divine qualities, the reflection of which exists in the inner depths of his being, and he must discover it.

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

Moreover, after man resolves those conflicts and contradictions and negates class controversies, he reaches a position when he must remove his own defects and this is only a beginning, the beginning of his vertical ascent which has no limit; for, in this system there is infinite room for ascension and edification even for the Prophet (S), though it is something that lies beyond our imagination, even though it is a reality for the Prophet (S). This is why the ideal human society is in fact a society of men who have realized their ideal and attained faith and belief. It is the victory of effort, endeavour, piety and justice. Victory is one side of this coin of human existence, whose other side, as the Quran says, is the victory of God's Party over the party of Satan.

Man has been created to be an intelligent, aware, free and responsible being. From the first day that man has attained the station of humanity-regardless of whenever that might have occurred-he has been the deputy and vicegerent of God. There has been no time since the instant of creation of man when the earth was ever without the existence of a vicegerent, the hujjat (testimony) of Allah, that is, a being endowed with freedom and responsibility. As long as mankind as such a Creator who has decreed for it a goal and purpose-a purpose which implies his knowledge of himself and ultimate conquest of evil and mastery over his own mind-the battle between good and evil, and between truth and falsehood, will continue. It will continue to the point-as predicted by our great religious figures-when it will ultimately result in a universal government, which is also interpreted as the universal rule of Imam Mahdi (A)-may God expedite his appearance.

On this basis, the evolution of man in his human dimensions has, by no means, reached a dead end from the point of view of Islamic Ideology. Islam, here, emerges as an ideology that relies on the spiritual aspect of human nature and which reclines heavily on recognition of this aspect of human nature. It stresses the need to make man aware of and to motivate him to develop and nourish this aspect of his being.

Islam seeks to achieve a balance between the two aspects: the higher and the lower, inherent in the human nature. The recommended acts of worship, rituals, the enjoined abstinence from sins,

the forbidding from lies, treachery, slander and oppression, all and all, besides their social value, are basically designed for cultivation of the human aspect of man and revival of his humanity. Therefore, if we really desire to take a step the direction of this evolution, there is no alternative to rising above all the materialistic criteria and notions about human nature; that is, we must consider man as a being whose faith transcends the notions of class differences and classless society. Only then human struggle can acquire an essentially ideological character based on faith and belief.

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

The Holy Prophet (S) sent an army to fight external enemies. The victorious warriors returned and the Prophet went forth to welcome them. Now look at the Prophet's sense of timing and occasion. At a moment when he is expected to congratulate them and welcome them with a cry of 'Bravo!', the Prophet (S) instead says to them: "Praise on you who have taken part in the minor jihad, and who have yet to wage the major jihad ! Surprised, his Companions declare: "O Messenger of Allah, we don't have any battle ahead bigger than the one we have just been fighting?" The Prophet answers: the greater battle is the jihad against the self. This jihad is the struggle of becoming a human being. This is the viewpoint offered by Islam for understanding of man and his struggle against his own carnal self.

The Quran says in this regard:

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

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

The Causes Responsible for Materialist (Lecture 3)

The second reason of importance in the large-scale inclination towards materialism in the West lies in the inadequacy of its philosophical ideas. In fact, that which is called 'divine philosophy' (hikmat-e ilahi) is in a very backward state in the West, though perhaps some people may not

concede that the West has not reached the level of the divine philosophy of the East, especially Islamic philosophy.

Many philosophical ideas which raise a hue and cry in Europe are among the elementary issues of Islamic philosophy. In translations of Western philosophical works we come across certain ridiculous observations cited from major European philosophers. We also find some statements which show that these philosophers were confronted with certain insuperable difficulties while dealing with theological issues. That is, their philosophical criteria were not satisfactory. It is obvious that these inadequacies created an intellectual climate conducive to materialism. The Problem of the First Cause:

One of the things that may appropriately be mentioned for the sake of example is the story of the 'First Cause' in Western philosophy. Although it is somewhat a difficult issue, we hope that our readers will show some patience.

Hegel is one of the great and famous philosophers of the world whose greatness is certainly undeniable. There is much that is true in his works. We will first quote a statement of this great philosopher concerning one of the most important issues of metaphysics and then compare it with what Islamic philosophy has to say in this regard. This statement is about the 'First Cause,' i.e. about the Necessary Being, from the standpoint of Its being the first cause of existents. Hegel observes:

In solving the puzzle of the world of creation we should not go after the efficient cause ('illat-e fa'ili), because, on the one hand, the mind is not satisfied with infinite regress (tasalsul) and continues to look for the first cause. On the other hand, when we consider the first cause, the puzzle is not solved and the mind is not satisfied; the problem remains as to why the first cause became the first cause. For solving the puzzle, we should find the end or the purpose and reason for being, because if we know for what it has come into existence, or in other words, when it is known that it is something rational, our nature is satisfied and does not seek another cause. It is obvious that everything requires a justification by reason while reason itself does not require any justification.

The commentators of his works have been unable to explain his intent, but perhaps a close examination might reveal what troubled this man.

If we wish to express this matter in our own philosophical idiom, in a manner that would accord with Hegel's viewpoint, or at least would come near it, we might say, [the conception of] God should be accepted in a form which is directly acceptable to the mind and not as something which the mind is constrained to accept under some compulsion. There is a difference between a notion whose teleology (limmiyat) the mind directly apprehends-and this apprehension is a natural one-

and a notion which is only accepted because there is a proof which negates its contradictory and compels its acceptance. In fact, the basis of its acceptance is that one is left without an answer to the proof negating its contradictory. On the other hand, when the contradictory of a particular proposition is negated and proved to be false, naturally and necessarily that proposition has to be accepted because it is not possible for both contradictories to be false and one of them has to be necessarily accepted, considering that the falsity of one of the two contradictories is proof of the correctness of the other.

Accepting a notion due to the falsity of its contradictory compels and constrains the mind, without really convincing it, and there is a difference between compelling and constraining the mind and convincing and satisfying it. Often one is silenced by a proof while in the depth of one's consciousness there lingers a kind of doubt and hesitation with respect to the matter proved.

This difference is observable between 'a direct proof' and *reductio ad absurdum* (*burhan-e khulf*). At times, the mind travels naturally and consciously from the premise and the middle term to the conclusion. The conclusion is the direct product of the middle term, as in a deductive argument (*burhan-e limmi*). In this type of proofs the mind spontaneously deduces the conclusion from the premises, and the conclusion, to the mind, is like a child born naturally from its parents. But in *reductio ad absurdum*-or even in *burhan-e inni* for that matter-this is not the case. In *reductio ad absurdum*, the mind accepts the conclusion as a compulsion. The state of the mind here is similar to that of a person encountering a coercive force before which he is helpless. He accepts it because he cannot reject it.

In these types of proofs, as one of the two possibilities is invalidated by proof, the mind is forced into accepting the other. The other alternative that is accepted by the mind is accepted only because its contradictory has been rejected, and one from among a pair of contradictories has to be necessarily accepted, for it is impossible for both contradictories to be false. Hence it accepts the other possibility under constraint and compulsion. This acceptance of one side is due to compulsion and not spontaneous.

Hegel wants to say that our going after the first cause and our acceptance of it belongs to the latter category. The mind does not directly apprehend the first cause, but accepts it to avoid infinite regress. On the other hand, it sees that although it cannot refrain from accepting the impossibility of infinite regress, it also cannot understand the difference between the first cause and the other causes that makes these causes require a cause while the first cause can do without it. In his own words, one cannot understand why the first cause became the first cause. But if we seek the teleology and end [of being] we arrive at an end and purpose whose being an end is essential to it and does not require any other end and purpose.

Statements similar to Hegel's with respect to the first cause have been made by Kant and Spencer

as well. Spencer says, "The problem is that, on the one hand, human reason seeks a cause for every thing; on the other, it rejects both the vicious circle and the infinite regress. Neither does it find an uncaused cause nor is capable of understanding such a thing. Thus when a priest tells a child that God created the world, the child responds by asking, 'Who created God?' "

Similar, or even more baseless, are Jean-Paul Sartre's remarks in this regard. He, as quoted by Paul Foulquie, says -concerning the first cause: It is self-contradictory that a being be the cause of its own existence. [1]

Paul Foulquie, while explaining Sartre's statement, says, "The above argument which Sartre has not elaborated is usually presented in this manner: If we contend that we have originated our own existence, we have to believe that we existed before our existence. This is the obvious contradiction which unravels itself. [2]

Let us now look at the true picture of the theory of the first cause from the philosophical point of view. Is it as what Sartre and others say-a thing bringing itself into existence and laying the foundations of its own being, so as to imply that a thing is its own cause and its own effect?

Or is the meaning of the first cause what Kant, Hegel and Spencer have imagined, i.e. a being whose case involves an exception to the law of causation? That is, although every thing requires a cause and it is impossible for it to be without a cause, the first cause, an exception, is not such?

And is it the case that the impossibility of infinite regress, which makes us accept the first cause, actually compels us to accept a thing's being its own cause? Is it the case that our mind, in the process of avoiding one impossible, is forced into accepting another? Why? If the basis is that the mind should not accept what is impossible, then it should not accept any impossible whatsoever. Why should there be any exception?!

In accordance with the picture presented by Sartre, the first cause, like all other things, is in need of a cause, except that it itself fulfils its own need. According to the conception of Kant, Hegel and Spencer, we are compelled for the sake of avoiding infinite regress to allow an exception among things which are logically similar, and say that all things require a cause except one, the first cause. As to the difference between the first cause and other causes that makes all other existents depend upon a cause while this one is an exception, the answer is that there is no logical difference. It is only for the sake of avoiding the impossibility of infinite regress that we are forced to assume one of them as not being in need of a cause.

In this interpretation, the first cause is not assumed to require a cause and to meet its own need (as in Sartre's interpretation); rather, it is assumed that the first cause does not require a cause to bring it into existence. That is, the first cause is an exception to the law of causality. But as to why

it does not require a cause, and why is it an exception, this interpretation gives no answer.

The first interpretation is very childish. No philosopher, or even an half-philosopher or laymen, would conceive God in this manner. Therefore, we will discuss briefly only the second interpretation and present the correct picture while doing so.

In our view, the doubt of the likes of Kant, Hegel and Spencer concerning the first cause derives from two basic philosophical issues, both of which have remained unsolved in Western philosophy. Of these, the first is the issue of fundamentality of existence (asalat al-wujud), and the second that of the criterion for requiring a cause (manat-e ihtiyaj bi 'illat). It is not appropriate here to discuss and explain the issue of fundamentality of existence, or the contrary doctrine of the fundamentality of essence (asalat al-mahiyah).

However, we shall confine ourselves to giving a brief explanation. On the basis of the notion of fundamentality of essence-to give a very elementary and superficial picture of it, that is, one based on the assumption that God also, like all other existents, has an essence and an existence (which is an invalid idea even from the viewpoint of the proponents of the theory of fundamentality of essence, because they too consider God as pure existence)-the question arises as to why everything requires a cause while God doesn't. Why is one being Necessary and others contingent? Is it not that all beings are essences which come into existence?

But on the basis of the theory fundamentality of existence-whose principal architect in regard to its philosophical demonstration and providing the proofs is Sadr al-Muta'allihin Shirazi-the pattern of thinking changes radically.

On the basis of the former theory (fundamentality of essence) our conception of things will be that their essence is something which is intrinsically different from existence. Existence should be given to it by another being. We name this other being 'cause.' But in accordance with the theory of fundamentality of existence, the real being of things is what they partake of existence. Existence is not an essence to which another being may bestow existence. Hence if it be necessary that an external cause bestow something, that thing would be the very being of things, which happens to be existence itself, not something accidental and additional to the essence of things.

There is another question which arises at this point. Is it necessary that existence as such-that is, regardless of its form, manifestation and plane-requires to be bestowed by another being, implying that existence qua existence is identical with being a gift and emanation [of something else with dependence, relation, being an effect, and being posterior [to that which gives it existence], and hence is necessarily finite? Or is there some other perspective?

The answer is that the reality of existence, despite its various planes and manifestations, is no

more than a single reality. It does not necessarily entail need and dependence upon another thing. That is because the meaning of dependence and need with respect to existence (in contrast to the dependence and need which were assumed earlier in relation to essences) is that existence should itself be needy and dependent. And if the reality of existence were need and dependence, it implies that it will be related to and dependent upon something other than itself, while no 'other' is conceivable for existence, because something other than existence is either non-existence or essence, which, as presumed, is derivative (i'tibari) and a sibling of non-existence. Hence the reality of existence qua reality of existence necessitates independence, self-sufficiency, and absence of need for and relation with something other than itself.

It is also necessarily absolute, unconditioned, and unlimited. That is, it entails the impossibility of non-existence and negation finding a way into it. Need, want, and dependence, and similarly finitude and mingling with non-existence, derive from another consideration, which is different from the consideration of pure existence: these derive from posteriority and being an effect (ma'luiyyat). That is, existence qua existence and regardless of all other considerations necessitates self-sufficiency and independence from cause. As to the need for a cause-or in other words, that a being at a particular plane and stage should require a cause-that derives from its not being the reality of existence and its reliance upon God for coming into existence through emanation. And the logical consequence of being an emanation is posteriority and need, or rather, it is nothing except these.

From here we come to understand that according to the theory of fundamentality of existence, when we focus our intellect upon the reality of existence, we find there self-sufficiency, priority, and the absence of need. In other words, the reality of existence is equivalent to essential necessity (wujub-e dhati), and to use an expression of Hegel's liking, the rational dimension of the reality of existence is absence of need for a cause. Dependence upon a cause derives from a consideration (itibar) other than the reality of existence, and this consideration is posteriority and finitude. In other words, the need for a cause is the same as existence at a plane posterior to the reality of existence, and, in Hegelian terminology, the need for a cause is not the rational dimension of existence.

This is the meaning of the statement that 'The Truthful, when they contemplate the reality of existence and observe it sans every condition and relation (idafah), the first thing which they discover is the Necessary Being and the First Cause. From the Necessary Being they infer Its effects which are not pure existence, being finite beings bearing non-being within.' This is what is meant when it is said that in this logic there is no middle term for proving the existence of God; the Divine Being is the witness of Its existence.

God bears witness, and those possessing knowledge and upholding justice, and the angles, that there is no God but He. (3:18) The proof of the sun is the sun (himself): if you require the proof,

do not avert thy face from him! If the shadow gives an indication of him, the sun (himself) gives spiritual life every moment.

This discloses the baselessness of the statements of those who say that the notion of the first cause involves a contradiction because it implies that a thing is the originator of its own existence and hence exists before coming into being.

Similarly baseless is the statement of those who say: 'Supposing that we prove that every thing has been brought into existence by the first cause, the question remains as to what has brought the first cause into existence; hence the first cause remains an unjustifiable exception. Explaining the Universe by Means of Reason and not Cause:

Hegel believed that explanation of the universe on the basis of the first cause, irrespective of whether we consider it to be mind, matter, or God, is impossible because the concept of the first cause itself is inexplicable. Therefore, a different way should be found for an explanation of the universe. First we should see what is meant by 'explanation,' he said.

Now an isolated fact is usually said to be explained when its cause has been discovered. And if its cause cannot be ascertained, it is said to be an unexplained fact. But we cannot explain the universe in this way. If the universe could be said to have a cause, then either that cause is the effect of a prior cause, or it is not. Either the chain of causes extends back in an infinite series, or there is somewhere a 'first cause' which is not the effect of any prior cause. [f the series is infinite, then no final and ultimate explanation is to be found. If there is a first cause, then this first cause itself is an unexplained fact To explain the universe by something which is itself an ultimate mystery is surely no explanation. [3]

Later on Hegel observes that the concept of causality not only cannot provide an explanation of the universe but is also incapable of explaining particular things, because explaining involves the description of the logical relationship between a thing and something else. Whenever a thing is logically 'inferred' from something else it is said to have been explained.

For example, when we know that angle A is equal to angle B and that angle B is equal to angle C, we arrive at the logical conclusion that angles A and C are equal. The mind necessarily concludes that it has to be so and it cannot be otherwise, that it is logically impossible. Here the equality of angles A and C has been explained with the help of two premises. These two premises are the reason or ground for the equality of angles A and C, not its cause.

But causality does not explain a thing. Causality simply states an existential proposition (qadiyyah wujdiyyah) and not a necessary proposition (qadiyyah daruriyyah). This is because the concept of causality is arrived at by experience and not through logical inference. For example, we find by

experimenting that water turns into steam due to heat and freezes due to cold. Consequently we say that heat is the cause of vaporization and cold the cause of freezing of water. But our mind does not make a judgment that it should be so necessarily and logically. Supposedly, if we arrived at the opposite conclusion by experiment, finding that water freezes due to heat and turns into steam on being exposed to cold, this would make no difference to the mind. Hence this assumption is not something logically impossible, whereas in contrast the assumption of inequality of angles A and C in the earlier example is a logical impossibility. Causality does not explain that an effect should be an effect logically, and that which is a cause should logically be a cause. Therefore, the universe should be explained through reason and not by resorting to causes. The difference between reason and cause is that a cause is something isolated; that is, it has an existence separate from that of its effect, whereas a reason is not isolated and separate existence from what it explains.

For example, the equality of angles A and B, and similarly of B and C, is the reason for the equality of angles A and C. But these reasons do not have an existence isolated and separate from what they prove, as in the case of causes which have an existence independent of their effects. Identity of Mind and Reality:

Hegel then discusses another principle, the principle of the identity of knowing and being, or the identity of mind and reality, or the mental realm and external reality. He is trying to remove the wall of dualism separating the mind from external reality. In Hegel's view, the mind and external reality are not two isolated realities alien to each other. That is, they are not two totally different entities opposing each other. They are identical because they are but two different aspects of a single reality. And the ground for this assertion is that the problem of how knowledge is possible appears to be insoluble if we do not accept it. [4]

Hegel launches his philosophical project on the basis of these two principles. The first is that reason and not cause can provide an explanation of the universe, and the other, the identity of knowing and being. He starts with being which he considers to be the first reason. From being he derives non-being, and from that he arrives at 'becoming' which is a concept denoting motion. In this manner he proceeds with his dialectic.

It is not possible for us to provide here a critique of Hegelian philosophy and to investigate the mainspring of his errors by applying the criteria of Islamic philosophy, which in itself would be a long and interesting account. Here it will suffice to point out that according to the theory of fundamentality of existence (asalat al-wujud) and with attention to the special 'Argument of the Truthful' (burhan-e Siddiqin), Hegel's imagined dichotomy between cause and reason, between the why and wherefore (limm-e thubiti and limm-e ithbati) vanishes. The first cause in this philosophy is both self-sufficient and without the need of a cause, as well as self-explanatory and requiring no ground. It is the cause as well as the ground of all things, as well as their explainer.

For solving the problem of epistemology, too, there is no need to resort to the identity of knowing and being as conceived by Hegel. The problem of knowledge, which is one of the most difficult and complicated issues of philosophy, has another solution. An elaborate discussion of these two issues has to wait for some other occasion.

We explained that according to the doctrine of fundamentality of existence the question as to why the first cause became the first cause becomes totally meaningless. Now we may observe that this question also does not arise on the basis of the doctrine of fundamentality of essence, because it arises only when we necessarily assume that the Necessary Being possesses an essence like all other existents which is additional to its existence.

But we are not compelled to make such an assumption. Rather we are compelled to assume the contrary; that is, after conceding the impossibility of an infinite regress we have no alternative except accepting the existence of the first cause, the Necessary Being. Similarly, since the Necessary Being cannot be an entity composed of essence and existence, we make the assent that It is pure existence and sheer ipseity (inniyat-e sirf). Naturally there remains no room for our question.

The proof is also valid on the basis of the theory of fundamentality of essence (aalat al-mahiyyah). Philosophers like Ibn Sina have taken the same path. If there remains any question, it relates to another point, that if the reality of the Necessary Being is pure existence, what is the reality of other things? Is essence the reality of other things, existence being something derived (i'tibari) in relation to them, implying that the realm of being is a duality? Or is it that the reality of all things is what they partake of existence?

A correct answer to this question lies in opting for the second alternative, which is the theory of fundamentality of existence.

Certainly the likes of Ibn Sina did not reject the fundamentality of existence. At that time the issue of fundamentality of essence and that of existence had not been posed among philosophers or others. Therefore this question, in the context of Ibn Sina's exposition, is one which had not been raised during that time, and it does not amount to an objection against his exposition. In any case, the objection raised by those like Kant, Hegel and Spencer is not valid even aside from the fundamentality of existence. Now we shall provide an explanation about the criterion for an effect's need for a cause. The Criterion for a Thing's Need for a Cause:

The law of causality and the cause-effect relationship between things form one of the most definite notions of human knowledge. The link and relation between the effect and its cause is not an apparent and superficial one; it is profound and permeates the very reality of the effect. That

is, the effect, with all its being, is so dependent upon the cause that if the cause didn't exist, it would be impossible for the effect to come into being. All the sciences developed by man are founded upon this law. We have proved in its appropriate place that disregarding this law is tantamount to rejecting the presence of any order in the realm of being as well as negating every scientific, philosophical, logical and mathematical law. Here we do not consider it necessary to discuss this principle any further.

In this regard Islamic philosophers have posed an issue [5] which in some respects precedes the principle of causality. This issue is: What is the criterion of the need for a cause? On this basis, in every case—for example concerning the causal relationship between A (the cause) and B (A's effect)—two questions come to the mind:

First, why did B come into existence? The answer to this question is that the existence of A required that B come into existence, and had A not existed, B too would not have come into existence. Therefore, the existence of A is itself the answer to this question. Suppose a house is destroyed by flood and someone asks, 'Why was this house destroyed?' We reply that there was a flood.

The second question is, why does B need A and why cannot it come into existence without it? Why is not B independent of A? Obviously, the answer to this question is not that, 'That is because the existence of A required it.' We need to find another answer to this question.

The reply to the first question can be given on the basis of science, which is the product of experimentation, because it is the function of science to discover causal relationships between things [6]. Hence if we are asked as to what is the cause of B, we reply by relying on science that the cause of B is A.

But as to why B needs A and why it is not independent of A or any other cause, the answer to this question lies outside the domain of science and it is not possible to answer it by experimentation, analysis, synthesis or by distilling or grinding in a laboratory. It is here that philosophical analysis and precise rational inference come in. That is because the question does not relate to any concrete phenomenon, because although the effect's need for a cause is an undeniable reality, it is not a phenomenon isolated from the cause and the effect; that is, we do not have three external phenomena, the cause, the effect and the effect's need for a cause. On the same basis, science, whose function is to study phenomena, is incapable of answering this question, while philosophy, which is capable of discovering these relationships and penetrating into the depth of realities, is the only discipline competent to answer such questions.

From the point of view of philosophy the matter is not that B needs A because B has never been observed empirically to come into existence without A, and therefore B requires A and that the

same is true of every effect with respect to its cause. From the philosophical viewpoint it is impossible for an effect to be not an effect and to be independent of the cause. The effect's dependence on the cause is inseparable from the reality of the effect, or, rather, it is the very reality of the effect. This is the reason why philosophy poses the issue in a general manner without discussing the particular causal relationship between some B and A:

What is the basis of causal dependence and where does the effect's need for a cause arise? Do things need a cause just because they are things and existents? Are thingness and existence the criteria of causal dependence, so that every thing and every existent should be dependent upon a cause just because of its being a thing and an existent? Or is it the case that mere thingness and existence are not the criteria of this dependence, because, if thingness and existence were the criteria of something they should in principle be the criteria of self-sufficiency and independence, not the criteria of need and dependence. That which can appropriately serve as the criterion of neediness and dependence is some kind of deficiency in thingness and existence, not thingness and existence as such and ontic perfection.

Islamic philosophers, as well as the theologians (mutakallimun), who were the first ones to have started this debate, never considered thingness and existence per se as the criteria of neediness and dependence because that would imply that an existent needs a cause merely because it is existent. Rather, they were definite that there is another aspect of things deriving from their aspect of deficiency and nonbeing wherein lie the roots of this neediness and dependence. Altogether three theories have been advanced in this regard.

1. The Theory of the Mutakallimun

The mutakallimun considered the criterion of neediness and dependence of effects upon causes and their lack of independence to be ,hududh, that is, their previous non-existence. They considered the absence of a thing's need for a cause to lie in its being eternal (qidam). They said that if the existence of a being was preceded by non-existence ('adam), or if, in other words, a thing did not exist at a time and came into existence at another time such an existent, on the basis that it was non-existent earlier and came into being later, needs a cause to bring it into existence, and its existence will depend upon something other than itself. But if there is a being which is eternal and there was never a time that it did not exist, such a being will be independent and without the need for a cause; it would not be dependent upon something else by any means.

The mutakallimun held that the causal relationship between two things, for example, A in relation to B, is that A brings B into existence from a state of non-existence, and this is only possible where B's existence is preceded by non-existence. But if B is assumed to be eternal and there was never a time that it did not exist, then the causality of A with respect to it makes no sense.

In fact, the mutakallimun identified the [ontic] deficiency that is the basis of neediness and dependence of things upon something else to lie in previous non-existence, that is, in the temporal precedence of non-existence over existence. And they considered the source of perfection, self-sufficiency and absence of dependence upon something else to be eternity or non- precedence by non-existence. Therefore, from the point of view of the mutakallimun, a being is either deficient, needy, preceded by non-existence (hadith) and dependent upon another, or it is perfect, self-sufficient, eternal and not dependent upon anything.

2. The Theory of Early Islamic Philosophers, such as Ibn Sina, down to the Era of Sadr al-Muta'allihin

These philosophers raised basic objections against the theory of the mutakallimun wherein huduth and previous non-existence were considered the criteria of ontic deficiency, need and dependence upon something else. However, this is not the place to mention their objections. They said that though it is true that everything which is hadith (preceded by non-existence) needs a cause, but the criterion for the hadith's need for a cause is not its huduth but something else. They also said that eternity is in no way the criterion of self-sufficiency, perfection and absence of dependence. The philosophers claimed that the criterion of ontic deficiency and perfection, and of need and self-sufficiency, should be sought in the essence and quiddity (mahiyah) of beings, not in previous non-existence, huduth, or eternal existence, qidam.

Things in their essence (dhat), from the point of view of being, are of two kinds-or at least can be assumed to be of two kinds. The first is the case where their being is their actual essence, that is, they do not have any essence (mahiyah) apart from their existence. In other words their essence and their existence are one and the same. The second case is where the essence of a thing is something distinct from its existence and nonexistence.

We call the first kind necessary being (wajib al-wujud), and the second, contingent being (mumkin al-wujud). The Necessary Being, from the standpoint of being existence itself-it being senseless for a thing to be devoid of itself, and impossible for it not to exist while being existence itself-is not in need of a cause, because causality implies that the cause brings the being of the effect into existence, and when the essence (dhat) of a thing is actual existence and there is no vacuum in it in this regard, the need for a cause does not exist. But a contingent being, from the viewpoint that it is neither existent nor non-existent in itself, being equally indifferent with respect to both the sides and having a vacuum in relation to both of them, needs something else to fill this vacuum,

and that something is the cause. The existence of the cause fills that vacuum with existence, and that which is contingent-existent-in-itself (mumkin al-wujud bi al-dhat) becomes necessarily-existence-through-another (wajib al-wujdd bi al-ghayr). The nonexistence of a cause fills that vacuum with non-existence and a contingent-existent-in-itself becomes impossible due to the absence of its cause (mumtani' al-wu jad bi al-ghayr).

The philosophers call this [ontic] vacuum "essential contingency" (imkan dhati) and consider it to be the criterion for requiring a cause. Similarly, they name [ontic] plenitude "essential necessity" (wujub dhati).

In fact, from the point of view of philosophers, the essential deficiency which makes existents needy, deficient, and dependent upon something else is that essential vacuity (khala' dhati), and the essential perfection (kamal dhati) which is the source of perfection of an existent and makes it needless with respect to dependence upon another is that 'essential plenitude' (mala' dhati), that is the identity of essence (dhat) and existence.

As these philosophers consider the root and criterion of dependence to be essential vacuity and not previous non-existence, if there were to exist a being in the world which is eternal, there being no time that it did not exist and without ever being preceded by non-existence, it would still be a contingent existent (mumkin al-wujud), that is, its essence is not identical with its existence and it has a vacuity of existence at the plane of its essence. Such a being is an effect, a creature, and dependent upon another despite being eternal and everlasting. The philosophers believe that such existents do exist and they name them 'uql-e qahirah (the Supreme Intellects).

3. The Special Theory of Sadr al-Muta'allihin and His Followers:

Sadr al-Muta'allihin conceded that every hadith existent depends upon something else. He also accepted that every contingent being is in need of a cause. He considered valid the objections raised by the philosophers against the theologians, and agreed with the philosophers that there is nothing to prevent an existent from being temporally eternal, existing since preeternity and everlasting, while being dependent, a creature and an effect. Similarly he endorsed the view of the philosophers that the criterion of neediness and dependence should be sought within things themselves and not in their previous non-existence. However, he proved that in the same way that huduth cannot be the criterion of neediness, so also essential contingency (imkan dhati), or in our words 'essential vacuity,' too, cannot be the criterion of dependence and neediness because essential contingency is an attribute of essence, and it is essence which is said to be essentially indifferent to being and non-being and something hollow and empty, requiring something else to fill it. But considering that essence is derivative (istibari) and not fundamental, it lies outside the realm of neediness and self-sufficiency causing and being caused, efficiency and receptivity. Rather essence lies outside the domain of existence and non-existence. Essential contingency

(imkan mahuwi) cannot be the principal basis of this neediness.

All these characteristics such as existence and non-existence, causing and being caused, neediness and self-sufficiency, can be attributed to essence, but only accidentally (bi al-'arad), metaphorically, and secondarily, that is following existence, from which essence is derived and abstracted. Therefore, the real basis of intrinsic neediness and intrinsic self-sufficiency should be sought in existence itself.

In the same way that Sadr al Muta'allihin proved the fundamentality of existence (asalat al-wujud), he also proved the gradation of existence, that is the hierarchy of different planes of existence. Accordingly, in the same way as self-sufficiency does not lie outside the reality of existence, similarly neediness too is not external to the reality of existence, and in the same way as perfection is not something extraneous to the reality of existence but is identical with it, so also deficiency is not external to it. It is the reality of existence which receives perfection and deficiency, plenitude and poverty, self-sufficiency and neediness, intensity and weakness, necessity and contingency, infinitude and finitude or is rather identical with them. The reality of existence in its purity and at the plane of its own essence is equivalent to perfection, self-sufficiency, independence, intensity, necessity and infinitude, while deficiency, need, dependence, contingency, and the like are posterior to the plane of the essence and derive from being an effect (ma'luliyat) with its implied deficiency.

From Sadr al-Muta'allihin's point of view, the notion of essential vacuity of essence in respect of existence and the need for something else to fill this vacuum is correct only on the basis of fundamentality of essence, not on the basis of fundamentality of existence. On the basis of fundamentality of existence, attributing need and essential vacuity to essence and the notion that something else called 'cause' is required to fill this vacuum, are only correct as a loose philosophical metaphor. Causing ('illiyyat) and being caused (ma'luliyat), as well as self-sufficiency and need, all pertain to something which is concrete and real, and that is existence. The roots of an existent's dependence on another existent lie in its essential deficiency and its essential finitude.

In contrast to the opinion of the theologians and the vast majority of philosophers, according to Sadr al-Muta'allihin's view, need, the needy, and the criterion of neediness are not different things; need, the needy, and the criterion of neediness, all the three are a single thing. Certain planes of existence are identical with actual need with respect to another plane by virtue of their essential deficiency and essential posteriority (ta'akhhur dhati) to the principal source of existence, .

Sadr al-Muta'allihin also follows the classical approach of such philosophers as Ibn Sina while discussing the issue of criterion for the need of a cause, but elsewhere he expresses his own

opinion on this issue, which is a definite and inevitable result of the principles he has propounded. As he has dealt with the issue in the classical manner by adopting the approach of his predecessors, later scholars and the followers of his school, like the late Hajji Sabzawari, have imagined that Sadr al-Muta'allihin does not have a distinct opinion of his own on this issue. We have for the first time highlighted this fact in the footnotes of Usul-e falsafeh wa rawish-e riyallism ('The Principles and Method of the Philosophy of Realism') and have presented it for the benefit of others.

In any case, that which is definite in accordance with the views of all the schools is that the roots of dependence upon a cause do not lie simply in being a thing or being an existent. Things, just because they have existence, do not require a cause. Existence, more than being indicative of dependence, is indicative of self-sufficiency.

From what we have said two facts come to light: 1. That which is often said that 'Every thing, or every existent, requires a cause,' is not only incorrect but also a grave error. The correct thing to say is that 'Every deficient being is in need of a cause.' As we have seen, the different schools which have discussed this topic differ in their determination of the deficiency which makes the criterion for dependence on a cause, but they concur that every deficient thing requires a cause, not every thing whether it is deficient or perfect. 2. Our conception of the First Cause has now become clear. It became evident that the First Cause, which is the same as the eternal, perfect, infinite Essence (dhat) of the Necessary Being, is the first cause because existence itself is Its essence, and existence in itself is perfect, not deficient, and limitless, not limited, thus ruling out any dependence upon a cause. The meaning of the First Cause is neither that it is its own cause-in the sense that it lays the foundation of its own existence and brings itself into being-nor that the First Cause does not differ from all other existents with regard to the need for a cause and that it is an exception to the law of causality.

Here it is possible that a doubt may arise in the minds of those who are not trained in these issues, that although it is correct that the First Cause, because of its being eternal, perfect, infinite and necessarily existent, is free from all forms of dependence, while all other things on account of their not possessing these qualities are dependent and in need, but why did the First Cause become the first cause? That is, why did only the First Cause, from among all existents, become eternal (qadim), perfect, infinite and necessarily existent? Why didn't It become hadith and deficient? Why didn't another existent, which is presently deficient and dependent, not take the place of the Necessary Being?

In view of the explanation provided, the answer to this question is obvious. It has been presumed in this question that it was possible for the Necessary Being not be a necessary being and that it was through the interference of a cause that It became a necessary and not a contingent being. It has also been assumed that it is possible for a contingent being not to be a contingent being, and

that it became such due to the intervention of some cause. In other words, it was possible for an essentially perfect and infinite being to be deficient and finite, and for a deficient and finite being to be essentially perfect and infinite, and it was due to the intervention of some factor that one became essentially perfect and infinite while the other became essentially deficient and finite. Yes, this is the basis of the question.

The questioner is oblivious of the fact that the plane of existence of each existent is the essence (dhat) of that existent, in just the same manner as the plane of each number is the actual essence of that number. Therefore, if an existent becomes independent of a cause as a result of essential self-sufficiency and essential perfection, the consequence is that no cause can interfere with it in any manner, no cause has brought it into existence, and no cause has placed it at the plane at which it subsists. The question as to why the First Cause became the first cause-which is considered unanswerable in Western philosophy-is actually a meaningless question. For the First Cause, Its existence is Its reality and Its very essence (dhat), and being the First Cause is also identical with Its essence, and in both capacities it has no need of a cause.

This question is just like saying, 'Why is the number one, one? Why didn't it not become two? Why did two become number two and not one, and why it didn't take the place of one?' Since we have discussed the matter that the plane of existence of each existent is actually the very essence of that existent in greater detail in our book 'Adl-e Ilahi ('Divine Justice'), we shall refrain from repeating it here.

As a conclusion to this part of the discussion it would be appropriate to cite the remarks of Bertrand Russell, a contemporary philosopher, about the First Cause for ascertaining the character of his philosophical views concerning this profound issue.

Russell has a small book by the name Why I am not a Christian. In it he does not simply limit his criticism to Christianity, but rather criticizes religious ideas in general, and the idea of God in particular, which is accepted even by some non-religious persons.

Among the things he objects to in that book is 'the First Cause argument.' In order to know how Mr. Russell, this great Western philosopher whose fame has spread everywhere, has conceived these issues in his mind we shall quote him here. He says:

It is maintained that everything we see in this world has a cause, and as you go back in the chain of causes further and further you must come to a First Cause, and to that First Cause you give the name of God. Then Russell goes on to refute the argument in these words:

I may say that when I was a young man and was debating these questions very seriously in my mind, I for a long time accepted the argument of the First Cause, until one day, at the age of

eighteen, I read John Stuart Mill's Autobiography, and I there found this sentence: 'My father taught me that the question, "Who made me?" cannot be answered, since it immediately suggests the further question, "Who made God?" ' That very simple sentence showed me, as I still think, the fallacy in the argument of the First Cause. If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause. If there can be anything without a cause, it may just as well be the world as God, so that there cannot be any validity in that argument. Our previous observations highlight the fallacy in Russell's argument. The argument is not about whether everything must have a cause or if it is possible for a being to exist without a cause as an exception, that if it is possible for one thing to exist without a cause, what difference would it make whether it is God or the universe.

The issue involved is that [the thingness of] every thing and [the existence of] all that exists is neither the criterion of dependence upon a cause nor that of non-dependence in respect of its being something and having some kind of existence, so that the question may arise as to what difference is there among these things in this respect. The issue at hand is that among things and existents there exists an entity and a being which is pure existence and absolute perfection, and every perfection derives from it and is directed towards it, and it, being identical with existence, is in no need of a cause-as against things which have a borrowed existence-and such a being neither lacks existence nor any of its perfections for it to either seek them, or hasten to acquire them, nor does it lose them.

On the other hand, we live in a world in which everything has a transient nature and is in search of something which it lacks, and everything at another time loses what it presently possesses. We live in a world in which everything is subject to decline, annihilation, change and transformation, and all the signs of poverty, need, dependence, indebtedness and having a borrowed existence are evident on the face of every thing. Therefore, such a world cannot be the First Cause and the Necessary Being. And this is the Abrahamic argument mentioned in the Noble Qur'an: So We were showing Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and earth, that he might be of those having sure faith. When night outspread over him he saw a star and said, 'This is my Lord.' But when it set he said, 'I love not the setters.' When he saw the moon rising, he said, 'This is my Lord.' But when it set he said, 'If my Lord does not guide me I shall surely be of the people gone astray.' When he saw the sun rising, he said, 'This is my Lord; this is greater!' But when it set he said, 'O my people, surely I am quit of that you associate. I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth, a man of pure faith; I am not of the idolaters.' (6:75-79)

The summary of the argument is that, in consonance with primordial nature and self-evident judgement of the intellect, he considers himself a being that is servile and subject to and sustained [by something else], and dedicates himself to the search of his lord and sustainer. The star, the moon, and the sun-which are the most luminous existents and which the people of Abraham's time considered as power that regulated and ruled the world-by turns capture his

attention, but after a moment's contemplation the signs of subjugation, subjection, and being sustained by something else become evident in them as well as other existents in the world of nature. Thereat Abraham sets everything aside and turns his heart towards the mighty power which is the absolute sustainer and absolutely supreme, and in which there is no sign of subjugation, subjection, huduth, annihilation, need and poverty. From the presence of need and annihilation, transience and decline, dependence and subjection, he discovers the existence of that subjugating power and perfection. God and Evolution:

Among the various issues which in my opinion have had a great impact on materialistic tendencies is the false notion that there is a contradiction between the principle of creation on the one hand and the theory of evolution, especially the evolution of living organisms, on the other. In other words, the fallacy is that creation amounts to instantaneous coming into existence of things, while evolution means that things do not have a creator.

As history indicates, the idea existed, especially in the Western world, that the implication of the universe being created by God is that all things should be unvarying and fixed, and that there should be no change in the universe, especially in the principles of the universe, that is, the species. Hence evolution is impossible, especially where it relates to the essence and necessitates a change in the essence of a thing and a mutation of its species. On the other hand, we observe that with the development of the sciences the notion that things, especially living creatures, show an ascending evolutionary movement becomes ever more confirmed and established. The conclusion that is drawn from these two premises is that the sciences, especially biological sciences, are moving in an anti-theistic direction.

As we know, the views of Lamarck and Darwin, especially those of the latter, raised a storm in Europe. Although Darwin was himself a believer in God and religion, and as related, sat the time of his death he held the Bible pressed to his chest,' and repeatedly in his writings declared his faith in God, his ideas were introduced as being totally anti-God.

Someone might say that evolutionism in general (especially Darwinism, in view of the hypothesis that the origin of man is from the ape, which was later abandoned) was considered anti-God because it went against the contents of the holy scriptures. In religious scriptures the creation of man has been usually traced back to a single human being named Adam, and this apparently implies that he was directly created from dust. Accordingly, it was both correct and proper that Darwin and the Darwinists, or rather all the proponents of evolution, be branded as anti-God, because in no way is it possible to reconcile faith in religion with belief in the theory of evolution. There is, therefore, no alternative to accepting one from among these two and rejecting the other.

The reply to this is that, firstly, what the sciences have opined in this regard are hypotheses which

are either constantly changing, modified, or even abandoned and replaced by other hypotheses. On the basis of such hypotheses, it is neither possible to reject some idea stated explicitly and without any room for interpretation in a divine scripture, nor is it possible to consider such hypotheses a proof of the baselessness of religion as such and the baselessness of religion as a proof for the non-existence of God.

Secondly, scientific opinion has moved in a direction which shows that the basic changes occurring in living creatures, especially at stages where their species changes and their essence undergoes mutation, are in the form of a leap, swift and sudden. Therefore, the concept of very gradual, intangible and cumulative changes is no longer relevant. When science considers it possible for an infant to cover a distance of hundred years in a single night, what evidence is there that it cannot cover the distance of hundreds of million years in forty nights? Even if that which has been mentioned in religious texts be presumed to imply explicitly the creation of the first man directly from dust, it has been expressed in a manner that shows that it involved some kind of action and reaction in nature.

It is stated in religious texts that Adam's clay was formed in forty days. Who knows, perhaps all the stages which the first living cell had to cover in the natural course in billions of years for it to eventually give rise to a human being, may have been covered in forty days by Adam's clay in extraordinary conditions which the hand of Divine power had brought about, in the same way as the human ovum, in a period of nine months in the womb, is said to cover all the stages the animal predecessors of man took billions of years to cover.

Thirdly, suppose that what the sciences say in this regard is more than a mere hypothesis and is a confirmed scientific fact, that it is not possible to create natural conditions so that matter may swiftly and speedily cover the stages which it covers slowly under a different set of conditions, and that it is a scientifically confirmed fact that man had animal ancestors. In the light of these assumptions, are the relevant religious texts such that they cannot be interpreted accordingly? If we specifically take the Noble Qur'an as the criterion, we find that the Qur'an has narrated the story of Adam in a symbolic manner.

I do not mean to say that the Adam mentioned in the Qur'an is not a person's name but a symbol representing the human species. I don't mean to say that. To be certain the first Man (Adam) was an individual and a person having concrete existence. What I mean is that the Qur'an has narrated the story of Adam in a symbolic way from the point of view of his stay in heaven, his seduction by Satan, greed, and jealousy, his expulsion from heaven, his penitence, and so on. The conclusion the Qur'an derives from this story is not from the standpoint of the wonderful creation of Adam and it does not play any role in drawing any theological conclusion.

Rather, the Qur'an narrates the story of Adam solely from the point of view of man's spiritual

station and from the viewpoint of certain ethical issues. It is fully possible for a person who believes in God and the Qur'an to retain his faith in God and the Qur'an while interpreting the story of Adam's creation in some manner. Today, we know religious persons who have faith in God, the Prophet (s) and the Qur'an, and who interpret the story of Adam's creation in a manner consonant with the modern sciences. No one has claimed that these views contradict with faith in the Qur'an. I myself, while studying these views in books on this subject, find in them many points worthy of attention and reflection, although I am not totally convinced about them.

However, to consider such issues a pretext for rejecting the Qur'an and religion is far from scientific justice, to say nothing of using them as an excuse for negating belief in God.

Fourthly, suppose we accept that the literal meanings of religious texts are not susceptible to an alternative interpretation and that man's descent from animals is scientifically definite. At the most it would mean that one will lose faith in religious scriptures. But why should one lose faith in God? Firstly, it is possible that new religions may emerge which do not subscribe to the idea of man's direct creation from dust as explicitly as the Torah. Secondly, does the rejection of a single, some, or all religions logically imply the rejection of belief in God? There have always been individuals who have had faith in God without adhering to any religion.

From all that we have said it is known that the assumed contradiction between the contents of religious texts and the theory of evolution cannot be considered a reason for inclining towards materialism; the reason must be something else. The fact is that the European materialists imagined the hypothesis of evolution to be rationally and logically incompatible with the issue of God, irrespective of its compatibility with religion. Accordingly, they proclaimed that belief in God is negated by acceptance of the theory of evolution.

Let us now examine this argument, to see whether there is any rational and logical contradiction between these two issues, or if the inadequacy of the concepts of European philosophy is responsible for an imagined contradiction. Whatever it may be, we need to examine the approach taken by the materialists in taking this contradiction for granted.

We can explain their statements in two ways. Firstly, in the sense that the theists are deprived of their most important argument with the emergence of the theory of evolution. A major argument of the theists for proving the existence of an omniscient and wise creator was the presence of a perfect order of existents. This perfect order is more evident in the plant and animal kingdoms. If the creation of plants and animals had been instantaneous, the argument based on the perfect order of existents would have been correct, because it was not rationally acceptable that a being could come into existence instantaneously and all of a sudden without any intelligent plan, especially where it possesses such structures which show that its formation, design, and organism has been created with a planned purpose. But if the creation of the existents was gradual and

extended in time, that is, if it has taken place in the course of hundreds of millions of years and the structure of existents has acquired the present form little by little with the passing of centuries and generations, there is no obstacle to regarding these intricate systems as entirely unplanned. That is, no intelligent power has supervised it and only coincidences and forced conformity with the environment have been the cause of these systems and organisms.

Therefore, with the acceptance and confirmation of mutation the main argument of the theists is taken away from them, and this by itself is sufficient to tilt the balance in favour of the materialists and make a group incline towards that side.

But this interpretation is in itself incorrect. If such views are presented before a vigorous theistic school of thought it will immediately reply that, firstly, it is a mistake to consider the perfection of design as the only argument for the existence of God, and to mention it as the main argument is indeed an exaggeration. Secondly, the whole order of creation is not limited to the structure of animal organs for it to be said that the gradual evolution of species is enough to explain their accidental existence. Thirdly, the important and also the principal reply to this criticism is that the gradual emergence of and accidental changes occurring in the structure of plants and animals are not at all sufficient for explaining the precise systems of their bodies.

Accidental changes can be considered sufficient only when we presume that there occurs a change in the body of a living creature as a result of an accident or an aimless act, or an act meant for some purpose other than the consequence produced; for instance, when a web is formed accidentally on a duck's feet and proves helpful in swimming and is transferred to later generations as a result of heredity.

But, firstly, from the viewpoint of heredity, the transfer of acquired and individual characteristics, especially acquired characteristics, is highly improbable or rather ruled out. Secondly, all organs and members of the body are not like the web of a duck's foot. Generally, every part is itself a part of an elaborate and complicated system, such as those relating to digestion, respiration, vision, hearing, and so on. Each of these systems is an organized and interlinked apparatus in which the related function and characteristic is not achieved unless all its parts come into existence. For example, the membranes of the eye are not such that each of them be assumed to perform a separate function of the body and as having come into existence gradually in millions of years. Rather the eye, along with all its membranes, fluids, nerves and muscles with their astonishing number, variety, organization and formation performs a single function. It is not admissible that accidental changes, even in billions of years, would gradually give rise to the ocular or auricular system.

The theory of evolution more than anything points towards the role of an intelligent and guiding force in the being of living creatures and demonstrates the principle of teleology.

Darwin himself propounded the principle of adaptation to environment in such terms that he was told that he spoke of it as if it were a metaphysical principle. It is a reality that the capacity of living organisms to adapt to the environment, which is a very mysterious and astonishing power, is something metaphysical; that is, it is subject to a kind of guidance and consciousness of purpose, and is in no way a blind and aimless power.

The principle of evolution implies the presence of an unseen regulating power in the universe no less than any other theory. The reason that Darwin and many other later biologists are theists and religious persons is this that they have not considered the principles and laws of nature-such as the principles of struggle for survival, heredity, selection of the fittest, and adaptation to the environment (if interpreted solely as an ordinary blind natural reaction to the environment)-by any means sufficient for explaining the emergence of living organisms. Of course, we do not say that they did not consider them necessary and reverted to the theory of instantaneous creation of living organisms. All that we are saying is that they did not consider them sufficient.

Actually, the reason why the theory of evolution was considered contradictory to the famous theist argument for the existence of God based upon perfect design was doubtlessly the weakness of the systems of philosophy and metaphysics. Instead of utilizing the emergence of the theory of evolution to the advantage of the theist school, they considered it as antithetical to theist thought, because they imagined that only an instantaneously created universe needed a cause and creator, and if the universe or any species were to come into existence gradually, the gradual natural factors were sufficient to explain their existence. Such assumptions indicate the weakness of the Western systems of philosophic thought.

Apart from the assumption that the theory of evolution weakens the argument by design and perfection of creation, there existed another reason why the evolutionary school was considered antithetical to theism, thus assisting the spread of materialism. This was the supposition that if there were a God, things must have come into existence according to a prior plan; that is, the existence of things should have been anticipated in God's knowledge and then created by His irresistible will.

The presence of a prior plan implies the total absence of chance, because chance contradicts foreknowledge, being something unexpected and unpredictable. But we know that chance plays an extraordinary important and effective role in the creation of the universe. Even if we suppose that chance is not sufficient for the initial existence of things, we cannot deny its existence and effective role in the process of creation. For example, the earth, which is the cradle of living organisms, was a fragment which came into existence due to a chance, for instance, due to the sun's nearing a big spherical body and coming under its gravitational pull. Had there existed a prior plan, or a fate predetermined since eternity, chance would have no role. The conclusion is

that if God exists things should come into existence in a manner preplanned and foreknown in His eternal knowledge, and had things been foreknown in God's eternal knowledge there would be no chance. And since chance has an effective role in creation, the creation of things was unpredictable, and since it was unpredictable, there is no God.

Apart from this, if things came into existence due to the eternal Divine will, it was necessary for them to do so instantaneously at one stroke, because God's will is absolute, irresistible and unconditional. The implication of God's absolute, irresistible and unconditional will is that everything He intends to create comes into existence without a moment's delay. Hence it is mentioned in religious texts that God's command is such that when He wills something He says, 'Be', and it comes into existence immediately. Therefore, if the world and things existing in it have come into existence by God's will, it follows that the world must come into existence from the very beginning in whatever form or state it would eventually assume.

The conclusion derived from these two points-one of which relates to God's eternal knowledge and the other to the Divine will-is that if God exists, there exist both an eternal Divine knowledge and an eternal will, and eternal knowledge and eternal will require that things come into existence instantaneously.

The reply is that neither God's eternal knowledge nor His eternal will require that things come into existence instantaneously. Further, neither the theists the world over nor the religious texts have posed the issue in this manner.

It is mentioned in religious texts that God created the universe in six days. Regardless of whatever may be implied by 'six days,' be it six periods, or six days of God, each of which is equal to a thousand years, or six ordinary days amounting to 144 hours, that which is understood from this statement is gradualness. The theists have never said that the eternal knowledge of God and His absolute will necessitate that the heavens were created in a single moment and instantaneously. The scriptures say that they were created gradually during a certain period of time.

And the Noble Qur'an also states very explicitly the gradual development of the foetus in the womb and considers it as a pointer to the knowledge of God. Nobody has ever said that the necessary implication of God's eternal knowledge and will-which is such that when it relates to a certain thing and He says, 'Be,' the thing comes into being-is that the foetus develops momentarily. This was from the viewpoint of the scriptures.

From the point of view of philosophy, the claim that God's eternal knowledge implies that chance does not play any effective role whatsoever, requires a bit of explanation.

From the philosophic viewpoint, fortuity and accident, or in other words chance, does not exist at

all, and that which men calls chance is not chance in reality and does not essentially differ in the least from all other causes and effects, prerequisites and consequences.

The word 'chance' is used in two different senses. The first sense is where something comes into being without any efficient cause, that is, a thing that supposedly did not exist comes into existence without the interference of any factor. This kind of chance is rejected by all schools of thought irrespective of their being theists or materialists, because even the materialists do not accept such a hypothesis about the origin of the universe. This kind of chance is also not related to the topic of our present discussion, because even those who claim that organic changes in animals are due to chance factors do not imply this kind of chance.

The other sense in which this word is used is where a consequence follows from conditions which are not its prerequisite, or when conditions give rise to a consequence which does not follow from them. For example, if you get into a car in Tehran and drive on the Tehran-Qum highway you will reach Qum after two or three hours. You never say that I drove on this highway and accidentally reached Qum, because the natural outcome of this journey is your reaching Qum. Now suppose you have an old friend whom you have not seen for years.

While travelling to Qum you are neither thinking about him nor looking around for him, but as soon as you reach 'Aliabad on the Tehran-Qum highway, you get off the car to relax for a while at an inn. Finding an empty chair at a table, all of a sudden you find your friend whom you had not seen for twenty years. You come to know that he was living in Shiraz and had come to Tehran, that he too had stopped there to relax for a while when he saw you. Here each of you will say, 'We met by chance on the Tehran-Qum highway.' The reason why both of you consider this meeting accidental is that in the general course of nature travelling between Tehran and Qum does not necessarily result in such a meeting.

Were it necessary, it would mean that such a meeting should occur whenever you travel from Tehran to Qum whatever the circumstances, while it is not so. This event took place only during this particular journey which took place at a particular time under its particular circumstances. That is why this meeting was not foreseeable for you or your friend or anyone in your place, and neither you nor your friend would have been able to include this meeting in his plans while planning his journey. Things which can be foreseen and included in an itinerary are those which occur in the natural course of journey between Tehran and Qum.

But if you turn your attention from the general character of the journey from Tehran to Qum and focus your attention on this particular journey which was made at a particular time under particular conditions, and if you take it into consideration with its accompanying circumstances and conditions and other accompanying events, you will find that your meeting your friend at that specific point and at that moment was not at all accidental; rather it was necessary, natural and

inevitable consequence of your journey towards Qum, and was also totally predictable for someone who was aware of all the movements and circumstances of both of you.

This meeting is accidental in the eyes of someone who takes into view the general nature of the journey from Tehran to Qum. Obviously this journey has a set of general implications, and that which lies outside them, from the point of view of its general nature, will be considered chance. But that which exists is not just the general nature; that which exists is that general nature along with a set of condition, and the notion of chance vanishes on taking into consideration these conditions and additional facts .

Here we give another example to further elucidate how accident and chance are subjective in nature; that is, it is an accident or chance from the viewpoint of a person who is ignorant of the causes, whereas from the standpoint of one who has knowledge of the causes involved there is no chance or accident.

Imagine two persons employed in a certain institution and who receive their instructions from a single source. One of them, Mr. A, is employed in Khurasan and the other, Mr. B, works at Isfahan. Instructions are received from the headquarters ordering Mr. A to leave on a certain date for a disaster-stricken area to perform some specific task, and soon afterwards instructions are received by Mr. B ordering him to go on the same day to the same place for performing another task. Obviously Mr. A and Mr. B meet each other at that place and their meeting is accidental for each of them. Both of them will say that they met each other accidentally on a certain day and at a certain place. Each of them separately views the nature of his task and finds that this meeting was not a necessary consequence of his task and that it was not predictable for either of them. But from the viewpoint of the headquarters, which ordered both of these apparently separate and unrelated assignments that were carried out under its instructions, this meeting was not at all accidental.

For the headquarters, which determined the courses of the two journeys from Isfahan and Mashad to that point and arranged both of them in such a manner that the two individuals reached that point on a specific date, their meeting and coming together was very natural and inevitable. The headquarters cannot say that it sent these two and they accidentally met each other at a certain place. Therefore, accident and chance are relative; it is an accident in relation to one who is unaware of the happenings, whereas for one who knows the details of events and has a complete knowledge of the circumstances and conditions there is no accident or chance involved. This is why they say: that which is called 'chance' is such only in relation to one who is ignorant of the causes, not for one who has complete knowledge of the events.

From this we come to know that for God, the Exalted, and in fact from the viewpoint of reality and what actually takes place, there is no question of accident or chance. Hence, to say that 'if we

accept God we must also accept that the events in the universe occur in accordance with a plan and are therefore predictable and involve no accident or chance, whereas the sciences believe in an effective and important role of chance and accident,' is something baseless.

The accidents are such with reference to us who are ignorant of the totality of causes, not with reference to God, who is the Creator and Originator of every thing and encompasses all causes, conditions, and circumstances.

Now something regarding [God's] eternal will.

This objection is weaker than the first one. Strangely enough, has been imagined that God's absolute and eternal will implies that all existents come into being instantaneously! What a big blunder! The implication of God's absolute will is that everything should come into existence in the manner He desires and in the form He intends without facing any opposition and obstacle, that there be no gap between His will and the thing willed, not that everything which He desires should come into existence in an instantaneous manner.

To explain, if we, who have a deficient and finite will, will something, we have to rely upon things other than our own will, and unless we obtain those means our will by itself can achieve nothing. Also we need to remove certain obstacles, because our will cannot be realized with their presence. But since God's will encompasses all things and everything is the result of His will, the means and hindrances too are the creation of His will. Thus at the plane where His will prevails there exists nothing by way of a precondition, means, or obstacle:

all conditions, means, obstacles and their absence are subservient and subject to His will. Therefore, that which He wills exists in the manner willed by Him, without the least delay. If the existence of a thing depends upon the fulfillment of certain conditions, it is proper to say from the viewpoint of that thing that it depends on these conditions, but it is not correct to say about God's will that it depends upon certain conditions. That is, the execution of Divine will is not dependent upon anything; rather it is Divine will which ordains the thing with those conditions and it comes into existence in the manner willed by Him without any departure.

Thus the meaning of God's possessing an absolute will is that whatever He wills takes place in the manner He wills, without His will depending upon anything beyond Himself for its execution. Therefore, if He wills a thing's existence to be instantaneous that thing comes into being instantaneously. But if He wills that a thing's existence be gradual it comes into being gradually. It depends upon the mode of the thing's existence and the manner in which God has willed its existence.

If Divine will and wisdom so ordain that living creatures should come into existence gradually in a

span of billions of years, they will naturally come into existence in this manner. Therefore, it is wrong to say that God's absolute will requires that everything come into existence instantaneously. The logical implication of the absolute Divine will is that everything comes into existence in the manner decreed by Him, instantaneously or gradually, without depending upon anything beyond the Divine will.

Apart from this, the philosophers have proved that things having a gradual character have an existence that can only be gradual; it is impossible for them to have any other kind of existence, either static or instantaneous. Hence the receptivity (qabiliyyah) of the receiver (qabil) also necessitates gradualness.

Sadr al-Muta'allihin has proved that there is a kind of motion in the world called 'substantial motion' (harkat jawhariyyah). According to the theory of substantial motion there is nothing static in nature nor can possibly be. All things existing in nature have a gradual existence and it cannot be otherwise. This philosopher, who is also a divine 'arif (gnostic), never thought that there might be people in the future who would imagine that the instantaneous creation of all things was implied by God's eternal knowledge or will.

A few years ago I wrote an article "Monotheism and Evolution" ("Tawhid wa Takamul") for the monthly Maktab-e Tashayy'u in which I have discussed the errors in the approach of Western philosophers in considering theism to be incompatible with the concept of evolution. Notes:

[1] Paul Foulque, L'Existentialisme, Persian trans., p96

[2] Ibid.

[3] Walter Terrace Stace, The Philosophy of Hegel, Dover Publications, pp50-1

[4] Ibid., pp71-2

[5] This was a problem posed for the first time in Islamic Philosophy, and like many other problems it was the result of the criticisms of the mutakallimun. The criticisms of the mutakallimun led to the emergence of certain problems in philosophy, and in this sense philosophy is greatly indebted to them.

[6] These remarks invoke a loose kind of speech. Science is incapable of proving the casual relationship that is the effects needs for a cause. The most sciences can establish is an association or succession between phenomena. We have clarified this topic fully in the footnotes to the Usule falsafeh wa rawish e riyalism, volume 2.

The Causes Responsible for Materialist (Lecture 3)

Another example of the inadequacy of Western philosophy is to imagine the concept of eternity of matter to be incompatible with faith in God, while in fact there is no such logical implication between this view and denial of God. Rather the divine philosophers believe that faith in God necessarily implies faith in His eternity and continuous creativity (fayyadiyyat), and it is the continuity of His creativity that implies the eternity of creation.

A Russian scholar had written in an article whose Persian translation was published by a magazine few years ago that Ibn Sina vacillated between materialism and idealism.

Why did this scholar express such a view concerning Ibn Sina while one of Ibn Sina's hallmarks is that he has consistently followed a single line in expressing his views and doctrines and there is no wavering and contradiction in his statements. Maybe his powerful and extraordinary memory which made it possible for him not to forget any of his thoughts was one of the causes of this characteristic.

This Russian scholar, since he saw on the one hand that Ibn Sina believed in the eternity of matter and did not believe that time had a beginning, thought him to be a materialist. On the other hand, he found him speaking of God, creation and the First Cause and concluded that Ibn Sina is an idealist. Hence Ibn Sina kept wavering between the two poles of materialism and idealism and had no fixed opinion in this regard.

This Russian scholar had such a view about Ibn Sina because he considered the concept of eternity of matter to be incompatible with the idea that matter and the universe were of Divine creation.

However in Ibn Sina's reasoning, where he has discussed the 'criterion for dependence upon a cause' and identified it to be 'essential contingency' (imkan e-dhati), there exists no such contradiction between these two. Earlier we have discussed the topic of criterion for dependence upon a cause, which happens to be one of the most important of philosophical issues and has been only dealt in Islamic philosophy. It was made clear that the logical implication of being caused and created is not coming into existence in time (huduth-e-zamani); there is nothing to stop an existent from having an eternal and everlasting existence while deriving its existence from a being other than itself. We will have more to say on this issue later on. God or Freedom?

Predetermination and freedom of will (jabr wa ikhtiyar) is a well-known issue of philosophy, theology and ethics. The discussion is about whether man is compelled in his actions and has no freedom of choice, or is free in his actions. There is another issue discussed in metaphysics which is named qada wa qadar' (Divine ordainments and determinations). Qada' and qadar implies the decisive Divine command which determines the course of the world's events and their limits and

extent.

The topic of qada and qadar involves the question whether Divine qada' and qadar is general and covers all things and events or not. In the case of its being general, what is the position of human freedom and free will? Is it possible for Divine qada and qadar to be general and all-inclusive and for man to have a free role at the same time?

The answer is, yes. I have myself discussed this topic in a treatise written on this subject and published under the title "Man and Destiny" (Insan wa sarnawisht) and have proved that there is no incompatibility between God's general qada' on the one hand and man's freedom of will on the other. Of course, that which I have mentioned therein is not something which has been said for the first time by me; whatever I have said is inferred from the Noble Qur'an and others before me have done the same, especially Islamic philosophers, who have adequately discussed this topic.

But today when we look at Europe we find persons like Jean Paul Sartre lost in the labyrinths of this issue, and since they have based their philosophy on choice, freewill and freedom, they do not want to accept God. Jean Paul Sartre says: Since I believe and have faith in freedom I cannot believe and have faith in God, for if I accept God I will necessarily have to accept fate, and if I accept fate I cannot accept individual freedom, and since I want to accept freedom and I love it and have faith in it, I cannot have faith in God.

From the Islamic point of view, faith and belief in God is equivalent to man's freedom and freewill. Freedom in the real sense is the essence of man. Although the Noble Qur'an introduces God as very great and His will as all- pervasive, it also strongly defends human freedom. There has certainly come on man a period of time when he was nothing worthy of mention. We created man of a mingled sperm so as to try him; and We made him hearing and seeing. Surely We guided him upon the way, whether he be thankful or unthankful. (76:1-3) This implies that man is free, and he may choose the right path or the path of ingratitude (kufran) of his own will.

The Qur'an further states:

Whosoever desires this present world, We hasten for him therein what We will unto whomsoever We desire; then We appoint for him the hell wherein he shall roast, condemned and rejected. And whosoever desires the world to come and strives after it as he should, being a believer, those, their striving shall be thanked. Each We succour, these and those, from thy Lord's gift; and thy Lords gift is not confined. (17:18-20). Yes, this is the Qur'anic logic. The Qur'an does not see any incompatibility between God's general qada and man's freedom and freewill.

From the philosophical point of view, too, conclusive proofs which negate any incompatibility

between the two have been provided.

However, these philosophers of the twentieth century have imagined that they can be free only if they do not accept God, and that too in the sense that they can in that case break the relation of their will from the past and the present, that is with history and the environment, and with a will severed from history and society choose and build the future, although the issue of determinism and freewill is not related to the question of acceptance or negation of God. By accepting God, too, it is possible to envisage an active and free role for the human will, as it is also possible to negate God and at the same time to challenge the concept of freewill on the basis of the universal law of causation.

That is, the root of determinism, or the imagined implication of determinism, lies in the belief in a definite system of cause and effect acknowledged both by the theists as well as the materialists. If there is no incompatibility between a definite system of cause and effect and human freedom and freewill, which in fact there is not, belief in God, too, does not entail negation of freewill. For more details on this issue refer to the book *Insan wa sarnawisht*. Here we intend to mention a few more examples of the philosophical errors of the West in the field of metaphysics. Chance, God, or Causation?

For a better understanding of Western thought, both theist and materialist, concerning God, it is proper that we discuss the following topic:

Some imagine that proving God's existence depends on casting doubt on the law of causation and the concept of causal necessity, that is the very thing which constitutes the most basic foundation for proving God's existence. Not only is it the basic foundation for proving God's existence but also the foundation for accepting any scientific and philosophical theory.

Bertrand Russell has assigned a chapter in his book *The Scientific Outlook* under the heading "Science and Religion." He has posed in this chapter certain issues which in his opinion form the area of conflict between science and religion. One of them is this very issue which he discusses under the heading of "Free Will." The reason he has mentioned it under this heading is that the Westerners imagine freewill and freedom in the human context to imply freedom from the law of causality and causal necessity. Therefore, if we reject the laws of causation and causal necessity in nature, we will be admitting to the presence of some kind of choice in nature. Accordingly Russell raises this issue under the heading "Free Will."

In our opinion, the raising of this issue under this caption is by itself another indication of the level of Western thought on such kind of topics. In any case this is what Russell says:

Until very recent times theology, while in its Catholic form it admitted free will in human beings,

showed an affection for natural law in the universe, tempered only by belief in occasional miracles ...

One of the most remarkable developments in religious apologetics in recent times is the attempt to rescue free will in man by means of ignorance as to the behaviour of atoms ... It is not yet known with any certainty whether there are laws governing the behaviour of single atoms in all respects, or whether the behaviour of such atoms is in part random ... In the atom there are various possible states which do not merge continuously into each other, but are separated by small finite gaps. An atom may hop from one of these states to another, and there are various different hops that it may make. At present no laws are known to decide which of the possible hops will take place on any given occasion, and it is suggested that the atom is not subject to laws at all in this respect, but has what might be called, by analogy, "free will." Eddington, in his book on the Nature of the Physical World, has made great play with this possibility. [1]

Russell then goes on to give an outline of the history of the principle of non-necessity and adds:

I am surprised, I repeat, that Eddington should have appealed to this principle in connexion with the question of free will, for the principle does nothing whatever to show that the course of nature is not determined. [2] Then he states that that which is understood from quantum mechanics is not the negation of causality but the negation of the principle of necessity (principle of the necessity of an effect's dependence upon a cause). He says:

There is nothing whatever in the Principle of Indeterminacy to show that any physical event is uncaused ... Returning now to the atom and its supposed free will, it should be observed that it is not known that the behaviour of the atom is capricious. It is false to say the behaviour of the atom is known to be capricious, and it is also false to say the behaviour is known to be not capricious. Science has quite recently discovered that the atom is not subject to the laws of the older physics, and some physicists have somewhat rashly jumped to the conclusion that the atom is not subject to law at all ... It is very rash to erect a theological superstructure upon a piece of ignorance which may be only momentary. There is, moreover, a purely empirical objection to the belief in free will. Wherever it has been possible to subject the behaviour of animals or of human beings to careful scientific observation, it has been found, as in Pavlov's experiments, that scientific laws are just as discoverable here as in any other sphere. It is true that we cannot predict human actions with any completeness, but this is quite sufficiently accounted for by the complication of the mechanism, and by no means demands the hypothesis of complete lawlessness, which is found to be false wherever it can be carefully tested. Those who desire caprice in the physical world seem to me to have failed to realize what this would involve.

All inference in regard to the course of nature is causal, and if nature is not subject to causal laws all such inference must fail. We cannot, in that case, know anything outside of our personal

experience; indeed, strictly speaking, we can only know our experience in the present moment, since all memory depends upon casual laws. If we cannot infer the existence of other people, or even of our own past, how much less can we infer God, or anything else that the theologians desire ...

There is, in fact, no good reason whatever for supposing that the behaviour of atoms is not subject to law. It is only quite recently that experimental methods have been able to throw any light on the behaviour of individual atoms, and it is no wonder if the laws of this behaviour have not yet been discovered. [3]

We endorse Russell's opinion that a satisfactory proof has not been provided to prove the lawlessness of atomic movements, and further contend that it is impossible that such a proof exist or be produced in the future. Similarly, we affirm his view that if the law of causation were not valid and the universe were lawless, all our inferences about the universe, God, and everything else would be in vain.

That which Russell has said in answer to those who claim the universe to be lawless (or lawless at least in subatomic particles) is the same as what Islamic philosophers have said in reply to the Ash'arites who tried to deny causal necessity. I have expressed my view about this principle in the footnotes of "The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism" and in the book 'Man and Destiny'.

But here I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise at the following two points. The first that a group of so-called theists have tried to prove the existence of God by negating causation, or in their own words, through freewill and negation of causal necessity and congruence between cause and effect (i.e. the notion that a certain cause can produce only a certain kind of effect). Anyone even with little acquaintance with Islamic metaphysics knows that acceptance of the principle of causation and causal necessity and congruence between cause and effect is part of the ABC of Islamic metaphysics.

The second point is that Mr. Russell imagines that the only blow delivered to science by the negation of the law of causality is our inability to generalize the results of scientific experiments, for the generalization of an experiment is dependent upon the theory that 'like causes in like circumstances act in a similar manner.' He is unaware of the fact that by negating the principle of causation, even in cases where all aspects of a thing have been experimented we cannot acquire the knowledge of it within the experimented limits, because our knowledge of external reality acquired through the senses and experimentation is itself dependent upon the law of causation. If the law of causation were not there, we would arrive at nothing. Mr. Russell repeatedly emphasizes this point in his book The Scientific Outlook that modern physics is advancing towards the concept of lawlessness of the universe.

The basic point is that the law of causation is not a physical law but a law of philosophy; consequently physics can neither prove it nor refute it. But Mr. Russell does not believe in philosophical laws independent of the achievements of the sciences and is therefore forced to remain bewildered in this quagmire.

In the footnotes of 'The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism' in the article, "The Origins of Multiplicity in Cognition," I have discussed the source of the concept of causality and the manner in which the mind arrives at this concept and affirms its validity. The reader is referred to that book. The Concept of Creation:

Among the confusions present in Western philosophical thought concerning the problem of causation is the analysis of the concept of creation. What is meant by creation? Does it mean that the Creator gives existence to a non-existent? Or does it imply that He brings an existent into existence? None of the two alternatives is rational and a third alternative is also unimaginable.

In other words, that which is created by a power either exists or is non-existent. If it exists, creating it amounts to 'acquiring the acquired' (tahsil e hasil), because creating what exists implies giving a thing something which it already possesses, like a straightening a straight line. And if it is non-existent, creating it amounts to kind of a contradiction, because creating a non-existent implies changing non-existence into existence, and this involves the conversion of non-existence into existence and non-being into being, and this is a contradiction.

Hence creation is either the changing of existence into existence or the changing of non-existence into existence. The former involves acquiring the acquired and while the latter results in a contradiction, and both are impossible. This is the well-known paradox in this regard. Among Islamic scholars, the one to develop this paradox more than anyone else is Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi.

Islamic philosophers have devoted a separate chapter to this issue, known as the 'problem of making' (mas'alah-ye ja'l) and have provided an excellent and precise analysis of the concepts of causation, creation, and the like, thereby resolving this paradox.

First, they have demonstrated that if this argument were correct we will have to set aside completely the notion of causation regardless of whether it is natural causation-that is, bringing about motion and changing a thing into something else, or Divine causation-that is, generation and creation.

Secondly, they have established that there are two possible kinds of causation and making (ja'l). One of them is simple making (ja'l-e basit) and the other compound making (ja'l-e murakkab). All those paradoxes have risen because all instances of creation and causation have been imagined as

belonging to the class of compound making and causation. Here we do not intend to study this problem which needs an elaborate treatment, and to discuss all its various aspects will greatly prolong this discussion. Here our sole purpose is to point out the causes responsible for materialist tendencies from the viewpoint of the West's philosophical inadequacies, and so we are forced to discuss this issue to the extent necessary to reveal one of the roots of these tendencies. One of these roots pertains to the remaining unsolved of the concept of creation, or in other words, the absence of an accurate analysis of the concept of causation, which has taken place in Islamic philosophy in the well-known discussion on ja'l.

Here I will again cite Russell in this regard in his capacity as a materialist Western philosopher. In the aforementioned book and chapter, Bertrand Russell has discussed a topic under the heading "God the Creator." There he has mentioned the famous theory of modern physics based on the world's gradual disintegration and running down and hence having an end. This in turn proves that the world has a beginning from the point of view of time, because that which has no beginning has no end, and that which has an end must have a beginning, although it is possible that a thing may have a beginning without having an end. From here it has been concluded that the world has been created by a power and that the view of the materialists is wrong.

Russell, while trying to explain that this new theory does not corroborate the theist thesis, says:

One of the most serious difficulties confronting science at the present time is the difficulty derived from the fact that the universe appears to be running down. There are, for example, radio-active elements in the world. These are perpetually disintegrating into less complex elements, and no process by which they can be built up is known. This, however, is not the most important or difficult respect in which the world is running down. Although we do not know of any natural process by which complex elements are built up out of simpler ones, we can imagine such processes, and it is possible that they are taking place somewhere. But when we come to the second law of thermodynamics we encounter a more fundamental difficulty.

The second law of thermodynamics states, roughly speaking, that things left to themselves tend to get into a muddle and do not tidy themselves up again. It seems that once upon a time the universe was all tidy, with everything in its proper place, and that ever since then it has been growing more and more disorderly, until nothing but a drastic spring-cleaning can restore it to its pristine order. [4]

Russell, after giving clarifications in this regard, goes on with his explanation:

As we trace the course of the world backwards in time, we arrive after some finite number of years (rather more than four thousand and four, however), at a state of the world which could not have been preceded by any other, if the second law of thermodynamics was then valid. This initial

state of the world would be that in which energy was distributed as unevenly as possible. [5] Then he goes on to quote Eddington and speaks about his hesitation and bewilderment concerning which theory should be eventually chosen. Eddington says:

The difficulty of an infinite past is appalling. It is inconceivable that we are the heirs of an infinite time of preparation; it is not less inconceivable that there was once a moment with no moment preceding it. [6] Finally Russell himself expresses his opinion in this manner The second law of thermodynamics may not hold in all times and places, or we may be mistaken in thinking the universe spatially finite; but as arguments of this nature go, it is a good one, and I think we ought provisionally to accept the hypothesis that the world had a beginning at some definite, though unknown, date. Are we to infer from this that the world was made by a Creator? Certainly not, if we are to adhere to the canons of valid scientific inference. There is no reason whatever why the universe should not have begun spontaneously, except that it seems odd that it should do so; but there is no law of nature to the effect that things which seem odd to us must not happen.

To infer a Creator is to infer a cause, and causal inferences are only admissible in science when they proceed from observed causal laws. Creation out of nothing is an occurrence which has not been observed [7]. There is, therefore, no better reason to suppose that the world was caused by a Creator than to suppose that it was uncaused; either equally contradicts the causal laws that we can observe. [8] That which has been quoted consists of two parts. The first is about modern physics, and expressing any opinion about it is outside the competence of metaphysics. From the metaphysical viewpoint, creation cannot be limited and have a beginning in time. Similarly it cannot stop at a particular limit. Divine effusion is interminable and infinite with respect to both its beginning and end.

The present universe as conceived by physics could be a single link in the chain of Divine effusion which comprises of numerous inter-connected links, but it cannot be the only link. From the standpoint of metaphysics, the meaning of the statement that the universe came into existence in finite time is that this part of creation has a beginning in time, not that the process of creation itself began in finite time.

The second part consists of the philosophical ideas of this twentieth century philosopher. The real purpose of our citing the above-mentioned passages was for the sake of this part. Now that modern physics affirms the theory of gradual disintegration and running down of the universe, he prefers to accept that the universe came into being at a finite though unknown point in time. And now that we are compelled to accept that the universe began in finite time, there are two possibilities: first that the universe was brought into existence by a creator at the point of its beginning, the other is that it came into existence spontaneously at that point without the interference of any agent. He claims that from the point of view of causal laws there can be no preference of any kind between the two possibilities considering; both equally contradict causal

laws. The coming into existence of the universe as an act of a creative power is also against causal laws because the causal laws which we are able to observe only justify conclusions which follow from the principle of causation. That is, it recognizes causality and being caused (ma'luliyat) only in cases where the cause itself is in turn an effect of another cause. But if a cause and effect are assumed where the cause itself is not an effect, this contradicts the principle of causality recognized by science.

If a cause and effect are assumed wherein the cause in its turn is not an effect of another cause this implies that creation has taken place from non-existence, and creation from non-existence is impossible by experience.

Firstly, Mr. Russell imagines that the law of causation belongs to the category of observable and sensible things. He has not paid attention, or has not wished to do so, that causality is not something based on the sense perception. That which is perceived is succession of events and not causality, nor the general laws of cause and effect. Rather, even succession and sequence are also not perceived by the senses but are inferred and abstracted.

Secondly, he says that the law of cause and effect only endorses such causation in which the cause is in turn an effect of another cause, and the idea of a causation wherein the cause is not an effect of another cause contradicts the law of causation.

We ask, 'Why'? Suppose we even consider the law of causation to be an empirical law; where is such a limitation in this law? Does our notion of causation imply anything except this that every phenomenon needs an agent to bring it into existence? But what experiment leads us to conclude that this agent itself must be something which has come into existence with the help of another agent, and similarly the latter agent, and so on ad infinitum?

Thirdly, what is meant by saying that 'observation shows that creation from nothing is impossible'? Are necessity and impossibility empirical concepts? Is impossibility or necessity a phenomenon and a physical condition susceptible to experimentation and perceivable by the senses? At the most that which can be said is that creation from nothing has not been empirically observed, but what is meant by the statement that its impossibility has been empirically proved?

Fourthly, what is the difference between a causation wherein the cause is itself an effect of another cause and a causation in which the cause is not an effect of another cause so as to conclude that in the former instance creation is not from non-being while in the latter it amounts to creation from nothing? In both the cases there is a being dependent upon another being and originating from another existent. If creation has taken place from nothing, it has done so in both the cases, and if it has not taken place from nothing it has not done so in both the cases.

Fifthly, according to this philosopher, in any case modern physics has declared the law of causation to have exceptions, because this physics compels us to accept a starting point for the universe and there are no more than two possibilities for the origin of the universe, and both the possibilities violate the law of causation with equal force.

Therefore, we must accept that all our inferences concerning nature and the universe are invalid, because earlier Mr. Russell has himself conceded that all inferences derived by us concerning nature are founded upon the law of causation, and if nature is not subject to law these inferences in their entirety would be unreliable.

The realm of nature is either subject to the law of causation or it is not. If it is, then its coming into existence must also be subject to the law of causation; if it is not, it is not possible that nature should come into existence in an arbitrary manner and then become orderly.

The following words of Russell are just as true of himself. He says:

The principle of causality may be true or may be false, but the person who finds the hypothesis of its falsity cheering is failing to realize the implications of his own theory. He usually retains unchallenged all those causal laws which he finds convenient, as, for example, that his food will nourish him and that his bank will honour his cheques so long as his account is in funds, while rejecting all those that he finds inconvenient. This, however, is altogether too naive a procedure. [9]

Supplement

It appears that these remarks are more true of Mr. Russell than anyone else. What we have observed concerning Mr. Russell's approach to the subject of God is that it is not logic and reasoning that have led him to deny God. Instead a kind of disinclination or rather a negative prejudice is apparent in him. An elaborate psychological analysis of his is required to disclose the source of this disinclination. The metaphysics and the knowledge of the supernatural which he acquired during childhood from his grandmother which he repeatedly mentions in his works, should not be ignored in this psychological analysis.

The simplest and the most popular argument provided for the existence of God is the argument from design. The Noble Qur'an refers to the world's existents as 'ayat,' that is, signs of God. It is

generally said that the presence of design and order in things is a proof of the existence of an ordering power. Unlike other arguments such as the argument of the First Mover, the argument of necessity and contingency (burhan-e wujub wa imkan), the argument of coming into existence and eternity (burhan-e huduth wa qidam), and the argument of the Truthful (burhan-e siddiqin), which are essentially philosophical, theological and rational, this argument is a natural and essentially empirical argument. It resembles all other arguments and proofs which are products of man's experience.

In the West, David Hume, the eighteenth-century English philosopher, cast doubts upon this argument and since then to our present times many Westerners believe that the argument from design, which is the greatest support of the theists, has lost its credibility. The loss of credibility of the arguments for God's existence, especially the argument from design, is one of the causes responsible for materialist tendencies in the West. Now we will examine the criticism of Mr. Hume.

Hume has written a book by the name Dialogues concerning Natural Religion in which a fictitious person named Cleanthes defends the argument from design while another fictitious character called Philo attacks it, and in this manner a dialogue takes place between the two. Although Hume himself is not a materialist, he tries to prove that the argument presented by the theists do not have a scientific basis, and that the same is true of the arguments of the materialists. He believes that faith is a matter of the heart, and if the argument from design is adopted as a rational criterion, it can be only said that:

The order in nature, in spite of all that has been said, suggests, if it does not Prove "That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence." Beyond this, we have no way to extend the argument in order to establish anything about the characteristics of this cause or these causes. [10] Hume himself is philosophically a skeptic and an agnostic, but he insists on proving that the argument from design is incomplete, or rather untenable. It is said about him that:

All his life, David Hume was concerned with the merits of various arguments which purported to establish the existence of a Divine Being. In his early notebooks and letters, he continually reflected about the problem, pointing out flaws or fallacies involved in the arguments of various religious writers. In various works, Hume made some incisive criticism of the reasoning employed by some of the religious philosophers. Possibly because of its currency in his day, one of his major undertakings was a thoroughgoing critique of the argument from design. He worked on this, off and on, for about twenty-five years, perfecting his famous Dialogues concerning Natural Religion. [11]

Hume states the argument from design in Cleanthes's words in the following manner:

Look around the world, contemplate the whole and every party of it, you will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain. All these various machines, and even their minute parts, are adjusted to each other with an accuracy which ravishes into admiration all men who have ever contemplated them. The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature, resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance of human design, thought, wisdom and intelligence. Since therefore the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble, and that the Author of nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man, though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work which he has executed. By this argument a posteriori, and by this argument alone, do we prove at once the existence of a Deity and his similarity to human mind and intelligence. [12]

Hume, speaking through Philo the skeptic, refutes Cleanthes's argument in the following words:

If we see a house, Cleanthes, we conclude, with the greatest certainty, that it had an architect or builder because this is precisely that species of effect which we have experienced to proceed from that species of cause. But surely you, will not affirm that the universe bears such a resemblance to a house that we can with the same certainty infer a similar cause, or that the analogy is here entire and perfect. The dissimilitude is so striking that the utmost you can here pretend to is a guess, a conjecture, a presumption concerning a similar cause.

For aught we can know a priori, matter may contain the source or spring of order originally within itself, as well as mind does; and there is no more difficulty in conceiving that the several elements, form an internal unknown cause, may fall into the most exquisite arrangement, than to conceive that their ideas, in the great universal mind, from a like internal unknown cause, fall into that arrangement.

And will any man tell me with a serious countenance that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art like the human because we have experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient, surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance

Can you pretend to show any such similarity between the fabric of a house and the generation of a universe? Have you ever seen nature in any such situation as resembles the first arrangement of the elements? Have worlds ever been formed under your eye, and have you had the leisure to observe the whole progress of the phenomenon, from the first appearance of order to its final consummation? If you have, then cite your experience and deliver your theory ... [13]

Secondly, you have no reason, on your theory, for ascribing perfection to the Deity, even in His finite capacity, or for supposing Him free from every error, mistake, or incoherences, in His undertakings ... At least, you must acknowledge that it is impossible for us to tell, from our limited views, whether this system contains any great faults or deserves any considerable praise if compared to other possible and even real systems. Could a peasant, if the Aeneid were read to him, pronounce that poem to be absolutely faultless, or even assign to it its proper rank among the productions of human wit, he who had never seen any other production?

But were this world ever so perfect a production, it must still remain uncertain whether all the excellences of the work can justly be ascribed to the workman. If we survey a ship, what an exalted idea we must form of the ingenuity of the carpenter who framed so complicated, useful, and beautiful a machine? And what surprise must we feel when we find him a stupid mechanic who imitated others, and copies an art which, through a long succession of ages, after multiplied trials, mistakes, corrections, deliberations and controversies, had been gradually improving? Many worlds might have been botched and bungled, throughout an eternity, ere this system was struck out; much labour lost, many fruitless trials made, and a slow but continued improvement carried on during infinite ages in the art of world-making. In such subjects, who can determine where the truth, nay, who can conjecture where the probability lies, amidst a great number of hypotheses which may be proposed, and a still greater which may be imagined? [14]

We have no data to establish any system of cosmogony (a theory about the origins of the universe). Our experience, so imperfect in itself and so limited both in extent and duration, can afford us no probable conjecture concerning the whole of things. But if we must needs fix on some hypothesis, by what rule, pray, ought we to determine our choice? Is there any other rule than the greater similarity of the objects compared? And does not a plant or an animal, which springs from vegetation or generation, bear a stronger resemblance to the world than does any artificial machine, which arises from reason and design? [15]

[Hume pointed out that] the analogical reasoning employed in the argument does not provide a basis for any conclusion about the moral attributes of the designer of nature, even if one concludes that there is such a designer. The conception of a moral, just, good, deity does not follow from the comparison of natural and human effects. If the designer is supposed to be like the human designer, then we would have no reason to suppose that there is any special moral quality belonging to the author of nature. When one examines the product, i.e., nature, and observes all its unpleasant features, e.g., hurricanes, earthquakes, the wars of one part of nature upon another, can we conclude that the planning was that of a just and good intelligence? [16]

The summary of the argument from design as stated by Hume is as follows:

a. The argument from design is not a purely rational argument based upon necessary axioms; it is an empirical argument which is derived by natural experience and must therefore fulfil the

conditions of empirical proofs.

b. This argument claims that extensive experience of nature shows that a perfect similarity exists between nature and human artifacts such as machines, ships and houses and it becomes evident that the universe is exactly like a big machine from the viewpoint of the relationship of its constituents with one another and the harmony that exists between the structure of the universe and the effects and consequences deriving from it.

c. In accordance with the general principle employed in empirical arguments, the likeness of effects is a proof of the likeness of causes, and considering that human artifacts are the creation of a spirit, mind and thought it follows that the universe too is a creation of a great spirit, intelligence, and thought.

Following is the summary of his criticism of this argument:

a. The basis of the argument, that is, the similarity between the works of nature and human artefacts, is founded upon the idea that the universe, from the viewpoint of the composition of its parts, is like a house or a car whose parts have been assembled by an external intelligent power, mind and spirit, for a series of aims. But this similarity is not complete; that is, it is not certain and definite, only probable. It cannot be said that the resemblance of the universe with a car is greater than the former's resemblance with a plant or an animal, which has an internal regulating power and is in no way controlled from outside.

b. This would have been an empirical proof if it had been repeatedly experimented with, that is, if worlds had been created repeatedly in the same form and conditions by conscious and humanlike beings, and we had found through experimentation a connection between this kind of effect and a humanlike cause. After seeing a world resembling the experimented worlds we could rule that this world, too, like those worlds, has a humanlike cause. However, such is not the case. The experience we have of making a ship, house, or a city is not the same as our experience about the world. The origin and formation of the world, which has taken place gradually during billions of years, does not resemble the building of a ship or a house.

c. Furthermore, this argument seeks to prove the existence of God, the Exalted, Who represents ultimate wisdom, infinite power, and absolute perfection. Even if supposedly it is proved that the source of this world is a humanlike being, it is insufficient for the purpose. This argument would have been sufficient for proving the existence of God had we found by experience that this world is the most perfect of possible worlds and conforms to ultimate wisdom. However, for us who know only this world and have not seen any other to compare and contrast it with our own, it is not possible to understand whether this world has been created on the basis of ultimate wisdom and that it is the best possible world. It is just like asking a villager who has just read one book in

his life (even if it is the greatest masterpiece) to declare that the only book he has read is the best book ever written.

d. Supposing that this world is the best possible world and a better world is not possible, even then it will not prove the existence of God, the Exalted, Who (as presumed) is absolute perfection, self-sufficient and the necessary existent, because this argument would be a proof of the existence of God if it proves, over and above that this is the best possible world and a better world is unimaginable, that this is the first world which God has created, that He had no previous experience of creation and has not gradually developed His craftsmanship, and that He has not copied any other creation. But none of these matters are provable. How can it be ascertained that the world's creator has not imitated another creations? How do we know that He has not been repeatedly experimenting with the technique of world-making since eternity and has gradually achieved this great progress in the craft?

e. Apart from all this, in our present world, we find deficiencies, evil, and ugliness, such as floods, earthquakes, diseases, etc., which do not accord with perfect Divine wisdom.

This was a summary of Hume's criticisms rendered in a relatively Eastern idiom.

Now we may proceed to examine these criticisms:

1. Mr. Hume's idea concerning the argument from design being essentially an empirical argument is mistaken. Empirical arguments are involved in cases where we want to discover the relationship of a particular empirical phenomenon with another empirical phenomenon.

In other words, an empirical argument is valid only when an enquiry concerns discovering the relationship between two natural phenomena, and not when it is meant to discover the relationship between nature and the supernatural. To put it differently, experimentation is possible where we observe a certain phenomenon in nature and want to discover its cause or causes through experimenting, or intend to ascertain the consequences and effects of that phenomenon. For example, by experimenting we discover the relationship between heating water and its transformation into steam and between its cooling and its transformation into ice. When we see two things taking place one after another and are also certain that nothing else is involved, we conclude that one of the two is the cause of the other. Hence the criterion for an empirical relationship is that both sides of the relationship be observable.

Now let us see whether the argument from design in the world for proving the existence of a conscious designer is an empirical argument or not. But before we examine the nature of the argument from design, it is necessary that we examine the nature of another common argument which Hume regards as totally empirical and considers the argument from design to be somewhat

similar to it. This argument involves inferring existence of thought and intellect in man from the artifacts created by man.

Is this common inference of ours regarding persons wherein we discover their intelligence, thought, and level of knowledge by observing their artifacts, in fact an empirical proof of the kind employed in discovering the relationship between natural phenomena, such as the relationship between heat and vaporization or between cooling and freezing? In other words, is the discovery of intelligence, consciousness and knowledge of human creatures from observing their artifacts an empirical inference, or is it a rational inference (burhan-e 'aqli)?

How do we know, for example, that Ibn Sina was a philosopher or a physician, or that Sa'di was poet and a writer of taste? How do we, who always come across various friends, teachers, students and classmates, know that one of them is bright, the other dull, another knowledgeable and a fourth ignorant? Obviously from the effects which derive from them, from their speech that we hear, from their behaviour that we observe, and their works and writings which we study.

We cannot directly see or touch their intelligence, minds and knowledge. Basically things such as thought and knowledge are incapable of being sensibly perceived and felt. Supposing that we dissect their brains or take a scan of their contents, we may possibly see certain structures in them, but we cannot observe their thoughts. Rather, we do not have a direct perception of these qualities except what we personally possess of thought, intelligence, and consciousness. We have a direct access only to our own knowledge, intelligence and thought, and that is all. Accordingly no intelligence and thought is accessible to us for experimenting so that we may determine the relationship between it and some other factor through experimentation. Rather, from an empirical point of view we are unaware of the existence of any other intelligence or thought apart from our own.

But why and on what basis do we affirm the existence of intelligence and thought in all other human beings and do not entertain any doubt about it? Further, on what basis do we, through observing man-made objects, artifacts and the manifestations of their work, infer the level of their intelligence, their consciousness, thought, knowledge, tastes and feelings. Didn't Descartes say that all animals with the exception of man were unconscious machines which have been so created that they react like living creatures? How do we know that the same is not true of other people? And how do we know that only animals are machines, without souls and consciousness, that show signs similar to those of living creatures and that all human beings except myself are not such?

I am not directly aware of the existence of any intelligence, thoughts and feelings except my own, and may be that they exist only in me and none else. What empirical proof is there that it is not so? The presence of intelligence and thought within me is not sufficient for concluding that

something exactly similar to what is in me is present in others. Because in logical terminology this is reasoning by analogy, that is, considering an individual as the criterion for other individuals, not an empirical proof which involves experimentation with a large number of individuals of a certain species to the point of acquiring certainty that the properties identified are not particular to the individuals involved in the experiment but belong to all the individuals of that species.

As a matter of fact, the inference of intelligence and consciousness in human beings from their effects and artifacts is neither by way of analogy nor by way of empirical inference; rather it is a kind of rational proof. It is true that man directly experiences the presence of such existents as intelligence, will, and thought only within himself and becomes aware of their action, which is to think, decide and to choose, that is to select from among a large number of alternatives one most appropriate to his goal. But where he studies the activities of others, although he does not observe their intelligence and consciousness, he does observe their action of selecting in their activities. That is, on studying their activities he finds that they constantly select from among the various kinds of activities, or, rather, from among a thousand different options of which only one gives the desired result. While the other options are fruitless that particular one leads to the desired result. They also make their selection in a way to obtain the desired result and disregard the rest.

For example, if a person holds a pen in hand and intends to draw it on a piece of paper to sketch some figure, there are thousands of possible figures which may be drawn, for example the shape of the alphabet mim. If he continues to move the pen on the paper, there are a thousand possible shapes which may be drawn of which one may be the alphabet nun. Again if he continues this act, out of a thousand possible figures one could be in the shape of the alphabet ta'. Now, if he holds a pen and its movements give shape to the word, it may be said that the shape drawn had one in a billion (1000 x 1000 x 1000) chance of materializing. Now if he continues this act and writes a few lines and together they take the form of the following passage:

It is the favour of God, the Glorious and the Mighty, that His obedience results in nearness to Him, and gratitude to Him a double blessing. Every breath that is drawn prolongs life and when exhaled brings delight to the soul; thus in each breath are two blessings and for each blessing thanks are due ...

the chance that all these alphabets have come together accidentally and not as a result of selection, that is, as a result of attention and choice, is so remote as to be unimaginable. That is, human reason normally considers it impossible. It is on this basis that it makes the judgement affirming the existence of a power of selection, which is the same thing as intelligence and will.

This is the reason why we say that the inference of intelligence and thought in man from human artifacts and effects is neither based on analogical reasoning-which merely involves making

oneself the criterion for others, like someone who having felt a stomach pain concludes that all people have stomach pains-nor on the basis of empirical evidence. Because such evidence here would be the establishment of the relation of such artifacts to human intelligence by repeated experiments, that is, by directly observing intelligence and its effects and discovering their connection. Rather this argument is a kind of rational inference which is similar to the inference which the mind makes for affirming the truth of historical reports received from numerous sources (mutawatir). [17]

Thus we see that our knowledge of the intelligence and consciousness of other people is not the result of empirical evidence, to say nothing of the argument from design, which establishes the relationship between the universe and God, the Exalted.

Recently this fallacy has found fancy with some Muslim Arab writers and their Iranian followers. They have imagined that the Qur'anic call for studying the signs of creation (ayat) is in fact an invitation to an empirical knowledge of God. They have imagined that when we know God through the study of the signs of creation, our knowledge of God is based on empirical evidence. From here they arrive at another ridiculous conclusion: "The method to be followed in theological issues is the same as the one followed by natural scientists in studying nature, and that there is no need for us to resort to those complicated and subtle philosophical discussions dealing with theological issues. Instead of bearing the stigma of ignorance or failure to understand them, we declare all of them to be baseless."

They are ignorant of the fact that the limits of experience only extend up to the knowledge of God's creation. The knowledge of God with the help of the understanding of the creation acquired by empirical means is a kind of a pure rational inference.

2. Mr. Hume has imagined that the theists want to prove that the world has a complete resemblance to human artifacts, and on the basis that similarity of effects is proof of similarity of causes, want to prove that since the world is totally similar to a car or a house, it too has a maker similar to the maker of a machine or a house.

Mr. Hume tells them that this is not the case; the world, more than its resemblance to a ship or a car, resembles the systematic and self-regulating mechanism of a plant or animal.

Firstly, in reply to Mr. Hume it may be remarked that the meaning of his words is that the world is not like a car or a ship, but is rather like itself! Did he expect the world to be unlike itself? Are not plants and animals a part of this world? In fact, the discussion is all about the plants and animals which in his own words have been so created that they are self-regulating like a most advanced machine, a thousand times more complicated than man-made ships and machines. Therefore, the signs of creation in a plant or an animal are more evident than in a ship or a machine.

Consequently, if the maker of the ship and the machine is endowed with intelligence and thought, there is a greater reason that the creator of the universe, whose creative power is manifested in plants and animals, should possess intelligence and wisdom.

Secondly, the remark of Mr. Hume about this argument that it essentially involves a kind of analogy (tashbih) and its purpose is to prove the presence of perfect resemblance between the works of the Creator of nature and human artifacts, is wrong. It is impossible that the works of the Creator of nature (God) perfectly resemble products of human make; rather, as the Creator of nature is beyond resemblance to man from the point of view of essence and attributes, so also He is beyond likeness from the angle of act and creation.

Man is a part of nature, and being such he is an existent which is in a continuous state of becoming and moving towards perfection (takamul). All his efforts are directed towards moving from the state of potentiality (quwwah) to that of actuality (fi'l), and from deficiency towards perfection. All the efforts of the human being are a kind of a movement from potentiality to act, and from deficiency towards perfection.

Similarly, man being a part of nature and not its creator, his dispensations concerning nature are of the form of establishing an artificial (unnatural) relation between the parts of nature. Human artifacts like cities, houses and ships consist of natural materials arranged in an artificial order with an aim and purpose which is the aim and purpose of the maker himself and not the aim of the thing made. That maker wants to achieve his goal and purpose through this artificial order.

Thus the two essential characteristics of human artifacts are:

- a. The relationship between its parts is artificial and not natural.
- b. The aim and objective involved in making it is the aim and objective of the maker. That is, it is the maker who achieves a certain aim and removes a deficiency from himself and moves from potentiality to actuality through the means of the artifact.

None of these two characteristics can be possibly present in the creation of God, the Exalted. Neither is it possible for the connection between the parts of the creation to be an unnatural one, nor is it possible that the purpose of the creation be the purpose of the Creator. Rather, the connection between the various parts of the creation will have to be natural, just like the one seen in the different parts of the solar system or the atom, or the elements of a natural compound, or the constituents of plants, animals and man.

This is what the metaphysicians imply when they say that 'the final causes of God's acts are all final causes of the act (fi'l), and not those of the Agent (fail) or when they say: Human wisdom

implies the selection of the best means for the best of purposes, while Divine wisdom implies bringing the existents to reach their own purposes.

The requirement of wisdom and providence, is to direct all contingents to their ultimate ends.

This is the meaning of their words when they say:

The higher does not turn towards the lower.

A station belonging to a higher ontic realm does not seek its end in the lower realms. And this is what they imply when they say that the necessary implication of the creation of existents and their issuing forth from the Absolutely Perfect Essence is that all of them have an end and it is love which pervades all existents; and the end of all ends (ghayat al-ghayat) is the Exalted Divine Essence.

This again is the meaning of their statement that human agency is an agency by intention (failiyyah bil-qasd), whereas the agency of God, the Exalted, is agency by providence (fa'liyyah bi al-inayah). In reality, the ideas of Hume and all Western philosophers from the earliest times to the present day concerning the argument from design are childish and amateurish, basing as they do upon the notion that this argument supposes God to be a craftsman like human craftsmen and arguing concerning the existence and non-existence of such a creator. Whereas by proving the existence of such a creator we would not have proved God but a creature of the level of man.

An examination of Hume's rhetorical rendition of the argument from design, which has overshadowed Western philosophy for about three centuries, brings to light once again the weak foundations of philosophy in the West, whether religious or materialist. It shows that the Western notion of the argument from design is not at all philosophical. That which has been discussed in Islamic philosophy under the title 'inayah (providence) has been unknown in the West. The Westerners' conception of this argument has been that of the common man, or at the most of the level of Ash'arite and Mu'tazilite theologians, and not of the order of that of Islamic philosophers and metaphysicians.

3. Mr. Hume says: Supposing this argument proves that the Creator of the world possesses an intelligence and consciousness similar to those of man, even then the claim, which is to prove God's infinite perfection, remains unproved.

Hume's mistake here is that he has imagined that those who consider God as absolute and infinite perfection do so on the basis of the argument from design, which in his opinion is an empirical proof.

We have mentioned in the fifth volume of 'The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism' that the value of argument from design is solely limited to the extent of carrying us up to the frontiers of the supranatural. This argument only proves that nature has something beyond itself to which it is subject and that beyond is conscious of itself and its acts. Regarding whether this transcendent is necessary or contingent, eternal or emergent (hadith), one or multiple, finite or infinite, omniscient and omnipotent or not, lie outside the limits of this argument. These are issues which wholly and solely belong to the domain of metaphysics, and metaphysics proves them with the help of other arguments.

4. Mr. Hume says: Supposing that our world is the most perfect world possible; but how do we know that the creator of the world has not copied it from some other place or that he has not perfected his craftsmanship gradually through practice?

This criticism too arises from Hume's ignorance of the limits of the application of the argument from design. He has imagined that all the issues of metaphysics are derived from a single argument which is the argument from design. In the second and fifth volumes of 'The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism' we have remarked that the application of argument from design involves proving that nature is not something left to itself and that the forces of nature are subject. Nature, in the terminology of the philosophers, is an agent by subordination (fa'il bil-taskhir).

In other words, nature has a supranatural transcending it which rules and administers it. The argument from design, whose application is limited to this extent, is both clear and sufficient within its own limits. But as to what is the state of the supranatural, whether its perfection is essential or acquired, whether it has been acquired gradually or is eternal like its essence, and so on—all these issues are capable of being researched with the help of a separate set of arguments. And supposing that they are incapable of being researched with the help of other arguments and are among issues which will always remain unknown to man—though certainly it is not so and they are capable of being researched—this does not decrease the value of the argument from design. The objective of the argument from design is to lead us from nature to the threshold of the supranatural. That which lies beyond this threshold lies outside the scope of this argument.

5. Mr. Hume has mentioned the matter of evil, epidemics, floods and earthquakes as a negation of the presence of a rational pattern in the world.

Considering that we have discussed this topic in detail in the book 'Adl-e Ilahi ('Divine Justice'), we shall refrain from taking it up here and refer the reader to that book.

Notes:

[1] Bertrand Russell, *The Scientific Outlook*, (New York: W.W Norton & Co. 1931) 1st ed., Persian transl. By Hasan Mansur, Jahanbini ye 'Ilmi, pp82-8

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., pp92-3

[5] Ibid., 94

[6] Ibid., p94

[7] This sentence in the Persian translation of this passage from Russell cited by the author has been translated as follows: "Observation shows that creation out of nothing is impossible." This error in the translation affects the author's criticism relating to this part of Russell's statements.
Editor

[8] Ibid., pp96-7

[9] Ibid., pp87-8

[10] Richard H. Popkin & Avrum Stroll, *Philosophy Made Simple*, p106

[11] Ibid., p103

[12] Ibid., p102

[13] Ibid., p103

[14] Ibid., p104

[15] Ibid., p105

[16] Ibid.

[17] Authors note: We have studied and discussed this topic in greater detail in our studies on epistemology (shenakht), which we hope to publish in the future.

The Causes Responsible for Materialist (lecture 4)

The third cause of the growth of materialist tendencies was the inadequacy of certain social and political concepts. In the history of political philosophy we find that when certain social and political ideas were propounded in the West and the issue of natural rights, especially the people's right to sovereignty, was raised, a group advocated despotism. It did not recognize any right for the masses vis-a-vis the rulers, and the only thing it recognized for the people was their duty and obligation to the latter. In order to lend justification to their arguments in favour of despotic rule, they took recourse in theology, claiming that the rulers were not answerable to the

people but only to God, while the people were answerable to the rulers and owed a duty to them. The people had no right to question the ruler's actions or to assign him a duty. Only God was entitled to question him and call him to account. Thus the people had no right over the ruler, although he had rights over them which it was their duty to fulfill.

As a natural consequence, there arose in the minds a kind of artificial connection and implication between faith in God on the one hand and belief in the necessity of submitting to the ruler and forfeiting all rights to question someone whom God has elected to protect the people and whom He has made answerable only to Himself. Similarly, there arose a necessary 'implication between the right of popular sovereignty on the one hand and atheism on the other.

Dr. Mahmud Sina'i, in the book *Azadi-ye fard wa qudrat-e dawlat*, ("Individual Liberty and the Power of the State") writes: "In Europe political absolutism and the idea that freedom was basically the State's prerogative and not of the individual, was linked with belief in God."

It came to be thought that if one accepted God, one also had to accept the tyranny of the State's absolute power, to accept that the individual had no right vis-a-vis the ruler and the ruler was not responsible to the people, but only to God.

Therefore, people imagined that if they accepted God they would, of necessity, have to accept social repression as well, and if they wanted social freedom they would have to negate God. Hence they preferred social freedom.

However, from the viewpoint of the social philosophy of Islam, the ruler is responsible to the people, and there is not only no necessary implication between faith in God and recognition of despotic rule of persons, but, on the contrary, it is only faith in God which makes the ruler responsible to society, bestows rights upon the individuals, and prescribes restoration of rights as an essential religious obligation.

Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a), who was a political and social leader as well as an infallible Imam chosen by God, in a speech delivered during the turmoil of Siffin, states:

By giving me authority over you, God, the Exalted, has created a right for me over you, and you too have a right over me, similar to my right over you ... A right is always reciprocal: it does not accrue to anyone without accruing against him as well, and it does not accrue against a person unless it accrues in his favour. If there is anyone who has a right without there being a corresponding right over him, that is only God, the Exalted, to the exclusion of His creatures, because of His power over His creatures and His justice which permeates all His decrees. This implies that rights are reciprocal, and everyone who enjoys a right will have a responsibility in return.

From the Islamic point of view, religious conceptions have always been tantamount to freedom, precisely in opposition to Dr. Sana'i observation concerning what took place in the West, where religious teachings were equated with repression.

Quite clearly, such an approach would have no other consequence except distancing people from religion and driving them towards materialism and opposition to religion, God, or anything having a divine hue.

There are three other causes of the tendency towards materialism which it is necessary to mention. These three causes are common both among us as well as the Christians. All these three causes relate to the method of preaching or practice which the adherents of religions have been following in the past or do so at present. Non-Specialist Opinions:

There are certain issues regarding which people give themselves the right to express their opinion. This was so in the past concerning health issues. If someone spoke about some complaint he suffered from, every listener would express his opinion about its cause, symptoms, and remedy. Everyone believed in his prerogative to express his opinion, and, at times, if he had the influence or power, or at least the patient was shy of resisting his suggestions, they would force him to apply the prescription whose efficacy was a total certainty. It was unheard of for anyone to think that dealing with health problems required specialized training, that one had to be a physician, a pharmacologist, with the necessary years of study under a teacher as well as sufficient experience. But it was as if everybody considered himself a doctor. Even today the same notion prevails among one group of people.

Precisely the same was true of religious topics, and it continues to remain so, with everybody giving himself the right to advance his opinion. Religious topics, especially those relating to theology and Divine Unity, are among the most complicated of scientific issues, on which everyone does not have the ability to express an opinion. Although the fundamentals of theology—to the extent that people in general are required to know and believe in—are both simple and innate (fitra), but when one takes a step further the issues involving God's Attributes, Names, Acts, and those relating to qada and qadar come to the fore and the problems become extraordinarily complicated. In the words of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a):

'It is a deep ocean,' whose depths can be fathomed only by whales. The identification and study of Divine Attributes and Names is not something which lies within the power of everyone; yet we see that everyone considers himself a specialist in this field and does not hesitate to argue, express his viewpoint, and advance a proof, at times making ridiculous statements.

It is said that once a priest wished to illustrate the principle of teleology, to explain that the order

of the universe was purposive and that the universe is moving along a purposive course. Thereby he wished to prove that the Creator possesses wisdom, knowledge, and will. Although, as we know, that is not a difficult task and the creation of any existent can be cited as evidence, the priest chose the lines on the muskmelon to illustrate his point. The reason behind its orderly lines, he said, was that when we want to divide the muskmelon among the members of one's family, the lines were for the knife to cut equal slices so that children did not fight amongst themselves and create a confusion!

Now an example from our society. They say that someone posed the question as to why God had given wings to the pigeon and not to the camel. The reply he suggested was: Were the camel to have wings, life would have been a nightmare, as the camel would fly and wreck our homes of mud and clay.

Another one was asked about the evidence for God's existence. He replied: "Unless there were an atom of truth in a matter, people wouldn't make a mountain out of it."

One of the major causes of irreligion and the inclination towards materialism are the weak reasons often advanced by unqualified people concerning issues pertaining to Divine wisdom, will, and omnipotence, Divine justice, Divine dispositions (qada' wa qadar), freewill and determinism, the world's preternity or its having come into existence (huduth wa qidam), life after death, the Purgatory (barzakh), Resurrection '(ma'ad), heaven and hell, the Sirat and the Balance, and so on, which often makes the listeners mistakenly imagine that what some of these ignorant persons say are the teachings of religion and that they speak from an in-depth knowledge of these teachings.

It is a great calamity for scholars, especially in Shi'i circles, when persons who neither have an understanding of the theist thought nor that of the materialists, taking advantage the confusion and disorganization prevailing in the system of religious preaching, write books weaving together a mass of absurdities to refute the materialist viewpoint, becoming a laughing stock. It is obvious that such preaching is to the benefit of materialism, and the numerous books of this kind written in our own time can serve as an example. God or Life?

Initially, it is necessary to take note of a certain point in order to make clear what we intend to discuss.

Man is compelled to obey his instinctive urges. He is endowed with certain instincts which urge him towards a goal envisaged in his creation. This does not mean that he should follow his instincts blindly; rather, what is meant is that the existence of these instincts is not purposeless, and that they may not be ignored. Neither they may be neglected, nor they are to be totally opposed. The instincts are to be refined, moderated, and guided, and this is a separate issue.

For example, man has an urge to have children. This urge is not a petty thing, and is a masterpiece of Divine creation. Were it not for this urge, creation would not have continued. However, in the scheme of creation this urge has been placed in every animal as something attractive and sweet, so that each generation is employed in the service of the succeeding generation, while also enjoying this service. This attachment has not been placed just in the preceding generation. In human beings every succeeding generation has been made to feel attachment towards the preceding generation, though not with the intensity of the preceding generation's attachment to it. These attachments are the secret of relationships.

Another instinctive urge in man is his curiosity, his desire to seek the truth and acquire knowledge. It is possible to hinder people temporarily from research, quest, and the pursuit of knowledge, but it is not possible to permanently impede the truth-seeking human spirit and its quest for knowledge.

Among human instincts is the love of wealth. Of course, the love of wealth is not a primary instinct in man; that is, it is not that man loves wealth for its own sake. Rather, since it is in his nature and instinct to seek satisfaction of corporal needs of life, and since the means of satisfying these wants are money and wealth in certain societies, such as ours, he loves wealth as the key to all his material needs. One who possesses money seems to have all the keys, while the one without it finds all doors closed upon him.

As we have already said, it is not possible to oppose a natural and instinctive urge by permanently neglecting it, though it is possible for a short period to draw society in that direction, or to draw a limited number of people permanently towards it. But man and human society cannot be stopped forever from responding to the demands of any one of these instincts.

For example, it is not possible to convince everyone to forego everything and to forswear the mysterious magic of the key called 'money' and 'wealth' as something filthy and detestable.

Now if these instincts are repressed in the name of God or religion, and celibacy and monasticism are considered holy in the name of faith, and marriage a defilement; if ignorance be considered as being conducive to salvation in the name of faith and knowledge as the means of perdition; if in the name of religion wealth, power, and prosperity be considered sources of eternal wretchedness, and poverty, weakness, and deprivation the causes of bliss and happiness; what will be the consequences? Consider a person who on the one hand gravitates towards religion and religious teachings and, on the other, is strongly drawn towards these things. Eventually, he will either opt for one of these two, or he will, like most people, remain entangled in the conflict between these two forces, like some of whom it has been said:

The scripture in one hand, and the wine goblet in the other, Oft within the lawful, and often out of

bounds.

This results in a wavering disposition:

Neither with these, nor with those. (4:143)

In fact such a person becomes a full-fledged psychic case with all its peculiarities and symptoms. The function of religion and its message is not to wipe out the natural urges, but to moderate, refine, and guide them and to bring them under one's control. Since instincts cannot and should not be annihilated, the inevitable outcome, in societies where they are repressed in the name of God, religion, and faith, and where the worship of God is considered as incompatible with life, is the defeat of these sublime ideas and concepts and the prevalence of materialism and other atheistic and anti-religious trends of thought.

Therefore, it must be categorically said that ignorant ascetics in every society—and unfortunately there are many of them in our own midst—are a major cause of the people's inclination towards materialism.

Russell says:

The teachings of the Church put man in the position of having to choose between two misfortunes: wretchedness in the world and deprivation from its pleasures, or wretchedness in the hereafter and deprivation from its joys ...From the viewpoint of the Church one must bear either of these two misfortunes. One must either submit to the world's misery and languish in isolation and wretchedness in return for the pleasures of paradise, or accept deprivation in the next if one wishes to enjoy this life.

The first and foremost objection and criticism against this kind of approach arises from the side of the genuine logic of monotheism and theology. Why should God require that man must compulsorily endure one of the two misfortunes? Why should it not be possible to combine both the kinds of happiness? Is God a miser?! Will it diminish the stores of His mercy?! Why shouldn't God desire our happiness in this world as well as in the Hereafter? If there is a God, an infinite omnipotent being, then He must desire our complete happiness and well-being. And if He does desire our complete happiness, it implies that He desires our happiness in this world as well as in the Hereafter.

Bertrand Russell is one of those who are deeply offended by this teaching of the Church, and perhaps this teaching had a major role in the development of his anti-God and anti-religious sentiments.

Those who have preached, and continue to preach, such a notion have imagined that the reason why certain things such as wine, gambling, fornication, injustice and so on have been proscribed in religion is that these things lead to happiness and pleasure, while religion is against happiness and pleasure, and God wants man to go without happiness, bliss, and enjoyment in this world so that he may be happy in the Hereafter! The reality is precisely the opposite.

These prohibitions and restraints are because of the fact that these things result in making life miserable and gloomy. If God has made the drinking of wine unlawful, that does not imply that you will be happy in the world if you drink and that the happiness of this world is incompatible with the happiness of the Hereafter. Rather it means that it has been prohibited as it is the cause of wretchedness in this world as well as the next. All the prohibited things are of this kind, that is, had they not been the cause of wretchedness they would not have been prohibited.

Similar is the case with religious obligations; that is, since religious obligations result in felicity and are a source of salutary effects in the present life, they have been made obligatory. It is not that they have been made obligatory for partially curtailing the happiness of this world.

The Qur'an expressly proclaims the benefits and advantages of the obligatory duties and the harms and evils of prohibited things. For example, it explains in these verses the vital quality of prayer and fasting and the strength they lend to human character:

Seek assistance in patience and prayer, and they are indeed difficult save for the humble. (2:45)

It observes concerning fasting:

O believers, prescribed for you is the fast, as it was prescribed for those that were before you, that you may be Godwary. (2:183) This implies that one should pray and fast so that one's spirit is strengthened and so that one is purged of bad qualities. Prayer and fasting are a kind of exercise and training which restrain one from perpetrating evil and abominable acts. These teachings not only do not consider worldly and spiritual matters as contradictory, but, on the contrary, spiritual matters are presented as a means of attaining harmony with an environment conducive to a happy life.

The false teachings of some preachers caused people to flee from religion and led them to imagine that belief in God necessarily involves the acceptance of poverty and enduring hardship and disgrace in this world. An Unfavourable Moral and Social Environment:

Another cause of the growth of the materialist tendency is the disharmony between a person's inner spiritual and moral ethos and the thoughts relating to faith in God and His worship. Faith in God and devotion to Him naturally require a special kind of sublimity in the spirit. It is a seed which grows in a wholesome soil and is ruined in polluted and saltish soils. If man falls victim to

the pursuit of corporal appetites, becoming materialistic and a prisoner of his base desires, gradually his thoughts begin to conform with his spiritual and moral ethos, in accordance with the principle of conformity with environment. The sublime thoughts relating to faith, worship, and the love of God give way to degenerate materialistic ideas and to nihilism and a sense of the futility of life, and the feeling that there is no moral principle governing the world and that all that matters is transitory pleasures of the moment, and the like.

Every thought requires a conducive spiritual climate for its survival and growth, and how well this has been alluded to in religious traditions where it is observed that:

Angels do not enter a house where there is a dog or a canine form.

This was in relation to one's inner spiritual environs. Here a question may be asked: What about one's social environment? The answer is that we have mentioned the proximate cause, and there is no doubt that the social environment also needs to be favourable. But the impact of the social environment is not direct on one's beliefs. A corrupt social environment initially spoils one's spiritual ethos, and a corrupt spiritual state weakens the basis for the growth of sublime thoughts and strengthens the basis for the growth of base ideas. This is why great attention has been paid in Islam to the reform of social environment, and it is again for the same reason that the forces pursuing the policy of eradicating higher thoughts from the people's minds prepare the ground for moral and behavioural corruption, and for doing so corrupt the social environment with the means at their disposal.

In order to elucidate the effects of an unfavourable spiritual environment upon materialist leanings, there is no alternative to explaining what we have alluded to earlier. Earlier we said that materialism is, at times, doctrinal, and at others, moral. Moral materialism means that although a person may doctrinally believe in the supranatural, he is a materialist morally and behaviourally. Moral materialism, as mentioned earlier, is one of the causes of doctrinal materialism. In other words, an unrestrained pursuit of sensual appetites and lusts and wallowing in the quagmire of hedonism are one of the causes of the growth of an intellectual leaning towards materialism.

Moral materialism implies a state in which one's life is devoid of any kind of moral and spiritual ideal.

Is it possible that one should be a theist in respect of belief while his acts do not reflect his faith, being, in practice, a materialist? Further, is it possible that a person be doctrinally a materialist, without being a materialist in practice, i.e. with a life free from and uncorrupted by excesses, transgression, and tyrannical behaviour? Finally, is it possible for moral materialism to exist in isolation from doctrinal materialism? The answer is: Yes, it is possible, and occurs often, though it is not something which may last for long, or which can be counted upon. That is because it is an

unnatural condition and that which is against nature and the natural order of cause and effect cannot survive for long. Further, wherever this separation exists, either behaviour influences belief and alters it, or belief and ideals make their impact and alter the mode of behaviour. As a result either faith gives in to behaviour or behaviour subdues faith.

It is hard to believe that someone can remain a theist all his life doctrinally and intellectually, while being a materialist in practice. Eventually one of the two sides will subdue the other and he will perforce incline towards one of them.

Similarly, a person who is a materialist in mind and belief, will either become a theist, sooner or later, or his moral rectitude will give way to moral materialism. These two types of materialism, doctrinal and moral, are cause and effect of each other and belong to the category of reciprocal causes and effects, that is, each one of them happens to be the cause of the other as well as its effect.

When one's mind arrives at the conclusion that the world is purposeless, that there is no sense, intelligence, and consciousness in it, that mankind are a creature of chance, without purpose, and that one's file is closed forever after death, such a person will naturally start thinking that he should enjoy every moment at his disposal instead of worrying about good and evil and wasting one's life. A nihilistic mode of thought in which existence, life and creation are considered useless, will naturally result in moral materialism, especially because this mode of thought is extraordinarily painful and exhausting. Generally, those who have such ideas become escapists, flying from themselves, trying to run away from their own tormenting thoughts. They are always after something which can keep these noxious thoughts, which torment them like scorpions, at bay. They seek diversions, or take refuge in narcotics and intoxicants. At the least, they turn to such parties and gatherings which provide amusements, that they may forget themselves and their thoughts, gradually sinking in moral materialism.

Thus the reason that materialism in belief leads to moral materialism is not solely that the logical basis of a morality based upon chastity and piety is shaken and there remain no grounds for foregoing corporal pleasures. It is not just that sensual appetites do their work in the absence of a spiritual restraint provided by divine thoughts. Rather, there is another reason. Materialist ideas concerning the world, life, and creation cause a person great anguish and pain and create in him a state in which he develops an inclination to escape these thoughts and seek refuge in diversions, which include among other things the quest of pleasures and use of intoxicants and drugs. The repellent impact of these frightful thoughts is not less than the attraction of material pleasures.

The converse of this condition is also possible. In the same manner in which doctrinal materialism leads to moral materialism, moral materialism also eventually leads to doctrinal materialism. That is, in the same way that thought influences moral behaviour, moral behaviour, too, influences

thought and belief. The main purpose of raising this issue in our discussion of the causes of materialist tendencies, which has led up to the issue of unfavourable spiritual and moral social environs, lies here.

A question may possibly be raised here: what is the relationship between conduct and thought? Isn't thought separate from action? Isn't it possible that a person might think in a particular manner and his pattern of thinking might persist without his actions and moral conduct conforming to it and that they might take a different direction?

The answer is that faith and belief are not just abstract ideas which occupy a part of the brain, having nothing to do with the other parts of man's being. There are many such ideas which have no connection with human behaviour, such as mathematical knowledge and concepts and information and most of the information relating to nature and geography.

But there are thoughts which, due to their links with one's destiny, dominate one's entire being and establish their sway over everything. When such thoughts appear, they give rise to a chain of other thoughts and alter man's course in life. It is like the story of the little pupil who remained reticent despite being repeatedly told by the teacher to say "A." When he remained tongue-tied after much insistence, the teacher asked him, "What harm would it do you were you to say 'A'?" He replied, "If I say 'A,' the matter won't end there. Then I will have to say 'B,' and then a long chain will follow. If I don't say 'A,' it will be good riddance to the end".

Sa'di says:

The heart said, occult knowledge do I seek,
Teach me some, should it be in your reach. 'Alpha,' said I.
'Then what?' it said. 'Nothing!'
Said I, 'A letter is enough, if anyone be there!'

The matter of God is just like the 'alpha' of the child's first lesson, which once said will immediately be followed by a 'beta' and then the rest of the alphabet of the knowledge of the Divine. Man, when he accepts God, will have to accept that God is the knower of all secrets and hidden things, is omnipotent and all-wise, and that there is nothing purposeless in anything that He does. This would imply that man's creation too has a purpose and aim. Inevitably the question will arise: Is man's life limited to this present life, or he has some duties as well? Has the One who created man assigned him any duty to perform, or is it that He has not done so? And if there is some duty, what is it and how is it to be performed?

This is an alpha which does not let one alone unless one surrenders all his life to it. This is the path which the Divine alpha traces out for man.

On this basis, the knowledge of God requires a favourable spiritual and social climate. And in the event the spiritual and social climate is not favourable, the roots of spirituality dry up, destroyed like a seed which is sown in the soil but does not get the proper environment to grow.

Faith in God demands a ready spiritual ground for its growth. It seeks spiritual edification and the sublimity of the spirit. It seeks to bring the spirit into harmony with the purpose of life and creation. This is the reason why the Noble Qur'an throughout speaks of receptivity, purity, and receptive capability. It says: a guidance for the Godward; and in order that one who is alive may be warned; 36:70.

On the other hand, moral sins and vices degrade the spirit from its state of sanctity. Consequently, this kind of thought and that kind of conduct are two contradictory forces.

This is not so only with respect to the sacred ideas of religion; rather, all sublime thoughts, whether they belong to religion or not, are of this type. Nobility, courage, and boldness of the spirit do not grow in everyone. The notions of honour, freedom, justice and concern for the welfare of the people do not flourish in all kinds of people. They decline and undergo erosion in a person given to sensual appetites and amusements, while they grow in a selfless person and one who has freed himself from corporal attachments. Therefore, whenever people incline towards sensual lusts, appetites, comforts, and amusements, all these human excellences die and men wallow in the quagmire of moral vices, and that is how societies and individuals degenerate.

A historical example of this is the downfall of Islamic Spain. Despite every effort to wrest it from the Muslims, the Church was unable to do so until it devised a cunning plan and deprived them of their spiritual eminence, making them addicted to wine and sensual pleasures and robbing them of their sense of honour and dignity. Thereby it was able at first to destroy their supremacy and sovereignty and then their religion and beliefs.

The awliya' and saints used to abstain even from many permissible pleasures and were cautious of being captivated by them, because once one gets addicted to pleasures, his soul is deprived of its sublimity, to say nothing of those who get accustomed to sin. In Islamic texts this idea has been presented in the form of the notion that sin blackens the heart and a blackened heart breeds faithlessness. In other words, black deeds make a black heart and a black heart gives rise to mental darkness. Then the end of those who committed vices was that they repudiated the signs of God (30:10) Bastion of Heroism and Dissent:

The causes and factors dealt with earlier, under such titles as, 'inadequacies in the religious ideas of the Church,' 'the inadequacy of the philosophical concepts,' 'the inadequacy of the social-and political ideas,' defective methods of religious preaching, and 'unfavourable moral and social environment,' are either related to past history and do not play any role in the materialist

tendencies of our times, or are causes which are common to all ages and are not exclusive to our own.

Now we would like to study the peculiar materialist tendencies of our own times. In our age materialism has more or less an attraction, though this attraction is not of the kind it possessed two centuries ago from the point of view of Enlightenment and its links with the growth of science. In the 18th and 19th centuries, due to inadequacies in the religious ideas of the Church and the philosophical concepts, there arose a wave based on the idea that one had to choose between science and knowledge on the one hand and God and religion on the other. But it did not take long for this false wave to subside, and it became clear how baseless it was.

The attraction of materialism in our age is from another angle, from the angle of its revolutionary character and its quality of political dissent and confrontation, for which it has become well-known.

Today, to a certain extent, this idea has gone into the minds of the youth that one must either be a believer in God, and therefore a pacifist and an indifferent quietist, or a materialist, and, consequently, an activist, a nonconformist and an enemy of imperialism, exploitation, and despotism.

Why is it that such an idea has found its way into the minds of the youth? Why is materialism identified with these characteristics, and the Divine school of thought with those? What is it that leads to infer these qualities from materialism and those from theist thought?

The reply to these questions is clear. It is not at all necessary that this be logically deducible from materialism and its opposite from the school of Divine thought, because the youth are not bothered about formal logical inference. A youth sees something and that is sufficient for him to arrive at a conclusion. The young people see that uprisings, revolutions, struggle and confrontations are staged by materialists, while believers are generally found in the camp of the inactive and the indifferent. For a youth this is sufficient for pronouncing a negative judgement on the school of Divine thought, and a favourable judgement about materialism.

Presently the majority of struggles against despotism and exploitation are being staged under the leadership of individuals more or less inclined towards materialism. There is no doubt that the bastion of heroism is to a large extent in their occupation. Activism and revolution have been relatively monopolized by them. We must accept that religious ideas in our times are devoid of any kind of heroism. On the other hand, taking into consideration the reaction which injustice and oppression produce on the minds of the dispossessed and oppressed, and in view of the spirit of hero-worship which is present in all people, it is sufficient that the positive value of this work be credited to the account of materialism, while the negative value of the practical approach which

the believers have adopted these days be put to the account of God and religion.

This situation appears strange, because, in principle, it should have been the opposite. It is faith in God and His worship which link man to objectives transcending material things and endow him with the spirit of sacrifice on the path of these objectives, contrary to materialism which naturally links man to matter and material things and personal life as an individual, and that too a life lived within the narrow confines of corporal existence.

Moreover, history shows that it were always the prophets and their followers who revolted against the tyrants, pharaohs and nimrods, and shattered the forces of evil. It were the prophets who, with the power of faith, mobilized the dispossessed and oppressed masses into a great force against the mala' (the corrupt elite) and the mutrifin (the affluent class). The Noble Qur'an, in the Surat al-Qasas, states And We desire to be gracious to those that were weakened in the earth, that We may make them leaders, and that We make them the inheritors, and that We may establish them in the earth, and that We may show Pharaoh and Haman, and their hosts, what they used to dread from them. (28:5-6) At another place it says:

How many a prophet there has been, alongside of whom many godly men have fought, and they slackened not neither weakened for what smote them in God's way, nor did they abase themselves; and God loves the patient. And what they said was nothing but, 'Lord, forgive us our sins, and our excesses in our affair, and make firm our feet, and help us against the faithless folk. And God give them the reward of this world and the fairest reward of the Hereafter; and God loves the good-doers. (3:146-8)

In the verses of the Surat al-Qasas it has been said: 'We desire to establish them in the earth.' Now we will mention a Qur'anic verse which highlights the conduct of the followers of the prophets when their power is established in the land. In the Surat al-Haj; it says: Those who, when We establish them in the earth, maintain the prayer and pay the alms bid to what s right and forbid what is wrong; and unto God belongs the final issue of affairs. (22:41)

This implies that they always strive to fulfill their duty, and as to its being fruitful or fruitless, that is something which depends upon a set of factors and circumstances which lie in the hands of God.

It is also stated in the same verses of the Surat al-Qasas that: 'We intend to make them leaders". Now we will mention a verse from the Qur'an which clearly explains what kind of people have the capacity for leadership in the Divine scheme of things. God says in the Surat Alif Lam Mim Sajdah:

And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command, whenthey endured patiently, and had convinced faith in Our signs. (32:24) The Noble Qur'an mentions at another place:

God has graced with a mighty wage those who struggle over the ones who sit. (4:95) At another place it says: God surely loves those who fight in His way in ranks, as though they were a building well-compacted. (61:4) At yet another place the Noble Qur'an mirrors their heroic and valiant aspirations in this manners: 'Our Lord, pour out upon us patience, and make firm our feet, and aid us against the faithless folk!' (2:250) These are not the only pertinent verses and there are many of them. Can one find a greater and better instance of epical enthusiasm. The Qur'an is replete with references to combat and jihad, to commanding what is right and good and forbidding what is wrong and evil.

Such being the case, how is it that the platform of revolution and confrontation was taken away from the followers of God and how come the materialists occupied it? That which is really surprising is that even the followers of the Qur'an have abandoned this platform. It is not amazing if the Church did so, because for centuries it has been sneering at the Qur'an, Islam, and its Prophet (s) for having violated the codes of monasticism and cloistral seclusion, for rising against tyrants, and revolting against worldly powers, for not leaving to Caesar that which belonged to Caesar and to God what belonged to God But it is really surprising for those who claim to be followers of the Qur'an. We believe that the abandoning of this platform by the worshippers of God, and similarly its occupation by the followers of materialist thought, have each a separate cause of their own.

This platform was abandoned by the worshippers of God when those who claimed to be religious leaders developed the spirit of seeking a life of ease and comfort. To put it more precisely, this phenomenon occurred when self-seeking people and those who sought the mundane ends of life, or, in the words of the scripture, 'worldly people' occupied the seat of the prophets and genuine religious leaders. The people too mistook them for their representatives and successors, though spirit was totally opposed to that of the prophets, the Imams, and their true disciples, and if there was at all any resemblance, it was confined to appearance and dress.

Obviously these people interpreted, and still interpret, religious teachings in a manner which does not burden them with any duty and does not contradict their easy-going ways in the least. Knowingly or unwittingly they distorted certain religious concepts, employing them against religion itself.

There exists among the Shi'ah a sane and wise concept that is endorsed by the Qur'an as well as reason. This concept is called taqiyyah (dissimulation). Taqiyyah consists of employing sensible tactics in combat for safeguarding one's forces in a better manner. It is obvious that every individual is an element of vital force and his life, economic resources and social status constitute an asset for the battlefield. Utmost effort should be made to safeguard this asset and force. Why should the forces be needlessly wasted? Why should the sources of strength be weakened? The

front should remain strong and powerful to the greatest extent possible.

Taqiyyah is like using a shield in battle. This word is from the root waqa, meaning shielding. The duty of a combatant in combat is not just attack to the enemy. Self-protection, to the extent possible, is also his duty. Taqiyyah implies the maximum of striking power with minimum losses. At any rate, taqiyyah is a reasonable and wise tactic in the course of struggle.

But today we see that this word has been totally divested of its real meaning, being imbued in the process with a meaning totally noncombative. From the viewpoint of self-seekers, taqiyyah means abandoning the battlefield, leaving it for the enemy, and devoting oneself to inconsequent debates and pointless polemics.

As to how the materialists came to take over this bastion, it may possibly be said that the reason behind their occupation of this front was its abandonment by the theists. But this observation is not correct. There is another reason for it.

In this regard the Church is more to blame than anyone else. In the West, as mentioned earlier, there were presented certain illogical concepts concerning God, the Hereafter, and Jesus Christ, which were unacceptable to free thinking and enlightened individuals. That which was presented in the name of theology, affiliated to the Church, was of a similar nature. In addition, there developed, on the one hand, an artificial connection between faith in God and belief in the legitimacy of despotism and repression, and, on the other, between godlessness and the people's right to self-determination and struggle for civil liberties.

These factors led some social reformers and activists to straight away reject God—and, for that matter, every idea originating from the concept of God—for the sake of freeing themselves totally from these restraints in their social struggles, and turn to materialism.

Their followers, who were fascinated by their social teachings, gradually started thinking that perhaps materialism had a miraculous quality and was capable of giving birth to such combative individuals. But the fact was that these individuals had not acquired this strength from materialism; rather, it was materialism which gained strength from these people and consequently acquired some respectability. The inclination of these individuals towards materialism was not in any way due to its merits; rather, it was result of the evils that afflicted the so-called religious establishment on the intellectual, moral, scientific, and social sides.

Now we see that some short-sighted people fancy that there is some kind of a relation between materialism and socialism, which concerns itself with the economic, social and political conditions of society, while in reality there exists no such relationship. In fact, much of the respectability and credibility of materialism in the present age is due to the pseudo-connection it has developed

with socialism.

To be sure we do not intend to exaggerate and claim that at present materialism has been able to capture from the theists all the bastions of revolutionary initiative, reconstruction, and combativeness. Such a general statement especially does not at all hold true of the Islamic world. The history of the last half a century of anti-colonial struggles in the Islamic countries is the best proof of this claim. It is predicted that enlightened Muslims will gradually capture this bastion which rightfully belongs to them. It is even said that, that which is taking place in South-East Asia and has amazed the world, is, contrary to some propaganda, accompanied by a kind of spirituality and anti-materialist dimensions.

But we should neither deny that such has been the case in recent past, and even today atheists are considered the real champions of these platforms. Conclusion:

What is the practical conclusion that we derived from the study of the causes and factors responsible for materialist tendencies?

I again admit that I do not claim this study to be complete and comprehensive. Certain causes and factors might have remained hidden from me. Also I might have been mistaken in the analysis of some of these factors. Obviously, those who interpret history on the basis of economics describe these events in a different manner and see the future in another way. Although I do not consider my study sufficient for giving a definitive opinion about the causes and factors responsible for materialist tendencies and consider a more accurate and inclusive analysis as necessary, yet I am not prepared to simply follow others and blindly accept their views.

Let us now see as to what is the remedy and what is to be done from the viewpoint of those who are interested in the spread and propagation of the message of tawhid, in whose opinion mankind's deliverance hangs on knowing and worshipping God, who consider spirituality a human necessity for individual and society, being certain that there is no hope of its survival without spirituality, that it will destroy itself, its civilization, and the planet on which it lives with its own hands.

If we take the study conducted so far as the criterion, it must be said that, firstly, we need to present the Divine teachings in a rational, scientific, and logical manner. We should not offer an anthropomorphic conception of God, neither should we fashion ears and eyes for Him, nor determine the distance between His two eyes. Further we should not look for Him in the laboratory, or above the clouds, or in the depths of the seas. We should follow the approach stressed by the Noble Qur'an on the issue of God's transcendence (tanzih) by considering Him beyond imagination, analogy, conjecture and fancy. We should not conceive Him only as the originator of the universe, nor assign a division of work between God and temporal causes. We

should counter irrelevant notions of eternal knowledge and eternal will, and, in short, prevent every kind of intellectual error in issues of theology.

Undoubtedly, this is only possible when we affiliate ourselves to a logical and systematic school of Divine thought capable of fulfilling this need.

Islamic teachings are extraordinary rich from this point of view and can fulfill this requirement very well. Islamic philosophers have been able to create a well-reasoned and powerful school of thought in this sphere under the inspiration of the Noble Qur'an and the traditions of the Noble Prophet (S) and the Immaculate Imams ('a). One acquainted with this school of thought will not say that the meaning of the first cause is that a thing brings itself into existence. He would never ask that if all things came into existence due to the first cause, what brought the first cause into existence. He would not say that the difficulty of the first cause is unsolvable, or that if we believe in God we will of necessity have to accept a temporal beginning for time, or that if we affirm God's existence we will have to reject the idea of liberty—'either God or freedom'!—and such things.

In Islamic history, the Ash'arites and the Hanbalis introduced stagnation and literalism, which threatened Islamic theology, but they could not resist the dynamism and sublimity of Islam's profound teachings.

Regrettably a group of so-called intellectuals among Muslim Arab writers have in recent times been propagating a kind of intellectual stagnation and theological agnosticism under the influence of Western empiricism on the one hand and the Ash'arite past on the other. They have been trying to popularize a type of Ash'arite thought mixed with empiricism. Farid Wajdi, and, to some extent, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad Qutb and Sayyid Abul al-Hasan Nadwi, belong to this group. To a certain extent this kind of thinking has reached here as well.

On the basis that the realm of the metaphysical is an obscure valley unknown to man and lying outside the limits of human thought and intelligence, and that we are not required by the Shari'ah to enter this unknown valley, this group completely locks up the door to the higher teachings (ma'arif). They think that the furthest limit of theology is to study the systems of the universe and remain stupefied by a feeling of wonder. Expression of wonder and awe to them is the zenith of theology. Accordingly, a course in natural history is sufficient to resolve all the issues of theology. Books such as that of Maurice Metterling represent a complete theology.

These persons do not know that the study of creation is the first step, not the last. At the most, through it we can reach the border between nature and the supernatural, no further.

In the fifth volume of the 'The Principles and Method of the Philosophy of Realism,' I have evaluated the different ways to obtaining the knowledge of God, including the way of empirical

science, that is, through the study of nature, identifying the limitations of each of them. There we have proved, firstly, the possibility of the knowledge of Divine and metaphysical issues for man as a valid science based on sound rational foundations. Secondly, from the point of view of Islam, man is required, or at least permitted, to acquire the knowledge of metaphysical issues through reasoning and inference, not just believe them on the basis of tradition. Thirdly, the path of empirical knowledge, or the path [to the knowledge of God] through nature, is one which extends from nature to the frontier of the metaphysical, no further.

We do not say that it is a path which stretches- from nature to the frontier of the Divine realm, or that it is sufficient, as they say, for 'the journey from the creatures to God' (min al-khalq ila al-Haqq). All that we are saying is that it is a road that leads only up to the frontiers of the metaphysical. That is, it only proves that nature has a metaphysical plane to which it is subject. But whether that metaphysical is itself created or not; that is, whether that metaphysical power is the creator of all things, or itself created and subject to something beyond it; and presuming that there is nothing beyond it, whether it is simple or composite, one or many; are its knowledge and power finite or infinite; is its grace finite or infinite; is man free or not vis-à-vis it—none of these and scores of similar other questions can be answered by it.

But there is a science and discipline which provides replies to all these questions. It enables us through its rational principles to fly from the world of creation (khalq) towards God (Haqq), and take us on 'the journey in the Divine realm in God's company' (bil-Haqq fi al-Haqq), acquainting us in the process with a set of teachings relating to the Divine realm.

However, one step in the way of countering materialist tendencies is to present a school of Divine thought which is capable of answering the intellectual needs of the thinkers of humanity.

In the second stage, the relationship of the issues of theology (metaphysical issues) with social and political affairs needs to be clearly determined. The place of a school of Divine thought as the supportive basis of political and social rights needs to be clarified. Belief in God should no longer be construed as amounting to the acceptance of tyranny and absolutism of rulers. Fortunately, from this angle, too, the teachings of Islam are rich and clear, although they have rarely been presented. It is the duty of the enlightened Islamic scholars to acquaint the world with the legal framework of Islam from the political and, especially, the economic point of view.

At a later stage, the chaos prevailing in the field of preaching and expression of non-specialist opinions needs to be countered. There should be no philosophizing of the kind that tries to explain the lines on the melon or advantages of the camel's lack of wings. The issue of a favourable moral and social environment harmonious with the sublime spiritual teachings should be given utmost importance.

The issue of a conducive moral and social environment, for which purpose the duty of amr bi al-ma'ruf and nahy 'an al-munkar (commanding the good and forbidding the evil) has been devised in Islam, is, apart from its other aspects, of extraordinary importance for preparing the ground for growth of sublime spiritual values.

More necessary than everything else, for our times, is that those who are aware of the real Islamic teachings and devoted to them should try to regenerate that combative spirit, which is one of the principal Islamic values. Of course, the restoration of the combative spirit to Islamic teaching requires an intellectual jihad, a jihad by pen and tongue—and yet another jihad, in action and deed.

The Role of Ijtihad in Legislation

The terms 'mujtahid' and 'ijtihad' are nowadays among those which have acquired great currency, even sanctity, among the Shi'ah. One would be surprised to know that the term ijtihad was formerly, from the times of the Prophet (S) and for several successive centuries, a Sunni term. It became Shia after undergoing a change of meaning, or what would be more precise to say, the term remained specifically Sunni for several centuries and became 'Muslim', in the wider sense, that is, after undergoing a change of meaning and dissociating itself from its earlier particular sense.

As to its not being a Shi'i term formerly, there is no doubt; if there is any uncertainty, it is about the date of its acceptance by the Shi'ah. It is not improbable that this term like several groups of people in the seventh century was converted to Shi'ism at the hands of the absolute Ayatullah, al-'Allamah al-Hilli. However, as we shall presently explain, the conversion came after its undergoing a change of meaning.

Apparently, there seems to be no doubt that this term was never used by any of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (A). The terms ijtihad and mujtahid, in the sense in which they are used by Shi'ah and Sunni fuqaha', have not been used in any of their ahadith. Neither they themselves were ever known by the epithet 'mujtahid' nor did they ever use it for the scholars and legists from among their companions. Otherwise the root relating to such terms as fatwa and ifta, which convey approximately the modern sense of ijtihad, and its derivatives do occur in the ahadith. For instance, al-'Imam al-Baqir (A) is reported to have said to Aban ibn Taghlib:

Sit in the mosque of al-Madinah and give fatwas for the people . Indeed I love more like you to be seen amongst my Shi'ah.

And in a famous hadith, al-'Imam al-Sadiq (A) is reported to have said to 'Unwan al-Basri:

Avoid giving fatwa in the way you would run away from a lion; do not make your neck a bridge for the people. The reason for the former unpopularity of the word is that during the early centuries of the Islamic era - that is also the period in which the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) lived - the word, due to the specific meaning it carried, was not acceptable to the Imams (A). Naturally, it could not have played any role in their teachings. However, after undergoing a gradual change of meaning, when it came to be used in a different sense by Sunni fuqaha' themselves, it was also adopted by Shi'ite fiqh. Now we shall briefly describe the background of the Sunni usage of this term. 'Ijtihad' in the Sunni Tradition:

Sunni scholars narrate a hadith that the Prophet (S), while sending Mu'adh to Yemen, asked him as to on what he would base his judgement. "In accordance with the Book of Allah", replied Mu'adh, "But what if you don't find it there?" inquired the Prophet (S). "According to the Sunnah of the Apostle of Allah", replied Mu'adh. "But what if you don't find it there too?" asked the Prophet (S) again. 'I will exert my own opinion', replied Mu'adh.

The Prophet (S) put his hand on Mu'adh's chest and said: "Thank God for assisting His Apostle with what he loves." They have narrated other traditions on the subject to the effect that either the Prophet (S) directly commanded his Companions to exercise ijtihad in case they could not find a rule in the Book and the Sunnah, or to the effect that he approved of the practice of his Companions that practised ijtihad. To the Sunnis, this is something definite, confirmed by consensus (ijma').

About the Holy Prophet (S) himself, they have said that some of his injunctions were purely based on personal ijtihad not on revelation. Even in their works on jurisprudence ('ilm al-'usul) the problem is raised whether or not the Prophet (S) could make errors in his personal ijtihad. They have narrated traditions in this regard and transmitted reports of the Companions as to how they justified their own actions or those of others on the basis of ijtihad. We abstain from quoting any of them here for the sake of brevity.

It is evident that in all the above instances the term ijtihad is not used in its current sense, that is, making the utmost effort in deducing rules of the Shari'ah from the related sources (adillah). The meaning of ijtihad there is 'exercising of one's opinion or judgement' (al-'amal bi al-ra'y). It means that in a case where the Divine dicta are absent or implicit, one should see what would be more acceptable to one's intelligence and taste, or nearer to truth and justice, or analogous to other Islamic laws, and to adopt it for his judgement. Accordingly, ijtihad is also accounted as one of the

sources of Islamic legislation, like the Quran and the Sunnah, although not as a source parallel to these two. So long as a rule is to be found in the Quran and the Sunnah, the need for ijtiḥad does not arise. However, in absence of relevant dicta in the Quran, the Sunnah or ijma', ijtiḥad becomes a source of legislation. On this basis, they have said that the sources of legislation are four: the Book, the Sunnah, ijma', and ijtiḥad (i.e. qiyas).

Also, according to this approach, ijtiḥad is not synonymous with expertise in Islamic law (faḡahah), nor is the term mujtahid synonymous with faḡih. Rather, ijtiḥad is one of the functions of the faḡih. The faḡih should have knowledge of the Quran and the hadith corpus; he should be able to distinguish the nasikh from the mansukh, the 'amm from the khaṣṣ, the mujmal from the mubayyan, and the muḡkam from the mutashabih. He should be familiar with the Quranic vocabulary and terminology, know the circumstances in which a particular verse was revealed (sha'n al-nuzul), and have knowledge of the successive generations of narrators and transmitters of hadith. He should also be able to reconcile the apparently conflicting traditions. In addition to all that, he should practise ijtiḥad and exercise his personal judgements in particular cases.

What was the character and basis of that ijtiḥad? Did the term ijtiḥad found in hadith mean exercising qiyas? Did the Prophet (S) and his Companions practise ijtiḥad in this sense. Did it also apply to other practices such as istiḡsan? Al-Shafi'i, in his famous Risalah, has a chapter on ijtiḥad, which follows the one on ijma', and is itself followed by one on istiḡsan. In his discussion of the subject, al-Shafi'i draws the conclusion that the ijtiḥad prescribed by the Shari'ah is confined to qiyas and that other types of ijtiḥad, such as istiḡsan, do not have any canonical grounds. Al-Shafi'i believes that the canonical grounds for qiyas are identical with those for ijtiḥad.

There were other questions that were debated by Sunni fuḡaha', such as: Are ijtiḥad and al-'amal bi al-ra'y confined to cases where there is no express text (nass) or whether one may do ijtiḥad (called ta'awwul in this case) and exercise his judgement despite the presence of express texts? What are the conditions applicable to Sunnah if it is to preponderate ijtiḥad? Are all traditions narrated from the Prophet (S) to be relied upon and given precedence over ijtiḥad? Is reliable hadith confined to those which are mashḡur and mustafid, as Abu Hanifah believed? Who are those who had the right of ijtiḥad and whose ijtiḥad was binding (hujjah) for the others? On what grounds have the others no right to go against their ijtiḥad? Evidently, to go into the details of each of these questions is outside the scope of this paper. However, it is necessary to mention some relevant points here:

1. The position of the fuḡaha' and imams of the Ahl al-Sunnah with respect to the acceptability of ijtiḥad, in the above-mentioned sense, is not the same. Some of them give a wider scope to ijtiḥad and qiyas and some restrict it. Some altogether reject qiyas and ijtiḥad.

Abu Hanifah, who lived in Iraq and was considered the jurist of the Iraqis, because of the many

conditions he required for a tradition to be acceptable, and also on account of being distant from the centre of hadith, which was the Hijaz, had lesser knowledge of hadith. Also due to other reasons, including his background of kalam and logic, he took greater recourse to qiyas and on this account was strongly opposed by the Sunni jurists of his time and those who came after him.

Malik ibn Anas spent his life in al-Madinah and made lesser use of qiyas. Reportedly, he did not use qiyas except in a few cases, and, according to a report of Ibn Khallikan, was greatly repentant at the time of his death of having taken recourse to qiyas in his fatwas even in those few cases.

Al-Shafi'i, who belonged to the Iraqi school and had studied under Abu Hanifah's pupils and had as well studied under Malik in al-Madinah, took a middle road between Malik and Abu Hanifah.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was more a muhaddith than a faqih and avoided qiyas even to a greater extent than Malik Ibn Anas. Dawud ibn Ali al-Zahiri al-'Isfahani, the founder of the Zahiri school, was altogether opposed to the practice of qiyas and regarded it as an innovation (bid'ah) in the faith.

As a consequence of these differences there emerged among the Ahl al-Sunnah two general trends: one of them was represented by the Ahl al-Hadith and the other by the Ahl al-Ra'y. The Ahl al-Hadith, or the Traditionists, attached lesser or no significance to qiyas and ra'y and the Ahl al-Ra'y in turn relied to a lesser extent on ahadith.

2. Concurrently with the emergence of the Ahl al-Ra'y and the Ahl al-Hadith, a problem that arose among the contemporary circles of kalam was that of the rational basis of legal judgements (al-husn wa al-qubh al-'aqliyyan). Although at first sight there seems to be no link between these two developments, because one of them belonged to fiqh and took place in juristic circles and the other belonged to the circles of kalam, but, as pointed by some historians, the theory of rational basis of judgement - which was raised by the Mu'tazilah and who staunchly defended it - was also intended to find some kind of basis for ijtiha, i.e. qiyas and the practice of ra'y. According to this theory, the laws of the Shari'ah were based on a series of real benefits and harms and that human reason was capable of independently discovering those benefits and harms inherent in things; therefore reason was capable of discovering the purposes and criteria of the laws of religion through ijtiha and ra'y.

This conjecture is further strengthened if we remember that the Ahl al-Hadith, who later, in the fourth/tenth century, came to be known as Asha'riah, represented the chief opposition to the Mu'tazilah.

3. Right from the first century, from the time when groups of people gathered in mosques for the purpose of study and debate, some persons debated about the issues of halal and haram. They gathered around them pupils and adherents from among the common people, who regarded their

fatwas as authoritative and referred to them their questions about halal and haram. Such was the beginning of the gradual development of a class of scholars who later came to be called fuqaha'. Every region, city and group followed a certain individual, and the rulers had not yet adopted the policy of following the fatwas of a certain jurist as official law.

The emergence of this class of jurists did not require any special conditions. Occasionally, social conditions demanded that one prominent individual should be recognized by the people and followed in religious precepts. Gradually, this resulted in the emergence of diverse legal approaches and schools, which in turn were preserved and perpetuated by the pupils of the originator after his death. In this way, various legal schools and sects emerged amongst the Sunnis, the most famous of them being the Hanafi, the Shafi'i, the Maliki, the Hanbali and the Zahiri schools. Of course, the founders of these schools were not the only early jurists and mujtahidun that were there. There were others who held their own legal opinions and were not followers of anyone. However, this independence gradually disappeared after the fourth/tenth century and no independent mujtahid emerged after this time in the Sunni tradition. Apparently, the last person to have been an independent mujtahid with his own independent approach in legal issues was the well-known historian and exegete Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310/922), who although famous for his work on history, is considered a Sunni faqih of the first rank.

The later Sunni mujtahids were either al-mujtahid al-mutlaq al-muntasib or mujtahid al-fatwa (also occasionally known as mujtahid al-madhab). 'Al-mujtahid al-mutlaq al-muntasib' means a mujtahid who is attached to one of the well-known schools and follows the juristic approach of its founder but in deducing legal rules, on the basis of the school's juristic principles, he may formulate his own independent legal opinions which may be different from the legal opinions of the founder. For instance, while being a Shafi'i or a Hanafi in jurisprudence, he may differ with al-Shafi'is or Abu Hanifah's express fatwas in legal matters. A number of eminent Sunni jurists are considered to belong to this class, such as: Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwaym, Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, Ibn al-Sabbagh, and others.

Mujtahid al-madhab' or 'mujtahid al-fatwa' is someone who follows the founder of the school in all matters in which the founder has expressly given his views. However in issues in which he does find an opinion of the founder, he may exercise his own Ijtihad and give fatwa . Accordingly, Ijtihad is of three kinds: independent Ijtihad, semi-independent Ijtihad (al-'ijtihad al-mutlaq al-muntasib), and Ijtihad within the framework of the juristic and legal positions of a school (Ijtihad al-fatwa).

In any case, the mujtahids who came after the fourth century did not find any followers. On the other hand the mujtahids who came before this period were not limited to the four imams of the popular schools; there were nine other eminent jurists of whom some lived before the four imams - such as al-Hasan al-Basri - some were their contemporaries - such as Sufyan al-Thawri - and

some who came after them - such as Dawud al-Zahiri and Muhammad Ibn Jarir al-Tabari - and all of them had more or less followers among the people. However, there was a gradual rise in the followers of the four imams, for, according to al-Maqfizi in al-Khitat, al-Malik al-Zahir, the ruler of Egypt, officially declared in the year 665/1257 that except the four schools - Shafi'i Maliki, Hanafi and Hanbali - other schools had no official recognition and that no judge had the right to give judgement except on the basis of the four schools. The people were also strictly forbidden to follow any except the four schools. This was the beginning of the restriction of the official schools to four.'

This brief description shows that when we talk of the closure of the door of Ijtihad in the Sunni tradition, we refer to the Ijtihad of the first kind, i.e. independent ijtiḥad. As to the second kind (al-Ijtihad al-mutlaq al-muntasib) and the third kind (ijtiḥad al-madhhab), their doors have remained open.

Why should the doors of independent ijtiḥad have been closed after the fourth century and no one should have right to complete independence and be bound to follow one of the imams in jurisprudence? Why and for what reason is it not permissible today to follow anyone except the four imams? Why should one who follows any one of the imams follow him in all issues and have no right to follow the other three by exercising discretion in some issues? Sunni scholars have given various answers to all of these questions and none of them is convincing.

Shah Wali Allah Dehlawi (d. 1180/1765), in a treatise (risalah) called "al-'Insaf fi bayan sabab al-'ikhtilaf" - which has been quoted by Farid al-Wajdi under jahada in the Da'irat al-Ma'arif, with the remark that it is the best treatise written on the topic - acclaims the closure of the door of independent ijtiḥad and the latter scholars' imitation of one of the early imams and says: that is, 'It is a secret that God Almighty has inspired in the scholars with' to safeguard Islam and protect the religion from disintegration. Farid al-Wajdi himself does not approve of the prohibition on Ijtihad and does not confirm those words of Shah Wali Allah.

Two years ago, according to what we have read in papers and have heard, the great 'Allamah Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut, the mufti and rector of Al-'Azhar University, with great courage characteristic of great reformers, broke this thousand-year-old spell and officially announced that the door of ijtiḥad is open and that there is nothing objectionable about a follower of one school referring to the judgements of another school in case they are supported by firmer arguments. He also announced in an official fatwa that it is correct to follow the Ja'fari school of fiqh, just like the other schools. Subsequently, a chair of comparative legal studies was established at al-'Azhar. Undoubtedly this was the greatest step that was taken since the beginnings of Islamic jurisprudence for the sake of the benefit and general welfare of Muslims. Its worth will be better recognized in the future.

4. Another problem related to the subject of Ijtihad is that of takhti'ah (admission of the possibility of error in the judgements of the mujtahid) and taswib (confirmation of the mujtahid's infallibility and denial of any possibility of error), which has throughout been a topic of debate in books on kalam and usul al-fiqh. Generally, it is mentioned in books on usul that the Shi'ah fuqaha' admit possibility of error in the mujtahid's fatwas and are accordingly called mukhatti'ah (derived from khata': error), whereas the Sunni fuqaha' believe that the mujtahid is always right in his judgements, and are hence called musawwibah (derived from sawab:

that which is right). However, it is not the case that all the Sunni fuqaha' support taswib; rather, only a small number of them have accepted this view. In any case, for the Shi'ah, who define Ijtihad as 'the effort to deduce the real law from the sources of the Shari'ah', it is difficult to imagine that every mujtahid should be always right. It is not possible that whatever any mujtahid may judge should be correct and his judgement should be the real law; for it is possible that different mujtahids may hold divergent opinions simultaneously about a certain subject and the same mujtahid may hold different opinions at different times about the same issue. How is it possible that he should always be right?

The roots of the theory of taswib lie in a certain theory of Ijtihad which is held by those who define Ijtihad as the practice of qiyas and ra'y . They claim that the laws received by the Prophet (S) through revelation are limited, whereas issues and problems which require legislation are unlimited in number. Therefore, the laws given by the Divine Lawgiver are not adequate to meet the requirements. Accordingly, God has given the right to the scholars of the Ummah, or a group of them, to employ their personal taste and intelligence in cases where there are no religious dicta and select something which resembles other Islamic laws and is closer to the criteria of justice and truth. In accordance with this reasoning, they accept the theory of taswib, for, according to this view of Ijtihad, it is itself one of the sources of the Divine Law.

The idea of taswib was unimaginable to the minds of Shi'ah jurists, because they had taken for granted the principle that every event or problem should have a real Divine law related to it. Ijtihad, to them, meant inquiry and effort to discover that law with the help of reliable canonical sources. Of course, in the light of such an outlook of Ijtihad it is impossible that every mujtahid should be right.

The theory of taswib, however, does not rest on such an outlook of Ijtihad. It rests on an outlook which regards it as impossible that God should have legislated laws regarding every kind of situation. Because, if such were the case, they should have been set forth in the Book and the Sunnah; but the laws given in the Book and the Sunnah are limited in number, whereas situations are innumerable and unlimited. Hence God has given the 'ulama' of the Ummah the right to legislate through Ijtihad such laws as have not been given through revelation. Since this right is God-given, the judgements of the mujtahid are the actual laws of God.

The problem of taswib and takhti'ah has been debated a lot in books on kalam and usul, and here our purpose was just to refer to the abovementioned point. The above discussion related to the Sunni background of the term ijthihad; now we shall turn to the change of meaning that this term underwent, which resulted in its acceptance by the Shi'ah.

'Ijthihad' in the Shi'ah Tradition:

Until the fourth/tenth and the fifth/eleventh centuries we observe that whenever the word is used by a scholar it carries the sense of qiyas and ra'y. For instance, Shaykh Abu Ja'far al-Tusi (d. 460/1067), in his 'Uddat al-'usul, devotes a chapter to qiyas. He devotes another chapter to Ijthihad where he discusses one of the issues related to ijthihad, i.e. the problem of taswib and takhti'ah. The book has another chapter entitled "Did the Prophet practise ijthihad, and whether it was legitimate for him to practise it? Was it legitimate for the Companions of the Prophet to practise ijthihad when they were away from him or were in his presence?" Later, in the course of his discussion, he says: "This controversy is basically uncalled for according to our doctrines, because, as we have proved earlier, qiyas and ijthihad are absolutely impermissible in the Shari'ah. "

This remark of al-Shaykh al-Tusi shows that until his age the word Ijthihad was still used in the sense of ra'y and qiyas.

'Ijthihad' lexically means 'putting in utmost effort' in doing something. In the earliest days, the term in accordance with the traditions ascribed to the Prophet (S) and the Companions, was taken to mean ijthihad bi al-ra'y, or putting in utmost effort in the exercise of ra'y and qiyas. However, gradually it took a wider meaning and came to mean putting in utmost effort in discovering the laws of the Shari'ah from its reliable sources. Thus we see that al-Ghazali (d. 505/1 111) in his al-Mustasfa - although he uses the word recurringly in its earlier sense of qiyas, for instance, when he says:

They have differed as to the permissibility of practising qiyas and ijthihad during the days of the Prophet ... (vol. 2, p. 354) He also uses it in the general sense of scholarly effort on the part of a faqih It (ijthihad) means putting in of the utmost effort in doing something. But the term has come to be used in the terminology of scholars specifically for the mujtahids putting in of the utmost effort in acquiring the knowledge of the laws of the Shariah. (vol. 2, p. 350)

From this time onwards we see that the term is used less frequently in the special sense of ra'y and qiyas and takes on the sense of scholarly effort in discovering the laws of the Shari'ah. With this change, the term found way into the Shi'ite fiqh also, for earlier the Shi'ah had opposed it on account of their opposition to Ijthihad bi al-ra'y, not because they were opposed to scholarly diligence. In any case, they did not resist its use after it changed its meaning. Probably the first to use this term among the Shi'ah Imamiyyah scholars was al-'Allamah al-Hilli (d. 726/1326), who

accepting it used it in its second sense in his work Tahdhib al-'usul. In that work he devotes a chapter to Ijtihad and uses it in the sense current today. It seems that it was from this time that the Shi'ah accepted the word or the word embraced Shi'ism.

We said earlier that the opposition to qiyas was not limited to the Shi'ah and there were schools among Sunnis who either altogether rejected it and regarded it as a heresy or avoided it as much as possible. The Mu'tazilah, who advanced the doctrine of al-husn wa al-qubh al'aqliyyan, backed qiyas and ra'y in their fight against the Ahl al-Hadith who rejected it. The Ahl al-Hadith, who later came to be called Asha'irah due to their approach in kalam, rejected the doctrine of al-husn wa al-qubh al'aqliyyan, claiming that the desirability or undesirability of things is derived from the commands and prohibitions of the lawgiver and not vice versa. As a result, they denied reason any role in legislation of Divine laws. The controversies between the Mu'tazilah and supporters of qiyas and ra'y on one side and the Asha'irah and the Ahl al-Hadith on the other side revolve around the role of reason and its share in legislation.

It must not be concluded from the above discussion that the Shi'ah opposition to ra'y and qiyas was also based on the same reasons as those of the Asha'irah and the Ahl al-Hadith, which was outright opposition to the role of reason in deduction of the laws of the Shari'ah. The Shi'i opposition to qiyas and ra'y had two reasons. The first was that the claim of the supporters of qiyas that the Book and the Sunnah are not adequate sources of legislation was not acceptable to the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (A). In the sermons of the Nahj al-balaghah and other Shi'i compilations of hadith the idea that the Book and the Sunnah are not adequate has been vehemently rejected. In the Usul al-Kafi, the chapter followed by another entitled:

The chapter about referring to the Book and the Sunnah, and that verily there is no haram or halal and nothing needed by the people that is not present in the Book or the Sunnah.

The second reason advanced by the Shi'ah against qiyas was that it was based on conjecture and led very frequently to error. These two reasons clearly stand out in the books of early Shi'ah scholars, and we shall abstain from further details for brevity's sake.

The best evidence of the fact that the Shi'ah opposition to qiyas and ra'y was not based on a hostility to the role of reason in canonical matters is that, from the very beginning that the Shiah jurisprudence was committed to writing, reason was considered one of the sources (adillah) of law. The Shi'ah jurisprudents stated that the sources of the Shari'ah are four: the Book, the Sunnah, ijma' and 'aql (reason), whereas the Zahiris and the Ahl al-Hadith confined the adillah to the Book, the Sunnah and ijma', and the support'ers of ra'y and qiyas regarded them as four: the Book, the Sunnah, ijma' and qiyas.

The Shi'ah jurisprudents, while opposing qiyas and ra'y, accepted the Mu'tazilah viewpoint about

the rational basis of ethico-legal judgements, defended it and did not oppose it like the Asha'irah and the Ahl al-Hadith. The concurrence of views between the Shi'ah and the Mu'tazilah regarding this doctrine and its corollaries - such as the doctrine of Divine justice - led the Shi'ah among the Mu'tazilah to be known as 'Adliyyah and the Shi'ah left behind the Mu'tazilah in their support of the doctrine of Divine justice. As a result, it came to be said in scholarly circles that: "justice and tawhid are 'Alawid and fatalism and anthropomorphism are Umayyad."

The reason for calling justice 'Alawid was that the supporters of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) were also defenders of the doctrine of al-husn wa al-qubh al-'aqliyyan and the doctrine of justice was a corollary to it. As to tawhid being 'Alawid, it was on account of the belief in the unity of Divine Essence and Attributes. The Umayyads supported jabr (fatalism) and tashbih (anthropomorphism) due to political exigencies. The issue of the independent capacity of reason to perceive the good and evil of things, and the subsidiary doctrine of justice, became so much a characteristic of the Shi'ah that justice came to be recognized as one of the principal tenets of the Shi'ite creed.

That the Shi'ite opposition to ra'y and qiyas is not to be taken to have been an opposition to the role of reason in ijtiḥad becomes completely obvious when we examine the extant documentary evidence. At the present the Shi'ah state the principle of the interrelation of Divine laws and actual benefits and harms and the principle of harmony between reason and religious law in these words:

Whatever is the judgement of reason, is also the judgement of the Shari'ah.

This is an incontrovertible axiom of Shi'ite jurisprudence. The above discussion makes it clear that the Shi'ah Imamiyyah approach to ijtiḥad was an independent one: it was neither bound to ra'y and qiyas, nor did it impose any bounds on reason in the manner of the Ahl al-Hadith. The Imamiyyah jurists on the one hand recognized the rights of reason and regarded it as one of the sources of law, on the other hand they rejected qiyas and ijtiḥad bi al-ra'y in their books on jurisprudence, in chapters devoted to qiyas. However, it would have been in order if the latter scholars had followed the ancient ones in discussing qiyas and ra'y in their works. It would have helped to define the exact limits of the prohibited form of qiyas, which would have been better understood. This would have prevented some individuals from waging a battle against reason under the pretext of opposition to qiyas. In fact it would have been better for scholars to devote a separate chapter to reason and rational grounds in their works on jurisprudence, in which they could delineate more precisely the role of reason and also discuss, secondarily, the inadmissibility of qiyas. In view of this author, the absence of any discussion by the latter scholars about the inadmissible form of qiyas and the limits of the role of reason in legislation has been more or less detrimental to Shi'ah fiqh and ijtiḥad.

We should know that the great secret of Islam, from the viewpoint of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt

(A), is the principle that the general laws of the Book and the Sunnah are sufficient for satisfying the religious needs of Muslims for all time, and that they have no need of ra'y and qiyas. It is characteristic of all Islamic laws that they are not only not hindersome to human progress in any era, but are conducive to it by guiding and directing it in the right direction. All that is needed to grasp this great secret is to have an enlightened and firm grasp of the vital issues. This great secret of the resourcefulness of Islam can also be called 'the great secret of ijihad'. To be certain, if an independent chapter were devoted to the above topic in books on jurisprudence, some of the existing contradictions and constraints in the relationship between fiqh and progress would have been eliminated. This problem requires an independent study and here we shall abstain from going into further details.

In the course of history, those Sunni schools of fiqh which were more rigid and formalistic and allowed lesser role to reason in deduction of laws, either disappeared gradually or the number of their followers diminished. The Zahiris, who followed Dawud ibn 'Ali, became altogether extinct. The Hanbali school, which after the Zahiri is the most rigid and formalistic of Sunni schools, gradually lost followers, and had it not been for the appearance of Ibn Taymiyyah, who provided the material on which Wahhabism was later to thrive, perhaps today the number of followers of the Hanbali school would have been very small.

The school of Malik spread only in North Africa and Maghrib, away from the centres of Islamic culture, and, as Ibn Khaldun says, the cause of the spreading of the school of Malik in North Africa and Maghrib was that the inhabitants were Beduins who lived away from the centres of science and culture. In any case, the rigid and formalistic Sunni schools declined and lost followers with the passage of time. Akhbarism in the Imamiyyah Tradition:

One of the most surprising as well as regrettable phenomena was the emergence of Akhbarism among the Shi'ah in the early eleventh/seventeenth century. Akhbarism was a hundred times more rigid and formalistic than either the Zahiri or the Hanbali school. Its emergence must be considered a great catastrophe in the Shi'ah world whose effects more or less survive to the present day, causing stagnation and obscurantism in the Shi'ah Muslim society.

The founder of Akhbarism was Mulla Amin Astarabadi, who expounded his beliefs in his famous book Fawa'id al-madaniyyah. Mulla Amin, as his book shows, was a brilliant and learned man. In general, those who found a school, no matter how baseless, rigid and false its teachings may be, are brilliant and intelligent men. A dullard cannot found a school and gather followers around himself. The dullards, however, are influenced by those brilliant individuals and become their loyal followers.

Amin Astarabadi claims to have discovered some truths which nobody before him had succeeded in knowing. Also, he claims a kind of Divine inspiration for himself; in the introduction to the

Fawa'id al- madaniyyah, he says:

And you (i.e. the reader), after having gone through our book, will find in it truths untouched by any of the early or latter philosophers, legists, scholastics, and jurists, and yet they are only a sample of what my Lord, the Almighty and the Supreme, has granted to me. In this book he challenges even the philosophers and the mutakallimun, as occasionally he has to discuss some issues related to philosophy and kalam. In the book's tenth chapter, he discusses the meaning of nafs al-'amr. The eleventh chapter is named by him "Fi bayan aghlat al-'Asha'irah wa al-Mu'tazilah fi awwal al-wajibat" ("On the mistakes of the Ashai'rah and the Mu'tazilah about the first obligations"). In the twelfth, he cites the mistakes of Muslim philosophers and theologians.

Amin Astarabadi under different pretexts, tried to deny the legal authority (hujjiyyah) of three of the four well-known sources of law, that is, the Quran, ijma', and 'aql, thus recognizing only the Sunnah as the reliable source. As to the Quran, he claimed that no one has the right to refer directly to the Quran and to interpret it. Only the Infallible Imams have such a right. Our duty is to refer to their ahadith. Only those parts of the Quran that have been explained in hadith may be referred to for legal purposes; other parts whose exegesis does not exist in hadith may not be acted upon. Also in order to deny the authenticity of the text of the Quran, Amin Astarabadi raised the issue of its corruption (tahrif).

As to ijma', he denied its validity, considering it an innovation (bid'ah) of the Sunnis. He also offered many arguments to deny the authority of reason. On the contrary, with respect to ahadith he went to the other extreme and claimed that all the traditions, especially those of al-Kafi, Man la yahdruru al-faqih, al-Tahdhib and al-'Istibsar are of certain authenticity and legally binding. He ferociously attacked al-'Allamah al-Hilli, who had classified traditions into sahih, muwaththaq, hasan, and da'if, and occasionally insults the 'Allamah and his followers in his book.

He categorically rejected the very principle of Ijtihad (even in its latter sense in which the Shi'ah fuqaha' had accepted it) and regarded it as an innovation in the faith. No one has any right to follow anyone except an infallible Imam, he claimed. He brought the entire force of his opposition to bear against reason and its authority. He claimed that all innovations involving reason - such as regarding Ijtihad as legitimate, considering the zawahir (apparent meanings of the Quranic verses) to be of binding authority, classifying ahadith into weak and strong, inquiring into the reliability of transmitters of ahadith and the like - came into vogue because the fuqaha' have followed the practitioners of qiyas, the scholastics, philosophers, and logicians to rely upon reason. Now, if Mulla Amin were to prove that reason is liable to error except in matters relating to objects of sense - experience or those which are derived from it (such as the concepts of mathematics), the fuqaha' would no longer go after Ijtihad and reason. Accordingly, he advanced rather forceful arguments to disprove the authority of reason in matters which are not perceptual or derived from sense-experience. He is especially keen to prove that metaphysics and theology, since they

are based on pure reasoning, are devoid of any value; hence the title of the twelfth chapter of the *Fawa'id al-madaniyyah*:

On part of the errors of philosophers and Muslim theosophers (*hukama'*) in their sciences and that their cause-as we have proved earlier-is that no one who deals with the issues whose preliminaries are extra-sensible is secure from error except the Infallible Ones (the Prophet [S], Fatimah [A], and the twelve Imams [A]). There, he discusses some well-known problems of philosophy, such as the necessity of an intervening rest between two reciprocating straight line motions, that something which is necessarily associated with some impossibility is also impossible, the problem of precedence, and the problem of the preponderance of will.

On the whole, he is of the opinion that reason can be a guide only in the study of problems related to the natural sciences, which are based upon sense-experience, and in that of mathematics, whose concepts are derived from such experience or are closely related to it, but not in problems of theology and metaphysics. This view agrees totally with the outlook of the European empiricists of the sixteenth century. Incidentally, the period in which Astarabadi lived approximately coincides with that of the emergence of empiricism in Europe. It is not known whether his views were original or he had borrowed them. All that we know about him at the present is that he lived in Makkah for nearly ten years where he studied under Muhammad Astarabadi, to whom he refers as a *faqih*, a *mutakallim*, and philosopher. After that he had spent several years at al-Madinah. But we know nothing about how he came to adopt those views, whether he had innovated them or had borrowed them from someone else ...

Amin Astarabadi himself, and his followers as well, do not consider him as the founder of a new school called Akhbarism. Rather they consider him a revivalist who restored the way of the early Shi'ah scholars of hadith. They claim that their way is the same as that of the early Shi'ah that was followed until the times of al-Shaykh al-Saduq and from which the people were gradually led astray by such scholars as Ibn Abi 'Aqil, Ibn Junayd, al-Shaykh al-Mufid, al-Sayyid al-Murtada, and al-Shaykh al-Tusi, who brought in reason and *ijtihad* to temper with Divine commands. Shaykh Yusuf ibn Ahmad al-Bahram (d. 1186/1772), the author of *al-Hada'iq al-nadrah*, who was himself a moderate Akhbari, in the tenth *muqaddimah* of *al-Hada'iq al-nadrah*, under a heading style "*Fi hujjiyyat al-dafiil al-'aqli*" (On the legal validity of rational grounds), cites the following words of Sayyid Ni'mat Allah al-Jaza'iri from the latter's work *Anwar al-nu'maniyyah*:

To be certain, a majority of our companions (i.e. the Shi'ah) followed a group of our opponents, among them philosophers, naturalists, or Ahl al-Ra'y and others, who, relying upon reason and its arguments, cast away the teachings of the prophets when they did not agree with their intellects. In these words, which hint at excommunication, Sayyid Ni'mat Allah al-Jaza'iri considers the majority of Shi'ah scholars - and along with them the philosophers, the naturalists, and those who follow *ra'y* and *qiyas* to be heedless of the teachings of prophets, merely on the ground that they

recognize the authority of reason. By the 'majority' he means all the scholars who came after al-Shaykh al-Saduq, as if until that time all Shi'ah had been Akhbaris.

In fact Akhbarism had never existed before as a school with distinct doctrines such as those based on the denial of the authority of the *zawahir* of the Quran, the denial of the authority of reason, impermissibility of the *taqlid* of anyone except the *Ma'sum* and so on. It is true that there were some who seldom went beyond quoting traditions in their books - even quoting them verbatim in their *fatawa*. But the fact is that the abundance of *ahadith* on the one hand, and the accessibility to the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt (A)* on the other, had been the major cause that the need for *ijtihad* and the need to deduce particular rules from general laws had not yet been felt.

Al-Shaykh al-Tusi, in the introduction to *al-Mabsut*, says: "I had heard from the 'Ammah (i.e. the Sunnis) the criticism that our *fiqh* is limited because we do not practise *qiyas* and *ra'y* and is therefore also inadequate for answering all the problems. For years I had been desirous of writing a work on legal deduction without having recourse to *qiyas* and *ra'y*, deducing in it particular rules (*furu'*) from the fundamental general principles (*usul*) that we have been taught in traditions. However, various preoccupations and hindrances prevented it." Then he adds: My determination was weakened further by the absence of any desire on the part of this sect (i.e. the *Imamiyyah*) towards it and their indifference in this regard; because they have compiled the traditions which they relate with their familiar vocabulary, to the extent that if in a problem different words to which they are not used to are employed to convey the same sense, they consider it as an odd thing.

Al-Tusi makes it clear that the biggest impediment in his writing of such a book was that it was not yet customary among the Shi'ah to practise *ijtihad* and to deduce particulars from universals.

As said before, there had not emerged any great jurist until that time who could officially practise *ijtihad* and deduce particular rules from the general principles. There had been some - such as al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Ibn al-Walid, and others - whose method was based on narration of traditions, not on a discursive study of the subject. Even if they wrote any book on *kalam*, their argument consisted mainly of traditions. It was they whom al-Shaykh al-Tusi calls '*muqallidah*' (imitators) and criticizes them. Al-Sayyid al-Murtada - as quoted in the introduction to *al-Sara'ir* by Ibn Idris - refers to them as *ashasb al-hadith min ashabina* (the '*ahl al-hadith*' from among our companions), and al-'Allamah al-Hilli, in *Tahdhib al-'usul*, calls them '*al-'akhbariyyun min ashabina*' (the '*akhbaris*'-traditionists-from among our companions).

Perhaps it is on this account that al-Shahristani, in *al-Milal wa al-nihal*, divides the *Imamiyyah* into the subsects of *mu'tazilah* and *akhbaris*. In the first volume of his work, he says: When there came to be divergence in the traditions narrated from their Imams, as time passed every group of them took its own way, and some of the *Imamiyyah* became either *Mu'tazilah*, or *Waidiyyah*, or

Tafdiliyyah, or Akhbariyyah, or Mushabbihah, or Salafiyyah. However, it is quite certain and definite that in the early era there was no school opposed to that of ijtiḥad and legal deduction amongst the Shi'ah to have challenged the authority of the *zawahir* of the Quran or the authority of reason in order to defend *ḥadith*.

The appearance of Akhbarism, as I have said before, was a catastrophe for the scientific and intellectual life of the Shi'ah. Many individuals came to adopt its teachings and came to look down upon reason and rationalism. They made reflection upon the Quran a taboo and, instead of making the Quran the criterion for the acceptability of *ḥadith*, made *ḥadith* a criterion for the Quran. Fortunately there emerged eminent personalities among the *mujtahidun* and *usulis* who fought the influence of the Akhbaris. Among them the names of Wahid Behbahani and Shaykh Murtada al-'Ansari - may God elevate their station - stand high. To describe in detail the services of these two personages is beyond the scope of the present study.

By the way, it should not remain unsaid that the struggle against Akhbarism was a difficult and complex matter because its teachings took a deceptive and self-righteous stance which misled the public. It was for this reason that they rapidly gained influence and popularity after Amin Astarabadi ...

As is known, there broke out severe and bloody conflict towards the end of the second/eighth century and the beginning of the third/ninth between the *Ahl al-Ḥadith wa al-Sunnah*, who resemble the Shi'ah Akhbaris, and the *Mu'tazilah*, who believe in the role of reason and the validity of rational arguments. Al-Ma'mun (r. 198-218/813- 833), who was personally a man of learning, supported the *Mu'tazilah* and backed them in the controversy about the createdness of the Quran. He sent out a circular declaring those who denied the creaturehood of the Quran as heretics, who had no right to be judges and preside over the courts of law nor was their testimony to be accepted in the courts. As a result the *Mu'tazilah* attained great power during al-Ma'mun's reign. More philosophical works than at any other time were translated into Arabic during al-Ma'mun's reign and rationalism became prevalent. When al-Mutawakkil (r. 232-247/846-861) came to power, he reversed the tide by throwing the weight of his support behind the *Ahl al-Ḥadith*. The *Mu'tazilah* were proscribed and the publication of philosophy was banned. Al-Mas'udi, in *Muruj al-dhahab*, writes:

When the caliphate fell to al-Mutawakkil, he ordered the people to abstain from discussion and debate and whatever they were used to in the days of al-Mu'tasim and al-Wathiq. He directed them to adopt compliance and imitation. Al-Mutawakkil's support for the *Ahl al-Ḥadith wa al-Sunnah* - who like the Shi'ah Akhbaris had a deceptively self-righteous stance, spoke untiringly of submission and devotion and persistently chanted the phrase *qala Rasul Allah* ('so said the Apostle of Allah') - had an extraordinary effect on the people, to whom it appeared to be a defence of the Prophet. For this reason, al-Mutawakkil, despite his tyranny and debauchery, came to assume

saintly image in the popular mind.

The Mu'tazilah could never recover from that blow. And we, the Shi'ah, should thank God that there arose no Mutawakkil in the era of the emergence of the Shi'ah Akhbaris, who were a hundred times more obscurantists and formalistic than the Ahl al-Hadith wa al-Sunnah, in their defence. However, we should note the point that even though the Akhbari onslaught was defeated through the courageous resistance of a number of the followers of the school of ijtiḥad, but the Akhbari thinking was not completely destroyed. Whenever the champions of ijtiḥad have made any headway and wherever they have put their feet, Akhbari thinking had to recede and disappear. But Akhbari obscurantism still rules in those places where they were not able to reach.

How often we come across mujtahids who do ijtiḥad with an Akhbari brain. Many of the kind of things which are published in the name of the 'teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt' and come to the market, but which strike dagger into the back of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (S), are no more than the remnants of the thought of Mulla Muhammad Amin Astarabadi.