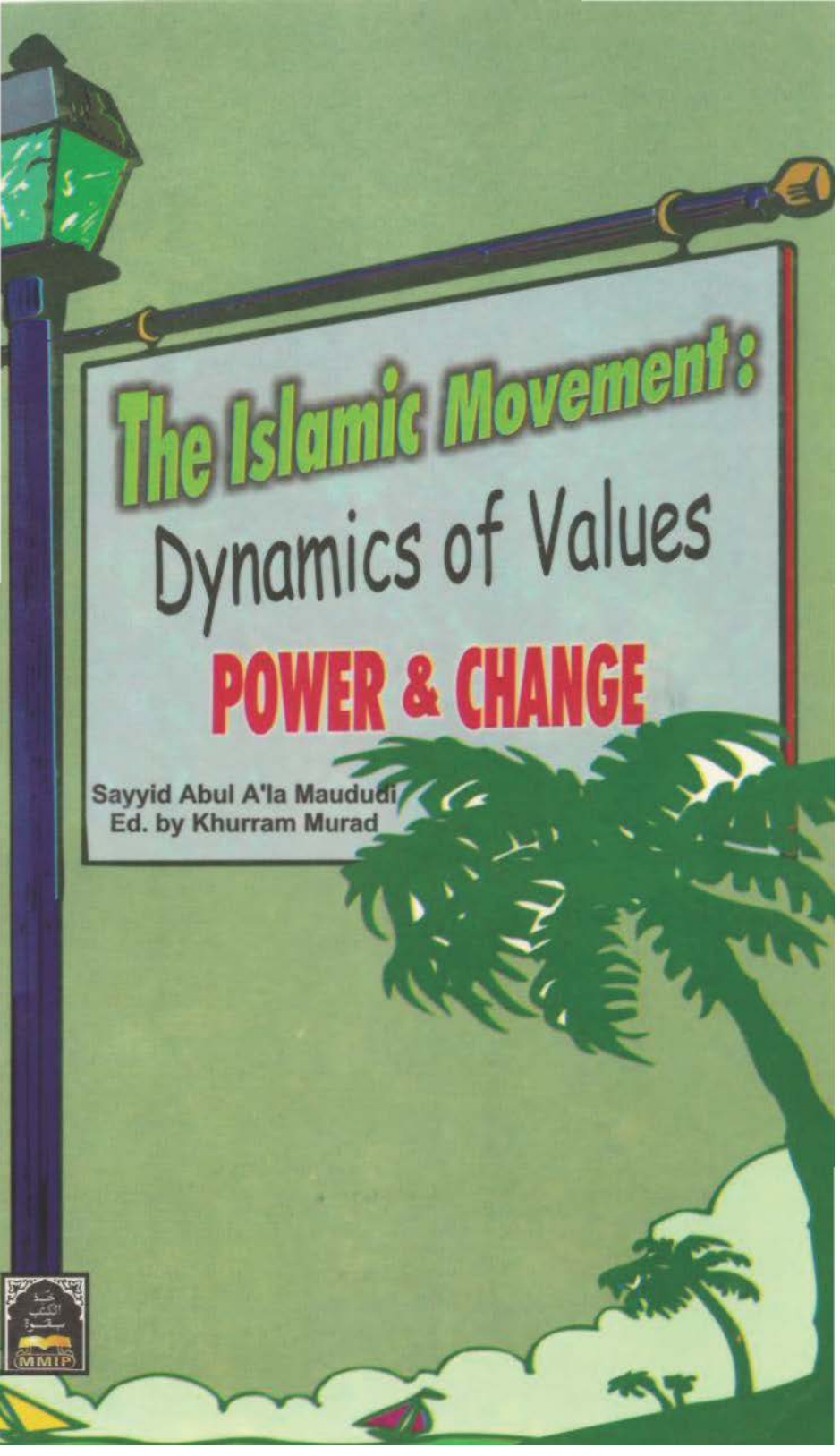

The Islamic Movement:
Dynamics of Values
POWER & CHANGE
Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi
Ed. by Khurram Murad
MMIP

The Islamic Movement

Dynamics of Values, Power and Change

MAULANA SAYYID ABUL A'LA MAUDUDI

Edited by
Khurram Murad

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Introduction

I

This book is a new and extended English version of an immensely important work by Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903–1979) on the nature and dynamics of the Islamic movement: *Teḥrīk Islāmī kī Akhlāqī Bunyādain* (Lahore, 1973).

The original text in Urdu was delivered on 8 Jamadi al-Awwal, 1364/21 April, 1945 as the concluding address to the First All India Conference of the Jama'at Islami at Darul Islam, Pathankot (now in Punjab, India). Since then it has gone through innumerable prints, both as a separate booklet and as a part of two larger books: *Rudād Jamā'at Islāmī*, Volume Three — The Proceedings of Jama'at Islami — (Lahore, 1969, first published 1945), and *Islām kā Niẓām Zindagī* — The Way of Life in Islam — (Lahore, 1962). An English translation has also been appearing since 1976 under the title *The Moral Foundations of the Islamic Movement* (Lahore, 1976).

Why, then, is it being published again now?

Because it is a basic work of lasting importance and value. It is essential reading for all those whose Islam, surrender to one God, is not confined to their individual selves, or *privatised*, but also encompasses their societies; put simply: all those who have joined the contemporary Islamic movement. Also for those who wish to understand the phenomenon of the Islamic resurgence. Yet the current English translation is rather unsatisfactory. More importantly, I felt that the present needs of the Islamic movement, many developments in ideas since its first

publication, and some responses to its main themes require its extension in certain directions. A task which, as I shall explain, I have reluctantly but dutifully and joyously undertaken.

Four decades ago what Sayyid Mawdudi had to say needs to be said and heard now as greatly as then; rather more emphatically now than at the critical moment when it was said originally. Now, as then, the issues he raises and deals with are neither ephemeral nor peripheral, but fundamental in their nature and central to the proper understanding of Islam and its role in history. The themes he dwells upon — like the importance of leadership and power, the moral nature of power, the primacy of values and moral authority in life and history, the inextricable link between faith (*Īmān*) and effort (Jihad), the need for organisational struggle — still remain alive and crucial. The contradictions and misconceptions he exposes — like the half-way house of Islam, distorted order of priorities, divided loyalties, outward religiosity — still reside in hearts and minds. The message he delivers — of fidelity and integrity, of effort and striving, of bringing all *power* and all *powers* under God, of breathing true life and meaning into outward religious life — still retains its vitality, need and force. Nothing has lost its relevance and urgency, nor its appeal and potency. In fact everything has increased in view of the increasing momentum of the world-wide Islamic resurgence.

Four decades ago he was addressing a Jama'at Islami which was still in its infancy, in the fourth year of its life.* Today it has grown into a vast, powerful movement. Its organisation is firmly rooted in four countries — Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka, and its presence can be felt almost everywhere. Indeed Sayyid Mawdudi's thought wields an influence which extends far beyond the territorial boundaries of any one country, spanning across continents. But, more than that, emanating at the same time from many places in the Muslim world, the Islamic movement has now

*The Jama'at Islami was formed, as a result of Sayyid Mawdudi's call, in Lahore, now in Pakistan, on 2 Sha'ban 1360/26 August 1941, in a gathering of about 75 persons. Sayyid Mawdudi was elected its first *Amīr*.

become a global phenomenon. And, more than ever, therefore, is the need for a clear and cogent discourse on the objectives and values that shape it, and the factors and forces that determine its outcome in this world. This is a desideratum of great importance for the men and women who are making their commitment to Islam in larger and larger numbers. This work by Sayyid Mawdudi should make a significant contribution to that end.

Four decades have also been a period of great fermentation and change for the Islamic movement. It has gone through many momentous stages, many ups and downs, facing many complex issues, resolving some of them, but still grappling with many others. Meanwhile the Muslim world is in a state of turbulence and crisis as never before. Does Sayyid Mawdudi have a message to impart to our day? How do his ideas, analysis and prescriptions stand in relation to the present situation? How relevant are they to the contemporary state of the Muslim society and the crisis-ridden world arena, almost half a century after? I strongly feel that they are as relevant today as they were at the time they were so forcefully expounded.

All these considerations have led to the decision to bring out this new edition in English in order to make Mawdudi's work accessible to the contemporary audience, in a form that would meet some of their needs.

The less than satisfactory, lifeless language of the current English translation, as I said, would in itself have been enough reason to justify a new and revised translation. The present rendering reads much better and transmits some of the force and charm of the original Urdu. For, not many know that Sayyid Mawdudi, apart from his immense contribution to the Islamic thought, is an outstanding Urdu writer with a beautiful and overpowering style of his own.

The previous title — The Moral Foundations of the Islamic Movement — did not seem to reflect the full scope and purport of the book. Hence it has been changed to *The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Change*. No title could be entirely satisfactory for a treatise of such breadth, but this, I hope, does greater justice to its contents and brings them into sharper, clearer focus.

But what may really make this version very different from all previous versions, in all languages, is the extensive annotation, mostly from the Qur'ān, provided by this editor. These notes to almost all important ideas presented by Sayyid Mawdudi are intended to help the reader to find for himself how far their basis lies in the primary textual and historical sources of Islam. Whether they succeed in this respect or not will be for him to decide, but for me the decision to inject so much supplemental material into a text whose author is no longer alive to approve such a course has not been an easy one. There have been long moments of hesitation and reflection. However, finally, I felt convinced, despite an acute sense of my own inadequacy, that undertaking such a task was justified because of its usefulness in many ways.

Firstly, Sayyid Mawdudi himself has repeatedly and forcefully declared that whatever he has said in this book is based entirely on the Qur'ān and Hadith. 'This, friends', he says, 'is the conclusion of . . . whatever understanding of the Qur'ān and Hadith I have attained. This is the main demand that the Qur'ān makes upon you'. A little later, he is more emphatic: 'If in the exposition . . . I have gone beyond the Qur'ān and Hadith and invented anything, do not hesitate to point it out to me'. Not only that, he had also been prepared to modify or change his views 'but only in the light of the Book of God and Sunnah of His Messenger'.

Obviously in a short speech which covers such a vast ground he had no scope and opportunity to provide extensive references from the Qur'ān and Hadith to substantiate his claim. It was neither possible nor even necessary. Yet elsewhere, and especially in his six-volume Qur'ānic commentary, the *Tafhīmul Qur'ān* (1949–1972), he had been doing and continued to do just that. There he has accomplished the task of substantiation to the fullest measure. Similarly, many of his other writings draw very extensively upon the Qur'ān and Hadith. Most of his audience then must have been reading him for quite some time past, particularly the persons whom he was directly addressing, the first respondents to his call to launch the Islamic movement. Similarly his Urdu readers have an easy access to those writings. They perhaps have no such need, but

surely an average English reader has a great need, and a right too, to know how Sayyid Mawdudi's views stand in relation to the Qur'ān and Sunnah. The appropriate thing may have been to draw upon his own works, but instead I have preferred to go directly to the sources. Though I do not have much doubt that my notes, to a large extent, are a result of inspiration from his writings, the responsibility for them is entirely mine. They represent only my own understanding and reasoning, my own efforts to discover the Qur'ānic sources for the ideas presented in this treatise. They should not be read as having anything to do with how Sayyid Mawdudi himself might have argued his case.

Secondly, his formulations are fundamentally important for understanding Islam and the movements generated by Islam in history, including our own times. To have left them as they were first developed and presented in a brief discourse would not have been fair to either him or his readers. He has a right to be heard and evaluated in the context of his overall thought as well as on the basis of his grounds in the basic texts of Islam. Those who disagree with him should disagree after having had this opportunity; those who agree should agree not simply because Sayyid Mawdudi has said something but because he presents only what the Qur'ān and the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, have taught.

Thirdly, and this consideration has been uppermost in my mind, I wish all studies and discourses on Islam to take place in a manner which brings the participants closer and closer to the Qur'ān and the *Sīra* of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him. I sincerely hope that the annotations I have provided, imperfect as they are, will still serve as a means towards that end. They would link the readers with the Qur'ān, give them a taste of the sweet pleasures and delights that await them in the Qur'ān, arouse in them an eagerness and thirst for relating themselves to the Qur'ān, awaken them to its relevance, its need and importance and give them the necessary clues and keys to unlock its teachings and capture its message, within the overall framework of its guidance for human life.

This book, in particular, I expect to be used as a basic text in many a training course and study circle in many parts

of the world. In such places it is my earnest desire that these annotations should help, rather lead, students and readers to move deeper and beyond its words into the world which is the source of all knowledge — the Qur'ān.

How far will the above purposes and expectations be fulfilled? My own inadequacy can hardly give much confidence, but all trust must rest in the infinite mercy of God, the Lord and Master. Without hope in that Source of hope I would never have undertaken this challenging task.

II

Sayyid Mawdudi has a remarkable way of saying things concisely and effectively. The text itself is therefore very brief and his style succinct. But that in no way seems to diminish its value or impact. Nor does that restrict his ability to discuss as large a number of issues as he considers relevant. Whatever is said is very simple, but its profundity is immense. The arguments are straightforward and plain, even at times looking mundane, but in their clarity, incisiveness and power they are hard to resist. So is the style: absorbing, gripping and compelling. It seems that, for all his brevity, he leaves almost nothing important unsaid or said feebly, without force of conviction and strength of passion. But brevity has its limitations, to which we shall come later.

What does he say? This is not the place to summarise; it is neither possible nor necessary or desirable. But in order to reflect upon that, it seems necessary to draw out here those strands of his thought which are crucial in understanding him. He argues two distinct yet interrelated major themes.

Firstly, he sees the *nature and logic of the Islamic movement* as inherent in the very reality of God being the only God, Lord and Master: worshipping Him alone is to 'accord the love of God the highest place in his heart and cast away [every idol] from the recesses of his heart'.[1] It means

that 'he and all that he has belongs to God'.[12] It requires surrendering and committing life 'entirely to God's truth' — individual and societal, inward and outward. Finally, it entails 'establishing and maintaining the sovereignty of God on earth' or the way of life ordained by Him.[13] To achieve that, both a new *individual* and a new order of *society* are essential.

Power and leadership in society, he further argues, are crucial for this, because these are 'the decisive factors in human affairs'. Firstly, 'human civilisation travels along in the direction determined by the people who control the centres of power . . . it can hardly resist'. A society 'in the hands of those who have turned away from God . . . drifts towards rebellion against God'. Secondly, in such a society, those desiring to travel toward God are in the precarious position of passengers in a train or individuals in a crowd, who desire to go in the opposite direction.[14] But this does not mean social determinism for, in his analysis, individuals who attain to the values of *īmān* (faith), *islām* (surrender), *taqwā* (God-consciousness) and *iḥsān*) (godliness), and struggle collectively, are always capable of changing the direction of the train or crowd. They have the potential to make history only if they are not content with being simply its creatures.

It is in the nature of *īmān*, then, that those who surrender themselves to God should strive to wrest control of all centres of power and authority from those in rebellion against God, *not for themselves* but to bring them under God. For 'ungodly leadership is at the root of the evils afflicting humanity'.[15]

Therefore the 'objective of the Islamic movement, in *this* world, is revolution in leadership' at all levels and in all spheres of life. For this purpose 'it is not enough to preach sermons', nor merely the presence of a large number of 'good' individuals. What is needed is organised, collective struggle — a Jihad to bring God's earth under God's rule.

That is the only way to earn the pleasure of Allah in *this*-world and in *that*-world.

Secondly, he boldly asserts the *primary as well as the decisive role of morals* in human history. That is the law of God (*Sunnat-Allah*), that would determine the outcome of

the Islamic movement.[6] But soon it becomes evident that his concept of 'morality' is very unique and has a very vast sweep indeed. It embraces not only generally accepted morality but much more: faith, fundamental values deep inside man as well as their articulation in his conduct and society, his entire individual and societal behaviour, his ceaseless pursuit of ideals laid down by God — what he calls *īmān*, *islām*, *taqwā* and *iḥsān*.[7] It is then both a *state of total being*, and a *process of total life*. More one attains to this ideal more should one struggle to subdue all powers to God's will. Here he speaks out passionately against any less than total commitment and loyalty to God, whether it be by dividing life into compartments and living in compromise with Kufr or by hoisting an outward religiosity over an empty heart.[8]

A passionate plea is indeed his entire book. It breaks many familiar, entrenched patterns of thought; others it may simply restate, but rediscover their startling implications. Into many old words it breathes fresh life, and to many new ones it imparts 'old' meanings. In all cases it demands response: one must either disagree, often sharply, or enter into a commitment of life and proceed to change himself and his world. There has been no dearth of either.

Some, especially among Muslims, disagree with the use of contemporary vocabulary like 'sovereignty of God', Islamic 'social order', 'movement', 'revolution' in a discourse on Islam. It is tantamount, they say, to politicisation of true Islam and smacks of capitulation to the domination of Western thought and methods of organising life. Even the Islamic terminology, in their company, loses its original intent. Thus, they allege, Islam is redefined in terms of socio-political values instead of the eternal, and goals, like establishing the Islamic state, become centred on *this*-world rather than on securing Allah's pleasure in *that*-world.

Others, especially from a Christian-Western background, detect here the familiar image of a faith dependent upon power, a religion using politics, a community superseding the individual, sanctioning of violence to make the entire world a *Dar al-Islam*. This 'confirms' what they have always *believed* that Islam has stood for since the time of Hijrah. And they disagree precisely because of that: what

faith has to do with power; its fulfilment is the Cross!

It is not my intention here to embark upon explaining, elaborating and justifying Sayyid Mawdudi's position or refuting those against him. For a Muslim, enough has already been included in the notes. But brevity and conciseness do create problems, especially in a text delivered as a speech which is impregnate with ideas of far-reaching consequences. One cannot argue his own position fully nor refute all the contending viewpoints. Nor can he cover all the intellectual ground around such fundamental ideas or do justice to their history. Defining all the words and concepts one uses is not possible, nor is defining a fruitful exercise. One only hopes that the full context and contents will make his true intent and meaning clear and prevent any misreading or misunderstanding. Alas this rarely happens with any communication in a human language.

I therefore feel that to reflect a little further on the major themes of this book could be profitable.

III

Are we justified, and wise, to use the contemporary vocabulary in explaining Islam?

To make the message of God heard and understood in our time is, as always, the main task before Muslims. Only then can contemporary man be confronted with the question: Which way will you go? It is a primary duty and a unique challenge: a duty that cannot be shirked, a challenge that must be met. To penetrate hearts and minds is never easy, but to impart a message from across centuries, and that too without losing or distorting any of it, poses a formidable challenge. To overcome that, both the language of *works* and the language of *words* are necessary. Yet, living in a time of decadence and in a world for long made by others, in both we face serious difficulties. Communication through example

suffers from a high level of dissonance created by disparity between Islamic ideas and Muslim practice, the wide gap between *is* and *ought*, the actual and the ideal. It is an internal problem, which cannot be resolved instantaneously or in isolation, nor without an effective communication through the language of words. The first steps have to be *Iqra* (read!) and *Qul* (say!).

The problems of our words about the word of God, however, are obvious, many and severe.

This is mainly because the dominant vocabulary of contemporary discourse is the vocabulary of the secular-Christian West, its grammar is the grammar of a scientific-technological culture. The reason is obvious. Look at the world we live in. Since Muslims abdicated its leadership or, more correctly, were forced to leave it to mightier forces in greater, living commitment to their own civilisational goals, it has been shaped by the West. Direct political rule by the West may have shrunk, but its ideas and institutions still rule. And only that vocabulary prevails as the currency for transactions in ideas which is the vocabulary of dominant ideologies and institutions.

Vocabulary, however, is not defined by the dictionary alone; that may well be only a surface meaning. Each keyword carries within it a deeper world of meaning. It has its own epistemology, its anthropology and ecology, its psychology and sociology, its politics and economy, and its history and ethos — all acquired from the culture within which it develops. For words do not exist in isolation from man and his society. So the language of contemporary culture embodies the culture of Western language.

As we live within the hegemony of the West, so we also live within the hegemony of its language and discourse. We can hardly talk without using its vocabulary. Already I have used words like culture, society, civilisation, anthropology and ecology, and I shall be using more. Using a specific Western language, like English, only exacerbates the problem; otherwise, the vocabulary of Western culture has found home in all the active languages of the world. This transmigration is an age-long, universal process, though modern technology has enormously accelerated its pace and expanded its impact.

Now whatever layers of meaning such words possess have been acquired within the context of development of thought and society in the West. Islam has hardly played any role in defining them. Some may not have much in common with it, others may convey entirely disparate, even contrary meaning.

The crucial question is: Can we convey Islam in our time, talk about it meaningfully, without recourse to *some* of the contemporary vocabulary? Do we use it only because we are caught in the web of Western discourse or because we have succumbed to the success of Western ideas? Or, is it necessary and desirable? Be that as it may, can the dangers and risks in such use, whatever they are, be overcome? If so, how? These issues must be explored in the context of the Muslim responsibility to the Divine message, and in the light of how it was tackled before, in history.

Firstly, I think, we can make contemporary man hear and understand the message of God only through words that he knows, in a language he is familiar with. For it is difficult for a man to grasp something which lies totally outside of his world of meaning. At least, from there the process must start. Only when we meet him on a common territory, however tiny, can we hold him by the hand and take him along to a new, even radically new, territory. Only when at some point we converge, can we persuade him to move in a new, even opposite, direction. When the Qur'ān used the word Allah — its most central word — in a radically new sense, its hearers already knew some of it. Note the beautiful, persuasive style in which the Qur'ān talks to them about Allah — (ask who created . . . , who provides . . . , *they* will say Allah)[9] Or, look how it confronts the Christians and Jews (come to a creed we both share[10] . . . bad is the behaviour your faith teaches you . . .[11]). Let not this significance be lost (nor this methodology). For every prophet has talked to the people in *their* language, so that he may make his message manifest. (Ibrāhīm 14: 4).

Secondly, the Western dominance of the language and substance of contemporary discourse cannot terminate suddenly, magically. It is Western because for long the West has been leading mankind and will not become Islamic until

Islam assumes that leadership. This will not happen unless Islam is able to capture the hearts and minds of men for God's message and change their lives, and so their language and discourse. For man's life and his discourse stand in a dialectical relationship. (Perhaps that is why Divine guidance has always been sent down in words.) Only when we are willing, and capable, to enter the modern discourse, though on our terms, and use its language to our purposes, can we communicate the word of God. Unless we communicate that, following the Qur'ānic paradigm of *Qul,* we cannot change man, nor transform his discourse.

We may choose to ignore these realities. We may shun the current vocabulary and remain outside of it. Islam, then, will not penetrate the discourse, nor make any impact, nor bring about its transformation. Or, we may continue conversing in a language which contemporary man does not understand or misunderstands, or which is not the currency of discourse. We may, then, forever move on parallel tracks or remain in collision. While we, having been made to learn the language of the Western culture, will continue to understand and be influenced by its message, the West will not hear Islam.

By contemporary man I do not mean only the Western but also the Muslim. They too have similar limitations and needs. Some have become westernised, but even others cannot escape the influences of Western culture. Being Muslim only adds to their problem, for even the vocabulary of Islam does not seem to penetrate and change their hearts and lives. Discourse within Islam, despite billions of words spoken and written every moment, fails to make much impact. Why? Perhaps because some words have become delinked from real life, they have lost much of their original significance and power. Not that their original meanings have been lost but, for all practical purposes, they have lost their lustre, much of their depth, much of their intent. For example, at one time, *lā ilāha ill-Allah* possessed the *meanings* which could shake its hearers. Today it can be proclaimed without causing even a stir, even in the realm of false *ilāhs* (gods). Can such words regain their power without being understood in the contemporary context? Perhaps

translating the original meaning of the Qur'ân in a language within which Muslims live today is the most critically important task the Ummah has been challenged to address. Were this not necessary or possible, perhaps no *tafsîr* would ever have been written.

We should not, some however argue, and at times quite vehemently, use Western vocabulary to explain and communicate Islamic values, teachings and institutions. Employing a language to express Islam which has not grown within Islam is like pouring its values into a linguistic, and therefore conceptual and cultural, mould which is not in keeping with its own self. It rather distorts and transforms their true intent and meaning. For the meanings Western words have acquired within their culture can never be detached from them. Therefore in using them we are susceptible to the danger of capitulating to the Western categories of thought as well. This, they add, indeed has already happened: The use reflects only the reality. Those who use words like 'movement', 'sovereignty', 'revolution', in fact have allowed themselves to redefine Islam according to contemporary Western intellectual culture. Their Islam has become socio-political rather than spiritual, *this*-worldly rather than *that*-worldly. Not only that, the ecology of Western words has proved so pervasive in its evil influence that, in their company, even purely Islamic words stand transformed into Western socio-political categories.

One need not agree with the above diagnosis nor accept the entire argument, but these fears and anxieties cannot be dismissed lightly. It is not that the above argument has no substance at all, but the issue is not that simple and deserves closer examination.

For language is important. Some may even say that we live within the confines of our language: the words we use shape our consciousness, determine our existence; we can hardly transcend them. Though there is no need to subscribe to such absolute determinism, it is important to recognise the dangers and risks of indiscriminately using the vocabulary of an alien, dominant culture. But without overcoming them, I believe, there is no way forward. We must enter the discourse, but without succumbing to its domination. We

should use its vocabulary, but without surrendering to its values.

Can this be done? The need cannot be denied; the possibility is there. For there is no substance in either linguistic determinism or in linguistic immutability. Otherwise no human communication, and hence no change, could ever take place, nor could any cross-cultural talk or dialogue. Even translating the message of Islam from Arabic into any other language would look a hopeless task. In fact, language interacts dialectically with man and his society. It is true that words have a key role in determining us, but man plays a larger role in determining their meanings: he was taught all names,[12] or, shall we say, the art and power of naming.

That is why, over time, words are known to undergo changes in meanings, sometimes radically. This happens, primarily, due to deliberate human intent and use. Words acquire meanings because men use them as such to name things and ideas. That is why some words — such as God or religion — may mean different things to different men and cultures. Also, because the ideas and things themselves take new shape. *Transport* gives a totally different idea today than it gave a hundred years ago, for modes of transport have drastically changed. Often there are new ideas to be conveyed. Thus social and technological institutions, structures and processes play an effective role in imparting meanings. *Industry* once meant only the human quality of 'diligence'; now it stands for an institution, and has even given rise to a word like *industrialism*.

Very importantly, words do not stand on their own, and meanings are also imparted by their relational uses and by the semantics to which they belong or are made to belong.

Finally, many words acquire meanings not only through use in writing and speech or from etymology, but also through practice. *Ṣalāt* would not mean what it does were one to determine its meanings from the Qur'ān alone. And *movement* would acquire only those meanings which its adherents demonstrate, not merely profess.

Let us look at some Western keywords.[13] *Culture* originally meant only 'tending of crops or animals', now it

stands for a 'whole way of life'. Still its meanings remain problematic.[14] *State* has acquired its present political institutional meaning only in the eighteenth century, especially in relational use with *society*. *Ideology* was used for 'philosophy of mind' or 'science of ideas'; Napoleon used it, pejoratively, for the Enlightenment principle of deriving social policy from social theory; for Marx and Engels it meant an 'illusion', a 'false consciousness', 'an expression of dominant material relationships' to keep the proletariat in chains, but Lenin felt no qualms in describing socialism as 'the ideology of struggle of the proletarian class'. Now it is often a neutral word, meaning a normative system of ideas, a world-view.[15]

To sum up for every language, as does Raymond Williams for English, words have a 'history and complexity of meanings; conscious changes, or consciously different uses; innovation, obsolescence, specialisation, extension, overlap, transfer; or changes which are masked by a nominal continuity so that words which seem to have been there for centuries, with continuous general meanings, have come in fact to express different or radically variable meanings'.[16]

To argue that because Western words have acquired their meanings through development in the West they cannot be used to mean differently in a new Islamic context is therefore a *non sequitur*. To overcome cultural and historical relativity is not impossible. If *some* Western words have to be used, they can always acquire new meaning in a new context.

Only, we should have the strength and confidence to converse on our own terms, to define areas and modes of debate, to redefine existing vocabulary and introduce new, to change the direction of discourse and transform its thought and content. For that we should undertand Islam properly, have faith in our values and recognise the limits we should strictly observe.

That is the model of the Qur'ān; on that model we should address our task. The discourse of those times was ruled by the language of the *Jāhilīyyah* culture, of poets and soothsayers, of merchants and nomads, steeped in *shirk* and materialism. It was no less unsuitable to convey God's message than that of today. Then as now, the problem was as

acute. How was it dealt with then?

The Qur'ān often lays great stress that it uses only 'luminous Arabic' so that 'you may *understand*'. No new vocabulary was invented, for that its hearer would not have understood. On the contrary, it picked up concrete, commonplace words from their everyday language and generated radically new, life-giving meanings in them by giving them a new context. They became part of the Qur'ānic world-view.[17] All the keywords in Islam — like *ilāh*, *rabb*, *dīn*, *'ibādah*, *īmān*, *islām*, *kufr*, *shirk*, *ẓulm*, *fasād* — were once part of an un-Islamic culture. They acquired new culture; they also acquired tremendous power to change men and their world. Of course the words *alone* were not the vehicle. Meanings were also being continually generated and reinforced by the *works* of the Messenger and his Companions.

Just one example should suffice. Allah, in the Arab understanding at that time, was the highest god among many gods. The Qur'ān did not give up the word — that was the only access to their hearts — but made them give up all false ideas and beliefs about it. More significantly, it said: 'Say, you call Allah or you call Rahman; whatever you call, for Him are all good names.' (al-Isrā' 17: 110)

Similar was the Muslim approach as they came into contact with new peoples, new cultures, new languages. Not indiscriminately but with judicious caution, they adopted new words to explain and communicate the Qur'ān and Islam. There was no hesitation to use words like *Khudā* for Allah, *Namāz* for *Ṣalāt* (Prayer), *Rawzah* for *Ṣawm* (Fasting), *Bandagī* for *'Ibādah* (Worship), though some of them had developed in a Zoroastrian culture. A reader in Farsi or Urdu often comes across, even on the same page, both Allah and *Khudā*. Great is the argument today about using God for Allah, but Shah Waliullah (d. 1762) and Shah Abdul Qadir (d. 1813) had no difficulty in using *Khudā* in translating the Qur'ān.

Muslims also introduced new words or gave new meanings to the old. Look at the word Shari 'ah: it has a root in the Qur'ān, but certainly not that all-embracing meaning as an institution and ideal as now. *Ṭarīqah*, *Taṣawwuf*,

Fiqh, Hadith are all later words. *Taṣawwuf*, it is argued, means only *iḥsān* as used in the Hadith,[18] but certainly it implies much more and much different than what *iḥsān* implies in the Hadith or in the Qur'ān. One might argue, with some force, that at that time Islam was dominant and hence could absorb such words. But surely the depth of faith and the clarity of thought are more powerful than political ascendency.

Our approach today should be the same. Not that every alien word can be used, nor that every one should be discarded. Interestingly, even those who deprecate the use of certain Western words freely use some others themselves. If *movement*, *system*, *revolution* are undesirable, what about *religion*? In most of the widely varying definitions in the West, religion is a human artefact and, therefore, subject to evolution towards higher forms. In that sense, one can hardly call Islam a religion, without some rigorous qualification. There are others who inveigh against words like Islamic *democracy*, but feel no inhibition in using others like Islamic *republic, revolution, state*, etc. Do these not carry Western connotations?

A line therefore has to be drawn. There can be no hard and fast rules for that, but only a full and correct understanding of the Qur'ān and Sunnah as well as of their essential differences with the Western culture can be the true guide. *Firstly*, only neutral words which convey a general human thought or activity should be employed. *Ideology* and *democracy*, for example, are now neutral: one can hear 'capitalist democracy' as well as 'socialist' and 'peoples' democracy', 'bourgeois ideology' as well as 'proletarian ideology'. But words like 'socialism' are not neutral — one can hardly conceive hearing a 'capitalist socialism' or a 'communist capitalism'. *Secondly*, not even the least of the Islamic vocabulary should be discarded. Nor should words be used to mean anything outside of Islam. Above all, they should be placed firmly and clearly within the context of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, which should provide permanent bearings. Also, the new should be used interchangeably with the original, and one would hope that the ecology of 'good' words would prove more powerful.

Let us look at the use of just one word: *movement*. It has been employed precisely to make contemporary man understand that Islam is not merely a religion in the Western sense, which it definitely is not. If we say it is a *Dīn*, a Westerner will not understand, and a Muslim will understand only what he sees in his everyday real life — which does not add up to much. Nor does simply saying that Islam is a 'way of life' suffice, because that still does not convey the full sense of Islam which includes Jihad, the struggle to bring total human life under God. The word *movement*, of course rigorously qualified and not alone but within the total Islamic language-system, makes all that meaning come alive and win Muslim commitment to Jihad as the highest goal of life in *this* world. Thus it means nothing more nothing less than Da'wah, Hijrah, Jihad, *Iqāmah al-dīn, Shahādah, I'lā' kalimat-Allah*.[19] In their company there is little danger of introducing any Western political concepts, though the missing dimensions of Islam certainly become alive.

Or, perhaps, in reality, the anxiety is *not* about words but those very dimensions. The issue is, then, much larger: in what relationship do Islam and politics, *this*-world and *that*-world, personal morality and social ethics, individual spirituality and a just social order stand? Such terminology would then be objectionable if one does not see any important link between them. To examining that issue we will therefore turn our attention now.

IV

Strangely enough, even Muslims often exhibit highly ambivalent and contradictory attitudes towards power and politics.

There are some who deliver sermons, mostly from the pulpits of power they have forcibly occupied, on keeping religion out of politics. To them, Islam is a religion, like

Christianity; its involvement in politics as baneful for society as was Christianity's, or as great an obstacle to their ambitions as that was to European kings and states. Evidently they talk under heavy Western influence. They obviously love power and strive and manoeuvre to get it and keep it, but for their own sake.[20]

The rest, the overwhelming majority, firmly believe and ardently desire that Islam should be supreme in life, politics should not be separate from it, an Islamic government, the government committed to the supremacy of the word of God and His Messenger, should come into being. Yet, paradoxically, most of them have also come to believe, somehow, that politics is a dirty business better to be shunned, power is a worldly thing not to be sought; that religious, saintly people should have little to do with them. According to some among them, to talk of political, social goals is to distort the essence of Islam as delivered by the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him.[21]

Some, however, have always believed that striving to bring about a state of society that God desires is as much a part of *'Ibādah* as anything else, say *Ṣalāt*. If that is 'politics' and 'pursuit of power', let that be. They, too, work to harness power, but never for their own selves.[22]

Ironically, the relationship between religion and politics, faith and power, is not an *Islamic* issue at all. Although a most passionate and divisive debate rages, there is nothing in the Qur'ān and Sunnah to warrant it. The very words 'religion', 'power' and 'politics', in the Western sense, have no relevance to Islam. There should never have been a controversy on them among Muslims.

How this came to pass? Partly it is a legacy of Christian-Western history which has become our lot because of Western hegemony, partly an outcome of certain developments within Muslim society and thought to which we are heirs.

In Muslim history, power has not always been what Islam wants it to be: totally subject to God's law and fulfilling the God-given mission of establishing justice among men.[23] That it could not be so in no way reflects any blemish or failing in Islamic teachings. For ideals need not be

eternally, perfectly realisable in praxis; they constitute the poles of reference and the focus of loyalty and struggle. They are there to provide bearing and spur continually to action in their pursuit. This task they have performed very well.

Nevertheless, this situation has given rise to three major currents which prevail to this day. These emerge, perhaps, when people see that to make power subject to God's guidance is the most arduous, sacrifice-demanding task. Confronted with insurmountable obstacles to the realisation of ideals, unable to make enough sacrifices to overcome them, or finding it futile or inexpedient, they seek different escape routes. Some legitimise the status quo, even if power keeps Islam as a lesser ally. Others espouse withdrawal from the socio-political world to 'eternal, transcendent concerns', seeking 'union with God'. Still others urge confining to the less difficult tasks of reforming individuals. This they describe, wrongly, as reforming society (a number of individuals is not the same thing as society), arguing that power is unimportant and once society (by which they mean individuals) is reformed it will *effortlessly, automatically* revert to Islam.

Each had its reasons, each served some purpose. There was indifference, defeatism and despair, but there was realism too. From the vantage position of hindsight it would be unfair to condemn them, or judge them too severely, especially when we, too, have not so far accomplished much. But a critique is essential to chart our course ahead; and to understand them as well.

Legitimisation was rationalised, not without some force, on the plea of preserving unity and stability of the Ummah, in the face of anticipated internal strife resulting from any attempt to change, and threats from external hostile forces. Support was drawn, though questionably, from the doctrine of the will of God too. Some no doubt legitimised to serve their own interests only. Prevailing political order was thus accepted. But by and large rulers were also made to serve, in varying degrees, the cause of Islam.

Withdrawal was both a reaction to the creeping political and moral corruption and a plea for spiritual impulse in society at such a time. Neo-Platonic, Christian, Vedantic and

Buddhist influences also played their part in this respect. No doubt what it accentuated lay within Islam, but there was a disregard of Islamic disapproval, even abhorrence, of asceticism (*rahbānīyyah*).[24] Despite drawing upon Islam rather partially they rendered some useful service in preserving precious values. In the face of less than Islamic power, Ulama who were content with reforming individuals fulfilled many Islamic duties, sometimes admirably well. They imparted knowledge, ensured better personal and social morality, provided a base for the revival of *Dīn* from time to time. Sometimes they were successful in influencing policy-making via good persons in key positions. However, there was complete dependence upon individuals, to the neglect of reform and restructuring of institutions. And above all this whole process helped strengthen attitudes of apathy, indifference and acceptance of the status quo.

All these currents, giving rise to the paradoxical notions about power and socio-political goals, took their toll. Taking roots in many minds, infiltrating to some extent their subconscious, they gradually diminished Muslim will and potency to bring about the state of society that God desired. Muslims thus lost the leadership of mankind to the West.

Western domination not only reinforced these trends, it greatly aggravated the situation by introducing some additional problems of great severity.

For modern Western civilisation is perhaps the only one in human history that started its onward march by firmly, unequivocally and openly banishing God from public life, or at least making Him irrelevant and redundant. How this came to pass is a long, tragic story. Very briefly, Christian interpretation of itself in divorcing power and law from faith (Cross) and the Western experience of religion in the form of Christianity, (in fact of a Christianity which, after failing in subordination of society to the Church, tried to carve out separate spheres for the two resulting in polarisation and confrontation between the Church and state and religion and science), largely determined this outcome. The West's ambitions (colonisation), too, gave a big impetus in this direction.

Consequently, with the spread of Western hegemony, secularism also began to be universalised. The world at large seems to have had no difficulty in accepting the Western way of keeping politics and religion apart, at least in protestation if not in practice. But not Muslims. Their experience has nothing in common with the West. So they have been plunged into a soul-rending conflict.

The issues, it is also important to remember here, are not confined to the West or to Muslims. Nor have they become consigned to the safe vaults of history. Although never have they been the 'problem' that they became in the West, nor has conflict between religion and politics always been the pattern, nor total divorce ever the answer (rather, in history, marriage of some sort has been the rule), they have, in one form or another, often confronted all human societies.

So the debate goes on everywhere and the controversy continues to agitate men's minds: often softly, as within academic discourses; at times fiercely, as within political processes. In some places religion may be a symbol to wage other battles; in others it may be the real issue beneath secular politics; in still others the battle lines may be drawn openly (as among Muslims). The reason is that, howsoever Western hegemony may predetermine the outcome of such debates, the links between religion and politics are inextricably interwoven into the very fabric of every society. In the context of crisis in world politics, the issues have only become more important today. For a century of unprecedented violence and man's moral decadence at a time when he has acquired power to destroy all life on this planet cannot be explained or remedied without taking into account the West's banishing of God from society.

But for none is this debate as fateful and crucial as for Muslims: on this hinges their destiny. And that of mankind too. Both destinies are inextricably linked with *hirā* and its fulfilment in *hijrah*. And no one faces the Western challenge as severely as do Muslims.

The very occupation of Muslim lands by Western imperial powers amounted to a *de jure* bifurcation between Islam and power. Some form of separation did exist before under the facade of Muslim rule, but now it became visible,

real, blatant. This greatly reinforced Muslim psyche in favour of keeping away from politics. (The occupation, naturally, also helped to activate their consciousness and renovate their vision of original total Islam, gravitate them to the real Islamic goals and spur them to action to realise them in history.)

Also, while in power, the West did everything to reshape Muslim thought in accordance with patterns established under the West's dominance, especially by transplanting a Western education system, resulting in the production of a new 'elite' in society alienated from its own history and values, and veered towards the civilisation the dominant power had imposed and introduced. They spared no effort to cast Muslim social structures and institutions into this mould, too. Thus Muslims have inherited from them a thought and society permeated by separation between religion and politics. To be truthful, there has been no real transfer of social institutions to 'Muslims'. Only the West's true heirs have taken over their control, avowedly on behalf of 'Muslims' but really to perpetuate the Western model over them. For, in the hands of 'Muslims', they surely would have undergone a change according to Muslim ethos of *Tawḥīd*.

More importantly, the West has the power over language and over defining of issues. How you define an issue, and in what language, determines to a great extent, the outcome of a debate. Religion is what the West has experienced, understood and defined as religion; so are state, politics, society and individual. We are forced to talk and debate in Western language. The language clinches the argument: is not religious faith *personal*, a private affair; is not its goal transcendent, not worldly; does not theocracy lead to despotism and violence? (Of course one is supposed to close his eyes to the violence caused in the secular era and the despotism generated by godless ideologies.)

Western language is determined not only by its ideology and history, but by its interests too. Those interests demand that Muslims should never be allowed to re-establish the link between faith and power, between *hirā* and *hijrah*. For that makes vivid in their minds the march of history from the seventh century onward. And that must never happen.

But Islam is not a religion or faith in the Western sense, nor is it linked with their sort of power, politics and state. *It cannot be reduced to any of them, though it must include each of them.* Even an outside observer, if not some Muslims, can plainly see that: 'It cannot be repeated too often that Islam is "not merely a religion". It is a total and unified way of life, both religious and secular; it is a set of beliefs and a way of worship; it is a vast and integrated system of law; it is a culture and a civilisation; it is an economic system and a way of doing business; it is a *polity* and a method of *governance*; it is a special sort of society and a way of running a family; it prescribes for inheritance and divorce, dress and etiquette, food and personal hygiene. It is a spiritual and human totality, *this*-worldly and *other*-worldly'. Hence 'religion and politics are two sides of a single coin in Islam'.[25]

Although Western observers have totally misunderstood or deliberately misrepresented the nature of relationship between faith and power in Islam, they have no difficulty in seeing that an inextricable link does exist between the two. Also that Muslims are now reasserting this link, despite all that the West might have done to prevent that occurrence. (This they intensely abhor and totally disapprove.) Titles of only a few recent books, if they can serve as an index, are one pointer to this fact: *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (Pipes, 1984); *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam* (Mortimer, 1982); *Islam and Power* (Cudsi and Dessouki, 1981); *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion* (Ayoob, 1981); *Religion and Politics in the Middle East* (Dessouki, 1981); *Militant Islam* (Jansen, 1979); *The Dagger of Islam* (Laffin, 1979).

In fact, whatever the burdens of Muslim history or of Western domination, the true Islamic ideals have always remained alive. Whatever the counter-currents in Muslim society and thought, the direction given by Hijrah could never be lost. The impulse has always kept beating inside, sometimes feebly, sometimes strongly. It has continually generated efforts (or, movements) for change, for the fulfilment of Islamic ideals, from the time of Imam Husain and 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz to our day. The list is too long to recount.[26]

Many a time the ideals were actualised or approximated. More often, very impressive achievements were obtained on a lesser scale. Rulers, even if they did not submit their total power to God and practised separation of Islam from their politics, were never allowed to rule unreined. Despots among them were few. Some even lived and ruled like saints, a feature which is rare in other civilisations.[27] Many Ulama, even if they accepted the status quo as *de facto*, never accepted it as *de jure*, as the true fulfilment of Islam. But, most remarkably, even a number of Sufis, who practised asceticism, generated such powerful socio-political movements and made such a tremendous impact on societies that they have no parallel in human history.[28] Whichever way the Muslim society deviated, its real genius kept throbbing and correcting the march.

It is therefore tragic that Muslims, too, should in our day be embroiled in a controversy between religion and politics which is not of Islam's making. There is nothing in the Qur'ān and Sunnah to justify the ambivalent, passive or quietist attitudes that many Muslims have come to hold towards *this* world. On the contrary, everything points in the other direction.

Islamic resurgence today is thus only a fresh flowering of the ideals given by the Qur'ān and the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him. What is its logic then?

V

Hardly anyone would disagree, even outside Islam,[29] that whenever God has spoken to man, one message has been central: I am your only God, so worship and serve Me alone. Had it been a call only to accept God's authority in the realm of spirituality, few would have had any quarrel with it. Indeed, in post-prophetic eras, many face no difficulty in affirming their faith in it. But, significantly, the call always

goes further to demand explicitly what is inherent: Repudiate every power in rebellion against Me, and never make anyone a god because you have none apart from me, they are all false. The uniqueness of the Qur'ān lies in making the implicit explicit and manifest, critical and essential. It is here, then, that vital questions and sharp differences arise: What worshipping Him alone does mean in real life? What makes anything a god? In what ways the transcendental and the earthly interpenetrate in worldly life? Turning to His guidance and the ways of His Messengers we find answers which are unambiguous and sharp.

Of what measure was Abraham's Islam? *I have turned my face [my entire being] to Him who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, having turned away from all else* (al-An'ām 6: 79); and *Whenever his Lord called upon him: Surrender, he readily responded: I surrender to the Lord of all the worlds.* (al-Baqarah 2: 131) And so declared the Prophet, peace be on him, *Say: My prayer, my sacrifices, my living, my dying — all belong to God alone, the Lord of all the worlds . . . Say: Shall I seek a Lord other than God, whereas He is the Lord of everything.* (al-An'ām 6: 162–4)

Thus Islam makes *all* life God-centred. To accept the reality of the Creator is to accept Him as the only Lord, the only Source of guidance. Accepting that brings all life and being under His rule. He is worshipped with everything, heart as well as body; He rules everywhere, in homes as in hearts, in manners as in minds, in public life as in private; He is the sovereign over soul as well as society. Prayer and progress become milestones of one straight path. The decision to surrender is personal and free, from which all else must flow, but the life one gives to his God must be total. Ceaseless striving towards that end is the substance of the life of faith.[30]

Tawḥīd is then *the* issue, not power and politics. Nothing can be left out of His Lordship, not even the tiniest territory in life, in heart or in behaviour. For, to that extent, God's worship will be incomplete, less than total, and life less Islamic. How then can power, politics and state be allowed to remain outside His kingship? Or, out of our foremost duty to worship Him alone and our ultimate concern to earn His

pleasure? Shall not whoever rules over them, independently or in defiance of God, become a god? Or, shall not they themselves end up becoming gods? And great gods, too.

For these aspects are supremely important and central to human life. What is power? Ignoring for a while the Western notions and their difficulties, in a very comprehensive sense, it is the ability or authority to act or make others act as one likes or wills. In a relational situation, obedience is its necessary consequence, give it whatever name you like. Power relations are thus the substance of life, closely interwoven into it. Especially they form the basis and texture of all social relations and institutions. No life can be God's without bringing all of them under God. Nor can anyone claim or exercise power, or demand obedience, independent of God, without becoming a god. *Neither effort nor power is there save with God, the Most High and Great.*

In common parlance, however, power is only political. It specifically stands for the powers of state, the right of individuals, the influence exerted over citizens and society through political authority. In this restricted sense, too, it is important. Obviously, *Tawḥīd* requires that political power be exercised and rights given according to God's will. The state, as we see it today, is a recent invention, but state power has always been there. Whenever it exercises its authority, independent of God, it becomes a god.

Such powers and institutions always have the propensity to become gods. The Western notions of power, however, nurtured in a Godless culture, have made them enormously omnipotent. Just look at two of them. Power, one says, is 'the influence exerted by a man or group, through *whatever* means, *over* the conduct of *others* in *intended* ways'.[31] In another, power is 'the ability of its holder to exact compliance or obedience of other individuals to *his* will, on *whatsoever* basis'[32] (emphasis mine). Of course, as Rousseau said, 'The strongest man is never strong enough to be always master unless he transforms his power into right and obedience into duty'.[33] And, soon, both right and duty, without being subject to God's will from 'above', become absolute. Absolutes which can rightfully only belong with a God-man relationship.

Such power, therefore, wherever it resides, cannot co-exist in life with surrender to one God alone. For, how can any created being, individual or institution, be allowed to have the right, unlimited right, to influence other created beings in ways not intended by the Creator, through means not approved by Him? How can it force obedience, absolute obedience, to *its* will, in disregard of God's, on *whatever* basis? That, then, would be a god.

This may look like a critique on behalf of a dogmatic belief. But such power cannot co-exist even with the possibilities of human freedom and dignity. A survey of recent history should be enough to prove that. Subjugation of entire peoples, manipulation of their thought and culture, totalitarian states, are only a few examples of how such power has denied and eroded man's dignity.[34]

Gods like that have proliferated and grown in power in the West as never before. Look at some of them. *Science*, which claims absolute monopoly of knowledge and therefore absolute power. For, declared Francis Bacon (1561–1626): *scientia potestas est* ('knowledge is power'). In its name, what some sociologists call 'knowledge classes' have acquired a right to unchecked rule, even over matters as private as health and rearing one's children. *Technology*: which promises to *do* everything, to *provide* everything. It has assumed control of men's lives to the extent that it can freely manipulate their beliefs, thoughts, morals, habits. *Media* is one manifestation of that technology. Advertising is one example of how people are made to submit dutifully to 'intended ways', even to comply by indulging in a vice like consumerism.

Man as *Man*: proud and self-sufficient, is the end of all; as said Protagoras, 'Man is the measure of all things'.[35] Humanism is the supreme object of loyalty and ultimate criterion of right and wrong. Man, as his own *Self*: is immersed in devotion to his comforts, immediate gratification of his desires, his happiness. Man as the *Will to Power*: is like Nietzsche's (1844–1900) superman. 'Not mankind, but supermen is the goal'; energy, intellect and pride — these make supermen, but he must be of noble birth. He is beyond good and evil.[36] *Race*: which has a right to subject other races to its will and interests.[37] *Society*: of

which even God is just 'a figurative expression', as said Durkheim (1858–1917). 'A reality *sui generis*': organic and irreducible, independent of and above its components, an end in itself. It is the origin of all human ideas, also of God: 'the believer is not deceived when he believes in the existence of a moral power upon which he depends and from which he received all that is best in himself: this power exists; it is society'.[38] To *conscience collective* all men must bow. For Marx (1818–1883), 'the real nature of man is the totality of social relations'. More specifically 'the mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life'.[39]

Starkest and most omnipotent among these gods are the *Nation* and *People* and *Sovereignty*; the *State* which *is* nation and people; and the *Legislature, Government, Bureaucracy, Party, Fuhrer,* who rule in their name. State is the 'arbiter of every individual destiny; it binds men to itself by every tie of need and feeling'.[40]

Machiavelli's (1469–1527) Fatherland demands that 'one should not stop for a moment to consider whether something is lawful or unlawful, gentle or cruel, laudable or shameful; but . . . [do whatever] . . . will save the life of the state and preserve its freedom'.[41] So is the Hegelian (1770–1831) duty to Fatherland 'the criterion by which the ethical activity of all individuals is measured; . . . the source of all the recognised *duties* and laws . . . the objective basis on which each individual's position rests'.[42]

Sovereignty is unitary, indivisible, supreme, vested in men. Marsilius of Padua (1270–1342) declared, 'The supreme legislature of human race is none other than the Totality of mankind'.[43] To Bodin, the sovereign 'legally commands and is not commanded by others'.[44] Hobbes' Leviathon is a 'mortal God': 'whatever he doth, it can be no injury to any of his subjects' He has 'the whole power of prescribing rules' and of judging 'what opinions and doctrines are averse, and what conducive to peace'. The 'right of judicature', 'the power of rewarding . . . and of punishing . . . according to the law he hath formerly made, the power 'to appoint what order of place and dignity each man shall hold' — all vest in him alone. His subjects are

bound to him. They 'cannot lawfully make a new covenant' or 'be obedient to any other, in anything whatsoever without his permission'. Anyone who dissents from a majority which declares someone a sovereign 'might without injustice be destroyed by any man whatsoever' irrespective of 'whether he be of the congregation or not, and whether his consent be asked or not'. But the sovereign can never be deposed nor 'justly put to death, or in any manner by his subjects punished'.[45]

Rousseau transfers sovereignty to an anoymous metaphysical entity: General Will. It 'is always right and tends always to the public advantage'. Formed by 'the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community', it 'gives to the body politic absolute command over [its] members'. Therefore 'whosoever shall refuse to obey the general will must be constrained by the whole body of his fellow citizens to do so'. The sovereign need give no guarantee to its subject: 'merely by virtue of what it is, is always what it should be'. 'The state, in relation to its members, is master of all their goods.'[46] What is this General Will, how will it manifest, what is Common Good? These are dark areas which have provided ample ground for absolutism and deification of the state.

But it is Hegel who takes the idea of nation-state, as a moral order, to its limits: 'The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth . . . We must therefore worship the State as the manifestation of the Divine on the earth. The State is the march of God through the world.'[47]

For long, powers have been made into gods, but always in partnership or beside the Great God. They brought miseries, but they were small gods. Having removed God entirely, the West has succeeded in making monstrous gods, of which the above are a few examples. Are not State, Nation, and like the newest gods? Should they not be stripped of their god-like nature and attributes? Not to do so would violate the very essence of Islam: there is no god but God.

The Qur'ān leaves no ground for any misunderstanding on that score. Gods are made not only of stone and wood, of flesh and blood, of cosmic objects and forces; but even one's

own self-desire, opinion, conviction or belief can become a god: *Have you, then, seen him who has taken as his god his desire (ilāhahū).* (al-Furqān 25: 43) Or culture and society: 'We shall follow only the way of our ancestors.' (Zukhruf 43: 22–3) To follow and obey those who lay down laws and ways of life which God has given no sanction is to make them partners with God (*shurakā'*). (al-Shūrā 42: 21; al-An'ām 6: 121) To claim such rights or to demand such obedience is to claim divinity.

It was in this sense that the Pharaoh said: *I am your highest Lord.* (al-Nāzi'āt 79: 24); *I know not that you have any god but me.* (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 38) That is why only when Moses explained that the Lord of the worlds is the 'Lord of the East and the West', too, that he felt threatened: *If you take a god other than me I shall surely imprison you.* (al-Shu'arā' 26: 23–9) Even to concede absolute legislative authority, whether to persons or institutions, amounts to making them god. It is in this sense that Christians and Jews 'made their rabbis and monks as lords (*rabb*) apart from God'. (al-Tawbah 9: 31) When 'Ady Ibn Ḥātim, then a Christian, questioned the statement — 'but they do not worship them' (they worship one God)' — the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, explained: 'Yes, but they follow them in whatever they do to make the unlawful lawful and lawful unlawful: this *is* worshipping them.' (*Aḥmad, Tirmidhī*)[48]

Are these gods described in the Qur'ān any different from all the claimants to power in a contemporary Godless society or from a sovereign state? Can a Muslim be a Muslim without striving to demolish them and wrest all power from these powers to bring it under God? Is that not politics?

What is politics? Western definitions, the only definitions so far, are difficult to work with in an Islamic discourse. They are laden with the Western notions of power, for 'all politics is about power'. But that 'power' has no place in Islam. However, even in the strict, popular sense of governmental processes and making of public policy, it shapes life decisively. But Aristotle saw it as the 'striving for good life by a society'; today 'the core of politics is [considered as] the conflict about the nature of good life'.[49]

If the only good life is that which is lived in worship and surrender to the One God and in seeking His pleasure eternally, and if politics is the process of human action by which conflict concerning good life is carried on or settled — then, politics is central to Islam.

Still, more broadly, any act performed in power perspectives — to influence others — is considered a political act, whether argument, discussion, negotiation, application of force or persuasion.[50] Thus Da'wah, *tablīgh*, Jihad and all interpersonal relations are, to some extent, political; so are all relations within social institutions and structures. Without participating, seizing and directing all such politics to ends laid down by God, can any claim to be striving for goals desired by Him, that is to say, being Muslim, be meaningful?

'To God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth; to Him belongs their kingdom': so to proclaim, as the Qur'ān very often does, is to call unequivocally to repudiate anyone who claims any absolute right and power over anything. And thus to banish *ẓulm* (oppression and injustice) from everywhere, as from the depth of one's *nafs* so from the human society. *Indeed associating anyone with God (shirk) is a mighty ẓulm.* (Luqmān 31: 13) It is an all-embracing call; it is political too. The response should never be only political; it must be a response of whole being. That would be an act of highest spiritual significance, but it can avoid including the political only at the peril of doing violence to itself.

Let there be no mistake about it. To reduce *Tawḥīd* to socio-political goals and programmes is to drain it of its real nature, of its ultimate concerns. It would be a blatant, crass error. The danger is always there; we must never let that happen. But to discard or downgrade them, as also often happens, is to rob man's relationship with God of its fullness, to condemn human society to the misery of *ẓulm* (oppression) and *fasād* (corruption and disorder). Politics undeniably has its perils and so has piety; but none of them are inescapable. The risk must be taken; for only a God-centred life possesses the possibility to escape these perils and yet bring justice to mankind.[51] This has been part of every Messenger's call.

God's message is never a product of its environment, of specific socio-political and economic situations. It is not primarily a response to social ills and malaises, to national yearnings. Allah and eternal life after death, accountability and judgement, are objective realities. And, yet, faith in them has always been deeply relevant to every man's total concerns, at any point in time and space. It is not a type of faith which has little to do with life, or even less with life in society. There is no gap between the life of faith and the life of the world. Hence a dynamic, all-embracing relationship of worship with the Ever-living God does translate into socio-political goals too. Every Messenger said: *O my people worship God alone;* each went further and added, significantly, a new dimension to this basic message.

Moses demanded from the Pharaoh: Give freedom to Israel to go with me. Hud chastised 'Ād on following arrogant, tyrant leaders (Hūd 11: 59), and added: What, you waste resources on building purposeless monuments, and mighty castles as you will live for ever; you seize nations like tyrants. (al-Shu'arā' 26: 128–30) Ṣāliḥ called Thamūd: Do not obey those who exceed their limits, who spread corruption on earth and set not things right. (al-Shu'arā' 26: 151–2); Lūt said: You commit such abominations as no one has ever committed before, you lustfully come to men, you waylay travellers, and you commit these unlawful acts openly and collectively. (al-'Ankabūt 29: 28–9) Shu'ayb said: O my people, give fully in measure and balance, with equity and justice, do not take away from people their things, and do not spread corruption. (Hūd 11: 85); Do not sit in ambush on every road. (al-A'rāf 7: 86)

At places this message becomes so deeply interwoven with the basic message that one may be misled to assume that faith in Allah and *Ākhirat* is merely functional, to bring about social justice.[52] That would be totally wrong. Yet social goals flow from faith as light flows from the sun. Transcendental concerns do not preclude socio-political goals, nor can be reduced to them; they subsume them. *Have you seen one who denies the Day of Judgement: that is the one who pushes orphans away, and does not urge to feed the poor.* (al-Mā'ūn 107: 1–3) Or, when those to be put away in

Hell will be charged thus: *He never believed in God, the Great; he never urged to feed the poor.* (al-Ḥāqqah 69: 33–4)

One primary goal of *Risālat* therefore is to create a new man and a new world order, both cast in the mould of justice, sent down by God: *Indeed We sent forth Our Messengers with clear messages, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that men may establish justice.* (al-Ḥadīd 57: 25) There can be no more categorical a statement regarding the central place that the Qur'ān gives to establishing justice among people, in social structures, and between nations and to the mission of striving for this objective, even using force to dislodge powers that have become gods.

That is the mission which must flow *from* knowing God (*ma'rifah* or gnosis), and *for* making Him known. Muhammad Iqbāl, the poet-scholar, quotes the words of a great Muslim saint, Abdul Quddus Gangoh — 'Muhammad of Arabia ascended to the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned' — and, then, adds: 'In the whole range of Sufi literature it will probably be difficult to find words which, in a single sentence, disclose such an acute perception of differences . . . [between a prophet and a mystic] . . . The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of "unitary experience"; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large . . . The Prophet . . . returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to create a fresh world of ideas.'[53]

How the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, lived that is how the Muslims should live, if they are to be true to their faith. What happened in Makka? What happened in Madina? These are crucial questions. There may be differences about many aspects of Sunnah, for example on how to pray. Many Hadith may be disputed. Some aspects of the Prophet's life may be obscure. But where there is no dispute, no difference, no obscurity is the *sunnah al-makkī*, the *sunnah al-madanī*. Bazaars in Makka, the Valley of Ta'if, Badr and Uhud, and Masjid al-Nabawi stand out clear and sharp.

Hijrah is central to the understanding of them all: Why did he undertake it? Either we accept the Christian-Western interpretation: he chose sword and power to achieve the triumph of his mission, statehood to sustain faith, and thus turned into an opportunist statesman from a visionary prophet.[54] Or, we consider that all this was an accident, a chance happening. The society in Madina fell like *manna* as a reward for their piety. Or, we conclude that it was a deliberate act, guided and supported by God. Not to seek the refuge of power for God but to seize power and make it surrender to God, so that no man, no institution will ever be master and god of man and society. Hijrah, a small journey in space, was a great leap forward for mankind. It was a leap of faith which unified the totality of human life and claimed it for God alone. That was the achievement of the Prophet's objective in *this* world.

Everything points to the truth of the last interpretation.[55] The followers of Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, have no other way to follow but his. They have nothing to look to but his footprints in Makka and Madina. He is the perfect pattern and mould (*Uswah Ḥasanah*). His life is the surest, most certain index to the path and goals that they should forever pursue.

Creating a new world, as he did, therefore remains the everlasting responsibility of the Ummah: *We have made you a just community* (al-Baqarah 2: 143); *O Believers, be establishers of justice, witnesses for God* (al-Nisā' 4: 135); *O Believers, be establishers for the sake of God, witnessing unto justice.* (al-Mā'idah 5: 8) Accordingly, the Ummah is required to undertake, *collectively*, an active struggle to establish justice — within self, so that *ẓulm bin-nafs* (wronging one's own self) is eradicated; and within society, so that *fasād fil-arḍ* (corruption on the earth) is curbed.

That new world cannot come into being so long as the centres of power in life — whether inside man's own *nafs* or outside in society — continue to belong to gods other than God or be gods themselves. Revolution in leadership is therefore an imperative of the highest order. Without that *Tawḥīd* will remain a metaphysical pursuit, or a feeble impulse to individual devotion, piety and morality. It will

become a *privatised* affair, continually being squeezed to narrower and narrower confines of life, if not totally driven out.

Every Messenger, therefore, gave another crucial call, as integral to his message of *Tawḥīd* — the third dimension: *Fear God and obey only me.* We can see eight Messengers, in Surah al-Shu'arā', stressing this message in precisely the same words. No less than twenty times does the Qur'ān give this call regarding the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him. It is plainly evident why this should have been so. One cannot live in surrender to God unless *all* life is lived in obedience to His Messengers: *He who obeys the Messenger obeys God.* (al-Nisā' 4: 80)[56] Only that can concretise *Tawhīd* in life.

Mere sermons by the Messengers on worshipping the only God and ensuring social justice would have hardly caused a stir in their contemporaneous society, as they never do now. The rendering may jar certain complacent ears, but 'accept only me as your leader' would be the only most appropriate translation of 'obey only me', that would be understandable and relevant in our time. That would also make understandable why 'sermons', then, caused such commotions and upheavals: you, you want to drive us out, to become superior to us, to change our way of life. We, should we obey you, a man like us? You, we shall kill, stone, crucify, banish. More radically, the call was not only to 'obey'; it went much farther, significantly, to demand: 'disobey'. Disobey 'all those who exceed their limits'. (al-Shu'arā' 26: 151) Disobey those whose hearts are unmindful of Us, who seek only this world, whose every affair has fallen into excesses. (al-Kahf 18: 28)

This is an unmistakable challenge to every leadership that is independent of God. This indeed is a clarion call, entailing an inevitable duty, for 'revolution in leadership', for 'wresting leadership from unbelieving and corrupt men' (as says Mawdudi).

The scope of this call is enormously vast; leadership is not merely political, though it includes that too. It is, first, a revolution inside by creating a powerful impulse *within* — that of *taqwā*. From that *taqwā* proceeds a new drive *without* to revolutionise every aspect of culture and civilisation. That

is why the call to *'fear God'* always precedes that to *'obey me'*. Only that kind of revolution can lead man, in his entirety, on the path of God.

The danger, in the politicised culture of our time, that this call may degenerate into merely political, is great. It must be avoided. But only a feeble, naive, or hostile mind would make the blunder of considering this godly objective synonymous with hankering after political offices, or of turning it into that.

That this revolution in leadership cannot happen and the state of world desired by God cannot come into being without ceaseless effort and striving is very obvious. Strangely, some Muslims find the idea incomprehensible or disturbing. But that is what Jihad is all about — an ideal and a process so high in Islamic order of values, so profusely eulogised in Islamic discourse, even by those who are not prepared to endorse or follow its implications in real life.[57]

One must find it very striking, and significant too, how very often the Qur'ān links *īmān* (faith) with good and righteous deeds (*'amal ṣāliḥ*) — no less than sixty times — and with Hijrah and Jihad — no less than twenty times. Hijrah and Jihad are the fuller manifestation of *īmān*, the highest virtues, the best-rewarded acts.[58] But there is nothing incongruous in this.

Do you think you would enter Paradise whereas God has not yet established who of you have struggled (jāhadū) and who are patient? (Āl 'Imrān 3: 142), asks the Qur'ān. Then it declares: *We shall surely try you until we know that of you who struggle and are patient.* (Muḥammad 47: 31) It is significant that the Qur'ānic verse describing the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, as the perfect example to be followed, occurs in the context of the Battle of Ditches. (al-Aḥzāb) Similarly, immediately after setting down that the Messengers have been sent with Book and Balance to establish justice, the Qur'ān adds: *And We sent down Iron, in which there is great power, and many benefits for men, and so that God might establish who help Him and His Messenger [believing in the] Unseen.* (al-Ḥadīd 57: 25) Iron has been interpreted as material power — arms and resources — or political power. And God wants to test who, without

seeing Him, would come forward to help Him and His Messenger in the aforementioned mission.

Paradoxically, if one strives to subdue his *nafs* into surrender to his God it is hailed as a truly 'religious' duty, but if he strives to bring his society into surrender to his God, it is decried as 'politics'. But, may I unhesitatingly venture, that in the Qur'ān, *Jihād fī sabīl-Allah* is used almost always in the latter sense, whatever terminology of *jihād bin-nafs* and *jihad bis-saif* may have come in vogue later.

More paradoxically, while one is never prepared to leave even ordinary things in real life to fate or in the hands of God and always works hard to get them, he finds no difficulty in proclaiming that entire change in the political structure will come about automatically. They would recount all the merits of Jihad, all the stories of Badr and Uhud, without ever bothering to do anything which might actualise them in their lives and in their times.

Jihad is then an essential condition of *īmān*. The venture is so crucial that there is no room for bystanders, spectators and backsliders.[59]

What ought *īmān*, faith, to mean for us today? Should it not be our task to work out the word of God, as brought by all of His Messengers and as contained in the Qur'ān, for and within our day, to make our relationship of *Tawḥīd* with the Living God come again alive? Without looking for realisation of the Qur'ānic teachings — *Tawḥīd*, total change in life, justice, revolution in leadership, and Jihad — in our world, the Qur'ān will always remain a document of bygone days (*asāṭīr al-awwalīn*).

Does doing that politicise Islam? The relationship between Islam and politics may take three shapes. Firstly, that Islamic values and ends are so interpreted as to become merely political. Secondly, that Islam is used to legitimise whatever politics and government prevail irrespective of the subordinate role assigned to Islam. In both cases politics becomes the end of Islam; Islam is then indeed politicised. This will always happen if Islam is made to abdicate its active concern, as laid down by God, for politics and state, and take a passive, indifferent, quietist, nonchalant attitude towards it. Thirdly, that politics is used to bring about the good life

(*ḥayāt ṭayyibah*) enjoined by God. Islam thus becomes the end of politics and it would be more correct to say, then, that politics is Islamised. The best way to stop Islam from being politicised, which has happened too often, is to actively engage in politics and make it serve Islamic purposes. If political power corrupts, this is the more reason for making it subject to God's law.

Let there be no disjunction between the faith in and obedience to God and political action. If Islam has to do with all life, why should it have any less to do with life in society and life in politics. Thus the goal of striving to make society and state Islamic, as a part of whole life, in no way politicises Islam nor does it substitute the goals of seeking Allah's pleasure and the eternal life with political and *this*-worldly goals. The phrase, 'politicisation of religion' smacks of a dualism which is against the very nature of Islam; it can only arise within a context like the Christian-Western.

However, no words can be enough, repetition too often, to emphasise this: that socio-political goals should never be allowed to replace or dilute the forever concerns of earning Allah's pleasure and His eternal blessings and rewards. To do so would transform the very substance of faith. The danger has to be recognised, faced and suitably dealt with.

But, firstly, such goals cannot be given up. As we have seen, they are an essential part of God's message. Without them His worship cannot be complete. Secondly, there is no basis to claim that the very nature of the act of striving for earthly goals is such that it is bound to replace the ultimate goals. Thirdly, nor can the probability of such a danger be an adequate reason for giving up what is so central in Islam. What can be a more political act than taking up a sword? One may, it is quite possible, fight for motives other than 'making the word of God supreme'. But that risk can never be enough reason to give up the very duty of Jihad.

The risks that are there can be met only by an enduring and ever-present awareness, indelibly embedded in consciousness, that the ultimate goal is seeking Allah's pleasure. That is the only bulwark against any danger of transforming or diluting the real goal. Constant vigilance, too, is required. But to abdicate the very mission that every

Messenger of God strives to achieve is to give up a supreme act of *'Ibādah*. Nor is there any justification for treating this struggle as merely seeking worldly and political goals.

Lastly, although political power and politics are important, not to be shunned but seized, it is very important to see that one does not fall into the Marxian trap of ascribing absolute capacities to them. That belongs only to God. Often belief in God's will is blamed for breeding fatalism and passivity. On the contrary, it works as a very healthy stimulus to act and an effective deterrent to man's intoxication with his own power. Nor is political power the sole, nor even the primary, initiator of change. That is *īmān*. Nor should politics be allowed to become *the* way of life, the arbiter of right and wrong. That is the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

The only way to avoid all pitfalls inherent in the path of power and politics is to understand their true nature and place in Islam and to unlock their mysteries through the key of *īmān*.

VI

What has Islam to say about man and history, about *dunyā* (*this*-world) and *Ākhirat* (*that*-world), about the individual and society? How are they interrelated? These are enormously vast, complex questions which we can hardly take up here. But to look at them, howsoever hastily and briefly, is necessary. For only in that perspective can we understand the real place of power and its radically new concept in Islam, which is so often misunderstood.

History, in the sense of an individual's biography within this world, is the ground and process through which each man is required to give an account of himself to his Creator, of how he uses his freedom. *He who has created death and life, that He might test you which of you is best in conduct.* (al-Mulk 67: 2) This is the Divine purpose in creating the

space-time, as we know, of the heavens and the earth (Hūd 11: 7; Āl 'Imrān 3: 190–5) and in providing all good things in life. (al-Kahf 18: 7) That is why man, with no 'mentionable' history before birth, has been given the faculties of *hearing and sight* (al-Dahr 76: 2), of *two eyes and a tonque, and a pair of lips* (al-Balad 90: 8–10), and thus the capacity to reason and discern between the right and wrong way of using that freedom. More importantly, he has been guided in this regard by Messengers sent by God.

Man is not, by nature, corrupt, depraved or sinful. Nor has he become so because of any historical episode. In fact, he is equally capable of being good or bad, moral or immoral. Both inclinations are given in his nature. And he is free, by God's leave, to be grateful, to remember Him, to accept His guidance and give his life away to seeking only His pleasure by surrendering to Him; or, to be ungrateful, to forget Him, to reject His guidance, and live in disobedience and rebellion. (al-Shams 91: 8; also 76: 3; 2: 207)

Every person's ultimate destiny depends on what kind of life he chooses to live in this world. This inevitably requires Judgement. No doubt, his choice does have its consequences in history here, in *dunyā*. But for many important reasons into which we cannot go here — like the open-ended nature of his actions which extend far beyond his biography, in time and to other biographies, and the inadequacy of the physical world to take into account their full moral nature — that Judgement cannot take place here. History must continue. This world must come to an end and lead to another life to come after, the *Ākhirat*. There he shall stand before his Creator and will be confronted with a full account of his worldly history. Not one jot or title will be missing. (al-Kahf 18: 49) 'This is only what you had sent forth; you are being recompensed only what you had done before': this is one of the most persistent, oft-repeated motifs in the Qur'ān. Often its implications are not remembered.

A few things are important to note here. One, man's personal destiny, and therefore the end of all his pursuits, lies in *Ākhirat*, but the road to that destiny lies in *dunyā*. Two, that destiny is the earning of His Creator's pleasure (*marḍāt-Allah*), seeking which alone must be the goal of life. This goal

is very different from that of salvation in Christianity: which is negative, totally individualistic, and purely spiritual. Three, that pleasure is the reward of the one who wills *Ākhirat* and strives his utmost, in a right manner and in a state of faith, to achieve it. (al-Isrā' 17: 19) Seeking and striving alone are needed for that; what he is able to actually *achieve* here has no bearing on his destiny there. And, finally, God's judgement does not amount to a debit-credit ledger, where one earns points simply on the basis of his meritoriousness. Deeds, no doubt, will be weighed, but the most important reward he is given — by committing himself to seeking God's pleasure — is God's forgiveness and mercy. It is a beautiful relationship in which such diverse, paradoxical demands as God's sovereignty and man's freedom, the absolute dependence on His grace and obedience to His will, hope and fear, are kept in a delicate, meaningful tension.

History, however, is not confined to a single biography. Personal lives enmesh with each other to form an entity, called society, which is different from their arithmetic sum and which exists in a continuum of time. History of societies and civilisations, or world history, too, is a stage, as for a person, to test how men, *collectively*, conduct themselves. A society is placed on earth and given power and authority only 'that We can see how do you act'. (Yūnus 10: 14; also al-An'ām 6: 165; al-A'rāf 7: 129) Its destiny, too, depends on how it uses, collectively, its freedom and power, how it conducts itself *vis-à-vis* the goals set for it by God — the Divine purpose. For it, too, Judgement is inevitable.

But there are two crucial differences. First, that Judgement takes place here in this world. A society or civilisation will not stand, as an entity, under God's Judgement in *Ākhirat*. It advances and rises or stagnates and decays or disintegrates as a consequence of its social-moral conduct. No individual dies simply because he is evil, or has his life extended because he is good, but a society does. 'We destroy no people but for the wrong they do to their own selves, for the corruption they spread on the earth': this is another persistent, oft-repeated motif in the Qur'ān. So is theme of 'life' granted to peoples because of values like *īmān* and *taqwā*.[60] Second, therefore, the Divine purpose for a

society is to establish justice, to eschew and eliminate *ẓulm* and *fasād*.

Let us pause for a while here. The Qur'ān, thus, radically negates all prevalent views of history. There is no determinism: historical, material, sociological or otherwise. History is not tied to any perpetually-revolving wheel of beginning, end, and return to the beginning. Societies are not biological: subject to birth, growth, decay and doom. Nor is there any inevitable linear march towards progress and perfection, either spiritual or moral and social. History is not moving towards any grand 'final' goal or destiny within the present heavens and earth like Augustine's heavenly city, Marx's classless society, Herder's plentitude in time, Leibniz's human happiness, Kant's rational order, or the triumph of science in a new man and new society as prophesied by thinkers like Condorcet, Saint Simonians and Comte. Nor is it the stage for any Hegelian Absolute or World Spirit to strive towards its own perfection or an Ideal being.

One may observe certain convergences and similarities between Islam and Christianity: for example God's sovereignty over history, conflict between good and evil, the end of world history. But despite that, there are sharp differences in meaning and intent. History is not the ground for the progressive 'redemptive activity' of God. Nor is the Divine concern limited to individual's spiritual progress or salvation, in disregard of society. Nor is Islam's view of *Ākhirat* similar to the Christian eschatology. Christianity also talks of Divine purpose in history. But here again Islam has an entirely different view.

To ask what is God's *own* purpose in human history — what He gains — is to step into a realm which is not human. It is to enquire into God's nature. In Islam, Divine purpose means the goal He has set *for* persons, as individuals and as societies. That purpose has been made abundantly clear.

Why are society and power important if an individual's ultimate goal is *personal*, in *that*-world?

Man is created in society; the very process of his birth is an overwhelming testimony to that fact. (al-Nisā' 4: 1) It is not that men established society because of corruption of

their nature (the theologians) or the savage 'stage of nature'. (Hobbes) Nor can its establishment be explained by any fiction of first convention or a social contract.

Like individuals, society and institutions have equal potentiality for becoming good and just or evil and corrupt. They are not, by nature, in a fallen state: corrupt, unjust, immoral or less moral than individual. As individuals can grow or decline morally and spiritually (*tazkiyah*), so can institutions. 'Spread not corruption on earth after *it* has been set right', says the Qur'ān. Thus, in Islam, oppression, wrong and corruption (*ẓulm* and *fasād*) have both a personal reference (*nafs*) and a communal reference, corruption on earth (*fil arḍ*).

The relationship between the individual and society has become or has been made into a 'problem' in the West; it is not so in Islam. The usual Western methods of analysis, fragmentation, abstraction, reductionism and dualism have been applied to this issue as well. The Christian-Western theory and practice has always fallen into one excess or another: from the early Christian individualism to the absolute Church supremacy; from the Enlightenment 'individual' — abstracted from society and pitted against it — to the totalitarian societies of our day. This relationship is extremely important, but it need never have been one of conflict. The conflict and collision arise because both have been rid of the sovereignty of one God. Both are in rebellion against Him. Each, then, either becomes a god and strives to dominate the other, or follows different gods. And the result is obvious. *Were there any gods except God in [the heavens and the earth] surely they would have fallen in disorder and chaos.* (al-Anbiyā' 21: 22)

In Islam both are integrated in an exquisitely balanced, symbiotic relationship. The problem is not that of individual vs. society, but that of both being *against* God or *under* God. Both must live in surrender to God alone. Both are prone to forget God and rebel against Him, as well as capable of remembering Him and turning to Him in surrender. Islam, very importantly, therefore sanctions no differentiation between individual and social ethics, private and public virtue. There are no two levels of morality. It does not preach

a 'love' ethics which is incapable of actualisation in society (indeed, not even in person), nor an ideal of justice which has no relevance to personal salvation.

Islam, also, does not urge the creation of a just society solely on the grounds of sinfulness and irrationality of collectivities and natural order. Individuals can be as much sinful and irrational. Rather it argues for justice on the basis of the mercy of the Most-merciful and the balance within cosmic order: *The Most-merciful, He has taught the Qur'ān. He has created man; He has given him faculties of discernment and articulation; He has raised the sky high, and set the Balance. So never transgress in the Balance and weigh [everything] with justice; skimp not in the balancing.* (al-Raḥmān 55: 1–9)

A person, in rebellion against God, not only ruins his *Ākhirat*; he is the root and cause of evils in society too. But the relationship is dialectic. Social relations and institutions, centres of power, in their turn, help or hinder his march towards his personal destiny. Based on *ẓulm* (oppression) and filled with *fasād* (disorder and corruption), they bring decay, ruin and destruction to nations and civilisation. They also hinder an individual's journey to his God.

Society has, therefore, been created as an integral part of an individual's trial on this earth through which he must seek his Divinely ordained purpose of pleasing Him. He will surely be questioned in *Ākhirat* for what he did *in* and *for* society, how he behaved collectively. As a society deviates from the path of God, towards oppression and corruption, a person will be both responsible for it and affected by it. As a society is judged in this world, he will share its fate.

It is now obvious why a prophet's mission is not confined to inviting men to worship God or condemning, in verbal outbursts, social injustices. It is, additionally, to establish justice, by bringing 'Iron' or power under God. Power is the glue that binds human beings together, it creates and sustains social institutions, it regulates all inter-personal relations — private or social. It is the energy that impels individuals and society forward. Power relations are so closely interwoven into life that no life can be just without making them *islāmic*.

Where does the 'person' stand? To think of faith as being either 'personal' or 'communal' reflects a mind which is incapable of unifying and synthesising. In Islam, faith is entrusted to 'a person in community'. The Qur'ān rarely addresses, except in the case of the Messengers, in a purely I-thou style. (Messengers include their followers.) Nor does it call: O Ummah! Rather its address is: O, those who have believed! This emphasises the freedom, worth and place of every individual who has made a decision to surrender, but, at the same time firmly places him in a community. It emphasises the community, but does not let individuals dissolve in it, does not treat it as an organic entity, independent of and over and above them.

The image of an individual in society as a passenger on a train or a lonely man in a crowd may suggest social determinism. But, it is important to realise that individuals, once they become *Mu'min, Muslim, Muttaqī* and *Muḥsin,* can, together, transcend the societal processes, replace the drivers, change the direction and carry the crowd the other way. That potentiality which Islam places at the disposal of individuals is a great step forward for human freedom.

Emphasis on community, the Ummah, in no way diminishes the ultimate primacy of individual decision. Islam, primarily and foremost, is a personal decision and act to surrender to the Creator. Once that decision has been made, he must begin to strive ceaselessly to bring his own self, and all social relations and institutions, and therefore all powers, under God. For nothing can be left out. He does that primarily because that is how, as Allah has guided him, he can earn His pleasure. Also, because being responsible to the Creator includes being responsible for all created beings, not only his own self ('witnesses unto mankind', 'brought forth for mankind', 'you will surely be asked about them'). Moreover, because his total life here will not become God's without that, and even living in submission to Him privately will be under constant threat.

But the actual *achievement* of that goal in no way affects his place in the sight of his God. The only thing that matters in this respect is that he decides to surrender (*īmān*), and strives sincerely and ceaselessly to bring all life under God.

That is enough to ensure his success (*falāḥ*). To what extent it actually happens in this world has no bearing on that result. There he shall stand, alone, before God: *And everyone of them shall come to Him on the Day of Resurrection, all alone.* (Maryam 19: 95) His fate then will depend on what 'faith and deeds' he has brought, not in what society he lived. Of course, among those deeds must be the effort to dethrone all false gods and to change the society, if it lived in rebellion against God.

It may be that all power will become subdued to God, and an Islamic society will come into being, but the individual will not attain his goal: for he did not long and strive for that purpose or did not strive sincerely, for God alone. Or, Islam may be reduced to the remotest recesses of private life, or may even be confined only in heart — such are the circumstances — yet the individual will attain his goal: for he did sincerely strive or longed to strive if he had no means, even though he did not succeed.

Therefore, to say that Islam is fulfilled *only* through community, power and state is an absolutist one-dimensional view.[61] To strive for them is essential, but they are *not* prerequisites to his *falāḥ* in *Ākhirat*.

Islam thus treats power from two perspectives. At the personal existential level, from the perspective of his ultimate concerns, the actualisation of *Islamisation* of power has no relevance to his Islam, to his being a good Muslim.* The more he deepens his faith (*īmān*), strives to actualise it (*Islām*), possesses the will to shun and root out what displeases God (*taqwā*), yearns, as an inner compulsion, to bring all life under God (*iḥsān*), the more he becomes a good Muslim. Dethroning all false gods who claim to rule and lead men and *Islamising* power is a necessary imperative of this life. At the social level, however, from the perspective of his worldly concerns, the *Islamisation* of power is supremely

*For want of a better word, I am using *Islamisation*, which means bringing power into surrender to the one God, not its attainment by any individual or group, as is commonly understood in the West. Let it not be confused with the alleged Islamisation of our day, for that hardly touches power; it is concerned with superficialities.

important. The more that happens the more a society becomes just, and his path to his God easier.

Islam's concern about power and the radical transformation it brings in its nature can be understood in the context of *dunyā-Ākhirat* relationship. Three things are important to understand.

Firstly, Islam does not preach the worthlessness of earthly life. In *this*-world, and no other, are we living. This life is the *only* ground on which one may sow the seeds of eternal life. Hence it is important. For it is the *means* to *that*-worldly goals. It becomes worthless, even ruinous, when we make the world itself the end of all pursuit. Then it yields nothing in the Hereafter, and results in eternal misery.

Secondly, Islam does not see *this*-world and *that*-world necessarily in conflict, it brings both into a single unified relationship. Islam gives a vision of *Ākhirat* which in no way distracts from *dunyā* or detracts its significance. That vision quickens our sense of how we should be living here. *This*-world must be illuminated by the light of the world to come; only then the life in *this*-world would turn into a light there: *their light will be spreading before them, and on their right.* (al-Ḥadīd 57: 12) This verse, too, is, significantly, placed in the context of Da'wah, Jihad, establishment of justice, use of power, and condemnation of withdrawal from the world.

Thirdly, then, one must find from God Himself how one can earn His pleasure there, what goals should he pursue here? And so long as he does what He tells, he is acting 'spiritually', 'religiously' — if one has to use these words. If one prays, ostentatiously, it is a *worldly* act; if he uses a sword, to make the word of Allah supreme and thereby earn His pleasure, it is a highly *spiritual* act. That His pleasure and rewards are for those who engage in Jihad to bring power under God is made amply clear in the Qur'ān.

Islam thus totally transforms the nature, scope, and process of power and politics as understood in Western theory and practice.

To state in a few words what is of cosmic significance: power in Islam is that power which flows from becoming and remaining absolutely powerless before the All-powerful.

Additionally, Islam puts all power in an active moral framework, by proclaiming that the decisive force in history is not physical but moral. It is a tremendous leap from the physical, manipulative power exercising domination and control over others, which springs from a determinist or materialist view of a cyclical or linear march of history or is caused by unconcern with the earthly City of men.

That power, obviously, is not merely political, nor are leadership or institutions only that. It is the totality of power-relations and all levels of leaderships which must come under God. Nor is it sought for any individual or group. Politics is motivated solely by the desire to earn blissful eternal life, by compassion for the *Raḥmān*'s creatures (*raḥmah* which springs from serving *Raḥmān*), not by quest for personal or collective aggrandisement, or for popular support or for status or for the sake of power alone. *That Last Abode, We grant to those alone who seek not dominance on earth, nor corruption.* (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 87)

So, also, Islam does not need power to nourish, sustain and to fulfil itself. Rather it is power that urgently needs Islam, to come under God, in order to save mankind from the enormous potential it possesses to do mischief and evil to individuals, to societies, indeed now even to the entire human race. Power, divorced from God, becomes the most evil thing. It lets loose corruption and fills God's earth with oppression. For every claim to power is a false claim.

Every faith by its very nature comes to have a relationship with power. It indeed *is* power. But faith in a false god can result in power which can do only evil to man. Faith divorced from power is bound to be usurped by it. Yesterday's colonial expansion was fired by faith; so are today's crusades for democracy and human rights fired by faith, sometimes in values, more often in self-interests. Christian history testifies to the havoc caused when power harnesses a faith to its cause, which has no active concern to bring it under God. Forget for a while the Sermon on the Mount, and the record is bleak.

Lā ilāha ill-Allah totally and effectively denies and roots out any claim, anywhere, for any power, over anything — man, society, state or nature. *Muḥammad Rasūl-Allah*

dethrones all those who claim to lead mankind by their opinions, wishes, preferences or interests. None has any right to loyalty or obedience save in accordance with God's will. 'No obedience to any created being if it amounts to disobedience to the Creator' is a revolutionary charter. Neither state nor society, neither class nor race, neither nation nor culture, neither knowledge nor technology, neither king nor parliament, neither general will nor popular sovereignty, can have any power over anything but by God's leave.

Only power which is entirely subject to God can be a source of mercy and justice to mankind. This was evident and necessary at all times; but perhaps never before as clearly and urgently as now. The intellectual and moral bankruptcy of Western theories and practice of power, of separation between religion and politics in Western history, has yielded unimaginably poisonous fruits. Tragically, even when power was claimed for and on behalf of God, it resulted in violence, bloodshed, and human misery (see conversions by the sword, crusades, inquisitions, religious wars). But after the separation of power from God the situation has changed disasterously (look at the two World Wars, the century of unprecedented violence, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the threat of nuclear Armageddon).

How did the West develop the concepts and art of power, once it edged out God as ruler and guide from man's life? Power, then, came to be identified with brute, naked, physical force, with ruthless manipulation and Faustian quest for dominance and control over men, things and universe. With the idea of eternal life discarded, the quest for power has no end but material satisfaction, here and now. As Skolimowski tells us, 'when the sense of transcendence and the sense of divinity are removed from our quest for progress, when the individual intoxication with power obscures larger paths of human destiny, and when the sensuous indulgence is seen as the only salvation, then the meaning of power becomes limited to its physical, economic and manipulative aspects'.[62]

The result is that today we witness an unprecedented rise in the magnitude of physical power accompanied by an

unprecedented incompetence to handle it. Man has developed, writes Bertrand Russell, 'a temper full of a sense of limitless power, of arrogant certainty, and of pleasure in manipulation even of human material'.[63] 'The basic novelty of our age [writes Koestler] is . . . [that while] the power curve shoots upward like a cobra stabbing at the sky, the spiritual curve goes into a deep decline.' In a bid to escape his destiny as a 'puppet of God', man became the grotesque figure of a 'puppet suspended on his chromosomes': as a result, his 'destiny was no longer determined from "above" by a superhuman wisdom and will but from "below" by the sub-human agencies of glands, genes, atoms, or waves of probability. This shift of the locus of destiny was decisive . . . The new masters of destiny were placed lower in the scale than the being they controlled; they could determine his fate, but could provide him with no moral guidance, no values and meanings'.[64]

Power by its very nature grows, expands and becomes ever more powerful. This has happened not only with physical power but more so with the socio-political. Just look at the modern state: how it has grown enormously powerful, once it severed its link with Divine sovereignty. It is now more powerful than emperors and popes ever were. God, who was above, has been replaced by gods below like nation and people — for there can be no vacuum in human life — in whose name it has been possible to amass the greatest ever conceivable power.

So monstrous have become godless powers in our day that no escape from them is possible. 'There is, therefore, no salvation but in seizing them.'[65] Only by establishing God's Sovereignty and the supremacy of a law which is not relative to any interest, can power be transformed. That is what Islam aims to do.

Is Islam, then, a quest for power? Yes, if it means that it is actively concerned about it. But no, if it means power as seen in Western theory and practice, merely political. It is the power whose nature, scope and process emanate from falling on knees, all powerless, before the All-powerful, alone and in congregation. It is a kind of power which the Christian-West cannot even conceive. For it has not known it in its history,

nor even a vision of society borne out of such power. Power as a means and not as an end; power in the service of the Lord and His purpose for the Creation, and not for self- or for national-aggrandisement; power as a tool of morality and goodness.

The beautiful triadic relationship in which the Qur'ān interweaves *sujūd* (prostrating oneself) before God, getting nearer and nearer to Him, and bringing all power under Him is one of its most important but not much explored themes. *Sujūd* is the path to reach near God. *Prostrate yourself, and draw close [unto Him].* (al-'Alaq 96: 19) The centre of Muslim community life is called Masjid (a place for prostration). And, significantly, the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, declared that for him the entire earth has been made a Masjid. (*Bukhārī, Muslim*) This is an index of Islam's universalism, measure of freedom and comprehensiveness in God's worship, and a declaration of the mission which Muslims are charged with for ever. The relationship between *sujūd* and power is clearly manifest in two places in the Qur'ān. In one place, it tells that God told Israel: When you enter a land, enter *prostrating yourselves, seeking His forgiveness.* When they violated this important guidance, they were severely punished. (al-Baqarah 2: 58–9) In another, when it promises Muslims victory and power, it describes them as *bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking bounty from God and good pleasure: their mark is on their faces, traced by prostration.* So when the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, entered Makka, he was prostrating himself, his forehead touching the back of his camel.

VII

What Sayyid Mawdudi has to say is not new. He lays no claim to being original. That does not in the least diminish its

value or importance. The notion that everything new and modern is better and valuable and everything old and primitive is bad and useless is a product of the concept of linear progress in history. That concept itself now lies in ruins wrought upon mankind by the march of Western history, but we have yet to get rid of its legacy by which the primitive always conveys a pejorative sense and the modern, panegyric. Sayyid Mawdudi's message is primal, in both time and importance. What he reminds us of is only the most ancient covenant between man and God: *Am I not your Lord, [He asked]? They affirmed: Yes, we shall remain witnesses [unto that]*. (al-A'rāf 7: 172) What he reiterates is nothing but the latest summons to that covenant: *And always remember God's blessing [of guidance] upon you,. and His covenant which He made with you, when you said: We shall hear and we shall obey.* (al-Mā'idah 5: 7)

Yet he does seem to make a radical departure from the existing order of things, to invite to a totally new, creative mode of life. That perception is a measure, sadly enough, of how far modern man has strayed away from his Creator. That is an index, too, of how greatly Muslims have come to neglect the primary responsibility they are charged with, only fulfilling which makes them Muslims. How rightly did the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, say: 'Islam begins its career as a stranger and a time comes when it again turns into a stranger.' (*Muslim, Tirmidhī*)

Otherwise, Sayyid Mawdudi does not repudiate the past: he *renews* it and makes it relevant to our present and our future. He repeats the age-old message of God. That message has always been with us, on our lips and even in our hearts. But what has become ordinary and commonplace he summons us to make fundamental to our life and existence. What has become lifeless and irrelevant he calls upon us to take as living and compelling. What has become fragmented he urges us to make once again whole.

But Sayyid Mawdudi is not content with repeating the message. That is done from our pulpits day in and day out and makes little difference to us. He goes beyond that, and confronts anyone having any claim or anything to do with Islam with the fundamental question: *Are you living in*

commitment to God alone; will you commit your life, entirely, to Him? What startles many of us is not the message itself — that is familiar enough — but the way he makes explicit what its demands are upon our real life. That shakes the familiar world of our existence, of entrenched and indolent habits and patterns of thought and conduct, of inaction and taking things for granted, of laziness and lethargy, of compromise and docility, of compartmentalising life, of centralising the trivial and trivialising the central. That is what many of us do not like; that is what we find disturbing.

It is these diseases of heart and mind, of word and work, that corrode us from inside, that sap our vitality, that bar the road to our destiny. He speaks passionately against them. And implores us to eradicate them.

So often God's worship becomes fossilised in outward forms: that religiosity Sayyid Mawdudi strongly laments. He does not devalue or de-emphasise even the least outward expression of faith, of *īmān*, however minor and insignificant it may be. What he decries is that *obsession* with the outward which makes it flourish in total disregard of the true intent and purpose of Islam, that is, undivided loyalty, allegiance and surrender to one true God. How often that outward formality is practised at the expense of ultimate demands, how often it becomes an excuse to dilute, devalue or replace the real goal! Islam fuses the outward and inward in man; both act and interact. No outward expression is a sure guarantee of inward faith. But, without public expression, the inward is gradually squeezed out. The Qur'ān and the Prophet have made it abundantly clear. 'It is not the flesh and blood of sacrifices that finds acceptance with God; it is *taqwā*.' 'Many are the Prayers, Fasts and Alms-givings which bring no reward to their practitioners.'

Sayyid Mawdudi extols us to restore that inextricable link between 'faith' and 'deed', between *īmān* and Jihad, which is so central to the Qur'ān, but which we seem to have lost somewhere.

Is not the very phrase 'a practising Muslim' a painful comment on our situation today? Something which was important for the vitality and true worth of Islam —

relationship between *īmān* and *'amal*, faith and deed — became an issue, quite unnecessarily, for the jurists and philosophers. Muslims had no need to assume a prerogative that was God's: to determine one's place in the Hereafter. Or, to engage in the business of excommunication. Such are not Sayyid Mawdudi's concerns; they lie elsewhere. He transcends them all, and busies himself with the business of making *īmān* real in life. He firmly believes that true *īmān* ought to be reflected through deeds. But he is not there to play God or to brand Muslims as Kafir. His entire emphasis on the perspective of the inevitability of *islām* as a consequence of *īmān* is a powerful tool for the evaluation of the Muslim situation, for a critique of self and society. By restoring this link, the consciousness is activated to undertake this important task. This generates humility not arrogance; *istighfār* not *istikbār*.

The heart and core of the Prophetic message is clear. So are its implications. The *ulūhīyyah* (godship) and *rubūbīyyah* (lordship) of Allah are not merely ideas or theories. Let us live *for* Him and *under* Him. Let us love what He loves and like what He likes; let us dislike what He dislikes and hate what He hates. Let there be no territories carved up, no frontiers set up, in serving Him. Let us passionately involve ourselves in our society to do His will, but still more passionately let our hearts yearn for His pleasure. Similarly, let the life of the Prophet live again in our lives. Let his message, his conduct, his goals, be our message, our conduct and our goals. So also, let nothing motivate us but an intense longing to please our Lord in the world to come, but let that expectation give a decisive shape to our life *here*. The hope of a meaningful future must make us dare to confront the risk and overcome the tribulations that lie in living by His will in the totality of our existence. We, as Muslims, have but one option: to strive to change the world to conform to the model given to mankind by the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him.

That is what the Qur'ān demands; that is what Sayyid Mawdudi confronts us with. However disturbing the questions may be, they should not be evaded any longer. Even at the risk of the whole present way of living being

turned upside down, we must answer them. Shall we be the helpers of Allah? Shall we vie with one another, racing to forgiveness from our Lord, and to the Garden which encompasses the heavens and the earth? For such is the reward of those who are God-fearing and godly, who struggle in the way of God and they neither faint nor waver and neither weaken nor become powerless against the power that be.

The Islamic Foundation,
Leicester
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Khurram Murad

NOTES

1 See p. 114.

2 See p. 113.

3 See pp. 79–80.

4 See pp. 77–8.

5 See p. 71.

6 See pp. 94, 104–5.

7 See pp. 112–21.

8 See pp. 114, 116, 118, 120, 135.

9 Yūnus 10: 31–5, al-'Ankabūt 29: 61, Sabā' 34: 24.

10 Āl 'Imrān 3: 64.

11 Al-Baqarah 2: 93.

12 Ibid., 2: 31.

13 See Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, (Fontana, London, 1981) for a study on this subject, to which I am indebted for this discussion.

14 See Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, (Vintage, New York, 1963), which catalogues more than 160 definitions of culture.

15 See Raymond Williams, op. cit., pp. 126–9; also John Plamenatz, *Ideology*, (Pall Mall, London, 1970).

16 Raymond Williams, op. cit., p. 15.

17 For some useful insights, see Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Koran* (McGill U.P., Montreal, 1966) and *God and Man in the Koran: A Semantical Analysis of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (Keio University, Tokyo, 1964). No Muslim scholar has so far given exclusive attention to this important area of study. However, some valuable and insightful

information can be found in Ḥamīduddīn Farāhī, *Majmū'a Tafāsīr Farāhī* (Lahore, 1973; tr. from Arabic) and in Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī's outstanding 8-volume Urdu Qur'ānic commentary, *Tadabbur Qur'ān* (Lahore 1967–1980). Both have explored the Qur'ānic vocabulary in the context of the *Jāhilīyyah* poetry and its subsequent development and transformation in the Qur'ān. I must confess my ignorance of similar material in Arabic.

18 Narrated by 'Umar, giving an account of the question Jibrail put to the Prophet and his answers. (*Bukhārī*)

19 See on Da'wah, Fuṣṣilat 41: 33, al-An'ām 6: 19, al-Mā'idah 5: 67; on Hijrah and Jihad, al-Anfāl 8: 72, al-Tawbah 9: 19–21, al-Ḥujurāt 49: 15, al-Ṣaff 61: 9–10, al-Baqarah 2: 216; on *Shahādah al-ḥaqq,* al-Baqarah 2: 143, al-Ḥajj 22: 77–8; on *Iqāmah al-dīn,* al-Shūrā 42: 13; on *'Ilā' kalimah-Allah,* al-Tawbah 9: 40; on social order and justice, al-Ḥadīd 57: 25; al-Mā'idah 5: 8, al-Nisā' 4: 134; for the supremacy of Islam, al-Fatḥ 48: 28. Also see the notes within text where most of these Qur'ānic verses have been quoted.

20 First and foremost among them is Mustafa Kamal Ataturk (d. 1938), who totally abandoned Islam and aggressively suppressed it. He abolished the Caliphate and the Shari'ah courts (1924), and all religious institutions — tariqas, *tekkas*, madrassahs (1925); introduced civil, criminal and commercial codes borrowed from the Swiss, Italian and German laws (starting 1926); replaced the Arabic script with the Latin (1928); banned the Adhan in Arabic (1933); deleted from the Constitution the clause 'the religion of the Turkish State is Islam' (1928) and put in 'laicism' (secularism) as its fundamental principle. In 1938 religion was banished, by law, from politics. Of course, he had to impose a number of martial laws to make the people comply with these 'reforms'. After him, the most ardent, secret wish of almost every Muslim ruler — like Sukarno of Indonesia, Ayub Khan of Pakistan, Nasser of Egypt, Bourguiba of Tunisia — has been to follow in his footsteps, though not always did they fully succeed. Sukarno refused to mention Islam in the Constitution (only 'belief in the One and Only God' should do); crushed Darul Islam; banned Masjumi (1960); and opposed any role for Islam in public life, imitating Snouck Hurgrounje's Ethical Policy. Ayub Khan dropped 'Islamic' from the name of Pakistan (but had to reintroduce it); banned the Jama'at Islami in 1964 (later annulled by the Supreme Court).

As against all Western experiences and theories, like those of Max Weber, Alasdair MacIntyre and Daniel Lerner, in the Muslim lands, significantly, secularisation has always been imported and imposed from the top through brute force. It has not been an inevitable evolutionary consequence of phenomena like industrialisation, rationalisation and calculus of choice.

21 Many Muslim scholars in our time have argued in this manner, especially against those who have generated Islamic movements like the Jama'at Islami and Ikhwan al-Muslimun. For example, see Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī, *Islamic Concept of Prophethood* (Lucknow, 1976, originally published in Arabic; Urdu version available as *Maṣab Nubuwwat awr us kay 'Ālī Muqām Ḥāmilīn*).

22 This was the unanimous view in the early Islamic era. In addition to the writings of contemporary scholars like Sayyid Mawdudi, Ḥasan al-Bannā, Sayyid Qutb, or of those in the recent past like Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Shehu Usmān dān Fodio, Shāh Walīullāh, one will find this is taken up equally forcefully in the earlier writings like those of al-Ghazālī and Ibn Taymīya.

23 A fine study of how the deviation from the ideal took place can be found in Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Khilāfat-o-Mulūkīyat* (Idara Tarjumanul Quran, Lahore 1975, 8th ed.) of which an English version under the title *The Islamic State: A Study in Ideal and Deviation* is planned for publication by the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, U.K.

24 The Qur'ān explicitly describes Christian asceticism as 'innovation' (*bid'ah*) as against what was enjoined upon them: 'seeking the pleasure of Allah'. (al-Ḥadīd 57: 27) This significantly is placed in the same context as that which describes the establishment of justice as one goal of the *Risālat*. The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, declared: 'Every people have their "religious asceticism", the asceticism of my people (Ummah) is the Jihad in the way of Allah.' (*Aḥmad*)

25 G. H. Jansen, *Militant Islam* (Pan, London, 1979) p. 17.

26 See Mawdudi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*, (Lahore, 1963). Also Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Tārikh Da'wat-o-'Azimat*, 3 vols. (Lucknow).

27 A unique feature of Islamic civilisation is the extent to which Muslim rulers were, firstly, subject to law and, secondly, led lives

of personal piety and other-worldliness, almost like saints. 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-Azīz, the Umayyad Caliph, was the first who gave up all worldly comforts and luxuries after becoming Caliph and lived frugally and simply. Later on, there were emperors who even earned their living by sewing and writing (like the last great Mughal king in India, Aurangzeb).

28 Indeed the Sufi *bay'ah* and brotherhood can be considered as the nearest thing to an organisation in an avowedly Islamic state which accepted the supremacy of the Shari'ah. Many early Sufis were actively engaged in politics, law and scholarship; they often came into conflict with rulers. Even in the recent past most of the revival and Jihad movements, whether internal or against colonialism, had strong Sufi impulses or were led by Sufis. Some notable among them being: al-Muwaḥḥidīn led by Muhammad Ibn Tumart (who was inspired by al-Ghazālī); al-Murābiṭin; Naqshbandis in Turkestan, who are to this day active in Turkey, Russian Turkistan and to whom belonged Shaikh Aḥmad Sarhindī of India who effectively reversed the anti-Islam tide launched by the Mughal emperor Akbar; the Tariqa and Zawiya network throughout Africa; Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī's Jihad against the British (1826–1831) and those of 'Abd al-Qādir in North Africa (1832–1897) and Shāmil in Dagistan and North Caucasus (1830–1859).

29 The Qur'ān makes this abundantly clear. See al-Anbiyā' 21: 25; also Ch. 2, note 7.

Outside Islam, the Bible imparts the same message. Thus God spoke through Moses: 'Worship no god but Me. Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth. Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the Lord your God and I tolerate no rivals.' (Ex. 20: 3–5) So He spoke through all the Israeli prophets; and through Jesus: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.' (Mt. 4: 10)

Under the influence of evolutionary theories, and especially after Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), the most widely held notion in the West has been that religion began in animism and evolved through beliefs and practices like those of ancestor worship and polytheism to the higher form of monotheism — somewhere between the eighth and fifth centuries B.C. (E. B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1871). This view has been strongly challenged, notably by Father Wilhelm Schmidt (*The Origin of the Idea of God*, 1912): first there was belief in One God, which came to be overlaid by

animistic, polytheistic and other elements. Evidence from even very primitive religions lends little support to the evolutionary theory. On the contrary, the idea of a supreme God, the Creator, prevails almost universally, even in the most primitive tribal religions of Africa, among people as far apart as the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego and the Arctic. Strikingly, they have very sophisticated ideas about creation and a supreme ruler, whom they do not represent through images.

Zoroastrianism is often credited with many of the central ideas in Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Zarathustra — whose time and place are a riddle (500 or 2500 B.C.?) — first encountered an angel as an emissary from God; called people to have faith in Him alone and Judgement after death; converted a king, Vishtaspa; and left behind scriptures: a familiar story. Even in Hinduism — so extensively polytheistic — and in Buddhism — thought to reject any idea of God — one can find, under all the layers of *shirk*, the idea of One God. Both have scriptures, too. Buddha is considered above all gods and a Buddhist's three-fold creed is centred on seeking refuge in Buddha (God), Dhamma (Book and Law), Sangha (community). The idea of worshipping one supreme being is present alike in Upanishads, Veds, and Bhagavad-Gita. Somewhere he is called Brahman (holy Power which sustains everything); 'he makes all, he knows all, the self-caused, the knower, the time of time, . . . the master of nature and man.' The sage Yajnavalkya, when asked how many gods there are, replied, 'One'. Sometimes he is called Shiva (keeps the whole universe in being), somewhere Vishnu. Were not these 'attributes' transformed into images? Were not Rama and Krishna messengers of God who were later turned into gods incarnate?

30 Al-Baqarah 2: 207, 85. The goal of ceaseless striving is forcefully projected in the Qur'ān through the powerful imagery of words like 'So run toward Allah' (al-Dhāriyāt 51: 50), 'Vie with one another' (al-Ḥadīd 57: 21) and 'Hasten!' (Āl 'Imrān 3: 133)

31 *A Dictionary of Social Sciences,* ed. Julius Gould and William L. Kolb (Free Press, New York, 1965), p. 524; also H. D. Lasswell and A. Kaplan, *Power and Society* (Yale U.P., New Haven, 1950).

32 *The Harper Dictionary of Modern Thought,* ed. Allan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass (Harper & Row, New York, 1977), p. 490.

33 Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Bk. I, Ch. 3, quoted in Ibid., p. 490.

34 Bertrand de Jouvenal, tr. J. F. Huntington, *Power: The Natural History of its Growth* (Hutchinson, London, 1948) is an illuminating, fascinating study on how, within the framework of Western concepts of sovereignty and society, state power has grown on an unprecedented scale.

35 Quoted in Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (Book Club Associates, London, 1979), p. 99. Protagoras (Circa 500–400 B.C.) was a sophist, who also wrote 'with regard to gods, I cannot feel sure either that they are or that they are not, nor what they are like . . .'

36 F. W. Neitzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, quoted in Ibid., pp. 732–4.

37 Race has been an important factor for many civilisations, but never the object of devotion as in the West, especially in the past few centuries. Greeks and Romans, too, believed in their racial superiority, but 'far and away the most widespread, enduring and virulent form of racism and the costliest in terms of human suffering has been that which developed in Western Europe and its colonial extensions in Africa, Asia, Australia and the Western Hemisphere'. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., Vol. 15, p. 362). As a result of Western colonial expansion, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, and the views of persons like Gobineau, Chamberlain, Kipling, Hitler, and others, the superiority of the white, Aryan race became an article of faith for scientists, politicians and masses alike.

38 Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, quoted in Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociology of Emile Durkheim* (Heinemann, London, 1975), pp. 87, 172, 180.

39 Quoted in Leslie Stevenson, *Seven Theories of Human Nature* (Oxford U.P., New York, 1981) pp. 3, 51. Also see Pelican's *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*.

40 de Jouvenal, *Power*, op. cit., p. 23.

41 N. Machiavelli, *Discourses*, quoted in *Political Ideas*, ed. David Thomson (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1982), p. 23.

42 C. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, quoted in John Dunn, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future* (Cambridge U.P., Cambridge, 1979), p. 55.

42 Quoted in de Jouvenal, *Power*, op. cit., p. 40.

44 Quoted in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Vol. IV (Scribner, New York, 1973), p. 315.

45 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathon*, Part II, Ch. XVIII, quoted in *Social and Political Philosophy*, ed. John Somerville and Ronald E. Santoni (Doubleday, New York, 1963), pp. 152–7.

46 J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book I, Ch. VII, quoted in Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 669–73.

47 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, quoted in Thomson, *Political Ideas*, op. cit., p. 139.

48 See Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam* (Islamic Publications, Lahore, 1974), pp. 3–14 and *Qur'ān kī Chār Bunyādi Iṣṭilāhain* (Islamic Publications, Lahore, 1978, 13th ed.) in Urdu.

49 *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, op. cit., p. 516.

50 Ibid., p. 516. Also see Lasswell and Kaplan, op. cit., p. 240; M. Meyerson and E. C. Banefield, *Politics, Planning and the Public Interest*, (Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1955), pp. 303–12.

51 The perils of politics for individual morality and spirituality are quite obvious. In this respect, very significantly the Qur'ān emphasises the path of *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness). Especially see Āl 'Imrān 3: 133–48. Nothing else is on the lips of people who are praised as a paragon of godliness and perseverance except: 'Our Lord, forgive our sins and whatever excesses we committed in our affairs.'

52 For example see Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982) pp. 13–14.

53 Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Ashraf, Lahore, 1980), p. 124.

54 There is almost total unanimity among the Orientalists on this. The very title of Montgomery Watt's condensation of his two volumes on the life of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, is intended to convey this theme: *Muhammad the Prophet and Statesman*. Kenneth Cragg, who loves to sing this song whenever he has an opportunity, perhaps represents all of them well, albeit with his particular gentlemanly civility. [The historical fulcrum of Islam is the Hijrah] . . . 'the supreme crisis of biography where the faith has located and opted its genesis . . . It is the decision arising from the question: "How should the Prophethood succeed

. . .'' . . . It was a decision for community, for resistance, for external victory, for pacification and rule . . . Some have argued a marked deterioration in the character of Muhammad in the Madinan years. That is probably too simple, mistaking a symptom for its source. The deeper truth is that at some point Muhammad elected for a religious authority, armed with sinews of war and means of government . . .' (*The Call of the Minaret*, Oxford U.P., New York, 1964), p. 93.

55 Besides the Prophet's, blessings and peace be on him, own very early explanations of his mission and his effort to find a piece of God's earth where he might establish His kingdom (see Ch. I, note 3), his journey to Ta'if and the content of pledges with the Yathribites at 'Aqaba provide ample evidence in this regard. Within the Qur'ānic text the evidence is very clear in Surah al-Isrā'. (The Ascension took place just after the journey to Ta'if and before the 'Aqaba pledge.) Here a reference is made to the history of Israel (exodus, power, rebellion, punishment); a prayer explicitly refers to Hijrah and its purpose (80–1) and finally, a comprehensive charter is given for the envisaged socio-political life (22–39).

56 It is important to note that, in Islam, this absolute authority is not transferred to any human individual or institution. After the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, none can claim to be the representative of God, or infallible. The Qur'ān — its understanding and interpretation — is not entrusted to anyone's charge; indeed no institution is named for this purpose. Muslims are given the right to dispute with their *Amīrs*, in which case the final authority are God and His Messenger. (al-Nisā' 4: 59) This effectively eliminates the possibilities of absolutism as that into which the Christian church fell. Compare Gregory VII's *Dictatus papae* (1075) regarding the Roman Bishop: 'That he can be judged by no man . . . That the Roman Church has never erred, nor ever, by the testimony of scripture, shall err, to all eternity' (quoted by Harold J. Berman, *The Interaction of Law and Religion*, p. 159).

57 It is ironic that some Muslim scholars and organisations recite the 'Merits of Jihad' and the glorious, inspiring stories of sacrifices by Mujahidin day in and day out but lift not even a finger which could take them on that path.

58 See Ch. 2, note 14, especially al-Nisā' 4: 95.

59 See Ch. 2, notes 13, 14 and 16; especially al-Ḥujurāt 49: 15; al-Tawbah 9: 24, 44–5, 81–4.

60 That *ẓulm* and evil moral conduct is the sole cause of the adverse fate that a community faces is an emphatic and frequent theme in the Qur'ān. For the link between advancement in this world and moral values see Yūnus 10: 98, al-A'rāf 7: 96, al-Mā'idah 5: 66, Hūd 11: 3, 52; Nūḥ 71: 10–12.

61 This is another favourite, constantly recurring motif in the Orientalist writing. Again I would quote Kenneth Cragg, as a representative sample: 'It is in community, in political expression and political sovereignty, that Islam is realizable. The true law in the custody of the true community is the condition of the true society . . . We may perhaps go so far as to say that within a Muslim concept the religious ideology, not simply requires but *is* a communal order realizable by political sovereignty within the life of this world. This is the ultimate meaning of law in Islam and of Islam as law. Even the phrase "Islam as law" is ambiguous, however, since it may imply that Islam could also be, in a parallel sense, something else. It is just that something else that the term "Islam as law" is here meant to rule out' (*The Call of the Minaret*, op. cit., p. 142).

62 Henry Skolimowski, 'Power: Myth and Reality', *Alternatives*, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 29.

63 Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science*, (Oxford U.P., Oxford, 1978), p. 246.

64 Arthur Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers* (Hutchinson, London, 1968), pp. 540–1.

65 de Jouvenal, *Power*, op. cit., p. 302.

1

Objective of the Islamic Movement

The objective of the Islamic movement, in this world, is revolution in leadership. A leadership that has rebelled against God and His guidance and is responsible for the suffering of mankind has to be replaced by a leadership that is God-conscious, righteous and committed to following Divine guidance.[1]

Striving to achieve this noble purpose, we believe, will secure God's favour in this world and in the next.[2]

It is regrettable that both Muslims and non-Muslims have tended to lose sight of the significance of this revolution. Muslims all too often consider it necessary only from the point of view of political expediency, and have no appreciation of its central place in their religion.[3] Non-Muslims, partly from prejudice and partly from lack of information, do not understand that ungodly leadership is at the root of the evils afflicting humanity and that it is essential for human well-being that the affairs of the world should be directed by moral and God-fearing people.

Whenever corruption is let loose in the world, whatever injustice is done, whenever tyranny or oppression exists, whatever poison flows in the veins of human culture, economic life and politics, whatever misuse of resources and human knowledge for destruction instead of welfare and enlightenment there may be, the reason is bad leadership.

There is no lack of good and high-minded people in society; the problem is that power is concentrated in the

hands of people immersed in materialism and ungodliness.

To change this situation it is not enough to preach sermons, exhort people to obey and worship God or to invite them to adopt high moral standards. Rather it is necessary for morally-just people to search each other out and strive to achieve enough collective power to wrest control of society from the morally corrupt. What is needed to change the centre of power and authority is *effort*. The revolution requires a coming together of the righteous in a common cause.

NOTES

1 This implies a change of leadership at all levels of life — intellectual, moral, technological, social, economic and political, national and international — and the reorganisation of human life to accord with the ideals and values revealed by God for the guidance of mankind.

2 The objective of the Islamic movement is the same as the objective of all the Messengers of God:

> It is He who has sent forth His Messenger with the Guidance and the Way of Truth, so that he makes it prevail over all other ways (religions), even though *Mushriks* (who take gods beside God) may hate it. (al-Tawbah 9: 33; al-Ṣaff 61: 9; al-Fatḥ 48: 28)
>
> Indeed We sent forth Our Messengers with clear messages, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that men may establish justice. And We sent down Iron, in which there is great power, and many benefits for men, and so that God might establish who helps Him and His Messengers [believing in the] Unseen. (al-Ḥadīd 57: 25)
>
> He has laid down for you as the Way that which He charged Noah with — and that We have revealed to you — and that which We charged Abraham with, and Moses, and Jesus: establish the Way, and follow not different paths [regarding it]. (al-Shūrā 42: 13)
>
> And when We took a pledge from all the Prophets — from you (O Muhammad), and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus the son of Mary — We took from them a solemn pledge. (al-Aḥzāb 33: 7)
>
> Then God sent down on him [the Prophet] His [gift of] inner peace and helped him with forces you could not see, and He made the word of the disbelievers the lowest, and God's word supreme. (al-Tawbah 9: 40)

Thus the Qur'ān makes it unmistakably clear that to bring all human life under the sovereignty of one God has been the fundamental mission that He entrusted to the Messengers, and hence, after the appearance of the last of the Messengers, to those who follow him. This leaves no doubt that all claimants to power must be dethroned — for they are false and have no right to hold power over God's creation — and leadership of mankind must belong to those who can lead it in accordance with the guidance and way of life given by God.

3 Muslims have gradually either diluted or transformed their original goal, which is so unequivocally stated in the Qur'ān, which was so unmistakably pursued by the Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, and which he so emphatically entrusted to his Ummah. Apart from the most significant fact of his migration to Madina and his battles with the leaders of Kufr in Arabia, many incidents from his Makkan life bear ample testimony that, from the very beginning, no one was in any doubt about his real goal — neither he himself nor his opponents.

In one incident, 'Utbah Ibn Rabī'ah, a leading Makkan chief, was shrewd enough to understand and foresee the nature and outcome of the Prophet's mission, blessings and peace be on him, when, after having gone to him to persuade him to desist from his mission, he heard some part of the Qur'ān from him. After he returned to his companions, the Quraysh leaders, he told them thus:

> Men of Quraysh, take my advice and do as I say. Stand not between this man and what he is doing for, by God, the words that I have heard from him will spread quickly. If the Arabs kill him, others would have rid you of him; and if he overpowers the Arabs, his sovereignty will be your sovereignty, his power your power, and you will prosper because of him. (*Ibn Isḥāq*)

In another incident, when the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, was going from tribe to tribe summoning them to God, telling them that he was His Messenger and asking them to take up the cause of Islam, the chief of Banū 'Āmir Ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah, Bayḥarah Ibn Firās was also equally quick to grasp the outcome of the Prophet's mission.

> He said: By God, if I could take this man away from the Quraysh, I could overpower the Arabs with him. And then he

> tried to bargain with the Prophet: If we pledge allegiance to you and God grants you victory over your opponents, shall we have a share in power? The Prophet replied: Power belongs to God alone who places it wherever He wills. (*Ibn Isḥāq*)

The third incident which brings into sharp focus the goal that the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, had before him, even when the Muslims were being severely persecuted in Makka, has been narrated by Khabbāb Ibn al-Aratt:

> We complained to Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, as he was reclining under the shade of the Ka'bah with his cloak under his head: Will you not ask for victory for us? Will you not pray for us? The Prophet said: There were such people before you that a man would be seized and a pit would be dug for him in which he would be thrown, then a saw would be brought and placed over his head and he would be cut into two, and his flesh would be combed away from his bones by iron combs — still nothing would turn him away from his religion. By God, He will complete this mission until a rider will travel from Ṣan'ā' to Ḥaḍrmawt and will have no fear but of God, and no worry but about a wolf that might harm his cattle — but you make haste. (*Bukhārī*)

Finally, this goal was most tellingly affirmed on the day of the battle of Badr, when the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, returned to his hut and beseeched God for help and victory in the following words: *O God, if this group perish today, You will not be worshipped any more. (Ibn Isḥāq)* This was both a petition and a pledge; an expression of the final goal of all his strivings, in which the battle of Badr occupies a very central place.

The same was the import of the mission and message of all the Messengers: that is why they all first addressed the leaders of their people, that is why those leaders, realising full well where the call to serve no god but God would hit their interests, were the first to array themselves against their message, opposing and persecuting them. Nor did those leaders hide their fears and apprehensions in this respect:

> He [Moses] said: [He is] the Lord of the East and the Lord of the West, and of all between them, if you would but think. Said he [Pharaoh]: If you take a god other than me, I shall surely imprison you. (al-Shu'arā' 26: 28–9)

And Pharaoh said: Let me slay Moses, and let him call his Lord. I fear that he may change your way of life, or he may cause disorder to prevail in the land. (al-Mu'min 40: 26)

He [Moses] wants to drive you out of your lands. (al-A'räf 7: 110)

But the great ones among his [Noah's] people, who rejected the truth, said: This [man] is nothing but a human being like yourselves, who wants to make himself superior to you. (al-Mu'minün 23: 24)

2

Power and Society

It is not difficult to see, even with little insight, that the factors which determine human advance or decline depend largely on the nature and the role of those who exercise control over the sources of power and direct the affairs of society.[1]

To take an example: a train will move in the direction the driver intends it to go. The passengers are in his hands. They will have to go in whatever direction the train goes. If they want to go in some other direction, they will have to change either the train or the driver. In the same way, human civilisation travels in the direction determined by the people who control the centres of power.

It is clear that mankind can hardly resist moving along the road shown by those who lead, if only by virtue of the fact that leaders control all resources, hold the reins of power and possess the means of shaping and moulding minds and behaviour. They have the power to influence individuals as well as social systems and moral values.[2]

If power and leadership are vested in God-fearing people, society moves along the right lines, and even the wicked have to follow certain rules. Good flourishes, and evils, if not altogether eradicated, are contained.[3]

Conversely, if leadership is in the hands of those who have turned away from God, the lifestyle of that society drifts towards rebellion against God, towards man's exploitation by man and towards moral degeneration and cultural pollution. This, in turn, leads to a general corruption of ideas, affecting the arts and sciences, politics and social

economy, culture, ethics and behaviour, law and justice.[4]

In such circumstances, evil flourishes and good is starved of the conditions it needs to take root and grow. And the virtuous find themselves swimming against the tide of an evil societal system. All their energies go into resistance rather than, as they would want, into the positive creation of a new order of society. Consider an individual in a crowd. He needs no effort to move along with it, but should he decide to move against it, he can hardly walk even a few steps; more likely the crowd would push him much further in the opposite direction.

These are not just theoretical generalisations. History bears them out. In our own country, attitudes, values and standards of behaviour have changed radically over the last century.[5] Everything is in flux and the question is: What, in the last analysis, is the origin of this transformation? The answer, surely, is leadership.

An objective appraisal of this period of our history shows that everything began to change with the change of leadership. The powers that came to rule over this country have succeeded in transforming both individual and society according to their own wishes. Is it not a fact that even the descendants of the very persons who yesterday led the resistance against those powers are today adrift in the current of the times and that the change that had overtaken the rest of the society has now penetrated even into their homes? Is it not a fact that among the descendants of the most pious and revered religious leaders have appeared those who even doubt the existence of God, of revelation and of prophethood? Changes in leadership and society have metamorphosed the entire lifestyle of a people.

In view of this evidence, is it difficult to accept that the decisive factor in human affairs is leadership — that is, who controls the sources and organs of power in a society?

This is not peculiar to the present; it has always been so. 'The people follow the ways of their rulers' is a very old saying. That is why, according to Hadith, the responsibility for the advance or decline of a people rests on their learned men and rulers.[6]

The Main Objective of Islam

Islam desires, above all, that people should commit themselves entirely to God's Truth and that they should serve and worship only God.[7] Similarly, it desires that the law of God should become the law by which people lead their lives.[8] It demands, too, that injustice be eradicated, that those evils be wiped out which incur God's anger and that those virtues and social values be fostered which are liked by God.[9]

These aims cannot be realised so long as power and leadership in society are in the hands of disbelieving rulers gone astray, and the followers of Islam confine themselves to worship rites, that too depending on the often arbitrary patronage and support of those very rulers. Only when power in society is in the hands of the Believers and the righteous, can the objectives of Islam be realised.[10] It is therefore the primary duty of all those who aspire to please God to launch an organised struggle, sparing neither life nor property, for this purpose. The importance of securing power for the righteous is so fundamental that, neglecting this struggle, one has no means left to please God.[11]

Consider, why the Qur'ān and the Hadith put so much emphasis on the necessity to establish a community (*Jamā'at*) based on submission to the Divine will, on the duty to hear and obey — so much so that, if anyone rebels against such a community, it is incumbent on all Muslims to fight him even though he may profess belief in the unity of God and perform Prayers and observe Fasts.[12]

The reason is that the establishment or preservation of a system of life based on Divine guidance — the ultimate purpose of Islam — requires the good to possess collective organisational power; anyone who threatens to weaken that collectivity is guilty of a crime so serious that it cannot be expiated by the performance of Prayers nor the profession of God's unity.

Again, consider why it is that such importance is given to Jihad that the Qur'ān condemns as hypocrites those who evade it?[13] Jihad is but another name for the attempt to establish the Divine order; the Qur'ān therefore declares it to be a touchstone of belief. In other words, people who have

faith in their hearts will neither succumb to domination by an evil system, nor begrudge giving their wealth and even their lives in the struggle to establish Islam. Those who show weakness in such situations cast doubt on the reality of their faith.[14]

This is not meant to give a complete exposition of this matter, but what I have explained should be adequate to demonstrate that, from the standpoint of Islam, establishment of the leadership of the good is of central and fundamental importance. Those who profess faith in this religion cannot fulfil their duty merely by trying to pattern their lives on outward appearances. The nature of their faith requires them to concentrate all their efforts upon wresting leadership from unbelieving and corrupt men in order to entrust it to the righteous, and upon establishing and maintaining the way of life that has been ordained for the conduct of the world according to the will of God.

Because this end is unattainable without the highest degree of collective effort, there must exist a God-fearing community devoted to the sole purpose of establishing and maintaining the sovereignty of God on earth.[15]

Even if there were only one man of faith on earth, it would not be right for him, on the plea of being isolated and powerless, to resign himself to the system of evil. Nor would it be right for him to search for legal excuses in the Shari'ah (Islamic code of life) to try to justify an isolated, truncated religious existence under the domination of Kufr (disbelief in God).[16]

On the contrary, the only right course for him would lie in calling all servants of God to the way of God.

If no one should respond to his call, it is nevertheless a hundred thousand times better that he pursues the straight path and continues to call the people to God than that he succumbs to the promptings of evil, plays to the tunes of misguided persons and follows the ways of God's rebels. And, even if a few respond, he should immediately launch a movement to achieve the objective I have mentioned.

This, friends, is the conclusion of whatever little knowledge I have and whatever understanding of the Qur'ān and Hadith I have attained. This is the main demand that the

Qur'ān makes upon you. This has been the life mission of all the prophets. I am open to be convinced against this, but only in the light of the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Messenger.

NOTES

1 Nowhere is this reality brought home in a more telling and awe-inspiring manner than in the dialogues which will take place between the leaders and their followers when human life will enter the next world after death and resurrection. They not only focus on the crucial role of leadership in human affairs, but also serve as a warning to the followers: they shall not be able to transfer any of their guilt to their leaders, nor will the leaders be able to help them, rather they will renounce all ties then — only regret and remorse, disillusionment and bitterness will be their lot:

> When those who were followed shall disown their followers, and they will see the punishment, and their ties will be cut to pieces. And those who followed shall say: Would that we returned again so that we could disown them, as they have disowned us. (al-Baqarah 2: 166–7)
>
> Those who had been weak [on earth] will say to those who gloried in arrogance: Had it not been for you, we would have been believers.
>
> Those who had been arrogant will say to those who had been weak: What, did we bar you from the Guidance after it came to you? Nay, it was but you who were guilty.
>
> But those who had been weak will say to those who were arrogant: Nay, but [you] scheming night and day, when you were ordering us to disbelieve in God, and to set up compeers to Him. (Sabā' 34: 31–3)
>
> On the Day when their faces would be turned about in the Fire, they shall say: Oh, would that we had obeyed God and the Messenger! And they shall say: Our Lord, we obeyed our leaders and our great men, and it is they who led us astray from the right path. (al-Aḥzāb 33: 66–7)
>
> And when they will argue with one another in the Fire, and then the weak will say unto those who gloried in their arrogance: Why, we were but your followers, will you avail us now against some share of this Fire? Then those who had

been arrogant will say: We are all in it. Indeed God has passed judgement upon His servants. (al-Mu'min 40: 47–8)

2 To say this is not to deny the role of individual initiative and effort. The point the author is trying to impress is that individuals and communities operate within a socio-political framework and the role of leadership, in its widest sense, is immense in determining their behaviour. It is God-fearing *individuals* to whom the leadership must finally belong to ensure the well-being of human society.

3 The following Qur'ânic statement indicates both the purpose and the consequence of good leadership:

> Who, if we establish them on earth, they establish the Prayer, and give Alms, and enjoin the doing of the right and forbid the doing of the wrong. (al-Ḥajj 22: 41)

4 Both general principles and concrete historical situations have been cited by the Qur'ân to describe the corruption and disorder caused in human society when power is controlled by bad leaders:

> And even so We made in every land the great ones to become its [greatest] evil-doers. (al-An'ām 6: 123)
>
> When it is Our will to destroy [the people of] a town, We command those in it who live at ease so that they act rebelliously therein, then the sentence [of doom] against it takes effect, and We totally destroy it. (al-Isrā' 17: 16)
>
> And some men there are whose views about the life of this world please you, and he cites God as witness to what is in his heart, and he is most stubborn in argument. But whenever he gains power, he strives in the earth to spread corruption therein and to destroy the tillage and the human race; and God loves not corruption. (al-Baqarah 2: 204–5)
>
> She [the Queen of Sheba] said: Surely kings, whenever they enter a country, corrupt it and make the noblest of its people the most abject. And this is the way they [always] behave. (al-Naml 27: 34)
>
> Indeed Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and divided its people into castes, abasing one group of them, slaughtering their sons and sparing their women; for he was one of those who spread corruption. (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 4)

> Thus he [Pharaoh] made his people unsteady, and they obeyed him; surely they were disobedient to God. (Zukhruf 43: 54)
>
> And We sent Moses with Our signs, and a manifest authority, to Pharaoh and his great ones; but they followed Pharaoh's bidding, and Pharaoh's bidding was not right-guided. He shall go before his people on the Day of Resurrection leading them to the Fire — evil is the destination to be led down to! (Hūd 11: 96–8)
>
> That was 'Ād: they rejected the messages of their Lord, and rebelled against His Messenger, and followed the bidding of every arrogant tyrant. (Hūd 11: 59)

5 This talk was given in 1945 in what was then undivided India; the reference is therefore to the period before partition, though it would equally apply to the present-day society.

6 The following Hadith illustrates this point:

> Ziyād Ibn Ḥudayr says: Umar said to me: Do you know what will destroy Islam? When I said that I did not, he said: It will be destroyed by the mistakes of scholars, the arguing of hypocrites using the Book, and the government by leaders who are in error. (*Darimī*)
>
> Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: There are two classes in my Ummah — if they are right the Ummah is set right; if they go wrong the Ummah goes wrong: they are the rulers and the scholars. (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in *Kitab al-'Ilm* and Abū Nu'aym in *Ḥilyah al-Awliyā'*)

The main responsibility for the degeneration in Israel is also placed, by the Qur'ān, on their rabbis and leaders:

> You see many of them [in Israel] vying with one another in sinning and transgression and in their devouring the unlawful; evil are the things they do. Why do not the masters and rabbis forbid them from making sinful statements, and devouring the unlawful; evil are the things they contrive. (al-Mā'idah 5: 62–3)
>
> O Believers, many of the rabbis and monks indeed devour the wealth of the people wrongfully and bar from God's way. (al-Tawbah 9: 34)

7 This has been the message and ideology to which all the Messengers of God invited their addressees, whenever and wherever they came, and which remains the message of the Islamic movement for all times to come:

> And We never sent a Messenger, before you, except that We revealed to him that: There is no god but I, so serve Me alone. (al-Anbiyā' 21: 25)
>
> O my people, serve God only. You have no god other than He. (al-A'rāf 7: 59 [Noah], 65 [Hūd], 73 [Ṣāliḥ], 85 [Shu'ayb], also Hūd 11: 2 [The Prophet], 26 [Noah], 50 [Hūd], 61 [Ṣāliḥ], 84 [Shu'ayb]; and also see al-Baqarah 2: 21)
>
> And I have not created Jinn and mankind except to serve Me. (al-Dhāriyāt 51: 56)
>
> The only [true] Way in the sight of God is self-surrender unto Him [*islām*]. (Āl 'Imrān 3: 19)
>
> O Believers, enter wholly into *islām* [self-surrender unto God]. (al-Baqarah 2: 208)
>
> And whoso desires a way other than *islām* [self-surrender unto God], it will never be accepted from him. (Āl 'Imrān 3: 85)

8 Sovereignty belongs to God alone; only He is the rightful Master and Lord who should determine what is lawful and unlawful for His creation:

> To Him belongs the sovereignty over the heavens and the earth; He gives life, and He makes to die, and He has power over everything. (al-Ḥadīd 57: 2)
>
> Verily to Him belongs all creation and all authority, blessed be God, the Lord of all the worlds. (al-A'rāf 7: 54)
>
> Judgement [as to what is right and what is wrong] belongs only to God; He has commanded that you shall not serve any but Him. That is the right way; but most men know not. (Yūsuf 12: 40)
>
> And do not say, as to what your tongues falsely describe: 'This is lawful, and this is forbidden', thus forging lies against God; surely those who forge lies against God shall not prosper. (al-Naḥl 16: 116)

> Say: Have you considered that in the sustenance God has sent down for you, you have made some of it unlawful and some lawful? Say: Has God given you leave [to do this] or do you forge lies against God? (Yūnus 10: 59)
>
> It is not for any believing man or believing woman, when God and His Messenger have ruled in a matter, to have any authority for themselves in their affairs. For whoever rebels against God and His Messenger has gone astray into manifest error. (al-Aḥzāb 33: 36)

Anyone who claims the authority and power, independent of or in rebellion against God, to lay down the code of life for men in fact claims to be a god, and one who ascribes such power and authority to anyone associates him as a partner with God and commits *shirk*:

> And forsake the outward sins, and the inward; surely those who earn sins shall be recompensed for what they have earned. And eat not of that over which God's name has not been mentioned; for it is disobedience to God. The Satans inspire their friends to dispute with you [in this]; and if you obey them, you become *Mushrik* (who associate partners with God). (al-An'ām 6: 120–1)
>
> They have taken their rabbis and monks for their lords beside God. (al-Tawbah 9: 31)

When the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, was asked how could one take a rabbi or monk for a lord if he does not worship him, he clarified:

> You take as lawful whatever they declare lawful, and you take as unlawful whatever they declare unlawful. (*Aḥmad, Tirmidhī*)
>
> Who judges not according to what God has sent down — they are the disbelievers . . . they are the wrong-doers . . . they are the transgressors. (al-Mā'idah 5: 44–7)

9 Each Messenger combined his call to serve one God only with a critique of his society, pointing out the major social evils that corrupted it and inviting to virtues and values essential for a healthy social life. See in the Qur'ān: for Noah (Hūd 11: 27–30, al-Shu'arā' 26: 111), for Hūd (al-A'rāf 7: 69, Hūd 11: 52, 59, al-Shu'arā' 26: 128–30), for Ṣāliḥ (al-A'rāf 7: 74, Hūd 11: 61, 64–5,

al-Shu'arā' 26: 146–52), for Lūṭ (al-A'rāf 7: 80–1, al-Shu'arā' 26: 165–6), for Shu'ayb (al-A'rāf 7: 85–6, Hūd 11: 84–6).

Also, the Qur'ān lays down the general principle:

> Surely God enjoins justice, and the doing of good and giving to kinsfolk, and He forbids all indecency, wrongs and rebellion. (al-Naḥl 16: 90)

10 This important principle, described earlier as the objective of the Islamic movement, emanates directly and inevitably, from the ideology of Islam.

Firstly, it is important to note that the call made by every Messenger to serve and worship one God alone is always linked with the call to give up all idols, all false claimants to power, all leaders acting in rebellion against God:

> And indeed We sent forth in every people a Messenger, [saying]: Serve God only, and shun all powers in rebellion against God. (al-Naḥl 16: 36)

> Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord, and follow no masters other than Him; little do you remember. (al-A'rāf 7: 3)

Secondly, the Messengers did not confine themselves to merely conveying the message to serve one God and leaving people to themselves to worship Him as and when they wished; rather they made a positive demand that only they should be obeyed as leaders, for to obey them is to obey God. Thus they made it abundantly clear that power must be wrested from the ungodly and held by the godly. At the same time it was forbidden to accept anyone else as leader beside the Messengers:

> I am a trustworthy Messenger to you, be, then, conscious of God, and obey me. (al-Shu'arā' 26: 107–8 for Noah; 125–6 for Hūd; 143–4 for Ṣāliḥ; 162–3 for Lūṭ; 178–9 for Shu'ayb)

> We have not ever sent any messenger, but that he should be obeyed, by God's leave. (al-Nisā' 4: 64)

> Whoever obeys the Messenger, he has indeed obeyed God. (al-Nisā' 4: 80)

> Whatever the Messenger gives you take it; whatever he forbids you, give it up. And fear only God. (al-Ḥashr 59: 7)

> But, by your Lord, they do not believe unless they make you the judge in whatever matters arise between them, and then they find not in their hearts any impediment regarding what you have decided, but surrender in full submission. (al-Nisā' 4: 65)

> Have you not seen those who assert that they believe in what has been sent down to you, and what was sent down before you, and yet desire to summon one another to the rule of powers in rebellion against God, although they have been commanded to reject them? (al-Nisā' 4: 60)

Thirdly, the call to worship one God is accompanied by a definite and emphatic demand to renounce all leaders who follow the path of Kufr, indeed to disobey them and not to follow them:

> And obey not him whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance, and who follows his own desire, and whose every affair has turned into excess. (al-Kahf 18: 28)

> And obey not the commandments of those who exceed their bounds — those who spread corruption on earth, and set not things right. (al-Shu'arā' 26: 151–2)

> O Prophet, fear God and obey not the disbelievers and the hypocrites. (al-Aḥzāb 33: 1)

11 This duty is embodied in the duty of Hijrah and Jihad, to which the Qur'ān assigns a central and very prominent place in its teaching:

> And fight against them until there is no more rebellion against God and sovereignty is God's entirely. (al-Baqarah 2: 193)

> So obey not the Kafirs (disbelievers) but strive hard against them — an utmost striving . . . (al-Furqān 25: 52)

> O Prophet, strive hard against the Kafirs and the Munāfiqs (hypocrites), and be uncompromising with them. (al-Tawbah 9: 73; al-Taḥrīm 66: 9)

> Fight the leaders of Kufr, who have no [regard for their] pledges. (al-Tawbah 9: 12)

> Fight against those who believe not in God and the Last Day and do not make unlawful what God and His Messengers have made unlawful, and do not surrender to the Way of truth — among those who have been given the Book — until

they pay the exemption tax with a willing hand and have been humbled. (al-Tawbah 9: 29)

Go forth, light or heavy! Struggle hard in God's way with your possessions and your selves, this is good for you if you but knew it. (al-Tawbah 9: 41)

They who believe, and those who migrate and strive hard in God's way — it is they who hope for God's mercy. (al-Baqarah 2: 218)

Do you think you could enter Paradise without God establishing who of you strive hard and who are patient. (Āl 'Imrān 3: 142)

12 There are many injunctions to this effect:

Al-Ḥārith al-Ash'arī, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: I enjoin upon you five things: a collective life (*Jamā'at*), listening (*sam'a*), obeying (*iṭā'at*), migrating (Hijrah), and striving hard in God's way (Jihad). He who secedes from the *Jamā'at* as much as a span has cast off the tie of Islam from his neck, unless he returns to its fold. And he who calls people to rally round *Jāhiliyyah* (pre-Islamic ideas) belongs to the people of Hell, even if he prays and fasts and asserts that he is a Muslim. (*Aḥmad, Tirmidhī*)

Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit, Allah be pleased with him, says: We pledged to Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, to hear and obey in difficulty and ease, in what we liked and what we disliked, to give way to others' interests, not to dispute with the ruler unless we saw them denying Islam; yet to say what was right wherever we were, not fearing whatever blame one may put on us in the way of God. (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*)

Umm al-Ḥuṣayn, Allah be pleased with her, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: Even if a mutilated slave is made your ruler, and he leads you in accordance with God's Book, listen to him and obey. (*Muslim*)

Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: I heard Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, say: He who gives up obedience and secedes from the *Jamā'at* and then dies, will die the death as if in *Jāhiliyyah*. He who fights

blindly under a banner — being angry due to partisanship, or summoning to partisanship or rendering aid on the basis of partisanship — and is then killed, will be killed as if in *Jāhiliyyah*. (*Muslim*)

Arfajah, Allah be pleased with him, says: I heard Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, say: If anyone comes to you, when you are united under one man, and wants to split you or divide your community, then kill him. (*Muslim*)

13 The Qur'ān says:

Those who [truly] believe in God and the Last Day ask not you for exemption from struggling with their possessions and their selves [in the way of God]; and God knows the God-fearing. Only those ask you for exemption who do not believe in God and the Last Day, those whose hearts are filled with doubts, so that in their doubt they go this way and that. (al-Tawbah 9: 44–5)

Those who were left behind rejoiced in their sitting [at home] behind the Messenger of God, for they hated to struggle with their possessions and their selves in the way of God . . . Let them, then, laugh little and let them weep much, in recompense for what they have earned . . . And pray never over any one of them when he is dead, nor stand over his grave: they disbelieved in God and His Messenger, and died while they were disobedient. (al-Tawbah 9: 81–4)

14 The Qur'ān says:

Believers are those who [truly] believe in God and His Messenger, then hesitate not, and who strive hard with their possessions and their selves in the way of God; it is they who are the truthful ones. (al-Ḥujurāt 49: 15)

Those who believe, and migrate and struggle in the way of God and those who give shelter and help; it is they who are truly Believers. (al-Anfāl 8: 74)

Such of the Believers as sit at home — unless they are disabled — cannot be equal to those who struggle in the way of God with their possessions and their selves. God has exalted those who struggle with their possessions and their selves over those who sit at home. Although to each God has promised the

most fair reward, yet God has exalted those who strive hard above those who sit at home by great rewards — many ranks higher before Him, and forgiveness, and mercy; surely God is All-forgiving, All-merciful. (al-Nisā' 4: 95)

Say, if your fathers, and your sons, and your brothers, and your spouses, and your clan, and the wealth you have acquired, and the commerce you fear may decline, and the houses you love — if these are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and struggling in His way, then wait until God brings His decision; God guides not the disobedient. (al-Tawbah 9: 24)

15 The Qur'ān says:

Let there be one group among you, who invites to good, and enjoins the doing of what is right and forbids the doing of what is wrong. (Āl 'Imrān 3: 104)

Those who believe, and migrate, and struggle with their possessions and their selves in the way of God, as well as those who give shelter and help — it is they who are the friends of one another. (al-Anfāl 8: 72)

You are the best community ever brought forth for mankind: you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong, and you believe in God. (Āl 'Imrān 3: 110)

Those who disbelieve are the friends of one another, and unless you do likewise, there will be oppression on earth, and great corruption. (al-Anfāl 8: 73)

16 Nothing illustrates this better than the injunctions regarding Hijrah which required Muslims to leave their homes, relatives and properties in Makka — the domain of Kufr — and to migrate to Madina — the domain of Islam. Its importance lay in the fact that Hijrah enabled Muslims to form their community, to live their full life under God's sovereignty, to acquire collective strength and to wage a ceaseless struggle to bring all leadership and power under God. So uncompromising was the call to Hijrah that those who evaded it lost all rights as members of the Ummah, in addition to whatever serious consequences they might face in the Hereafter:

And those whom the angels take — while they are wronging themselves — the angels will say: In what circumstances were you? They will say: We were too weak on earth. The angels

will say: Was not God's earth wide so that you could migrate in it? For such, then, the destination is Hell — and how evil the journey's end. (al-Nisā' 4: 97)

Therefore take them not as friends until they migrate in the way of God; then, if they turn away, seize them, and kill them wherever you find them; and take not any of them for your friend or helper. (al-Nisā' 4: 89)

Those who have believed, but have not migrated — you have no [duties of] friendship to them till they migrate. (al-Anfāl 8: 72)

3

The Role of Moral Power

Once the purpose of our struggle is clear, it becomes necessary to understand the laws which God has laid down regarding success in this struggle.

The Physical and the Moral in Man

The universe has been made by God, and everything in it follows a set course. No human effort can succeed merely on the basis of pious wishes and good intentions, nor can success be achieved merely by invoking the aid of holy souls. It is necessary to take concrete, specific and appropriate action: this is an established law of God.[1] If you are working in agriculture, then no matter how pious and devoted you may be, or how eloquent in praise of God you are, the seeds you sow will produce no fruit until your farming techniques take full account of the law that God has laid down for cultivation.

So, although God's remembrance is essential, pursuit of the correct means is indispensable for the fulfilment of the Divine plan. To bring about a revolution in leadership and change the system, which is our objective, it is imperative that we should understand the conditions of the law under which leadership is established in the world, the law by which power is gained or lost.

This is a matter of such great importance that without understanding it we cannot clearly visualise our struggle strategy. I therefore wish to discuss it in some detail here.

Man's being has two distinct aspects which are different

from one another yet, in the final analysis, are complementary.

One aspect is physical and animal. In this sphere those laws operate which govern all physical and animal beings. Efficiency and success in this part of his life depend on material resources and physical factors. Man's attainments, as far as his physical being is concerned, stem from conformity to physical laws. Human efforts, in this respect, are as much subject to the laws of cause and effect as the rest of the physical world.

The second aspect of man's being is moral. This is what makes him a human being. The moral being is not subservient to the physical; rather, its function is to direct it along the right paths. To that end it uses physical resources, within him and those in the external world, but the real springs of human power stem from moral attributes. The human life is governed not by physical laws, but by moral laws.

The Role of Moral Factors

Man's success or failure, advance or decline, depend on both material and moral factors. Both are necessary, but neither on its own is sufficient. Deeper analysis will however reveal that it is the moral dimension which is the more decisive. To acquire material power, employment of physical agencies and control over external causes, is a necessary condition for success, and so long as man lives in this physical world he cannot ignore this. But the fundamental cause of man's rise or decline and the greatest influence on his destiny is the extent and quality of his moral strength.

What distinguishes man from other living beings is not that he occupies space or that he breathes or that he procreates. The distinguishing feature that makes him not only an independent being, but the *Khalīfah* (representative) of God on earth is his capacity to make moral choices and to shoulder moral responsibility.[2] If human uniqueness lies in man's moral awareness, it follows that moral attributes occupy a central place in the growth or disintegration of human life and that moral laws govern the advance and decline of man.[3]

Two Categories of Moral Attributes

Moral attributes fall into two main categories:

1 Basic human morals.
2 Islamic morals.

Basic Human Morals

Basic human morals include all those qualities that form the basis of man's existence as a moral being. These contain all the qualities necessary for man's success in this world whether he works for good or evil. Whether or not a man believes in God, revelation, prophethood or the Day of Judgement, whether or not he has purity of soul and good intentions and whether he works for good or evil do not come into this question. That is to say, if a man is able to be effective, he should possess the attributes of strength of will, power of decision, ambition and determination, patience and perseverance, courage, preparedness and diligence, a love for his goal and readiness to make sacrifices for it, whatever be the demands in time, money or even his own life.[4]

Similarly, other essential attributes are caution and vigilance, far-sightedness and prudence, insight and the capacity to adopt and make creative responses to differing situations, discipline and restraint, the ability to attract, plan, organise and maintain support and co-operation from others.

One whose character and personality shine with these qualities will also have those noble characteristics which are, in fact, the essence of humanity and upon which esteem in this world is built. The most desirable qualities are: self-control, generosity, mercy, sympathy, a sense of justice, breadth of vision, truthfulness, trustworthiness, integrity, respect for pledges and commitments, fair-mindedness, moderation, courtesy, purity and discipline.

These attributes, when possessed by any people or group, form the human capital from which a powerful social entity may be created. But having gathered this capital together, a group will only become vigorous and strong if other moral attributes are also developed. This will happen

only when all, or a majority at least, of the individuals are agreed on some common objective and put its achievement above all other considerations, even those of wealth and family.

They will need to have mutual love and sympathy, the resolve to work together, to be able to subordinate personal interest to the collective objective, to be able to distinguish between good and bad leaders and to choose only suitable leaders, to make sure that their leaders possess sincerity, sound judgement and all the other necessary characteristics of good leadership. They should also be prepared to put at their command all their resources. At the same time, there should be a vigilant and strong public opinion which would not allow any harmful or immoral tendencies to flourish.

These are the qualities which we describe as 'basic human morals' because they constitute the fundamental elements of human moral strength. It is impossible in this world to attain any human objective until these attributes are present in men who seek to achieve that.[5]

These moral qualities may be compared to steel in a sword. If the steel is strong, so will the sword be, whether it is used for killing the innocent or for defending the oppressed. If the steel is weak, the sword will be, too. And if the sword is made of brittle wood, it will not be able to fulfil its function.

This is what the Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, meant when he said: 'The best among you in *Jāhiliyyah* (the pre-Islamic period) are also the best in Islam'.[6] That is, those individuals who in the *Jāhiliyyah* showed great ability and firmness of character, would continue in their Islamic phase to be dynamic and creative. But there would be a key difference: formerly their abilities were directed along the wrong lines, while after their acceptance of Islam, they would begin to follow the right course.

Thus, the reasons for the enormous success of the Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, among the Arabs — the effects of which were felt in a relatively short space of time by a large portion of the world stretching from the Indus to the shores of the Atlantic — lie in his having enlisted the best available human material from among the

Arabs, persons with character, vigour and dedication. Had he been surrounded by feeble, cowardly, weak-willed and unreliable persons, what results could he have attained then?'[7]

Islamic Morals

There is another set of principles and values which I call 'Islamic morals'. This category is not independent of the basic human morals, but is complementary to them in many ways.

Orientation of Basic Morals

The first thing Islam does is to provide a centre and an axis for the basic human moral qualities which enables them to become good and to be harnessed in the cause of goodness and truth. In their primary form the basic human moral qualities can be for both good and evil, just as a sword in the hands of a bandit may be an instrument of oppression and in the hands of a true fighter in the cause of God an instrument of good.

Similarly, the mere fact of an individual or a group having these attributes is not in itself good; their goodness in the final analysis depends rather on the way they are employed. If the ends are good, these means become strong aids to truth and goodness. Islam harnesses them to the service of the right cause and the important task of giving them the right direction.

The necessary implication of Islam's call to affirm *Tawḥīd* (unity of God) is that the sole purpose of all human effort, striving and struggle becomes seeking the pleasure and fulfilling the will of God.[8] *Ilayka nas'ā wa nahfid*, 'We strive and struggle for Thee alone.' The entire range of a Muslim's thought and action should be bounded by the limits that God has prescribed for him. *Iyyāka na'budu wa laka nuṣallī wa nasjudu*, 'Only Thee do we serve and for Thee do we perform our Prayers and prostrate ourselves.'[9]

The impact of this orientation on life is such that all the basic human moral attributes mentioned above are set on the right path. The strength which is produced by these moral

qualities is not exclusively devoted to the exaltation of oneself or one's family or people or country; rather, it is directed towards the glorification of the God-ordained system.[10] This elevates the basic moral qualities from an abstract concept to a force for positive good and makes them a blessing for the world.

Widening the Scope of Basic Morals

The second function that Islam performs in the realm of morality is to strengthen the basic human moral attributes and give them the widest possible application.

Let us take perseverance or patience (*ṣabr*) as an example. Even the most persistent people realise that there is a limit to the endurance and patience oriented towards gods other than God and rooted in materialism, which they can exhibit for worldly ends. Beyond that limit they are not prepared to go. But patience which is firmly rooted in *Tawḥīd* and which is dedicated, not to worldly pursuits, but to God, the Lord of the worlds, is far stronger and enduring. It becomes a treasure-house of strength which all the world's difficulties combined are not able to exhaust.

The ability to be patient, of one who does not surrender himself to God, is limited. Although he may be able to withstand bombs and bullets with absolute steadfastness, he may not be able to resist the stirrings of carnal appetite when he is confronted with an opportunity to satisfy his lusts.

By contrast, Islam insists on patience (and patience of a high order) throughout man's entire life and develops in him the ability to face not only dangers, trials and difficulties, but onslaughts of greed, fear, suspicion and desire. In short, Islam makes the whole life of a Believer a life of patience and perseverance (*ṣabr*).[11]

Such a person does not yield to evil in thought or deed, no matter how pleasing the prospects and how tempting the invitations. Abstaining from evil and practising goodness and virtue throughout one's life for the sake of consequences in the Hereafter constitute what is called Islamic patience. Patience may and does express itself on a limited scale in the lives of disbelievers. But its complete expression takes place only when one is committed to God alone.

The same is true of all other fundamental human moral qualities. They lack proper spiritual foundation unless they are rooted in Islamic beliefs and concepts.

A Higher Level of Morals

On the basic moral characteristics, Islam builds a higher system of morality by virtue of which mankind can realise its greatest potential. Islam purifies the soul from self-seeking egotism, tyranny, wantonness and indiscipline. It creates God-fearing men, devoted to their ideal, possessed of piety, abstinence and discipline and uncompromising in the face of truth. It induces feelings of moral responsibility and fosters the capacity for self-control. Islam generates kindness, generosity, mercy, sympathy, peace, disinterested goodwill, scrupulous fairness and truthfulness towards all creation in all situations. It nourishes noble qualities from which only good may be expected.

Nor is Islam content only to make a man good: in the words of a Hadith, it makes him 'the key to good and the barrier against evil'.[12] In other words, it has been entrusted with the mission to spread good in the world and prevent evil. Such is the beauty and magnetism of Islamic morality that if some organised group possesses it and actively works toward the mission Islam has set it, then no power in the world can stand against it.

Law of God Regarding the Leadership of Mankind

The law of God regarding the granting of leadership is a law which has been in operation since the beginning of creation and will continue as long as mankind exists in its present form. The law is this: if there is no organised collectivity that combines the Islamic moral attributes with the basic human moral attributes and which also has the capability to use material resources, then the leadership necessarily passes to that group which, although lacking Islamic moral virtues, is more advanced in its development of the basic human moral qualities and material resources than other existing groups.

This is so because God, in every circumstance, wants order in the world. The task of maintaining order is entrusted, at any particular time, to the group most capable amongst those available. Though, if that group develops a propensity to evil, God will see to it that the reins of control do not remain permanently in its hands.[13]

However, if there is an organised group superior to another in its possessing both Islamic morals and basic human morals and not lacking in material means, then no other group should gain leadership over it. Such would be against nature, against the law by which God regulates the affairs of men, and against the promises which God has made in His Book to the Believers. In the presence of such a righteous group, able to run the world in an orderly manner in accordance with the will of God, there is no reason He would permit others to rule.

We must nevertheless remember that goodness will enjoy a position of power only if such a group is organised. The existence of a single good individual or of a number of such persons existing separately cannot alter leadership, even though these individuals in their own place may be great saints. The promises which God made about leadership and vicegerency have nothing to do with individuals in isolation but with individuals in a group that has proven itself by its actions to be 'the best of communities' and 'a just community'.[14]

It must also be remembered that the mere coming into being of such a group will not in itself lead to the dethronement of the corrupt and misguided people who have hitherto formed the leadership. The righteous group will have to wage war against unbelief and immorality in every field of life and at every step. In the battle to establish the religion of truth they will be called on to make many sacrifices and to prove their commitment to truth, their loyalty to the Lord and their own ability to run the affairs of the world. Not even the prophets were exempted from fulfilling this condition; how should people today expect it to be otherwise?[15]

Comparative Roles of Moral and Physical Powers

Where moral power wholly depends on fundamental human moral qualities, material resources have a great importance. It is quite possible that if a group is greatly superior in material resources it may, with a small measure of moral strength, dominate the world and other groups who have a higher moral authority. The latter group or groups, despite being morally superior, may remain subjugated merely because of lack of physical resources.

But where the moral power consists of the combined force of both basic and Islamic moral qualities, it has the potential, despite any lack of material supremacy, to triumph over those forces equipped merely with basic moral qualities and material resources.

This concept may be illustrated thus: if along with fundamental moral qualities we require a hundred degrees of material strength, only twenty-five degrees of material power is needed when Islamic morals are present. The remaining deficiency of seventy-five degrees of power is made up by the strength of Islamic morals. Indeed, the period of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, shows us that if Islamic morality reaches the standard of those days and of the days of his Companions, only ten percent of relative material strength is needed. This is the fact to which the following Qur'ānic verse refers: *If there be twenty patient and persevering men among you, they will triumph over two hundred adversaries.* (al-Anfāl 8: 65)

This last statement should not be attributed to any facile complacency; nor are we alluding to any miracle. What we are talking about is a natural phenomenon which takes place according to the law of cause and effect.

How do Islamic morals, which include in them the basic morals, compensate for such great deficiency in material power? To understand this let us look at the contemporary international situation. The great upheaval that started more than five years ago has come to an end with the defeat of Germany. The fall of Japan is imminent.[16] Now, as far as basic morality is concerned, both parties in the conflict were almost equally matched. In certain respects Germany and

Japan have proved themselves superior in moral strength. As far as scientific knowledge and its practical application are concerned the contending parties were more or less on an equal footing. If anything, Germany was superior.

But there is one factor which gave a definite edge to one party over the other and that is material means. The Allied Powers have tremendous manpower and material resources — many times greater than their adversaries; and they have a better geographical position. That is why they have triumphed. That is the reason why any small nation with few material resources has no chance against those nations which are heavily populated and have more resources — even if the smaller nation surpasses them in basic moral qualities and in the application of scientific knowledge.

The reasons are obvious. A nation depending on basic ethics and scientific knowledge may often either believe in its own national supremacy and seek to conquer the world for itself or it may uphold some universal ideology and invite other nations to share it.

In the former situation, such a nation can only succeed if it has more material power and resources than other nations; for those nations which will be directly threatened by its lust for power will resist it with all the strength at their command.

In the latter instance, there is some possibility that the hearts and minds of the people will be conquered by this ideological call; but it should be remembered that hearts cannot be conquered merely by a few glittering principles. One requires such sincerity, good intentions, righteousness, selflessness, generosity, sympathy, nobility and justice as will stand the test of both war and peace, victory and defeat, friendship and enmity.

Such qualities are related to that superior morality which is far above basic ethics. That is why the struggle of the nations which depend on mere basic moral strength and material power — whether they openly believe in nationalism or not or whether they claim to uphold certain universal ideology — is ultimately based on purely personal or national selfishness. We can see this clearly in the foreign policies of America, Britain and Russia. In such a situation no nation shall yield to another, unless crushed under a superior force.

Decisive Role of Morality

Let us now imagine that there exists in the same environment a group which is free from personal, class or national selfishness. It may belong, initially, to a particular nation, but comes into being purely as an ideological party. Its struggles and endeavours have no purpose other than the establishment of society according to certain principles. Such a society is devoid of national, territorial and racial prejudices. Everyone can belong to it and have equal rights or status. Any person or groups of persons, irrespective of their racial or territorial origin, can be chosen to lead it provided they adhere to the fundamental principles guiding the life of the society. Even the vanquished, once they prove true to these principles, may become leaders of the conquerors.

Let us further suppose that when this group embarks on its mission, the people who are opposed to its principles resist it and a conflict arises. The more the conflict intensifies, the more superior this group proves to be in morality and nobility; its conduct shows that it has no motive except the betterment of humanity. Its reason for entering the conflict is neither personal nor racial, but is based on its enemies' deflection from the right path. If they abandon their wrong course it will have no hesitation in embracing them. It does not covet its enemies' riches nor their markets and industry, but only their moral betterment. It does not resort to falsehood, deceit and fraud even under the most trying circumstances.

Even in the passion of battle this group abstains from excesses and inhuman acts, faithfully adhering to the principles which it invites others to follow. It is truthful and loyal, dispenses justice impartially and lives up to the high standards of trustworthiness and honesty that it has urged others to adopt. When the God-fearing, pious and humane warriors of this group are pitted against the drunk, promiscuous, gambling and callous troops of their opponents, the humanity of each of its fighters shines above the barbarity of each of the enemy soldiers.

If the enemy are taken prisoner their corrupted souls become purified by the effect of the nobility, piety and purity

of their captors' morals. If the warriors of the God-fearing group are captured, their humanity shines brightly in the dark surroundings.

When an Islamic army conquers any territory the vanquished experience forgiveness instead of revenge, kindness and justice instead of oppression and atrocities, sympathy instead of callousness, forbearance and courtesy instead of arrogance, call to goodness instead of abuse, and preaching of the truth instead of false propaganda.

The conquered marvel that the victorious soldiers demand of them neither women or possessions, and that they do not try to prise their economic secrets from them to destroy their economic stability. Their prime concern is that the honour of the population should not be abused. In contrast, when the other side occupies a territory, the entire population is subjected to atrocities and excesses.

In such a conflict the morally superior group, despite its meagre resources, will finally defeat the barbarism of its enemies. The ethical force of superior morality will prove much more effective than the physical force of guns. In the midst of battle enemies will become friends. Hearts will be won before bodies are conquered. Whole nations will give themselves up without fighting. When this righteous group launches its mission with few resources and a small band of dedicated fighters it will gradually find soldiers, generals, military experts, weapons, supplies and military equipment — in fact everything — beginning to filter over from the enemy camp.

The above discussion is not based on wishful thinking. If we remind ourselves of the various historical deeds during the period of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, and the Rightly-guided Caliphs we see that what has been set out above actually happened — and can happen again provided the will is there to put it to the test.

Morality, the Real Power

The real source of power is therefore moral strength. If there is a well-knit group which, apart from having basic

morals, practise Islamic morals and also make proper use of material resources, it is unthinkable that a rival group can remain in power for any length of time.

The Muslim Decline

The crucial reason for the Muslims' decline is, in fact, the lack of Islamic morality. A people who do not make proper use of material means, are not motivated by basic ethics and do not possess thorough-going Islamic morality cannot retain power and leadership. God's unchangeable tradition demands that they be superseded by such disbelievers who, even if lacking in Islamic morality, surpass them in their adherence to basic morals and the use of material resources and thus prove themselves fitter to manage the affairs of the world. If Muslims feel any grievance in this respect, it should be directed against themselves and not against Allah. It is up to them to remove the deficiencies that have turned them from leaders into the led.

NOTES

1 The emphatic, persistent way in which the Qur'ān links faith with action, and with struggle and striving, leaves little doubt about the importance it attaches to effort. It also says:

> And whoever desires the World to come and strives for it as it ought to be striven for — and he is a Believer — it is they whose striving shall be thanked. (al-Isrā' 17: 19)
>
> [That] no bearer shall bear the burden of another, and that nothing shall be accounted to man but what he has striven for. (al-Najm 53: 38–9)

2 The story of the creation of Adam makes it absolutely clear that human beings have been given freedom to choose between right and wrong; hence they are moral beings, responsible for their actions:

> There shall surely come to you guidance from Me, and whosoever follows My guidance, no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they sorrow. And those who disbelieve and cry lies to Our messages, those shall be the inhabitants of the Fire. (al-Baqarah 2: 38–9)
>
> We did offer the trust [of reason and volition] to heaven and earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it because they were afraid of it; and man bore it, surely he is [capable of being] great wrongdoer, very foolish — so that God may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the idolators, men and women; and that God may turn in His mercy unto the believing men and believing women; and God is All-forgiving, All-merciful. (al-Aḥzāb 33: 72–3)

3 The moral dimension is crucial in determining the fate of nations, and that even material progress depends on it is made amply clear in the Qur'ān:

> Had the people of the cities believed and been conscious of Us, We would indeed have opened up for them blessings from

heaven and earth; but they cried lies, and so We seized them for what they had earned. (al-A'rāf 7: 96)

And I [Noah] said: Ask forgiveness from your Lord: surely, He is ever All-forgiving: He will loosen the sky above you in abundance, and will aid you with wealth and children, and give you gardens, and give you running water. (Nūḥ 71: 10–12)

And, O my people [said Hūd], ask forgiveness from your Lord, then turn towards Him in repentance; He will loosen the sky over you in abundance upon you, and He will increase you in strength unto your strength; and turn not away as sinners. (Hūd 11: 52)

Had they established the Torah and the Gospel, and what has been sent down to them from their Lord, they would have partaken of all the blessings from above them and from beneath their feet. (al-Mā'idah 5: 66)

Shall any be destroyed, except the wrong-doing people. (al-An'ām 6: 47)

Shall any be destroyed except the ungodly people. (al-Aḥqāf 46: 35)

And indeed We destroyed generations before you when they did wrong. (Yūnus 10: 13)

4 Some of these basic moral qualities are alluded to in the Qur'ān and Hadith, especially in the story of Adam (peace be on him):

And We made covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found in him no firmness of will. (Ṭā Hā 20: 115)

5 The Qur'ân says:

And perfectly was fulfilled the good promise of your Lord upon the children of Israel for that they endured patiently. (al-A'rāf 7: 137)

O Believers, whenever you meet a host, then stand firm, and remember God often, so that you might be successful. And obey God and His Messenger and quarrel not with one another, lest you lose heart and your morale vanish. And be patient; surely God is with the patient. (al-Anfāl 8: 45–6)

6 The full text of the Hadith refers to these qualities as mines of gold and silver:

Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: People are mines, like the mines of gold and silver. So those who are best among you in *Jāhiliyyah* (pre-Islam) are best among you in Islam, if they understand Islam. (*Muslim*)

7 See Sayyid Mawdudi's *The Process of Islamic Revolution* (Islamic Publications, Lahore, 1970).

8 The Qur'ān says:

I have turned my face [said Abraham] unto Him who brought into being the heavens and the earth, having turned away from all else; and I am not of those who take gods beside God. (al-An'ām 6: 79)

Now there has come to you from God Light, and a clear Book; through which God guides him who follows His pleasure in the paths of peace, and brings them out of the depths of darkness into the light, by His leave; and He guides them onto a straight path. (al-Mā'idah 5: 15–16)

And some men there are who sell their selves to seek the pleasure of God; and God is most compassionate towards His servants. (al-Baqarah 2: 207)

They fulfil their vows, and fear the Day whose evil is bound to spread; they give food, for the love of Him, to the needy, and the orphan, and the captive [saying]: We feed you for the sake of God alone, we desire no recompense from you, nor thanks. (al-Dahr 76: 7–9)

9 These phrases are part of the *du'ā' qunūt* recited, especially by the Ḥanafīs, in *witr* Prayer after *'Ishā'* or *tahajjud*.

10 The Qur'ān says:

That life in the Hereafter is granted only to those who seek not to exalt themselves on the earth, nor yet to spread corruption; for the future belongs to the God-conscious. (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 83)

Similarly there are many Hadith which emphasise this aspect:

'Abdullah al-Ash'arī, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, was asked: One man fights to show off his valour; one, out of hatred and

rage; and one, for ostentation: which of them is in the way of God? Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, replied: Only he who fights so that God's word may become supreme. (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*)

11 The Qur'ān says:

And be patient in respect of the commandment of your Lord; surely you are before Our eyes. (al-Ṭūr 52: 48)

Those who remain patient only to seek the countenance of their Lord. (al-Ra'd 13: 22)

They fulfil their promises whenever they promise, and endure with fortitude misfortune and hardship and in time of peril. (al-Baqarah 2: 177)

O all you who believe, seek help in steadfast patience and Prayer, surely God is with the patient . . . Surely We will try you with something of fear and hunger, loss of wealth, and of lives, and of fruits. Give glad tidings unto the patient who, when any affliction befalls them, say: Surely unto God we belong, and unto Him we shall return. (al-Baqarah 2: 153–6)

Good and evil are never equal. Repel [evil] with that which is good — and lo, he between whom and yourself was enmity may become as if he were close, a true friend. Yet this is not given to any but the steadfast patient, this is not given to any but the greatly fortunate. (Fuṣṣilat 41: 34–5)

12 The Hadith says:

Sahl Ibn Sa'd, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: Good deeds are like treasures, and there are keys to these treasuries. So glad tidings unto the servant whom God has made a key to good and a barrier to evil; and woe unto the servant whom God has made a key to evil and a barrier to good. (*Ibn Mājah, Mishkāwī*)

13 That the replacement of one group in power by another group is determined by the criteria of achieving greater order and peace and less corruption on earth is clearly stated in the Qur'ān:

Were it not that God drives back the people, some by means of others, the earth had surely corrupted. (al-Baqarah 2: 251)

Were it not that God drives back the people, some by means of others, there had been destroyed monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein God's name is much mentioned. (al-Ḥajj 22: 40)

[They] who transgressed all bounds in the land, and greatly increased corruption therein, and therefore your Lord let loose on them a scourge of punishment. (al-Fajr 89: 11–13)

14 These promises are made in the Qur'ān:

Faint not, neither sorrow, for you shall be dominant if you are [truly] Believers. (Āl 'Imrān 3: 139)

God has promised those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will surely make them gain power on earth, even as He made those gain power who were before them and that He will surely firmly establish their Way for them that He has approved for them, and that He will replace their state of fear with peace; let them serve Me alone and take no gods beside Me. (al-Nūr 24: 55)

15 See note 11 on p. 88 and note 14 on p. 90.

16 In April, 1945, the Second World War was still continuing.

4

Islamic Morality

Four Grades

Now we turn to Islamic morality in more detail, for Muslims are much confused about it. Very few of them know what it is and how it should be cultivated.

What we characterise as Islamic morality contains, according to the Qur'ān and the Hadith, four aspects or grades:

Īmān (faith in God)
Islām (surrender to God)
Taqwā (God-consciousness)
Iḥsān (Godliness)

Each of these four concepts is linked in mutual dependence: each grows out of the one on which it rests and simultaneously provides a base for the next to grow.

Īmān or faith is the foundation of this edifice. Upon it is built the structure of *islām* (submission to God), and then *taqwā* and *iḥsān*. Without *īmān*, none of the other three can exist. Similarly, weak *īmān* means that the upper structure, if even somehow built, will be shaky. And a limited *īmān* means limited *islām*, *taqwā* and *iḥsān*. In fact, shaky and limited faith cannot sustain any true superstructure at all. The first priority in the development of Islamic morals is, therefore, a firm and deeply-rooted *īmān*. No sensible man can build any structure without proper foundations. So it is necessary to strengthen *islām* before *taqwā*, and *taqwā* before *iḥsān*.

Unfortunately, people often start talking of *taqwā* and

iḥsān before achieving *īmān* and *islām*. Even more regrettable is that people generally have a narrow concept of *īmān* and *islām*. They think that by adopting certain styles of dress, social etiquette, eating habits and similar outward mannerisms they can attain complete *taqwā;* and by incorporating additional Prayers in worship they can reach the heights of *iḥsān,* although at times one sees such obvious signs in the lives of the people who are supposed to possess *taqwā* and *iḥsān* that it seems clear that even their *īmān* is not correctly and firmly established in their lives.

So long as these misconceptions persist one can never expect to complete the full course of Islamic morality. It is, therefore, necessary that we correctly understand *īmān, islām, taqwā* and *iḥsān,* particularly the sequence in which individuals must come to embrace them.

Īmān

Īmān implies belief in the unity of God and the prophethood of Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him. Anyone who testifies to this belief fulfils the legal requirement for entry into the fold of Islam and becomes entitled to be treated as a Muslim.

But can this simple testimony be enough? Can it support the edifice of an Islamic morality? Is not understanding the nature and demand of one's commitment of fundamental importance? Some people think that verbal profession is enough; hastily they begin to build further. But, constructing *islām, taqwā* and *iḥsān* on a foundation which has not been fully and firmly laid will lead to the whole edifice being incomplete or collapsing at the first sign of stress.

Consider the belief in God, which comes first. It may mean different things to different people. Some know nothing beyond that God is there: that He is the Creator of the universe and He is One. Others may not see God as more than the object of our devotions and to be worshipped. For others again, the concept of God's attributes and His rights and authority may not extend beyond the notion that He has no partner in His claim to be the Knower of the unseen,

Hearer of prayers, Provider of man's needs and object of man's worship and that in matters 'religious' the final authority is the Book of God.

These different concepts are reflected in the different kinds of life people lead. The narrower the concept of God, the narrower will be the application of Islamic principles in a man's life and the narrower will be the base of his morality. Even where the concept of *īmān* is wider, but only in a 'religious' sense, Islamic life may end up in a compromise between Islam and Kufr; at one and the same time, owing allegiance to God and rebelling against Him!

Similarly, the depth of belief in God varies. An individual, although believing in God, may not want to make even the smallest sacrifice for Islam. Another man may hold God very dear, but hold a few things even dearer. And a third person may be prepared to sacrifice his life and possessions for God if necessary, while at the same time trying not to give up his ideas and thoughts, or desires or get into a position where he thinks his reputation will suffer.

We can work out the extent of *īmān* in a person's life by analysing his attitudes. In fact, one's Islamic morality would betray one at the very point where the foundation of *īmān* is weak.

The edifice of a complete Islamic life can only be built on a belief in God's unity (*Tawḥīd*) that permeates a man's entire personal and social life, and which is so strong that he considers himself and all that he possesses as belonging to God; he accepts Him as the sole rightful Owner, Object of worship, Receiver of obedience and Law-giver for himself as well as the rest of the world; he considers Him the fountain-head of guidance, and is totally aware that disobedience to God, indifference to His guidance or an inclination to associate some other being as a partner with Him in His Being, constitute deviation from the right path.

That is to say: for the edifice of Islamic life to be firmly founded in an individual implies that that individual should declare that he and all that he has belongs to God and is at His command. It also means that he is prepared to subordinate his personal likes and dislikes to the will of God, annihilating his ego and moulding his ideas, desires, passions

and ways of thinking according to the knowledge that God has imparted through His Book; he will abandon any loyalties to forces repugnant to God, accord the love of God the highest place in his heart and cast away from the recesses of his heart any idol that may demand to be held dearer than God. He will base his loves and hates, friendships and enmities, likings and aversions on what God approves of.

This is real *īmān*.[1] How can imperfect *īmān* be made up for by length of beard, style of dress, recitation of the rosary or nightly worship?

Other beliefs that are part of the faith may be considered in the same way. Belief in prophethood (*Risālat*) cannot be complete unless one accepts the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, as one's guide in all the affairs of life and rejects all that is contrary to his guidance. Belief in the Qur'ān remains imperfect until the code of life it lays down is accepted in its entirety. Moreover, there should be no lack in longing to see one's life or the life of the rest of the world governed by the rules that God has prescribed.

Similarly, belief in the Hereafter (*Ākhirat*) cannot be complete until one is prepared to attach more importance to it than to the present life and to reject the values of this world for the values of the other world. It is equally important that the thought of one's accountability on the Day of Judgement should guide one at every step on the road of life.

Where these beliefs are missing from a person's life, what foundations can there be on which to build the structures of Islamic life?

It is ironic to see that people have taken the building of Islamic life for granted without seeing the need to extend, strengthen and complete its foundations, with the result that the door to the highest stages of *taqwā* and *iḥsān* has been opened for a judge who may make decisions in violation of the Qur'ān, for a lawyer who may argue on the basis of laws contrary to the Shari'ah, for the administrator who may manage the affairs of life in accordance with a system based on Kufr, for the leader and his followers who may work for founding and building of life on the social and political principles of disbelievers — in short, for everyone, provided they fashion their outward style of life after a certain pattern

and observe the ceremonies of worship rites and attach great importance to voluntary Prayers.

Islām

As we have seen, the edifices of *islām* can be built only on the deeply embedded and solid foundations of *īmān*. In fact, *islām* is the practical demonstration of *īmān*. The relationship between the two is the same as that between seed and plant. *Īmān* is the seed and *islām* represents its fruition. Examine the tree and you find what the seed contained. *Īmān*, if present, will manifest itself in man's practical life, in his morality, in his conduct, in his relations with others, in his choice of activities, in the nature of his struggle, in the use of his time, energies and capabilities — in short in every aspect of life.[3]

If there is a sphere of a man's life where non-*islām* instead of *islām* is evident, it is there that *īmān* is absent or at most has only a fragile existence. If an individual's entire life follows an un-Islamic pattern, it is obvious that either *īmān* is lacking altogether or that the soil is too barren for the 'seed' of *īmān* to grow.[3]

The Qur'ān and Hadith show, I am convinced, that it is impossible to have *īmān* in one's heart without it showing through in one's day-to-day life.

Let us forget for a moment the arguments of the jurists and philosophers about *īmān* and its ramifications and try to understand it in the light of the Qur'ān.[4] It becomes obvious from the Qur'ān that the inner conviction of faith and the practice of Islam are essentially interdependent. God frequently mentions faith and righteous conduct together. All the promises of a blissful future that He has made to Muslims apply to those Believers who really do submit to His will. In fact, wherever God castigates hypocrites (in the Qur'ān) He cites the faults of their practices as evidence of imperfection in their faith and declares the practice of Islam as the sign of real faith.

Branding somebody a disbeliever, however, and excommunicating him from Islam demands extreme caution. It

is not an issue which need concern us here. Our present concern is with the actual, not the legal, Iman and Islam, which are acceptable in the sight of God and which lead to rewards in the Hereafter.

If we consider the essence of both facts we will find that where there is deficiency in submission to God, where one's desires differ from God's will, where loyalty to others co-exists with loyalty to God, where attention is being devoted to activities other than the struggle for the establishment of God's guidance, where efforts are being made for causes other than the cause of God, *īmān* does necessarily suffer from flaws and blemishes.[5]

Taqwā and *iḥsān* cannot be built on defective *īmān*, no matter how much effort is made to acquire the outward appearance of *Muttaqīn* (the God-conscious) and imitate some of the deeds of *Muḥsinīn* (the godly who attain excellence in doing good deeds). Appearance without reality is a sham — rather in the way a handsome body may be preserved after death. Whatever expectations one may build upon, it can do nothing. Indeed a live body, however bad-looking, is much better than a good-looking but lifeless one.

One can deceive oneself by wearing false appearances, but this will not carry any weight on the Day of Judgement. We must appreciate that real *taqwā* and *iḥsān*, which are needed to bring glory to Islam in this world and to tilt the balance in favour of goodness on the Day of Judgement, can never be reached unless the foundation of *īmān* is firm and the proof of its strength is provided by a life lived according to *islām*.

Taqwā

What is *taqwā?* Let us understand this first. *Taqwā* does not merely imply any particular form, appearance or life-style. Rather, it is a state of inner self, which no doubt does reflect in every part of life. *Taqwā* consists of man's awe of God, consciousness of his duty towards Him and an awareness of his accountability to Him: that the world is a place of trial where God has sent man for a specified period

of time; that God's decisions on the Day of Judgement on an individual's future in the Hereafter will depend on how he makes use of his energies and capabilities in the given period of time at his disposal in this world, how he deals with his fellow beings.

A conscience which is fired by consciousness of God becomes alive. Man's sensitivity becomes sharp under this influence and he avoids everything that is against God's will. He starts examining his own thoughts and feelings to see what tendencies are being nurtured within him. He begins to scrutinise his life to find out what activities he is spending his time and energy on.

Not only does he scrupulously avoid things which are explicitly prohibited; he also hesitates from getting involved in affairs which are in any way dubious. His sense of duty makes him fulfil God's commands in a spirit of total submission. His fear of God causes a feeling of faintness whenever there is a possibility that he may be in danger of exceeding limits prescribed by God. Ensuring the discharge of his obligations towards God and towards his fellow-beings becomes his way of life; he shudders at the thought of doing anything unjust.[6]

This state of consciousness does not appear in any one form or in any one particular sphere; instead, it manifests itself in an individual's whole way of thinking and in all his actions. By contrast, where *taqwā* merely consists in putting on a certain mode of conduct and outwardly assuming some immediately recognisable, measurable appearance, one perceives two ways of life in conflict: meticulous conformity to outward details along with a morality which has least relationship with *īmān*. As Jesus said, the situation is similar to that of one who strains at a gnat but swallows a camel.[7] The difference between real and seeming *taqwā* can be understood by the following example of two different people.

One has a deep sense of cleanliness and a concern for purity. He will abhor filth in whatever form it may appear, and will be clean in all essential manners, even if not in all outward forms. The other person, who has no innate sense of purity, carries with him a long list of prohibitions under the heading of cleanliness. This man will avoid all the unclean

things that he finds on his list, but will be found indulging in many other loathsome acts, which are not included as such on the list and which may be far more revolting than those he is avoiding.

This is not a theoretical example. We can see it with our own eyes in the lives of those who often enjoy great fame for their *taqwā*. They are so particular about the minutest details of the Shari'ah that one having a beard shorter than a certain length is threatened with excommunication and one with his trousers going down below the ankles is threatened with hell-fire. Deviating from the secondary injunctions of their own juristic persuasions is to them tantamount to heresy. But their neglect of the fundamentals of Islam reaches such heights that they have turned the Muslim's entire life into a life of compromise and political expediency.

They have found numerous ways of evading the struggle for the establishment of Islam. All their efforts are directed towards preparing plans for an 'Islamic life' in the midst of the supremacy of Kufr. It is their misguided approach that has convinced Muslims that they can fulfil the dictates of Islam by leading a religious life in a limited capacity, while they live under an un-Islamic order and even serve it. Beyond that, there is nothing they are required to strive for.[8]

What is even more regrettable is that if someone places before them the real demands of Islam and draws their attention to the struggle required if an Islamic society is to be established, they resort to ruses, tricks or strategems to excuse both themselves and other Muslims from such a struggle. Still, their *taqwā* apparently remains unimpaired and none among the religious-minded spiritualists suspects any deficiency in it.[9]

Such paradoxes can be discerned only if we have a clear concept of *taqwā*.

None of this means that I want to belittle or deny in any way whatsoever, God forbid, the importance of the precepts regarding etiquette, dress, conduct and deportment that are traceable to the Hadith. The point I want to emphasise is that the essence of *taqwā* lies in an attitude of heart and mind rather than its outward forms. The whole life of a person who develops real *taqwā* will be consistently Islamic. Islam with

all its comprehensiveness will be increasingly reflected in such a person's thoughts, emotions and inclinations, frame of mind, allocation of time and spending of energies — in short, in all aspects of his worldly life. But without sowing the seed of *taqwā* no artificial measures will be fruitful.

Taqwā requires time and patience, develops gradually and bears fruit after a long time just as a tree takes long to grow from a seed and bloom. That is why people of superficial character avoid it. The second type of personality can be developed quickly and with as much ease as a stick may be dressed with leaves, blossoms and fruits to give it the appearance of a tree. That is why this method of cultivating *taqwā* is popular today. But it is obvious that the benefit expected from a real tree cannot be obtained from an artificial one.

Iḥsān

Iḥsān is the highest stage of Islam. It implies the deep attachment, profound love, genuine faithfulness and sacrifice which make a Muslim completely identify himself with Islam. The essence of *taqwā* is fear of God which may enable a person to escape God's anger. The essence of *iḥsān* is love of God, which motivates man to try to win God's pleasure.

The difference between the two may be illustrated by the following example:

Among the employees of a Government may be some who scrupulously discharge the functions entrusted to them, doing nothing to which one can take exception, but are not otherwise committed. Others, however, may be loyal, devoted and totally committed to the Government. They do not just carry out the duties that have been assigned to them but are always zealously concerned to promote the interests of the Government. They exert themselves beyond the call of duty, being prepared to sacrifice their lives, property and children in defence of their country. Any violation of the law hurts them personally, any sign of rebellion is enough to arouse them. Far from deliberately harming the Government they will spare no effort to support it. More than anything,

they want to see their own Government paramount in the world and their flag flying in all corners of the earth.

The first kind of people are *Muttaqīn* of the Government and the other its *Muḥsinīn*. Though the *Muttaqīn* are regarded as good servants, the honour and reward reserved for *Muḥsinīn* is exclusively theirs. Though *Muttaqīn* are valued and trustworthy people, *Muḥsinīn* make up the real strength of Islam. The task that Islam has to accomplish can only be carried out by this group.[10]

It is therefore impossible for people to be counted as *Muḥsinīn* who stand passively by and see the religion of God dominated by the forces of Kufr, the sanctions of Allah (*ḥudūd*) completely ignored and the Divine laws being at best neglected and at worst overturned: the reign of tyranny and oppression unleashed on God's earth by God's rebels.

Or who see that the ascendancy of disbelief is not only promoting moral and social ills in human society, it is also causing the Muslim community itself to turn from the path of righteousness, and do nothing.

How can anyone be regarded as *Muḥsin* who can stand by and see this decline in Muslim society without feeling the urge to try and change this state of affairs. And what is one to say of those Muslims who reconcile themselves to it and tempt other Muslims to adopt a conciliatory attitude to the domination of a non-Islamic order? Being guilty of such a monstrous crime, can they attain *iḥsān* merely because they are found at Prayer in mid-morning (*al-ashrāq* and *al-ḍuḥā*) and past midnight (*tahajjud*), spending time in meditation and remembrance of God and lecturing on the Hadith and the Qur'ān? Or, because they devote time to observing the minutest but superficial details of the *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) and the Hadith and to teaching in the monasteries such practices of self-purification which incorporate all the subtleties of the Hadith, *Fiqh* and *Taṣawwuf*, but what they lack is that religiosity which inspires one to sacrifice one's life for the cause of Islam rather than to accept an order not in accordance with God's commands, like that of Yazīd, a religiosity which makes them give away their lives even if there be no success.

Even a secular society knows how to distinguish loyalty from disloyalty. If a rebellion takes place in a country or it is overrun by an enemy, those who accept the domination of rebels and enemies, make compromises with them or work out agreements whereby real power resides in the occupation forces, are considered traitors however much they preserve their national way of life or abide by their national law in superficial matters.

Concrete examples may be cited. In the countries liberated from German occupation, what kind of treatment was meted out to those who compromised and co-operated with the enemy? The only criteria being used to judge their status are: How much resistance did people put up against the enemy? What did they do to re-establish the power to which they claimed allegiance?

Can one believe that God cannot recognise those who are truly loyal to Him? Can one imagine that He will be taken in by the length of a beard, the distance of the trousers above the ankles, the recitation of rosaries, devotions and Prayers, worship and meditation and other outward signs when He comes to judge true loyalty and devotion?

NOTES

1 The Qur'ān explains in great detail the nature and various essential attributes of this real *īmān* and leaves little room for ambiguity, misunderstanding or doubt in this regard.

Firstly, that *īmān* is a covenant, a pledge, and a bargain whereby one gives himself totally to Allah: exercising his free-will, he surrenders himself completely, and without reservation, to His will; he lives doing His will, seeking nothing but His pleasure and countenance:

> And remember God's blessing upon you, and His solemn pledge by which He bound you [to Himself] when you said: We have heard, and we obey. (al-Mā'idah 5: 7)
>
> God has bought from the Believers their lives and their possessions for [the price] that theirs is Paradise; they fight in the way of God; they kill, and are killed — a promise binding upon God in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'ān; and who could fulfil his convenant more than God? Rejoice, then, in the bargain you have made with Him; this is the mighty triumph. They [are those] who turn [unto God] in repentance, who serve [Him], who praise [Him], who go on and on [seeking His pleasure], who bow down [to Him] and who prostrate themselves [before Him], who enjoin right and forbid wrong, who keep to the bounds set by God. And give glad tidings to [such] Believers. (al-Tawbah 9: 111–12)
>
> And some men there are who sell their selves to seek the pleasure of God; and God is most compassionate towards His servants. O Believers, enter wholly into *islām* [self-surrender unto God]. (al-Baqarah 2: 207–8)
>
> And who has a better Way than he who surrenders his whole being [or, will] unto God, doing [every act] excellently. (al-Nisā' 4: 125)
>
> The only response of Believers, whenever they are summoned

unto God and His Messenger that he may judge between them, is that they say: We hear and we obey; those — they are the prosperous. (al-Nūr 24: 51)

It is not for any believing man or believing woman, when God and His Messenger have ruled in any matter, to have any authority for themselves in their affairs. For whoever rebels against God and His Messenger has gone astray into manifest error. (al-Aḥzāb 33: 26)

Secondly, that this kind of *īmān* implies forsaking loyalties and obedience to every object other than God, unless that it be in accordance with His will:

Have you not seen those who assert that they believe in what has been sent down to you, and what was sent down before you, and yet desire to summon one another to the rule of powers in rebellion against God, although they have been commanded to reject them. But Satan desires to lead them far astray. (al-Nisā' 4: 60)

See also al-Naḥl 16: 36 and al-A'rāf 7: 3 (note 10, p. 87).

Thirdly, that loving Allah most and seeking His pleasure are a necessary condition and fruit of *īmān*. Loving Allah includes loving His Messenger and Book, fellow-Believers and the Jihad in His way:

And some men there are who take to themselves compeers apart from God and who love them as God should be loved; whereas those who [truly] believe love God more than all else. (al-Baqarah 2: 165)

They [hypocrites] swear to you [Believers] by God to please you, while God and His Messenger are most entitled that they should please Him, if indeed they are Believers. (al-Tawbah 9: 62)

Anas, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: None of you truly believes till I become dearer to him than his parents, his children and all other people. (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*)

Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: You shall not enter Paradise unless you truly believe; and you shall not truly believe unless you love each other. (*Muslim*)

Abū Umāma, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: He who loves for God's sake, and is hostile for God's sake, and gives for God's sake, and withholds for God's sake — indeed he has perfected his faith. (*Abu Da'ūd, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī*)

Anas, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: There are three things, anyone who has them will taste the sweetness of *īmān*: that God and His Messenger become dearer to him than anything apart from them; that when he loves a person he does not love for anything save Allah; that he hates to return to Kufr as he hates to be thrown into fire. (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*)

Fourthly, that the only criteria for such love is that one must follow Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, in every respect; obey him unreservedly, but more than that follow his every footstep and mould one's entire life on his model:

Say: If you love God, follow me; and God will love you, and forgive your sins. (Āl 'Imrān 3: 31)

But, by your Lord, they do not believe unless they make you the judge in whatever matters arise between them, and then they find not in their hearts any impediment regarding what you have decided, but surrender in full submission. (al-Nisā' 4: 60)

The Prophet has a prior claim on the Believers than their own selves. (al-Aḥzāb 33: 6)

'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: None among you truly believes unless all his desires become subservient to what I have brought. (*Sharḥ al-Sunnah*)

Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: All my people will enter Paradise except those who deny me. On being asked who deny, he replied: He who obeys me will enter Paradise; he who disobeys me has denied. (*Bukhārī*)

Fifthly, as a consequence of above, for Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, spent every moment of his life in Da'wah and Jihad, and also as a consequence of faith, love and obedience to Allah, one cannot be true in his faith unless he is

prepared to strive in the way of Allah with all that he has — life, possessions, relations, etc. According to the Qur'ān there can be no true *īmān* without Jihad.

In this regard, see earlier quoted verses: al-Ḥujurāt 49: 15, al-Anfāl 8: 74 (note 14, p. 90), al-Tawbah 9: 24 (note 14, p. 91).

2 The parable of the seed to explain how *īmān* fructifies into practice, righteous deeds and morally-sound conduct is perhaps the most commonly used, and the most important, parable in all Divine revelations. So it is in the Qur'ān:

> Have you not seen how God has set forth a parable? A good word is like a good tree — its roots are firm and its branches are in heaven; it gives its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Lord. (Ibrāhīm 14: 24)

> Muhammad, the Messenger of God, and those who are with him, are hard against the disbelievers, merciful one to another. You see them bowing, prostrating, seeking favour with God and good pleasure. Their marks are on their faces, the traces of prostration. That is their parable in the Torah, and their parable in the Gospel: like a seed that brings forth its shoot, and strengthens it, so it grows stout, and stands firm upon its stem, delighting the sowers . . . (al-Fatḥ 48: 29)

The way the Qur'ān presents various practices and behaviours as a necessary outcome of *īmān* is another important manifestation of the interdependence of faith and practice. So does a rich treasure of Hadith which forcefully and clearly demonstrates how every aspect of behaviour and conduct is linked with *īmān:*

> And obey God and His Messenger, if indeed you are Believers. (al-Anfāl 8: 1)

> Eat, then, of that over which God's name has been mentioned, if indeed you believe in His messages. (al-An'ām 6: 118)

> O Believers, fear God, and give up interest that is outstanding, if indeed you are Believers. (al-Baqarah 2: 278)

> Do not fear them; but fear Me, if indeed you are Believers. (Āl 'Imrān 3: 175)

> Are you afraid of them? Nay, God alone is more worthy that you should fear Him, if indeed you are Believers. (al-Tawbah 9: 13)

> And in God you must trust, if indeed you are Believers. (al-Mā'idah 5: 23)
>
> Be conscious of God, if indeed you are Believers. (al-Mā'idah 5: 112)
>
> Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: *Īmān* has over seventy branches; the most excellent of them is to declare that there is no god but Allah, and the least is to remove anything harmful from the road. And modesty, too, is a branch of *īmān*. (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*)
>
> Anas, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: By Him in whose hands is my soul, none of you truly believes unless he likes for his brother what he likes for his own self. (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*)
>
> Abū Shurayḥ, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: He who believes in God and the Last Day must treat his neighbour well; he who believes in God and the Last Day must honour his guest; he who believes in God and the Last Day must say what is good, otherwise keep silent. (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*)
>
> Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand men are safe; the Believer is he whom men trust with their lives and properties. (*Tirmidhī, Baihaqī*).

3 Many Qur'ānic verses and Hadith emphasise that an un-Islamic act cannot co-exist with *īmān*, indeed to the extent that, at least while man is committing a sin, his *īmān* leaves him. Very significantly also, the Qur'ān mentions renewal of *īmān* as the step that must follow repentance (in this respect also see earlier quoted al-Tawbah 9: 44–5):

> They say: We believe in God and in the Messenger, and we obey. Then some of them turn away after this: and they are not Believers. And when they are summoned unto God and His Messenger that he may judge between them, lo, some of them turn away; but if they are in the right, they come to Him submissively. What, is there sickness in their hearts, or are they in doubt, or do they fear that God and His Messenger may deal unjustly with them! Nay, it is they, they who are the

wrong-doers. (al-Nūr 24: 47–50)

Have you not seen him who gives lie to the Judgement? That is he who pushes the orphan away, and urges not the feeding of the needy. (al-Mā'ūn 107: 1–3)

Burayda, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: Anyone who abandons Ṣalāt, he becomes a Kafīr. (*Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī*)

Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: I swear by God he does not believe! I swear by God he does not believe! I swear by God he does not believe! When asked who is he, he replied: One from whose injurious conduct his neighbour is not safe. (*Bukhārī*)

'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: The Believer is not the one who eats his fill while his neighbour beside him is hungry. (*Baihaqī*)

Anas, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: There is no *īmān* in him who does not keep trust; and no *dīn* in him who does not keep promise. (*Baihaqī*)

Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: Three traits are signs of a hypocrite, even if he fasts and asserts that he is a Muslim: when he speaks he lies, when he makes a promise he breaks it, when he is trusted he betrays. (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*)

Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: While one is committing fornication, he is not a believer; while one is stealing, he is not a believer; while one is taking liquor he is not a believer; while one is plundering, as people look on, he is not a believer; while one is committing fraud, he is not a believer; so beware, beware! (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*)

Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: When a servant of God commits fornication faith departs from him, and there is something like an awning over his head; but when he stops from it the faith returns to him (*Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd*)

> Indeed I am All-forgiving to him who repents, and believes and does righteous deeds, and thereafter keeps to the right path. (Ṭā Hā 20: 82; also Maryam 19: 60; al-Furqān 25: 70; al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 67)

4 At this stage, someone from the audience had asked if the speaker considered *īmān* and *'amal* (actions) to be the same or different.

5 In addition to what has been quoted above from the Qur'ān and Hadith, let us look further at a few more aspects of the nature of *īmān* and its relationship with conduct and behaviour (*islām*).

Firstly, one cannot fail to notice the striking feature that both *īmān* and *'amal ṣāliḥ* (righteous conduct) are almost always mentioned together, and all promises and rewards have been made conditional upon both. In fact the verses are too numerous and well known to need to be referred to. Significantly, whereas at places it has been made clear that without true *īmān* good conduct may not be of much avail (see al-Nisā' 4: 124, al-Naḥl 16: 97, al-Isrā' 17: 19), often it has been said that the outcome in the Hereafter depends on what one *did* here. So often the Qur'ān mentions: a reward or punishment for what they used to do.

Secondly, all those who profess to have *īmān*, the Qur'ān says, do not necessarily truly believe; many have diseases of weakness, feebleness or hypocrisy in their hearts:

> And some men there are who say: We believe in God and the Last Day; but they are not [really] Believers . . . in their hearts is disease. (al-Baqarah 2: 8–10)

> The Bedouins say: We believe. Say: You do not [truly] believe, rather say, 'We have (outwardly) surrendered' — for faith has not yet entered your hearts. (al-Ḥujurāt 49: 14)

> O Messenger, let them not grieve you those who vie with one another in [the way of] Kufr, from among those who say with their mouths 'We believe' while their hearts believe not. (al-Mā'idah 5: 41)

Thirdly, that is why the Qur'ān describes 'believing' — by which it means true faith — as a necessary attribute of Believers. Also, significantly, it often invites the Believers to 'believe', to attain to true faith. This would be a semantic absurdity if profession of *īmān* and reality of *īmān* were the same:

> O Believers, believe in God and His Messenger and the Book He has sent down upon His Messenger and the Book He sent down before. (al-Nisā' 4: 136)
>
> Believe in God and His Messenger, and spend of that of which He has made you trustees. And those of you who believe and spend shall have a great reward. How is it with you, that you believe not in God — seeing that the Messenger is calling you to believe in your Lord, and He has taken a pledge from you — if indeed you are Believers. (al-Ḥadīd 57: 7–8)
>
> Those only are Believers who believe, who believe in God and His Messenger and who, when they are with him upon a collective matter, do not go away until they have sought his leave. Surely those who [do not abstain from the agreed action unless they] ask your leave — it is [only] they who [truly] believe in God and His Messenger. (al-Nūr 24: 62)

Fourthly, in this respect the struggle to establish God's guidance — Jihad — is the most important criterion of *īmān*, as already shown: see al-Ḥujurāt 49: 15, al-Anfāl 8: 74 and al-Nisā' 4: 95 (note 14, p. 90), al-Tawbah 9: 44–5 and 9: 81–4 (note 13, p. 90). Some Hadith also present conclusive evidence in this respect:

> Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: If any of you sees some wrong he should change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; if even that he cannot, then with his heart; and that is the weakest *īmān*. (*Muslim*)
>
> 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd, Allah be pleased with him, (in a long Hadith which describes how power and leadership will pass on to people who say what they do not do and do what they have not been permitted to do), says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: He who struggles against them with his hand [physically], he is the Believer; and he who struggles against them with his tongue, he is the Believer; and he who struggles against them with his heart, he is also the Believer; but beyond that there is not even one grain of *īmān*. (*Muslim*)
>
> Aws Ibn Shurahbīl, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: Anyone who

joins an oppressor to strengthen him, knowing that he is an oppressor, has left Islam. (*Baihaqī*)

Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: Anyone who dies whereas he neither went out to wage Jihad nor even thought about it, he dies with a trait of hypocrisy. (*Muslim*)

6 The Qur'ān describes *taqwā* as an all-embracing moral quality of the highest order:

It is not piety, that you turn your faces towards the East or the West; true piety is [of him] who believes in God, and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Book, and the Prophets; and gives away his wealth, however cherished, to kinsmen, and orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage; and who performs Prayer, and pays the Zakāt; and who fulfil their promises whenever they promise, and endure with fortitude misfortune and hardship and in time of peril; it is they who are true [in their faith], and it is they who are [truly] God-fearing (*muttaqī*). (al-Baqarah 2: 177)

[The Book is] a guidance for the *muttaqīn* who believe in the Unseen, and perform the Prayer, and spend out of what We have provided them, and who believe in what has been sent down to you and what has been sent down before you, and who are certain of the life to come. (al-Baqarah 2: 3–4)

. . . the *muttaqīn,* who spend in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and restrain their anger, and forgive their fellow men — and God loves the doers of good — who, when they have committed a shameful deed or have wronged themselves, remember God and seek forgiveness for their sins — for who shall forgive sin but God — and do not persist in the things they did, and that knowingly. (Āl 'Imrān 3: 133–5)

And he who brings the truth and he who accepts it as true — it is they, they who are the *muttaqīn.* (al-Zumar 39: 33)

Nay, but those who fulfil His covenant and fear God: God loves the *muttaqīn.* (Āl 'Imrān 3: 76)

Be just: this is closer to *taqwā.* (al-Mā'idah 5: 8)

Hold fast with full strength unto what We have given you, and remember what is in it, so that you might attain *taqwā.* (al-Baqarah 2: 63)

> O Believers, raise not your voices above the Prophet's voice, and be not loud in speaking to him, as you are loud one to another, lest your deeds come to naught while you are not aware. Surely they who lower their voices in the presence of God's Messenger — it is they whose hearts God has tested for *taqwā*. (al-Ḥujurāt 49: 2–3)
>
> Abū Hurayra, Allah be pleased with him, says: Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: A Muslim is a Muslim's brother: he does not wrong him, nor desert him, nor despise him — *taqwā* is here (pointing three times to his breast) — despising his Muslim brother is enough evil for any man to do. (*Muslim*)

7 Matthew 23: 24.

8 See earlier references on Hijrah and Jihad (pp. 89–91).

Also the Qur'ān emphasises that the guidance given by Him cannot be split into parts — the peripheral, less important ones to be followed, the fundamental more important ones to be put in cold storage. *Īmān* and Jihad have the highest priority:

> And when We took pledge from you: You shall not shed one another's blood, neither expel one another from your homelands; then you confirmed it, and you bear witness. And yet there you are killing one another, and expelling some of your own people from their homelands, aiding one another against them in sin and enmity; but if they come to you as captives, you ransom them; although their [very] expulsion was forbidden you. What, do you believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in part? What shall be the recompense of those of you who do that, but ignominy in the present life. (al-Baqarah 2: 84–5)
>
> Have you made the giving of water to the pilgrims and the inhabiting of the Holy Mosque as the same as one who believes in God and the Last Day and strives hard in the way of God? Not equal are they in God's sight; and God guides not the people who do wrong. Those who believe, and who have forsaken their homes, and have striven hard in the way of God with their possessions and their selves attain the highest rank with God; and it is they, they who shall triumph. Their Lord gives them glad tidings of mercy from Him, and of His pleasure, and of the gardens which await them wherein is lasting bliss, therein to dwell forever and ever; surely with

5

Conclusion

As a result of misconceptions developed over a long period of time, superficialities and appearance have so deeply impressed themselves on the minds of ordinary Muslims that, however much attention may be drawn to the fundamental and absolute teachings of Islam and the essence of Islamic morality, their minds tend to revert to minor issues and considerations. Even our own friends are affected by this common malady. I have made every effort to make people understand the true nature of Islam and the real priorities in life. Unfortunately, their minds are still preoccupied with the peripheral rather than the fundamental.

As a result, for the last three days I have been flooded with letters demanding that the people associated with the Jama'at Islami be asked to grow longer beards, wear their trousers above the ankle and punctiliously observe other such details.

Apart from this we have come to know how badly some people feel the lack in the Jama'at of what they term as spirituality. Though perhaps they themselves cannot define what they mean by it, they want us, while maintaining the objectives and strategy of this Jama'at, to turn to the monasteries for spiritual training and purification of the self. All these suggestions indicate that despite all our efforts, the people have not yet attained real appreciation of Islam. If in the exposition of *īmān*, *islām*, *taqwā* and *iḥsān*, which has just been given, I have gone beyond the Qur'ān and Hadith and invented anything, do not hesitate to point it out to me.

Consider again: what was God's purpose in raising

In other words, he first turned crude metal into gold and then stamped it with the seal of a gold coin; he first trained the soldiers, then gave them the uniform. This is the right sequence as is evident from studying the Qur'ān and the Hadith. If observing the Sunnah means doing as the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, did in accordance with God's guidance in order to fulfil His will, it is certainly *not* emulation of the Prophet's practice, but rather its violation, to try to cast people in the outward mould of a *Muttaqī* and make them copy well-known and popular acts associated with a *Muḥsin* without first making them real *Mu'min*, *Muslim*, *Muttaqī* and *Muḥsin*.

To pass counterfeit coins as gold coins, to parade men in uniform with no spirit of loyalty and sacrifice as a fighting army, amounts to deceit. Such coins carry no value in the market, such soldiers can win no battle.

What is it that God really values? Let us suppose that a person is endowed with true belief and high morals, is conscious of his duty, is observant of the limits set by God, is faithful to Him, and is ready to sacrifice his life for Him. But this same person's outward appearance is poor, and his sense of etiquette is lacking. At most he would be said to be a good servant who lacks manners. For these reasons he may not rise to a high position in society. But is it that likely that his Master will therefore cast him into Hell? Will not his devotion stand him in good stead in the Hereafter?

Now, let us suppose that there is another person who dresses according to the teachings of the Shari'ah and is punctilious about etiquette. But both his loyalty and his sense of duty are deficient and his respect for the demands of his faith is imperfect. What is likely to be his fate?

If an average man with his patently imperfect reason is well able to distinguish between the real and the counterfeit, why would not God? Will He value the coin by just looking at the stamp with which it is impressed or will He be able to distinguish between gold and copper? How much value will He place on outward perfection when compared to inner deficiencies? This is not a complex point of law to be resolved with the help of books. Ordinary common sense tells us the answers.

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