

ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL REVIVAL  
OF THE  
MODERN MIND

# ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL REVIVAL OF THE MODERN MIND

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ  
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A collection of articles and papers together with  
some lectures delivered in South Africa during 1972  
by  
Mawlana Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahmān Ansāri بِسْمِ اللَّهِ  
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Lectures transcribed by  
Mahdie Kriel

Articles/Papers retyped and Qur'anic text inserted

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## NOTE 1

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Someone once described Maulana Fazlur Raḥmān Anṣārī رحمته الله as a man firmly imbedded in the present, but with an ever-wakeful readiness to reflect on the past and a vision firmly set on the future.

This willingness to comment on the past, apply the enduring values to the present and give direction to his students/listeners to prepare for the future with its possible pitfalls, give his lectures, albeit in printed form, such a relevance that we are wont to say: “Where is Maulana Anṣārī today!”

News of the imminent appearance of Volume 2 will be greeted by many of Maulana Anṣārī's رحمته الله followers and readers as a refreshing breath of fresh air amidst the stifling atmosphere of rigidity and dogmatism currently plaguing the world of Islam today and debilitating the emergence of creative literary insights from Muslim scholars.

Mahdie Kriel has certainly demonstrated his commitment to familiarise the community with the inspiring messages by hosting scores of programmes on radio with invited scholars to discuss and critically analyse the lectures. Hence this new publication follows the same pattern of listening to the new lectures and painstakingly transcribing and compiling them. Incidentally many of these lectures were given in the homes of the hosts, with more relaxed surroundings, and may well reflect a more intimate *conversation* rather than formal lecture

In expressing thanks to Mahdie Kriel and his team for

undertaking such a monumental task , we pray that he will continue to find fulfilment in his efforts and support from the benefactors to see the fruits of his labour.

Aameen.

**Rashard Jedaar**

[Retired School Principal]

## NOTE 2

The Muslims of South Africa were fortunate to have a luminary with stature of the Eminent Dr. Moulana Fazlur Raḥmān Anṣārī رحمته الله visiting our shores. By the grace of Almighty Allāh, we were privileged that this great 'Ālim, philosopher and scholar was a guest of my Father. His inspiring speeches, delivered in the Transvaal had a tremendous impact on young and old. We had the honour and pleasure to be present at almost all the lectures he delivered in the Transvaal. To this day the words of this 'Ālim resonate in my heart. He ended the idea of priesthood and stressed that every individual is responsible to Almighty Allāh, for their personal and spiritual development. When we leave this planet we will personally answer for our short duration in this temporal dimension.

We are grateful to Almighty Allāh, for having met and spent days and nights with Dr. Anṣārī رحمته الله who opened the doors of understanding by emphasising that Islam is a way of life instead of a religion. The impact and new breeze that Dr. Anṣārī رحمته الله shared with the Ummah will reverberate for many years to come.

This book is your opportunity to experience the encounter we had with Dr. Anṣārī رحمته الله. It is a clearly communicated, transcribed book filled with information, wisdom and understanding for all to read. We are encouraged to live a balanced and practical life. I call on all my brothers and sisters to step into these pages and let the faithful teacher, Dr. Anṣārī رحمته الله escort you into finding material and spiritual satisfaction and live a life discovering Almighty Allāh.

Our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said “He dies not who gives his life

to learning, we must learn something every day, if we do not, we will age faster.”

Ismail A. Kalla  
Vice-President, Islamic Council of South Africa  
Pretoria, South Africa

### NOTE 3

Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind is an excellent collection of essays. Brother Mahdie Kriel's work is always succinctly stated, lucidly expressed and coherently conceived. Certainly in the Islamic theological tradition this anthology of essays would be a worthwhile textbook for educators and students. It pulls together pieces of mawlana Fazlur Raḥmān Anṣārī's <sup>رحمته</sup> work in a way that is seldom done in the Islamic world. I highly recommend its reading.

Yusef Waghid, DEd, PhD, DPhil  
Professor of Philosophy and Education and  
Dean of the Faculty of Education at  
Stellenbosch University, South Africa  
2011-05-11

## ABBREVIATIONS

- سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ  
- subḥānahu wa ta,ālā: Glory be to the Most High  
Used as a mark of submission and humility
- سَلَامٌ  
- ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam: May the Peace and Blessings of Allāh be upon him. Used whenever the name of a Nabī [Prophet] or divine Messenger is mentioned
- عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ  
- 'alayhis salām: On whom be peace – Used for all Prophets mentioned in the Noble Qur'ān
- رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ  
- raḍiallāhu 'anhu / 'anhā: May Allāh be pleased with him / her – Used whenever the companions or family of the Prophet ﷺ is mentioned
- رَحْمَةً  
- raḥmatullāhi 'alay: May the Mercy of Allāh be upon him

# TRANSLITERATION NOTE

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

His Eminence Dr Ḥāfiẓ Muhammad Faẓlur Rehmān Ansārī  
Al Qādirī رحمته عليه

In a recent interview, Dr Atāur Rehman, an eminent Pakistani educationist of repute, stated that the technological advancement achieved to date since the advent of Man on earth, will be doubled in the next ten year period. Irrespective of the accuracy of this statement, the prophecy appears to be logical and close to truth given the exponential progression of human understanding, innovation and discoveries in the field of scientific thought we witness at present.

The phenomenal advances in the realm of modern day physical sciences and the growing awareness of the intricacies of creation are a tribute to the intellectual potential of the human mind and affirm the Magnificence of the Ultimate Creator. It is a pity, however, that Muslims who were once the torch bearers of knowledge, are now almost non-existent in that category of scientific research. Those intellectual giants of the past, who probed the horizons of knowledge and deemed it their legacy to achieve the highest level of understanding of the universe and its Creator, have become but a faint memory. Regrettably, with the passage of time, the blessing of constructive, critical and analytical research together with reasoning inspired by Qur'anic guidance [amongst the Muslims] was gradually diminished.

The manifestations of spiritual, moral and physical malaise, even amongst the intellectual elite representing the Muslim ummah of today, is the result of our misunderstood notions about religion. In the process we fail to draw strength from the fountains of knowledge and wisdom contained in the Qur'an and

Sunnah. Despite the gigantic strides in the field of physics, philosophy, psychology and mind sciences, the human mind has so far failed to unravel with certitude the deeper mysteries of the metaphysical dimension. Without the aid of revealed knowledge [divine guidance] and its application in real time situations, the metaphysical dimension will remain a mystery.

Dr Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Faẓlur Raḥmān Anṣārī ر.ك. spent the major part of his life to understand the dilemmas confronting the modern mind and providing possible solutions to the intellectual problems of the day. Blessed with a colossal intellect, endowed with a mighty spiritual core, he roamed the far corners of the world, spreading the light of wisdom, infusing the dynamic essence of orthodox Islam, and disseminating the message through his writings and lectures, as a panacea of all the maladies affecting humankind.

Born in Saharanpur, India on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1914, corresponding to 14<sup>th</sup> Sha'bān, the illustrious son of the Anṣārī clan was a descendent of Ḥaḍrat Abū Ayūb Anṣārī ر.ك. of Medina Munawwara, a companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the auspicious day of his birth, his father Muḥammed Khalil Anṣārī, received a letter from one of his maternal uncles, Maulana Mushtaq, a ṣūfi saint, which stated that he saw the grandfather of Dr Anṣārī ر.ك. seated next to Ḥaḍrat Ghauthul A'dham Shaykh Muḥiuddīn 'Abdul Qādir Al-Gilāni ر.ك. and other eminent saints in a circle, all of whom were placing rose flowers in his lap. On enquiry, he was told that they are congratulating him on the arrival of a grandson, who will play a major role in illuminating and spreading the message of Islam to the four corners of the world, as a humble devotee and a true disciple of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Maulana Mushtaq رحمته الله wrote that if this is the case, then the child should be named Muḥammad Faḏlur Raḥmān and that his formal education should begin with the memorization of the Holy Qur’ān. The family of Dr Anṣārī رحمته الله was considered highly educated, enlightened, and religious. Dr Anṣārī's father was known as a strict disciplinarian. Three of the six brothers specialized in engineering sciences in those days.

Dr Ansāri رحمته الله memorized the Holy Qur’ān at the tender age of six and a half years. Reminiscing, my grandmother used to tell me that the young Ansāri would not repeat his morning lesson and, when asked, he would repeat the entire lesson of the morning with remarkable ease and without a single mistake. A truly extraordinary child as narrated by his esteemed mother, Ḥusn Ara Begum. His scholastic achievements earned laurels throughout his outstanding educational career in which he was awarded several gold medals in recognition of his achievements. He was named as the 'best product of Aligarh Muslim University' and 'a refulgent star on the firmament of Islamic learning'.

His entire life was a true portrayal of a zealous mujāhid and missionary of Islam, who raced against time to attain his life mission. The sincerity and intense passion with which he propounded the various facets of dynamic Islam left deep imprints wherever he went. Verily, the Qur’ān states for such Muslims: “*And those of faith are overflowing in the love of Allāh*” (2:165).

His first major debut in serious writing came out in the form of a booklet 'The Beacon Light of Islam' at the age of 18 years. His expositions were lucid, direct, logical and appealing. His lasting contribution to humanity was his internationally acclaimed magnum opus 'The Qur’ānic Foundations and Structure of

Muslim Society,' which provides clear and comprehensive interpretation of Qur'ānic guidance to Muslims to achieve moral excellence with the objective of attaining the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ, the *raison d'être* of *Dīn-e-Islam*. While writing this monumental work, one could not fail to observe the depth of his concentration and the visible hurry to complete his work in the shortest possible time. One could see that he knew the end was near. He worked very hard throughout his life and the comfort of rest was unknown to him. He always found his bliss in devotion to his life's mission.

While in his company, one could not fail to observe the immensity of his love and intensity of his devotion to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in furtherance of the prophetic mission to inspire and form a single brotherhood as stated in the Qur'ān: "The believers are but a single brotherhood." (49:10). He was deeply concerned with the problems of disunity and emergence of factions amongst the Muslims and always pleaded and prayed for the unification of the Muslim ummah. Those who knew him well could discern his agony and concern in this regard.

His caring personality as a father to four daughters and a son, spoke volumes about the depth of his relationship, his sense of responsibility and the intensity of his compassion for his family. He was impeccable in all his ways and mannerisms, an icon of excellence for his protégé, a role model to emulate. He was extremely kind and soft spoken, and well versed in the art of relating to individual problems with sensitivity *par excellence*. He gave tremendous confidence to his children and imbued them with wisdom, inspiring their personalities with the love of Allāh ﷻ and the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

He was an ideal father who taught his children the true meaning and essence of this earthly sojourn and succeeded with the will of Allāh ﷻ to instill the understanding of the objective of this existence and its responsibilities. He watched over his children's intellectual, moral and spiritual development with deep parental concern, and provided inspiration and highly enlightened guidance to establish the bases of their individual personalities.

He was an extraordinarily affectionate husband as confirmed by my wonderful mother, who would endlessly speak of the virtuous nature of her husband, all the while remaining grateful to Allāh ﷻ for having blessed her with such a kind and caring husband. They were an adorable couple, each trying to outdo the other in imparting limitless kindness and compassion to all they came in contact with.

Dr Anṣārī's <sup>رحمته</sup> sincerity and piety, coupled with his remarkable intellectual acumen and spiritual capacity, earned him the profound regard and deep affection of his mentor, the highly revered Ḥazrat Maulana Muḥammad 'Abdul 'Alīm Ṣiddīqī Al Qādirī <sup>رحمته</sup>, under whose tutelage, he continued his spiritual advancement and practical missionary training. Someone asked my grandfather to elucidate the determining factor in the selection of my father as his son-in-law from amongst the numerous proposals; he stated that it was my father's outstanding piety.

My grandfather was very fond of his eldest daughter—as the saying goes, she was the apple of his eye. Being very close and dear to my grandfather, he confided in her about the exemplary role that Dr Anṣārī <sup>رحمته</sup> was destined to play as a Muslim missionary and reformer. Knowing to some extent the spiritual stature of her father as a mystic, my mother asked him to gauge

and coach her husband to attain the higher spiritual elevations in keeping with the formidable task ahead.

Dr Anṣārī رحمته الله traveled extensively to various parts of the world on his missionary errands culminating in the establishment of numerous Muslim associations, societies, mosques, educational forums and institutions in the countries that he visited. He also founded a specialized center of academic and spiritual training for Muslim missionaries, which he considered a necessary prerequisite for the intellectual revival of the Muslim ummah, in Karachi, Pakistan. This center was named in memoriam of his spiritual teacher and Shaykh - the 'Alīmiyah Institute of Islamic Studies, the nexus of the World Federation of Islamic Missions' principal activity.

He was an astute educationist and knew well that the decadence and decline of the Muslim world owes its origin to its backwardness and lack of proper education. He was emphatic on creating centers of excellence capable and fully equipped to impart ideal academic and spiritual education and training. His initial program was to pick potential, willing individuals from different parts of the world, provide them the necessary academic, intellectual, and spiritual discipline, subsequently sending them back to their countries of origin to impart knowledge in conformance with the sharī'ah.

After completion of his final monumental work, he went on his last missionary tour to the Seychelles Island with Brother Moḥsin Ebrahim, then a student of the 'Alīmiyah Institute. His strenuous efforts in writing the book had sapped his energy and drained him physically. Also, with his unattended and uncared for diabetes, irreversible damage was caused to his kidneys. This resulted in pulmonary edema and a mild heart attack in May 1973.

The project that he had started concurrently while he was giving finishing touches to the book 'The Qur'ānic Foundation' was even more complex and demanding. This work was to focus on the Aḥādīth and provide incontrovertible evidence in support of the system of life envisaged in the Qur'ān and amplified in his book 'The Qur'ānic Foundation'. Unfortunately, this was not meant to be. The frailty of his physical condition cut short his lease on life, and he was moved to the hospital where he underwent faulty treatment resulting in further deterioration.

A week before his demise, he desired to be moved back to his home and the treatment was changed from Allopathic to Homeopathic. Apparently, his kidneys were beyond repair and did not respond to the treatment. The concentration of urea in his blood shot up to extreme levels. Dr Muḥammad Ali Shāh, his disciple and attending Allopath physician, stated that he has not come across any case in the annals of medical history, where the mental faculties are so vibrant and active despite the extremely high concentration of urea in the blood.

It was the early hours of Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1974, when Dr Anṣārī رحمته الله was in intense pain and realizing that the doctors could not do anything he then said “Ok. It is now time to leave”. He asked me to open all the doors and windows of the room and to give him space. His powerful voice echoed with the melody of Surah Raḥmān, expressing from the core of his heart his gratitude to his Lord. As he approached the end of the Surah, his voice started to fade in slower rhythm. During all this time, he raised his right hand umpteen times as if shaking hands. The whole house appeared to be electrified. With his voice gone, one could see his tongue uttering “Allāh, Allāh, Allāh...”, and then the movement stopped - the saintly soul had departed to meet the Owner, the Lord Almighty, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

May Allāh ﷻ rest his soul in peace and reward him His choicest blessings, Āmīn.

Mustafa Fazil Anṣārī

Son of His eminence Dr Ḥafīẓ Muḥammad Faẓlur Raḥmān

Anṣārī Al Qādirī رحمة الله عليه

Honorary General Secretary

World Federation of Islamic Missions

## FOREWORD

It is very important for us to understand, amongst other things, the historical role played by people such as Mawlana Fadl Raḥmān Al-Anṣārī رحمته الله in the period after the demise of Nabī Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. Immediately after his صلى الله عليه وسلم demise, the Companions رضي الله عنهم and later two more generations after them, saw to the guidance of the community. After this period, Islam spread widely through Africa, into Europe and through Asia. Allāh Almighty did not leave the Muslim nation in the different parts of the world without any human guidance. Of course, the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* were there, but people still needed very special pious scholars to help them in their day-to-day application of the rules and regulations of Islam, to travel with them on the path of Spirituality, and to give them a special understanding of the sciences of the Hereafter. These intensely learned scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets صلى الله عليهم وسلم.

In my very humble opinion, Mawlana Fadl Raḥmān Al-Anṣārī رحمته الله was such an inheritor; a *waliy* of Allāh Almighty, whose teachings and presence in different communities brought about major qualitative changes with the practice of Islam in those communities. Although he was steeped in knowledge, it also appears that individuals like him receive very special inspiration from the heavens. His understanding of Islam was too unique to have been a product of his personal thought processes. It is in this uniqueness of the understanding of Islam, that we recognize Mawlana Fadl Raḥmān Al-Anṣārī رحمته الله as an inheritor of the Prophets صلى الله عليهم وسلم.

I had the honour of meeting him on two occasions, and also to have listened to almost all his lectures. It was very clear to me, when listening to him, that this man's primary concern was

Allāh Almighty, and that he was prepared to sacrifice his time, life and energies in Allāh's ﷻ Cause. Perhaps this is the reason why people consider him to be one of the friends of Allāh ﷻ. His intensely pious life and his concern with the sciences of the Hereafter, indicate this to us. Of course, he formed part of the cream of the Muslims, standing out as a major revivalist of Islam during the period he lived. It was clear to me at the time that the inheritance he had received from one or other Prophet ﷺ, were in the fields of knowledge, piety and working in the Cause of Islam. When I met him, I just sat in deep awe; admiring the man for what he was. It was so clear. This man was special.

What Mahdie Kriel has done by bringing the work of Mawlana Fadl Raḥmān Al-Anṣārī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ into the public domain, is a major contribution to our remembrance of those who have inherited from the Prophets ﷺ.

And Allāh ﷻ knows best.  
Prof Yusuf da Costa  
2011-05-09

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ through Whose Mercy, Love and Grace this work titled “Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind” is made possible. This work was a labour of love and is dedicated to our leader, the Holy Prophet ﷺ and to the memory of a great teacher of the 21st century, *Mawlana Muḥammad Fazl-ur-Raḥmān Anṣārī Al-Qādirī* رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ .

My good friend, Anveruhaque Essa, who has a deep appreciation for Mawlana's works and love for Islam, requested that I undertake the task of collecting the various articles and papers written by Mawlana Fazlur-Raḥmān Anṣārī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ for publication into one book. He also provided the major portion of the funding for this project together with booklets published by the World Federation of Islamic Missions under the Alīmīyah Memorial Series.

Mawlana Anṣārī's رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ son, Mustafa Fazil, provided articles which appeared in the Minaret magazine and THE VOICE OF ISLAM. Brother Mustafa Fazil Anṣārī also wrote the Biographical Sketch of his revered father. May Allāh ﷻ reward him in abundance in this world and the next, Āmīn.

All the articles from the various magazines and publications were re-typed and Arabic text added. I have added to this publication some additional lectures that I transcribed from some of mawlana's lectures delivered in South Africa during his South African lecture tour of 1972.

Further, I would also like to acknowledge the help of the following persons who were all part of this work:

- Shaykh Gasan Kriel - for doing all the Arabic text and also checking the English text
- Dr Uwais Rafuiddin - for reading the final draft
- Sufyān Kriel - for his technical assistance
- The authors of the various Notes and Foreword
- Sponsors who wish to remain anonymous
- My wife Sharifa and children - for their assistance and sacrifices
- Shaykh Adiel Davids - for checking the Arabic text [Qur'ān and Ḥadīth]
- Abdul Aleem Kriel - for the cover design

Some articles were provided by Adam Kolia of Makki Publications, however, Mustafa Fazil Anṣārī also provided these articles which were published in the magazines mentioned above.

Again a special thanks to Anverulhaque Essa and his brother Abdul Munīr Essa for their financial assistance.

May Allāh Almighty reward all with the best of rewards in this world and the next, Āmīn.

To the readers, constructive criticisms are most welcome and please pray that Allāh Almighty shower His forgiveness and Mercy upon the transcriber and compiler for any errors in the text. All praise and thanks belongs to Allāh ﷻ, Lord of all the worlds.

Mahdie Kriel [AlQādirī] (Reg. Eng. Tech.)  
 Crawford, Cape Town  
 Republic of South Africa  
 Mobile: 084 748 1543  
 02 June 2011

## INTRODUCTION

Dr. Mawlana Muḥammad Fazlur-Raḥmān al-Anṣārī Al Qādirī رحمته الله was a scholar of international repute. He was one of those teachers who –whilst observing him, “reminded one of the Holy Prophet ﷺ”. I clearly recall how he would stand with his two hands on top of his walking stick and the words would flow from his mouth. Sometimes he would be advised about the topic as he entered the masjid or lecture hall.

Dr. Mawlana Muḥammad Fazlur-Raḥmān al-Anṣārī Al Qādirī رحمته الله was a scholar in the real sense of the word and always referred to himself as a student of Islam.

He was the Chief successor to his spiritual master and teacher namely: Mawlana 'Abdul 'Alīm Siddīqī Al-Qādirī رحمته الله. Amongst other he was:

- President of the World Federation of Islamic Missions
- President of the International Union of Islamic Service
- Principal of the Islamic Missionaries Training College
- Lecturer in Islamic Religion at the University of Karachi
- Patron of the Muslim Digest

His visit to South Africa was indeed a historical occasion and each venue where he spoke was always full to capacity or overflowing.

This work is a collection of papers and articles written by mawlana Fazlur-Raḥmān Anṣārī رحمته الله together with some lectures delivered in South Africa during his visit here in 1972. The picture of Islam painted by Mawlana was a clear and beautiful picture and he touched the hearts and lives of his listeners. This is the case even at present when one reads his

works or the transcription of his lectures. Wherever I have presented some of the talks of mawlana, people are visibly touched and moved. The series of lectures of mawlana Fazlur-Raḥmān Anṣārī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ that I presented on radio had a similar effect on the listeners. Strangers would come to me and comment how they appreciate listening to the presentation of the series of lectures of mawlana and how it touched their hearts.

This book should be considered as a follow-on of the book, "Islam To The Modern Mind". The difference being that three of the chapters are transcriptions of lectures whilst the rest are articles and papers delivered by mawlana رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ .

The collection of articles [Chapter 1 – 10 and Chapter 14 – 16] were published in various magazines, amongst other – THE VOICE OF ISLAM, MINARET and The Muslim Digest of Makki Publications. Mustafa Fazil Anṣārī forwarded a large number of articles written by his illustrious father رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ .

Chapters 16 – 18 are a collection of lectures (transcribed by myself) delivered here in South Africa during mawlana's lecture tour of 1970 and 1972.

I have kept the editing to the minimum as I did not want the spoken word to become merely a written word or text. The Arabic text of Qur'ānic verses and some Aḥādīth have been added to all the articles and other written text in order to give life to the pages.

The lectures and articles are indeed thought provoking and intellectually stimulating. Chapters 6 and 7 should be studied by each student of higher education and each student of Islamic Shari'ah. Mawlana Fazlur-Raḥmān Anṣārī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was a Ṣūfi shaykh and the spiritual vibrations are evident in his talks and writings.

Again, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all who were part of this publication. May Allāh Almighty shower His Mercy and Blessings upon us all and guide us on the way of truth, justice and beauty, Āmīn.

Mahdie Kriel [Al Qādirī]

29 April 2011

Cape Town

South Africa

Mobile : 084 7481543



## CHAPTER 1

# ISLAM AND WESTERN CIVILIZATION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

The Muslim world is passing today through a crisis unprecedented in her history. This crisis has been created by the impact of Western civilisation on the world of Islam.

It began when, after enslaving the Muslim world politically, the Western imperialist powers planned their subtle strategy of crushing the spirit of cultural self-determination among the Muslims, on the one hand, and of introducing a system of education which aimed at enslaving the Muslim mind, on the other. How hostile and well-designed had been their strategy can be judged even if we consider only the Macaulay Report on educational policy in the British territories, the laws framed by French colonialists for undermining Islam in Africa, and the repressive imperialist policies pursued by Holland in Indonesia.

The Western imperialistic power executed their strategy with all the brutality at their command while Muslim counter planning proved to be hopelessly inadequate in every way. And the net result of all this has been that today, although most of the Muslim territories have regained their political freedom, Islam has not been able to regain freedom for itself. It still remains what the Western imperialists had made it, namely, a personal affair of the individuals: while all the collective problems are under the sway of the West. Indeed, the process of Westernisation has

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

continued unabated throughout the Muslim world. Rather, it has gained momentum in many Muslim territories since the termination of political slavery.

The Western civilisation is, in a way, the child of Islam. But it is a disloyal child, because its progress, except for the technological aspect, has taken place in a direction which is diametrically opposed to the Islamic way of life, as will be evident from the forthcoming discussion.

The three stages through which the Western civilisation has passed since the Renaissance are those of Secularism, Materialism and Communism, and the life-blood of the Sensate Culture which has evolved in consequence is the creed of "God-and-soul-negation". It is evident that this blood, when injected into the body-politic of Islam, can act only as a poison and not as a panacea.

### THE TRAGEDY OF WESTERN CIVILISATION

#### Through Secularism to Communism

Secularism, Materialism and Communism are interrelated. In the materialistic interpretation of life, the first stage which the western civilized nation attained was the stage of Secularism wherein the State was separate from the Church and the different branches of knowledge were divorced from the belief in God. This stage ultimately opened the doors wide for Materialism which says that all Reality is material and material alone. This philosophical materialism, after it had penetrated sufficiently into the different departments of western life, transformed itself into "scientific materialism" in the hands of Karl Marx who, in the 19th Century, gave to the world for the

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first time in human history the most thorough and the most aggressive materialistic philosophy.

### The Christian Gateway

Secularism owes its origin to two factors: Firstly, Christianity, which became the sole religion of the Western world some centuries ago, and which has laid down the law: "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." Thus Christianity has divided human life into two water tight compartments. One of them, namely, the spiritual compartment is presided over by God, while the other one, namely, the compartment of worldly life has been placed under the guidance and command of human beings.

In this manner Christianity paved the way for Secularism when a new factor appeared on the European scene, a factor which carried the Christian maxim to its last logical limits - although under an inspiration which was rooted in hostility to the Christian Church and the consequences of which have been most grim and gloomy for mankind. This factor was the war which waged between Christianity and the forces of Enlightenment after the Renaissance in Europe.

### The Impact of Islam

As all students of history know, Christianity came into a world where the light of Greeco-Roman learning and civilization was still flickering. But, instead of nursing that flickering flame and revitalizing it to grow in its light, Christianity from the very first day waged a deadly war against all philosophic and scientific learning with the result that the ages between the introduction of Christianity in Europe and the establishment of the

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

Renaissance are unanimously declared by the historians of the West as the Dark Ages. The darkness of those Dark Ages was ultimately dispelled when the sun of Islam shone from the valley of Faran and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ inaugurated the modern scientific era. It was the Muslim scholars who unearthed the treasures of knowledge from under the debris of the dead civilizations of Greece and Rome, Babylonia and Iran, India and China. They unearthed those treasures and classified them, cultivated them, developed them and transmitted them to Europe from their universities in Baghdad, Cairo and Spain and thus the founder of the European Renaissance was really the Muslim learning and Muslim teachers through whose teaching arose men like Roger Bacon, Pope Sylvester II and others.

### The Church versus Enlightenment

The Renaissance was actually a severe shock to Christianity, and as Christianity wielded political power, it reacted with all the venom at its command. The leaders of the Renaissance were persecuted to the extent of burning some of them alive. They were forced to recant their views and those who did not do so had to suffer. A regular department of the infamous Inquisition was instituted. The ultimate consequence of all this was that the leaders of the Renaissance became sworn enemies of the Christian Church. This enmity towards the Church soon transformed itself into enmity towards Christianity, and that ultimately culminated in hatred and antagonism against all religion and finally against God Himself.

### Secularism as a Dogma

The first great thinker who worked to lay the foundations of the secularisation of Western thought was Darwin. In his book:

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“Origin of the Species” he has tried to explain the biological phenomena on the basis of mechanical causation in which the need for affirming the existence of God has been dispensed with. Darwin's biological ideas were applied to the science of Sociology by Huxley and Herbert Spencer, to Metaphysics by Hume, to Law and Morality and Politics by Bentham and Mill and Hobbes and the ball was set rolling and thenceforward Western thought became more and more materialistic and secularistic so much so that today Secularism has become a deeply grounded faith in the minds and hearts Western scholars. For instance, even such a conservative scholar as Marshall says in connection with Economics: “in Economics we are concerned only with the economic facts and not with any ethical considerations.”

### **Poisonous Effects of Secularism**

Segregation of the different departments of human activity into separate water-tight compartments creates what the psychologists call disintegration in the social order and this dissociation in the human personality. As regards disintegration of human social order, there is an underlying urge in human social ethos for unity and coordination. Now, wherever there is no comprehensive or wherever spirituality is not considered as the highest value, as is the case with the West, the material aspect of life becomes the regulative principle and thus materialism becomes be-all and end-all of life. And this has been the consequence in the West where segmentation of knowledge and fragmentation of life has led to Secularism and Secularism has led to Materialism and Materialism is leading to disaster. As regards dissociation in human personality, namely, the personality of the individual, this dissociation creates, according to psychology, disharmony of functions, and disharmony of

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functions creates Neurosis and Neurosis in its turn increases the incidence of crimes, including suicide. And this has been the consequence in the West, where a large section of the adult population suffers from Neurosis, and the percentage of lunatics and criminals is the highest in the most advanced countries of the western world. The situation is getting worse day by day, and the reason is not far to seek. When the human personality is divided into segments and each segment is treated individually, very naturally the physical segment of personality becomes the centre of human love. because this physical segment is the closest in human experience. And when the physical segment becomes the centre of love the acquisition of the maximum amount of physical sensuous pleasure becomes the highest ideal of human life. And because this ideal cannot be achieved without damaging other aspects of one's personality and injuring the interests of others, crimes multiply at a rapid pace and suicide increases among those for whom life becomes stale. Hence, the western world stands to-day because of Secularism, on the horns of a dilemma, or between the devil and the deep sea. This is the opinion that has been voiced, with all the vehemence at their command, by the greatest modern philosopher of history, Arnold J. Toynbee and his great predecessor, Spengler.

### Emergence of Communism

When we analyse the concept of Secularism we find that two schools of thought are possible, namely: (1) a community may have faith in God and religion but it may divorce its mundane affairs from religion; (2) a people may not believe in God and religion at all and consequently their outlook on all matters may be completely Godless and materialistic. Examples of the former are the western democracies and their imitators. Examples of the latter are the Soviet Union and the other Communist states.

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God-tolerating Secularism is, however, only a preliminary step in the direction of Godless Secularism. This fact is very well borne out by history. For instance, when Christianity came to Europe, the Christian empire which evolved as a consequence was non-secular in character. **Indeed**, it was theocratic. Then came the time when the function of the State and the Church were separated and the Christian states were secularised. This Secularism gradually undermined the forces of religion and morality which process has been continuing till today. In the meantime, the natural child of Secularism was born in the form of Communism. God-tolerating Secularism was dethroned by God-hating Secularism. Karl Marx, who founded Communism, did not believe in building half-way houses. He dragged Secularism by the nose and lifted it up to its natural culmination, namely, “materialism unashamed” or, what he wrongly styles, “scientific materialism”.

Communism appears to be a doctrine of Economics. But actually it aims at a complete philosophy of life. Karl Marx has taken the greatest care to see that his book, 'Das Kapital' does not begin with economic problems but with philosophical belief. He starts with the discussion of Dialectic Materialism. Then he applies his dialectic philosophy to the social phenomena, making Materialism thereby the be-all and end-all of life. He gives a philosophy which hates God, ridicules religion and frowns at the very idea of values and ideals. For him the only realities are hunger and sex and he claims to deduce everything from these. This is his 'religion' and this is the religion of every consistent Communist.

It is thus evident that there is a natural and logical relation between Secularism, Materialism and Communism.

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## The New Materialist Trinity

As remarked earlier, the modern Western Secular civilisation is for all practical purposes a materialistic civilisation in which the idea of God has been included only as an irrational patch-work. The western nations have been Trinitarians since quite a long time. But they have changed the Christian notion of the Trinity - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost - to the Secularist triad: Wealth, Wine and Woman. These are the new "gods" whom the Western civilisation worships today.

## Foundations of Western Civilisation

The above is the situation that obtains in practical life. Theoretically considered, an analysis of the philosophy of life of the Western civilisation reveals that it is based:

1. from the metaphysical point of view on Materialism
2. from the psychological point of view on Sensationism: its art and fashions prove this fact most conclusively
3. from the ethical point of view on Expediency and Lust
4. from the economic point of view on Exploitation of under-developed humanity: otherwise also both Capitalism and Communism are exploiters because both enslave the people
5. from the political point of view on Racial Antagonism and Colour-Bars

Actually, all these characteristics are the expression of one thing

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and that is the materialistic outlook.

### **Culmination in Communism**

If we study Communism we find that these characteristics of modern Western civilisation have been magnified a hundred-fold in that ideology. The former is a dwarf, the latter is a giant.

But both belong to the same species. Indeed, but for the modern Western Secular civilisation Communism would have never been born!

### **THE ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY**

#### **Values and Ideologies**

Human consciousness manifest itself in five different forms, viz. Empirical or Physical Consciousness, Theoretic or Rational Consciousness, Moral Consciousness, Aesthetic Consciousness and Spiritual Consciousness. Consequently, human personality has five different planes of activity, viz., physical, mental, moral, aesthetic and spiritual. These five planes of activity bear reference to five sets of values, viz., physical, mental, moral, aesthetic and spiritual. The differences in human ideologies and the distinction in human civilizations are based always on the emphasis which is laid in them on the different values.

A critical investigation into the ideologies which have existed in human history reveals that they have emphasised different values and different gradations of values. Thus, in certain ideologies the emphasis has been solely on the physical value and consequently they have been of the materialistic type. In certain other ideologies the emphasis has been on the spiritual value. As

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regards the latter, again, the emphasis has taken two different forms, namely, Mystical Spirituality, which is based on the mystification of life and escape from life, and Rational Spirituality, whose function is to orientate human activity in a spiritual perspective and to integrate human personality on the basis of the spiritual value.

It is not, however only one value which an ideology usually emphasises. Rather, it is in most cases a set of values and those values are presented under a system of grading in which one value is emphasised as the basic value and others are graded in order of merit below it. Thus, the ideology of the ancient Hindu civilisation was Mystico-Intellectual in which the mystical element was dominant and the intellectual value was its servant. Besides that the physical value was considered to be a necessary evil and the moral value was treated as an adjunct of the mystical twist. That ideology created a wealth of mystic experience and philosophical hair-splitting but failed to make any great contribution in the domain of empirical sciences. The Greek civilisation was Empirico-Intellectualistic. Consequently, the Greeks failed to make that contribution in the field of mystic experience and abstruse philosophical hair-splitting which the Hindus could make. Their outlook was more rational and realistic. although their greatest philosophers show signs of inability to escape from the clutches of superstition. The ideology of the modern Western civilisation is Empirico-Aesthetico-Intellectualistic. In this ideology the physical value is the most basic, while the mental and the aesthetic are conjoined as sub-servient values, and the moral value is viewed in a utilitarian perspective and as a matter of expediency.

## THE 10 BASIC FEATURES OF ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY

### 1. Spiritual Basis and Integration of Values

So far as the Islamic ideology is concerned its first basic feature is that it regards the Spiritual Value in the Sense of rational spirituality as the most basic value. This value functions in the Islamic system of values as the foundation as well as the life-blood of all the other values which receive their due share in Islam. For Islam regards all the five values as necessary and believes in their harmonious blending and integration. Each value should be maintained in its natural place and no value should be unduly curtailed. Of course, the spiritual value is to function as the all-pervading force side by side with being a member in the institutional structure of the PENTAGON.

Making the Spiritual Value the foundation means building up the edifice of life on a system of belief (or, Imān). In Islam, it consists fundamentally in: Belief in the One True God, in His Messengers and in Life-after-death.

Islam teaches that belief is the father to action - that life moves from within outwards. Belief is the "root" out of which sprouts the "tree" of human endeavour with its different branches of morality, politics, economics, etc. Hence, while Islam takes care of the root as well as of the branches, it lays primary emphasis on the root. For, once the root is strong and healthy - once the love for God has been truly acquired and the loyalty to Him has become undivided and the

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fear of Final Accountability has taken hold of the heart the entire human activity proceeds and progresses in a natural manner and towards the most glorious success. This is what happened when the people of Arabia answered the Call of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. The lives of those who embraced Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were revolutionised, and their motives and actions both attained such heights of purity as were never attained by any community before or since. The course of their history was changed, and with that was changed the course of the history of mankind.

Here Islam differs from Communism which emphasises the physical value to the detriment of other values, and with the non-Islamic religions which emphasise certain values wrongly or whose view is either unsystematic or incomprehensive.

### 2. Comprehensiveness of Guidance

Islam regards God as the Source of all Guidance. Hence, the Guidance it has offered could not but aim at comprehensiveness. This forms the second basic feature of Islamic ideology. For, Islam is not merely a religion built on a few ceremonies, a few moral maxims and a few miracles. It is "Dīn", namely, Complete Code of Guidance which covers every conceivable department of human activity. Thus, while Islam is essentially a religion, it is also a self-contained culture and a self-sustained civilisation, and its goal is human success in this life as well as in next.

### 3. Principle of Unity

The notion of the integration of values brings us to the third basic feature of Islamic ideology, i.e. the Principle of Unity.

In other words, Islam is the religion of Tawḥīd (Unity) which runs through it from the beginning to the end.

Its first expression is in the domain or the conception of God. Islam insists that God is Unity in His Being as well as in His Attributes, that He has no partner in His functions and that there is none comparable unto Him. In this teaching Islam opposes and refutes the teachings of Christianity, Hinduism and other polytheistic religions. Again the Islamic conception of the unity of God is transcendental. Here it is opposed to the Jewish anthropomorphic notion of Godhead. Still again, Islam regards God as a personal God, and here it stands in contradiction to Buddhist and Jainist impersonalism. Indeed, the Islamic doctrine of the Oneness of God is the purest and the most exalted in the whole domain of religion; and it is also the most rational because the latest advances in the realm of scientific philosophy have progressively been in the same direction.

The second manifestation of the principle of Unity is in the realm of the nature of the world. Islam regards the entire cosmos as a unity. It has been brought into being - created ab novo - by the One God; hence it is a unity, which means that all its different components and parts, are interrelated and they function for the

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achievement of one purpose. This singleness of purpose makes the world a Moral Order.

The third stage at which the principle of Unity manifests itself is that of humanity. According to Islam, all human beings, whether white or black, red or yellow, Europeans, or African. Westerners or Orientals, form one Family. And here Islam has laid the foundations of the Fundamental Human Rights which is Islam's major contribution in the field of social relations. We might, by way of contrast, refer here to the racial superiority-complex which has been perpetrated by the Christians, the Jews and the Hindus.

The fourth stage at which the principle of Unity manifests itself lies in the realm of knowledge. Because all the different parts and things of the world are organically inter-related, the different departments of knowledge are also inter-related. According to Islam, humanity can attain true knowledge and derive proper benefits from the pursuit of knowledge, not by segregating the different departments of knowledge into separate water-tight compartments – a blunder which the modern Western civilisation has committed – but by channelising the different currents of knowledge into a unitary stream. Here Islam has given the great principle of Correlation of Knowledge.

The fifth stage at which the principle of Unity manifests itself is that of human personality. Islam regards the different factors that go to make up the

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individual as only different facets and aspects of the same thing. The human personality, according to Islam, is essentially a Unity. It is an organic whole and its proper development is possible only if every aspect of human life receives the fullest attention due to it and is treated not as an isolated phenomenon but as an interlinked reality. Verily, the distinction of the "religious" and the "secular" is totally alien to Islam. This comprehensive Islamic view of the human personality stands in sharp contrast with the partial view of personality presented and upheld by the non-Islamic religions, on the one hand, and by the Western Secularism and Communism on the other.

### 4. Based on Divine Revelation

The fourth basic feature of Islamic ideology is the emphasis on Divine Revelation as the basic source and the foundation of human Guidance. Islam teaches that when Almighty Allāh created the first human being namely, Ādam, he revealed to him the "Knowledge of all things" and made him the first Prophet. After that he continued to send down Guidance through Revelation given to his different Messengers and sent to all the races and peoples of mankind. This process of educating humanity continued till the time of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, after whom the door of Divine Revelation was sealed. Thus, according to Islamic ideology, it is Divine Revelation which fed the human civilization from the beginning and through the different epochs of human history until with the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, after whom the door of Divine Revelation was sealed. Thus,

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according to Islamic ideology, it is Divine Revelation which fed the human civilisation from the beginning and through the different epochs of human history until with the advent of the Holy Prophet Moḥammad ﷺ mankind attained the stage of maturity and was no more in need of divine spoon feeding. The last revealed Book, i.e., the Holy Qur'ān has retained its pristine purity unto this day and will abide with humanity in this state of purity up to the Last Day.

The principle which emerges from the Islamic teaching is that the salvation of humanity has always been and will always be grounded basically in Divine Revelation. This does not mean that Islam in any way deprives human reason of its true place in human affairs. Indeed, Islam has laid the fullest emphasis on the importance of reason and on the cultivation of knowledge and all its branches. Side by side with that, however, Islam also emphasises the limits of human reason. For instance, Islam teaches that human Reason is absolutely incapable of solving the Ultimate Problems. In the domain of social problems also Islam holds to the view that human reason must commit blunders if it is not guided by Divine Revelation. Moreover, Reason has attained its present state of development basically through its culture and training by Divine Revelation during the bygone ages.

### 5. Principle of the Vicegerency of Man

The fifth basic feature of Islamic ideology is its teaching concerning man and his relations with the world. Islam proclaims that man is the vicegerent,

khalīfah) of God on earth. Now, what does this term signify? In the first instance, man is to act as the agent of God in all the spheres of life, whether they relate to himself or to other and when they refer to morals or economics or politics or any other department of human activity. This great idea opens the door of dynamic spirituality and leads mankind on the road to truly healthy civilisation. Secondly, man has been endowed by God with certain capabilities whereby he can subjugate the natural forces and harness them to his use, hereby participating, so to say, in the creative activity of God.

This is a revolutionary idea which Islam introduced in human thought. With this idea the Holy Qur'ān opened wide the gates of scientific and technological advancement for humanity, on the one hand and dealt a crushing blow to nature-worship which had marred the outlook of the idolatrous religions of the world.

### 6. Thorough-going Democracy

The sixth basic feature of Islamic ideology is that it is a thorough going Democracy. The society which Islam builds is at one and the same time a Spiritual Democracy, a Social Democracy and a Political Democracy. It is a Spiritual Democracy because in Islam there is no priesthood, namely, a privileged class or dynasty of religious leaders who might act as intermediaries between man and God. All other religions of the world establish priesthood and consequently establish spiritual oligarchy. The

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Islamic Society is a Social Democracy because Islam establishes a classless social order in which the standard of preference and superiority is neither tribe nor dynasty nor race nor wealth nor even administrative leadership but only character. The Islamic society is a Political Democracy because it establishes the State on the basis of the formula: “Government of God for the people by the people”. When Islam emphasises the sovereignty of God it means that no human being has the right to rule over other human beings. The head of the state, his cabinet and his parliament all of them are merely agencies elected by the people under the Law of God and the Divine mandate to carry out the administration as Agents and Servants of God and representatives of the people. In the Islamic political order the supremacy on the human level has been given not to person or persons, but to Law. According to Islam, all are equal before the law. Thus Islam tramples under the feet the age-old conception of the Divine Right of Kings and the modern conception of special privileges for the Head of the State.

It might, be pointed out here that democracy which is established under the concept of the “government of the People” cannot be so real, because of being based on party system, as the democracy which is built on the principle of Sovereignty of God and the no-party system of Islam. This is because the right of legislation rests in a modern democracy with the people which always means the majority and in Islam it vests in God which means that it is represented in the will of every single individual who is the citizen of the Islamic State.

## 7. Principle of the Balance

The seventh basic feature of Islamic ideology consists in the principle of the "Balance". Islam has laid down the general rule of adopting the middle path in our outlook as well as our actions; and this principle manifests itself on different levels.

For instance:

It is the major shortcoming of all the non-Islamic religions and ideologies that they are one-sided. They sacrifice either this world or the next. Islam, in its turn, strikes a happy balance between the demands of this world and the requirements of the next, thus giving to us that balanced ideology which alone can ensure true and comprehensive success.

Then, Islam is neither a "loose" system nor "rigid". Rather, it strikes a balance between the "permanent" and the "changeable" by giving fundamental and unchanging principles and laws in the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah, on the one hand, and by establishing the institution of Ijtihād for effecting adjustments in deference to the changing modes of human problems. The fundamental and the unchanging principles and laws are for all time because they are based on the fundamentals of human nature, and human nature is unchangeable. The modes of human problems do change and vary from group to group, and hence the principle of flexibility which Islam permits in that domain.

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In the general theory of society, Islam sacrifices neither the interests of the individual nor the claims of society, but gives to both what is due to them.

In the sphere of Politics, Islam effects a most healthy balance between the rights of the state and the rights of the citizens, thus avoiding totalitarianism and anarchy both.

In the domain of Economics, Islam resolves the conflict of Capital and Labour by ensuring the genuine rights of both, and thus steers a middle course between Capitalism and Communism.

### 8. Complete Theory and Perfect Pattern

The eighth basic feature of Islamic ideology is that it is not merely theoretical. The Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ did not confine himself to giving sermons and laying down rules of conduct but also put into practice what he taught. And while his teachings covered every aspect of human life, his practical example covered every field of human activity. Thus Islam has given not only a complete theory of human belief and conduct but also a perfect Pattern, and this feature of Islamic ideology is again unique in the known history of mankind.

### 9. Simplicity

The ninth basic feature of Islamic ideology is its simplicity. The Creed of Islam - Lā ilāha illallāh, Muḥammad-ur-Rasūl-ullāh - is the simplest and the

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most well-defined in the world and Islam prescribes no mystifying belief and no mysterious rites and ceremonies.

### 10. Allied to Reason

The tenth basic feature of Islamic ideology is that it is allied to Reason. Namely, instead of demanding blind acceptance on the basis of “Believe in it and you will be saved”, the Holy Qur'an makes fervent appeals on page after page to employ reason in understanding the truth, the beauty and the grandeur of its teaching. The same cannot be said of any other religion of the world.

Islam has not only harmonised the roles of Reason and Revelation in the domain of human problems, but it has also laid special emphasis on the cultivation of physical sciences - a pursuit which is a sacred obligation according to the Holy Qur'an which, on page after page, makes the most passionate and impressive appeals to investigate the multifarious natural phenomena and thus to realise the Word of God in the Work of God, and also to harness the natural Forces for the realisation of human destiny in terms of the Vicegerency of God.

The scientific quest in Islam has, however, to be pursued in a spiritual perspective and not for promoting materialism and atheism as it is happening most unfortunately in the West.

## THE CONCLUSION

We have assessed briefly the nature of Western civilisation and the basic features of Islamic ideology and the only conclusion at which we can arrive is that the materialistic hedonistic outlook of Western civilisation is not compatible with the spiritual outlook of Islam.

It is necessary to remark here, however, that Islam is neither hidebound nor retrograde. Rather, it stands for cooperation in every thing which is good, and it is committed to progress in all its genuine and healthy manifestations. As regards the former, the law of the Qur'ān is:

ط  
وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ

*Cooperate in virtue and piety (with all human beings)*

(Q 5:2)

And as regards the latter, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ has said: “All wisdom is the lost property of the Believer. He should take hold of it wherever he finds it”.

The only wisdom that the West can give to us consists in its achievements in the field of technology. Islam places no bar in the way of the acquisition of this wisdom by the Muslims. But the Sensate Culture of the West is pure poison in many of its aspects; and its adoption means nothing less than the destruction of Islam. Moreover, Islam aims at a self-contained Culture and a self-sustained Civilisation; and hence it cannot permit anyone to replace its foundations or to exchange its cultural principles with alien norms and ideals.

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This is the truth which it is necessary for the Muslim world to realise in its fulness before it is too late; and the realisation of this truth, in its turn means a radical break with the present chaos and a return to the social philosophy of Islam and a system of education which might ensure the creation of all-round Islamic personality in the ranks of Muslim intelligentsia.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 2  
**ISLAM:**  
**The Way Of Unity And Progress**



With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

WHAT is the character of the universe which we inhabit and how are we related to it? These are the two fundamental questions which have controlled all religions and philosophies of the world. In this connection each religious and philosophical system has tried to answer them in its own way.

Closely connected with these questions is the problem of the nature of relationship between mind and matter-between the spiritual and the physical aspects of life, and a solution of this problem alone can form the basis of our world-view and our life-programme.

There are three distinct answers offered to our enquiry in this connection, namely: (I) by the pre-Islamic religions: (II) by the post-Islamic empirical thought of the West: (III) by Islam.

**THE PRE-ISLAMIC RELIGIONS** were deeply impressed by the notion of an acute conflict between man's moral and physical existence, or, in other words, between 'the biological within' and 'the mathematical without'. This dualistic idea led them ultimately to find a way for the affirmation of the spiritual self in man in the rejection of the physical reality as either meaningless or dangerous.

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Hinduism regarded the world of matter as **maya**, namely illusion, and prescribed a life of renunciation for the spiritual development of its devotees. Buddhism considered the physical world an obstruction in the onward march of the soul and pointed to the annihilation of the individual self and the severance of its emotional links with the physical world as the way to achieve **nirvana**. Similarly, Christianity recognised the antagonism between the physical and spiritual aspects of life and conceived the world of matter, or to use a more Christian term, the world of the flesh, as essentially the play ground of Satan. Consequently, it standardised human perfection in the type of the ascetic Saint.

Such a despising attitude towards the material aspects of life affects humanity in two ways.

Firstly, it shuts the door to all material progress, not to speak of scientific advancement, because our indulgence in material pursuits is considered detrimental to the ideal of spiritual self-realisation.

Secondly, it gives rise to a perpetual conflict within us, because on one side is the religious call to shun the world, while on the other side exists the natural urge to enjoy it. Such a state of affairs can only culminate in creating a continuous feeling of bad conscience and thus defeat the very purpose of our idealistic attitude.

A high Christian dignitary, the Ven. J. M. Wilson D.D., admits the evil effects of the Christian attitude, in his book: "WHAT IT IS TO BE A CHRISTIAN", in the following words:

"If we mechanically applied, as rules of conduct, Christ's

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ideals of temper, we are certain from commonsense, that universal pauperism, lawlessness and national extinction would follow.”

In his famous book, **Life of Jesus**, Renan revolts against the Christian conception of perfection and observes in a rather irreverent tone:

“In these fits of severity Jesus went so far as to abolish all natural ties. His requirements (for the Kingdom of Heaven) had no longer any bounds. Despising the healthy limits of man's nature, he demanded that he should exist only for him and should love him alone. The harsh and gloomy feeling of distaste for the world and excessive self abnegation, which characterises Christian perfection, was originated not by the refined and cheerful moralist of earlier days, but by a sombre giant whom a kind of pre-sentiment was drawing more and more out of the pale of humanity. We should almost say that, in the moments of conflict with the most legitimate cravings of the heart, Jesus had forgotten the pleasures of loving, of seeing, and of feeling.”

THE post-Islamic empirical thought of the West adopts a path which is radically different from the pre-Islamic idealism. It asserts that the world of matter alone is real and worthy of our attention and that the realisation of human destiny lies in the conquest of Nature with the ultimate aim of achieving the highest amount of physical pleasure.

It ignores all transcendental values and spiritual considerations simply because they do not fall within the scope of empirical sciences. There is only one criterion of ethics which it recognises,

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and that is the criterion of practical utility for the enhancement of the earthly or 'carnal' pleasures of man.

Now, the physical world being essentially a battlefield of conflicting appearances, an exclusively materialistic interpretation of reality, even though it may be concealed behind the otherwise fascinating mask of scientific spirit, is bound to unbalance human life.

This is what the West is experiencing today. Nations are running at the throats of each other and individuals are indulging in the pleasures of the flesh in a way which precludes all possibilities of life's spiritual expressions. Peace and piety both have been left far behind.

**WHAT**, then, is the message of Islam which stands between the ancient world that stressed the exclusive validity of the spiritual aspects of life and the modern world which interprets all reality in terms of matter? Has it any solution to offer to reconcile this sharp antagonism? Has it any teaching to give in the light of which we may develop all our faculties evenly and work out our destiny without prejudice against both our natural surroundings and the physical conditions of our life or our idealistic yearnings which are certainly not an illusion but a positive reality and are ingrained in our very nature?

To start with: Islam does not consider the universe as composed of two self-existing and conflicting entities. It conceives all life as a unity because; it proceeds from the Divine Oneness, and Reality. According to it this Reality is neither material nor mental but "a realm in which thought and thing, fact and value, are inseparable, neither having any existence apart from its correlative; the real world being a coherent organic unity,

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spaceless and timeless, but including all happenings in space and time in their proper relations to itself.”

In addition to this principle of harmony, Islam emphasises the purposive nature of all existence, whether spiritual or physical. Thus says God Almighty in the Holy Qur’ān:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَعِبِينَ،  
مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*“We have not created the Heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in sport; We have not created them but for a serious end: but the greater part of them understand not.”*

(Q 44:38-39)

Thus our earthly surroundings are not a meaningless projection of the play of blind forces- a mere empty shell with no content. No, the tiniest particle of sand, the smallest drop of water, the frailest roseleaf, is full of meaning and music and functions under a definite and well planned Divine scheme.

This being the character of the universe, what is the nature of man? Should we conceive him as a being who is originally born low and cannot attain the pinnacle of purity and perfection except through the tragedy of renouncing worldly pleasures or of passing through a continuous ordeal of transmigration? This is the way Hinduism, Buddhism and some other religions go. Or, should we believe him to have been born in sin and therefore incapable of working out his destiny except through a mysterious Divine sacrifice? This is the doctrine of Christianity. To these questions Islam replies in the negative. It is emphatic in its assertion that man is born sinless and is the chosen of God, as we read in the Holy Qur’ān:

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لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

*“Of the goodliest fibre We created man.”*

(Q 95:4)

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ

*“And it is He Who has made you His vicegerent on the earth.”*

(Q. 6:165)

STARTING his life with a sinless birth, man is entitled, or we might say, destined, as an evolutionary being, to scale the loftiest heights of perfection and to surpass all God's creation, including the angels, in his uniqueness and purity. Thus we read in the Holy Qur'an:

وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ، وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ،  
لَتَرْكَبَنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ، فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*“It needs not that I swear by the sunset redness and by the night and its gatherings and by the moon when at her full, that from state to state shall ye be surely carried onwards.”*

(Q. 84:17-20)

What then should be our attitude towards our material environment? Should it consist in renouncing the world and repressing our physical desires? No - Islam says nothing of the kind. Instead of recognising a conflict between the moral and physical existence of man, it emphasises the co-existence of these two aspects as the natural basis of life.

It maintains that our earthly sojourn is a “positive” factor in the Divine scheme of creation and the necessary stage in the evolution of our soul-life. Consequently, it seeks the affirmation

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of the spiritual self in man, not in renouncing the world of matter, but in the active endeavour to master it with a view to discover the basis for a realistic regulation of life. “The life of the ideal”, says sir Muhammad Iqbal, “consists not in a total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions, but in the perpetual endeavour of the appropriate with the real view eventually to absorb it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being“. It is, therefore, impossible for Islam to despise our earthly existence and activities, and here it differs radically with other religions of the world.

This realistic attitude of Islam may not, however, be identified with that of the modern West. The latter ignores our spiritual existence altogether and regards our earthly career as an end-in-itself, and that in a way which amounts to material worship. Islam, on the other hand, conceives it, not as an end, but as a means to a higher spiritual end.

And what is the higher end? It is submission to the Will of Allāh and seeking His pleasure, as the Qur’ān says:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي  
لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ

*“Say: Verily, my worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, Who has no partner.”*

(Q 6:162)

Viewed in this light, all our worldly actions, including the most insignificant ones, are transformed into religious acts, the moment we give them a spiritual orientation, namely, the moment we perform them with the consciousness that we are

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acting in the light of Allāh's commands. In fact, Islam conceives the whole life of a Muslim as a life of continuous worship, for says God in the Qur'ān:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

*"I have not created the jinn and human kind but that they shall worship Me."*  
(Q. 51:56)

Thus the notion worship in Islam is also radically different from that of other religions. In Islam there is no such distinction as 'religious' and 'secular'. Every act of a true Muslim is a religious act because he has to perform all his works in obedience and conformity to Divine injunctions and has to dedicate all his faculties, spiritual or physical, to the cause of God's eternal scheme. Devotion and submission to God in this sense constitute the very meaning of our life in Islam.

**HERE ISLAM GIVES** us the highest and the purest ethical standards, **"The Highest form of religious ethic"**, says Sir Richard Gregory<sup>1</sup> "is that in which the aim of conduct is complete and implicit obedience to what is conceived to be the will of God...(this obedience) may become a joyous and spontaneous acceptance of a mode of life, such as it is conceived would be constant with the nature of God, subject to such limitations of the desire for uprightness as an end-in-itself, either with a view to reward, if not in this world, in the next, or pursued selflessly for its own sake. **This concept of religious ethic has led to the highest idealism in human conduct.**"

The notion of worship in Islam being what it is, it was absolutely necessary that Islam should not confine itself to the explanation of the metaphysical relations between man and his Creator but

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should also define exactly the relations between the individual and the society. And this Islam has accomplished to its external glory by giving us an exhaustive guidance which does not leave even the most trivial actions of our life untouched.

From what has been said above, the essential nature of the Islamic view of life must have become amply clear. But it is only the principle of 'unity in life' that has been emphasised so far. There is another fundamental principle, namely, 'movement in life' or **progress**, which requires elucidation. The discussion in this connection may be confined to an examination of Islam's attitude towards the empirical science which is, however, the direct outcome of its realistic conception of Nature and Man.

The holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ stands alone in the religious annals of the world as the advocate of scientific enquiry. The pages of the Qur'ān abound with passages which invite our attention to an empirical study of the natural phenomena and emphasises the conquest of nature by man. In fact, the inductive method of enquiry, which is the basis of modern scientific and philosophical thought, is one of the most valuable gifts of the Qur'ān to the world. Here are just a few Qur'ānic verses in support of this statement:-

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

*“Assuredly in the creation of the Heavens and of the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and in the ships which pass through the sea with what is useful to man, and in the rain which God send down from*

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*Heaven, giving life to the earth after its death and scattering over it all kinds of cattle, and in the change of winds and in the clouds that are made to do service between the Heavens and the earth- are signs for those who understand.*

(Q. 2:164)

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا ،  
وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا

*“Can they not look up to the clouds, how they are created; and to the Heavens how it is upraised, and to the mountains how they are rooted?”*

(Q. 78:19-20)

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ  
اللِّسَانِ وَالْوَاوِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

*“And among his signs are the creation of the Heavens and of the earth, and your variety of languages and colour. Herein truly are signs for all men.”*

(Q. 30:21)

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا  
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

*“Do you not see that it is Allāh Who hath made subservient to you whatever is in the Heavens and on the earth.”*

(Q. 31:20)

IT IS NO WONDER therefore that during the ages of Islam's glory, its followers became the pioneers of civilisation and the inaugurators of the modern scientific era. It might sound strange to those who are accustomed to hear and read that Islam obstructs the way to progress and is an enemy of scientific

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learning. The truth lies just the opposite way and it can be honestly said that but for Islam there would have been no modern scientific progress. No less a person than Briffault, the noted historian of civilisation, has admitted this fact in his reputed work, *The Making of Humanity*.

“Neither Roger Bacon nor his later namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Muslim science and method to Christian Europe. Science is the momentous contribution of Arab civilisation to the modern world, (though) it was not science alone which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the civilisation of Islam communicated its first glow to European life.”<sup>2</sup>

“The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in discoveries or revolutionary theories. Science owes a great deal more to Arab culture: It owes its existence. The ancient world was, as we saw, pre-scientific. The astronomy and mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation, never thoroughly acclimatised in Greek culture. The Greeks systematised, generalised and theorised. But the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to Greek temperament. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the

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Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs.”<sup>3</sup>

A vital point of difference between the spirit of modern West and the spirit of Islam may however be emphasised again. While the modern West has employed mostly for the satisfaction of its unjust craving for ill-used power and ill-gotten pleasures of human destruction, Islam seeks in the scientific enquiry a means to the service of humanity and spiritual elevation. How beautiful the Qur’ān has inculcated the latter idea in the following verse:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ  
لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ، الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا  
وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

*“Verily, in the creation of the Heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, are signs for people of understanding, who standing, sitting and reclining bear God in mind and reflect on the creation of the Heavens and of the earth and say: ‘Oh, our Lord! You have not created all this in vain: Glory be to Thee!! Save us from the fire”*

(Q.3 :190-191)

Islam, it may be emphasised, is not merely a faith, a “religion”, a creed. It is a way of life, - a life to be lived. It does not only respond to man's religious yearnings, but to human life as a whole. It does not only give us an infallible metaphysics, but also a comprehensive and sublime code of individual and social ethics, a sound economic system, a just political ideology, and many other things besides. It is not a solitary star, but a whole solar system, encompassing the whole and illuminating the whole.

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It should therefore be evident that the foregoing very brief discussion of a few Islamic verities forms only an introduction to the study and fuller understanding of Islam. It is meant to stimulate thought, to bring out the fundamental distinction of Islam from non-Islam, and to show that the notion of religion in Islam is infinitely richer and more sound than any other to which humanity subscribes.

The present writer is confident that those who undertake an impartial and detailed study of Islam will come to the same conclusion and will join him in saying:

God's choicest blessings be on Muḥammad ﷺ for the Light and Guidance he brought to humanity!

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 3  
CONDITION OF THE WORLD  
BEFORE THE ADVENT  
OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ

*“Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men’s hands have done.”*

(Q. 30:41)

So says the Holy Qur’ān of the rotten condition of the world at the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet MuḤammad ﷺ, thus pointing at the necessity of the appearance of a World Teacher.

No statement can be truer than that. The 6<sup>th</sup> century of the Christian era which witnessed the appearance of MuḤammad ﷺ was a century of universal religious and moral depravity. The votaries of all the great religions of the world had most ignominiously relapsed into idolatry and immorality. Even the last flames of true religious fervour had been extinguished in the human breast and the civilization of the world stood on the brink of ruin and destruction.

Christianity, the youngest of the revealed religions of the world was “decrepit and corrupt” according to Sir William Muir.

Gibbon, renowned author of the ‘Decline and Fall of the Roman

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Empire' says: "The Christians of the seventh century, had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of paganism; their public and private vows were addressed to the relics and images that disgraced the temples of the East; the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a crowd of Martyrs, Saints and angels, the objects of popular veneration, and the collyridian heretics, who flourished in the fruitful soil of Arabia invested the Virgin Mary with the name and honours of a Goddess. The mysteries of the trinity and incarnation appear to contradict the principle of the Divine Unity. In their obvious sense they introduce three equal deities and transform the man Jesus into the substance of the son of God: an orthodox commentary will satisfy only a believing mind... The creed of Mahomet is free from the suspicion of ambiguity, and the Qur'ān is a glorious testimony of the Unity of God".

The remarks of Rev. Dr. White may be more convincing in this connection because he was a clergyman. He observes:<sup>1</sup>

"Divided into numberless parties, on account of distinctions, the most trifling and absurd, contesting with each other from perverseness and persecuting each other with rancour, corrupt in opinion, and degenerate in practice, the Christians of this unhappy period seemed to have retained little more than the name and external profession of their religion. Of a Christian church scarce any vestige remained. The most profligate principles and absurd opinions were universally predominant; ignorance amidst the most favourable opportunities of knowledge, vice amidst the noblest encouragements to virtue; a pretended zeal for truth, mixed with the wildest extravagancies of error; an implacable spirit of discord about opinions which none could settle; and a general and striking similarity in the

commission of crimes, which it was the duty and interest of all to avoid”

“The images of the saints who had labored to disseminate, and the bones of the martyrs who had died to confirm the faith, were now, by the arts of a designing priesthood, and ignorance of a superstitious multitude, held up as proper objects of religious adoration”.

“The blind fury of superstitious zeal extinguished the tenderest sentiments of nature; the majesty of the laws was trampled on and violated with impunity; the cities of the East were deluged with blood.”

Professor JJ Lane observes:

“it was not in Christendom alone that, what is popularly misnamed philosophy had done its worst: the evil culminating in idolatry. This so-called philosophy which had developed itself afresh as Spinozism had already overpowered the earlier revelation in the East. The results in the Semitic races of Central and Eastern Asia were most corrupt systems of idolatry, so that between these and Christendom, to which may be added the northern tribes of Europe, the known world, in the days of Muhammad, represented one vast scene of idolatrous abominations, and, as we have since discovered, the then known world was in the same condition... Even some of the Jewish tribes failed to escape the general contagion, joining in the idolatrous observances and sundry offerings to the heathen worship in the Ka'aba at Mecca.”

ARABIA needs here a detailed and special mention because it

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was the country where Muḥammad ﷺ was born, and further, because some adverse Christian critics like Prof. A. H. Sayce, H. Hirschfield, Samuel M. Zwemer, Rev. Tisdall, and Prof. D.S. Margoliouth have asserted that Muslim writers have painted a false picture of the pre-Islamic Arabs, who they say, due to their contact with Judaism and Christianity were already in possession of high virtues and refined culture.

This country, as we read in its chronicles recorded by its historians and regarded as correct and of unimpeachable authenticity by all true western scholars of oriental history, was the darkest spot on the face of the earth. It was the centre of all vices that could be conceived of in those days. The Ka'aba which had been built by the Holy Prophet Abraham ؑ for the worship of God Almighty, had become the centre of idolatry. It contained three-hundred and sixty idols, including the image of Abraham, Ishmael ؑ, Jesus ؑ and his mother. The Arabs would visit the shrine annually in thousands and would go round the images in a state of complete nudity. Besides the pantheon of Ka'aba “each family had its particular divinities, its Lares, in fact, in honour of which even human victims were immolated.”<sup>2</sup>

The God of wine was universally worshipped and “the passion for gambling was so reckless that a man would often stake all his possessions and after losing them at a throw, would next stake his freedom, and losing that also become a slave.”<sup>3</sup> Adultery was practiced unblushingly and was boasted of in their songs. The number of wives was regulated only by the dictates of lust. Female infanticide was rife. “The most barbarous practice of these 'times of ignorance'...” says Bosworth Smith,<sup>4</sup> “was the burying alive of female children as soon as they were born; or, worse still, as sometimes happened, after they had attained the age of six years, the father was generally himself the murderer.

'Perfume and adorn your daughter!', he would say to the mother, 'that I may convey her to her mothers'. This done, he led her to a pit dug for the purpose, bade her look into it, and then, as he stood behind her, pushed her headlong in, and then filling up the pit himself, leveled it with the rest of the ground!...

A woman had no rights; she could not inherit property; Her person formed part of the inheritance which came to the heir of her husband, and he was entitled to marry her against her will. Hence sprung up the impious marriages of sons with their step-mothers and others of an even worse character which Muḥammad ﷺ so peremptorily forbade; Polygamy was universal and quite unrestricted; equally so was divorce, at least as far as the man was concerned. We read of a certain woman, Ommi-i-Charijah, who had distinguished herself, even amongst the Arabs, by having forty husbands.”

Some of the popular proverbs regarding woman were:

'To send woman before to the other world is a benefit.'

'The heart of women is given to folly.'

'Women are the whips of the devil.'

'Our mother forbids us to err, and herself runs into error.'

In the midst of drunken assemblies, acts of all sorts of profligacy were committed. Female slaves played the role of dancing girls, and were compelled to sell their favours the price of which was appropriated by their masters.

A pre-Islamic poet has thus summed up the Arabian hedonistic

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conception of life:

Roast meat and wine, the swinging ride  
On a camel sure and tried,  
Which her masters speeds amain  
Over low dales and level plain:  
Women marble white and fair  
Trailing gold fringed raiments rare:  
Opulence, luxurious ease,  
With the lute's soft melodies  
Such delights hath our brief span,  
Time is change, Time fool is man,  
Wealth or want, great store or small,  
All is one since death's are all!<sup>5</sup>

People were extremely fond of poetry, but “it was lyrical and descriptive only: their amour and their love feuds, the joys of the dice-box and the wine-cup.... These were the themes of their greatest poets and these, the wild tribes of the desert flocked to hear.”

The poet-laureate Imraul Qais composed a poem in which he expressed his pride over his amours with the daughter of his aunt; and the obscene poem was hung on the door of the Ka'aba!

In times of war, it was the common custom to burn men alive, to commit most indecent acts with women and to slay the children of the vanquished foe.

Superstition was the most trustworthy guide of the people in all their actions. Small charm-stones were employed to avoid or remedy any misfortune. They had a peculiar science based on the movements of animals by which they used to predict happiness or ill-luck. Certain animals on giving birth to female young ones

on certain occasions were regarded as ominous. To appease the anger of gods during famines, it was the religious custom to take a cow into the hills and having tied burning wood to its tail to leave it there to die. There was also the custom of tying the camel of the deceased to the grave so that it may die there and may then serve the master in the next world. If the death of any one took place through murder, it was avenged to console the soul of the deceased which would, otherwise, transfigure itself into an Owl and would continue crying: “Quench my thirst.”

Slight provocations often developed into interminable feuds and sanguine wars with heavy toll of lives on both the sides. The war of Basus was fought for forty years, because the she-camel of one tribe broke the eggs of a lark in the garden of the other! Foul play in a race of horses gave rise to an equally long war of Dabis and Ghabra.

“The sixth century, especially in Arabia, was the time of religious and social controversy, of uncouth customs of martial conquest, of cruel injustice and of general irregularity... Incest was not uncommon; female children were frequently killed at their birth, slavery was an age-old custom, and was cruelly applied to conquered enemies. There was, on every side, tribal wars as well as blood-feuds that lasted from generation to generation. Human sacrifices were offered to idols, and the worshippers feasted on the flesh of their victims. Kinsman slew kinsman and neighbor slew neighbor on the slightest provocation, whilst utter licentiousness took the place of human love and family life.”<sup>7</sup>

“The Arabs,” Says John Davenport,<sup>8</sup> “Believed neither in a future state nor in the creation of the world, but

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attributed the formation of the universe to nature, and its future destruction to time. Debauchery and robbery everywhere prevailed, and since death was regarded as the end, strictly so called, of existence, so was there neither recompense for virtue nor punishment for vice. Alike moral and religious corruption was to be found among the Christians and the Jews who, for ages, had established themselves in the Arabian peninsula, and had there formed very powerful parties. The Jews had come to seek in that land of liberty an asylum from the persecution of the Romans; the Christians had also fled thither in order to escape the massacres occasioned by the Nestorian Eutychianism and Arian dissensions. It is not easy to conceive of anything more deplorable than the condition of Christianity at this time. The scattered branches of the Christian Church in Asia and Africa were at variance with each other, and had adopted the wildest heresies and superstitions. They were engaged in perpetual controversies and torn to pieces by the disputes of the Arians, Sabellians, Nestorians and Eutychians, whilst the simony (the buying and selling of church privileges such as pardons), the incontinence, the general barbarism and ignorance which were to be found amongst the clergy, caused great scandal to the Christian religion and introduced universal profligacy (recklessly extravagant or wasteful or indulging too much in physical pleasure) of manners among the people.

In Arabia the deserts swarmed with ignorant and infatuated Cenobites, or recluses, wasting their lives in vain. Based on fiery speculations they would then rush, often armed, in mobs into cities, preaching their

fantasies in the churches, and enforcing assent to them by the sword. The grossest idolatry had usurped the place of the simple worship instituted by Jesus – that of an all-wise, almighty, and all beneficent being, without equal and without similitude; a new Olympus had been imagined, people with a crowd of martyrs, and angels in lieu of the ancient gods of paganism. There were found Christian sects impious enough to invest the wife of Joseph with the honours and the attributes of a goddess. Relics and carved and painted images were objects of the most fervent (passionate) worship on the part of those whom the word of Christ commanded to address their prayers to the living God alone. Such were the scenes which the Church of Christ presented in Alexandria, in Aleppo, and in Damascus.

At the time of Muḥammad ﷺ advent all had abandoned the principles of their religion to indulge in never-ending wrangling upon dogmas of a secondary importance, and the Arabian people could not but see that they had lost sight of the most essential point of every religious doctrine – the pure and true worship of God – and that, as regards the most disgraceful and the grossest superstition, they were upon a par with their pagan contemporaries.”

This indeed was the condition of the world before the emergence of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

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All thanks and praises belong to Allāh,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 4

# MAN'S STRUGGLE FOR PERFECTION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

### FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

MAN finds himself confronted with the most vital problem of his life, viz. What have I to do and what have I to become? Naturally, he has to do and he has to become what is in harmony with and adequate to his nature, the nature of the universe and the place he occupies in it. **Hence the questions:**

What is the nature of the Universe?

What is the nature of Man?

What is the place he occupies in it?

What is the conduct befitting the place he occupies?

These questions are so deep seated in human nature that they can never be ignored. Man must reach a satisfactory solution of them. Indeed he does come to a solution whether consciously or unconsciously, critically or uncritically.

The credit of man however, lies in a conscious and critical solution of these questions. Therefore, when they are raised at the critical stage of reflective thought, there arises a question as a pre-requisite of the solution of the fundamental problem of man—namely: what are the conditions of the solution of these questions?

## Chapter 4 -Man's Struggle for Perfection

EVIDENTLY the solution is possible only if man is endowed with the capacities competent to know the nature of the universe, his own nature, as well as his place in the universe.

The philosophical attempts made by man to solve these problems may be divided into two stages: Pre-Critical and Critical- the stage of reflection and the stage of reflection upon reflection. The stage of reflection, viz, the Pre-Critical, may again be divided into two eras, the Rationalistic and the Empirical.

As the Rationalistic stage the basis of the solution of the fundamental problem of man is the dogmatic assumption that theoretical reason alone is the faculty of the knowledge of ultimate reality. At this stage, theoretical reason becomes conscious of its superiority over all human faculties and feels its privilege to sit in judgment over all kinds of truth, with the result that its inquiry leads to conflicting conclusions.

THIS conflict of conclusions unhinges faith in the competence of reason and rationalism asserts itself in another form, viz. Empiricism, which is indirectly another interpretation of rationalism itself. That is, not reason but experience is the avenue of the knowledge of reality.

Reflection on the conclusions of rationalism and Empiricism creates an attitude of despair and want of faith. Man however, cannot stay in such an attitude and consequently the problem is raised afresh and in a modified form at the Critical stage of reflection. Formerly the problem was: What is the nature of the Object? viz., inquiry began from the side of the object, but at the Critical stage of the subject the question becomes:

What am I, and how can I attain perfection adequate to my nature?

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

In connection with this “I”, there are two aspects:

Now “I”, the human ego, is a kind of activity which is purposive. Therefore the nature of “I” as a purposive activity can be understood only with reference to the purposes to which it is directed. This purposive activity can be viewed from two aspects, viz. Instinctive and Rational.

As for the Instinctive aspect, the question arises: What are the different instincts and the ends thereof?

“An instinct”, according to McDougal,<sup>1</sup> “is an innate psychophysical disposition which determines the organism to perceive (to pay attention to) any object of a certain class, and to experience in its presence a certain emotional excitement and an impulse to action which finds expression in a specific mode of behaviour in relation to that object.”

The chief human instincts and their ends are:

1. **Instinct of hunger**: it has primacy over all other instincts in the sense that when aroused in great strength, it over-rides every other tendency. Its end is nutrition of the organism.
2. **Instinct of Repulsion or Disgust**: its end is primarily the avoidance of noxious things, or their rejection if they have been taken into the mouth.
3. **Instinct of Combat**: it has two phases, i.e. of threatening and of attack. Its natural end is getting rid of obstruction (in the smooth progress towards its natural goal) caused by any other activity.

## Chapter 4 -Man's Struggle for Perfection

4. **Instinct of Escape:** Its end is to get out of a dangerous situation when combat is either impossible or risky.
5. **Acquisitive Instinct:** its primary end is hoarding surplus food against possible future emergencies.
6. **Constructive Instinct:** Its primary end is to provide shelter. N.B- The above six instincts form one organic whole having the final end of **Self-preservation**.
7. **Mating or Sex Instinct:** Its immediate goal is sexual union with an individual of the opposite sex, and its ultimate end is the **Pro-creation of the species**.
8. **Parental Instinct:** It is distinct from the Mating instinct and is the most altruistic instinct in man. Its end is in the first place, the protection of one's young offspring and in the second place, of anyone in need or distress.
9. **Instinct of Appeal:** It is the master-key to the Parental instinct. Its end is to obtain aid and comfort from others, primarily from the parent. N.B- The above two instincts working together serve the end of the **Preservation of species**.
10. **Instinct of Curiosity:** The attitude of curiosity is one of suspended judgment and thus this instinct forms the beginning of wisdom. The end towards which this instinct strives is fuller apprehension or clearer perception of objects.

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

11. **Herd Instinct:** Its end is the near presence of other members of the species for the three-fold purpose of: (a) mutual warnings of dangers; (b) collective defence and attack; (c) benefits secured from the keener senses or the superior intelligence of other members of the species. N.B- This instinct combined with **Primitive Passive Sympathy** renders group-life advantageous to all members of the group and is the basis of all higher developments of sociability.
12. **Instinct of Self-Assertion:**
13. **Instinct of Submission:** N.B-Taken together, the common end of the last-mentioned three instincts is the **Creation and Preservation of Social Organism.**

As regards the rational aspect of purposive activity, it is directed to its own ends, viz. Knowledge, Art, Morality, and Religion.

WHEN the human ego is directed towards the world of objects in order to know it, it is the theoretical aspect of its nature and may be called *Knowledge Consciousness*.

When it is directed towards apprehension or creation of harmony in the world of objects, it is *Artistic or Aesthetic Consciousness*.

When it is directed towards morality, it is called *Moral Consciousness*.

When it is directed towards holiness and perfection embodied and experienced in a person, it is called *Religious Consciousness*.

## Chapter 4 -Man's Struggle for Perfection

Now the human ego is involved in a manifold conflict which is really the basis of its entire idealistic struggle. This conflict may be classified as follows:

1. The conflict (disharmony) between the instinctive activity and its end. To put it in other words, the activity of the human instincts may often be disproportionate to their ends, as for instance, the actual craving of hunger and sex seems to be excessively great as compared with the purposes, respectively, of the nutrition of the organism and the propagation of the species.
2. A conflict is possible in the activity of the different instincts themselves as for instance, the instinct of self-preservation may come into conflict with the instinct of self-assertion or with the gregarious [living in flocks] instinct; and this conflict may frustrate the end of one or the other instinct.
3. Instinctive activity may conflict with rational activity. In other words the activity directed towards knowledge or art or morality or religion may be opposed and frustrated by some instinctive activity or, the pursuit of knowledge or art or morality or religion may demand the suppression of any of the instincts.
4. The various rational activities may clash and conflict among themselves. For instance, the activity directed towards knowledge may clash with that directed towards moral self-perfection or towards artistic creation.

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

5. A conflict between “I” and its rational ends is also possible in the sense that the ego may find itself incompetent to realise the ends towards which it is directed.

### TO ISLAMIC METAPHYSICS THROUGH MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS

**MORAL** Consciousness is concerned with actions - modes of behaviour towards men; it yearns to do good (morally) and to avoid evil. Its problem therefore is: What is the nature of morality? And how is morality possible?

Morality consists in certain modes of actions which are performed for their own sake - in actions performed in obedience to laws which are absolutely, universally and unconditionally binding. The question therefore becomes: What are the laws which ought to be obeyed for their own sake and what are the metaphysical implications of the obedience of such imperatives?

Evidently the imperatives of the kind can be conceived as binding only if man is Free to act according to them. Otherwise there can be no responsibility.

**NOW** man finds himself face to face with two worlds - the world of inexorable Necessity and the world of Freedom, both thrusting them upon him and both trying to penetrate into each other, thus rendering morality and success incompatible and irreconcilable. This incompatibility necessitates that human life must be infinite in its existence in order to render success conceivable. Thus besides freedom, Immortality also is implied as a necessary condition of man's moral perfection.

## Chapter 4 -Man's Struggle for Perfection

In spite of freedom and immortality, the attainment of moral perfection seems impossible unless the world is essentially in harmony with human pursuits, that is, unless the world is a Moral Order.

Again even if the world be essentially in harmony with human yearnings and may ultimately admit of success in the moral struggle, the appearance of incompatibility that the world gives, necessitates that there should be a personality who would out of sheer Grace, lead man to perfection adequate to his nature.

THUS we come to Freedom of the will, IMMORTALITY, Moral order of the World and God, as the necessary implications of success in the moral life (struggle) of man. Hence, it becomes necessary to determine the import of these concepts.

### 1. Freedom:

“Freedom means, positively, the possession of inherent independence in the object called free to determine the mode of its activity and, negatively, the absence of any kind of external restraint or internal constraint on its action.”<sup>2</sup>

How is freedom conceivable in this sense? Freedom is a quality *sui generis* which can be conceived in a situation of moral conflict. When two motives - the motive to fulfil self-interest and the motive to perform Duty - conflict with one another, the moral agent deliberates over the situation, one moment leaning towards one motive, and the other moment towards the other.

Further, he has to choose between them and to resolve to

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

translate the chosen motive into action. Now if there had been any determining factor behind his choice, the action would have been causally determined and moral responsibility consequently, would have become inconceivable. But moral consciousness insists to hold that the choice of the motive translated into action is free from all kinds of compulsions.

SUCH freedom is conceivable if it is borne in mind that all the force which lies behind the motive to fulfil the natural inclination consists in the feeling associated with the idea of its (natural inclination's) end; and the motive of performance of Duty, too, is constituted of the idea of duty which is an abstract idea, and of the feeling of reverence associated with it.

If the feelings associated with the idea of the End and with the idea of duty conflict with one another, both the idea of duty and idea of the End of natural inclination are left bare, impotent and abstract ideas without any force behind them, leaving full possibility for reason to exercise its influence in favour of one or the other idea, without any compulsion on its decision. Thus freedom of the will is conceivable as a super-sensible factor in the free decision of the moral agent.

### 2. Immortality:

IMMORTALITY consists in the revival of the moral agent after death with the consciousness of self same identity (to be the subject of reward or punishment of the actions performed in the temporal world). Immortality in this sense is compatible only with the

## Chapter 4 -Man's Struggle for Perfection

idea of a God who is personal and who has created man and universe out of absolute "Nothing". All the difficulty that one has to face in conceiving immortality is due to the postulate of Architectonic Intelligence of the Creator in which it becomes inconceivable to bring together the constituent elements of the body of an individual when once they have disintegrated.

### 3. Moral Order of the world: Creation:

That the world is a moral order is the requirement of moral self-perfection because the entire moral struggle seems to be absolutely futile even if the human ego is immortal unless the world is so constituted that it admits of man's success in his moral efforts. But that is possible only if the world was created *ab novo* without any aboriginal nature of its own. Otherwise, if it had some independent factor in its essence it must remain an obstacle not only in the way of man but also in Divine interference with the world-order. Creation of the world, therefore, is another implication.

"Creation means bringing something into being out of complete nothing. This conception however is a stumbling block for the speculative consciousness, because such a coming into being is absolutely inconceivable. The speculative consciousness, therefore must stop in its logical regress at some being from which it could by modification, deduce the actual world-order.

It cannot conceive that a substance can come into being *ab novo*. About accidents or qualities of the substance it does not seem to be so sceptical - new qualities do come

into being as a matter of fact.”<sup>3</sup>

In reality the difficulty in the way of speculative consciousness takes its birth in the attitude of conceiving substance and qualities as two separate entities. But as Dr. S. Z. Hasan holds, substance may well be conceived as the sum of qualities, in which case the difficulty is thoroughly overcome.

**FROM** the point of view of religion, the concept of creation is necessary because if the things exist or have come into existence independently of God's Will, a limit is set thereby to His power by their nature and His control over them and over the events of the universe does not remain complete. He thereby ceases to perform the function for the sake of which His existence was postulated. That is He cannot satisfy the religious consciousness unless He is also the Creator.

#### 4. God:

“Man finds himself confronted in his course with insurmountable obstacles. On the one side stands his innate yearning after harmony with reality, after moral perfection and happiness, after knowledge and after beauty. On the other stands the universe, stupendous, dark and brutal, full of sin and ugliness, unnameable to harmony with his moral and spiritual yearnings and unwilling to accede to the demands of his soul.

He finds himself helpless-forlorn. There must be a Being that has the power as well as the will, to help him if he is to be rescued. Hence it is that Religious consciousness

## Chapter 4 -Man's Struggle for Perfection

affirms the existence of such a Being. He can help him in his natural wants and guide him to the right path.”<sup>4</sup>

SUCH a Being must be transcendent. He must necessarily be over and above the world and man. He must be wholly another because the despair of man amidst the obstacles that originate in his own nature and those that originate in the nature of the world around him demands that help should come from a source which is other than the sources of his troubles and which has full control over the whole world of men and things.

Indeed this succour from the source over and above the world is the very purpose for the sake of which Religious consciousness postulates the existence of such a Being. That is why religious Unity is necessarily transcendent.

Again the religious consciousness is necessarily dualistic, “For the situation that has given rise to the postulating of the existence of a Divine Being, is that man is disappointed with his own self and the nature of the world. Neither of them is capable of according any help to him in his distress.

“He postulates the existence of a spiritual Being. To be in harmony with Him alone would enable him to realise his yearnings. This implies that God on the one side and the universe and man on the other must be fundamentally different in nature. One is perfect, that other imperfect. Both exist and exist side by side. One is other than the other.”<sup>5</sup>

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

THAT God must be a personal Being is the stubborn demand of religious consciousness. Personality implies consciousness. No, it implies more! It implies self-consciousness, consciousness of itself as over and above - as other than something else, i.e., transcending them, but we can conceive a Being who is self-conscious, and yet it will hardly deserve the name of personality unless it can determine its own action according to the principles of morality, that is unless it is Free. Again such a Being may be just; - absolutely just; it may be holy. But that is not enough; it would then be only the doctrine of Karma hypostatized. We want more; it should be capable not only of Justice but also of Grace. It is grace which forms the distinctive feature of personality.

A man, who always gives you but your deserts, neither more nor less, will be regarded by you as lacking in personal elements.

Now the religious consciousness seeks a unity which is eminently personal. It seeks that the Divine Being should be aware of my actual conditions; and that He should be aware of my yearnings; more, He should have grace - He should be capable of satisfying my yearnings in spite of my shortcomings - in spite of my failure to deserve what I yearn for. That is to say, the religious unity must be fully personal.

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The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 5

# WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

The subject, “What is Philosophy of Religion and how it is Possible”, involves two concepts: Philosophy and Religion.

Philosophy is one of the most misunderstood and misinterpreted terms in common parlance. It has been sometimes used as a synonym for day-dreaming, pessimism, silence, etc. This is how the layman misunderstands and misinterprets philosophy.

Among the learned, philosophy is defined in so many different ways that we are perplexed to pick out the proper definition for the term. For instance, Professor Lipps will tell you that philosophy is the inquiry into the inner experience. He is confining the scope of philosophy to mental sciences alone. According to Doring, Philosophy is the investigation of goods and values. For him, therefore, Ethics and Aesthetics constitute philosophy. Another tendency is to consider it the science of knowledge, thereby reducing it to Logic and Epistemology [branch that deals with knowledge].

These definitions remind us of the blind men who examined different parts of an elephant and formed different notions about it. Paulsen, writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, professes to overcome this fault by calling philosophy the sum-total of scientific knowledge. His view is also misleading, as it

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deprives philosophy of the necessity of existing apart from the particular sciences.

**Now** I shall try to put, very briefly the real implications of philosophy. Philosophy, as the etymology [development in the meaning of a word] of the term denotes, is love of wisdom. Love is rather a process than a result attained by a process. So, it is more correct to understand by the term “philosophy”, the doctrine of wisdom: it includes the knowledge of the real purpose of life and actions directed to the attainment of that purpose. This shall be achieved by understanding the universe. Its relation to man, man's ultimate destiny, and the life he should lead in conformity with this understanding.

Philosophy is, therefore, an attempt to understand life. It is a critical enquiry into the meaning of experience. It is an attempt to arrive at a comprehensive and systematic knowledge of the form and connection, the meaning and import, of all things. Ferrier has adequately defined philosophy as the pursuit of absolute truth, that is, of truth as it exists for all intelligences.

**The** next concept which forms part of my subject is Religion. Religion is one of those verities which have passed without being very much questioned. In every age and in every country everyone held some religion or the other.

Religions differ so widely from one another that it is very difficult to deduce unity out of the diversity. All the same we may use the process of abstraction and arrive at the common element in religion. It involves the admission of something supernatural. It is the human attitude towards the supernatural which is for it the ultimate reality.

## Chapter 5 -What is Philosophy of Religion?

Man sometimes, often, finds himself confronted with insurmountable difficulties. He has his yearnings after moral perfection, beauty and knowledge. But he finds the world corrupted and ugly, and its mysteries beyond his comprehension. There must be a Being who has the power as well as the Will to rescue him in these difficulties. Hence the expression of religious yearning displayed through one religion or the other. It is a real fact.

The age-long permanence and the world - wide acceptance of religion are testifying to its sanctity and importance. Humanity could never dispense with it in the past. The religious conception of the Ultimate Reality always remained intact, and the vicissitudes of history and knowledge could not affect any serious disturbances in the religious convictions.

IT may be asked whether religion would survive the present-day scientific advancement. As an answer to this question, I need only remind you that man is not mere intellect. He is a willing and feeling being. Feelings of humility and reverence and yearnings after perfection determine his attitude towards reality more immediately and profoundly than the concepts and formulae of science. So religion is an every day fact from times immemorial, and for all time to come.

We have seen that philosophy and religion have their goal in ultimate reality. But they are the expressions of different consciousnesses. Necessarily their approach is different. Philosophy begins with intellectual apprehension, and its main object is to discover the nature of reality. That primarily includes the enquiry into the nature of human ideals. But the problem of religion is the quest as to how I can realise my ideals. While the one begins from doubt, the other is based on faith.

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

Now I come to the problem of the philosophy of Religion. Philosophy and religion are not so different as to exclude all possibility of their meeting together. Religion exists because man is a willing being. Philosophy appeared because he is a knowing being. A philosopher cannot leave any one of the human consciousnesses without thoroughly inquiring into its nature and contents.

“Philosophy”, says the renowned philosopher, professor S.Z. Hasan, “is not a matter of choice. You cannot help reflecting on the nature of the universe and your relation to it. What is it all? What am I? What is my function here? Whence I come and where to I go? A rational being cannot help putting these questions.”

Let me tell you that the reason for enquiring into such problems is the simple fact that they are the most vital problems. Would it then be possible for anyone to refrain from enquiring into that which has formed an inseparable part of his deepest self, namely, Religion? So philosophy of religion is not only possible, but it is there before we seek it.

SOME times it has been seriously questioned as to how religion, primarily a matter of faith, can be subjected to philosophic inquiry which is primarily rationalistic. I find the basis of such a notion in the ignorance of the complete connotation of the terms “philosophy” and “religion”. Philosophy is, following the pre-Kantian method, misunderstood by being conceived as purely rationalistic, that is to say, where everything is examined by reason and its validity affirmed or denied by it. On the side of religion there is the misconception that it is a matter of pure faith, or to be more correct, a matter of blind faith. Neither is philosophy necessarily rationalistic nor is religion a matter of blind faith.

## Chapter 5 -What is Philosophy of Religion?

Kant, the greatest philosopher of the modern era, has established beyond the shadow of doubt that reason is not an omnipotent faculty. It has its limits. Hence the correct method of philosophy is NOT Rationalism but Criticism. This gives greater scope in philosophic investigation. Whatever could not be reduced to the categories of reason had to be rejected as false according to Rationalism. But criticism enables us to accept those aspects of truth which are found to lie definitely beyond the scope of reason, if they are in perfect harmony with the results of other inquiries.

IN the realm of religion we find that the growing tendency is to welcome reason within reasonable limits. When we thus understand the complete connotations of philosophy and religion, the one to be more than merely rationalistic and the other to be more than faith, we will realise that the philosophic inquiry into religion is quite consistent with its spirit.

It is worthwhile at this stage of our discussion to understand the function of the philosophy of religion. Philosophy claims to inquire into the nature of the ultimate reality. It is not the business of philosophy to deny reality itself. It is to discover its nature, and in that attempt follow the inquiry to the ultimate limit. In philosophy of religion, too, the same thing is done.

Religious concepts, I mean, the facts of religion consciousness, form the subject-matter of philosophic investigation. The object is not to deny them because the facts of religious consciousness are, like the facts of knowledge consciousness, real, existing facts. The object of the philosophy of religion is only to explain them.

IN philosophy of religion, we deal with the concept of religion

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

and attempt to show that it is what it really claims to be. Here we study the nature of the human attitude towards God, and its implications in order to find out the ground of the validity of religious faith and the possibility of the ideals of religion. Then we proceed to show that its implications are perfectly in harmony with the knowledge arrived at through other inquiries.

It is the duty of the philosophy of the religion to remove any conflict, real or apparent, between religious doctrines and other established truths. Religion has its own view of reality quite in consonance with its aspirations. It, as I have pointed out at the very outset, necessarily involves certain fundamental concepts. The question before the philosopher of religion is: What is the ground of their validity? The results of rationalistic inquiry have rather distorted these concepts. Therefore the question arises: Do we really possess any such faculty which is competent to grasp these religious verities?

If the conclusion we arrive at is in the negative, and if we are able to show that faith in these verities alone is in harmony with the yearnings of man as man, the task of the philosophy of religion is accomplished. And the highest philosophical inquiry does really lead to this conclusion. The **modern world** has not produced a greater philosophical genius than Kant!

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All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 6

# OUR INTELLECTUAL EMANCIPATION And Islamic Reconstruction

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

### 1. NATURE OF THE PRESENT CRISIS:

#### THE 'PROGRESSIVE' MUSULMANS:

Of all the evils which Western domination has brought to the Muslim world, the greatest and the most dangerous, in view of the present writer, is that of the “slavery of the mind” and the transfer of power into the hands of those who have succumbed to it. These so-called “progressive” Muslims seek the justification of their existence and their ideology in the shortcomings of the technique of conservatism. But, actually, they are the product of gross ignorance of the beauties of Islam and true Islamic life, on the one hand, and of the spirit of intellectual defeatism which, because of reasons that might be elucidated on some other occasion, followed fast upon the heels of Islam's political land-side in the nineteenth century. For them Islam is just a religion among religions and deserves respect, if it ever does, merely as a social symbol or as a historical legacy. It is at best a personal (-private) faith, meant to comfort and sustain the individual, and capable of being set in any cultural framework they choose. They are vehemently opposed to the idea that Islam is a discipline, a way of life, a self-contained culture, and a self-sustained civilization.

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

This 'progressive' view of Islam is not the product of any intellectual appreciation of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, but of the spirit of slavish submission to Western norms and ideals. It began in the adoption of Western dress and manners and the creation of the pseudo-rational apologetics of the nineteenth century and has culminated today in the cultural and intellectual apostasy of a fairly large section of Muslim intelligentsia. And in truth it could not have been otherwise. The new current of Western thought was not confronted with the vigorous and dynamic Islam of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah but with a narrow, static and formalistic scholasticism, which, under the stress of circumstances, had divorced itself from the practical problems of life.

Few of us, however, realise the tremendous havoc which the many-faced impact of Western culture has caused to the Muslim world. Still less do we realise the doom which must inevitably befall Islam if the present self-complacency and senselessness of its upholders continues.

It is a fact known even to the man in the street that the majority of our rising intellectuals are not only ignorant of Islam but, because of this ignorance and the powerful impact of anti-Islamic influences, also positively antagonistic towards its ideals. The phenomenon of some of our best youths succumbing to the fashionable materialistic socio-political creeds of the West, as for instance Marxism, is now of daily occurrence. It may be a transitory phase; but it is there all the same.

It is not, however, individuals only who are deserting our cause. The poison has percolated into the very heart of our body-politic. Typical in this respect is the case of modern Turkey, where a radical divorce from the Qur'ānic ideals was effected by Atatürk

and his party not only in the externals of culture, in social outlook, in political policy, but also in intellectual and religious life. The last links with the Islamic cultural past were brutally broken by abolishing the Islamic code of law and the Arabic script- the script which enshrines the Islamic past of the race and which is the international script of Muslim Asia, Africa and Europe-, and adopting in their stead the German, Swiss and Italian codes and the Latin alphabet, forgetting in the blind fury of revolutionary spirit that nothing is more national than the law and the history of a people.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE INTELLECTUAL FACTOR

Who is responsible for this deterioration of Islamic religious life and disintegration of Islamic cultural order?

1. The enemies of Islam attribute the responsibility to Islam itself.
2. The Musulmans, in their turn, generally refer it to Islam's political breakdown - to their political servitude in the recent past and in the present.

The first is at best an a priori contention and collapses as soon as it is brought to face the evidence of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and Islamic History.

The second contention is a half-truth. It is true in the sense that political subjection does bring in its wake a sort of intellectual inferiority complex - a spirit of intellectual defeatism - especially when the intellectual level of the ruling nation is higher than that of the subject race. It is more than true in the positive sense that complete and perfect political freedom of all the Muslim peoples

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is an essential condition for the ultimate dissolution of the anti-Islamic world-order. But it is not true inasmuch as our political breakdown itself is the effect produced by some other more fundamental factor.

An empirical test of this view lies in the fact that the restoration and consolidation of political power in several Muslim countries has not in itself contributed in any appreciable degree to a revival of the Islamic world-order. In fact, in certain cases, as for instance in Turkey and Iran, quite the contrary happened and political consolidation and evolution only brought **greater opportunities to the anti-Islamic forces.**

To seek a solution of our present tragedy in the political resurgence alone, would, therefore, be a blunder of the first magnitude, and those who might take an exclusively political view of our destiny may be reminded that in the very midst of the struggle our youths have been forsaking our hope and the ghost of scepticism haunts the hitherto impregnable fortresses of our faith.

Consequently, while acknowledging that our political weaknesses and shortcomings have been contributing greatly to the present crises, we should not blind ourselves to the importance of other basic factors, among which the most fundamental is our *Intellectual Collapse*, which snatched away from the hands of Islam the right to educate us and to transform us into super-men and soldiers of the Kingdom of God. Our national existence has in consequence come to resemble a tree whose roots have been washed bare by the mighty torrent of Western civilization: and the tree is slowly withering, decaying and collapsing for want of proper nourishment.

## CONFUSION AND CHAOS

All of us probably realise the intellectual backwardness of the Muslim world, particularly in the field of natural sciences, but few of us have cared to evaluate our horrifying ignorance of Islamic values and our intellectual bankruptcy in the creative realm.

A majority of our old school seem to have forfeited all creative genius. They have been mostly employing and considering as final a technique evolved centuries ago in an atmosphere and under circumstances in many respects different from our own.

The reaction against it has given rise to an ever-increasing loose-thinking and scepticism. The modernized educated Musulmans, with few honourable exceptions, learn their faith and their past national history from Western orientalist- Goldziher and Nicholson and Margoliouths and Macdonalds- who paint Islam in the blackest colours. Even when they venture to come out of that vicious circle, the bias for Westernism persists and the demi-gods of Western thought continue to keep them in thrall.

The confusion thus created has landed us intellectually at the cross-roads.

1. On the one hand, there is a new-fangled trend of modern materialism and scepticism which is leading us straight into the arms of apostasy.
2. On the other hand, there is a trend which seeks to steer a middle course between Islam and modern Western ideals, thus assuming that black and white are the same colour and consequently grey: there is a

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large proportion of this “grey” belief in the ranks of the westernized Muslims.

3. There is a third trend less vigorous than the rest of the two, but quite alive among the general masses, the trend, namely, which refuses to come out of the intellectual atmosphere of five hundred years ago and disdains to form a contact with modern problems.

All these three trends will lead us to disaster, or- might we not more truly say-, have actually landed us in disaster. The storm in the world of Islam is in full swing!

### TOWARDS AN INTELLECTUAL RENAISSANCE

The storm of un-Islamic and anti-Islamic forces is in full swing in the world of Islam, creating confusion and chaos all around and penetrating even the most hidden recesses of Muslim national life.

But shall this be our end? It should not be: it must not be: it cannot be.

It should not be because an immense majority of Muslims all over the world still retain an absolute faith in the redeeming powers of Islam.

It must not be because Islam still possesses those infinite potentialities which can avert the mightiest catastrophe.

It cannot be because humanity, in spite of all her progress in science and philosophy, has not yet outgrown Islam.

What is needed today is an ardent faith, a firm resolve, an intelligent move, in the direction of the Reconstruction of the Basis of our Intellectual Life, even as, for instance, Imam Abu-Ḥamid Muḥammad Al-Ghazzālī رحمته الله tried to accomplish to a certain extent in his own day.

By thus emancipating our intellect from the serfdom of the West and all other un-Islamic and anti-Islamic influences, we shall be able to lay the foundations of the Islamic Intellectual Renaissance, which in its turn will contribute to the generation of the forces required to bring about our moral regeneration. And, moral regeneration will form a genuine guarantee not only for the restoration of our political power but also against the repetition of the present tragedy.

### INSTRUMENTS FOR BRINGING ABOUT THE ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL RENAISSANCE

In laying down a programme for our future intellectual struggle, a distinction must be made at the very outset between two different concepts, namely, 'Islamic intellectual revival' and 'Revival of Muslim Learning'. The first concept is fundamentally 'Religious' and consequently comprehensive. The second is fundamentally 'secular' and consequently partial. The foregoing analysis of the intellectual aspect of the present crisis makes it clear that our effort should be based primarily and essentially on the first concept.

The idea in undertaking such a task should be four-fold;

1. To eliminate all anti-Islamic elements from our intellectual life;

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2. To impart to the intellectual aspect of our national existence a true and positive Islamic character by creating a distinct and powerful Islamic thought which may fundamentally cover all branches of knowledge;
3. To ensure and conserve our intellectual Self-sufficiency;
4. To bridge up the gulf and resolve the conflict which exists today between 'theological' and 'secular education, even as our ancestors did in the heyday of Islamic civilisation, thus allowing Islam the opportunity for its full and rich expression in our intellectual life, which expression should finally become the bedrock for raising up the mighty edifice of our distinct civilisation.

This task is indeed immense and huge and might create a frown on the foreheads of those who are accustomed to be always and invariably pleased with short-cuts. But I would solicit their permission to point out that this task has become a religious duty for us today and cannot be shirked. To shirk it, to belittle it, or even to delay it, would be fatal. For the anti-Islamic thought-waves that are attacking the weather-beaten and neglected boat of Islam are formidable and swift.

The instruments for achieving the ideal out-lined above are two (not necessarily arranging them in order of merit herein below):

(A) A national system of Muslim Education:

(B) Large-scale and High-class Research.

Let us take them up and discuss them one by one.

### ANATIONAL SYSTEM OF MUSLIM EDUCATION

Education, for the Muslims, should have three ends (without for the time-being going into a detailed classification of the elements comprehended by each end):

1. The development of the individual on Islamic lines, or in other words, the creation of true Islamic character in its manifold aspects;
2. General intellectual development of the highest order.

N.B- I might make a passing reference to those who regard intellectual culture as an end in-itself. Such an ideal is, in the first place partial, in the second place false and in the third place, dangerous, especially for an ideological nation like ours which is entangled in a life-and -death struggle and is thirsting for the realisation of its world-ideal. Intellectual Culture may rightly be conceived not as an end-in-itself, but as an end sub serving a higher end, and the higher end for the Muslim is Islam.

3. All-round professional development (which includes Medicine, Engineering, etc.) especially the cultivation of Applied Science, which is absolutely necessary for making a nation materially great and powerful in the present industrial age.

The blending of these three ends will give us a distinct system of education.

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The working of that system shall require as every educational system does, two instruments of a specific type, the type which answers to the requirements of the ideal outlined above. These two instruments are:

1. Courses of study and the text-books used there for;
2. Teachers.

The success of the system, both from the Islamic and the purely educational points of view shall depend upon the type of these instruments.

The character which these two instruments should possess can be considered from two different points of view, namely, (i) Islamic, and (ii) Academic.

I shall not discuss the academic aspect here because such a discussion lies outside the scope of the present essay.

Hence taking up the Islamic aspect alone let us proceed with a scientific analysis and evaluation.

### 1. COURSES OF STUDY:

Viewing the courses of Study first: what method shall we have to adopt and introduce to give them a distinct Islamic character so that they may serve the great Islamic ideal outlined above?

The popular method which has been employed so far is what I call the Patchwork Method. It consists in introducing the Islamic element into the system of modern education in the form of the inclusion of a compulsory course of "theology" in the curriculum

of studies.

But I may be allowed to say, though I may seek pardon of conservative Muslim educationists in saying this, that in actual practice this method has failed. It has failed, not merely because the syllabi of theological study prescribed in the Muslim institutions of secular education have been usually of an imperfect, unbalanced and antiquated type (with the sole exception, perhaps, of the one prepared by Ḥazrat Maulana Moḥammed Abdul Alīm Siddīqui رحمته الله and prescribed by the Karachi University) but also because and this cause is fundamental of an inherent conflict to which such a method must obviously give birth.

The conflict comes in because of the existence of an acute dualism in the educational scheme, with a most powerful current of un-Islamic and, in many respects, anti-Islamic thought, on the one hand, and a feeble divergent current of so-called 'theology' on the other.

### DOUBLE PROCESS OF ISLAMISATION

The only way for resolving the conflict, in my opinion, is to make Islam the basis of our education and to forsake permanently the policy of making it a side-show.

To realise this end we shall have to plan our courses of study anew, basing our work on the following ideas:

1. The period of primary education is the most important period in the intellectual and moral life of man. The impressions which a child receives and cast into his mind, which is moulded at this stage,

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prove to be of abiding nature in most cases. It seems necessary, therefore, to concentrate our educational struggle in this stage on giving to Muslim children the best possible grounding in Islam.

2. In the later stages of education, neither the inclusion of an elementary course of 'compulsory theology' nor the addition of a full-fledged course of 'optional theology' as nowadays current, can serve our ideal of maintaining a basic uniformity of character on Islamic lines. The proper method would, therefore, be to adopt a double process of Islamisation of education, it being taken for granted that education must include all those modern subjects which are being taught nowadays in the advanced secular Muslim educational institutions.

The double process will consist of:

- a. A graduated course of Islamics, including the Arabic language;
- b. The creation of a Muslim background and the evolution of a Muslim Point of View in all the subjects taught, in whatever measure necessary and possible in the different stages of the growth of our education under the new scheme.

Both these points need a little elucidation:

1. Let me emphasise at the very outset that by a Graduated Course of Islamics I do not mean a course

of 'theology' as taught in the theological institutions. For in my scheme of education, the proper place for such a course is in the stage of special studies. The course of Islamics, on the other hand, which I advocate is a compulsory course which is to be adopted in all stages of education - primary, secondary and higher.

Such a compulsory course of Islamics should be of a type which should help:

- (i) To mould the morals of the Muslim youths according to the Islamic pattern;
- (ii) To create in the Muslim youth an unconquerable faith in the future destiny of their great nation and to evolve in them the practical common-sense which may enable them to judge their present and future in the perspective of their past history;
- (iii) To create an Islamic intellectual background according to the requirements of the intellectual atmosphere of the modern age with a view to make our youths immune from the storm of scepticism;
- (iv) To give them an all-round grounding in Islam, in order that their intellectual expression in later life may proceed on Islamic lines and in order that ultimately the spiritual and moral faculties of the Muslim nation may be rescued from the state of

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sterile tranquility into which they have been thrown.

With this view, the proposed course of Islamics shall include:

- a. The Spiritual, Moral, Social, Economic and Political teachings of Islam, classified and stated according to the modern canons of thought and expression;
- b. Islamic history viewed in its comprehensiveness;
- c. Arabic Language.

All the component parts of the course graduated according to the different stages of education.

2. The second point is based on a socio-philosophical truism that the poisonous gas of inferiority-complex with which the atmosphere of the present-day Muslim world is saturated must be neutralised before we can even dream of building up a great future for Islam.

Europe was confronted with a similar problem when the intellectual forces which the Muslim world was then generating had opened for her the gates of an intellectual renaissance. She solved that problem in a way which, if it is legitimate for the Muslims to imitate her, is one of those things which they would do well to imitate. Europe received the scientific method and many other elements of thought and culture, besides the intellectual legacy of Greece, from the Muslims. But she took the

greatest care to give to her intellectual movement a distinct stamp of her own, and in doing that went so far as to be ungrateful to her Muslim benefactors by making a strenuous effort for effacing the last traces of Muslim influences and by suppressing the recognition of the part played by them in her cultural history. She planned her scheme of Intellectual Renaissance by linking up her 'present' with the Greek and Roman 'past', thus creating the pride in the minds of her future generations which, though, in its baser aspects, it has resulted in doing injury and bringing misery to the rest of the world, has proved very beneficial to Europe herself in many ways.

The idea underlying the two concepts mentioned above, namely, the creation of a Muslim background, and, the evolution of a Muslim point of view, must, I hope, be clear now. But let me elucidate the two concepts in concrete terms.

*The creation of a Muslim background means:*

- (i) Making the Islamic teaching the basic ground-work in such subjects in which it is possible to do so, as, for instance, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of History, Moral Philosophy, Politics, Economics, etc.
- (ii) The linking up of our present renaissance with our intellectual past by reviving in the fullest measure the Muslim contribution to the various domains of knowledge – encompassing our whole past intellectual struggle from the very beginning of Islam, thus creating a *Historical Continuity* in our national intellectual life;

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- (iii) The assimilation of this past contribution in the curriculum of our education in a most suitable manner.

The evolution of a Muslim Point of View will be possible only gradually:

### 1<sup>st</sup> stage:

By allowing the fundamental Islamic values to react on our study of different branches of knowledge;

### 2<sup>nd</sup> stage:

By studying the different possibilities of the interpretation of facts in each problem which may confront us;

### 3<sup>rd</sup> stage:

By adopting and developing by further research an interpretation which is most in harmony with the fundamental Islamic values.

There is a likely misunderstanding which I may anticipate here and remove. By the last two factors in my scheme for the evolution of a Muslim point of view, I do not mean that scientific facts should be distorted or that science should be manufactured to serve the ends of Islam, which procedure is neither necessary nor honest.

That the evolution of a Muslim point of view is not an unscientific ideal can be understood by referring, by way of illustration, to two schools of the science of Psychology, namely, the Behaviourist school of the materialists and the Hormic school of the idealists. These schools are radically opposed to

each other in their ultimate conclusions, but in spite of that disparity, one is as scientific as the other.

### 2. TEACHERS:

While discussing the instruments of education in the foregoing I enumerated two: (1) Courses of study, (2) Teachers. Having finished with the Courses of Study, we may now come to the problem of Teachers.

The idea of the creation of a new type of teachers is inherent in the very idea of evolving a new system of education which should serve an end fundamentally richer and in many respects different from the present one. The validity of such an idea, therefore, does not require a discussion for its proof. What we have to aim at here in the limited scope of the present introductory discussion is to try to fix the type needed.

It should of course be evident to all that the first quality which the persons selected for the job should possess is their ability to teach their subjects according to the Islamic requirements of the new scheme.

But this quality shall have to be supplemented with another, which is in a way more fundamental, if the ultimate ideal of our education is to be successfully achieved. This other quality may be described by saying that, as a class of Muslim intellectuals and teachers of the nation, they should be those sons and daughters of Islam who move and have their being in the perennial sunshine of an unconquerable faith [Īmān] and a pure intellectual vision, those who may possess the fire of missionary zeal and the proper mental equipment for healing the intellectual cancer of the nation.

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Neither those faithless Intellectual Perverts whose minds roam perpetually in the dark shadows of inferiority-complex and away from the light of Islam, nor those incorrigible intellectual Non-descriptors who find pleasure always in dressing their intellects with materials from the antiquary's shop, nor even those half-awake intellectual pacifists whose interest in Islam is divorced from the ideal of service, can run the new scheme.

Having now finished with one instrument of the Islamic Intellectual Renaissance, let us proceed to the second.

The problem of **Research** should have come first in our discussion, for it actually forms the first step in the materialisation of the fundamental idea of Islamic intellectual Renaissance. But it has been taken up after the discussion of the problem of education because in that discussion alone its function and scope could have become clear.

In that discussion we have discovered the preliminary and basic work which shall have to be accomplished before we are actually able to introduce a new system of education.

This work in its basic aspect will aim at:

### 1<sup>st</sup> stage:

- (i) The restoration of our Intellectual Equilibrium and the creation of a new type of Muslim intellectuals who should be fit to run the new scheme of education with absolute faithfulness to the ideals outlined.
  
- (ii) The creation of a Muslim Background and the evolution of a Muslim point of view in the

different branches of knowledge.

2<sup>nd</sup> stage:

- (iii) Planning of the Courses of Study and preparation of suitable Text-books for the different stages of the proposed type of education.

The accomplishment of such a mighty task will essentially require the creation of a powerful Intellectual Movement, which must, in its basic ground-work, take the form of a large-scale, well organised, fully-coordinated and high-class Research. The practical form which this idea of Research should take is the establishment of a Central Islamic Research Academy.

As a basic ground-work of the proposed Intellectual Movement, the work of the Academy should be graded into two distinct stages.

Work in the first stage may be broadly classified into the following items:

1. To evolve a religious philosophy of Islam for giving a new orientation to the basis our intellectual life and for meeting the attacks of scientific materialism launched against religious verities in general and against the Islamic transcendental values in particular;
2. To attempt an accurate and scientific formulation of the Islamic solution of the various social (including economic and political) and ethical problems which afflict humanity today;

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N.B. These two items of work shall require extensive research in the Holy Qur'ān, the Traditions of our Holy Prophet ﷺ, the Muslim Law and Jurisprudence, and the whole sweep of Muslim as well as Modern religious, philosophical, social and ethical thought.

3. To study, compile and interpret Islamic History in a thoroughly scientific and comprehensive way;
4. To unearth the treasures of Muslim contribution to knowledge buried in the ancient manuscripts, and thus to build up our half-forgotten past and to link it up with the present.

Work in the second stage shall consist of:

1. Planning of the Subjects of Study, and,
2. Compilation of the required type of text books, on the basis of the work accomplished in the first stage

### VERDICT OF MUSLIM HISTORY

Here I wish to anticipate and reply an important objection. Some might protest that my idea of adopting a long-range policy and of completing an elaborate work of Research before attempting to plan and introduce a sound system of Muslim national education is too far-fetched to deserve any serious consideration.

In reply I would say that the alternative policy of adopting popular remedies and short-cuts cannot pay in the long run and has actually proved to be the ruin of Islam and Muslims in the past. And this view of mine is not only negatively grounded in the

verdict of the last five hundred years of the history of our decadence, but is also positively supported by the voices of our great reformers. The voice of:

- Khairuddīn Barbarossa, whose plea for reforming the House of Islam on the basis of a long-range policy, made at the fateful hour when the Christian flood, gathering at the gates of Islam, was preparing to sweep off the Muslim countries of Europe, Asia and Africa, failed in penetrating the sterile brains of a corrupt Muslim administration;
- Mustafā Fazil Pasha, whose Reform Manifesto, submitted to the Sublime Porte for checking the Western tide with a comprehensive constructive programme, was dynamited by the reactionary forces of the lethargy of an indolent people under the smoke-screen of a false plea for protecting the rights of conservatism;
- Syed Jemāluddīn Afghani, whose masculine efforts for administering the antidote against disruption and for revitalising the body-politic of Islam by a constructive process, were undermined by the self-seeking Muslim exploiters of Islam;
- Prince Saīd Halim Pasha, whose clarion call for the Islamisation (*Islamlashmaq*) of the collective life of the Muslim peoples under the Caliphate, at a time when the sapping influences of Turanian nationalism were still in their infancy and could be nipped in the bud, fell on the deaf ears of a self-conceited scholasticism and was lost.

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Voices, all of them sublime and heroic and great; voices, all of them land-marks in the history of our civilisation; voices, all of them still alive and reverberating; though in mournful tones, in pulsations of throbbing hearts of genuine lovers of Islam and can therefore pronounce the verdict.

### A FINAL APPEAL

I wish every Muslim to remember one heartrending fact once for all:

*The Muslim world has already forfeited much of its individuality and now stands in danger of losing its destiny.*

I further wish every Muslim to realise, and realise finally, that the impending danger *cannot* be averted either by sticking to the old conservative technique, or by means of theological patchworks, or by building up our national programmes on the shifting sands of expediency.

Only a scientific approach to our present peril, a rational analysis of the shame and misery that surrounds us, a re-search in the ever-fresh and fertile fields of the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah for finding out the possibilities of the revival of Islam as a world-policy, can save us from our inevitable doom.

Indeed, unless Islam wages a determined, final and all-out war against the thought-forces of modern materialism and scepticism, and triumphs in establishing its own world-order, Islam must suffer the fate which is overtaking all other faiths; and if, knowing the infinite resources and strength of Islam in this respect, we Muslims of the present day shirk our duty and thus deprive ourselves and humanity of the blessings of Islam, we

should be regarded as the greatest criminals of all history.

Let Iqbal's immortal message of Faith ring across the world of Islam:

Let the war-cry of every Muslim be:

Away from Aristotle and Plato, away from Plotinus and his hosts, away from Mill and Marx, away from the spiritual perversion of Nationalism, away from the moral devastation of Capitalism, away from the atheistic implication of Communism. Away from the hedonistic materialism of the Occident, Away from the effeminate mysticism of the Orient.

Away from all these, and many other un-Islamic and anti-Islamic sign-posts of human history, and let the call be:

Back to Allāh ﷻ, the Author of our existence, the Author of Islam, the Author of the universe;

Back to the Qur'ānic stream of perennial life and light:

Back to the world-leader Muḥammad ﷺ (may Allāh's ﷻ choicest blessings be with him for all time to come!)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,

The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 7

# ISLAMIC THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

### Heart of Muslim Society:

History reveals that different human groups have been coming into existence on different foundations. Some have sought the bond of integrity in common geographical boundaries, others in the affinities of race and colour, and still others in the possession of a common language. But, whether it is geographical boundaries or race or colour or common language, the bond of group-integrity thus created, remains materialistic and non-ideological.

The concept, on the other hand, which Islam upholds and gives, is that of an ideological community. The Muslim community of the world, is thus, a community which is through and through ideological in character, having come into existence on the basis of the ideology of Islam, which in its turn, is constituted of a distinct system of belief and a comprehensive code of life based upon it. As regards the Islamic system of belief, again, it is founded on spiritual verities and its function is to orientate entire human life in spiritual values. Thus, every cross-section of Muslim life, both on individual and collective levels, is determined by spiritual norms and is to be pursued in the service of spiritual ideals. Again, because Islam forms the ideological basis of the Muslim community, Muslims can prosper and

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progress harmoniously only if they submit each and every aspect of their individual and collective life to the eternal Guidance of the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

The above-mentioned truth is accepted not only by the 'Ulamā (theological scholars of Islam) but also by all genuine lay-Muslims. But, neglect of the logical implications of this acceptance is as universal as the acceptance itself.

One of the most important of these logical implications is that the 'Ulamā constitute the heart of the Muslim society. This is so because Divine Guidance in the form of the religion of Islam has not only given birth to the Muslim community but also forms its basis of activity and source of sustenance; and the function of the 'Ulamā is that, equipping themselves with this Guidance, both academically and practically, they have to serve the Muslim community and humanity at large as the representative of the Holy Prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ, as we read in the Ḥadīth:

إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

*“Verily the 'Ulamā are the Successors of the Prophets (in the mission of delivering the Message of Allāh)*

(Abū Dā'ud, Tirmidhī)

Combined with this there is another truth which has been stated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the following words:

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ  
وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

*“Verily there is a piece of flesh in the body of man which if diseased, the whole body is diseased: while if it is healthy, the whole body is healthy. And behold it is the heart.”*

(Bukhari and Muslim)

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This law which relates to individual personalities has also a direct bearing on collective life. It means that if the “heart” of the community is healthy and strong, the community is basically healthy and strong: while if the heart is weak or diseased, the community is bound to suffer from all types of collective ailments.

Muslims of the world are suffering today not only from weakness on the international plane but also from collective diseases of different types. This is a fact which has been accepted by social reformers, in fact, by all thinking Muslims. However, no proper attention seems to have been concentrated on the root-cause, namely, the deficiencies and the diseases that have found their way into the ranks of Islamic religious leadership.

### **Sad story of the Dark Period of Muslim History:**

There was a time when Muslims surpassed all communities of the world in every field of human activity - in spirituality and morals, in intellectual and aesthetic pursuits, in economic and social organisation, in commerce and industry, in military science and state-administration. Then came the time when, after the destruction of Baghdad and the fall of Cordova (Spain), they (Muslims) withdrew from the intellectual Jihad (Struggle), which withdrawal assumed later on such permanence that until today they have not been able to recapture their eminent position in the intellectual field. The political front also suffered a setback. But it was short lived, because of the conversion of the Ottoman Turks who, taking over the leadership of the Muslim world, were a new glorious chapter in the history of Islam, and Muslims were thus able to maintain their political supremacy all over the Islamic world. This included Muslim India-Pakistan for a further appreciable length of time.

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Unfortunately, however, during that period of renewed political strength and stability, nothing tangible was done to reinvigorate Muslim society on other planes of activity, with the consequence that it continued to degenerate and debilitate, so much so that finally her life became infested with different types of ailments. The Muslim social order was menaced by the existence of the privileged classes who destroyed the vitality of the Muslim world through their luxurious and effeminate habits.

The ideal of conquering the world spiritually for Islam was made subservient to the ambitions of worldly gains and material ends. The scholars of Islam fell prey, with few honourable exceptions, to intellectual stagnation, while many of the rulers sold their hearts away to the satisfaction of baser desires. The greatest crime against their own selves which the Muslims committed was, however, the neglect of the of the cultivation of physical sciences - a task which had been sanctified by Islam, a task which their forefathers had pursued with glory ultimately to become the inaugurators of the modern scientific era, a task without which the maintenance of political greatness and material prosperity was impossible. Historically viewed, the neglect did actually pave the way for backwardness in the realms of technology, industrial production and economic organisation. It kept the Muslims back from developing better weapons of war and it finally culminated in making the Muslim world politically vulnerable, and as a consequence thereof, economically and intellectually conquerable.

Even before the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century A.C., cracks began to appear in the magnificent edifice of Islamic civilisation which the sacred hands of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ had built; and the cracks continued to grow wider until the Christian nations of the West, who owed their Renaissance to none else

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but the Muslims, but who were in spite of that, their bloodthirsty enemies, entered in those cracks from all sides equipped, as they were, with superior military weapons, intellectual attainments (especially) in physical sciences, industrial techniques, economic production, social organisation and democratic political ideals.

As regards the Muslims, they had already given up Jihād to a great extent in the spiritual, social and intellectual fields. Now when occasion came to meet the biggest collective onslaught of Christendom on the battlefield, they found it impossible to achieve victory in their military jihād; even though they had formerly routed Christendom during the crusades. Muslim countries fell to the enemy one after the other until a large part of the world of Islam from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the islands of the Indian Ocean to the frontiers of Siberia was enslaved by the Christian powers of the West before the close of the nineteenth century A.C. The only exception was the Turkish empire which could cross the nineteenth century with some of its dominions intact. But Turkey was herself sick and had, therefore, to surrender those dominions to the enemies of Islam even before the first quarter of the twentieth century ended.

The slavery which started gripping the Muslim world more than a century ago was not purely political in character. Nay, along with that came two other and more terrible forms of slavery, namely, economic and mental slavery. Then a fourth form of slavery was also born as a result of the above-mentioned three forms – to wit, social slavery.

As to political slavery, it has gradually disappeared by Allāh's ﷻ Grace. Most of the Muslim countries have regained their freedom in the wake of the Second World War. The economic

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emancipation of the Muslim world is also taking shape and the chains of economic slavery are becoming progressively weaker in response to the progress in scientific education and better organisation of economic resources.

The situation is, however, different in respect of mental slavery and social slavery, wherein the grip has continued to become more and more severe and there are still no signs of our emancipation, in spite of certain measures adopted by certain Muslim governments for promoting the cause of Islam and in spite of the fights waged against these evils by certain powerful Islamic organisations in particular and by the 'Ulamā in general.

Evaluating their adverse effects, mental slavery is by far more dangerous because it is this which really brings about and perpetuates social slavery. The fact is that the acceptance of mental slavery of the enemy by a community gives birth to such a deadly social poison as can kill that community from within, however great and glorious its past history might have been; because this acceptance is not possible without loss of faith in its own values - an adverse factor which is even more injurious than political slavery. So says Dr. Muhammad Iqbal:

*Faith consists in forsaking one's ego and living in the ecstasy of Divine Presence.*

*Faith consists in accepting the Ordeal of fire like Abraham.*

*Listen O thou who has been enthralled by (the materialistic values of) modern civilisation.*

*Want of faith (in thy destiny as Muslim) is worse (in its injurious effects) than political slavery.*

From north to south and from east to west the above-mentioned social poison has been penetrating into the ranks of the

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modernist Muslim intelligentsia. And not only that, the greater calamity is that those who brand conformity with the principle of historical continuity in Muslim thought and belief as slavery regard the mental slavery of the West as freedom. Thus, giving to evil the place of good and to vice the place of virtue is bound to land every community in a situation where its very foundations are sure to be destroyed. But, even the consciousness of this heart-rending consequence is getting lost in the ambition for false freedom.

It may be emphasised here that this ugly situation is the result of a long-drawn historical process. When Muslim scholarship proved deficient in fulfilling the intellectual needs of the community and the non-Muslims became the custodians of all the sciences and arts, it was only natural for the Muslim to become votaries at the non-Muslim shrines of learning. It was thus basically our own neglect of intellectual jihād which caused the present ugly situation. Islam has invited its followers through the Holy Qur'ān and the ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to a comprehensive intellectual jihād, and if we had not kept ourselves aloof from it for centuries, especially in the fields of physical and social sciences, it appears in the light of philosophy of history that neither would the Muslims have fallen prey to mental slavery nor to political, economic and social slavery.

The fact is that whenever any community tries to accommodate two conflicting and mutually hostile systems of thought and action within its body-politic, disintegration is always the result. This disintegration causes a shake-up in the realm of beliefs on the one hand, and double-facedness in character, on the other. Besides that, mental slavery of the opponents give birth to inferiority-complex. The inferiority-complex, in its turn, tends to create petty-mindedness and meanness. And the

final result is that life is pushed further and further from moral excellence and closer to moral degradation.

Unfortunately, most unfortunately, the Muslim world of today is confronted with the same ugly situation. We are not only weak politically, economically and intellectually, but even our moral life is not what Islam wanted it to be. Morally we have been caught in a whirlpool and signs of moral degeneration are manifest everywhere.

### **Islam's weak Intellectual front in the Modern age:**

This unfortunate situation is there. But more unfortunate than this is the situation which obtains in the ranks of religious leadership. It is more unfortunate because it is the religious leadership which forms the real spearhead of reform and its failure means a basic failure.

The invaluable intellectual (as also spiritual) services which the genuine and respectable members of this most respectable group have rendered during the different epochs of Islamic history are too well-known to be recounted here. But the point which demands and deserves full emphasis in connection to the present discussion is that deterioration has manifested itself in the ranks of this group in proportion to the deterioration of conditions in the Muslim world. Or might it not be more true to say, that conditions in the Muslim world deteriorated in response to the deficiencies and weaknesses that gripped the group of the 'Ulamā. Their standard and scope of knowledge and practice has been gradually deteriorating for some centuries past, so much so that even that standard of knowledge and piety that existed among most of the 'Ulamā a hundred years ago is rarely to be met with today.

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There is no doubt that the hardships that the group of 'Ulamā has endured in preserving and defending Islam and the contribution which the individual 'Ulamā have made everywhere in accordance with their respective capacities, during the past one hundred years of unprecedented trials and tribulations, deserve all praise. May Allāh ﷻ bless all those who have served, and are serving the cause of Islam genuinely and truly. In spite of that, however, the weakness that had entered their ranks have continued to grow, so much so that we find today the prestige of the group of 'Ulamā shattered considerably.

The emergence and growth of group-weaknesses among the 'Ulamā have not only damaged their prestige but have also inflicted a severe injury on Islam and, consequently, on humanity. This could not have been otherwise, because knowledge of Islam forms the only ideological nourishment and, therefore, the only source of ideological survival for the Muslim community; and the only vehicle of the transmission of this nourishment are the 'Ulamā. Consequently if the 'Ulamā are not highly equipped intellectually and truly dynamic and powerful in their spiritual leadership, it would be futile to expect a radiant and healthy ideological life within the Muslim community and a proper transmission of the message of Islam to humanity at large.

Now just as Islam does not base its conception of worship on the separation of the religious from the secular, similarly, in its concept of education, it does not exclude “secular” knowledge from the curriculum of “religious” studies in the manner in which the one-sided religions and cultures of the world do it. This is the reason why, during the age of glory of the Islamic civilisation, the educational system of the Muslim world was unitary, being based on the fundamental Islamic principle of *Tawḥīd*. In that system, theological sciences were taught in conjunction with all

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other so-called “secular” subjects, e.g. natural sciences, mathematics, philosophy, etc. The result was that every Muslim scholar of that age used to be a comprehensive scholar. Again the formal system of examinations and award of formal certificates which is prevalent today was not in vogue at that time. Hence none could obtain a certificate without genuinely acquiring the necessary knowledge and the requisite intellectual and spiritual discipline, and everyone got an individual certificate in accordance with the actual intellectual stature he had acquired and this fixed up his place in society. Moreover, spiritual discipline and character-building also formed a vital part of education side by side with academic attainments, and thus aptitude, labour and piety, all were fully coordinated, harmonised and rewarded.

But when, in the nineteenth century, the enemies of Islam succeeded in enslaving a large part of the Muslim world, they planned and adopted different schemes for crushing and annihilating the religion of Islam itself; and unfortunately they succeeded in causing colossal damage to Islam. One of the most far-reaching and disastrous among these schemes was the establishment of an educational system which snatched away from the hands of Islam the resources and the opportunity of educating the Muslim in accordance with its norms and ideals; and **this** has resulted in the slow but steady alienation, or, at least; indifference, of a powerful section of western-educated Muslims from the Islamic ideals and values.

Side by side with that, another and more terrible consequence also emerged - the consequence, namely, that as regards material rewards theological education was devalued almost to the limit of zero, hence it could no more attract, beyond a few students from among the intelligent and well-to-do Muslims, virtually all

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of whom went in for modern education. Gradually, the institutions of Islamic theology were filled up with students many of whom were backward and below the mark in different respects. Its natural result was that the courses of theological education had to be made lighter [scaled down], causing the standard of religious training to suffer. And as a consequence, the standard of religious leadership degenerated.

Day by day the situation has continued to deteriorate in these respects, until it has reached a point today where, because of their one-sided education, the 'Ulamā have become confined to the mosque while all the departments of thought and action have passed on solely to the charge of those who have received purely secular education. Inside the mosque itself, the leadership of the 'Ulamā, is largely confined to the uneducated or the less-educated Muslims.

Surely, in the ranks of the 'Ulamā there are even today such personalities, although very few, whose intellectual calibre or standard of piety can be a source of satisfaction to the Muslim community. The majority however, consist of those whose shortcomings and deficiencies stand in the way of the 'Ulamā -group in achieving its rightful role in Muslim society, all in all, the 'Ulamā -group has become incapable of leading modern humanity.

In this connection, it is very significant that they could not produce in the present century a dynamic thinker like Iqbal who could inspire the western-educated Muslim youth with love for Islam, or a leader like Jinnah who could unite the Western-educated Muslims, the 'Ulamā and the Muslim masses for achieving Pakistan; and the best among them were forced to play only a subservient role in the national struggles of Muslim countries.

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As regards the creation and the continuation of shortcomings, and deficiencies among the 'Ulamā, it is the Muslim community as a whole which is responsible for them, and not merely the 'Ulamā. It is, therefore, the obligation of the Muslim community to remove those shortcomings and deficiencies.

The only genuine and correct method of resolving this ugly situation is through the creation and adoption by all Muslim countries of a system of education which should harmoniously combine the “religious” and the “secular”.

However, until this most vital step is taken, an urgent demand of the situation is that:

1. Our theological institutions should adopt a comprehensive course of education wherein high level knowledge of Islamic theological subjects may be combined with a critical study of other religious and of modern thought, so that it may become possible for our 'Ulamā to guide and inspire all sections of the community and all the cross-sections of humanity with proper insight and in keeping with the dignity of true religious leadership.

This point needs some elucidation. A critical study of other religious and of Modern thought, with Islam as the standard of Guidance, is necessary for the 'Ulamā, for three reasons: Firstly, they cannot preach Islam successfully to the non-Muslims unless they possess a proper knowledge of the ideologies which they follow. Secondly, they cannot inspire the modern-educated with the love for Islam without establishing rationally the truth of the Islamic teachings and their superiority

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over the teachings of other religions and ideologies: and this necessitates a critical study, especially of Modern thought. Thirdly, the latest advances in knowledge assist in understanding the Holy Qur'ān and the ḥadīth better.

2. Spiritual discipline, character-building and social service should receive recognition in our theological institutions similar to that extended to the acquisition of knowledge.
3. For those who qualify from our theological institutions and wish to devote themselves to missionary work, some such academic equipment is also necessary whereby they may be able to earn their livelihood in an honourable way and independently of their missionary work and may thus, save themselves from financial and moral suffering.

In this way shall it be possible to have those 'Ulamā who may be the possessors of comprehensive knowledge on the one hand, and of a genuine and high-class Islamic character and personality and the mission of social service, on the other.

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The fact cannot be over-emphasised that it is only the creation of such 'Ulamā which can form the first sure step towards the revival of our lost glory. Indeed all other reformatory efforts seem to be futile without this most basic step.

Generally speaking, the acquisition of the available comprehensive knowledge has been our tradition during our age of glory. Among the jurists, the historic achievements of Imām Abū Ghanīfah, Imām Shafi'ī, Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmed bin

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Ḥanbal (Allāh ﷻ be pleased with them all) could not have been possible without profound comprehensive scholarship. Among the philosopher-theologians, we may cite the example of Imām Abū Ghāmīd Muḥammad Al-Ghazzālī ر.ل.ع. who, as the possessor of comprehensive education, shattered the aggressive and hostile forces of alien philosophies and thus wrote a new glorious chapter in the intellectual and religious history of the Muslims.

Similarly, Muslim history abounds in such personalities in whom intellectual and spiritual greatness had been harmoniously blended. Their spiritual leadership was crowned with miraculous success both among Muslims and non-Muslims and the spiritual service they rendered was of such a high order that their names have become immortalised in history. Here we might cite the example of that august personality who is known as Ghauth-ul-A'dham Muḥiyuddīn Sayyid 'Abdul Qādir al-Jilāni of Baghdad ر.ل.ع. He rose to a high stature in the field of intellectual attainments. But more than that, his greatness lies in spiritual development with which his personality was crowned. He shone out as the sun of righteousness and spiritual splendour amidst a night of storms. His radiant personality broke the dark spell of confusion, his efforts for the revival of spiritual fervour among the Muslims were crowned by Allāh ﷻ with glorious success. Indeed, his services to Islam and to humanity form a landmark in our history, and his spiritual blessings have been immortalised in the constitution of Muslim society. Likewise, there is the refulgent personality of Qutb-ul-Aqtāb Khwāja Mu'inuddīn Chishti ر.ل.ع. of Ajmer. The harmonious blending on a high level of intellectual and spiritual attainments and his dynamic spiritual leadership has made him once for all one of the greatest spiritual luminaries of Muslim history. It was none else than he, the sword of whose

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spiritual personality conquered the fortress of Kufr in India and laid the foundation stone of Pakistan centuries before the emergence of the latter state. Among other similar personalities may be mentioned to cite just a few, the names of: Shaikh Ali al-Ḥujwiri (better known as Data Gunj Bakhsh), Shaikh Shihābuddīn Suhrawardy, Qutb-ul-Aqtāb Khwāja Bahauddīn Naqshband, Maulāna Jalāl-ud-Dīn el-Rūmi, Shaikh Abul Ḥasan Shādhili, Shaikh-ul-Islam Abdullah al-Anṣārī of Herat, Shaikh Aḥmed of Sirhind (Mujaddid Alf-e-thāni), Shāh Walīullāh of Delhi. etc رحمته.

Among the 'Ulamā of the present century also, there have been several spiritual luminaries who have shone out with distinction through the combination of academic and spiritual attainments. The work of all such 'Ulamā has been more effective than the work of those whose sole focus was academic. An illustrious example in this connection is that of the renowned spiritual leader and missionary of Islam, his eminence Muḥammad 'Abdul 'Alīm Siddīqī al-Qādirī رحمته. He combined modern education with the theological and possessed a magnetic and radiant spiritual personality. With these qualities of head and heart he rose to be a distinguished international Muslim missionary of his time and the services he rendered to humanity through Islam form a glorious chapter in recent Muslim history.

In summarising the foregoing discussion, let it be stressed that the emphasis in our current system of theological education being mostly on Fiqh (law), our 'Ulamā are generally capable only of legalistic guidance in respect of the daily personal life of a Muslim. The task, however, of establishing rationally the truth of the teachings of Islam in all their aspects and the superiority of Islam over other religions and ideologies cannot be accomplished without a comprehensive and deep knowledge,

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not only of Islam but also of other religions and ideologies-both ancient and modern. And this task has to be performed by the 'Ulamā not only in respect of non-Muslim humanity but also with regard to those modern educated Muslims, who have fallen victim to the glamour of alien philosophies and cannot be persuaded to practise Islam unless their brains have been washed clean of the anti-Islamic influences of alien thought and they have been thoroughly inspired in respect of Islamic ideals and values. Moreover even after the accomplishment of this task in the realm of belief, it is necessary for the 'Ulamā to employ ḥikmah, i.e., methodical and consequential approach in the domain of Action, and for this purpose deep spiritual and psychological knowledge is necessary - knowledge formulated and cultivated by the classical Ṣufīs of Islam.

Unfortunately, the system of theological education in vogue in the world of Islam today fall miserably short in respect of both the above-mentioned tasks; and as a consequence, the Muslims themselves have generally adopted wrong standards in respect of their religious leaders. Those who can stand up in the public as entertaining speakers or those who can make fighting speeches and hurl abuse at their adversaries in respect of controversial theological issues pass off as popular 'Ulamā in the estimation of the Muslim masses who form the bulk of the religious front; while those who know how to carry on flourishing business in talismans and charms are regarded by the general folk as spiritual leaders.

This most unfortunate situation demands urgently an all-out effort by the Muslims of the world for the creation in large numbers of those 'Ulamā who may possess the qualities of high-mindedness, sobriety and sweetness in their personal character, who may endear themselves to the people through their wisdom,

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high morals and love for service, and who may be accepted by the modern-educated Muslims as their intellectual leaders because of their superior and more comprehensive intellectual attainments.

*Let us act before it is too late.*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 8

# ISLAM: And The Institution Of Slavery

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

A west-African Muslim complained as follows:

*“There is a net-work of Christian missionary propaganda in my country, and I feel deeply sad that you could not visit us during your missionary travels round the world. The attacks which the Christian missionaries make on Islam are not rare. In fact, they consider it a virtue to circulate wild allegations and white lies' about Islam. On most problems we can successfully cross swords with them. But, the knowledge of Muslim scholars in this country being of a limited type, we are badly in need of help of eminent Muslim scholars from abroad. One of the problems on which I seek enlightenment from you is that which relates to the attitude of Islam towards slavery. You know perhaps that the coloured people of Africa are deeply sensitive to the insults which the civilised races have heaped upon them. I request you to throw light on the institution of slavery, not only with reference to Islam but also with reference to Christianity. Allāh will bless you for it.”*

## REPLY

No social, moral, intellectual and even spiritual progress is possible in a community which does not possess a true estimate of human dignity, and this was the state of affairs when the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ appeared. The dignity and powers of man had been greatly underestimated and undermined by the

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great religions and cultures of the world. Human dignity had been assailed by various religious and cultural institutions like caste system, serfdom and slavery. It was believed that men and women, those noblest creatures of God, were incapable of leading upright lives in the midst of society, and should therefore become hermits, monks and nuns and lead a life of celibacy and detachment from the world. Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, and Christianity, all believed in this theory. Christianity preached the sin-innate theory - a necessary corollary of the theory of atonement - and insisted that man was incapable of observing the law.

The Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ exposed the baselessness of all such notions. He declared that human species was the noblest creation of God, and that all things of the universe were created for its use.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ  
لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*“To live your life according to the nature which Allāh has made you and the nature around you. To live your life in conformity with nature, that is the right religion, but most human beings do not understand this.”*

(Q. 30:30)

He taught that sin was an acquisition and not a heritage, that man had been endowed with the highest capabilities of achieving unlimited progress if he followed the right path, and that he could sink low only when he went against the natural law and violated his own inherent goodness.

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لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿١٩٦﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

*“Verily I have created man in the best form – given him the best constitution. But I have endowed him [that if he so desires] he can sink to the lowest of the low.”*

(Q. 95 : 4-5)

He called man by the honourable title of the vicegerent of God on earth.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

*“Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth.”*

(Q. 2:30)

He, the Prophet ﷺ preached the unity and equality of mankind and broke the fetters of slavery and caste.

It is trite objection of the opponents of Islam that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ advocated and established the institution of slavery. Nothing more mischievous than this can be conceived. The institution of slavery had been existing since times immemorial, and none of the pre-Islamic religions can claim today that it ever tried to abolish it. For instance, take the case of Christianity, which is one of the great religions of the world and whose missionaries and ministers are highly fond of attacking Islam day in and day out.

Christianity rose in the Roman Empire where, though slavery had been a recognised institution for centuries, men like Dio Chrysostom, Diocletian and Seneca had begun to voice their protest against the cruel practice.

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But the work of reform was checked [opposed] at its very outset by Christianity. This fact might surprise those who have become accustomed of hearing from the present-day Christian apologists that their religion was responsible for softening the attitude of the Romans towards slaves. Facts, indeed, lie the opposite way, as a Christian scholar himself admits<sup>1</sup>

“We have observed a change in the policy of the law, indicating a change in the sentiment with respect to slave class, which does not appear to have been at all due to Christian Teaching, but to have arisen from the spontaneous influence of circumstances co-operating with the softened manners which were inspired by a pacific regime.”

In fact, Christianity regenerated the institution of slavery when the Romans were going to abandon it and she used it for centuries in degenerating vast human populations of the world. The description of severities perpetrated by the Christians upon innocent men, women and children of Africa and other territories to obtain slaves for their colonies, is not pleasant reading. Who can have the courage to deny that the great cities of Christendom continued to remain the popular slave-markets of the world from the days of Constantine up to 1850 C.E, that the Christian priests were for centuries the most Zealous slave-dealers and that they indulged in slave-trade with the conviction that it was in perfect accord with the teaching of Jesus and that the Old and New Testaments upheld and advocated slavery?

“The whole history of Christianity” wrote Joseph McCabe in the Literary Guide, “needs rewriting.... the entire and true story of the relation of Christianity to the people during its thousand years of complete domination has never yet been put before the people..... Sunday by Sunday they are told how Christianity

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abolished slavery and serfdom; how nobles fraternised with commoners in the age of faith; how Christ was the first to talk of social justice in a grim capitalist world, and so on. These monstrous untruths should be nailed definitely to the counter”.

If we were to examine here in detail the slave-trade carried on by the Christians that would cover a volume. Those details can be read in the histories of those cruel ages.

Our aim at the present occasion is only to establish that the institution of slavery has been sanctioned by the Bible. Its following verses are eloquent enough to reveal its attitude:-

*“Both thy bondmen, and thy bond-maids, which thou shall have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.*

*“Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begot in your land: and they shall be your possession.*

*“And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever.”*

( Leviticus, XXV : 44-46)

*“If a man smites his servant or his maid, with a rod, and he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished.*

*“Notwithstanding, if he continues a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is money”*

(Exodus, XXI: 20-21)

As regards the New Testament, it also plainly endorses slavery.

For instance, it says:

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*“Servants be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling.”*

*(Ephesians. VI:5)*

*“Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour”*

*(Timothy, VI: 1)*

*“Exhort servants to be obedient unto their masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again.”*

*(Titus. II: 9)*

*“Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and the gentle, but also to the forward.”*

*(Peter. II: 18)*

A point may be clarified here about the word “servant” used in the above verses. The present editions of the New Testament are only translations from Hebrew and Greek versions where we find words which should be translated as “Slave” and “bondman” and not as “servant”.<sup>2</sup>

“Slavery,” wrote Rev. Professor Drew<sup>3</sup>, “was established by divine authority among even the elect of heaven, the children of Israel.”

It was in the spirit of the New Testament that Rev. Dr. Taylor of Yale College said:

*“I have no doubt that, if Jesus Christ were now on earth, he would, under certain circumstances, become a slave-holder.”*

Such quotations can be multiplied to show that Christianity as a

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religion legalised slavery and that it was Christianity more than any other factor which was the real hindrance in the way of those enlightened Europeans who wanted to abolish slave-trade.

On the other hand, the religion of Islam, stands out today as the only one which waged a holy war against slavery. The task before it was a most difficult one because the institution had been in existence from times immemorial and had therefore led to various complications. It could not be abolished at once because that would have been a rash and imprudent step, making confusion worse, confounded in a country where it lay deeply embedded. As a practical and Divinely-inspired reformer, therefore, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ took various practical steps:

1. He forbade his followers from calling slaves as bondsmen or bondswomen:

*“Let not any one of you say when addressing his slave, 'Abdi' (my bondsman) or 'Amati' (my bondswoman), but let him say, 'my young man', 'my young maid', 'my young boy.'”* (Bukhārī)

2. The emancipation of slaves was made an act of the highest virtue:

لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ  
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ  
ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبْنَى السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّالِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ

*“It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West;  
but righteousness is he who..... gives his wealth for the love of Him..... to set  
free slaves....*

(Q.2:177)

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وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقْبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَكُ رَقَبَةً

“Ah what will convey unto thee what the Ascent is, “(It is) to free a slave.”  
(Q.90:12-13)

“The most beloved of all deeds with God”, said the Holy Prophet ﷺ, “is the emancipation of a slave.” (Bukhāri)

Once a man asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ: “Point out to me an act which might bring me closer to paradise and remove me farther away from hell”. “Free a slave and ransom a captive”. Came the reply from the Saviour of slaves.  
(Baihāqi)

Lady Asmā ؓ daughter of the Caliph Abu Bakr ؓ, reports:

أَمَرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِالْعَتَاةِ فِي كُسُوفِ الشَّمْسِ

“We were enjoined to free slaves whenever there was an eclipse.”  
(Bukhāri)

“Verily” remarked the Holy Prophet ﷺ once, “my friend (angel) Gabriel continued to enjoin kindness to slaves, until I thought that people should never be taken as slaves or serfs.”

3. To treat slaves as equals was enjoined:

“Verily, your slaves are your brethren, God has placed them under you. Whoever, then, has his brother under him, he should feed with the food which he himself eats, and clothe him with such clothing as he himself wears. And do not impose upon him a duty which is beyond his power to perform or if you command them to do what they are unable to do, then assist them in that affair”. (Bukhāri)

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4. Marriage with slaves was recommended and the possessors of slaves were enjoined to impart education and culture to their slaves:

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ  
إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*“And marry such of you as are solitary and the pious of your slaves and maidservants. If they be poor, Allāh will enrich them of His bounty. Allāh is of Ample Means Aware .... Force not your slave-girls to whoredom”.*

(Q 24:32)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

*“If a man has a slave-girl in his possession and he instructs her in polite accomplishments and gives her good education, without inflicting any chastisement upon her, and then frees her and marries her, he shall be rewarded with a double reward”.*

(Bukhāri and Muslim)

5. The harsh treatment meted out to a slave was made a sufficient ground for his or her emancipation. The Glorious Prophet ﷺ said:

*“He who beats his slave without fault or slaps him on the face, his atonement for this is freeing him.”*

(Muslim)

Abū Masūd ؓ says: *“I was beating a slave of mine, when I heard behind me a voice: ‘Know O Abū Masūd! God is more powerful over thee than thou art over him’; I turned back and*

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*saw the Holy Apostle of God. 'He is now free for the sake of God', I said. The Holy Apostle replied: 'If thou hadst not done that, verily fire would have touched thee'.*"

(Bukhāri and Muslim)

6. It was ordained that if a slave wanted to purchase his or her freedom, he or she should be granted the request, and, more than that should be helped with money and other means:

وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ  
إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَّآتُوهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ

*"And such of your slaves as seek a writing (of emancipation) write it for them if ye are aware of aught of good in them (i.e., if you think that they would be able to earn an honest living and would not lead the life of paupers) and bestow upon them of the wealth of Allāh which He hath bestowed upon you."*

(Q 24:33)

7. The atonement of certain sins was proclaimed to be the freeing of slaves.
8. It was made a law that no Muslim could be made a slave.

Having briefly seen how the Great Humanist Muḥammad ﷺ attacked the established institution of slavery from all sides, we may now come to the problem of the prisoners of war.

The pre-Islamic laws of war generally reveal a picture of unmitigated cruelty and depravity. The usual custom was that, of the defeated foe, men were slaughtered or burnt and women

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and children were enslaved. Islam came as a protest against those severities and limited the punishment of the aggressor to prisonership and taught that the captives were either to be generously awarded freedom or allowed to ransom themselves:

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثْخَتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا  
الْوُثَاقَ فَمَا مَثًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا ذَٰلِكَ وَلَوْ  
يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَأَنْتَصَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِن لِّيَبْلُوَ بَعْضُكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي  
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

*“Now when ye meet in battle those who disbelieve, then it is the smiting of the necks until when ye have routed them, then make fast of bonds; and afterward either grace or ransom till the war lay down its burdens. That is the ordinance”*

(Qurān, 47:4)

Not only did Islam soften the laws of war to the extent of allowing the prisoners to ransom themselves, but it was made a matter of legislation that Muslims themselves should spend their money to assist them in that behalf:

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمَلِينَ عَلَيْهَا  
وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

*“The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allāh and (for) the way-farer; a duty imposed by Allāh: Allāh is Knower, Wise.”*

(Q,9:60)

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The Holy Prophet ﷺ was not a theorist and a visionary, and consequently his work for the abolition of slavery was of the practical nature. He sacrificed his own wealth and worked as an ordinary labourer to purchase the freedom of slaves as, for example, he did in the case of the Persian slave Salmān, when, to obtain his freedom, he planted three hundred palm-trees with his own hands. He set free in his life-time thousands of slaves as, for instance, he awarded freedom to 6000 Ḥawāzins after the battle of Ḥunain.

*“It is indeed an 'abuse of words' to apply the word 'slavery' in the English sense to any status known to the legislation of Islam.”<sup>4</sup>*

The Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ left no room for slavery in the society which he founded and if there have been a few among some of his unworthy followers who have indulged in slave-trade in Africa, it may directly be traced to the influence of those Christian slave-traders who wanted slaves for their colonies.

Indeed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was the greatest saviour of slaves that the world has known. Even in the last moments of his life on earth, he repeatedly exhorted his followers in these words:

*“Fear Allāh in the matter of Prayers and in the matter of those whom your right hands possess.”*

(Abū Dāwūd)

“According to the Koran,” writes the English orientalist, Dr. Leitner,<sup>5</sup> “no person can be made a slave except after the conclusion of a sanguinary battle fought in the conduct of a religious war (Jihād) in the country of infidels who try to suppress the true religion. Indeed where-ever the word slave occurs in the Koran it is 'he whom your right hands have

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conquered,' or a special equivalent for neck 'he whose neck has been spared,' thus clearly indicating 'a prisoner of war' made by the action not of one man only, but of many..... Limited, however, as the legal supply of slaves is according to the Koran..... the Arabian Prophet recommended:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخْنَتُمْوَهُمْ فَشَدُّوْا أَلْوَتَاقَ  
فَإِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً

*'When the war has ended, restore them (the slaves or prisoners) to liberty or give them up for ransom.'*

(Q. 47:4)

Again, in the 16<sup>th</sup> Sura of the Koran, Muḥammad in his very novitiate, boldly confronts a state of society in which even the female belongings of a deceased were sold or distributed as part of his property - a position from which he raised women by constituting them 'legal sharers,' or the first cases of the Muḥammadan Law..... Surrounded by powerful and hostile relatives and tribesmen, the owners of slaves, who sought an excuse for his destruction, he invites them to divide their income or provision (rizq) with their slaves in equal shares:

*'God has made some superior to other in income, and yet those who have been so benefitted do not divide their income with those their right hands have conquered, so that each (master and slave) may have equal shares. How dare they thus to gainsay the goodness of God?'*

“And elsewhere: 'Alms (which procure righteousness) are destined.....to the redemption of slaves' (as the ruling Begum of Bhopal professed to have bought and imported slaves for the ostensible object of setting them free). Further:

وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتِغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ  
 إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَآتُوهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ

*'If any of your slaves ask for his manumission in writing give it to him, if you think him worthy of it, and give him also some of the wealth which God has given you.....'*

(Q.24:33)

“The reconciliation of a separated married couple should be preceded by the ransom of a slave, and, if none can be found, the husband should feed sixty poor, or else fast for two months.

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِن نِّسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ  
 رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا ذَٰلِكُمْ تَوْعْظُونَ بِهِ ؕ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا  
 تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ؕ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتتَابِعَيْنِ مِن  
 قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَاِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ذَٰلِكَ  
 لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ؕ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

*But those who divorce their wives by Zihār, then wish to go back on the words they uttered, (it is ordained that such a one) should free a slave before they touch each other: these are ye admonished to perform: and Allāh is well-acquainted with (all) that ye do.*

*And if any has not (the wherewithal), he should fast for two months consecutively before they touch each other. But if any is unable to do so, he should feed sixty indigent ones. This, that ye may show your faith in Allāh and His Messenger, those are limits (set by) Allāh. For those who reject (Him), there is a grievous Penalty.*

(Q.58:3-4)

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Whenever the sense of happiness, including that of conjugal felicity, predisposes the heart to gratitude toward the Creator, or whenever the fear of God or of punishment or the desire of blessing, affects, as such motives can and do affect the daily life of a Muḥammadan, the emancipation of a slave, as a most proper act of charity is recommended. In short, the 'cliff', or a narrow path to salvation, is charity: 'What is the 'cliff'? It is to free the captive (or slave).

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ

“What is the 'cliff'? It is to free the captive (or slave)”

(Q. 90:12-13)

“Descending to the second of Muḥammadan law, the authenticated traditions or *Ḥadith*, we find Muḥammad stating that 'the worst of men is he who sells men': Slaves who displeased their masters were to be forgiven 'seventy times a day' ; no believer can be made a slave ; and 'in proportion to the number of redeemed slaves will members of the body of the releasing person be rescued from the (eternal) fire.’

“The history of Muḥammadanism has since shown not only the admission of the converted slave on equal terms into Muḥammadan society (a circumstance which does not exist to the same extent among Christian negroes), but also his rise in several Muḥammadan countries, including Egypt, to the highest positions in the state, whether as an individual or as a member of a whole class of slaves, and irrespective of colour. The brotherhood of Muḥammadanism is no mere word. All believers are equal and their own high-priest. Zaid, the ex-slave, led Muḥammad's troops..... The Ḥaznavide dynasty was founded by the slave Sabaktagin; the first King of Delhi, Kutbuddin, was a

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slave; etc.

“Lord Auckland's Minute on the Indian Law Commission, which reported that 'all slavery is excluded from amongst the Muḥammadans by the strict letter of their own law, 'shows that ' the abhorrence of slavery entertained by the English functionary was then, as now, welcome to the respectable native community..... The cruel treatment of slaves has been the reproach of European rather than of Eastern nations”.

Another Western scholar writing in the Westminster Review (No. IX, pp. 221), said: “His (i.e. Muḥammad's) law of slavery is, 'If slaves come to you, you shall' - not imprison and then sell by public sale, though no claimant appears, as in the nineteenth century is the law of Christian England in her provinces, but - 'redeem them, and it is forbidden to you to send them forth.' (Koran II, p. 85.) and this was a man standing up in the wilds of Arabia in the seventh century.”

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 9

# WHICH RELIGION?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

### INTRODUCTION

When we analyze the concept of Religion we find that this concept is constituted of three factors, namely, God, Universe and Man. All the different discussions that are involved in religious thought hinge on these three factors. Consequently, we shall have to approach the problem of the study of the above-mentioned religions in the perspective of these factors and their connected problems, in which the most important and comprehensive is the problem of the "scheme of salvation".

Taking the last point first: So far as the concept of Salvation is concerned, the religions under discussion fall under two headings:-

1. Religions of Salvation;
2. Religions of Fulfillment.

**The Religions of Salvation** are: Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. In fact, all the religions of the world, with the exception of Islam, are the Regions of Salvation.

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As regards Religions of Fulfillment, there is only one, and that is Islam.

The Religions of Salvation are again divided into two categories:

- a. those whose concept of salvation is linear, namely: they teach the advance of human life in the linear style wherein human life passes through the gateway of death to continue beyond the grave and to attain heaven or hell;
- b. those whose concept of salvation is cyclic, namely: they teach continuous transmigration of souls in cycle upon cycle.

Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism belong to category (a). Hinduism and Buddhism belong to category (b).

Behind these differences in points of view concerning salvation and fulfillment are the philosophies of life which are grounded in different notions concerning the nature of man, the nature of the universe and the nature of God.

The concept of salvation originates essentially in the belief that this world is evil, that the sojourn of humanity on this planet is basically evil, and that consequently the human beings should endeavor to find ways and means of rescue or escape from this evil world and this evil life and thus attain salvation.

The foundation of the concept of fulfillment, on the other hand, is the belief that the world is essentially good. According to Islam, which is the religion of fulfillment, God is Absolutely Good, and because He is Absolutely Good all His actions must of necessity

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be good. Consequently, all His creation is good which means that the world is good, the human personality is good and a social relations are good. This being so, all human beings are born sinless, and here Islam stands in contradistinction with Christianity which says that human beings are born in sin. Islam also differs with other religions in its ideal of saintliness. Thus, while, for instance, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity teach asceticism and renunciation of the world as the way to acquire Holiness, Islam is emphatic in the assertion that human life should be lived to the fullest, of course within the legitimate bounds of healthy existence. According to Islam, God has endowed the human beings with certain faculties and powers and the purpose of this endowment is that the human beings should employ and develop those faculties and powers in the early life. These faculties and powers cannot, however, be brought into play except in social environment. Hence, social life and social relations are essential good. It is through social morality and subjugation of the natural forces by means of physical science and personal spiritual development through an all-pervading love for and devotion to God Almighty that humanity can attain, according to Islam, the status of saintliness, or, in other words, the status of the Vicegerency of God.

We may now take up the religions that have been selected for study and discuss their teachings under the three heads that we mentioned in the beginning, viz., God, Universe and Man.

### CHRISTIANITY

Let us take up Christianity first.

Christian scholars class Christianity as a monotheistic religion. But, it must be admitted that if Christianity is monotheistic in

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any sense of the word, its monotheism must be regarded as of a peculiar or, at least, special type. For, actually it preaches the conception of the Triune God. The members of the Christian Godhead are three: God the Father. God the Son and God the Holy Ghost (or, from another point of view, Goddess the Mother). These three members of the Trinity are said to be one and yet three. The Christian formula of Godhead is: Three in One and One in Three. But the statement of the formula presents, to say the least, an enigma to human understanding. The three members of the Godhead are three persons. If they had been three attributes of the same God, Christian "monotheism" would have been understandable. But, neither God the Father, nor God the Son, nor God the Holy Ghost is an attribute. Rather, they are definite persons and, as far as human understanding is concerned, mutually exclusive individuals. This makes Christian "monotheism" a full-blooded polytheism.

The Christian notion of Godhead is not only deeply mystifying but also flagrantly blasphemous. The belief in Jesus as "the only begotten Son of God" makes the Christian concept of God anthropomorphic, on the one hand, and hurls the greatest conceivable blasphemy on God, on the other. There are some more points of blasphemy also in the Christian faith in God inasmuch as the Old Testament forms a vital part of the Christian Bible. To those blasphemies we shall refer when we discuss Judaism.

The view of Christianity with regard to the world is that it is evil. This fact emerges in the Christian notion which say that human life on earth is essentially evil. Christianity regards the human soul as noble and holy and the human body as evil and the playground of Satan. Consequently, the ideal of saintliness or godly life is that which is represented in the life of the biblical

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Jesus, viz., the ideal of asceticism and renunciation of physical pleasure and social relations. This ideal has been pursued from the very beginning in the form of the institution of monks and nuns.

In connection with life-after-death, Christianity teaches a crude form of the doctrine of heaven and hell. It upholds salvation is a linear style as opposed to the cyclic order of Reincarnation.

### JUDAISM

As regards Judaism, the religious thought of the Jews developed not all at once but through centuries. The texts on which Judaism is based are many. All of them combined together in one corpus are called "Torah" or the "Old Testament".

When we analyse the teachings of Judaism, the first thing that strikes us is the presence of conflicting views. Thus, in connection with the conception of God we find the most primitive and even blasphemous notions, on the one hand, and the idea of pure monotheism, on the other. For instance, in the very beginning of the book we find the remark that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day-the day of the Sabbath. Now, this idea of rest casts a slur on the personality of God, because rest is always induced by fatigue and fatigue is caused by the consumption of limited energy. Hence, to say that God needed rest after six days of labour means that God's energy had been consumed and He was thus suffering from fatigue. In other words, God's Power is limited, namely, God suffers from lack of Power. But he who suffers from lack of power cannot be called God because God must be infinite in His Being as well as in all His Attributes.

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Another instance of blasphemy against God is to be found in the continuation of the same story of Creation where it has been said that when Eve and Adam had committed the first sin, God repented.

Now, situation for repentance arises only on the basis of ignorance and lack of power to control one's affairs. A man feels sorry only when he commits an act which he later on finds to be wrong. He also feels sorry if he is unable to perform an act which it is necessary for him to perform- Sorrow comes because of lack of power.

Proceeding further in the story of Creation, we find that God refused to forgive Adam. Now Adam was the first human being and his sin was the first sin-and that too of quite a simple type. It was not a crime like the crime of murder. The only injury that Adam had done was to himself alone. It is a principle followed in the law courts of the world that they take the first offence lightly and very often try to forgive the culprit or at least to mitigate the punishment. But, according to the Old Testament, God refused to forgive the first simple offence of the first simple human being. The only logical conclusion that we can derive from it is that He can never forgive anyone. Here the Old Testament teaches the absence of the will-to-forgive in the personality of God.

The above discussion shows that, although Judaism preaches monotheism, which is its merit, its conception of God is extremely defective, nay, even blasphemous. For, a God who suffers from finitude in his power and knowledge and who lacks the power of mercy is actually no God at all. He is only a magnified human being. And this brings us to the anthropomorphic character of the Jewish conception of God.

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The Jewish monotheism is of a primitive type. The conception of Jehovah seems to be that of a tribal god and bears no comparison with the sublime, comprehensive and faultless Islamic monotheism.

The Jewish outlook on human life is more realistic and practical than that of Christianity. The Jewish moral code has many elements of value, although it has been marred by racialism. Judaism emphasizes the supremacy of man in creation and the importance of earthly existence. Its conception of salvation in the next world is based on the notion of law with rewards and punishments in the form of heaven and hell.

### HINDUISM

Hinduism is the most indefinable religion in the world. Indeed, it is more of a social order than a religion in the strict sense of the word. A person who believes in one God can be a Hindu; a person who believes in three gods can also be a Hindu; a person who believes in millions of gods, he too can be a Hindu; and so also a person who believes in no god.

Hinduism is actually the story of a race-the race of Central Asian Aryans who brought certain beliefs of nature-worship and certain principles of social organisation when they conquered the northern plains of India and subjugated its people. They foisted their beliefs on the conquered races and at the same time absorbed the beliefs and social habits of their subjects. Thus a hotchpotch was created in which mutually conflicting beliefs and mutually fighting gods and goddesses were accommodated. Indeed, when we study and investigate the beliefs and practices of Hinduism, we find that Hinduism stands not for one religion but a number of religious systems, among which the only

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common doctrines appear to be those of Karma and transmigration of souls.

Hinduism, like Judaism, is the religion of a particular race. A Hindu is born and not made. For, unlike Islam and Christianity, Hinduism does not believe in the conversion of the non-Hindus to Hinduism. And it is not only racialism which is the characteristic of Hinduism but also the caste system. Namely, not only is a Hindu tied to a certain race but also to a particular caste. Every Hindu is born either a Brahmin or a Khattriya or a Vaishya or a Sudra. No amount of moral greatness or acts of chivalry or any other distinction can enable a person to change his caste or to rise from the lower to the higher caste in his life.

Hinduism has the peculiarity, among all the religions of the world, of excommunicating the members of its own fold, treating them as untouchables by reason of their birth and persecuting them in a manner which defies description. For instance, the great Hindu law-giver, Manu, has laid down the law that every member of the Brahmin caste is so holy and every member of the Sudra caste is so unholy and despicable that if any Sudra comes so near to a Brahmin that the voice of the Sudra can reach the ear of the Brahmin, the Sudra is to be punished for defiling the holiness of the Brahmin by pouring molten lead into the ears of the Sudra. This being the case, the question of inter-marriages and other social relations is ruled out completely. And when this is the treatment which Hinduism metes out to its own members, its attitude towards the members of other religions and races can be well imagined. Indeed, for a Hindu all non-Hindus are untouchables. They are, in his opinion, not only spiritually inferior but also socially condemned and contemptible. This means that Hinduism has absolutely no notion of common humanity and no idea of fundamental and universal human rights.

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As regards the theory of the Transmigration of Souls and its foundation, the theory of Karma, they appear to be irrational and unacceptable when weighed in the balance of human reason. The Hindu view of salvation is cyclic, viz., there are cycles upon cycles of rebirth through which every human being must pass times without number in order to attain salvation. According to Hinduism, if a person commits more vices than virtues in his life, he is born again in this world in a lower caste or even in a lower category of existence. This according to Hinduism, happens in order to punish him for his misdeeds and also to enable him to work his way to salvation. Thus a person may be born again and again.

This theory, however, does not stand the test of reason. In the first instance to realise that a person is suffering or benefitting on any particular occasion in this life because of action performed in a previous life on this earth, it is necessary that every human being should have a complete picture of his supposed previous life at all moments and on all occasions. Otherwise, the purpose of his re-birth would be defeated. But no such picture exists in the mind of any human being. Secondly, if we pick up an immature seed from a tree and wish to get a tree from that seed in spite of its immaturity, we never paste or pin that seed back on the tree. Rather, we try to get the best of the seed by providing better manure and better conditions. Similar is the case of the human personality. When a human being leaves this world without achieving that purity and maturity which is necessary for salvation, nature should not and would not paste and pin him again on the tree of earthly life, but should provide for him conditions whereby his impurity and immaturity may be remedied and he may be able to proceed on the path of evolution. Thirdly, evolution is an established law of the human personality as well as of the universe. But evolution is always linear and never

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cyclic. Hence, on this score also the theory of salvation through transmigration of souls is unacceptable.

### BUDDHISM

Buddhism was born in India as a revolt against certain principles and institutions of Hinduism, although in its basic characteristics it was and is virtually an offshoot of Hinduism. It was a revolt inasmuch as it broke off the fetters of the caste system which forms the corner-stone of the Hindu social order. It was a revolt also in the sense that it substituted a virtually impersonal concept of God- a concept of non-existence of God-- in contradistinction to the anthropomorphic and pluralistic Hindu concept of Godhead. It was an offshoot of Hinduism inasmuch as it retained the Hindu doctrines of Karma and Awa Gawan (reincarnation and transmigration of souls). Now, these two doctrines form actually the foundation and the basic distinguishing characteristics of the Hindu philosophy of religion. Consequently, there are scholars who are inclined to regard Buddhism as only one of the numerous sects of Hinduism.

The starting point of the Buddhist movement is well known to the students of Indian history. We are told that Gotama was a member of a princely house of the Hindus, that he was deeply stirred by the sufferings of humanity, that he left his hearth and home in search of solution for the human sufferings, that he remained absorbed in contemplation and meditation for years, and that he attained Buddhahood, namely, Enlightenment, under a tree at Buddh-Gaya - a place in the province of Bihar, India.

The solution at which Gotama Buddha arrived through his Enlightenment was that the only way to conquer suffering was

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to negate all Desire. This is called the doctrine of world-and-life-negation. According to this doctrine, the world is unreal; it is an illusion: it is a trap. Therefore, it should be avoided. All sufferings come through the cultivation of desires for possessing the things of the world. But because this world is a trap the wise man (Buddhist) should cut off all his relations with the world, including social relations born of marriage. He should live the life of a mendicant, namely, of a roaming beggar who should have no home, no worldly duties and no worldly aspirations. It is said about Gotama Buddha himself that when he left his home in search of truth he had his wife whom he left behind, and when after years of wanderings he returned to his native place he did not return to his wife.

Another doctrine of Buddhism is that of Ahimsa, namely, total abstention from punishing anyone and killing anyone. The Buddhists are famous as protagonists of this doctrine, although because the doctrine is unnatural and non-human, no Buddhist community has been able to practise it in its logical implications. Rather, Buddhism had to continuously modify its teachings in order to meet the natural exigencies of social life and the rational demands of human nature. Thus Buddhists have been marrying and thereby perpetuating social relations and they have been engaging themselves in trade and industry and politics and even war. And still they have remained Buddhists!

Besides several minor sects of Buddhism there are three important sects, namely, the Mahayana, the Hinayana and the Zen.

The Hinayana sect is so called because it formed the minority group of the Buddhists after the famous Council of Patna. The followers of this sect seem to be the most orthodox and more

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loyal to the spirit and teachings of Buddha. They believe in asceticism and other-worldliness. The Mahayana group has named itself so because it formed the majority group at the Council of Patna and it has remained so up to this day. It penetrated to the north and east of India and it adopted an outlook which accommodates the worldly duties of mankind. The ideal human beings, according to this sect also, are the ascetics, but it permits social relations as a natural and necessary evil. Its comparative popularity over the Hinayan sect is in the main due to the concession it gives to worldly relations. But even this sect is averse to the military profession and it regards the act of taking up weapons as totally opposed to Buddhism. But war is a vital fact of human life and a necessary part of the activity of all nations, and even the Buddhists, however much they might detest it, are bound to face it. Consequently, as time progressed and the practical difficulties in following the Buddhist philosophy of life became more and more apparent, modifications in Buddhist teachings went further and further. Thus when Buddhism entered Japan and it gained followers among the militarist Japanese, a new version of Buddhist philosophy emerged in the form of Zen Buddhism which permits and promotes fully the militarist aspirations. Thus, although Buddhism started as a pacifist movement, it has ended in conceding the demands of those who regard military profession and fighting as virtues.

Both Buddhist theology and moral philosophy appear to be based on wrong foundations from the point of view of human reason. Buddhist theology gives us an impersonal blind force in place of God, on the one hand, and naked anthropomorphism and all the evils of animistic idolatry, on the other. Thus Buddhism is a two-edged sword which murders the concept of God right through. In the domain of moral philosophy, the

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doctrine of the total negation of all Desire is a hopeless doctrine, because it turns human beings into stones. It is only stones who may be conceived to have no desires. As regards human beings, desire is the first and foremost condition of their activity and the most vital foundation of their progress. The only thing that can be wrong about desire is to have an evil desire or to have desire in a wrong measure. Therefore, a true moral philosophy would never negate all desire but only wrong desires and desires in wrong measure, as Islam teaches; while the negation of all desire would mean the negation of good desires also, which standpoint cannot be accepted by any rational human being.

As regards the doctrines of Karma and Awa Gawan, while the doctrine of Karma seems too rational in its normal implications, viz., that the effect is conditioned by the cause, the doctrine of transmigration of souls has absolutely no foundation in human experience, as has been already discussed in connection with Hinduism.

### ISLAM

Islam was born in the broad daylight of human history. Indeed, it is the only religion which is fully historical and whose scripture exists today without the minutest change. It is also the only religion about whose founder's life we possess a complete and most detailed information.

The authenticity and purity of the text of the Holy Qur'ān stands in sharp contrast with the veracity of the Christian Gospels, for instance. The Gospels were not dictated by Jesus Christ ﷺ, while the Holy Qur'ān was dictated word for word by the Holy Prophet Moḥammad ﷺ. The first authorised version of the Gospels was not in existence before 321 A.C., while the

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authorised version of the Holy Qur'an was already ready in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Then, there is only one version of the Holy Qur'an while there are four versions of the Gospels, viz., according to Mark, according to Matthew, according to Luke and according to John. Again, these four versions have been continuously subjected to revision.

As regards the historicity of the personalities of Jesus and Moḥammad (God bless both of them): the only period of the life of Jesus about which we know anything covers hardly two years, and there too we get only brief references to his miracles and his struggle and no detailed information about his personality and character, which means that we cannot get any comprehensive guidance in our day-to-day life from the personality of Jesus. The case with the Holy Prophet Moḥammad ﷺ is entirely different. From his birth to his last day on the earth, we possess a record of his life and activity, of his personality, and character, of his teachings and his struggle which is so detailed that even the minutest events of his private life are to be found there. Indeed, the comprehensiveness of Information about the Holy Prophet's ﷺ life is so astounding in its dimensions that it forms a unique phenomenon of human history. This historicity of Islam, its scripture and its Teacher is the first basic characteristic of Islam as a religion - a characteristic which is denied to all religions, including Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

The second characteristic of Islam is that, among all the Teachers of Religion, it is only the personality of the Holy Prophet Moḥammad ﷺ which is not only historical but also all-dimensional. There is not a single department of constructive and positive human activity and there is not a single role in the sphere of the greatness of mankind and nobility of human character which does not find expression in the life of the Holy

## Chapter 9 - Which Religion?

Prophet ﷺ.

As a religion, Islam stands on seven articles of faith, namely, belief in:

1. Existence and Unity of God.
2. Angels, who are personalities made of Light and who function as executors of the Will of God in the universe.
3. The Scriptures and Messages sent by God to different communities of mankind all over the globe in different ages, beginning with the Divine Guidance received by Ādam and ending with the Holy Qur'ān.
4. The Messengers of God from among the human beings who were raised by God in all the communities of the world since the time of Ādam, the first Messenger of God till the time of Moḥammad ﷺ, the last and final Messenger of God (peace be upon them all).
5. The Resurrection, namely, raising up of the dead and reviving them with their total personalities at the break-up of the present physical order.
6. The Last Day when the order of the world will break up to give place to a new order and all human beings will be called upon to render account of their deeds and God Almighty will give His Judgment and will give reward or punishment by sending people into heaven or hell.

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7. Pre-measurement of good and evil, which means that the world is a reign of law, that everything and every action is grounded in a definite measure given to it by God and that conformity to measure is good and deviation from measure is evil.

From the practical point of view, Islam has been built on five pillars. They are:

1. Affirmation and Declaration that there is absolutely no deity except the Only One God, Allāh ﷻ, who is transcendent, has no 'only begotten son' and does not incarnate Himself in any person or thing and that Moḥammad ﷺ is the Messenger of God – and as such, the last and the final.
2. Performance of the Obligatory Institutional Prayers prescribed by Islam for the day and the night.
3. Observance of Fasting during the month of Ramaḍān.
4. Payment of the Social Insurance Tax (Zakāt) by all those who possess the means.
5. Performance of the Pilgrimage (Ḥajj) by all Muslims of means.

The seven Articles and the five Pillars give to Islam its character as a religion. Islam is not, however, merely a religion but also a self-contained Culture and a self-sustained Civilisation. The Culture of Islam has been conceived on the principles of Knowledge and Piety, and the struggle of a Muslim's life has been

## Chapter 9 - Which Religion?

termed Jihād, which means unrelenting endeavour for the establishment and promotion of Piety, Peace and Progress. The basic constituents of the Islamic social order are: Equality, Fraternity and Liberty. The underlying idea of the Islamic society is the establishment of social, political and spiritual democracy. The guiding principle of the Islamic economic system is what has been laid down in the Holy Qur'ān in the following verse: "Let not wealth circulate only among the wealthy people of the community". Here it may be noted that Islam is equally opposed to Capitalism and Communism and it steers a middle course of balanced Socialism between the two. As a political system, Islam stands for the supremacy of the law, which means that Islam does not regard anyone" not even the head of the state, as above the law. As a world-order, Islam stands for human brotherhood and condemns all ideas of superiority and inferiority based on caste, class, tribe and race. Indeed, it was Islam that gave to the world, for the first time in human history, the Charter of Fundamental Human Rights.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 10

# GRADES IN CREATION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

THE LATEST ADVANCES in the domain of physical science reveal that the basis of “Matter” is “Energy” and we may reasonably regard the world to have begun in the form of “Waves of probability”. Again, the analysis of the atom demonstrates that the basic constituents of matter are the electric particles whose fundamental attributes are “Light” and “Heat”.

The Islamic thought on these problems is similar. According to Islam, the universe, which is of an expanding and evolutionary character, began within the “Waves of Probability”, as a nucleus of Light – known in Islamic terminology as the “Light of Muḥammad ﷺ” that been continuously “unfolding” itself.

Thus, the first form which the universe assumed was that of a “World of Light”. Then, after a period of time, a portion of the universe assumed the form of the “World of Fire”.

Later on, a portion of the “World of Fire” cooled down to assume the form in which we find the surface of the earth today – the form of “Clay”.

Science classifies the things of the world into inorganic, organic and living beings. As regards the attribute of personality, science

confines it, and that, quite naturally, to human beings. But Islam teaches that God created three distinct and different types of personality, corresponding to the three different stages in the life of the universe and the three different types of “Worlds” which exist today.

### TYPES OF PERSONALITY

**THE FIRST TYPE** of personality is that of the Angels, who have been made of “**Light**” and whose function is to execute the Will of God in the universe. One of them, Archangel Gabriel, enjoys the distinction of having acted as the medium between God Almighty and His human Messengers for the communication of Divine Guidance.

The second type of personality was created at the stages of the stabilisation of the “**world of Fire**”, in the form of the **Jinns (Genii)** who are made of “**fire**”. They appear to have been the original inhabitants of the earth when it was a “**ball of fire**”. One of them, known as **Iblis or Devil**, refused later on to acknowledge the superiority of Adam, the first man and Prophet, out of haughtiness and jealousy; and he, along with his hosts, forms the anti-Adam force in the moral and spiritual domains.

The third of personality was created in the form of Man when the earth had cooled down and conditions for the emergence of the highest form of living organisms had stabilised. The human species appeared on the scene as the most evolved form of personality and the highest in the scale of creation.

The creation of the **Angels**, the **jinns** and the **human beings** in a serial order seems to be a case of “**repetition of forms**”, because it appears from a study of Islamic thought that an **angel, a jinn**

and a human being, are basically similar in “form” but different in “nature”. We might note here certain characteristics of each one of them.

### The Angels

1. They are made of “light”. Maybe they are a “form of energy bottled up in the shell of Personality”.
2. Like electrons, they are imperceptible. But their constitution being flexible they can change to a perceptible state of existence, appearing to the human eye as human beings.
3. They are immensely mobile, possessing a speed which seems to be infinitely greater than the known speed of light (186,000 miles per second).
4. They are passionless and incapable of sin. Hence they are non-moral and sinless.
5. They do not appear to have sex-life. Procreation is, therefore, out of the question.
6. They possess intellect as well as will, but their intellect and will function in total subordination to the will of God. In other words, they are incapable of disobedience.
7. They are stable beings in the sense that since their creation they have continued, and appear to be destined to continue, to exist in the same form. In other words, they have not to pass through the ordeal of death.

## The Jinns

1. They are made of “fire”. Their constitution seems to be gaseous, related probably to Hydrogen and Helium. Their special habitat appears to be the sun or other fiery planets.
2. Like the gases, they are imperceptible to the human eye. Moreover, their constitution is fluid. Hence they can transform themselves.
3. They are very mobile, i.e. they can move at great speed within a fixed circle in the universe.
4. They possess passions as well as free-will. Hence they are moral beings, subject to reward and punishment.
5. They have sex-life and they procreate.
6. They possess intellectual powers though not of the high order which the human beings possess and also a self-directed will.
7. They are subject to decay and death, although the span of their life in the present spatio-temporal order is very long.

### **Belief in the angels forms an article of faith in Islam**

**The creation of the jinns from fire and their existence as a distinct class of living beings, has been clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur,ān.**

## Human Beings

1. They are formed out of “clay” and possess a highly-developed body.
2. They are perceptible beings. Moreover, their constitution is “fixed”. Hence they cannot change their “gear of existence” or their form at will.
3. Their mobility is very limited. They are not self-mobile like the angels and the jinns, but need external vehicles for acquiring mobility beyond their natural limits.
4. They have a strong element of passion in their lives, enjoy the prerogative of free-will and possess a highly-developed moral consciousness. Hence they are moral beings, subject to rewards and punishments.
5. They have a highly-developed sex-life and they procreate.
6. They possess, in all creation, the most highly-developed form of intellect- creativity being its distinguishing characteristic- and also a self-directed will.
7. They are subject to disease and death and the duration of their life on the earth is short, although they are destined to continue to exist indefinitely after death.

### THEIR EXISTENCE

**THOSE WHO DENY** the existence of the angels and the jinns or refuse to attribute personality to them, have no scientific foundation for their negative belief. Rather, scientific thought, as hinted in the foregoing, falls in line with the accepted Islamic belief on the subject. At least there is no conflict between physical science and Islam in this matter.

As regards the special characteristics of the jinns, we might make here certain observations in the light of accepted scientific facts. For instance, according to Boyle's Law, when a gas is compressed its volume decreases but its pressure increases, and when a gas expands, its volume increases but its pressure decreases. Now, if this is true, how is it inconceivable for a jinn to assume different shapes through variation in pressure and the consequent change in volume?

Moreover, the molecular theory of motion in gases states that the expansion in gases gives birth to rapid motion and hence the production of energy. (It may be any form of energy). This provides the scientific clue to the great mobility of the Jinns. Also, we are told that density and pressure are related by the simple formula:  $P^1/D^1 = P^2/D^2$ , where  $P^1/D^1$  are the initial density and pressure and  $P^2/D^2$  are the final density and pressure respectively. Now, according to this relation, it is quite possible for the jinns to change their form-volume and density being connected by the relation  $V^1/D^1 = V^2/D^2$  is equal to Mass.

### GRADES OF PERFECTION AND THE PROPHETS

We said above that the highest in the scale of creation are the human beings. Now, according to Islam, the highest among the

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

human beings themselves are the Prophets and Messengers of God. It is they who are the embodiments of true human perfection, which is spiritual. Among the Prophets and Messengers of God, again, the highest in the scale is the personality of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. For, his perfection is comprehensive, while others were blessed only with basic perfection.

Three grades of perfection have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān below the category of Prophets and Messengers. They have been graded in their order of merit as “**the Truthful**” (or, embodiment of Truth), “**the Martyrs**” (or embodiment of Sacrifice in the Way of God) and “**the Righteous**” (or, embodiment of Righteousness). The **Prophets** and the **Messengers** are perfectly sinless in spite of their humanity. This forms the foundation of their perfection. **The Truthful, the Martyrs** and the **Righteous** stand below them serially in their order of merit, and their immunity from sinfulness is in accordance with their grades.

The Prophets and the Messengers of God are “**BORN and not made**”. Indeed, no human being can acquire this high office through any personal effort or spiritual development. Rather, it is a divine gift.

The Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was the last of the line of Prophets and Messengers, and there can be no new Prophet or Messenger after him. However, the way is open to acquire, in ascending order, the status of “the righteous”, “the Martyr” and “the Truthful”, This way consists in imitating the greatest embodiment of human perfection, i.e the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, thereby acquiring angelic virtues and traits and rising ultimately ABOVE the angels.

## Chapter 10 - Grades in Creation

In this connection, the methodology of Islamic Personality-Culture has been expounded in detail by the fore-most spiritual luminary of Islamic history, Gauthul-A'dham Sayyid 'Abdul Qādir Jilāni رحمته الله عليه of Baghdad.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER II

# LIFE AFTER DEATH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

THERE are different schools of thought in connection with life-after-death. Broadly speaking, these schools can be divided into the following two fundamental categories:

1. Those who deny the continuity of life after death. For them the present earthly life of the individual human being is the only life and it comes to an end when death occurs and the physical frame disintegrates. This school of thought is represented by Materialists and Atheists.
2. The other school of thought is represented by those who believe that the human personality is not merely physical in character, that there is an enduring substance in this personality which is non-physical, that this enduring substance is the thing which in common parlance is termed “SOUL”, and that this enduring substance or soul survives the physical death and disintegration. This school of thought is represented fundamentally by most of the religions of the world.

The first school of thought mentioned above is further divided into two sub-schools. One of them maintains that all existence is

## Chapter II - Life After Death

purely physical and consequently the death of the physical frame means the total annihilation of the total personality. The other sub-school thinks that there is a psychic factor which exists side by side with physical personality, manifesting itself as mind or intellect in the physical frame of the individual.

**THIS PSYCHIC FACTOR** is a part and parcel of the World-Mind, and this being so, it is re-absorbed into the World-Mind after the occurrence of the physical death. In this case also the continuity of the personality of the individual is actually denied, because the psychic factor no longer retains its individuality, just as when a drop of water mixes up with the ocean its individual existence is totally lost, although it continues to exist fundamentally.

The second school of thought mentioned above is also basically divisible into two sub-schools. One sub-school is that which is represented by Hinduism and its sister-religions. It upholds the theory of cyclic existence based on the doctrines of **Karma** and **Awagawan** (i.e. Transmigration and reincarnation of Souls).

According to its theory, matter and the individual souls exist from all time and will exist up to all time, that the forms of living matter are different not only with regard to their shape but also as regards their function, and that the individual souls enter the different moulds in accordance with the virtuous or vicious life which they lead in the preceding existence.

**THUS A BRAHMIN** (who belongs to the highest category of human beings according to Hinduism) is born in the next life as Sudra (one who stands in the lowest scale of humanity) if the Brahmin leads a vicious life in a certain measure. He might be born also as a dog or a pig if his vices are more. Thus the

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succeeding life is either a reward or a punishment of the **Karma** (or, moral actions performed in the preceding life). This succession of life continues in an endless cycle until the stage of **Mukti** (salvation) is reached, which implies freedom from the inexorable cycle of transmigration through the attainment of divinity.

As opposed to this sub-school stands that one which is represented by Islam and, with certain variations, by Judaism and Christianity. According to this school, nothing is eternal except God. There is a type of immortality which the soul enjoys, but this immortality is of an individualistic character.

This individuality of the human personality is fully observable in the physical life and it is this individuality which survives the physical death and plays a very important part as an individual beyond the grave.

The continuity of life beyond death plays a very important part in connection with this individuality within the grooves of its individual existence, and not its fusion or dispersion into other moulds of physical existence found on the earth.

### CRITICISM OF THE NON-ISLAMIC POINTS OF VIEW

The atheistic point of view of the discontinuity of life as such at the occurrence of the physical death is against the doctrine of Evolution which is supported and affirmed in one form or the other by the entire scientific world.

As regards Evolution, the most meaningful view is that in which the evolutionary process is conceived to develop progressively from inorganic existence to organic existence, and then from

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conscious organic existence to self-conscious organic existence.

In other words, Evolution has been from inanimate state to animate state and then from the purely physical existence to moral existence, because self-consciousness is the foundation of conscience which is not a physical but a moral quality. Then there is a further form of consciousness which goes beyond the moral consciousness.

It is the consciousness of spiritual values, and it consists in the search for holiness. It endeavours to come into contact with God Who is the embodiment and source of all Holiness.

This means that if we accept the evolutionary point of view and do not refuse to accept its logical consequences we are bound to admit evolution from the physical to the mental, from the mental to the moral, and from the moral to the spiritual levels of existence. So far as the transition from physical to mental and from mental to moral is concerned, we possess ample evidence on that behalf. Inorganic matter has only physical characteristics but no mental or moral qualities, nor any tinge of what we call 'life'.

ABOVE the inorganic matter stand the plants. They possess physical qualities as well as life, but no mind and no morality. Above the plants stand the animals, and they constitute an advance in so far as they possess brains and conscious mental activity based on perception and rudimentary memory.

Above the animals stand the human beings. They embody in their persons not only the physico-chemical properties of matter but also the animate behaviour of plants, a mind and a mental activity more developed and of a higher quality than that

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possessed by the animals, and two unique qualities of their own namely, the 'Conscience' and the 'Quest for holiness' - the former expressing itself in Morals and the latter manifesting itself in Communion with the Infinite.

This means that the human beings stand highest in the scale of Evolution and their unique characteristics, viz. Moral and Spiritual characteristics stand at the top of all those characteristics which other things possess.

Now, in order that the demands of Evolution may be fulfilled, this world should be such that moral and spiritual ideals of humanity should be fully realisable in it. But we find that in our physical existence it is practically impossible even to realise fully our moral ideals, not to speak of the spiritual ones. The evolutionary process must, therefore, ensure a state of existence in which the moral and spiritual ideals should be fully realisable. It must mean a change in the form of life.

This, in its turn, is perfectly rational and scientific, because forms have been actually changing for the progressive realisation of ever-widening ideals. To suppose that life should evolve only to the extent that we observe in our present state of existence and that Evolution should stop haphazardly without attaining its logical goal, namely, the fullest realisation of moral and spiritual values, although Evolution has been progressing in a perfect manner during the preceding stages, would be most irrational and unscientific.

Therefore, the standpoint of the atheist with regard to the abrupt cessation of life at the occurrence of death is untenable and unwarranted.

## Chapter II - Life After Death

**THE CYCLIC THEORY** of life, based on the doctrines of **Karma** and transmigration of souls, is also neither scientific nor feasible from the point of view of common-sense. We might mention here two very simple objections to this theory:

1. No human being, whether he is leading a life of happiness or of misery, has any remembrance, even in the slightest degree, of any previous existence and of any good or evil deeds performed by him in that supposed existence. It is, therefore, impossible for him to rectify his past mistakes or to derive inspiration from his past good conduct in his present life. It means that without the continuation of memory, the theory of Transmigration of souls defeats its very purpose and turns out to be practically meaningless.
2. This theory goes against the accepted fact of Evolution. All of us know that if a seed has not evolved in the proper measure and has been separated from the tree which bore it in an unripe and imperfect state, and is, consequently, incapable of producing a tree, we do not, in order bestow perfection on the seed, stick it back on the tree by some mechanical device. Rather, what we do is rectify the deficiencies and imperfections of the seed by supplying better conditions of soil and richer manure in order that the seed might ultimately perform its evolutionary function of becoming a tree.

## ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW

It may be remarked at the very outset that the Islamic doctrines concerning the nature of death, continuity of life, resurrection and the Last Day have full support in human experience. The following observations are worthy of note in this connection:

Death is not annihilation. Islam says that it is merely Intiqal, or transfer from one state of existence to another. We shall prove it shortly.

Also, the death that we experience after having lived our life on the earth cannot be regarded as our first death. This fact emerges clearly when we view the progress of our life backwards. There we find that scientific knowledge has so far traced our existence to the life-germ. But our scientific reason insists that we must have lived in some form or forms even before that. Indeed, we must have lived since the time of Creation, even as the Holy Qur'ān says. And thus we must have experienced numberless deaths in our journeys towards higher forms of life.

However, if we confine ourselves only to the experience-able duration of our existence, even then our problem of understanding the Islamic point of view is solved.

**WE SUFFER** the first **known** death when we leave the habitat of our father's body and move into our mother's body, where we are entombed in the mother's womb for a period of time. We may reasonably call it a grave, because the earthly grave which we enter later on in life does not differ much from the belly of the mother which bulges under the outward pressure of pregnancy. Inside this first **known** grave of ours we stay for a period of time to undergo continuous transformations until our initial form of the life-germ changes to the form of a full-fledged baby.

## Chapter II - Life After Death

Then we emerge “resurrected” from our “grave” of the mother's womb with severe “shakings” pangs of birth and move out into the open world, an infinitely larger world than the mother's womb. In that new form of life we pass through different stages of our evolution (about which we have spoken already), ultimately facing death again. Then we are buried for the second time in a grave. This time our grave is the “womb” of the Mother Earth.

The materialists say that our burial in the grave forms the “end of the road” – That our physical death means the annihilation of our personality. Islam on the other hand, says that we shall stay inside our grave in a state of Barzakh, or state of transition, till the day of Qiyāmah or the Last Day, which will come in the form of severe Shaking and shall be accompanied by Resurrection on a mass scale.

**LET US STOP HERE** and reflect. There are certain very logical and valid considerations which can assist us in understanding the true nature of death, life-after-death, the Last Day and the Resurrection. They are as follows:

1. We have seen that there are at least two deaths which occur before what is regarded in the superficial view as the only death. Now, these two previous deaths are only stages which bring about transfer from a lower state to a higher state of existence. To regard the third - and, in the superficial view, the only - death as annihilation is therefore, totally unwarranted, irrational, illogical and unscientific. Rather, we are compelled to view it with Islam as a crisis which paves the way for further evolution, or, as a gateway to another and higher form of existence.

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

2. The materialist view of regarding the early grave as the first one is wrong, because our first KNOWN AND OBSERVABLE grave is the mother's womb and not the earthly grave.
3. So too is the materialistic view of regarding the grave as the 'END OF THE ROAD' entirely wrong. Because, if the first known grave, i.e., the mother's womb, does not form the 'END OF THE ROAD' but only a stepping-stone to further evolution, to hold an opposite view for the earthly grave shall be most unwarranted, irrational and arbitrary.
4. Similarly, the materialistic view of regarding the Islamic doctrines of the 'RISING UP FROM THE GRAVES' and the Resurrection on mass scale on the Last Day as fantasies turns out to be most unwarranted. Because, our emergence from the mother's womb is our first KNOWN 'RISING UP FROM THE GRAVES' and 'RESURRECTION', and the existence of these phenomena tears into shreds the materialist insinuation and proves to the hilt the validity of the Islamic teaching.
5. Also, the pangs of birth, or, severe shakings and jerks, which precede our first known resurrection, form an illustration and evidence of the occurrence of the 'GREAT SHAKING' which, according to the Holy Qur' ān, shall take place on the Last Day when the womb of the Mother earth shall open under the impact of that 'GREAT SHAKING' as a prelude to Resurrection.

## Chapter II - Life After Death

IN BRIEF, the Islamic verities relating to death and beyond are not based on blind dogmas but on facts which already exist in human experience. For, what Islam teaches about the future exists already in the present, the only difference being that the scope and level of the phenomena of present experience are narrower and lower than the scope and level of future experience. Indeed, it is a case of repetition of phenomena, and no better and more solid ground for proof could be sought and found.

Viewing now the problem of life-after-death on the basis of the principle of Evolution: We might repeat what we have already said in different words. Every human being observes life evolving in this world from stage to stage.

For instance, we find that the human individual is a mere speck at the start, which gradually grows, changing its forms, until it becomes a full-fledged human baby and is born into this world. The baby starts on its evolutionary journey with new qualities emerging and developing at different stages of its growth. At the very beginning of its earthly life it is only a physical entity with only a rudimentary instinctive activity.

Later on, its senses are gradually activated and its sensations develop into meaningful sense-perceptions. After that the mental growth starts until the child, who had practically a clean slate so far as his mental activity was concerned, is transformed into an intellectual giant like Imam Ghazzālī عليه السلام with his mental processes becoming immensely complicated.

Soon after the commencement of the intellectual growth another quality also begins to take shape- the quality of Conscience. Then his moral ideas of good and bad lead him to a quest for a

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

personality who is Absolutely Good, i.e. God. This is the beginning of the spiritual growth and it is, so to say, the last to take place.

THIS IS ONE of the immediately-observable phenomenon of Evolution which falls into the ken of observation of even the least intelligent human being. When we enter the domain of scientific enquiry we find the same phenomenon being repeated on a world-scale. We are told that this world was first of all constituted of inorganic matter only.

Then there came a stage when a very rudimentary type of organic existence emerged. That rudimentary type was still just a lump of physical qualities, possessing only very vague sensations. After that the rudimentary type was succeeded by a type of living beings possessing more complicated physique and better developed senses.

This evolution of types and forms continued through the millenniums until the reptiles, the birds and the quadrupeds came to exist. They had highly developed physiquess, perfect senses and also a type of mental activity. At the last stage emerged man, enjoying all the good qualities of physique and acuteness of sense-perception, and also possessing in addition to them self-consciousness, creative thinking, moral consciousness and the quest for spiritual realities of life, including God Himself.

THIS IS THE rational story of Evolution. Islam accepts the common-sense point of view as well as the tele-finalist scientific theory of Evolution. But Islam goes beyond the point where scientific observation has to stop because of its natural limitations. It says that just as life has been evolving and the human being is the last and final product of this process of

## Chapter II - Life After Death

evolution, there is no ground for believing that evolution should stop at this point. It is logical as well as scientific to believe that it should continue.

Now, the continuation of evolution can mean nothing else than that those qualities which are attained by the human being last of all and which cannot find the fullest scope for their expression and evolution within the limitations of this life (which is dominated by the physical element), should form the basis for further evolution. Consequently, Islam says that death is only a crisis- only a transition from one stage of evolutionary existence of the human individual to another state.

The disintegration of the body takes place at the time of death because the human personality has now to soar into higher regions which are spiritual in their character and constitution. In the very nature of the case, it does not require those qualities which have become redundant. They were only the stepping stones for further stages of evolution and as such they had quite naturally to be left behind.

Heaven, according to Islam, is a spiritual world of unlimited evolution, while hell is a spiritual hospital where those who have sinned and have thus broken their wings, becoming incapable of pursuing the flight of spiritual evolution, are to be treated of their imperfections and deficiencies.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 12

# OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS SELF

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

ISLAM IS the religion of self-affirmation in contrast to the teaching of self-negation and self-annihilation propounded by certain philosophical systems and religions of the ancient world. The entire moral outlook of Islam is based on this doctrine. Islam aims at the development of the self and its ideal is the harmonious growth of human personality in all its aspects, namely physical, moral, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual. None of these aspects of human personality is to be sacrificed and none is to be exaggerated beyond proper limits. The ideal has to be kept in view that the human self or personality is an organic Whole and has the infallible right on us that we should continuously and persistently build it up and enrich it.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

*“You have the right of yourself against yourself”*

and the Holy Qur’ān has expressed the value of the individual human personality by saying:

مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ  
النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

## Chapter 12 - Obligations Towards Self

*“He who kills an individual except for murder or treason, it is as if he kills the entire human race; and he who preserves the life of an individual, it is as if he preserves the entire human race.”*

(Q.5:32)

The discussion as to whether the individual is supreme or the group is supreme has an importance all its own in moral and social philosophy. It would be beyond our scope to enter into that discussion here. But it might be pointed out that every group of human beings, and even the entire human race, is a collection of individuals, primarily and basically. From this point of view the moral health of the society would always depend on the moral health of the individuals who constitute it.

**THE OBLIGATIONS** towards self may now be given according to the classification of the different aspects of human personality:-

1. In the Physical domain, the basic obligation is the preservation of one's body in a healthy state. Islam has consequently forbidden the use of all goods and drinks which are unhealthy, e.g., pork and wine, and it has condemned suicide in the strongest terms.

The obligations in this category are not only negative but also positive, by which we mean that Islam has given a positive code of physical health which it is the obligation of every Muslim to follow.

2. In the intellectual domain, the obligations are:-
  - (a) Safe-guarding and preservation of the health of the mind;

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

### (b) Development of the mind.

The mind gets diseased through wrong thinking, through harbouring whims and false notions and through the cultivation of the habit of worrying uselessly about things. Islam gives us a code of action in which it guarantees that those who observe codes faithfully and cultivate the requisite outlook shall become immune to anxieties and worries. The Holy Qur'ān says:

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

*“Remember! Fear and grief do not touch the friends of God.”*

(Q.10:62)

Moreover, Islam has made the cultivation of knowledge and the pursuit of education an obligation on every Muslim man and woman.

In short, it is an obligation to follow the laws of Islam concerning mental health and intellectual development.

3. So far as the aesthetic aspect of human life is concerned, Islam is deeply alive to it. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ

*“God is beautiful and loves beauty”.*

(Muslim)

It is consequently the obligation of every Muslim to aspire for and cultivate beauty in every item of his life. In a word, a Muslim should be beautiful in thought, word and deed and should express in his life a refinement of taste and a mental approach towards all things conducive to the development of aesthetic

## Chapter 12 - Obligations Towards Self

consciousness.

An important point is to be noted here, however. Genuine aesthetic approach does not mean sensuousness. It is, in fact, a spiritual quality at one refined and sublime, and its function is to elevate man in the higher realisation of life and not to degrade him to the level of pure animality. Consequently Islam would not condone and uphold the aesthetic tone which finds its expression today in most cases in the non-Muslims creations of art.

4. The obligations in the moral sphere are many and varied, and they cover as a matter of fact the entire sweep of human life. Fundamentally, we might say that the moral obligation towards self is the cultivation and maintenance of absolute purity of conscience. This according to Islam can be attained only through the regulation of our actions in the light of the objective which Islam has laid down, namely, seeking pleasure of God through submission to His Will and the imitation of His Attributes.
5. Spiritual obligations enjoy a fundamental importance in Islam, because Islam gives primacy and supremacy to spirit over matter.

This is in sharp contrast to the trend of modern Western secular thought which denies the existence of the spirit (or, the soul) for all practical purposes. Even those modern thinkers who do not go so far as to say that the soul does not exist, interpret it in such a fashion as to render it almost meaningless.

**IN ISLAM**, the soul is something positive and real. It is the very foundation of human personality and the very basis of life. It is

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

that factor in human personality which governs and controls every aspect of human life. According to Islam, if the soul is healthy, the entire human personality will be healthy, and vice versa.

Most people experience difficulty in conceiving the soul and it is because of this that they either deny its existence outright or interpret it as an abstract principle having virtually no bearing on the day-to-day life. Consequently, they refuse to admit at least practically that the spiritual life, or, the spiritualisation of life, has any meaning whatsoever.

Scientifically speaking, the difficulty in the formation of the conception of the soul might be removed in the following manner.

According to modern physics, all matter, whatever its form, is originally and basically “vibrations of light”, and it is the particular direction in terms of permutation and combination of the electric particles, which go to constitute the original Light that gives us the various forms of matter, the various shapes of bodies and the various types of personality. The basic and the original Light might be conceived as a vast primordial nebula. It is the activation of a part of that original Light which gives an independent form and shape to the part. The scientists are unable to tell us how a certain part of light becomes activated.

\According to Islam, it is God's Command (amr) which does it, and the point at which activation takes place is the embodiment of the Soul. It forms a nucleus and a body evolves out of it on its foundations.

We have seen that the soul has primacy over the body, i.e., it is

## Chapter 12 - Obligations Towards Self

more important and more fundamental than the body. We all realise that there ought to be certain obligations towards the body. Quite naturally, there must be some obligations towards the soul also. Those obligations should doubtless be considered as of more fundamental importance than any other obligations towards one's personality.

**THE MAJOR** Obligations towards the body are: (1) to safeguard it against injuries and ailments; and (2) to ensure its growth and development through the cultivation of its physical powers. Similar obligations must be conceived towards the soul also.

We safeguard the body-the physical health-with the help of hygienic principles and medicines and we ensure the growth of the body by means of healthy foods and physical exercises. Unless we do so, it will be impossible to keep the body alive, not to speak of its growth and development. The same should be the case with the soul. We should safeguard its health by means of spiritual hygiene and spiritual medicines and we should sustain it, build it up and develop it by giving it spiritual food. And this is what Islam has provided in the fullest measure.

Islam has made it obligatory on every Muslim to pray five times a day. These five daily prayers are actually five daily spiritual feeds. The best-fed person takes physical diet at the most five times a day: bed-tea or coffee, breakfast in the morning, lunch at mid-day, tea or coffee or fruits in the afternoon and dinner at night. There is a parallel between this feeding of the body five times a day with the feeding of the soul five times a day in Islam.

**THE FIVE** daily obligatory prayers form the fundamental means of spiritual nourishment. The goal to be achieved is the cultivation of the ideal of God's constant presence, and the

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

method of this cultivation is to remember God on every possible occasion, punctuated with the climax of remembrance in the five obligatory prayers in institutional form.

Thus, when any Muslim begins any work, he should say “Bismillāh” (in the name of Allāh); when he comes across anything good or beautiful, he should say “Subhānallāh” (Glory be to God); when he finds anything happening, he should say “Mashā-Allāh” (as God willed it); when he promises to do anything, he should say “Inshā-Allāh” (if Gods wills it); so on and so forth. As a matter of fact, Islam has taught us prayers for every conceivable occasion in life.

We have so far discussed the problem of the nourishment and feeding of the soul. The problem of spiritual hygiene and medicine now remains. In this connection it may be pointed out that Islam has given elaborate Spiritual Materia Medica, but it is beyond the scope of our study to state it here. A reference to fasting, which is the fundamental spiritual medicine in Islam, would suffice.

Islam has made it obligatory on every adult and healthy Muslim to fast from dawn to sun-set regularly and un-interruptedly for one month - the month of Ramaḍān-every year. Islam has further taught that fasting does not imply merely starvation but it means primarily and basically a spiritual state of mind and body in which a Muslim should abstain from every type of immorality also in thought, word and deed.

It is, indeed, a spiritual training for gaining control over one's thoughts, passions and appetites. In this manner, fasting not only cleanses the body of physical impurities and many physical ailments but also purifies the soul of spiritual dross, gives it

## Chapter 12 - Obligations Towards Self

better resistance against the attacks of spiritual diseases and re-energizes it.

Joseph J. Nunan in his book "Islam and European Civilization" remarks:

*"In many respects it must be admitted that Mahomet wrought a vast and abiding reform - the rigid formulary of ablution, prayer and fasting - provides a discipline which it is not easy to replace even under a more exalted system of morals and theology"*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,

The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 13

# WHAT IS THE REAL HEAVEN According To Qur'ān?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

AT THE OUTSET it seems necessary to make a few remarks concerning the function of philosophy with regard to this problem. The problem is of a transcendental nature and directly pertains to our religious consciousness. That heaven is real and exists cannot be revealed to our senses, but should it for that reason be denied by philosophy? No philosophy must take its data from various forms of human consciousness - from the scientific consciousness, from the artistic consciousness, from the moral consciousness - so also from the religious consciousness. It is not the function of philosophy to question their facts because they alone are its data. Its function is rather "to grasp their elements conceptually and to combine them into a system."<sup>1</sup>

The life-after-death and hence heaven and hell are data given to us by religious consciousness. The business of philosophy is to understand them - to evaluate them.

My task at the present occasion is to present the Qur'ānic conception of heaven, for it is this conception which seems to me to be the most reasonable, but before doing so it seems necessary to give briefly the views of the Qur'ān regarding the various stages of human life. The following verses from that Book are highly instructive in this connection:-

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ، الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ  
 وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ، ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ  
 مَكِينٍ، ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا  
 الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ  
 فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

“(Those) who shall inherit the heaven, they shall abide therein,  
 “And certainly we created man of an extract of clay;  
 “And Allāh brought you forth from the earth as a growth;  
 “Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting place  
 “Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh;  
 then We made the lump of flesh bones; then We clothed the bones with  
 flesh; then We caused it to grow into another creation; so blessed be Allah,  
 the best of the creators”.

(Q. 23:10-14)

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ، ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ،  
 وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَائِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ

“Then after that you will most surely die. Then surely on the day of  
 resurrection you shall be raised. And certainly We made above you seven  
 ways; and never are We heedless of creation”.

(Q. 23:15-17)

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَتْهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَى  
 ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَادِرُونَ، فَأَنْشَأْنَا لَكُمْ بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ خَيْلٍ  
 وَأَعْنَبٍ لَّكُمْ فِيهَا فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

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*“And We send down water from the cloud according to a measure; then We cause it to settle in the earth, and most surely We are able to carry it away”.*

*“Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm-trees and grapes for you; you have in them many fruits and from them do ye eat.”*

(Q. 23:18-19)

These verses give us in brief the whole process of human evolution as also the part played by religion in human life. Man arises out of the earth; the earthly matter passes through several stages of evolution before it finds its sublimation in the human form. It takes the form of the life-germ which, though it is microscopic in size, is the repository of the physical, intellectual and moral features of man. The germ grows and becomes man. In a grown-up man it is the physical aspect which is more usually and more thoroughly realized, but the human frame is only a vehicle for the soul to develop itself. The soul has to evolve itself from the crude form of simple consciousness to a certain stage of spirituality. This evolution can be worked out only through the cultivation of our faculties.

The Qur'ān uses the word *Falāḥ* for this cultivation. *Falāḥ* literally means the furrowing out of the latent faculties. Thus the peasant who tills the land and brings to surface the innumerable treasures of the earth is called *fellaḥ* in Arabic. Man ought to act similarly. His soul possesses infinite potentialities of advancement. He has to till the field of the depths of his soul and bring out his latent faculties, but just as the ordinary peasant needs rain for his crop, so man too needs rain. That rain comes from God in the form of revelation and is given to humanity through the medium of prophets. Man should become a receptacle to this spiritual rain if he wishes to reap a good harvest. Without it the field of human soul would become sterile

## Chapter 13 -What is the Real Heaven according to Qur'an?

and subject to decay. This has been further pointed out in another verse:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ، فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ،  
قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ، وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

*“Consider the soul and Him who made it perfect, then breathed into it its sin and its piety. Happy indeed is he who purifies it and sorrow will indeed be his portion who corrupts it.”*

(Q. 91:7-10)

THUS the Qur'an regards man as an evolutionary being who has been created of the best fibre and possesses the highest capacities of making spiritual progress. In fact the very first attribute of God mentioned in the opening verse of the first chapter of the Holy Qur'an is Rabb, i.e. He who leads his creatures through one stage after another until they attain perfection.

Our present life is a preparation. It is necessary to work out our faculties and bring them up to a certain stage of evolution in our earthly sojourn. Then alone shall we be fit for progress in the life after death.

Our very action in this life has a hereafter. It creates a permanent impression on the soul. When the soul departs from the body, it leaves this body for good. The great Muslim philosopher and divine Shāh Walīullāh رحمته الله, calls it Nusma (in his book - Hujjatullāh-il-Baligha). This Nusma is perhaps what is spoken of by Sir Oliver Lodge as ectoplasm. He says:

*“Exudation of a strange white evanescent dough-like substance, which has been photographed by scientific*

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

enquirers in different stages of evolution, and which shapes itself into parts or whole of the body, beginning in a putty-like mould, and ending in a semblance. This is the spiritual body spoken of by St. Paul, a body that contained the Spirit and yet was distinct from the ordinary body.”<sup>2</sup>

Death is thus not annihilation but a gateway for entering into a new life- a life of unlimited progress, but we can enter that life only if we have made ourselves fit for it. This may be illustrated by an example. Suppose we take down two seeds from a tree- one ripe, the other immature. We sow both under similar conditions but we do not get any plant from the immature seed although it commenced its life with the same potentialities as the ripe one. Similarly if we have not attained a certain stage of spiritual development in our earthly life, we cannot enter the heavenly life. Now after departing from the physical body, the soul does not enter its life of heaven, or hell, at once. It remains suspended in the ethereal world called Barzakh in Islam. Here its faculties remain in abeyance though intact and this state will continue till the hour of resurrection when it will be sent to either heaven or hell, but the impressions which it has acquired on earth through its actions come to the surface. Character being the crystallization of one's thoughts “the thoughts that he or she was thinking in this world take their shape- virtuous thoughts take happy shapes and wicked thoughts take shapes of calamities according to what he believed in this world.”<sup>3</sup>

The Qur’ān declares that a day will come when the solar system will be destroyed which will result in ending the present conditions of life totally. God will then bring into existence new heavens and a new earth as the Qur’ān says:

يَوْمَ تَبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَوَاتُ  
وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

*“On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth, and the heavens (as well), and they shall come before Allāh, The One, the Supreme.”*

(Q. 14:48)

This new world will have an affinity with the body of the soul which will be different from the one that it had on earth. This new body has been described in the Qur'an as “new creation”. It has been further stated to take the colour of our actions on earth. The Qur'an says:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ نَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ يُنَبِّئُكُمْ  
إِذَا مُرِّقْتُمْ كُلَّ مُمْرِقٍ إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

*The Unbelievers say (in ridicule): "Shall we point out to you a man that will tell you, when ye are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that ye shall (then be raised) in a New Creation?"*

(Q. 34:7)

يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌُ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌُ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ  
أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ،  
وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْيَضتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ ففِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

*“(Some) faces shall turn white and (some) faces shall turn black; then as to those whose faces shall turn black (it will be said): Did you disbelieve after believing? Taste therefore the chastisement because you disbelieved. And as to those whose faces turn white they shall be in Allāh's mercy; in it they shall abide.”*

(Q. 3:105-106)

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

Now the souls which are suffering from spiritual diseases and do not come up to a certain standard will be sent to a spiritual hospital called hell. The Qur'ān has to say much on the subject but to go into details would be a long digression. Suffice it to say that hell will be one of the stages in the process of evolution for the soul that has not utilized the opportunities provided to it in its earthly sojourn and has stunted its faculties and got diseased and corrupted. After cure it shall come out of that state and shall start on its evolutionary journey. Imam Bukhāri رحمته الله records a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to the effect:

“When the sinners shall have attained **tahdhīb** (politeness, good manners, refinement) and **tanqiyah** (purification), they will be allowed to enter heaven.”

The words **tahdhīb** and **tanqiyah** are highly meaningful. **Tahdhīb** means the cutting off of the branches of a tree so that the tree may enjoy a more luxuriant growth; and **tanqiyah** means the separating of the corrupt and the corruptible parts from a thing in order to purify it completely.

HAVING briefly viewed the nature of hell, let us come to the heavenly life. The souls which attain the required standard of perfection will start on their evolutionary journey anew in the next world. They will carry impressions of their actions done on earth. These impressions will, because of the rightness of the actions, enclothe the soul in a garb of undefinable happiness—“undefinable”, because it will be of a wholly different character from earthly happiness. In our present state of finite and chained existence we cannot realize its reality. Our words have been invented to express things primarily of the physical nature. They cannot convey ideas of transcendental verities. These can be described only allegorically as the Qur'ān does. Ibn Jābīr رحمته الله says:

## Chapter 13 -What is the Real Heaven according to Qur'an?

“Whatever is in the heaven has no resemblance with anything of this world except in name.”

The Qur'an Says:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

*“No soul knows what is in store for them of the joys (that which will refresh the eyes) as the reward of their actions.”*

(Q. 32:17)

According to the ḥadīth (Bukhāri) God has provided for the righteous that which:

مَا لَأَعْيُنٌ رَأَتْ، وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ ،  
وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَيَّ قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ

*“No eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, nor hath it ever occurred to the mind of man.”*

(Bukhāri)

Thus the expressions descriptive of the heaven which occur in the Qur'an are allegorical, e.g. gardens, rivulets, costly garments, delicious fruits, etc. To illustrate this point further, I may cite an incident of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ life. A pious lady saw a river in a dream and she somehow or the other came to think that it pertained to one of the deceased Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ named Uthmān bin Madh'un ﷺ. She related her dream to the Holy Prophet ﷺ for explanation. He said: “It (i.e., the river), is his noble actions flowing for him (or for his benefit)”.

I would now give certain verses of the Holy Qur'an which depict the heavenly life, but would like to put them under nine different

headings for the sake of clarity.

1. The Qur'an speaks of the heavenly life as the eternal one. It says:

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ  
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا

“...and whoever believes in Allāh and does good deeds, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein forever.”

(Q. 65:11)

2. That life will be free of all toil: of hunger and thirst and other physical needs. The Qur'an says:

إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَى ، وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَصْحَىٰ

“Surely it is (ordained) for you that you shall not be hungry therein, nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein, nor shall you feel the heat of the sun.”

(Q. 20:118-119)

جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ  
هُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ كَذَلِكَ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ

“The gardens of perpetuity, they shall enter them, rivers flowing beneath them: they shall have in them what they please. Thus Allāh rewards those who guard (against evil).”

(Q. 16: 31)

3. It will be free of evil thoughts and propensities. The Qur'an says:

Chapter 13 -What is the Real Heaven according to Qur'an?

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا إِلَّا سَلَامًا

“They shall not hear therein vain discourse, but only ‘Peace’.”

(Q. 19:62)

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ غَلٍّ

“And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their hearts.”

(Q. 7: 43)

4. It will be a state of supreme peace for the soul. The Qur'an says:

هُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ

“They shall have the Abode of Peace with their Lord...”

(Q. 6:128)

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا، إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا

“They shall not hear therein vain or sinful discourse except the word peace, peace.”

(Q. 56:25-26)

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ

“Surely those who guard (against evil) shall be in a place of security...”

(Q. 44:51)

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْيَضَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِى رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

“And as to those whose faces turn bright (or white) they shall be in Allāh's mercy; in it they shall abide.”

(Q. 3:107)

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

5. The Heaven will be the Abode of Light. The Qur'an says:-

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ

*“On that day you will see the faithful men and the faithful women-their light going before them and on their right hand.....”*

(Q. 57:12)

6. In it a halo of holiness will encircle the souls. The Qur'an says:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ  
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً

*“Whoever does good whether male or female and is a believer, we will most certainly bestow upon him a pure life...”*

(Q. 16:97)

وَهُدُوا إِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَهُدُوا إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْحَمِيدِ

*“And they will be guided to pure (thoughts and) words and they will be guided into the path of (Allah) the Praised One.”*

(Q. 22:24)

وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا  
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ

*“He will cause you to enter ..... the Abode of Purity ....”*

(Q. 61:12)

لِّلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا  
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ

“For those who guard (against evil) are.... pure mates.... “  
(Q. 3:15)

وَسَقَنَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا

“... and their Lord shall make them drink a pure drink.”  
(Q. 76:21)

7. In the glorious state of being encircled by Light, Peace, Mercy and Holiness of God, the souls shall sing hymns in praise of their Lord. The Qur'an says:

دَعْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّاتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ  
وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Their utterance in it shall be: Glory to Thee. O Allāh! And their greeting in it shall be: Peace; and they will end by saying: Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of all the worlds.”

(Q. 10:10)

8. In the heavenly state the souls will be blessed with the goodly pleasure (ridwān) of Allāh. The Qur'an says:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ، أَرْجَعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَّةً

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“O soul that art pacified! Return to thy Lord well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him).”

(Q. 89:27-28)

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا  
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّةٍ عِدْنَ  
وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

“Allah has promised to the believing men and the believing women gardens, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; and best of all is Allah's goodly pleasure- that is the grand achievement.”

(Q. 9:72)

9. The climax of the blessings of the heaven will be reached in the vision of Allāh and in living in His Holy Presence. The Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّةٍ وَنَهْرٍ ،  
فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

“Surely those who guard (against evil) shall be in gardens and amplitude, In the Seat of Truth, before (or with) the most Powerful Lord.”

(Q. 54:54-55)

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ ، إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

“(Some) faces on that day shall be bright, looking to their Lord.”

(Q. 75:22-23)

## Chapter 13 -What is the Real Heaven according to Qur'an?

تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ

*"Their salutation on the day that they meet Him shall be Peace."*

(Q. 33:44)

سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِّن رَّبِّ رَحِيمٍ

*"Peace: a word from the Merciful Lord."*

(Q. 36:58)

But when the description of the heavenly life has been given, I would emphasize a point again. This description is not to portray the really real heaven. The Holy Prophet ﷺ says: "Leave that which you know of it (i.e. that form which make in your mind)". With regard to the real nature of heaven, I would ultimately refer to the meaning of the word "Jannat" which has been generally used in the Qur'an to denote heaven. In the first place, Jannat means something concealed from the naked eye; in the second place it means rank and luxuriant growth. Thus the heavenly life, according to the Qur'an, is a life hidden from the eyes which consists in the unfolding of the latent faculties of the soul and its complete growth. Verily, it is a life of unlimited progress as the Qur'an says:

إِنَّ هَذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهُ مِنْ نَفَادٍ

*"Most surely this is our provision (or sustenance): it shall never come to an end."*

(Q. 38:54)

In the end I beg to submit that this conception of heaven seems to satisfy all what the heart and the intellect requires of heaven.

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There is no element in it which conflicts with these yearnings.

It satisfies my scientific consciousness because it affirms the existence and validity of law in that life. It satisfies my artistic consciousness because Heaven is a world of Beauty and Grace.

It satisfies my moral consciousness because it is the abode where righteousness is combined with happiness and perpetual progress.

It satisfies my religious consciousness because it affirms the realization of the highest yearning of my soul - the Vision of and proximity to my Lord.

It fulfils the requirements of the conception of a transcendental condition and is best fitted for our acceptance.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 14

# PHYSICAL ASCENSION OF PROPHET MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

## THROUGH OUTER SPACE TO THE HEAVENS AND BEYOND ON THE NIGHT OF MI'RĀJ

The Holy Qur'ān says:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ  
الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

*“GLORY to (God) who did take His servant for a journey by night from  
the Sacred Mosque (Makkah) to the Farthest Mosque (Jerusalem),  
whose precincts We did bless, in order that We might show him some of  
Our Signs: for He [Allāh] is the One Who hears and sees (all things)”*

(Q. 17:1)

The journey by night is an allusion to the incident of Mi'rāj - the physical ascension of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to the heavens through outer space and beyond the heavens, in the presence of God Almighty. The fact of human journey through space is evidenced in two instances: the first was the instance of the physical Ascension of Ḥadīrat 'Īsa (Jesus Christ, ﷺ) to be protected from his persecutors; the second instance being the physical Ascension of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, far beyond the limits where time and space lose their significance, for the traditions (Ḥadīths) say that when the Holy Prophet

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Muḥammad ﷺ returned home from Mi'rāj his bed was still warm with the warmth of his body.

### NON-BELIEVERS MOCK EVENT OF MI'RĀJ

The Mi'rāj is one of the most outstanding signs of the Prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. It was a clear sign for the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well as a sign for those who live in this era of scientific advancement. The truth of Mi'rāj could neither be denied today.

The non-believers of Mecca had complete faith in the honesty and truthfulness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ but they could not sever their emotional attachment with their three hundred and sixty petty gods and goddesses, nor could they prevail upon themselves to believe in only one God. Hence, as they could not blame the Prophet as being a liar, they began to condemn him as a crazy or deluded person. When they knew that the Holy Prophet ﷺ claimed to have visited the Mosque of Jerusalem and then ascended to the heavens, and came back home, all within one single night, they knew that they could then easily prove that he was either crazy or deluded.

How was it possible for a mortal to travel even up to the Mosque of Jerusalem and return home within the short span of a night? So they gathered around him to disprove his claim. A good many among the Sheiks of Quraish had traveled to Jerusalem together with the trading caravans. They had seen the Holy Mosque of Jerusalem with complete detail so they began to question the Holy Prophet ﷺ about these details, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ had seen the Mosque at Jerusalem only once during his journey of the Mi'rāj and he had not attached any importance to studying the details of the structure. He was naturally perturbed, but God

would not let His servant down. He presented to the Holy Prophet ﷺ a model of the Jerusalem Mosque in a vision and so he was enabled to describe to the assembly every minute detail relating to the structure of the Jerusalem Mosque.

The non-believers were thus defeated in their attempt to disprove the journey to Jerusalem of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but as they were diehard non-believers, instead of being convinced, they began to condemn the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a Sorcerer!

#### ḤAḌRAT ABU BAKR ﷺ QUESTIONED

When Abu Bakr ﷺ was asked whether he thought it possible for a person to travel to Jerusalem and return home within one single night, he replied that he believed in matters which were of a more astounding nature: he believed in the fact that the revelation came daily to the Holy Prophet ﷺ from beyond the heavens. This firmness of faith earned Abu Bakr ﷺ the title of Al-Ṣiddīq – the Most truthful, from the Prophet ﷺ.

#### MODERN SPACE TRAVEL AND MI'RĀJ

The current decade may be named the Inter-planetary decade because during this decade man has been able to send his space-ships to neighbouring planets, but only a few years back it was not possible to convince a rationally minded person that man would soon be able to travel through space. It involved several obstacles, including the earth's gravitational pull, the emptiness of space, the hazard of the meteorites etc, capable of traveling through space.

How was it possible for such rationally minded persons to believe that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had journeyed through space

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physically. But thanks to the current inter-planetary Decade that the clouds of doubt are clearing away: a rationally minded person is now able to think, no, he is sure of the possibilities of traveling to other planets through space. With regard to the journey to the surrounding solar systems, the vastness of distance constitutes the only obstacle which can be overcome by using the swiftest means of transport and which means of transport can be swifter than a vehicle electronically propelled, traveling at the speed of light or lightning? In this respect, it is most significant that the means of transport which was provided to the Holy Prophet ﷺ on the occasion of Mi'rāj was "Burāq".

The word "Burāq" is derived from 'Barq', which means lightning! It is described in the books of ḥadīth as a quadruped taller than an ass and shorter than a mule in stature, which covered in each step the whole distance the human eye is capable of sweeping through.

Who was it who told an unlettered person (named Muḥammad) who lived among the uncultured savages of Arabia fourteen centuries ago that only this sort of a vehicle travelling at the speed of lightning and propelled by electricity, was fit for inter-planetary transport?

As a matter of fact the incident of Mi'rāj is one of the greatest and everlasting miracles of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. If viewed from a proper angle, it is enough to dispel every doubt from the minds of the sceptics with regard to the truth of Islam.

### MUSLIM NEGLECT

A jewel in the possession of a beggar goes unnoticed because only the trained eye of a jeweler can detect it. So does Islam go

unnoticed by non-Muslims because it is the religion professed by a backward and under-developed people, Some of them even have the audacity to blame Islam for the backwardness of Muslims. In fact it is Muslims who are to be blamed for defaming Islam. Islam has presented to Muslims every principle responsible for their spiritual and material advancement, but Muslims have obstinately refused to act according to those principles.

Before the dawn of the industrial age no one was able to realise the full worth of iron and steel. Gold was of course a precious metal. The Holy Qur'ān turned the attention of Muslims towards the importance of Iron. A whole chapter of the Holy Qur'ān is captioned "Al ḥadīd", which means: "The iron". A verse in the chapter says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ

*"And we poured down iron which has great striking power and is useful to men in many ways"*

(Q. 57: 25)

But the industrial age dawned in the West among the non-Muslim nations with iron giving them thereby strength and wealth. The world of Islam thus depends today on the West in matters relating to heavy industry.

Similarly, the Muslims were the first people who were given, by their religion, the idea of inter-planetary transport through the incident of Mi'rāj. Besides, the following verses of the Holy Qur'ān revealed over fourteen centuries ago give an idea of the possibility of penetrating through the orbits of the planets:

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

يَمَعَشَرَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنْ أَسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَنِ

*“O ye assembly of Jinns and men! If it be that ye can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth, pass ye; not without authority (power) shall ye be able to pass.”*

(Q. 55:33)

### WHITHER MUSLIMS

But the space age dawned in the West, and the Muslim nations are nowhere to be seen around. The Russian and the American Scientists are trying their best to outstrip each other in the race of inter-planetary exploration. It is commonly believed that space science can be used as a more deadly weapon than the very nuclear weapons.

Today we are far behind the West in material progress, but if Japan could build herself within fifty years and China could build herself within twenty years and be equal to the West, why can we not build ourselves within a shorter period, guided as we are by the teachings of Islam?

Let us, therefore, take our guidance from the message of Islam, build our character as true Muslims and quicken our pace of progress until we attain our rightful place as the Vice-gerents of God on earth.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,

The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 15

# SHAHRU RAMAḌĀN AND ZAKĀT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

### The Significance Of Ramaḍān and 'Eid

Nearly fourteen centuries have elapsed since the occurrence of the greatest event in the history of mankind - namely, the commencement of the revelation of the Holy Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍān. The Holy book came carrying in its pages the writ of the greatest and the noblest revolution of human history and the inauguration of a new era wherein the progeny of Adam was to realise all the potentialities of its greatness. Fed and nourished by continuous guidance from its Maker and having completed a long preparatory march through the stormy stretch of time, mankind had reached its stage of maturity, and consequently, enveloped although it was in the darkness of a mighty crisis, its soul was crying for a perfect and final Divine Dispensation to guide it in its onward journey.

That dispensation and that Guidance came in the form of the Holy Qur'ān and in the sacred month of Ramaḍān, as we find clearly stated in God's word:

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شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ  
مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ  
وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ  
يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا  
الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

*“The month of Ramaḍān in which was revealed the Qur’ān, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the criterion (of right and wrong). So every one of you who is present during the month, should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. Allāh intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you into difficulties. He wants you to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you: and perchance ye shall be grateful.”*

(Q 2:185)

Thus Ramaḍān comes every year to every Muslim home throughout the world as the commemoration of the new era of Blessings which the Holy Qur'ān ushered, and this commemoration consists in a twofold activity according to the above verse, Viz.(1) Self discipline and (2) Offering Thanks to God.

As regards Self-Discipline, Islam believes in and aims at all disciplines of the self, i.e. physical, mental, moral, aesthetic and spiritual. Consequently, it blends them with perfect harmony and equilibrium in its scheme of fasting and prayer which operates throughout the month of Ramaḍān. Glorification of God and seeking Divine Blessings through it are also

comprehended by that scheme. They however, form the special feature of a day especially set aside for that purpose – the day of 'Eid-ul- Fiṭr'.

The 'Eid-ul-Fiṭr' is thus a purely spiritual festival. Physical rejoicing does of course form part of it, and that solely because Islam does not believe in the separation of the physical and the spiritual. But the all-important fact should not be lost sight of that the keynote of this festival is piety. Coming in the wake of a month of rigorous discipline, which is meant to re-equip the human soul. The day of 'Eid-ul- Fiṭr' can only be the day of the formation of fresh determination for the conquest of vice and the establishment of the reign of virtue within one's own self and in the world at large. It is a goal and an ideal for the achievement of which the Holy Qur'ān was revealed, thus becoming, in the final analysis, the first important day of what might be called the Qur' ānic Year.

All thanks and praises belongs to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

### Zakāt

Some 'Ulamā feel that you cannot give zakāt money for a Madrassa building. However there are others who say that the item of zakāt mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān is “fī sabīl lillāh” – in the way of God”. In this connection our general 'Ulamā say that on the basis of older books or thought, the conditions that existed were different due to the fact that the Muslims were in the rule (the major power) in the world and were wealthy and prosperous, not as the conditions are now. At that time “fī-sabīl lillāh” was interpreted as supplying arms to the Muslim soldiers when they went for Jihād, or providing money to their families (those in the army). This is in connection with the defense of

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Islam and thus this money (Zakāt) can be spent for the defense of Islam.

Now that this Jihād has not been made possible and Islam is to be defended on other grounds – in a community like this where there is no Muslim government, to look after the Islamic education of our children – and our Īmān and Islam has become quite weak, with so many short comings in so many people. Thus the view of this school of thought is that under the item of “fī sabīl lillāh”, after the needy and the destitute and the widows and the orphans, have been looked after properly and there is an amount in the community chest which is saved and the cause for the defense of Islam in the form of building Madrasas for teaching or even publishing books on Islam etc., zakāt can be spent on this task, under the heading of “fi-sabil-lillāh”.

There is a school of thought in this 20<sup>th</sup> Century proposing that the surplus in the zakat fund, can be invested in order that the fund can grow and this cause can be served better. In this regard again we take sanction from the holy Qur'ān. The Qur'ān has given the sanction about the property of the orphan. That the guardian can invest that wealth in some business in order to help and benefit those orphans. In this connection If the guardian is honest in his endeavour, as the guardian. Regarding the minority view you may give 1/8<sup>th</sup> of zakāt for this purposes “fī sabīl lillāh.”

Because the money held in trust for the orphans by their guardian can be invested in business in order to benefit those orphans. Similarly surplus money (zakāt) due at the end of the year, for the benefit of the poor, that money can also be invested. It would remain the property of the would be beneficiaries.

Thus zakāt money may also be used to pay for school fees, books,

clothes to go to school in, for that person is poor. To provide for education is one of the highest virtues in Islam.

### Life insurance policy.

According to the law it is the duty of the Islamic state to insure the life of every Muslim. Islam was the first to give the social scheme to the world and established the social welfare department and social insurance tax etc. So if that social insurance is there already, it would be ḥarām for any Muslim to take out any insurance policy.

But under non Islamic rule without any form of security from any quarter, then in order to face this big evil of insecurity a Muslim under such conditions can take out life insurance policy.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 16

# THE SUNNAH - THE CHALLENGE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

Almighty Allāh says in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“(We sent them) with Clear Signs and Scriptures and We have sent down unto thee (also) the Message; that thou may explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought”.

(Q. 16:44)

[*Litubayyina linnaasi maa nuzzila ilayhim*] The Holy Prophet ﷺ has been given this mission, that is, “to expound what was revealed for them” in the Holy Qur'ān.

In the 1st century after Hijra not much writing took place as the priority was the consolidation of the ummah which spread far and wide. The period of writing in earnest started in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AH and blossomed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH. That is why the majority of works of Islam dates from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH. Then different types of mischief started in the form of various writings towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AH and especially in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH.

Imām Al Bukhāri رحمته الله challenged the mischievous writers and he did an excellent job regarding those who forged the Sayings of

the Prophet ﷺ. There were a very large number of so-called sayings of the Prophet ﷺ that appeared on the scene. This factory of manufacturers of false Aḥādīth has been with the wise amongst the Jewish people. They played a major part in creating mischief in various fields.

So the Jews at that time opposed Islam at the very beginning which resulted in their expulsion from the suburbs of Medina al Munawwarah. This happened after their many violations of treaties and nefarious activities. Thus they could not bring any changes to the Holy Qur'ān for the Qur'ān was given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ as we have it now. The Qur'ān has been memorized by many Ṣaḥābah ؓ during the life time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and it is in the form of a compendium, arranged in the same manner as we have it now. So it was not possible for them to make any changes in the Qur'ān as changes were made in the Christian and Jewish scriptures. But what they did was that they took up the second issue, the Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They started to forge Aḥādīth [sayings of the Prophet ﷺ] and according to Imām Bukhārī ؒ these amounted over 100 000. The entire Muslim world was flooded with those false Aḥādīth.

Another thing that happened was that vast numbers of people joined Islam. Their entry was not so much through missionary work; but more from their own free will. When communities entered into the fold of Islam, their priests also joined them. Among them were mostly Christians, magians and Buddhists from Afghanistan, Central Asia and so on. Thus some of them brought into the fold of Islam their old notions and types of beliefs. The Muslims that were there at the time did their best to educate new reverts to Islam about the teachings of Islam, but the task was too great, too immense and was therefore not done properly and completely. As a consequence we find that even up

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till today the Jewish folk lore mentioned in some of our commentaries of the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth etc. Books were written by some of our 'Ulamā, especially those who were not very cautious in connection with research. Those books of this century and even now (1970) contain lots of material which are of Jewish origin. These materials are not in keeping with what Islam really teaches. So in this state of affairs when the work of writing have not been undertaken by Muslims on a large scale, stories and Aḥādīth were being forged and different stories came with the priests when they entered the fold of Islam.

Thus we have that different wrong notions came to hold their sway in the Muslim community. It is a fact that if you ask any of the 'Ulamā or muftis that are here, they will tell you that Islam uphold slavery and Islam upholds concubinage. And they will swear by it and say that anybody that says the opposite or denies this is outside the fold of Islam. But, as matters stand, the only book that can be regarded as 100% authentic and correct is the Holy Qur'ān.

The books of Aḥādīth although they contain plenty of valuable material owing to the efforts of such a great man as Imām Al Bukhārī رحمته الله, they are not of the some value as that of the Qur'ān itself. Then again if something has been stated clearly in the Holy Qur'ān, and there is anything to be found in any book of ḥadīth which contradicts it, then the law for all time is that the Qur'ānic stand point will be accepted and not that of the ḥadīth.

Now when you read the Qur'ān you will find that the Qur'ān has laid it down clearly that one of the missions of the Holy Qur'ān is to abolish slavery. It made it an obligation of the Muslim state to set aside a portion of its income for launching a world wide scheme whereby slavery could be abolished. The emancipation

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[setting free] of slaves has been mentioned in the Qur'ān as the highest social virtue. The Qur'ān says:

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ، فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ

*“What is the most difficult or highest form of virtue?” it says “The emancipation of slaves” [the abolition of this institution].*

(Q. 90:12-13)

With regards to concubinage, the Qur'ān is absolute clear that any extra-marital relations of any type is clearly forbidden. The only thing Islam sanctioned is marriage as a social contract between two free adult persons, who must be sane to undertake this obligation. This institution of marriage, which is primarily spiritual, shall be undertaken with due consideration to all the implications regarding married life. Beyond this the Qur'ān did not mentioned any other type of relationship like concubinage. This has been totally ruled out by the Qur'ān and there cannot be the slightest indication where the Qur'ān has sanctioned it in any way.

But there are Aḥādīth where this has been sanctioned and there are stories about the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which casts a blemish on the personality of the Prophet ﷺ. E.g. In one of the earlier biographical sketches of the Prophet ﷺ written by Wāqidi. This person has been considered by our muḥaddithīn as one of the biggest liars that ever lived. But his book has been quoted by so many of our 'Ulamā and I fail to understand why? And this issue has provided a means to the orientalist and the enemies of Islam of insulting the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Even in the Ṣaḥīḥ-al-Sitta, in the six books of Aḥādīth, some sayings are mentioned that puts a slur on the personality of the

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Holy Prophet ﷺ and on Islam. And those who do not possess a proper knowledge of Islam, our common run of the mill of 'Ulamā and the masses, to them the Ṣaḥīḥ-al-Sitta is as good as the word of God. Anything said there in the six books of the authentic ḥadīth is accepted as valid and must be followed. This, I think has created a very big mischief actually.

Consequently Maria Qibṭiyyah ؓ was married to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and there was absolutely no question of any concubine in the household of the Prophet ﷺ or any of the Ṣaḥābah. Concubinage has been clearly and explicitly condemned in the Holy Qur'ān. Therefore, this plays into the hands of the enemies of Islam.

Thus our 'Ulamā for the past 500 years or so have been doing this. You know, when I speak in such strong terms about the 'Ulamā of this age, it is not that I am not one of them, but the thing is that Muslims do not know what pathways Islam have been coming through all these centuries.

To take this issue on Aḥādīth further, somebody posed the question:

We are told that Moulāna Anwar Shāh Saheb of Deoband is one of the greatest theologians of this century. In his book Mukte Anwar he stated that there are more than 100 errors in Bukhāri Sharif. Is this the case?

### Maulana's Reply:

He is correct. He was one of the most eminent scholars of Aḥādīth of this century and he was one of the

personalities whom I have a great love and respect for. In the field of Aḥādīth he was a great man.

The issue of correction or errors was the question posed by these great Imāms themselves. The great contribution of Imām Al Bukhāri رحمته الله is an invaluable contribution, for at that time there was no proper compendium about Aḥādīth. There were only a few small manuscripts on the sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. So the greatest contribution of Imām Al Bukhāri رحمته الله was to sift all those false Aḥādīth. This task was completed by Imām Bukhāri رحمته الله approximately 80%. That itself is a very great contribution. And he gave us those canons and principles of classifications of Aḥādīth. On those principles he evaluated the Aḥādīth. His life term was limited as we know and he worked day and night on this noble task.

His first great task was to collect all Aḥādīth, those forged and those that are true. Secondly, to formulate principles of this science which were not there before. Then the 3<sup>rd</sup> task was to evaluate all Aḥādīth he collected and ultimately classify each. He carried on his tests with his evaluation system of principles within his limited life span. He knew that he was going to pass away and he tried to complete his work as best as he could. He was an honest man and gave that material at that time of his death, including the method applied and left it to posterity – those who would come afterwards. Other muḥaddithīn came on the scene and they also did an excellent job.

But in the meantime the great mischief has been done due to the huge influx of converts to Islam. Especially converts without any plan. Of course many teachers were made available to teach converts but there were not enough teachers of the best quality available to deal with this tremendous task of teaching.

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Consequently that little confusion that prevailed caused this issue of fabricated Aḥādīth to remain up to this time. There are in Ṣaḥīḥ-al-Sittah, Aḥādīth which should not be included but should rather have been revoked. But, during the past 500 – 600 years the majority of Muslim 'Ulamā's role has been that of copying. The original 'Ulamā had the spirit of ijtihād, of discrimination and creative work. After that it was as if a seal of finality was put on this work of those great muḥaddithīn, of course with good intensions and good will. That attitude gave us benefits, but our eminent 'Ulamā have not done that which they should have done. It is one example in this century, Moulana Anwar Shāh رحمته الله and then after him there have been some 'Ulamā in Egypt and Syria who have carried on this work of verification of certain questionable Aḥādīth. But this work has not yet been finalised.

When a ḥadith is evaluated, the first point in connection with this ḥadith is that the chain of reporters should be a continuous one. The second one is that all those who are members of that chain, their character and integrity should be of the highest category, to the extent that it would not have been possible for them to speak a lie. They must also have been persons of the highest intellect. It should not have been possible for them to have misunderstood anything they might have heard, and they must have had proper wisdom. In this manner it was taken and recorded.

However there is one very important point which later muḥaddith got and which is being emphasised now in this 20<sup>th</sup> century, after this great work of Maulana Anwar Shāh Saheb رحمته الله. Now, the first touch stone of the Aḥādīth is that it should not contradict in spirit or in letter anything which is there in the Qur'ān. It should be in total conformity with Qur'ān. It should be

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a sort of explanation of the Qur'ānic text. Because, according to the Qur'ān, Almighty Allāh says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has been given this mission, that is, “to expound what was revealed for them”

(Q. 16:44)

So, naturally, his exposition is “outside” the Qur'ān, which is known as Ḥadīth.

Thus, this work of verifying those Aḥādīth which should be revoked is the work of a team of the highest category of 'Ulamā who are specialists in this field. It is not the job of one person alone. The works of those muḥaddithīn, like Imām Bukhārī, Imām Muslim, Imām Mālik, Imām Tirmidhī, Abu Dāwūd and Imām Nasā'ī رضي الله عنه are eminently acceptable but not at the same level as the Holy Qur'ān which was given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ as we have it now. But there should be an eminent Council of the best 'Ulamā who are experts in the science of ḥadīth and Qur'ān, who should take it up. Even those Aḥādīth, that are classified weak, if it needs to be omitted, it should be done, but with the consent of the 'Ulamā. And as long as this does not take place, we should stick basically as we have been commanded to the Qur'ān as the Book of Guidance, and all those Aḥādīth which are explanatory very directly of the Qur'ān.

To leave out perhaps those Aḥādīth which are mutashābir, which may lead to some sort of confusion for the time being and leave it to the experts. We will not lose anything because of that.

The Qur'ān has revealed about itself that it is:

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تَبَيَّنَا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

*“It is a complete guidance in every problem.”*

(Q. 16:89)

Then in the Aḥādīth regarding the life and character of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, which is the Sunnah – we, the Ahle Sunnah wal Jama'ah and our basis is the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Anything which goes out of this scope, and found in a ḥadīth, that should be subjected to scrutiny. And any common Muslim should refrain from saying anything up to the time that the experts comment about that ḥadīth, **because this is a very serious issue.**

Thus it is clear that there are a number of false notions among Muslims e.g. about Ummul-mu'minīna 'A'īsha al-Ṣiddīqah ﷺ. There is a story that has come through all these centuries that she was 8 years old when she was married to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However, my research in that field has proved conclusively that she was 18 years old and not 8 years old. So, some scholars had to investigate and research the issue and I was one of them. We came to this conclusion that it is absolutely false to say she was 8 years old at the time of marriage to the Prophet ﷺ.

In the Ḥadīth as sitta – even if we may feel that there are a few Aḥādīth that may not be acceptable – because there are Aḥādīth of various categories like “muttafaqun 'alay - agreed by all” or ḥasan – “it is good” – gharīb – rare or ḍa'īf, - weak. Those muḥaddithīn were honest, therefore the ḥadīth as sitta is a most valuable treasure for us to understand the Qur'ān and Sunnah. – This is Islam. Thus it will be impossible for us in anytime of our history to cast away the books of Aḥādīth, not at all! They will remain the source of Islamic guidance.

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The only question that can emerge is whether a particular ḥadīth that is there which does not agree with the principles and norms that are given in the Holy Qur'ān, should be revoked or not. That should be left to the eminent experts of Qur'ān and ḥadīth. As I said that 98% of Aḥādīth in the Ṣaḥīḥ-al-Bukhāri are such that they cannot be challenged. Imam Bukhāri (r) Imam Muslim رحمته الله Abū Dawūd رحمته الله Tirmidhī رحمته الله they have the entire Muslim world under deep gratitude for the enormous and valuable work which they did.

The Aḥādīth as we have it now in the Ṣaḥīḥ-al-Sitta, can be analysed by only the most eminent scholars of ḥadīth who are called muḥaddithīn. Not even the ordinary 'Ulamā have that right.

### **We now come to the issue of Abrogation [mansūkh] [abrogate – to repeal, to annul]**

There is a sort of belief that certain verses of the Qur'ān abrogate other verses. I sometimes call it the aqīda of nāṣig and manṣūkh. In the early period of history such verses were considered numbering about 100. Then during the course of history as eminent scholars arose, the number of abrogated verses continued to decrease until in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Shāh Walī-yullāh رحمته الله, who is the last great Islamic classical Theologian and scholar, proved that there was not a single verse that was abrogated. Now on this point, we are fighting whether we should read the Fātiha or not and this makes a person a Muslim or kāfir, etc. Here we have more serious issues, for certain verses to abrogate other verses, is a very serious issue. It is something with far reaching consequences in connection with our theology.

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Now those people, who considered that more than 100 verses of the Qur'ān were abrogated, were they Muslims or not? And those who thought there were only 80 or 50 or 10? And we who taught that there were none what do you think about their Islam?

What I am saying is that just as with the situation of Sittinā 'A'isha-al-Ṣiddīqah رضي الله عنها, there is the situation about the abrogation of the verses in the Holy Qur'ān. That it took 13<sup>th</sup> centuries ultimately for the problem of abrogation to be clarified. And Shāh Walī-ullāh رحمته الله who is accepted by the Brelvis, Deobandis and everyone else. He was the greatest Imām of his age and he proved that there is not a single verse that has been abrogated.

One of the major contributions of Islam was to dissolve the divide [dichotomy] between faith and reason. In Islam faith is not faith unless based on a rational understanding. The Qur'ān is very clear on that, for blind faith is not faith, it is merely superstition. So whatever the Qur'ān taught has to be understood in the light of reason and has to be taught in the light of reason. For the past 500 years we have been teaching that the Qur'ān has come for those:

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ

“those who believe in the unseen realities of life”.

(Q. 2:3)

Actually what the Qur'ān is referring to are the unseen metaphysical realities of life like heaven, hell, malāika and God Himself. But it has been translated by some to mean “believe without seeing” or “who believe blindly.” What are we doing to ourselves? If we have committed all these mistakes, this great

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Ummah, which was meant to be supreme in every manner as a social force, as an economical force, in international affairs, and a spiritual, intellectual and moral force, this Ummah is no where near this objective. There must be some reason or cause for this. To attribute that cause only to our enemies is not correct, for they were there from the very beginning and we were in the minority and they were the majority!

Why could they not over power us at the time and why are they able to over power us now? So, in reality we have not been true to Islam. We have been true to our Īmān on whatever we know, but that is not enough. E.g. If a child falls sick and the mother, out of her conviction indulge in charm and magic and does not call in a doctor, and the child remains ill. It is not on account of any ill will on the part of the mother or evil but it is bad reasoning. So this is what we have been doing. As far as our love for Islam is concerned that has been there but as far as our understanding of Islam is concerned, we are found lacking. Especially in the pattern of life or way of life that has been changing since the Industrial Revolution. It is a fact that with the change in technology it brought about a change in culture. A change in culture brings about a change psychologically (behavioral pattern). Now, when such tremendous changes took place, Muslims were saying this is kufr, that is kufr, etc. Ultimately they were taken over by their nemesis (enemies) and the entire world of Islam collapsed like a house of cards.

This happens when the foundation has already been eaten away. So what happens after that? What are we going to do about it? May I add that our most pious people know nothing beyond ritualism. Consequently Islam has become a cult; it is no more a comprehensive philosophy of life for the Muslims, not at all!

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Now we have gone to the extent that it is not merely ritualism as regards our obligation as they have been given to us, like the five pillars (arkān) they are obligatory. But even those things which have not been made obligatory by God Almighty or the Holy Prophet ﷺ, those things have been made obligatory by some of us. For example: that you should wear such type of a beard and clothing of certain type etc.

Orthodoxy is a very holy word. What it means is that we should be true to the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. But this is obscurantism [obscurant – one who labors to prevent enlightenment, inquiry or reform]. Here in Islam, orthodoxy actually means dynamism, the meaning given by some of our 'Ulamā is wrong, they are mis-using that word. They say that they are orthodox but they are conservative. Orthodoxy is one thing and conservative is another. No community can actually survive in this world by being only conservative. There should be an amount of it for the sake of historical continuity only. But the world itself is not conservative. It is changing all the time. How can you be conservative and expect to survive?

What would the verse -

فَمِنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ  
“whom your right hands possess”

(Q. 4:25)

mean then?

Here I am referring to the female slaves that were in possession of the Muslims. Does the Qur'ān mention that you can own a female slave? – No, not at all! In this verse concubinage has been brought to an end completely. The Muslims have been commanded to marry of those female slaves that are in their community; and this verse goes further – “No Muslim is allowed to have any relation

with a female slave in obscenity or indecency”. Read the whole verse.

فَمِنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ  
“whom your right hands possess”

(Q. 4:25)

has been mentioned in the Qur'ān because of three reasons: Firstly, slavery was a well established institution in Arabia and almost all the countries of the world at that time. When Islam came and the Holy Prophet ﷺ started his mission, to abolish this institution [of slavery] immediately would not have been wise. Consequently the holy Prophet ﷺ took various steps in addressing this issue.

The Qur'ān proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal and consequently slavery is an irrational and invalid institution. Secondly, the Holy Prophet ﷺ taught that the highest value was to emancipate a slave. Thus if you collect the data of the number of slaves that were emancipated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions, the number in that small community was approximately 46 000 – 49 000. Slaves, whose freedom has been purchased by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions ﷺ.

Thirdly, the Prophet ﷺ laid down certain laws about the behavior towards slaves. “You should give them to eat what you eat yourself and let them wear clothing that you wear yourself.” Thus their social status had to be the same as the person who owned them. Then he laid down the law that no Muslim should ever call his slave as 'abdī or amatī but should call them as my “good man or good woman.” Then another law was laid down that, if any slave wanted to purchase his/her freedom by earning

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through a profession, then it was the duty of every Muslim to allow him/her to do it. That is called “Makatir”

Then the Qur'ān laid down the law “do not force your female slaves to commit fornication”. This is a clear verse in the Qur'ān. Thus the Qur'ān laid down the law that a Muslim should marry his slave instead of having concubines. The verse read earlier and read the entire verse: Islam did not allow slavery that had been there prevalent like in other communities. The Holy Prophet ﷺ cursed a person who sells another human being. So the only thing Islam permitted was “prisoner ship of war.”

In connection with “prisoner of war” Islam laid down the law that if the Muslims fight a battle as the result of aggression from the enemy side, then, if they are victorious and they take prisoners, the first thing to do is:

Law No 1. - Either give them freedom out of grace:

فَأِمَّا مِّنَّا بَعْدُ

“Either give them freedom out of grace”

(Q. 47:4)

meaning, “to oblige them” to “be magnanimous” and give them their freedom.

In this regard the Qur'ān is always practical in its outlook, for the enemy can also have some of the Muslims as prisoners. So for the sake of justice you may grant this freedom if there are no Muslim prisoners of war.

Law No 2 - If that is not advisable from the practical aspect, then the Muslim state should ask ransom or payment from the enemy

## Chapter 16 - The Sunnah - The Challenge

state. If that community is not prepared to purchase their freedom then the 3<sup>rd</sup> law is that the prisoner of war should be told: “We are prepared to invest some money for you so that you may carry on some trade or profession or teach etc. Earn that money which you have to pay as ransom”. If the prisoner agrees to it then the Muslim community should do it and then they should make money available in order that the prisoner can earn his/her freedom (3<sup>rd</sup> law).

The 4<sup>th</sup> law is if they are not prepared to do that then they should be adopted by families who would agree to accept them as members. In those families they will stay as servants, and as servants they will get the same to eat and clothing to wear as that family. The Holy Prophet ﷺ laid down the rule that if any guardian of these captives is harsh to them, then that act of harshness would be a valid reason for emancipation (freedom).

In this connection according to the Holy Qur'ān, if there are female captives, there actually should not be, for according to Islamic law only those who are combatants can be held as prisoners of war, not civilians. If there are female captives then the Muslims should marry them rather than forcing them to behave as prostitutes. This is the Qur'ān. If the female servant does not want to marry for any reason, she should be left alone. Marriage requires her consent. Thus, all those issues about concubinage (in our fiqhah) arose because of a misconception.

There are eminent scholars in the world of Islam who, if they should be put onto this task [of evaluating those few Aḥādīth that are problematic], they will be able to accomplish it. It is not that the Islamic world is empty in that regard. But for all such things, I believe that as far as the basic Islam is concerned, the whole of Islam is there in the Holy Qur'ān.

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

Here again we have been taught that the basis of religion is Ayāt ul Mukhkamāt – “clear cut verses”. If there are verses which require interpretation then Allāh ﷻ has not made them as the basis of our code of life. We can leave them to the experts.

But Islam is something practical and we should try to understand it on the basis of the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and how to transform human beings. What was and what should be that process to be adopted, in order that we may undertake the process for ourselves, as individuals and our communities. And to stick to this Al Kitāb wa Sunnah and thus we will have a smooth sailing. But for the ordinary people and Muslims, who indulge in controversy, it will be absolutely wrong and our community as it stands here, first and foremost what it needs is unity, love and solidarity and harmony between Muslims. To abstain from division – that is the command in the Holy Qur’ān. We should firstly concern ourselves with things that are of primary importance. Let us cover the basic field first before we go out and find fault with so and so etc.

When I say that we should curb this ritualism, disunity and fighting about small issues, we should rather try to imbibe the Islamic spirit. This does not mean that any of the foundations can be given up at any time or in any manner. Whatever has been prescribed and accepted by the Ahle Sunnah wal Jama'ah, which has always been the overwhelming majority of Muslims, this is the real and genuine Islam and correct. The only mistake that we have made is in connection with its practice. In that we have sometimes put the cart before the horse.

Someone asked me whether I was a follower of Parvez and I said that I disagreed with him. The system of values and arrangement of values that he gives are wrong. His system of thought which he

has given is in my opinion un-Islamic. It is not able to catch the proper spirit of Islam. I disagree with Mr. Ghulam Parvez for I feel that he does not even understand the a-b-c of philosophy of religion. He does not understand what religion stands for, what is its function. He is not a theologian – nor an eminent scholar of Arabic or modern thought. He is only a B.A., and in my country this is a very ordinary person. The manner in which he has dabbled in Islam, I think it is impossible for me to accept him as an authority on Islam in any manner. I as a member of the Ahle-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah and as a student of Islam, for years and years I have tried to read every single book that was written by Muslim scholars from the earliest times to this day. It is on the basis of my conviction, that I am an orthodox Muslim, I believe in the ḥadīth, the fiqh, in Ṣūfism and of course in the Holy Qur'ān.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 17

# OUR CONCEPT OF ISLAM

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

**I think** the South African Muslim Community is similar to most other communities of the world. It has the same problems, the same weaknesses and the same strong points. It is a community composed of two groups, Indian and Malay and also a group from Zanzibar, the Swahilis.

Everywhere in the world of Islam, the problems are same. I think I should congratulate the Muslims of South Africa as they came here under very adverse conditions and the manner in which they have been able to keep Islam alive in this country is worthy of admiration. From this point of view they are superior to the Muslims of Pakistan or India. Even now there are different issues in the country that will not make it possible for Islam to prosper. Muslims are scattered all over and whatever they managed to retain of Islam is a good sign.

When an 'Ālim asked me about the condition of Muslims and Islam in Pakistan, I frankly replied that we are too busy fighting one another and nobody to take care of Islam. Unfortunately, I have found the same condition here. It is very unfortunate that there seems to be no way out. I have emphasized here, that the differences between the Shāfi'īs, Ḥanafīs, Mālikis, Ḥambalis are greater than the differences between Ḥanafī's that are Brelvis and Deobandi's etc.

## Chapter 17 - Our Concept of Islam

Those differences arose at a time when Muslims were large-hearted, with high ideals and they wanted to achieve those ideals and did not care for petty issues. The 'Ulamā of those days declared, that those four schools of thought, are all correct. But what happened with us is that, unfortunately we are in an age where we do not have any high ideals or high ambitions. Thus we are prone to fight about very minor issues. The issues we fight about does not in any case make a Muslim become kāfir. So when there is a stubborn attitude between the two parties, then a compromise is not possible. Thus the strife and quarrels continue.

Unfortunately Muslims here have learnt Islam like that and know only that part of Islam. We have thus converted Islam into a cult; we do not stand for the whole of Islam. The majority do not even understand what the world of Islam is.

As I emphasized, Islam has value system which is its foundation; then emerges a system of norms, then principles and from principles emerge laws. From these laws we have taken some or a few and tried to live by it as best we can. But, I am sad to say that our approaches have become partial – and unfortunately this is happening in the whole Islamic world. The approach is either historical, that my fore fathers were Muslim and therefore I am a Muslim – this is a historical approach, that Islam is a legacy. This is accidental, to which I refer at times - Muslim by accident. Then there is a social or cultural approach which we inherited from our forefathers. We try to stick to our culture and when some proceed beyond that, those who are educated, they have an academic or philosophical approach. This consists and results mainly in intellectual gymnastics and nothing beyond that.

If you become sort of pious – then your approach is ritualistic.

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

Islam stands for certain rituals but not in the sense that they are rituals. Rather that they are the highest spiritual exercises. Prayer is not a ritual. However if it is said without that proper spirit, it becomes a ritual. But, if it is said in a constructive manner, with the understanding what are the values that stand behind prayer, why should a person pray, that this prayer is communion with God, which is something real. This communion is consequential, it bears fruit, and it builds up my personality. And this thing that I have been ordered as a Muslim to pray 5 times per day, this has a very deep meaning because, as a Muslim, I should try to be a godly person and remember God all the time. Thus at intervals – 5 times a day I have been asked to perform this communion in order that the focus will remain correct. Focus on Allāh ﷻ alone.

But, if we do not pray in this manner and with this consciousness, then the result may well be what I call a “piety complex”. That a person who prays 5 times a day and conforms to certain external forms of dress or anything else, they usually develop a sort of piety complex. For example, they look down upon others who are behaving slightly different to them. These things are happening because – in my humble opinion – there is no proper channel of imparting the knowledge of the whole of Islam, that is, knowledge at a comprehensive level. As we are told in the Holy Qur’ān:

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَدْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ كَافَّةً

*O believers enter into Islam completely and comprehensively*

(Q2: 208)

We should teach what the ideal of Islamic life is and what technique has been given to us to realize that ideal. Islam is positive, constructive, and progressive; it is not apologetic, not

## Chapter 17 - Our Concept of Islam

defensive, and not passive. It believes in activism. Therefore its entire outlook on life and the entire Sharī'ah is based on the concept of progress and evolution. This progress cannot be possible until and unless the obstacles that are there, are conquered. If you travel through a country, you have to conquer valleys, hills, ponds, forests etc. in order to reach your destiny.

The entire Islamic ideal is based on conquest: Conquest of the self, environment and nature – by nature I mean in terms of space and time or the world of natural phenomena. If this ideal is understood properly by a Muslim community, then when they pray 5 times per day as they should, that prayer will have a force, because the ideal must be achieved by means of this prayer (*Ṣalāt*). When they fast, they will fast with a definite consciousness that they have to achieve an ideal by this means. Thus the Muslim will always be conscious of the ideal all the time (in all types of activity). Thus the instrument [prayer or fasting, etc.] will be tested all the time.

Thus if prayer is the means or instrument to some ideal, then every person will consider it his or her obligation to verify whether that ideal has been achieved or not. This self examination shall have to be done. And in this manner he/she will improve and learn how to pray, really, in spirit and consequentially (whatever we do has a consequence or a result). But if the prayer is done for some *thawāb* only, then that Islam cannot achieve its purpose, although the community may be loyal to Islam. That has been our undoing – all over the world. I believe that we should make a determined effort.

My analysis is that there are only two forces in the world of Islam. There is one force which is the force of conservatism. They want conserve everything that has come to them from their forefathers

## Islamic Intellectual Revival of the Modern Mind

and they think that all that is old is good.

Then there is another force or trend that is more powerful and becoming very dangerous, namely the trend of modernism. Thus we have conservatism on one side and modernism on the other side and Islam is sandwiched between the two. My study of Islam has led me to believe that while conservatism essentially is good; to use it beyond a certain measure is bad, especially if this conservatism consists in preserving things which are not fundamental.

Consequently a re-examination is urgently needed, where we may be able to know what orthodox Islam is. By Orthodox Islam I mean, that which is given in the Qur'ān and given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in his Sunnah; that is orthodox Islam. The orthodox Islam that I have found is: revolutionary, dynamic, highly progressive, very natural, rational and very powerful. The conservative outlook we have seen and known has not been able to help Islam.

Modernistic outlook is inspired more by the inferiority complex. Whatever comes from the west is considered good because the Western nations are making material progress. It is not a case that whatever comes from the west is good, for most of it is absolutely wrong. Their progress consists in adoption of business ethics and principles of organization and industrial technology, whereby they capture the markets of the world, to get all the wealth of the world, etc.

But in many things they are hopelessly wrong. And anybody who has this inferiority complex – “that whatever is western or modern is good, and whatever is old is bad” is committing a very big crime. Such persons have been able to fall only into

“heterodoxy” which I call– **intellectual dishonesty**”. Because, if I know and believe that Islam is from God, and I have been told something by God, then for me to try to amend it (change it) would mean that I regard my wisdom to be superior to the Wisdom of God”. Where do you stand after this? – No where! So heterodoxy is something absolutely dishonest and unfortunately we have these movements in the Muslim world also. They may be sincere in other aspects like to regain the Islamic Glory, but the very spirit in which they start is wrong! The spirit should be, to employ all the knowledge that you may have and to enquire: “**What is it that the Holy Qur’ān or the Holy Prophet ﷺ actually wants from me?**”. If this effort can be made, then there can be a powerful movement in the world of Islam, and then we can make real progress and remain real good Muslims.

This point of view that I try to preach is, “Dynamic orthodoxy”. Here we do not just have a theoretical solution. This world is a world of activity and thinking is only a stepping stone to action. So clear thinking – methodical, scientific, etc, is essential but should be for action. If this action can be revived or set in motion among the Muslims, that alone Inshā-Allāh will do us good and benefit us.

The starting point is to develop a living and dynamic relationship with Allāh ﷻ, to experience Him – this is the very foundation of Islam. Without building up that consciousness and experience of God, you will not be able to build up that ideal according to the Islamic foundation. When we proceed on this road of building up our consciousness of God then certain things are bound to appear in the character of that man or woman. The **first fruit** is humility, the more a person experiences God, the more humble he/she becomes. He / she becomes more sweet, gentle and compromising. However, compromising not on truth - not

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compromising truth with falsehood, but rather in daily human dealings. That is, to deal with the spirit of making others happy.

The more one experiences Allāh ﷻ [God], the wiser he/she becomes. He avoids vain things and pursues things of the higher order, like knowledge and constructive activity. In this manner the deeper the consciousness in God becomes, the better human being the person becomes. This one institution like ṣalāt can change the character of a person if it is done with the proper consciousness.

This is my message to all of you. The only reality is God, Allāh ﷻ. He is the Eternal Living Reality. He is the source of Knowledge of all Wisdom, all Truth, Beauty, Power, etc. Try to build up with Allāh ﷻ a bond as strong as possible. The stronger that bond, the better person you will be, the more successful, powerful, wiser, etc. But, it should be what Islam wants. And for this, the test will always be for you to understand whether you are becoming more godly or not. It is the emergence of those qualities in your character like humility, gentleness, selflessness, integrity etc. These qualities are bound to emerge as a consequence, and if not, then something is wrong in your approach.

So, ask from someone about whom you may think has acquired those qualities, and try to determine where you went wrong. And in this world you will find somebody who may be in that capacity as a teacher, or a few steps beyond where you are, and that person may advise you how to correct yourself.

In this way even a minority community can live Islam, and you can get this beauty, happiness and ecstasy from this way of life. If you analyze what is it ultimately that you want, then two words emerge; happiness and success. Thus godliness gives happiness

## Chapter 17 - Our Concept of Islam

that is real. Try it and you will find it to be the truth. It gives a happiness that cannot be overpowered by the greatest of sorrow. Try to understand and live Islam in this way and Inshā- Allāh you will acquire happiness and success. We should not wait, because tomorrow never comes. Do it now! That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

*“work for the ideals of Islam as if you are going to die tomorrow.”*

Don't just talk about the path, go on that path. Those who waste their time don't get anywhere. The western nations do not waste their time, to the extent that no other nation can challenge them. If we do not understand and live Islam properly, then we can vegetate and bring into this world Muslims by accident etc. We increase in numbers only. Islam came to build up quality, not only quantity. Allāh ﷻ says in the Holy Qur'an:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

*“Whoever strives in My way for Me, I make the path smooth for him” –  
and lead him to the goal.*

(Q. 29:69)

May Allāh ﷻ enable us to benefit from Islam, for then we can benefit others through the light of Islam and through the greatness and glory which Islam brings.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh ﷻ,  
The Lord of all the worlds.

## CHAPTER 18

# ATTAINMENT OF HOLINESS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allāh ﷻ, The Compassionate, The Merciful

الْمَ ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

*This is the book; in it is guidance, sure, without doubt; to those who fear Allāh.*

(Q. 2:1-2)

It would appear that we seem to take pride in creating more problems and dividing this community. The only thing possible for any community anywhere [all Muslim communities seem to be plagued by this problem], that can save Muslims and bring about unity, is two fold in my opinion. Firstly, to become positive and try to make a contribution as an individual and as a community for the good of the community and entire mankind as we have been commissioned by the Holy Qur'an:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

*Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allāh.*

(Q. 3:110)

When this positive thinking and attitude is there and a person looks at a problem from a higher level, then minor issues will not

throw him off course. The one, who has higher ideals, does not care about minor issues. The one, who has no higher ideals, is all the time scratching in the gutter to see how much dirt is there.

Secondly – the principle of “Live and Let Live”. I can assure you with the utmost sorrow and grief that the new (future) generations will not be Muslim or they would not like to be Muslim at all. If Islam can not give them anything higher and better in the spiritual domain, then it will be like we have for example now, Muslims in Pakistan are going for spiritual advice to the yogis. In so many communities I have seen them going to the Hindus for spiritual advice – whereas the very foundation of Islam is spirituality.

Regarding morals, the Muslims are reading the works of the Western writers – how to make themselves morally good – as if the 'Ulamā can't teach them this knowledge. When the 'Ulamā talk and teach, they would focus on certain minor issues regarding Islamic Law. Here you fall into hell and there into heaven etc., etc. We are dealing with Islam as a cult. If this problem is not solved, the danger is there that we are going to lose Islam in this community or this country, if we continue to be petty minded.

As I understand Islam, for the past 25 years I have worked on the value system as to be found in the Holy Qur'ān. This includes the laws and Qur'ānic teachings regarding all facets of life. Here my point of view, from my understanding of the wrongs in the Muslim community, – even in the case of pious Muslims with good intentions - the problem is that they do not understand the proper arrangement of values. What I understand from the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is that he is the “uswatun ḥasanah”, the model, he is Islam personified. There are certain conditions for

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being a Muslim as there are conditions preliminary to get admission into a medical college for example, etc. A person must be qualified in the preliminary levels before being admitted to a medical college – having passed in subjects like Biology etc.

Those preliminary conditions are obtainable from the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the manner in which he preached Islam. We are Muslims by accident for we were born in such homes. How many of us devote ourselves to find out what the problems are and try to find the solutions to those problems? Thus we just take pride that we are Muslims and there it ends. What I have understood from the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and from Islam is that there are qualities that should be present in a person before he or she proclaims to be a Muslim in the genuine sense of the word. Before the Holy Prophet ﷺ started his preaching and historical mission – he was firstly – absolutely truthful – even his enemies called him *aṣṣādiq*. He was called *Al-Amīn* – the trustworthy one and he was called *aṣṣādiq wal Amīn* – the most truthful and the most trustworthy, the most honest, the man of integrity.

Then the 3<sup>rd</sup> quality – when he came with the first message, to his wife *Ummul-Mu'minīna Khadija-al Kubra* ؓ, the words she said to him was that he was a person who was dedicated to the service of his fellow beings. He was a selfless human being devoted to the services of others. These are the three characteristics or preliminary qualifications to *Imān Billāh* – “faith in Allāh”. If these qualities are not there then you have a problem. In the beginning the *Qur'ān* says, it is a:

هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ

“guidance only for all mankind”

(Q. 2:185)

## Chapter 18 - Attainment of Holiness

But before that it says it is:

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

*a guidance only for those who are men of character,*

(Q.2:2)

those who have integrity, they will be able to pursue that code of life that God Almighty has prescribed. It is only they who can really benefit.

Now, we have forgotten all these – we started in another or rather wrong way. We say: You know the *Kalimah*, let me teach you – and you say “*Lā'ilā-ha illalāh*” – the second lesson is 5 times prayer – fasting during the month of *Ramaḡān* – *Zakāt* if you have any spare money at the end of the year and then *Hajj*. The lesson starts in this fashion. Although these foundations are most important, we do not seem to understand the nature, spirit and the meaning of these foundations. What is the implication of “*Lā'ilā-ha illalāh*”? Can we still worship anything else; can we still worship our ego? We cannot! So we carry on formally and when it is said to the community that this is Islam and this you have to do, they are not able to do it. Then you have those who do not feel inspired at all – why should I pray? So many young people have asked me this. Then I tell them that God to them is a revolting idea - and ask them: in which God do you believe? He would say that there must be some force that brought this universe into being. And I would reply: “That is not sufficient, you are not a Muslim”. You are only a philosopher or believe from an academic point of view.

In Islam, God is personal and He wants you to cultivate a personal contact with Him. He says: *Fadhkurūni adhkurkum.....* – “Remember Me and I remember you”, it is a personal affair in

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Islam. Islam is based on communion, not a formality. As Sayyidinā Junaid رضي الله عنه said to the Mu'adhin “you are a liar. You are saying: I bear witness that there is no God but Allāh ﷻ? How do you bear witness? The word *shahāda* and *shuhūd* is based on *mushāhada* (observation), unless you have observed God, how can you be a witness that there is a God?” Someone advised the Mu'adhin to say: “I bear witness that the Prophet ﷺ said *Lā' ilā-ha illalāh* – he was truthful and I bear witness on that account”.

If you can teach the most modern young man: my brother or son, there is God who is the end all and be all of life, if you want to acquire success, happiness and whatever good here or in the hereafter, you can acquire it only from Him. So I teach you the method of acquiring it. Now here the problem of benefit arises, this is human nature. If you tell him that you can never understand it for it is a divine mystery and you have to believe it and you will be saved, it is very difficult to attract the attention of any modern educated person. Unless he has the habit put into him, through the milk of his mother. These are exceptions; otherwise these young men would not like to come to the mosque (masjid). And when they hear of all the mischief and problems, they would never come, because their minds are not like that or of that type.

Thus it shall have to be taught – “how to experience God.” The Qur'an mentions about two types of *jihād* – *jihād fī sabīlillāh*; “striving in the way of Allāh ﷻ” and *jihād fillāh* – “striving in God.” To strive “in the way of God” is to strive through your knowledge, influence, piety, wealth, etc. for promoting virtue and goodness – *jihād fī Sabīlillāh*. But *jihād fillāh* is something completely different. It is striving in God is to acquire direct experience of God, and for this experience, Islam came.

## Chapter 18 - Attainment of Holiness

When you start for the experience of God, you will be starting with Imān. “*yu minūna bil ghaib*” – you will start by believing that there are certain supra sensual realities – unseen realities. You do the same in exact sciences like mathematics. In geometry you will start with similar ‘*īmān* (belief). It starts with a point. A point is that which has no length, no width and no thickness. What is a point then? So conceptually it is not material at all. Now you have a line which is an aggregate of points. Now if the point does not have length, then a 100 000 points also does not have length etc., so from where does the length come from? The mathematician will tell you that must believe in it. Then you come to the square which has length and breadth – if the point is nothing, where does this area come from? Then you come to the cube – Length x breadth x thickness [l x b x t] – made up of squares lines, points – from where have those properties come? They will tell you that you must believe in it, for it is the starting point. Then you will proceed further etc. On this basis you are able to build up a whole science which is factual and which you can employ in the different fields of technology. The same is the case with Islam, it starts from there:

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ

*“those who believe in the unseen”.*

(Q. 2:3)

Those who start with this belief, that there is a Reality which is beyond our senses or experience. But does this condition have to remain beyond our senses or experience? No! It must be experienced by you. That is why Islam came. You must experience Allāh ﷻ, Who is the Really Real and the foundation of all that exists. Also, you believe in the intermediaries like angels, heaven, hell, etc., which are beyond this physical world.

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These have to be experienced. Now here the most important thing is experience of God and dealings with Him.

For instance He, Allāh ﷻ, has made different promises. Those who do this, He'll do that for them in an extra-ordinary manner. Come on and test it! This is Islam. Prayer and fasting are a means to an end, to achieve that connection. Allāh ﷻ did not intend it to be a mere exercise for you and meaningless to Him. But it is the highest exercise whereby you can commune with Him. You must learn how to commune with Him. You must not be contented with merely the formal issues, like you have read so many sunnah etc. and considers yourself important. What we have been taught is that ONE *sajda* (prostration) which is genuine, is equal to 100 years of formal prayer. That is what is needed, but if we do not have it in our mind that we want to commune with God – then we may operate only in a very formal manner, with no real benefit.

Another point – Allāh ﷻ has given us the *Kalimah* in two parts, *Lā'ilā-ha illalāh* – is one part, that is the goal, to experience Him. *Muḥammadun-Rasullullāh* – is the other part, the vehicle to use to arrive at the goal. Now the greatest mistake some Muslims are making and they are not spiritualized – is that they think that they can bypass the Prophet ﷺ. They do not understand that the miracle of transformation that happened to the companions (*rahm*) happened only through the Prophet ﷺ. This function he, the Prophet ﷺ was given. The Qur'ān says that the function of transforming Muslims into better human beings was the function of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. God Almighty has not undertaken that function. He sent down the code and sent his beloved Prophet ﷺ, the highest in entire creation and who has been endowed by Allāh ﷻ with tremendous powers, inconceivable by us. Thus this function of *tazkiyyah* has been

given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ;

“Wayu zakkīhim” “he purifies them”- the Prophet ﷺ does that and this function of transformation (of the personality) by the Prophet ﷺ, this act he will do up till the day of Qiyāmah for his followers. Read Suratul Jumu’ah:

يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ

*to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify [purify] them,*

(Q. 62:2)

The Prophet ﷺ has been commissioned for this purpose and this is the goal of Islam – transformation of the personality. Rituals are only a means to an end. The moral laws are also not the goal, but means to an end. The goal is the attainment of holiness and to come into contact with Allāh, for He is All Holy. That holiness that is to be acquired is conferred through the dynamic personality of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As the holy Qur’ān confirms that the Prophet ﷺ will continue to perform this function which he performed for his companions and all those of the Muslim community until the day of Qiyāmah.

Therefore if this transformation is to be done by the Holy Prophet ﷺ then I should be in communion with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. That communion should be of a type that I will be able to come under the shadow of his blessings. And the dynamo of his personality will continue to change you with godliness and holiness and in that way one will be continuously transformed. If that is not undertaken and you think only of him as a divine postman, you can make absolutely no spiritual progress. The Prophet ﷺ is the basis of Islam. *Īmān* is the vehicle and medium through which you are to be transformed in terms of holiness.

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The more this holiness increases the nearer you will come to God and become a better human being. Then you can arrive at a stage where you can transcend space and time. As a ṣūfī taught, that there are people who are a slave of time – “ibn al waqt – and the function of a real believer is to become “abul waqt -father of time” that is to command time. But to be able to understand that: Allāh ﷻ is the goal of *Īmān*. The basis of *Īmān* is the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If I am to connect the start with my goal, I must remain connected with my base. If the rocket travels to the moon, it remains in contact with the base station all the time. If it loses contact it will be lost or destroyed.

Similarly when the human personality takes the flight towards God it must continuously remain in contact with the personality of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and consequently the first lesson in spirituality is *ṣalāt* and *salām* on the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This we have been commanded to do in the Holy Qur’ān. Do it as best and as much as you can. It is the key that opens the door – to be in the company of the holy Prophet ﷺ and get blessings from him. If you say *assalāmu ‘alaykum* to anybody, that person may reply: “*wa ‘alaykumus salām*”. But when we say “*assalāmu ‘alaykum*” to the Prophet ﷺ then he says “*wa ‘alaykumus salām*”, and that is of infinite value. This greeting is a prayer, and if the Holy Prophet ﷺ says a prayer for us it is the greatest treasure one can obtain.

So, say *ṣalāt* and *salām* as much as you can, the more we do it, the more refined you become, the more capable you become to walk the path to God Almighty – for He is the goal,

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

“And unto your Lord is the Goal.”

(Q. 53:42)

## Chapter 18 - Attainment of Holiness

So our Prophet ﷺ is a functioning Prophet, alive in an infinitely superior manner than when people saw him in this spatial-temporal dimension. We wrongly feel he has left this world. Life after death is far superior to the life we have here. The life of any believer is considered far superior after death. And of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it is the *ijmā'* of the Ummah that he is a living, functioning divine teacher until the day of *Qiyāmah* for all his genuine followers. He assists those who take him as a teacher.

If we can present to the youth, Islam in this pragmatic fashion, whereby they can see how far they are on the way or off the track. Also, where they can achieve anything they could not achieve through science or philosophy etc., I think then our youth will walk on the path of Islam with greater enthusiasm than our elders. But, if you continue to present Islam in this ritualistic, scholastic, lifeless and static fashion, I think there will be no future for Muslims.

May Almighty Allāh guide us all on the way of truth, justice and beauty.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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