

AL TAWHĪD:
Its Implications for
Thought and Life

Ismā'īl Rājī al Fārūqī

International Institute of Islamic Thought
Herndon, Virginia, U.S.A.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى خَاتَمِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful,
Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Universe,
and Peace and Prayers be upon
His Final Prophet and Messenger.*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾
أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ
مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

العلق ١ - ٥

Read in the name of your Sustainer, Who has Created man out of a germ cell. Read – for your Sustainer is the Most bountiful One. Who has taught (man) the use of the pen. Taught Man what he did not know. (Qur'an 96:1-5)

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

النحل ٧٨

And Allah has brought you forth from your mother's womb knowing nothing – but He has endowed you with hearing, and sight, and minds, so that you might have cause to be grateful.

(Qur'an 16:78)

AL TAWHĪD:
Its Implications for
Thought and Life

First Edition (1402/1982)
Second Edition (1412/1992)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author acknowledges with deep gratitude the assistance and encouragement extended to him by the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, and the tireless effort of Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) toward production of this book.

Equally, the author acknowledges his enormous debt to Br. Wa'il Shawkat al Khayri for his constant prodding to think through the relevant issues and for his inspiring criticism of the ideas here presented. The author's obligation to his wife, Dr. Lois Lamya', his niece Maysam Jawad, and his daughter Tayma' in the preparation of the manuscript can hardly be expressed in words.

May Allah (SWT) reward them all.

© جميع الحقوق محفوظة
للمعهد العالمي للفكر الإسلامي
هرندن — فرجينيا — الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

© 1412/1992 by
The International Institute of Islamic Thought
555 Grove Street
Herndon, Virginia 22070-4705 U.S.A.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Al Fārūqī, Ismā'īl R., (1339-1406 AH/1921-1986 AC)
Al Tawhīd: its implications for thought and life/Ismā'īl Rājī al Fārūqī.
p. cm. — (Issues in Islamic Thought: 4)
Originally published in 1982.
ISBN 0-912463-79-1 (HC). — ISBN 0-912463-80-5 (PB)
1. Islam. I. International Institute of Islamic Thought.
II. Title. III. Series.
BP161.2.A477 1992
297' 211—dc20

91-47175
CIP

Printed in the United States of America
by International Graphics
4411 41st Street
Brentwood, Maryland 20722 U.S.A.
Tel. (301) 779-7774 Fax (301) 779-0570

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	iv
INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION.....	xi
PREFACE	xiii

CHAPTER I

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.....	1
I. <i>AL TAWHĪD</i> AS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.....	1
II. <i>AL TAWHĪD</i> AS WORLDVIEW.....	9

CHAPTER II

THE QUINTESSENCE OF ISLAM.....	17
I. THE IMPORTANCE OF <i>AL TAWHĪD</i>	17
II. DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY.....	20
III. DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE IN ISLAM.....	23
IV. ISLAM'S SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CULTURE.....	29

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPLE OF HISTORY.....	33
THE PRINCIPLE OF KNOWLEDGE.....	39
I. NEITHER SKEPTICISM NOR THE "FAITH" OF CHRISTIANS.....	39
II. <i>ĪMĀN</i> : A GNOSEOLOGICAL CATEGORY.....	42
III. UNITY OF GOD AND UNITY OF TRUTH.....	43
IV. TOLERANCE.....	46

CHAPTER V

THE PRINCIPLE OF METAPHYSICS.....	49
I. THE ORDERLY UNIVERSE.....	50
II. THE TELEOLOGICAL UNIVERSE.....	55

CHAPTER VI

THE PRINCIPLE OF ETHICS.....	61
I. THE HUMANISM OF ISLAM.....	62
II. PURPOSE OF MAN'S CREATION.....	65
III. MAN'S INNOCENCE.....	67
IV. <i>IMAGO DEI</i>	70
V. ACTIONALISM.....	74
VI. UMMATISM.....	76
VII. UNIVERSALISM.....	78
VIII. LIFE AND WORLD-AFFIRMATION.....	82

CHAPTER VII

THE PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL ORDER.....	85
I. UNIQUENESS OF ISLAM.....	85
II. <i>AL TAWHĪD</i> AND SOCIETISM.....	91
III. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	93
IV. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	95

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE UMMAH.....	103
I. TERMINOLOGY.....	103
II. NATURE OF THE UMMAH.....	105
III. THE UMMAH'S INTERNAL DYNAMICS.....	112

CHAPTER IX

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE FAMILY.....	129
I. DECLINE OF THE FAMILY INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD.....	129

II. THE FAMILY AS CONSTITUTIVE UNIT OF SOCIETY.....	130
III. CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS.....	133

CHAPTER X

THE PRINCIPLE OF POLITICAL ORDER.....	141
I. <i>AL TAWHĪD</i> AND <i>AL KHILĀFAH</i>	142
II. <i>AL TAWHĪD</i> AND POLITICAL POWER.....	153

CHAPTER XI

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE ECONOMIC ORDER.....	157
I. JOINT ESSENTIAL PRIORITY OF THE MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL.....	158
II. UNIVERSALISM OF THE ISLAMIC ECONOMIC ORDER.....	170
III. ETHICS OF PRODUCTION.....	173
IV. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF PRODUCTION.....	176
V. ETHICS OF CONSUMPTION.....	180

CHAPTER XII

THE PRINCIPLE OF WORLD ORDER.....	185
I. THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.....	185

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRINCIPLE OF ESTHETICS.....	195
I. MUSLIM ARTISTIC UNITY AND ITS CHALLENGERS.....	195
II. TRANSCENDENCE IN ESTHETICS.....	199

REFERENCES.....	217
-----------------	-----

INDEX.....	223
------------	-----

GLOSSARY OF TERMS OF FOREIGN ORIGIN.....	231
--	-----

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

If the concept of *tawhīd* is central to Islam and everything Islamic, it is because of its centrality to existence and everything that exists. Belief in the Divine Principle, the transcendent Allah, brings with it the understanding that all creation is subservient to Him. With this relationship at the core of all matters, all things and all creatures are thus interrelated, at least at the most basic level. But in most cases that is only the beginning. Indeed, Islamic science, whether religious, moral, or natural is essentially a quest to discover the order underlying the variegated world of multiplicity.

The work of *al Shahīd*, Dr. Ismā'īl Rāḥī al Fārūqī on the subject of *tawhīd* affords the reader not only a look at the axial doctrine of Islam, but further allows the reader to understand that doctrine from a number of different perspectives. In the endeavor to explain the simple truths of the doctrine of unity, Dr. Al Fārūqī touches upon a broad spectrum of subjects, drawing into his discussions elements from history, comparative religion, anthropology, philosophy, ethics, epistemology, archaeology, and other disciplines. As such, his concept of *tawhīd* is rich in the depth of its erudition, abundant in its perceptions. Indeed, it is perhaps this work more than any other that reflects the profound and original thought of Dr. al Fārūqī.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought is proud to present the reader with a completely new edition of this important contribution to the contemporary Islamic library. In this edition, great care has been taken to ensure the integrity of the original text. Moreover, a glossary of foreign terms has been added and the index has been significantly expanded. Another important feature is that all of the Qur'anic verses quoted in the text appear in the footnotes in the original Arabic. In short, no effort has been spared to ensure the quality of this edition.

In closing, we remind ourselves as well as our readers that perfection belongs to Allah alone. Thus, any corrections or suggestions about the improvement of this work will be most welcome.

And it is Allah who prospers and assists!

International Institute of
Islamic Thought
Herndon, Virginia
Sha'bān 1412/February 1992

PREFACE

This book carries a number of presuppositions which, if understood, would serve to clarify as well as to justify it.

First, the world ummah of Islam is undeniably the most unhappy ummah in modern times. Despite the facts that it is the largest in number, the richest in land and resources, the greatest in legacy and the only one possessing the most viable ideology, the ummah is a very weak constituent of world order. It is fragmented into an endless variety of states, divided against itself at loggerheads with other ummah(s) on all its frontiers, incapable of producing what it needs or consumes, of defending itself against its enemies. Above all, instead of being the ummah wasat (the median among the peoples of mankind) (Quran 2:143), which Allah (SWT) wished it to be, it is the prey of everybody. If it has made any contribution to the historical battle of humanity against disease, poverty, ignorance, hostility, immorality and impiety in modern times, it has been negligible.

Second, the divine dictum "Allah will not change the condition of a people unless and until they change themselves" (Quran 13:12) is equally the decree of history. Applied to the world ummah of Islam, it explains the failure of previous attempts at reform, and the reason for the continuing malaise. In the less recent past, the attempts undertaken by the Salafiyah movements in the Arabian Peninsula, in North and West Africa, in the Indian Subcontinent, registered far more success than the more recent attempts. For they have addressed the ummah's deterioration more deeply and sought more radical cures. They attacked the *ghuluww* (excessiveness, inordinateness) of *tasawwuf* (mysticism), which is proper; and they set out to confront the rest of the ummah and/or the outside world without adequate preparation, which was their fatal mistake. Consequently, they all failed despite their excellent intentions. The more recent reforms undertaken by the "nationalist" governments of the Muslim world (whether constitutional monarchies and republics or dictatorships) were mostly constructions on sand. When sincere, these reforms addressed the material needs of the ummah but omitted the graver need of the spirit. Indeed, they increased the vitium in society by

spreading nationalism, a despicable Western virus of an old disease the ummah had confronted earlier in its long history, namely, *al shū'ubīyah* (tribalism). Nationalism has succeeded in Europe (though only for a while and is certainly dying at present) largely because the authority of the Catholic Church was sacked by the Protestant Reformation and their God was dethroned by skepticism. The Muslim, devoid of authoritarian church and endowed with unshakable faith in a unique transcendent Absolute which is God, and an overpowering *shari'ah* (law, Islamic law, law of God) to govern his social behavior, never understood nationalism, let alone became its addict. That is why he showed some enthusiasm when the "nationalist" leader associated himself with the cry *Allah akbar* and quickly reverted to his unconcern when that image of the leader faded. Man was not remade by these movements; for none of them had the right insight into the Muslim's predicament. Modernization failed because it was Westernization, alienating the Muslim from his past and making of him a caricature of Western man. Even the little attention given by the earlier movements to purify the Muslim's basic world-view from the accretions of superstition and ignorance was nowhere present in these reforms which looked down upon religion and sought to transcend it *a la West*. The prerequisite for a change of fortune laid down by Allah (SWT) was not fulfilled; and the world ummah continued to skid.

Certainly al Ikhwan al Muslimun movement sought to fill the gap benefitting from the experience of the century. It had a wonderful beginning but could not keep the pace. Besides the tragedy of allowing itself to be sucked into a battle it could not win—its minor fault the graver tragedy was its inability to crystalize the vision of Islam as relevant to every moment of human life, every shade of modern human activity. The vision was at its brightest in the mind of the late Hasan al Banna; but it was somewhat confused and less clear in his followers. Unfortunately, the great Muslim minds kept themselves busy elsewhere. They did not rise to fill the task left over by al Banna, of elaborating the principles of Islam as those of a modern and viable experience. Thus the movement could grow in numbers but not in ideational depth which is the requirement of change prescribed by the divine decree.

The third and last presupposition of this book is that the world ummah of Islam will not rise again or be the ummah *wasat* except through that which gave it its *raison d'être* fourteen centuries ago, its character and destiny through the ages, namely, Islam. It is the Muslim's conception of himself as the *khalifah* (vicegerent) of Allah (SWT) on earth that

makes him the vortex of human history. Only as God's *khalifah*, and hence only in proper commitment to the vision of Islam, may man act responsibly in the totality of space-time. As such, the Muslim must interfere in the causal processes of space-time (the material, the psychic, the social and the spiritual) so as to redirect their course toward fulfillment of the divine pattern. As such, the Muslim's interference into space-time will be to reconstruct it, not to abolish it or escape from it, as in Hindu-Buddhist spirituality. And in his reconstruction of it, it is not his "creative" will that the Muslim pursues, but the will of God. Finally, the Muslim's reconstruction is not an act of defiance and conquest as in the Promethean West, but a responsible act of submission. Hence, the Muslim enjoys a triple protection: against his own capacity for exploiting nature; against the arrogance of power if he succeeds; and against tragedy where helplessness and despair are of the essence, if he fails.

It is Islam's vision of reality that this book seeks to present for the instruction of Muslim youth. In it, the author hopes to take the youth further on the road of genuine self-reform, bringing up-to-date as it were, the early ideational insights of the great reformers of the Salafiyah movement; Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhab, Muhammad Idris al Sanusi, Hasan al Banna and others. The relevance of Islam to the various fields of human thought and activity is here analyzed and elaborated with the hope of its becoming the groundwork for reformative programs in each of these fields. No other groundwork of Islam will succeed. The essence and core of Islam being al tawhid, al tawhid is the name of the book as well as content of that relevance.

May Allah (SWT) accept this work as humble contribution of one of His servants on the greatest of all topics. And may He guide the reader to His truth. Whether this book contributes to this positively by showing that truth, or negatively by showing what it is not, the author is content that Allah (SWT) will have used his work as instrument toward that goal.

Ismā'īl Rājī al Fārūqī

Temple University
Dhū al Ḥijjah 1402
October 1982

CHAPTER I

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

I. *AL TAWHĪD* AS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

At the core of religious experience stands God. The *shahādah* (confession of Islamic faith; the witnessing that there is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger; witness; witnessing) asserts: "There is no god but God." The name of God, "Allah," which simply means "The God," occupies the central position in every Muslim place, every Muslim action, every Muslim thought. The presence of God fills the Muslim's consciousness at all times. With the Muslim, God is indeed a sublime obsession. What does that mean?

Muslim philosophers and theologians have battled it out among themselves for centuries, and the issue culminated in the arguments of al Ghazālī and Ibn Sīna. For the philosophers, the issue was one of saving the orderliness of the universe. The world, they argued, is a cosmos (a realm in which order and law prevail), where things happen by a cause and causes cannot be without their proper effects. In this stand they were heirs to the Greek, the Mesopotamian and the ancient Egyptian legacies of religion and philosophy. Creation itself was these traditions' passage from chaos to cosmos. The Muslims entertained the highest ideas of transcendence and nobility of the divine Being, but they could not conceive of that Being as consistent with a chaotic world.

The theologians, for their part, feared that such an emphasis on the orderliness of the universe necessarily renders God a *deus otiosus*; that it leaves Him little to do once He has created the world and built therein the clockwork mechanism necessary to set everything in causal motion. They were right. For a world in which everything happens according to a cause and where causes are all natural—i.e., in and from the world—is one in which everything happens necessarily and hence is a world which does not need God. Such a God would never satisfy the religious feeling. Either He is He by Whom everything is, by Whom

everything happens, incapable of initiating or controlling it or there is some other god besides Him, who is the real cause and master of all. Hence, they rejected the philosophers' view and invented the doctrine of "occasionalism." This is the theory that at every moment of time, God recreates the world and thus makes happen all that happens therein. They replaced the necessity of causality with the trust that God, being just and righteous, will not deceive but will see to it that the right effect will always follow upon the right cause. The upshot of the matter was not the establishment of causality, but of divine presence, and of accommodating causality to that presence. The theologians carried a sweeping victory over the philosophers.¹

Behind the theologians' position stands the Muslim's experience, where God is not merely an absolute, ultimate first cause or principle but a core of normativeness. It is this aspect of God that suffers most in any theory where God becomes a *deus otiosus*; and it is the Muslim's responsiveness to this core of normativeness that the philosopher's theory throws out of joint.

God as normativeness means that He is the Being Who commands. His movements, thoughts and deeds are all realities beyond doubt; but everyone of these, insofar as man conceives of it, is for him a value, an ought-to-be, even when, in the case where it is already realized, no ought-to-do flows from it. Besides being metaphysical, God's ultimacy is not, for the Muslim, isolable from or emphasizeable at the cost of the axiological. Were we to allow the Muslim here to use the category of "the value of knowledge," he would say the value of the metaphysical is that it may exercise its imperativeness, its moving appeal or normativeness.

God is the final end, i.e., the end at which all finalistic nexuses aim and come to rest. Everything is sought for another which in turn is sought for a third and so on, and hence demands the nexus or chain to continue until a final end is reached which is an end-in-itself. God is such an end, an end for all other ends, a chains of ends. He is the ultimate object of all desire. As such it is He Who makes every other good; for

¹ This is evidenced by the poor reputation which "philosophy" (i.e., the tradition of abstract thought begun by al Kindi and continued by al Fārābī, Ikhwan al Šafā, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd) and philosophers had enjoyed, by the names by which they were called (e.g., *Hillīyīn*, *Manāṭīqah*, *Mashshā'ūn*, *Riwaqīyūn*), and by the treatment the philosophers and their books were given throughout Muslim history. No doubt this sad fate was due to the philosophers' distance from the basic intuition of the *ummah*. For an excellent analysis of the Hellenic roots of Muslim "philosophy" and of its rejection by Islamic thinkers, see: 'Alī Šamī al Nashshār, *Manāhij al Baḥth 'ind Mufakkirīn al Islām wa Naqd al Muslimīn li al Mantīq al Aristatālīsī* (Cairo: Dār al Fikr al 'Arabī, 1367/1947).

unless the final end is posited, every link in the chain is undone. The final end is the axiological ground of all chains or nexuses of ends.

It follows from this conception of God as the ultimate, finalistic terminus and axiological ground that He must be unique. Obviously, if this were not the case, the question would have to be raised again regarding the priority or ultimacy of one to the other. It is of the very nature of a finalistic end to be unique, just as it is the nature of the ultimate cause of chain to be unique. Ultimacy precludes the possibility of the ultimate's dependence upon another.² It is this uniqueness which the Muslim affirms in his confession of faith, "There is no god but God." In the long history of religions, the Muslim's assertion of God's existence would have come late. Indeed God had told him in the Quran that "there is no people unto whom He had not sent a prophet,"³ and that "no prophet but had been sent to teach the worship and service of God."⁴ But the assertion of the uniqueness of God is new. It brought a refreshing iconoclasm at a time and place where dūalism and trinitarianism were the higher, and polytheism the lower, state of religious consciousness. And, in order to purge this consciousness for once and for all, Islam demanded the utmost care in the use of language and precepts appropriate to the unique God. "Father," "intercessor," "savior," "son," etc., were utterly banished from the religious vocabulary; and the uniqueness and absolute transcendence of the divine Being were stressed that no man may claim any relation to God which all other men cannot claim. Islam held as a matter of principle that no man or being is one iota nearer to God than any other. That all creation is creaturely, that it stands on this side of the line dividing the transcendent from the natural, is the necessary presupposition of God's axiological ultimacy.

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلَهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (الأنبياء: ٢٢)

² If there were more than one god... Heaven and earth would have collapsed into disorder and chaos. Praised be Allah, Lord of the Throne, Transcendent beyond all their descriptions of Him (21:22).

... وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ (فاطر: ٢٤) وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا... (الحل: ٣٦) ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رَسُولَنَا نَذِيرًا كُلِّ مَلْجَأٍ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولَهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَأَتَيْنَاهُم بِبَعْضِهِمْ بَعْضًا... (المؤمنون: ٤٤)

³ There is no ummah but unto it We have sent a prophet to warn (35:24)... unto each ummah We have sent a messenger (16:36)... One after another We sent Our messengers to the peoples of the world, though they were belied and rejected (23:44).

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ... (الحل: ٣٦)

⁴ Unto every ummah, We have sent a messenger to teach them that service is due to Allah alone, that evil ought to be avoided (16:36).

The relevance of this "unicity" of God to the religious life of the person is easier to grasp. Man's heart always harbors lesser deities than God, and the human intention is nearly always beclouded with desiderata of varying orders of rank. The noblest intention is, as Kant had taught, the purest, i.e., purified from all objectives of *"die Willkur."* And the purest, Islam after all *Willkur* objects are removed and banished.

To perceive God as core of normativeness, as an end whose very being is imperativeness and desirability, is not possible unless there are beings for whom this normativeness is normative. For normativeness is a relational concept. For it to be, there must be creatures for whom the divine command is both perceivable (and hence knowable) as well as realizable. Relationality is not relativity and should not be understood as implying that God is dependent upon, or needful of, man and his world. In Islam, God is self-sufficient; but this self-sufficiency does not preclude the creation of a world in which men find the imperativeness and realize its ought-to-bes. At the core of the Islamic religious experience, therefore, stands God Who is unique and Whose will is the imperative and guide for all men's lives. The Quran has put it dramatically. It portrays God as announcing to His angels His intention of creating the world and placing therein a vicegerent to do His will. The angels object that such a vicegerent who would kill, do evil and shed blood is unworthy of being created. They also contrasted such a vicegerent with themselves, who never swerve from fulfilling the divine will, to which God answers, "I know something which you do not know."⁵ Obviously, man would indeed do evil for that is his prerogative as a free being. But for anyone to fulfill the divine will when it is perfectly in his power to do otherwise is to fulfill a higher and worthier portion of the divine will. The angels are ruled out precisely because they have no freedom to violate the divine imperative. Likewise, in another still more dramatic Quranic passage, God offered His trust to heaven and earth, mountains and rivers. These were struck with fear and panic and

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ سُبْحٌ يَعْبُدُكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ٣٠)

⁵ When your Lord announced to the angels that He was about to create a vicegerent for Him on earth, they said: "Would you establish on earth a creature that sheds blood and works evil, while we do nothing but adore and praise You?" Allah answered: "Yea, I have a purpose (for what I am about to do) which you do not know" (2:30).

rejected the truth. But man accepted the trust and assumed its burden.”⁶ The trust, or divine will, which no heaven-and-earth can realize is the moral law which demands freedom from the agent. In heaven-and-earth, the will of God is realized with the necessity of natural law.⁷ It is His inalterable *sunnah* or pattern which, implanted in creation, causes creation to run as it does. Natural law cannot be violated by nature. Its total fulfillment is all that nature is capable of doing.⁸ But man, who boldly accepts the trust, is capable of doing as well as not doing the will of God.⁹ Only he, therefore, of all creatures, satisfies the prerequisites of moral action, namely freedom. Moral values are more conditioned than the elemental values of nature since they presuppose them. Equally, they presuppose the utilitarian or instrumental values and therefore stand higher than either of these. Evidently, they are the higher part of the divine will which necessitates the creation of man and his appointment as the vicegerent of divinity on earth.

Because of this endowment, man stands higher than the angels, for he can do more than them.¹⁰ He can act morally, i.e., in freedom, which

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ...
(الأحزاب: ٧٢)

⁶ We offered Our trust (*amanah*) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains. They shied away from it in fear, panic-stricken. But man accepted to carry it (33:72).

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ (القمر: ٤٩) وَمِمَّنْ دَابَّتْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رُجُوعُهَا وَعِلْمُهُ مُنْقَرًا وَمُسْتَوْدَعًا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ (هود: ٦) وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْتَنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيرِ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ (يس: ٣٨-٤٠)

⁷ Everything We have created and prescribed for it its measure, its character and destiny (54:49)... No creature creeps on earth but Allah provides for it its sustenance. He knows its purpose and destiny. For it is He Who prescribed them in His eternal order (11:6)... The sun rises and sets, traversing its orbit exactly as the Almighty has ordained. And the moon passes regularly through its phases, returning to its original thin crescent form. Neither sun nor moon overtakes the other; neither night nor day deviates from their preordained courses. Each moves in the orbit Allah has ordained for it (36:38-40).

⁸ Ibid.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ ...
(الزمر: ٤١)

⁹ We revealed to you the Book in truth, that you may proclaim it to the world. Whoever decides to be guided by its guidance does so to his own credit. Whoever rejects its guidance does so to his own discredit (39:41).

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا ... (البقرة: ٣٤)

¹⁰ And We commanded the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam. They did... (2:34).

they cannot. Man equally shares the necessity of natural causation in his vegetative and animal life, in his physical presence as a thing among things on earth. But as the being through whom the higher part of God's will can be realized, he stands absolutely without peer. His is a cosmic vocation, a genuine *khilāfah* (vicegerency) of the divine order.

It would indeed be a poor, uncoordinated work on the part of God if He had created such a cosmic creature as man without enabling him to know His will; or placing him on earth which is not malleable enough to receive man's discharge of his ethical vocation; or one where the doing or not-doing of that will would make no difference.

To know the divine will, man was given revelation, a direct and immediate disclosure of what God wants him to realize on earth. Wherever the revelation was corrupted, perverted, or forgotten, God has repeated the performance, taking into consideration the relativities of history, the changes in space and time, all to the purpose of keeping within man's reach a ready knowledge of the moral imperatives. Equally, man is endowed with senses, reason and understanding, intuition, all the perfection necessary to enable him to discover the divine will unaided. For that will is imbedded not only in causal nature, but equally in human feelings and relations. Whereas the former half takes another exercise of the discipline called natural science to discover it, the second half takes the exercise of the moral sense and the discipline of ethics. The discoveries and conclusions are not certain. They are always subject to trial and error, to further experimentation, further analysis and to correction by deeper insight. But, all this notwithstanding, the search is possible, and reason cannot despair of reexamining and correcting its own previous findings without falling into skepticism and cynicism. Thus, knowledge of the divine will is possible by reason, certain by revelation. Once perceived, the desirability of its content is a fact of human consciousness. Indeed, the apprehension of value, the suffering of its moving appeal and determinative power, is itself the "knowledge" of it. For to know value is to lose one's ontological poise or equilibrium and to roll in the direction of it, that is to say, to suffer change, to begin the realization of its ought-to-be, to fulfill the ought-to-do which issues therefrom. As the leading American empiricist, C. I. Lewis, used to say: "The apprehension of value is an experience and is itself a 'value-ing'."¹¹

¹¹ C.I. Lewis elaborated upon this idea in his *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (La Salle: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1946), 416-17.

So much for the consequences of religious experience in Islam for the theory of man. We ought now to consider the implications for soteriology and history. We have already mentioned the malleability of the world, its readiness to be informed, kneaded, remolded and cut so as to make it a concretization of the divine pattern. This preparation, together with the availability of revelation and the promise of a critical establishment of the divine will by reason, all render unpardonable the failure of man to fulfill his vicegerency. Indeed, fulfillment of his vocation is the only condition Islam knows for man's salvation.¹² Either it is his own doing or it is worthless.¹³ Nobody can do the job for him, not even God, without rendering him a puppet. This follows from the nature of moral action, namely, it is not itself moral unless it is freely willed and undertaken to completion by a free agent. Without the initiative and effort of man, all moral worth or value falls to the ground.¹⁴

Islamic soteriology therefore is the diametrical opposite of that of traditional Christianity. Indeed, the term "salvation" has no equivalent in the religious vocabulary of Islam. There is no saviour and there is nothing from which to be saved. Man and world are either positively good or neutral, but not evil.¹⁵ Man begins his life ethically sane and sound, not weighed down by any original sin, however mild or Augustinian.¹⁶ In fact, at birth he is already above the zero point in that he has the revelation and his rational equipment ready for use, as well as a world all

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِعِبَادِي (الذاريات: ٥٦)

¹² And I [Allah] have not created the *jinn* and humans but to serve Me (51:56).

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ... (الملك: ٢)

¹³ It is Allah Who created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds (or, that you may excel one another by deeds of righteousness).. (67:2).

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ... (البقرة: ٢٥٦) ... فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفِرْ ... (الكهف: ٢٩)

¹⁴ There is no compulsion in religion. Truth and righteousness are henceforth manifestly distinguished from their opposites (2:256). Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will let him disbelieve (18:29).

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ... (السجدة: ٧) الَّذِي خَلَقَ فُسُوقِي (الأعلى: ٢)

¹⁵ It is Allah Who created everything in the best form (32:7)... It is He Who created and perfected all things (87:2).

¹⁶ Saint Augustine, *The Enchiridion*. chap. 26. For an analysis of the Christian conception of sin, see this author's *Christian Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Analysis of Its Dominant Ideas* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), chap. VI.

too ready to receive his ethical deed.¹⁷ His *ḥalāḥ* (felicity; felicity through works; ethical felicity; success; happiness and ease), a term Islam uses which comes from the root meaning "to grow vegetation out of the earth," consists of his fulfillment of the divine imperative.)¹⁸ He can hope for God's mercy and forgiveness, but he may not count on it while refraining from doing the divine will whether out of ignorance, laziness or blatant defiance. His fate and destiny are exactly what he himself makes them to be.¹⁹ God's government is just, neither favorable nor unfavorable. Its scale of justice is absolutely that of the most precise and perfect balance. And its system of worldly and other worldly rewards and punishments disposes for everyone, whether blest or unblest, exactly what he deserves.²⁰

Islamic religious experience has great consequence for world history. The fire of the Muslim's vision caused him to hurl himself onto the stage of history, therein to effect the realization of the divine pattern his Prophet (SAAS) had communicated to him. Nothing was for him worthier than this cause. In its interest, he was prepared to pay the maximum price, that of laying down his life. True to its content, he regarded his stage as consisting of the whole world; of his *ummah* as consisting of mankind minus a few recalcitrant people whom he sought to bring within

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ (البلد: ٨-١٠) وَسَعَىٰ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا... (الجمالية: ١٣) الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ (الزخرف: ١٠)

¹⁷ Have We not created for men their eyes, their tongues and lips? Have we not granted them their senses of orientation? (90:8-10). Allah has indeed made all that is in heaven and earth subservient to humankind (45:13)... It is He indeed Who made the earth men's dwelling place; Who made for you roads thereby you may find guidance (to destinations) (43:10).

¹⁸ M.M. al Zubaydi, *Tāj al Arūs* (Dār Maktabat al Hayah, 1965), s.v. "f-l-h," vol. 2, 199.

يَوْمَ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (الزلزلة: ٦-٨)

¹⁹ On that day [the Day of Judgment], all people will be resurrected and shown their own deeds. Whoever does an atom's weight of good will behold it then, and whoever does an atom's weight in evil, it will be reckoned unto him with equal precision (99:6-8).

... وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي قَوْمًا ظَالِمًا بَلَّغًا عَمِيلٍ (آل عمران: ١٨٢) فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أَبْصِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمِيلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى... (آل عمران: ١٩٥)

²⁰ Allah never treats His servants unjustly (3:182). Allah accepts the prayers of those who pray to Him, that He will never lose account of any good deed by anyone, whether male or female (3:195).

the fold by force of arms. His *pax Islamica*, which stood on his arms, was never conceived as a monolithic society in which Islam alone predominates. It included Jews, Christians, Sabeans by Quranic authority, Zoroastrians by Muhammadan authority, and Hindus and Buddhists by the jurists' extrapolation of that authority. The ideal remained the same, namely, a world in which, as the Quran puts it, "the divine word is supreme," and everybody recognizes that supremacy.²¹ But for such recognition to be worth anything at all it must be free, the deliberate decision of every person. That is why to enter into the *pax Islamica* never meant conversion to Islam, but entry into a peaceful relationship wherein ideas are free to move and men are free to convince and to be convinced. Indeed, the Islamic state put all its resources at the disposal of Jewish society, Christian society, Hindu and Buddhist society, whenever these sought its authority to bring back into line with Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism any member who defied or transcended that line. The Islamic state was the only non-Jewish state where the Jew was not free to de-Judaize himself, or to rebel as a Jew against the authority of Judaism. The same applied to the Christian, Hindu or Buddhist. Whereas, up to his emancipation in the nineteenth century, the European Jew who defied the directive of this *Bayt ha Din* could only be excommunicated—such excommunication making of him a lawless man, awaited just outside the walls of the ghetto by the Christian state or any non-Jew to be dispossessed and killed—the oriental Jew who defied *Bayt ha Din* was corrected by the Islamic state in the name of his rabbis. This constitutes an ultimate proof of the Muslim understanding of the divine trust as ethical.

II. *AL TAWHĪD* AS WORLDVIEW

Traditionally and simply expressed, *al tawhīd* is the conviction and witnessing that "there is no god but God." This seemingly negative statement, brief to the utmost limits of brevity, carries the greatest and richest meanings in the whole of Islam. Sometimes a whole culture, a whole

... وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَىٰ وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا (التوبة: ٤٠)
 ... وَيَكُونُ الَّذِينَ يُلُوا ... (البقرة: ١٩٣)

²¹ It is He Who humbled to the depths, the word of the unbelievers; He Who made His word supreme (9:40)... That religion be all His alone (2:193).

civilization, or a whole history lies compressed in one sentence. This certainly is the case of the *al kalimah* (pronouncement) or *al shahādah* of Islam. All the diversity, wealth and history, culture and learning, wisdom and civilization of Islam is compressed in this shortest of sentences - *lā ilāha illā Allah* (There is no god but God.)

Al Tawhīd is a general view of reality, of truth, of the world, of space and time, of human history and destiny. At its core, stand the following principles:

A. DUALITY

Reality is of two generic kinds, God and non-God; Creator and creature. The first order has but one member, Allah (SWT). He alone is God, the Eternal, the Creator, the Transcendent. "Nothing is like unto Him."²² He remains forever absolutely unique and devoid of partners and associates.²³ The second is the order of space-time, of experience, of creation. It includes all creatures, the world of things, plants and animals, humans, *jinn* and angels, heaven and earth, paradise and hell, and all their becoming since they came into being. The two orders of Creator and creation are utterly and absolutely disparate as far as their being, or ontology, as well as their experience and careers, are concerned. It is forever impossible that the one be united with, infused, confused with or diffused into the other. Neither can the Creator be ontologically transformed so as to become the creature, nor can the creature trans-

فَاطْرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ... لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ (الدورى: ١١) ... وَتَعَلَّى عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ (الأَنْعَام: ١٠٠) لَا تَدْرِيكَ الْبَصَرُ وَهُوَ يَدْرِيكَ الْبَصَرُ... (الأَنْعَام: ١٠٣)

²² Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the earth... Nothing is like unto Him. He is All Hearing, All Seeing (42:11)... Transcendent is He beyond all their descriptions of Him (6:100). Sight can never reach Him; His sight reaches all things.. (6:103).

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ (الإخلاص: ١-٤)
وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ... (الأَنْعَام: ١٠٠)

²³ Proclaim: Allah is One, Eternal. He neither begets nor is begotten. Nothing is ever comparable to Him (112:1-4)... They ascribed the *jinn* as associates to Allah, (though Allah did create the *jinn*). They even ascribed to Him sons and daughters. All this they did with no knowledge (6:100).

cent and transfigure itself so as to become, in any way or sense, the Creator.²⁴

B. IDEATIONALITY

The relation between the two orders of reality is ideational in nature. Its point of reference in man is the faculty of understanding. As organ and repository of knowledge, the understanding includes all the gnoseological functions, such as memory, imagination, reasoning, observation, intuition, apprehension, etc. All humans are endowed with understanding. The endowment is strong enough to understand the will of God in either or both of the following ways: When that will is expressed in words, directly by God to man, or "the laws of nature," the divine will is deductible through observation of creation.²⁵

C. TELEOLOGY

The nature of the cosmos is teleological; that is, purposive, serving a purpose of its Creator, and doing so out of design. The world has not been created in vain or in sport.²⁶ It is not the work of chance, a happenstance. It is created in perfect condition. Everything that exists does

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا إِلَهًا مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ هُمْ يُنْشِرُونَ لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلَهِةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ
لَا يَسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ آلَهِةً قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ ... (الأنبياء: ٢١، ٢٢، ٢٣، ٢٤)

²⁴ Or, have they chosen a deity from the earth who raise the dead? If there were therein gods beside Allah, then verily both (the heaven and the earth) would have been disordered. Glorified be Allah, the Lord of the throne from all that they ascribed (to Him). He will not be questioned as to that which He does but they will be questioned. Or have they chosen other deities beside Him? Say: Bring your proof (of their deity)... (21:21-4).

... قُلْ نَحْمَدُكَ اللَّهُ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ نَجِدَ لِسَانَ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا (فاطر: ٤٣)

²⁵ As to the patterns of Allah in creation, you will never find exception. The patterns of Allah are immutable (35:43).

... وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا تُسَبِّحُكَ ... (آل عمران: ١٩١)

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَئِيْمِينَ (الأنبياء: ١٦)

²⁶ [Righteous are] those who ponder the creation of heaven and earth and affirm, "O Allāh! You have not created this creation in vain" (3:19)... Certainly, We have not created heaven and earth and what is in between in sport (21:16).

so in a measure proper to it and fulfills a certain universal purpose.” The world is indeed a “cosmos,” an orderly creation, not a “chaos.” In it, the will of the Creator is always realized. His patterns are fulfilled with the necessity of natural law, for they are innate in the way other than what the Creator has ordained for it.²⁸ This is true of all creatures—except man. Human action is the only instance where the will of God is actualized not necessarily, but deliberately, freely, voluntarily. The physical and psychic functions of man are integral to nature, and as such they obey the laws pertinent to them with the same necessity as all other creatures. But the spiritual function, viz., the understanding and moral action, fall outside the realm of determined nature. They depend upon their subject and follow his determination. Actualization of the divine will by them is of a qualitatively different value than necessary actualization by other creatures. Necessary fulfillment applies only to elemental or utilitarian values; free fulfillment to the moral. However, the moral purposes of God, His commandments to man, do have a base in the physical world, and hence there is a utilitarian aspect to them. But this is not what gives them their distinctive quality, namely, that of being moral. It is precisely their aspect of being fulfillable in freedom, that is, the possibility of being fulfilled or violated remaining always open, that gives them the special dignity we ascribe to things “moral.”²⁹

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَخَلَقَهُ... (السجدة: ٧) الَّذِي خَلَقَ نَفْسِي (الأعلى: ٢) اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ
فَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ... (غافر: ٦٤) ... وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي
إِمَامٍ مُبِينٍ (يس: ١٢)

²⁷ [Allah] Who created everything and did so perfectly (32:7)... [Allah] Who created and perfected His creature (87:2)... [Allah] Who made for you the earth a place of settlement, the firmament a protective canopy and Who formed you in the best of forms (40:64)... To everything Allah has prescribed its nature and fixed its place in the eternal order (36:12).

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ... وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَفَعَلَهُ مَقْدِيرًا (الفرقان: ٢) قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَكَ الْإِلَاحُ
كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا... (التوبة: ٥١)

²⁸ Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of heaven and earth. He created all things. To each and everything He prescribed its measure [its character, course or destiny] (25:2) Say: Nothing will happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us. (9:51).

²⁹ Qur'an 33:72 (quoted earlier). This is the lesson of the dramatic account given in the Qur'an of the *amanah* Allah offered to nature, but which nature could not bear, and which man voluntarily accepted and carried. In essence, it is the moral principle that *taklif* (obligation) necessarily implies *qudrah* (capability to act) and *ikhtiyar* (freedom to choose).

D. CAPACITY OF MAN AND MALLEABILITY OF NATURE

Since everything was created for a purpose—the totality of being no less so—the realization of that purpose must be possible in space and time.³⁰ Otherwise, there is no escape from cynicism. Creation itself, the processes of space and time, would lose their meaning and significance. Without this possibility, *taklif* (charge, moral obligation, responsibility), falls to the ground; and with its fall, either God's purposiveness or His might is destroyed. Realization of the absolute, namely, the divine *raison d'être* of creation, must be possible in history, that is, within the process of time between creation and the Day of Judgement. As subject of moral action, man must therefore be capable of changing himself, his fellows or society, nature or his environment, so as to actualize the divine pattern, or commandment, in himself as well as in them.³¹ As a subject of moral action, man as well as his fellows and environment must all be capable of receiving the efficacious action of man, the subject. This capacity is the converse of man's moral capacity for action as subject. Without it man's capacity for moral action would be impossible and the purposive nature of the universe would collapse. Again, there would be no recourse from cynicism. For creation to have a purpose—and this is a necessary assumption if God is God and His work is not a meaningless *travail de singe*—creation must be malleable, transformable. capable of changing its substance, structure, conditions and relations so as to embody or concretize the human pattern or purpose. This is at once true of all creation, including man's physical, psychic, and spiritual natures. All creation is capable of realization of the ought-to-be, or the will or pattern of God, or the absolute³² in this space and in this time.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِعِبَادِي (الذاريات: ٥٦) أَلَيْسَ خَلْقَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْحَيَاةِ لِبَلَاءِكُمْ إِن كُمْ لَعَسَاءً ...
(المالك: ٢)

³⁰ I [Allah] have not created jinn and humans but to serve Me (51:56)... [Allah] Who created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds (67:2).

³¹ Ibid.

سُبْحَانَكَ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا لَيْسَ بِمُحَدِّدٍ ... (الإسراء: ٤٤)

³² The seven heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, praise [obey] Allah. Nothing exists but it praises (obeys) Allah (17:44).

E. RESPONSIBILITY AND JUDGEMENT

We have seen that man stands under the obligation to change himself, society and environment so as to conform to the divine pattern. We have also seen that he is capable of doing so, since creation is malleable and capable of receiving his action and embodying its purpose. It follows from these facts that man is responsible.³³ Moral obligation is impossible without responsibility or reckoning. Unless man is responsible, and somehow and somewhere he will be reckoned with as far as his deeds are concerned, cynicism becomes once more inevitable. Judgement, or the consummation of responsibility, is the necessary condition of moral obligation, or moral imperativeness. It flows from the very nature of "normativeness."³⁴ It is immaterial whether reckoning takes place in space-time or at end of it or both; but it must take place. To obey God, i.e., to realize His commandments and actualize His pattern, is to incur *falāḥ*. Not to do so, i.e., to disobey Him, is to incur punishment, suffering, unhappiness, and the agonies of failure.³⁵

The foregoing five principles are self-evident truths. They constitute the core of *al tawḥīd* and the quintessence of Islam. They are equally the core of *Ḥanifism*, of all the revelations that came from heaven. All the prophets have taught these principles and built their movements upon them. Equally, these principles are built by God in the very fabric of

...وَهُمْ يُنْشَأُونَ (الأنبياء: ٢٣)

³³ And they [all humans] shall be reckoned with (21:23).

(There are numerous other passages in the Qur'an whose main support is the affirmation of man's responsibility.)

³⁴ This is what Islam understands by the idea of *ḥisāb*. *Yawm al Ḥisāb* is the Day of Judgment. The idea that Allah (SWT) is going to "reckon" (to do *ḥisāb*) with humans is ubiquitous in the Qur'an and it may be said to be the very foundation of the whole moral/religious system.

³⁵ Any casual reading of the Qur'anic *sūrah(s)* revealed in Makkah will confirm this understanding of Allah's relation to man as covenantal. It is equally the understanding of all previous prophets and their followers. The same covenantal spirit provides the religious and moral foundation of the ancients. It is evident in Mesopotamia's *Enuma Elish* and the codes of law of Lippit Ishtar and Hammurabi. See James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955).

فَأَنْذِرْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (الروم: ٣٠)

³⁶ And turn yourself to primordial religion as a *ḥanīf*, true to the innate religion with which Allah endowed all humans. Immutability is Allah's creation. It is the true and valuable religion; but most people do not know (30:30).

human nature, constituting the unerring natural religion or natural conscience upon which human acquired knowledge, rests. Naturally, all Islamic culture is built upon them, and together they form the core of *al tawhīd*, knowledge, personal and social ethics, esthetics and Muslim life and action throughout history.

F. CONCLUSION

The essence of religious experience in Islam, we may say in conclusion, is the realization that life is not in vain, that it must serve a purpose the nature of which cannot be identical with the natural flow of appetite to satisfaction to new appetite and new satisfaction. For the Muslim, finality consists of two utterly separate orders, the natural and the transcendent, and it is to the latter that he looks for the values by which to govern the flow of the former. Having identified the transcendent realm as God, he rules out any guidance of action that does not proceed therefrom. His rigorous *al tawhīd* is, in final analysis, a refusal to subject human life to any guidance other than the ethical. Hedonism, eudaemonism and all other theories which find moral value in the very process of natural life are his *bête noire*. In his view, to accept any of them is to set other gods besides God as the guide and norm of human action. *Shirk* (the association of other gods with God, violation of *al tawhīd*), is really the mixing up of the moral values with the elemental and utilitarian which are all instrumental and never final.

To be a Muslim is precisely to perceive God alone (that is, the Creator, and not nature or the creature) as normative, His will alone as commandment, His pattern alone as constituting the ethical desiderata of creation. The content of the Muslim's vision is truth, beauty and goodness; but these for him are not beyond the pale of his noetic faculties. He is therefore an axiologist in his religious disciplines of exegesis, but only to the end of reaching a sound deontology, as a jurist. Justification by faith is for him meaningless, unless it is the simple introduction into the arena of action. It is there that he claims his best, as well as his worst. He knows that as man, he stands alone between heaven and earth with none but his axiological vision to show the road, his will to commit his energies to the task and his conscience to guard against pitfalls. His prerogative is to lead the life of cosmic danger for no god is there to do the job for him. Not only is the job done if and when he has done

it for himself, but he cannot withdraw. His predicament, if he has any by nature, is that he must carry the divine trust to complete realization or perish, as a Muslim, in the process.³⁷ Surely, tragedy lurks behind every corner in his path. But that is also his pride. As Plato had put it, he is "doomed to love the good."

³⁷ Consider in this regard the answer of the Prophet (SAAS) when his uncle Abū Ṭālib asked him to desist and put an end to the sufferings of the Hāshim clan at the hands of its enemies in Makkah because of Islam. "O my uncle," he said, "if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I would never forsake this call [to preach the new religion] even if I should perish." Muhammad Ḥusain Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, tr. Ismā'īl R. al Fārūqī (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1976) 89.

CHAPTER II

THE QUINTESSENCE OF ISLAM

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF *AL TAWHĪD*

There can be no doubt that the essence of Islamic civilization is Islam; or that the essence of Islam is *al tawhīd*, the act of affirming Allah (SWT) to be the One, the absolute, transcendent Creator, the Lord and Master of all that is.

These two fundamental premises are self-evident, not subject to doubt by those who belonged to Islamic civilization or participated in it. And only very recently have missionaries, orientalist and other enemies of Islam subjected them to doubt. However, it is for us, Muslims, self-evident. Islam, Islamic culture and Islamic civilization have a knowledge essence, namely, *al tawhīd*,¹ which is capable of analysis and description. Analysis of *al tawhīd* as essence, i.e., as the first determining principle of Islam, its culture and civilization, is the subject of this chapter.

Al tawhīd is that which gives Islamic civilization its identity, which binds all its constituents together and thus makes of them an integral, organic body which we call civilization. In binding disparate elements together, the essence of civilization in this case, *al tawhīd*—impresses them by its own mould. It recasts them so as to harmonize with and mutually support other elements. Without necessarily changing their natures, the essence transforms the elements making up a civilization, giving them their new character as constitutive of that civilization. The degree of transformation may vary from slight to radical. It is slight when it affects their form, and radical when it affects their function; for it is the latter that constitutes their relevance to the essence. That is why the Muslims developed the science of *ʿilm al tawhīd* and subsumed under it the disciplines of logic, epistemology, metaphysics and ethics.

¹ Ismāʿīl R. al Fārūqī, "Jawhar al Ḥaḍārah al Islāmīyah," *Al Muslim al Muʿāṣir*, vol. 7, no. 27 (1901/1981), 1-27. This article was published along with "Critical Response" and "Response to the Response" in *Al Islām wa al Ḥaḍārah* (Riyadh: W.A.M.Y. Publications, 1401/1981), vol. 2, 583-668.

Allah (SWT) has said: "I have not created *jinn* and mankind except to serve Me ... And to every people We sent a prophet to convey to them that they ought to serve Allah and avoid *al tāghūt* ... Your Lord has decreed that you shall serve none but Him. Serve Allah and do not associate aught with Him ... Come, let me tell you what your Lord has forbidden you; namely, that you do not associate aught with him."²

These verses from the Holy Quran clearly indicate that the very purpose of man's creation is the service of God alone. Only God is worthy of worship; only He is worthy of service. His "Face," i.e., His sake, should be the end of human desire, of all human action. This is the whole essence of the message of our Prophet Muhammad (SAAS), which he could hardly express but in the words of God: "Come, let me tell you what your Lord has forbidden you; namely, that you do not associate with Him."³ That *al tawhīd* is the highest and most important commandment of God is evidenced by the fact of God's promise to forgive all sins but the violation of *al tawhīd*. "Allah will not forgive any associating of other gods with Him; but He will forgive the lesser sins to whomsoever He wills. Whoever associates aught with Allah, has perpetrated a very grave sin."⁴

Obviously, no commandment in Islam would hold without *al tawhīd*. The whole religion itself, man's obligation to serve God, to fulfill His commandments and observe His prohibitions would fall to the ground the moment *al tawhīd* is violated. For, to violate *al tawhīd* is to doubt that Allah (SWT) is the One and only God. But to do so means to assume that other beings may share His divinity. This cannot be done without

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْإِنْسَ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات: ٥٦) وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ... (النحل: ٣٦) وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِلَٰهًا ... (الإسراء: ٢٣) وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ... (النساء: ٣٦) قُلْ تَمَنَّاؤُا أَتْلُو مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ
شَيْئًا ... (الأنعام: ١٥١)

² I have not created the *jinn* and humankind but to serve Me (51:56)... Unto every people We have sent a messenger to teach that service is due only to Allah, and that evil ought to be avoided (16:36)... Your Lord has prescribed that you shall serve none but Him (17:36)... Serve Allah and do not associate aught with Him (4:36)... Say [O Muhammad] to the people, "Come now, let me tell you what your Lord has prohibited; First, that you associate no god with Him" (6:151).

³ (6:151).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشْرِكْ بِهِ، وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ، وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ٤٨)

⁴ Allah does not forgive any ascription of associates to Him, but He forgives all other offenses to whomsoever He wills. Whoever, therefore, ascribes partners to Allah has committed a sin most heinous indeed (4:48).

doubting the obligatoriness of Allah's commandment. For if two or more gods were possible, it is logically necessary that one should seek an individual relation with his creation or his dependents; that one should rise above the other in mutual competition.⁵ Such gods would be of no avail to men unless one were to destroy or subjugate the others, for only then could he be the "ultimate" being the definition of "God" requires. Only an "ultimate" source could stand as the final good, the final authority, the final principle. Otherwise, the authority of a subservient god, of a god with whom there may be other gods, would stand always open to question. That is why Allah (SWT) said in the Quran: "If in them (heaven and earth) there were other gods than Allah, they would have fallen into chaos."⁶ Nature cannot obey two masters; it cannot operate in orderly manner and be the cosmos it is if there are two or more sources of authority, two or more ultimate movers.

Without *al tawhīd*, therefore, there can be no Islam. Certainly, not only the *sunnah* of our Prophet (SAAS) would be subject to doubt, and its imperatives shaken; the very institution of prophecy would fall to the ground. The same doubt which pertains to the plural gods would apply to their messages. To hold on to the principle of *al tawhīd* is therefore the cornerstone of all piety, of all religiosity, and all virtue. Naturally, Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAAS) have raised observance of *al tawhīd* to the highest status and made it the cause of the greatest merit and reward. He said: "Those who believed and mixed not their *īmān* (belief, faith) with injustice, to them belong security. They are the rightly guided,"⁷ Likewise, it was related by 'Ubādah ibn al Ṣāmit that the Prophet of Allah (SAAS) said: "Whoever witnesses that there is no god but Allah, alone, without associate, and that Muhammad is His ser-

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَدَّهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَمَّا لَبِثُوا عَلَىٰ صُفْحِنَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (المؤمنون: ٩١)

⁵ Allah never beget or adopted a son. Never did He have an associate. Otherwise, every god would have sought exclusive dominion over his part of creation as well as dominion over the others. But Allah is beyond all their descriptions (23:91).

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (الأنبياء: ٢٢)

⁶ If there were other gods beside Allah, heaven and earth would collapse in disorder and chaos. Praised therefore be Allah, Lord of the Throne, Transcendent beyond all their descriptions of Him (21:22).

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُسْتَبَدُّونَ (الأنعام: ٨٢)

⁷ The rightly guided, who believe and do not vitiate their faith by committing injustice. Theirs is safety and guidance (6:82).

vant and apostle, that 'Īsā (Jesus) is the servant of Allah and His apostle, His command unto Mary and of His spirit, that Paradise and Hell are true, Allah would on that account enter him into Paradise." This *ḥadīth* was reported in both *Ṣaḥīḥ(s)* which also recorded the report of 'Itbān that the Prophet (SAAS) said: "Allah will not permit to be consigned to Hell anyone who witnesses 'There is no god but God,' seeking thereby nothing but Allah's face." The Prophet (SAAS) is also reported by Abū Sa'īd al Khudrīy as saying: "When Mūsā (Moses) asked Allah to teach him a prayer to recite whenever he remembered or called upon Him, Allah answered: "Say, O Mūsā, there is no god but Allah," Mūsā said: "O Lord, all your servants say these words." Allah said: "O Mūsā, if the seven heavens and all they hold, and the seven earths as well, if all these were weighed against this word of 'There is no god but Allah,' the latter would outweigh the former." It is also reported by al Tirmidhī that Anas heard the Prophet (SAAS) say: "Allah said: 'O man! Were you to come to Me with all the bags of the world full of your sins, but with the witnessing that you associate naught with Me, I would come to you with those bags full of mercy and forgiveness.'"⁸

It is no wonder therefore that the Muslim is definable by his adherence to *al tawḥīd* by his profession of its *shahādah*, by his observance of the absolute unicity and transcendence of Allah (SWT) as the ultimate principle of all creation, of all being and life, of all religion.

II. DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Being the youngest world religion and stemming from the same Semitic roots out of which Judaism and Christianity had previously emerged, Islam had to relate itself to these religions. It regards them as it did itself. They and it constitute successive moments of Semitic consciousness in its long march as the carrier of a divine mission on earth and hence as the vortex of human history. While it thus identified with Judaism and Christianity, Islam found fault with them and sought to correct their historical manifestations. The error most grievous to Semitic consciousness and hence least pardonable in the eye of God (Quran 4:47, 155) Islam identified as that of misconceiving the transcendence of God.

⁸ Quoted by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al Wāḥḥāb in his *Kitāb al Tawḥīd*. See: tr, by this author under same title (Kuwait: I.I.F.S.O., 1399/1979), 9.

Judaism and Christianity, it asserted, have made themselves guilty of it; not their primeval form, in the revelations they received from God, but in their historical form, in the texts they accepted as scripture and in their expressions of their faith for the instruction of men.

A. ISLAM'S CRITICISM OF JUDAISM

Islam charged Judaism with speaking of God in the plural *Elohim* throughout the Torah; with claiming that the *Elohim* married the daughters of men (Genesis 6:2-4); that Jacob and his wife stole "the gods" of Laban because they cherished them (Genesis 31:32); that God is a ghost whom Jacob beheld "face to face" and with whom he had wrestled and nearly defeated (Genesis 33:24-30); that God was the father of Jewish kings (Psalms 2:7; 89:26; II Samuel 7:14; I Chronicles 17:13, etc.); that God was father of their nation in a real sense (Hosea 1:10; Isaiah 9:6; 63:14-16) which does not become invalid even by their "a-whoring" after other gods (Hosea 2:2-13). Islam also charged that the relation Judaism claimed to bind God to "His People" straight-jacketed Him into granting them favors despite their immorality, their hardship and stiffneckedness (Deuteronomy 9:5-6). A "bound" god, bound in any sense or degree, is not the transcendent God of Semitic consciousness.

B. THE OFFENSE OF CHRISTIANITY

The offense of Christianity against transcendence was even greater. Islam charged Christianity with extending the nontranscendent concept to God's "fatherhood of the Jewish kings" to Jesus and giving it, besides its moral signification of compliance with God's commandments, the de-transcendentalizing ontological connotation of unity of substance between God and Jesus.⁹ Indeed, Christian catholicity defined itself with terms of this "substantial" identity of Jesus with God, as distinct from plurality of their "personalities." characters and consciousness. Obviously, the source of this new departure from transcendence of the divine being within the Semitic stream was not the Jewish inheritance of Christianity. This had given Christianity the concepts, not their connotation. Neither

⁹ H. Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 61, 68-69.

was gnosticism the source of that departure, whose argument "If he suffer, he was not God; if he was God, he did not suffer" was hurled against their fellow Christians in defence of transcendence.¹⁰ The source must be the non-Semitic influence of the "mystery religions." It was from this source that Christianity derived its "suffering God" who saves by dying and returning to life and whose *mana* (grace) is imparted to the communicant thought sacrament.¹¹

This anti-transcendence influence on Christianity at its formative stage was partly responsible for its success among non-Semitic peoples unfamiliar with the notion of God as "totally-other." It is equally responsible for the misinterpretation of innocent Hebrew and Aramaic concepts current among Jesus' contemporaries. *Barnash* or *bar-Adam* meant a well-bred and hence virtuous person. But it acquired in St. Paul a mysterious metaphysical dimension. Any righteous person could claim what Jesus did, namely, "I and my father (God) are one," in the sense of total compliance with God's will. Christians, however, took this to mean that Jesus claimed divine status. Whereas *Kurie*, *D. Kurios*, *Mar Mari* and *Maran* were among Semites attributable to anyone in authority, Christians took this attribution to Jesus by his Semitic disciples as their evidence of assuming him to be God. Finally, Christian theologians, taking all these elements for granted, searched the Hebrew scripture for evidence of plural divinity. With typical intellectual clumsiness, Augustine, Tertullian and many others thought they found in the plural pronouns of Genesis, "Let *us* create man according to *our* image" (Genesis: 1:28) the evidence for three persons in the deity! This has remained a Christian "argument" to the present day held by such a notable thinker as Karl Barth. Indeed, Barth shamelessly claimed that maleness and femaleness were intrinsic to the divine nature because Genesis had reported immediately after the above-mentioned statement, "Male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:28). Since the former statement ends with the word "image," he thought, the latter statement must be an apposition to the term and hence indicating maleness and femaleness as constitutive of the divine image!¹² Christians have committed themselves to divine non-transcendence so resolutely that it had become with them an *idée fixe*, enabling Paul Tillich to declare *sub specie eternitatis* that the transcendent God is unknown and

¹⁰ Couched in this form, the argument is known as "the Arian Syllogism." See Bettenson, 56.

¹¹ G. Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), 156-57.

¹² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* tr. G.W. Bromley and T.F. Torrence (London: T. & T. Clark, 1960), III, part 1, 190ff.

unknowable unless He is concretized in an object of nature and history.¹³

Since this was the state of "God's transcendence" in Christianity, the language expressing it was equally improper. Although Christians never ceased to claim that God is transcendent, they spoke of Him as a real man who walked on earth and did all things men do, including the suffering of the agonies of death. Of course, according to them, Jesus was both man and God. They never took a consistent position on Jesus' humanity or divinity with accusation of apostasy and heresy. That is why their language is always confusing, at best. When pinned down, every Christian will have to admit that his God is both transcendent and immanent. But his claim of transcendence is *ipso facto* devoid of grounds. To maintain the contrary, one has to give up the laws of logic. But Christianity was prepared to go to this length too. It raised paradox above self-evident truth and vested it with the status of an epistemological principle. But under such principle, anything can be asserted and discussion becomes idle. The Christian may not claim that the trinity is a way of talking about God; because if the trinity discloses the nature of God better than unity, a greater plurality would do the job better. At any rate, to reduce the "Holy Trinity" to a status of *in percipi* is heretical as it denies *una substantia* as metaphysical doctrine.

III. DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE IN ISLAM

A world of difference separates Islam from Judaism and Christianity on this question.

Islam declares the transcendence of God to be everybody's business. It asserts that God has created all humans capable of knowing Him in His transcendence. This is an innate endowment, a *fiṭrah* (*sensus communis*, the state of nature in which every man is born) which all humans share.¹⁴ Its nature is that of a faculty with which humans recognize divine ultimacy, unity and transcendence. Islam thus tolerates no discrimination *à la hindoue* between humans who may contemplate the Absolute in its transcendence and those who may perceive Him only through other

¹³ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), vol 2, 40.

¹⁴ Rudolph Otto came close to the Islamic position when he affirmed that all men are endowed with a faculty—which he names *sensus communis*, borrowing an expression of Immanuel Kant—which enables them to perceive the Holy in His mysterious of numinous existence, as well as in His might and moving appeal or fascination. See his *The Idea of the Holy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), chap. 5.

gods or idols. Since recognition of divine transcendence is something innate to humanity and hence necessary, Islam attributes all departures from that norm to nature and history. Forgetfulness, mental laziness, passion and vested interest, Islam explains, are the causes of such and continue from generation to generation.

This is the first assertion of the Islamic creed that "There is no god but God," which the Muslim understands as denial of any associates to God in His rulership and judgeship of the universe, as well as a denial of the possibility for any creature to represent, personify or in any way express the divine Being. The Quran says of God that "He is the Creator of heaven and earth Who creates by commanding the creature to be and it is ... He is the One God, the ultimate ... (2:117, 163). There is no God but He, ever-living, ever-active (3:2). May He be glorified beyond any description! (6:100) ... No sense may perceive Him (6:103) ... Praised be He, the Transcendent Who greatly transcends all claims and reports about Him (17:43)." In fulfillment of this view, the Muslims have been all too careful never to associate in any manner possible, any image or thing with the presence of the divine, or with their consciousness of the divine; and in their speech and writing about the divine to use only Quranic language, terms and expressions which, according to them, God has used about Himself in the Quranic revelation.

A. TRANSCENDENCE IN ART

The association of things and sensory images with God was meticulously avoided by Muslims at all times and places. Never has any Muslim mosque contained any object associated with divinity. The mosque has always been an empty building. Its walls and ceiling would be decorated either with verses from the Quran or with abstract arabesques. The latter were designs made of stylized stalk, leaf and flower, deliberately denaturalized and symmetrically repeated to dispel any suggestion of the creaturely natural as vehicle of expression for the divine. The arabesque could also consist of geometrical figures which by their very geometrical nature bespoke the denial of nature as expressive of the divine. The arabesque was expansive by nature, to suggest an infinite field of vision to which the interlacing of its figures propelled the imagination *ad infinitum*. It generated an "idea of reason" — the infinite continuation of itself—and demanded the imagination to produce the con-

tinuation beyond the given wall, panel, facade or floor plan. The imagination failed to produce the infinite continuation every time it was asked by an arabesque to do so; and, in the process, gave the subject an aesthetic intuition of infinity, a facet of transcendence.

All the arts of Islam developed in fulfillment of divine transcendence acting as supreme principle of esthetics. All Islamic arts developed stylization as denaturalization; all were nondevelopmental and nonfigurative; and all did their best to transubstantiate the natural forces of gravity and cohesion, the natural elements of mass, space and light, of water and color, of melody and rhythm, of physiognomy and perceptive—in short of everything natural and creaturely, into floating, air-suspended patterns suggestive of infinity. To my knowledge, transcendence in the fine art of Islam has known no exception worthy of consideration.¹⁵

B. TRANSCENDENCE IN LANGUAGE

Transcendence in language was equally well maintained by Muslims around the globe, speaking all sorts of languages and dialects and belonging to all sorts of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This was the objective of the Quranic dicta, “We (God) have revealed it an Arabic Quran” (12:2; 20:113)... We have sent it (the revelation) down an Arabic judgment (13:39); “We have revealed it in the Arabic tongue” (39:28; 41:3; 42:7; 43:3); “It is We Who shall collect it. We Who shall explain it” (75:16-19). Abiding by these dicta, Muslims treated only the Arabic original as the Quran and regarded the translations as mere aids to understanding it, not as text. Liturgical use of the Quran could be made only in Arabic. *Al ṣalāh*, the institutionalized worship, kept the form it was given it by the Prophet (SAAS) on divine instruction. Moreover the Quran gradually molded the consciousness of the non-Arab speaking converts and furnished the categories under which religious matters could be thought out and religious feelings could be expressed. Any God-talk by Muslims became exclusively Quran-talk, one adhering scrupulously to the Arabic categories of the Quran, and to its Arabic terms, its Arabic literary forms and expressions.

How did the Quran express transcendence? It gave 99 or more names for God expressing His Lordship of the world, and His Providence in

¹⁵ Ismāʿīl R. al Fārūqī. “Islam and Art,” *Studia Islamica*, Fasc. xxxvii, 81-109.

it; but it emphasized that "Nothing is like unto Him" (42:11). Anything belonging to His realm or associated with it like His words, His time, His light, etc.—the Quran described as something to which empirical categories cannot apply. "If all trees were pens and all seas were ink with which to record God's speech," (31:27); it asserted, "they would be exhausted before God's speech runs out" (18:109); "A day with God is like a thousand years of man's" (22:47); "The light of God is that of heaven and earth. Its likeness is the light of a lamp whose glass is a celestial star, whose fuel is from a blessed olive tree that is neither of the East nor of the West, incandescent without fire ..." (24:35). Thus, empirical language—figures and relations from the world are used; but with the unmistakable denial that they apply to God *simpliciter*.

In time, some non-Arabic speaking Muslims fell into the error of anthropomorphism as they attempted to achieve a more intimate acquaintance with Quranic teaching. Coming from religions where anthropomorphic representation of the deity was common, it was difficult for these new Muslims to shake off their anthropomorphic habit of mind. The Mu'tazilah rose to the defence of transcendence, and argued that the divine attributes had to be taken allegorically, not literally. In their enthusiasm, the Mu'tazilah asserted that God would not be visible to the righteous even in Paradise. The Quranic passage promising the same (75:22) was to be allegorically interpreted so as to nullify the apparent lexicographic meaning of the terms. The Muslim masses feared that any legitimization of allegorical interpretation would inescapably reduce the term as such, as well as of its lexicographic meanings; that once the lexicographic anchoring of terms is lifted, nothing is left to moor the meanings down and prevent them from floating downstream indiscriminately. That is the very risk that Judaism and Christianity had taken under the pressure of Hellenization, and as a result of which both suffered radical transformations.¹⁶

The task of articulating this fear fell to al Ash'arī (died 322 A.H./935 A.C.) who began his career as a Mu'tazilah member and then rebelled against them. The divine attribute, he said, is neither God, nor not God. *Al tashbīh* (anthropomorphism) is false; and so is *al ta'īl* (neutralization of the attributes through allegorical interpretation of them). The former is contradictory to transcendence; the latter, to the fact of the

¹⁶ See the debate of this author with Maurice Wiles, Regius Professor of Theology at Oxford University, on the subject of the expression of divine transcendence in language, in "World Faiths," *Journal of the World Congress of Faiths*, no. 107, (Spring 1979), 2-19.

Quran's predication of the attributes to God, which is tantamount to denying the revelation itself. The solution of the dilemma, he reasoned, was first, in accepting the revealed text as it is, i.e., as one whose meaning is anchored in the lexicography of its terms; and second, in rejecting the question, "How the commonsense meaning is predicable to the transcendent being" as illegitimate. This process, he called *bilā kayf* (without how).¹⁷

Obviously, al Ash'arī meant to say that anthropomorphism is inevitable if the question of the how of predication of the attribute is raised in the expectation of an answer similar to that analyzing the relation of the predicate to subject in the empirical world. Since the subject and predicate are transcendent, the question itself is invalid. Obviously too, al Ash'arī meant that once the lexicographic meaning of the predicate is acknowledged and understood and then denied, it acts as a springboard for the mind to create a new modality for the predication in question, other than the empirical. But no new modality is possible. Therefore, the mind perceives the impossibility of empirical predication while the understanding is still anchored to the lexicographic meaning of the term. The imagination is thus compelled to produce the needed modality once the denial of empirical predication and transcendence both are upheld. In this suspense, an intuition of transcendence is obtained, not unlike that of infinity and sensory inexpressibility engendered by the arabesque. The lexicographic meaning of the term serves as anchor while the imagination soars in search of an applicable modality of the meaning in question, a modality that is impossible to reach. Indeed, the Quran likens the word of God to "a tree whose roots are firm in the earth, and whose branches are infinite and unreachable in the skies above" (14:24).

C. THE PRESERVATION OF ARABIC

The total preservation of the Arabic language with all the categories of understanding imbedded therein and its continuous use by the millions to the present day, eliminated most of the hermeneutical problems confronting the modern reader of the fourteen-centuries-old revelation. The

¹⁷ Abū al Ḥasan al Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al Islāmīyīn* (Cairo: Maktabat al Nahḍah al Miṣriyah, 1371/1954), vol 1, 224-229. See also the discussion of al Ash'arī's views on the divine attributes in Muḥammad 'Abd al Karīm al Shahrastānī, *Al Milāl wa al Niḥal* (Cairo: Al Azhar Press, 1328/1910), 149 ff.

application of Quranic directives to the ever-changing affairs of life will always be new; and so would the translation of its general principles into concrete prescriptive legislation speaking to contemporary tasks and problems. This, Islamic jurisprudence always recognized. But the meaning of the terms of revelation, the categories under which those meanings are to be understood, are certainly realizable today exactly as they were for the Prophet (SAAS) and his contemporaries fourteen centuries ago. The latter, not the former, is the problem of expressing transcendence. Understanding the meanings of the Quran as the Prophet (SAAS) had understood them is the assumption of the application, or misapplication, of those meanings to contemporary problems.

The capacity of any student to understand the revelation today exactly as it was understood on the day it was revealed, is indeed a "miracle" of the history of ideas. It cannot be explained by the distinction of "disclosive" and "creative" functions of the language. The former suggests an esoteric level of meaning which is disclosed to the initiates only, and by means of exegesis; and the latter, a fabricative role whose product is not distinguishable from the constructs of pure fiction. Moreover, the "creative" function is not immune against the charges of relativism and subjectivism which render impossible any claim on behalf of Christianity and Islam as such, and treats all claims as personal and dated. The Muslim-Christian dialogue offers little reward if all it can purport itself to be is a dialogue between two persons, not two religions.

That language changes so that it is never the same is not necessary. Arabic has not changed, though its repertory of root words has expanded a little to meet new developments. The essence of the language—which is its grammatical structure, its conjugation of verbs and nouns, its categories for relating facts and ideas, and the forms of its literary beauty—has not changed at all. The Heraclitean claim that everything changes and is never the same is a fallacy, because there must be something permanent if change is to be change at all and not the skeptic's "stream of the manyfold." Far more safe and accurate in the definition of language were the Muslim linguists who recognized in language one and only one function, namely, the purely descriptive. Characteristically, they defined eloquence as "descriptive precision." The terrain of lexicography thus became for them sacrosanct—"God Himself taught Adam the names of things" (2:31); and they laboriously produced for the Arabic language of the Quran the most complete lexicographic dictionaries of any language. Creativity, they ascribed to the human mind,

where it properly belongs; and, in pursuit of more precision, they defend it as the capacity to discover and place under the full light of consciousness, aspects of reality which escape the less creative or capable, but which genius captures. The more precise the description of such apprehended reality, the more eloquent and beautiful it is, as well as more didactic and instructive. Language — in this case Arabic—thus remained an ordered and public discipline, open to inspection, capable of accurate judgement, and compelling whoever has the requisite intelligence say to the good author or critic, “Yes! That’s just it!” It was natural that the Islamic revelation would do all this. For without it, considering the transformations the revelations of Moses, Zoroaster, the Buddha and Jesus had gone through as their original languages were lost, forgotten, or “changed,” the transcendent God Himself would be a poor student of the history of religions!

IV. ISLAM’S SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CULTURE

The essence of religious experience in Islam is *al tawhīd*; that is, the recognition that there is no God but God (*lā ilāh illā Allāh*). What is distinctly Islamic — and hence novel — in *al tawhīd* is the negative aspect of its statement. That no being of whom godhead is predicated is God except God, strikes Jewish, Christian and pre-Islamic Arab notions of associating other beings with God. The gods of Arabia represented in stone and wood, to whom worshippers addressed praise, thanks, and whom they appeased with divination and sacrifice, relegated Allah (SWT) to the position of a *deus otiosus*. Christian trinitarianism postulated three persons in the deity each of whom is fully God, and asserted that God had become human, thus violating both the divine unity and the transcendence, or absolute otherness, of God. Judaism addressed God in the numerical plural *Elohim*, and described *Elohim* as engaging in sexual intercourse with the daughters of men, thus violating God’s unicity as well as His transcendence. Moreover, by calling Ezra, the Jewish kings, and the Jews at large, “son” or “sons” of God, and by calling God the Jews’ “father,” to whom they are related in ways other than those of any other creature, Judaism compounded its compromise of the transcendence of the divine being *vis-à-vis* the One to Whom everything is equally a creature *ex nihilo*, not a generated progeny. Apparently, the redactors

of the Old Testament sought thereby to assert the superiority of the Hebrew race over all other races. Through *al tawhīd*, therefore, Islam sought to purge religion absolutely clean of the godhead. Thereby, it accomplished a double purpose: that of acknowledging God as sole Creator of the universe, and that of equalizing all men as creatures of God, endowed with the same essential qualities of creaturely humanity, with the name cosmic status.

By its brief statement, *lā ilāh illā Allāh*, *al tawhīd* expresses on the axiological level three novel meanings. The first is that the creation is the material in which the absolute, as divine will, is to be actualized. Every component of creation is therefore good, and creation is not only the best of all possible worlds; it is flawless and perfect.¹⁸ Indeed, creation filled with value by man through moral vision and action is itself the divine purpose of creation.¹⁹ Consequently, enjoyment of its elemental or utilitarian values is innocent;²⁰ a value-full world is a monument to God, whose preservation and enhancement are acts of praise and worship on the part of man. As an instrument for the realization of the absolute, every object in creation is invested with higher, cosmic value. *Per contra*, Christianity had deprecated the world as "flesh," mankind as *massa peccata* (fallen creature), and space-time as that in which the

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ... (السجدة: ٧) ... مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوُّتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ
مِن قُطُوبِهِم مَّرْجِعَ الْبَصَرِ كُنْ يَقْلِبَ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرَ خَيْرَ مَا يَخْتَارُ (الملك: ٣-٤)

¹⁸ It is Allah Who created everything and did so perfectly (32:7)... There is no flaw in Allah's creation. Look into it once, twice and more for any discrepancy or shortcoming. You will find none. Your quizzical sight will return to you humbled but convinced [of the perfection of Allah's creation] (67:3-4).

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّمَن نَّسْلُوهُرَأَيْتُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (الكهف: ٧) الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَوَةَ لَسْأَلُكُمْ
أَبْكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا... (الملك: ٢)

¹⁹ We have created what is on earth as ornament, an enjoyment to you, that We may test who among them are best in conduct. (18:7)... He created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds (67:2).

يَبْنَیْ مَا دَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي
آخَرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ... (الأعراف: ٣١-٣٢)

²⁰ O Sons of Adam! Put on your best ornaments when you go out to the mosque [for a communal prayer or function]. Eat and drink [of Allah's bounty], but do not go to excess. Allah does not love those who do so. Say: [O Muhammad], who prohibited the ornaments [the delicacies, beautiful things] which Allah provided for His servants? Say, Such belong in this very world to those who believe. And they will enjoy it once more in purity in the other world (7:31-32).

realization of the absolute is forever impossible.²¹

The second is that man stands in no predicament out of which he cannot pull himself. That man's road is full of obstacles, that he is inclined to lose himself in egocentrism, or to take the easier path of lazy hedonism and euphoria, are facts. But they are no more factual than their opposites. Man therefore needs no savior, no Messiah and no salvation; but, rather, to apply himself to his cosmic duty and to measure his worth in direct proportion to his achievement. Against Christianity, Islam therefore taught that spirituality—i.e., pursuit of the divine will without disturbance of the ontological poise of creation, without deflection of the causal threads of nature on all levels of space-time, in short, without politics and economics—is false and futile pretension. It called men to felicity rather than salvation, and promised them rewards in this world and the hereafter directly proportionate to their deeds.

The third novel meaning *al tawhīd* expresses on the axiological level is that since the good to be realized is the divine will, and since the divine will, because of its creatorliness is the same for all creatures as all of them must fall under its ought-to-be, there can be no discrimination between places or men as objects of moral action. This meaning was adequately assured by Jesus and the apostolic fathers; but it was hardly observed by their Christian followers, thus necessitating a fresh restatement for their benefit. Judaism, on the other hand, has persistently denied it on principle and has always taught the opposite. That there can be no discrimination between points of space-time as foci of centrifugal political action, thus none between men as subjects of moral action, thus making the moral life necessarily universalistic and societistic at the same time, was a novel discovery unknown and unpracticed when the Islamic movement was born.

All this seems to fall within the perspective of the Semitic religious tradition. From a wider, world-perspective, Islam constituted a genuine breakthrough from the fixation into which the world had fallen, divided as it was between Indian religiosity and Hellenic religiosity. Indian religiosity maintained that the universe was itself the absolute (Brahman), not in its ideal form, but in an objectified, individuated and particularized form which it condemned. Objectification and materialization of the absolute spirit, Brahman, is an undesirable event. Hence, salvation was conceived of as escape from the religious/moral imperative. The realm of objectification (creation) was regarded as evil, while the realm of the

²¹ St. Augustine, "De Diversi Quaestionibus," *Ad Simplicianum*, i.g., 1:4 and 10.

absolute (brahman, Nirvana), was praised as bliss and *summum bonum* (the plenum of values, the sublime). Under this view cultivation of the world, i.e., procreation, mobilization for food production, education, rendering the world into a garden and making history, are definitely evil because they spread, intensify or prolong the state of objectification. Evidently the only morality which harmonizes with this view is individualistic and world-denying. Judaism and Theravada Buddhism remained true to this essential vision of the Upanishads. Hinduism accepted the vision for the endowed elite. It propounded a popular religiosity in which the castes look forward to release from their travails only in the after-life, while continuing to labor in their appointed stations in this life with no little amount of joy and complacent satisfaction that they are fulfilling the purpose of their existence. Likewise Mahayana Buddhism kept this vision as a background and constructed its religiosity out of native Chinese worldly morality; and appointed Bodhisattvas (human ancestors apotheosized into saviors) to redeem men from the afflictions of existence.

Combining elements of Egyptian and Greek religions, of Mithraism and Near Eastern mystery cults, Hellenism engulfed the Semitic movement of Jesus which sought to reform the legalism and ethnocentrism of Judaism. Hence, the Greco-Egyptian element which identified God with the world was retained but modified and diluted in the doctrine of the incarnation which made God become man and enabled man to associate himself with divinity. Hence too, the resentment of the downtrodden of the empire, Gnostic aversion to matter and the world, and the redemptionist hope of Mithraism and Judaism, all combined to give historical Christianity its judgement of creation as fallen, of the world as temporary evil, of state and society as the devil's handiwork, and of the moral life as individualist and world-denying.

It was a refreshing clarification that Islam achieved. It put aside both claims of India and Egypt which identified the absolute with the world, the Creator with the creature, whether to the advantage of the creature as in Egypt and ancient Greece, or to that of the "creator" as in India. It reaffirmed the ancient Mesopotamian vision of the utter desperateness of Creator and creature, and of man as servant in the manor of God. Benefitting from history, Islam's reaffirmation was to be a crystallization of this ancient Mesopotamian wisdom as well.²²

²² Ismā'īl R. al Fārūqī, *Historical Atlas of the Religions of the World* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1974), "The Ancient Near East," chaps. 1, 2 and 3.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPLE OF HISTORY

Al tawhīd commits man to an ethic of action; that is, to an ethic where worth and unworth are measured by the degree of success the moral subject achieves in disturbing the flow of space-time, in his body as well as around him. It does not deny the ethic of intent where the same measurement is made by the level of personal values affecting the moral subject's state of consciousness alone, for the two are not incompatible. Indeed, Islam demands the fulfillment of the requirements of the ethic of intent as a preliminary prerequisite for entering into fulfillment of those of the ethic of action.¹ By so doing, Islam prevents its ethic from becoming one of consequences, or utilitarianism, however noble the ring.

Disturbing the flow of space-time, or transformation of creation, therefore, is expected of the *engagé* Muslim. Having acquiesced to God alone as his Master, having committed himself, his life and all energies to His service, and having recognized His Master's will as that which ought to be actualized in space-time, he must enter the rough and tumble of the market place and history and therein bring about the desired transformation. He cannot lead a monastic, isolationist existence unless it be as an exercise in self-discipline and self-mastery. Even then, if the exercise is not conducive to the end of achieving greater success in the transformation of space-time, it is doomed as unethical egocentrism; for the purpose would in that case be self-transformation as an end in

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ (الزمر: ٣) بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (البقرة: ١١٢) إِيَّاكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ يَا قَلْبُ سَلِيمٍ (الشعراء: ٨٩) إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ (ق: ٣٧)

¹ Religion in all its purity belongs only to Allah... Allah will not guide anyone guilty of lying, of ungodliness or unfaith (39:3)... Whoever turns his face to Allah in loyalty and does the good works will have his reward with Allah. Such persons will not grieve; and no fear shall befall them (2:112)... Allah will forgive none but those who turn to Him with candid hearts (26:89)... In this is a lesson, a reminder, to those who have a sincere heart, or to those who stop arguing when evidence confronts them squarely and acquiesce to it readily (50:37).

itself, not as a preparation for transforming the world into the likeness of the divine pattern.

The Quran has amply justified creation and described it as that in which man is to undertake his cosmic vocation. Emphatically the Quran asserted that the world is the realm where the absolute is to be realized, and so by man. "Excellence in the deed," (*falāḥ*) in terms of which the Quran describes the purpose of creation as a whole, can have no other meaning than the transformation of the materials of creation, i.e., men and women, earth, town and country.² To the question, who is the denier of the religion ("religion" being a more comprehensive term than "God") the Quran answers: "it is he who repulses the orphan; who does not urge the feeding of the poor."³ Evidently, filling this world, this space, and this time with value, even the material value of food, is not only important for religion, but the very whole business of religion. For this reason, Islam's eschatology is radically different from that of Judaism and Christianity. In the former, the "Kingdom of God," is an alternative to the Hebrew situation in exile. It was the Kingdom of David projected nostalgically by those who had lost it and who presently stand at the nethermost level of captivity and degradation. As for Christianity, its main thrust was to combat the materialist, externalist, enlandising ethnocentrism of the Jews. Hence it was necessary for Christianity to spiritualize the Kingdom of David and remove it altogether from space-time. This trend already existed in later Judaism, and Christianity developed it further by universalizing it as the salvation of mankind and purging it clean of earthly attachment. In both cases the "Kingdom of God" became an "other world" and thus this world became the temporary theater of Caesar, the devil, the flesh, "where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."⁴

... يَتَقَوَّمُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَإِنْ رَبِّي

قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ (هود: ٦١)

² O People! Serve Allah alone. You have no god other than Him. It is He Who established you on earth that you may settle in it [according to His pattern]. So do seek His forgiveness and repent to Him. He is our Lord, near and responsive [to those who call on His mercy] (11:61).

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ فَمَا لِلَّذِي يَدْعُ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ

(الاعون: ٣-١)

³ Have you considered the denier of reckoning? It is he who pushes away the orphan, who does not enjoin the feeding of the destitute (107:1-3).

⁴ Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal (Matthew 6:19).

Islamic eschatology did not have a formative history. It was born complete in the Quran, and bears no relation to the situation of its contemporary adherents as in Judaism and Christianity. It was conceived as a moral climax to life on earth, a climax consisting of rewards and punishments.⁵ This world was not to be repeated, as it were, under different auspices and with different lots for men than their present miseries. It was the one and only kingdom, the one and only spacetime. All that ought-to-be, ought to and can happen in it through man's agency. Once it comes to an end, only award and execution of judgement, consummation of reward and punishment can take place. This happens in a way totally other than the ways of this space-time, a transcendent way utterly removed from human knowledge, except the allegorical description of it given us by revelation.

In consequence, the affairs of this world acquire in Islam a significance of utmost gravity and seriousness. History is as crucial for the Muslim as it is for the communist except that the Muslim knows himself, not the Absolute, as responsible for history. The Muslim is confident that what God disposes history to be in the end is the direct consequence of his own conduct in history, on the personal, individual level, as well as on the communal or societal. Whereas for the communist, history is itself the absolute and hence necessary, and for the Christian, history is irrelevant, superfluous and evil, it is for the Muslim the theater, the material, the test, the substance, and the very purpose of creation. It follows that Islam defines its adherent as he who is existentially "serious," who ponders creation and exclaims, "Praise be to You O Lord! for you have not created all this in sport!"⁶ who leads the dangerous life of interfering with the processes of nature and history to the maximum degree possible; and who is willing to be judged by his achievements and failures in history. *Al tawhīd* thus enables the Muslim to see himself as the vortex

⁵ Every page of the Qur'an contains either an element of *targhib* (promise of reward in this life or the hereafter) for good conduct, the good deeds or works of man, or an element of *tarhib* (a threat of punishment, of suffering and of, ill) for misconduct, the works of evil. This continues a tradition of morality as old as man. Islam only paints its scenarios more vividly and strikingly than they were ever described before.

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا تُسَبِّحُكَ فَقِيَمًا عَادًا إِنَّا نَارٍ (آل عمران: ١٩١)

⁶ Righteous are those who are always mindful of Allah in their work, in their rest or in their sleep, who ponder the creation of heaven and earth, and who conclude: O Lord, You have not created all this in vain. To You is the praise. Protect us from the punishment of eternal fire! (3:191).

of history because he is the only vicegerent who can bring the will of God to fulfillment in history.

This is the only perspective capable of explaining the conduct of the Prophet (SAAS) as well as of his companions (RAA) and early generations of Muslims. Muhammad's vision in the cave of Hira' and his communion with divinity through Jibril, sent him into Makkah to act and transform men and history. It did not hold him in the state of the experience, nor taught him to desire and seek its own recurrence, nor teach his companions to desire it for themselves. Rather, it commanded him with oppressive clarity to reknead and recut the real world of space and time according to the likeness of the divine pattern. This is probably the ultimate distinction of Muhammad's experience over that of Christianity's Jesus; namely, what while it reaffirmed the personalist values Jesus, it built over them as precondition the vision that to behold God, to love God and be absorbed in Him, to live in Him is nothing unless it actually lifts this world, this history, this matter to the plenum of value which is God's will. It was this plus of religious experience which caused the Prophet (SAAS) to answer his uncle's plea to give up upsetting the *status quo* which Islam had caused in these worlds: "If I were given the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left that I relinquish this task before God gives it victory or I perish in the process, I shall not accept."⁷

Rather than surrender passively to his enemies and make of himself another sacrificial lamb, Muhammad (SAAS) outwitted them, emigrated to Madinah and in the first week established the first Islamic state and gave it its constitution. His apostleship consists of no more than receipt and conveyance of the message. But the message had a content and Muhammad (SAAS) was the first to fulfill what it demanded. This content dictated to him to interfere in the processes of nature, in the lives of his people and all men, there to bring about the desired transformation. After an illustrious career of leadership on all fronts of life—from the most personal to the military, political and judicial—during which he unified Arabia and mobilized it for the dramatic interference in world-history, he died while a mobilized army stood on the ready to bring Islam to the world outside Arabia.

Caught by the Prophet's vision and his personal fire, the early Muslims plunged headlong into the arenas of history, changing the internal constitution of individuals of all races and cultures, and the patterns of their

⁷ *Supra*, chap. I, n. 37.

daily lives, the cultures of whole societies as well as the maps, contours and skylines of villages, cities and whole empires. ‘Uqbah ibn Nāfi’ ’s famous speech on the shore of the Atlantic in the Maghrib, “O Ocean, if I knew that there is earth beyond you, I would cross you on horseback!” is typical of the spirit of that new generation brought up by Islam. The task the Muslim conceived was global; and he wanted to be sure he had fulfilled it all. The nature of the task was moral and religious, for the Muslim was concerned neither with political office nor with economic advantage. It was an earth governed by a new world order that he sought to establish; an earth where no injustice can escape without meeting its just redress; where ideas are free to travel and men are free to convince and be convinced; and where Islam can call men to the unity of God, of truth and of value. Had history itself not existed before and cried, as it did in the Muslim’s ears, for re-formation, the Muslim would have created it. For, like Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, having discovered God and the divine will, he had to carve out of the trees a raft with which to cross the seas, to end his individualist isolation, to seek society and the world and to make history.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCIPLE OF KNOWLEDGE

I. NEITHER SKEPTICISM NOR THE "FAITH" OF CHRISTIANS

In today's world, and especially in the West, skepticism has grown to very grave proportions. It is the dominant principle among the "educated" and is found quite often among the unlettered who emulate the "intelligentsia" in their societies. This spectacular spread of skepticism is partly due to the success of science which is seen as the continuing victory of the empirical, over the religious, mind. The latter is defined as that which adheres to notions taught by the Church. In the opinion of the empiricists, the Church lost its *magisterium*, or authority to teach the truth, a long time ago. It was an authority of which the Church was never worthy, precisely because its position is necessarily dogmatic; i.e., it assumes certain propositions to be true without first subjecting them to empirical testing and critical examination. The Western world, and all those who emulate it, are still intoxicated by that easy victory of the scientific mind over the Christian Church. Under its transport, they jump to the false and double generalization that whereas all religious knowledge is necessarily dogmatic, all ways to the truth must be empirical, finding their ultimate confirmation only in the given of sense, as presented by the controlled experiment. Anything not so confirmed, they hasten to conclude, is doubtful; and, if it is thus unconfirmable, is necessarily false.

Dogma, therefore is in their view adherence to a view known to be unconfirmable in experience, and hence worthless. Truth is unknown and unknowable. Faith, in consequence, is an act, a decision, by which a person resolves to accept as true that which is *scandalon* (stumbling block to the mind).¹ Pascal described it as a "wager" which one makes

¹ Jews want miracles for proof, and Greeks look for wisdom. As for us, we proclaim the crucified Christ, a message that is offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles. St. Paul, I Corinthians 1:22-23.

on something the veracity of which forever escapes him. The irreligious among the Christians have described the Christian faith as the blind man's belief in a black cat in a dark room where there is no cat. In the nineteenth century, at the apogee of this intoxication induced by the victories of science, Schleiermacher, a German theologian, advised his fellow Christians in reply "to the despisers of religion"² to base the Christian truth not on fact, or critically observe reality, but on subjective experience. The revolution of romanticism had apparently completed its domination of the European consciousness. Even God, in the romantic view, is to depend for His reality upon the feeling of the experiencing subject of faith.

That is why the Muslim should never call his *īmān* "belief" or "faith." When used in a general sense, these English words carry today within them an implication of untruth, of probability, of doubt and suspicion. They carry some validity only when they are ascribed to a particular person or group. Even then, they mean only that that person or group holds a certain proposition to be true. Never does either term mean that such a proposition is true. Obviously, this is the exact opposite of the meaning of the term *īmān*. This term, deriving from *amn* (security), means that the propositions it covers are in fact true, and that their truth has been appropriated (i.e., understood and accepted) by the mind. In Islamic as well as Arabic parlance, a man can be *kādhīb* (lying) or *munāfiq* (cheating); but *īmān* cannot be false in the sense that its object is nonexistent or otherwise than it purports to say. That is why *īmān* and *yaqīn* are synonymous terms. Before *yaqīn* one may deny, and may question, the truth. But when *yaqīn* is present, the truth is as established and convincing as sensory evidence.³ It has become indubitable; the only response possible to the person who continues to doubt is *Voilà!* (see here for yourself!). *Yaqīn* therefore is certainly of the truth, as apodeictic as it can come. *Īmān* is hence "conviction," absolutely free of doubt of probability, of guessing and uncertainty. It is not an act, not a decision, not a resolution to accept, or put one's trust in, that which is not known to be true, a wager to place one's fortune in this rather

² Friedrich D. Schleiermacher, *Religion - Speeches to Its Cultural Despisers*, tr. John Oman (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1958) pp. 94 ff.

كَلَّا لَوْ قَسَمُونَ لَعِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (الكاف: ٥ - ٧)

³ Rather if you only knew the truth with apodeictic certainty, you would then be convinced of the reality of hell as you would when beholding it with your very eyes (102:5-7).

than that basket. *Īmān* is something that happens to man, when the truth, the factuality of an object strikes him in the face and convinces him beyond doubt of its truth. It is of the nature of a geometrical conclusion which, given the antecedent premises, one recognizes its truth and inevitability; or as the Quran has put it, an object whose existence is doubted, is produced and placed before the spectators for all to see and touch.⁴

Unlike the faith of the Christians, the *īmān* of Islam is truth given to the mind, not to man's credulity. The truths, or prepositions, of *īmān* are not mysteries, stumbling blocks, unknowable and unreasonable but critical and rational. They have been subjected to doubt and emerged from the testing confirmed and established as true. No more pleading on their behalf is necessary. Whoever acknowledges them as true is reasonable; whoever persists in denying or doubting is unreasonable. This cannot be said of Christian faith, as it were, by definition; but of the *īmān* of Islam, it is a necessary description. That is why Allah (SWT) described the truth of Islam in these terms: "(With this revelation) the truth has become manifest; falsehood is confuted, just as it should be ... Wisdom is now manifestly shown; error is something else."⁵ The reasonableness of Islam consists in its appeal to the mind at its critical best. Islam is not afraid of counterevidence nor does it operate in secret, exercising its appeal to some "gut" feeling, some "inner" doubt and uncertainty, some wishful anxiety or desire for the realities to be otherwise than they actually are. The claim of Islam is public. It is addressed to reason, seeking to convince it of the truth, rather than to overwhelm it with the incomprehensible,⁶ to coerce it into surrender by that which "passes all understanding."⁷

⁴ The contrast of Islamic *īmān* is strongest with the faith of Pascal who argued for faith as a wager which one places on an outcome which is by definition unknowable. Whereas in Pascal's thinking, man can never be demonstrably convinced of Allah's existence, of His commandments, and final judgment, Islam has taken up the challenge to give such demonstration. Every form of argument was hence used by Muslims to bring about such rational conviction. The arguments from creation and change, from design and purpose, and from the moral consciousness received their best formulation in the Qur'an.

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا (الإسراء: ٨١) ... قَدْ بَيَّنَّ الرُّسُلُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ (البقرة: ٢٥٦)

⁵ Say, O Muhammad, the truth is now manifest: untruth is confuted, as it should be (17:81)... Truth has become [by this revelation] manifestly distinct from error (2:256).

⁶ Contrast this rationalism of Islam, its insistence on clear and distinct proofs, its admiration and promotion of knowledge and wisdom, its exhortation to science and the discovery of the patterns of Allah (SWT) in the whole of creation, in nature, in the sky, in the human psyche, with Paul's description of faith in Christianity in I Corinthians 1.

⁷ I Corinthians 1:1-20.

II. *ĪMĀN*, A GNOSEOLOGICAL CATEGORY

Īmān, it should be said in conclusion, is not merely an ethical category. Indeed, it is firstly a cognitive category; that is to say, it has to do with knowledge, with the truthfulness of its propositions. And since the nature of its propositional content is that of first principle of logic and knowledge, of metaphysics, of ethics and esthetics, it follows that it acts in the subject as a light which illumines everything. As al Ghazālī has described it, *īmān* is a vision which puts all other data and facts in perspective which is proper to, and requisite for, a true understanding of them.⁸ It is the grounding for a rational interpretation of the universe. It itself, the prime principle of reason cannot be nonrational or irrational and hence in contradiction with itself. It indeed is the first principle of rationality. To deny or oppose it is to lapse from reasonableness and hence from humanity.

As principle of knowledge, *al tawḥīd* is the recognition that Allah, *al ḥaqq* (the Truth) is, and that He is One. This implies that all contention, all doubt, is referable to Him; that no claim is beyond testing, beyond decisive judgement. *Al tawḥīd* is the recognition that the truth is indeed knowable, that man is capable of reaching it. Skepticism which denies this truth is the opposite of *al tawḥīd*. It arises out of a failure of nerve to push the inquiry into truth to its end; the premature giving up of the possibility of knowing the truth. as an epistemological principle, it is a counsel of despair, resting on the a priori assumption that man lives in a perpetual dream where no reality can ever be distinguished from unreality. It is inseparable from nihilism, or the denial of values, for the apprehension of values requires the acknowledgment that man may reach the truth of values. Whether what is claimed to be a value is indeed so, whether it is realized or violated in a given instance, and whether the given instance is in fact what it is described to be, are questions without which no valuational claim could be ascertained. Unless it is possible to answer them with certainty, i.e., to know the truth of them, the knowledge of value founders. The valueness of a value, its instantia-

⁸ Abū Ḥāmid al Ghazālī, *Al Munqidh min al Ḍalāl* (Damascus: University Press, 1376/1956), pp 62-63. Here al Ghazālī says that *īmān* does not deny, contradict, or go against the evidence of reason but confirms it. "...I sought a cure for my doubt, but it was impossible except with rational evidence. However, no evidence stood unless it was based on the primary sciences [metaphysics]. And since the bases of these sciences were not secure, their conclusions and anything built upon them were equally insecure... But after (i.e., under, or with *īmān*)... all these rational foundations [of science and metaphysics] became secure, rationally sound and acceptable, fully supported by their foundations in knowledge" (p. 62).

tion in the given situation, may be just as subject to doubt as any other datum. Unless one begins, therefore, with an assumption contrary to skepticism, namely, that the truth may be reached regarding these matters, nihilism becomes inevitable.

III. UNITY OF GOD AND UNITY OF TRUTH

To acknowledge the Godliness of God and His unity is to acknowledge the truth and its unity. Divine unity and the unity of truth are inseparable. They are aspects of one and the same reality. This becomes evident when we consider that truthfulness is a quality of the proposition of *al tawhīd*, namely, that God is One. For if truth was not one, then the statement "God is One" could be true, and the statement "some other thing or power is God" could also be true. To say that truth is one is therefore to assert not only that God is One, but that no other god is God but God, the very combination of negation and assertion that the *shahādah* conveys. *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*.

As methodological principle, *al tawhīd* consists of three principles: first, rejection of all that does not correspond with reality; second, denial of ultimate contradictions; third, openness to new and/or contrary evidence. The first principle rules out falsehood and deception from Islam, as it lays everything in the religion open to inspection and criticism. Departure from reality, or failure to correspond with it, is sufficient to vitiate any item in Islam, whether it be a law, a principle of personal or social ethics, or a statement about the world. This principle protects the Muslim against opinion, i.e., against making an untested, unconfirmed claim to knowledge. The unconfirmed claim, the Quran declares, is an instance of *ẓann* (deceptive knowledge), and is prohibited by God,⁹ however slight is its object. The Muslim is definable as the person who claims nothing but the truth, who presents nothing but the truth, even at his own peril. To dissimulate, to mix the true with the false, to value the truth less than one's own interest or that of his kin, is as hateful in Islam as it is contemptible.

The second principle, namely, no contradiction on one side, and paradox on the other!¹⁰ This principle is of the essence of rationalism.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ... (الحجرات: ١٢)

⁹ O People who believe! Avoid suspicion of your fellows. Even a little suspicion is a crime (49:12).

¹⁰ For more analysis of this point, see this author's article and response in *Al Ḥadārah al Islāmīyah*, chap 11, n. 1.

Without it, there is no escape from skepticism; for an ultimate contradiction means that the truth of either contradiction can never be known. Surely contradiction does happen in the thinking and speech of men. The question is whether or not contradiction is avoidable, another principle or fact overarching the contradictories in terms of which their contradiction can be solved and their differences composed.

The same is valid when contradiction occurs between revelation and reason. Islam not only denies the logical possibility of such contradiction, but it furnishes in the second principle under discussion a directive for dealing with it once it occurs in the understanding. Neither reason nor revelation may lord it over the other. If revelation was prior, there would be no principle with which to differentiate between one revelation and another, or between two claims of revelation. Even the simple contradictions, the disparities, or apparent incongruencies between the letter of any two statements or positions claimed to be revealed, would not be soluble. No revelation would thus want to deprive itself of the means of harmonizing itself with itself, of putting its own house in order. On the other hand, revelation may run counter to reason; i.e., to the findings of rational examination and cognition. Where such is the case, Islam declares the contradiction not ultimate. It then refers the investigator either to review his understanding of the revelation, or his rational findings, or both. Having rejected the contradiction as ultimate, *al tawhīd* as unity of truth requires us to return the contradictory theses with the intention of looking into them once more. It assumes that there must be an aspect which had escaped consideration and which, if taken into account, would compose the contradictory relation. Equally, *al tawhīd* requires us to return the reader of revelation—not revelation itself—to revelation for another reading lest an unobvious or unclear meaning may have escaped him which, if considered, would remove the contradiction. Such referral to reason or understanding would have the effect of harmonizing not revelation *per se*—revelation stands above any manipulation by man!—but our human interpretation of it. It makes our understanding of revelation agree with the cumulative evidence uncovered by reason. On the other hand, acceptance of the contradictory or paradoxical as ultimately valid appeals only to the weak-of-mind. The Muslim is a rationalist as he insists on the unity of the two sources of truth, *viz.*, revelation and reason.

The third principle of *al tawhīd* is unity of truth, namely, openness to new and/or contrary evidence, and protects the Muslim against

literalism, fanaticism and stagnation-causing conservatism. It inclines him to intellectual humility. It imposes upon him to append to his affirmations and denials the phrase *Allāh a'lam* (Allah knows better!), for he is convinced that the truth is bigger than can be totally mastered by him at any time.¹¹

As the affirmation of the absolute unity of God, *al tawhīd* is the affirmation of the unity of the sources of truth. God is the Creator of nature from whence man derives his knowledge.¹² The object of knowledge is the patterns of nature which are the work of God.¹³ Certainly God knows them since He is their Author; and equally certainly, He is the source of revelation. He gives man of His knowledge; and His knowledge is absolute and universal.¹⁴ God is no trickster, not a malevolent agent whose

... وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَعِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (الأنعام: ٨٠) اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا (الطلاق: ١٢) إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (الأنعام: ١١٧)

¹¹ The knowledge of my Lord encompasses all things. Will you not mind His commandments (6:80)... It is Allah Who created the seven heavens and the seven corresponding earths. His commandment permeates them all, that you may know that He is Omnipotent: that He knows each and every thing completely (65:12)... Your Lord knows better who strays from His path and who is rightly guided (6:117).

¹² This is the meaning of the Qur'an's description of the world, or the phenomena or nature, as full of *āyāt*, signs, ("sign: lit., index or evidence") of Allah. In all these instances, the Qur'an is referring to an inference which is obvious to those who have the mind to see, between creation and its Creator, Whose existence and constant activity is implied by the phenomena of nature.

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُتَوَقِّينَ (الذاريات: ٢٠) هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَٰلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّ فِي آخِيَائِكَ الْبَلِّ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ (يونس: ٦-٥)

¹³ The earth is full of signs evidencing the work of Allah. They are perceived by those who are certain of the truth (51:20)... It is Allah Who gave you the sun and moon for light; who ordered them in their orbits that you reckon the seasons and years. He created all this in truth; and He clarifies the evidence to those who have the mind to know... In the succession of day and night, as in all that Allah created in heaven and earth, are evident signs to those who fear Allah (10:5-6).

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (النساء: ٣٢) ... وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَعِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (الأنعام: ٨٠) وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ... (البقرة: ٣١) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (العلق: ٤-٥) ... وَعَلَّمَكُمْ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِسْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ١٥١)

¹⁴ Allah is knowing of all things (4:32)... The knowledge of my Lord encompasses all things. Would you not heed His commandment? (6:80)... Allah taught Adam the names [essences] of all things (2:31). He taught man the use of the pen. He taught him what he did not know (96:45)... Allah taught you the Book [religion] and wisdom. Yea, He taught you what you would never know otherwise (2:151).

purpose is to misguide and mislead. Nor does He change His judgement, as men do when they correct their knowledge, their willing, or their decision. God is perfect and omniscient. He makes no mistakes. Otherwise, He would not be the transcendent God of Islam.

IV. TOLERANCE

Al tawhīd is the acknowledgement that God alone is God. This, we have already seen, means that Allah (SWT) is the ultimate source of all goodness, of all value. To assert this is therefore to hold God as ultimately good; i.e., as the highest good for the sake of Whom every good thing is good. Allah (SWT) gives the good its goodness, value its valueness. The goodness of the source of ultimate goodness cannot ever be in doubt. One must always assume that whatever Allah (SWT) has disposed, He has disposed it for a good purpose which is His own. To hold the opposite is to deny *al tawhīd*. That is why the Quran emphatically prohibited the Muslims from thinking ill of God,¹⁵ and condemned those who do in no uncertain terms. Allah (SWT) does not create us to torture and to misguide us. Nor did He give us our faculties of knowledge, our instincts and desires, to lead us astray. What we recognize with our senses is true, unless our senses are evidently deformed or sick; what seems coherent to our common sense is true unless it is proved otherwise. Similarly, what our instincts and desires want is basically good unless God has expressly forbidden it. *Al tawhīd* prescribes optimism on the epistemological and ethical levels. That is also what we call tolerance.

As an epistemological principle, optimism is the acceptance of the present until its falsehood has been established; while as an ethical principle, it consists of accepting the desires until the establishment of their undesirableness.¹⁶ The former is called *sa'ah*; the latter, *yusr* (ease,

وَيُعَذِّبُكَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظُنِيبُ السَّوءِ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوءِ
وَعَصَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ وَعَذَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا (الفتح: ٦)

¹⁵ Allah will certainly punish the pretenders, the associationists, and those who think ill of Allah, whether males or females. Theirs is the circle of evil; They have incurred Allah's wrath and His curse. For them, He has prepared the worst fate, the eternal fire (48:6).

¹⁶ Inspired by this principle, the jurists of Islam have laid down the principle that, "Generally, all things are permissible except those which have been prohibited by Allah" as a foundation for the law.

tolerance). Both protect the Muslim from self-closure to the world, from deadening conservatism. Both urge him to affirm and say yea to life, to new experience. Both encourage him to address the new data with his scrutinizing reason, his constructive endeavor, and thereby to enrich his experience and life, to move his culture and civilization ever forward.

As a methodological principle within the essence of *al tawhīd*, tolerance is the conviction that God left no people without sending them a messenger from among themselves to teach them that there is no god but God and that they owe Him worship and service,¹⁷ to warn them against evil and its causes.¹⁸ In this regard, tolerance is the certainty that all men are endowed with a *sensus communis* enabling them to know the true religion, to recognize God's will and commandments. It is the conviction that the diversity of religions is due to history with all its affecting factors, its diverse conditions of space and time, its prejudices, passions and vested interests. Behind religion diversity stands *al dīn al ḥanīf* (the primordial religion of God) with which all men are born before acculturation makes them adherents of this or that religion.¹⁹ Study of the history (in the plural) is what tolerance requires the Muslim to undertake with a view, first, to discover within each the primeval endowment of God,²⁰ which He had sent all His apostles at all places and times

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات: ٥٦)

¹⁷ I have not created the jinn and humankind but to serve Me (51:56).

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ

حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ (النحل: ٣٦)

¹⁸ Unto each and every ummah We have sent a messenger to teach them to serve none but Allah and to avoid evil. Some were rightly guided by Allah. Others were misguided and earned the evil consequence. Go out into the world, and see for yourselves what were the consequences of unfaith (16:36).

¹⁹ "I have been sent as a prophet to preach tolerant *Ḥanīfism*.' In answer to the question, Which of the [past] religions do you like best? the Prophet (SAAS) answered: 'Tolerant *Ḥanīfism*,' or the religion of Ibrahim." The ḥadīth has been reported by Ibn 'Abbās (al Zubaydī, *Taj al Arūs*, s.v. *Ḥanaf*, vol. 6, p. 78); al Imam Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, summary of: al Ḥāfiẓ al Mundhirī, *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Muhammad Naṣir al Dīn al Albānī (Kuwait: al Dar al Kuwaytiyah li al Ṭibā'ah, 1388/1969), vol. 2. p. 249, Ḥadīth No. 1982.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ

وَلَكِن كَثُرَ الْكَاسِرَاتِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (الرود: ٣٠)

²⁰ And turn yourself to the primordial religion as a *ḥanīf*, true to the innate religion with which Allah endowed all humans. Immutable is Allah's creation. This natural endowment is universal and immutable for Allah's human creatures. It is the true and valuable religion, but most people do not know (30:30).

to teach; and second, to emphasize this primordial religion and draw men to it, with comeliness and arguments ever more sound.²¹

In religion—and there can hardly be anything more important or prior in human relations—tolerance transforms confrontation and reciprocal condemnations between the religions into a scholarly investigation of the genesis and development of the religions to the end of separating the historical accretions from the original given of revelation. In ethics, the next all-important field, *yusr*, immunizes the Muslim against any life-denying tendencies and assures him the minimum measure of optimism required to maintain health, balance and a sense of proportion, despite all the tragedies and afflictions which befall human life. God has assured us, “With hardship, We have ordained *yusr*.”²² And as He commanded us to examine every claim and make certain before judging,²³ the *usūlīyūn* (doctors of jurisprudence) had recourse to experimentation before judging as good and evil anything desired which is not contrary to a clear divine injunction.

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدْ لَهُمُ الْبَالِغَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَحْسَنُ مِنْ رَيْكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْذَبِينَ (الحل: ١٢٥)

²¹ Call unto your Lord with wise argument and comely exhortation. Dialogue with others and present to them the better view. Your Lord knows who has strayed from His path and who is rightly guided (16:125).

... يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ ... (البقرة: ١٨٥)

²² Allah wants your life to be full of ease, not of hardship (2:185).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَسُوقٌ مِنْ بَنِي فَسَيْقٍ أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِمِجْهَدِكُمْ أَنْ تُنْصِفُوا عَلَيْنَا مَا نُمْسِكُ نَذِيرٌ (الحجرات: ٦)

²³ O believers! If the unrighteous come to you with news, do not believe them and investigate for yourselves. Otherwise, you will be led to aggression without justice, and you will regret having committed your deeds (49:6).

CHAPTER V

THE PRINCIPLE OF METAPHYSICS

Hindu cosmology regards nature as an unfortunate event that happened to Brahman, the Absolute.¹ Creation (i.e., every individual creature) is an objectification of it (the Absolute) that should not have taken place because it is a degradation of its perfection as absolute. Everything in nature is hence regarded as an aberration, as something encaged in its creaturely form, pining for release and return to its origin in and as Brahman. While it continues as a creature in the world, it is subject to the Law of Karma through which it is upgraded, or further degraded, according to whether it acknowledges and complies with this first cosmological principle, namely, that it is merely an ontological mishap of the Absolute.² Christian cosmology regards nature as creature of God which was once perfect, but which was corrupted in the "fall" and hence became evil.³ The evil of creation, ontological, essential and pervasive, is the reason for God's salvific drama, of His own self-incarnation in Jesus, of His crucifixion and death. After the drama, Christianity holds, restoration has and has not come to creation, theoretically. Practically, the Christian mind continued to hold creation as fallen, and nature as evil. The great enmity to matter which characterized Gnosticism pass-

¹That the creation, or as the Hindu thinkers prefer to call it, "the world of manifestation" of Brahman, the Absolute, is not ultimately real and is therefore a debasement of the Absolute, a departure from its transcendental perfection and hence an unfortunate aberration, is affirmed in several Upanishads. A favorite passage is *Svetasvatara*, IV, 9-10. The same ideal is elaborated in medieval Hindu thought by Sankara (e.g., in the *Adhyasabhasya*) and by Ramanuja in the conception of the world as constituting the body of Allah, the body possessing a dependent existence in relation to the soul (*Brhadaranyaka* 3.7.3). In modern times the idea is expressed though more guardedly by such thinkers as S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1951, 1923), vol. 1, 38-39, 197 and M. Hiriyanna *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961, 1932), 63-65.

²Ibid.

³Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned. There was sin in the world before the law was given; but where there is no law, no account is kept of sins. But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses death ruled over mankind, even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam did when he disobeyed God's command (Romans 5:12-14).

ed on to Christianity and reinforced its contempt and antagonism for nature and "the world" so avidly pursued on every level by Christianity's first enemies—the Romans. Nature, with its material potentialities and propensities, was the realm of Satan. On the material level, its momentum is the pull away from "the other world" to "the flesh," to "sin." On the social, it is temptation to politics, to will power and self-assertion, to "Caesar." Programatism—the will to order the movement of history toward transformation of nature—is by Christian definition vain.⁴ For a millennium or more, "nature" was contrasted with "grace" as its opposite. Both were treated as mutually exclusive; pursuit of the one was necessarily violation of the other. Under the impact of Islamic thought first, and later of the Renaissance, of scholasticism and the Enlightenment, Christians opened themselves to life—and world affirmation. World denial and condemnation, however, were never eradicated but only muted. In more recent times, with the triumph of romanticism and secularism following the French Revolution, "naturalism" came to occupy and sometimes dominate the Christian's attitude to nature and the world.

In Islam, nature is creation and gift. As creation it is teleological, perfect and orderly; as gift it is an innocent good placed at the disposal of man. Its purpose is to enable man to do the good and achieve felicity. This treble judgement of orderliness, purposiveness and goodness characterizes and sums up the Islamic view of nature.

I. THE ORDERLY UNIVERSE

To witness that there is no god but God is to hold that He alone is the Creator Who gave to everything its being, Who is the ultimate Cause of every event, and the final End of all that is; that He is the First and the Last. To enter into such witnessing in freedom and conviction, in conscious understanding of its content, is to realize that all that surrounds us, whether things or events, all that takes place in the natural, social or psychic fields, is the action of God, the discharge of His causal efficacy and ontic power, the fulfillment of one or another of His purposes. This does not mean that He is directly and personally the cause

⁴This is why I tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? And isn't the body worth more than clothes? Look at the birds: they do not plant seeds, gather a harvest and put it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them! Aren't you worth much more than birds? (Matthew 6:25-26).

of all, the immediate agent behind every event, but that He is the ultimate Agent Who may and does bring events about through other agents or causes. Nor does it mean that God, rather than us, is responsible for our deeds. We must reckon that the moral worth or unworth of our deeds is solely our individual responsibility; but that the ontological power which diffuses being and non-being is God's alone to have and to exercise. Humans are not creators. They can neither give being nor take it away, though they act as agents of such giving or taking away. Once made, such realization becomes a second nature to man, inseparable from him during all his waking hours. One then lives all the moments of his life under its shadow. And where man recognizes God's action in every object and event, he follows the divine initiative because it is God's. To observe it in nature is to do natural science,⁵ for the divine initiative in nature is none other than the immutable laws with which God had endowed nature.⁶ To observe the divine initiative in one's self or in one's society is to pursue the humanities and the social sciences.⁷ And if the whole universe itself is really the unfoldings of fulfillment of these laws of nature which are the commandments of God and His will, then the universe is, in the eye of the Muslim, a living theater set in motion by God's command and action. The theater itself, as well as all it includes, is explicable in these terms. The unization of God means therefore that He is the First Cause of everything, and that none else

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ (الذاريات: ٢٠) هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِّعَلَّمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّ فِي آخِذَاتِ الْأَيْدِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ (يونس: ٦٥)

⁵The earth is full of signs of evidence for those who have certitude (51:20)... It is Allah Who gave you the sun and moon for light; Who ordered them in their orbits that you may reckon the seasons and years. He created all this in truth; and He clarifies the evidence to those who have the mind to know. In the succession of day and night, as in all that Allah created in heaven and earth, are evident signs to those who fear Allah. (10:5-6).

... وَلَا تَحْدِلْ سَنَنَاءَ نَحْوِيْلَا (الإسراء: ٧٧) ... سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا (الأحزاب: ٣٨) ... سُنَّتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ ... (غافر: ٨٥) ... وَلَنْ يَحْدِلَ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا (الأحزاب: ٦٢) ... لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ... (الروم: ٣٠)

⁶In Our path, you will find no change of pattern (17:77)... That is the divine pattern in dealing with your predecessors. Allah's will is always done (33:38)... The pattern of Allah today is the same as of the past (40:85)... No variation is observable in the pattern of Allah in creation (33:62)... His pattern is forever immutable (30:30).

⁷Ismā'il R. al Fārūqī and A. O. Naseef, *Social and Natural Sciences* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), chap. I.

is so. God's power is not so remote, and His causation is so immediate, as to render Him a *deus otiosus*, a "retired" kind of God. That was the mistake of the philosophers who pushed God's causality back to creation, and conceived of the cosmos as a woundup mechanical clock which does not need the clock maker to operate. The *mutakallimūn* have repudiated such a view; and so do we. Our God is a living, active God, Whose action is in everything that happens, though it happens through the causal mechanism proper to it. Our God is indeed present and everywhere active at all times. He alone is sole ultimate Agent of all events, the Cause of all being.⁸

Necessarily then, *al tawhīd* means the elimination of any power operative in nature beside God, Whose eternal initiative is the immutable laws of nature. This is tantamount to denying any initiative in nature to any power other than God's above all, the elimination of magic, sorcery, spirits, and any theurgical notion of arbitrary interference with the processes of nature by any agency. Through *al tawhīd*, therefore, nature is separated from the gods and spirits of primitive religion, from the superstitions of the naive and ignorant. As Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb has amply shown in his *Kitāb al Tawhīd*, every superstition, every piece of sorcery or magic, involves its subject or "beneficiary" in *shirk*. *Al tawhīd*, or the subjection of all creation to one transcendent God, made it possible for the first time for the religio-mythopoeic mind to outgrow itself, for the sciences of nature and civilization to develop under the blessing of a religious worldview which has renounced once and for all any association of the sacred with nature. Necessarily, therefore, *al tawhīd* achieves for natural science what it desires and needs most, namely, the *sine qua non* condition without which it cannot operate. And that is the "profanization" or "secularization" of nature. In the history of science, these terms have meant no more than the removal from nature of the many theurgical causes, of ghosts and spirits, which superstitious people and mystery-mongers have falsely ascribed to natural events. Science does not require the removal of God from nature, but that of ghosts and spirits that act arbitrarily and unpredictably. God, on the other

أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَجَعَلَ خِلَالَهَا أَنْهَارًا وَجَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسٍ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا أُولَئِكَ مَعَ اللَّهِ
 بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (النحل: ٦١)

⁸Would you ascribe associates to Allah? Is it not Allah [the One] Who made the earth (your) place of settlement? Who placed rivers in the folds thereof and established its anchorage? Who made a barrier between the two seas? (27:61).

hand, never acts arbitrarily; and His *sunan* (laws and patterns) are immutable.⁹ Rather than being its enemy, God is the necessary condition of natural science, for unless the scientist assumes that the same causes will always produce the same results—which is precisely what the determination of nature by God means—science cannot function. *Al tawhīd* gathers all the threads of causality and returns them to God, rather than to occult forces. In so doing, the causal force operative in any event or object is organized so as to make a continuous thread whose parts are causally—and hence empirically related to one another. That the thread ultimately refers to God demands that no force outside of it interferes with the discharge of its causal power or efficacy. This in turn presupposes the linkages between the parts to be causal, and subjects them to empirical investigation and establishment. That the laws of nature are the immutable patterns of God means that God operates the causal threads of nature through patterned causes. Only causation by another cause which is always the same constitutes a pattern. This constancy of causation is precisely what makes its examination and discovery—and hence, science — possible. Science is none other than the search for such repeated causation in nature, for the causal linkages constitutive of the causal thread are repeated in other threads. Their establishment is the establishment of the laws of nature. It is the prerequisite for subjecting the causal forces of nature to control and engineering, the necessary condition for man's usufruct of nature, and hence the presupposition of all technology.

The modern scientists of the West rejected God and removed Him, as it were, from nature, out of their hatred for the Christian Church and the false *magisterium* it had imposed for itself on all knowledge including that of nature. Only when they did so, could natural science flourish and prosper in their midst. For a millennium, the Christians produced no science because of this dominion by the Church. Its paradoxical method, incarnational theology, and an authoritarian scripture which spoke *ex cathedra* on questions of natural science, stifled every possibility for the scientific spirit to move. Myth and superstition were backed by Church authority. Removal of the former was regarded as threat to the latter. In putting the scientists to the stake, the Church sought to guard

... فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا (فاطر: ٤٣)

⁹You will never find exception to the patterns of Allah in creation. His patterns are immutable (35:43).

its own foundations. Nonetheless, the scientists gradually won and the Church was defeated. What they succeeded in doing was "secularization" insofar as it meant the removal of the Church *magisterium* from the science of nature. Their accomplishment was valid and extremely worthy.

What is needed therefore for science to function and develop is a nature free of spirits, ghosts, *mana*, *numens* and all kinds of magical elements. Nay, more is needed. Beyond nature "secularized" in this sense, science needs to assume that nature functions according to patterns—that is an orderly system. This requirement is absolutely essential for science. Without it, i.e., with the possibility that natural behavior is arbitrary, erratic, and happenstance, no science is possible. Science rests its whole claim on the assumption that every time a cause is provided, its effect will follow upon it, that what the scientist has discovered is a true law of nature. This means that given the same causes, the same effects will indeed reappear.

Whence the authority for this assumption? Some Western scientists, notably those of the nineteenth century, have claimed that the patterned fabric of nature is deducible from nature itself; i.e., from empirical observation. The same position was advocated by Muslim philosophers a millennium earlier, and al Ghazālī has refuted both with equal philosophical finesse.¹⁰ Against their claim, he rightly argued that from the observable given of nature, one may conclude with the scientists that X follows Y, and that X has followed Y so many times in past experiments or observations. That X follows Y, however, is a far cry from the scientists' claims that X was brought about, or caused, by Y; or that X will always follow upon Y because it is its necessary effect. And yet it is precisely such causal linkage and necessary or infallible predictability that are needed by science and assumed by the scientist to exist between "causes" and "their" presumed effects. Twentieth-century philosophers of science have exposed this prejudgment on the part of the scientists. In consequence, the scientists have grown to be much more humble, and many of them have returned to religion, to God, once their "faith" in the orderliness of nature has been exploded by Einstein's relativity, and Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy. It was philosophy that contributed the most to the questioning of the inductive leap. And it was George Santayana, the skeptic, who called the scientists' trust in cosmic

¹⁰Abū Ḥamid al Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al Falāsifah*, tr. Sabih Aḥmad Kamalī (Lahore: The Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1958), pp. 186 ff.

orderliness a piece of "animal faith." His obvious contempt for their trust is due to the fact that it is utterly without foundation in empirical truth. Thus, with but a little twist, Santayana repeated the same criticism al Ghazālī had directed to the philosopher-scientists in the sixth century AH/eleventh-century AC. Santayana derived his expression "animal faith" from the Pavlovian example, cited *ad nauseam* by all, of the dog becoming so accustomed to finding food upon hearing a bell ring that it "believed" the ring was the cause of the food.¹¹

For us, as Muslims, Allah (SWT) is the cause of this orderliness. The cosmos is indeed a cosmos, not a chaos, precisely because He implanted in it His eternal patterns. These patterns are knowable, i.e., discoverable by observation and intellection, faculties with which Allah (SWT) has equipped humans to enable them to prove themselves by their deeds to fulfill His purpose through such deeds. Rather than being a hindrance to science, Islam, especially its *al tawhīd*, is the condition of science. The Muslim is convinced beyond doubt that Allah (SWT) is, that He is the ultimate cause, the only Agent, by whose benevolent action all that is, and all that happens, happens. Nature, thus perceived through *al tawhīd*, is fit and ready for "scientific" observation and analysis. For the Muslim scientist, the so-called "introduction-leap" is not a leap at all, but another step in an ethymematic syllogism which begins with *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* as its major promise.

II. THE TELEOLOGICAL UNIVERSE

The order of nature is not merely the material order of causes and effects, the order which space and time and other such theoretical categories make evident to our understanding. Nature is equally a realm of ends where everything fulfills a purpose and thereby contributes to the prosperity and balance of all. From the inanimate little pebble in the valley, the smallest plankton on the surface of the ocean, the microbial flagellate in the intestine of the woodroach, to the galaxies and their suns, the giant redwoods and whales and elephants—everything in existence, by its genesis and growth, its life and death, fulfills a purpose assigned to it by God, which is necessary for other beings. All creatures are interdependent, and the whole of creation runs because of the perfect harmony which exists between its parts. "To everything," God says in

¹¹George Santayana, *Skepticism and Animal Faith* (New York: Scribner's).

the Quran, "We have given a measure proper to it."¹² This is the ecological balance which the contemporary pollution of nature has brought to the consciousness of modern man with alarming threat. The Muslim has been aware of it for centuries, and has seen himself as standing within it, for he is as much a part of it as any other creature.

That each element of creation feeds on another and is fed upon by a third is certainly a nexus of ends, perhaps the most obvious among the higher creatures. The dominion of the same nexus over the unseen world of algae, microbes and enzymes is harder to observe, to establish and to imagine in all its reaches. But it is no less real. Still more difficult to discover is that the feeding patterns of vegetal and animal life are the chains of interdependence in the very activities of all creatures, activities other than feeding whether or not connected with it, in the continuous action and reaction of the elements on one another, whether in earth, in the waters, in the air and among the bodies of outer space. Our knowledge of the intricacies of nature's ecology is still at an infant stage, although the sciences of nature have revealed enough of it for the imagination to construct the system as a whole.

As a teleological system, the world presents us with a sublime spectacle. The size and comprehensiveness of the macrocosm, the delicate minutiae of the microcosm, as well as the infinitely complex and perfect nature of the mechanisms of the balance, are overwhelming and fascinating. The mind is literally "humbled," as the Quran says, before them; but it is the humbling of love and admiration, of appreciation and value-apprehension,¹³ for the world as the purposeful creation of the Almighty is beautiful, indeed sublime, precisely on account of its teleology. The exclamation of the poet, "How wonderful is the rose! In it is visible the Face of God!" has no sense other than this, that the rose serves the purposes of man and insects by its fragrance and visible beauty, purposes which have been endowed to it by God and which it renders

إِنَّا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ (القمر: ٤٩) لَقَدْ أَحْصَيْنَاهُمْ وَعَدَّاهُمْ عَدًّا (مرم: ٩٤) ... إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا (الطلاق: ٣)

¹²Everything We have created and assigned to it its measure, its character and destiny (54:49)... Allah keeps all things in census (19:94)... Certainly, His will will be done. To everything He prescribed a measure (65:3).

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ غَائِبًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ (الملك: ٤)

¹³Look into Allah's creation once, twice and more [for any flaw or discrepancy]. You will find none. Your quizzical sight will return to you humbled but convinced [of the perfection of Allah's creation] (67:4).

to perfection, reflecting, to those with the eye to see, the glorious efficacy and sublime workmanship of the purposive Designer and Creator—God.

A. NATURE AS DIVINE MANOR

So much for the metaphysical arm of Islamic doctrine. The other arm is the ethical. Islam teaches that nature was created as a theater for man, a “field” in which to grow and prosper, to enjoy God’s bounty and in doing so to prove oneself ethically worthy.¹⁴ First, nature is not man’s property but God’s.¹⁵ Man was granted his tenure therein by God and to the end prescribed by Him.¹⁶ Like a good land-tenant, man ought to take care of his Master’s property. The right of usufruct which man certainly holds does not entitle him to destroy nature, or to so exploit it as to upset and ruin its ecological balance. The right of usufruct which is all he possesses is an individual right which God renews with every individual at his birth. It is neither vicarious nor hereditary, and hence, does not entitle man to preempt the future of others’ enjoyment of it. As steward of the earth—indeed of creation—man is supposed at death to

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَتُكْفَرُ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ (الملك: ٢) إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّمَن يَسْكُنُهَا إِنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (الكهف: ٧)

¹⁴It is Allah Who created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving (67:2)... We have made everything on earth an ornament unto it that you may prove yourselves worthy in deeds (18:7).

قَسْبَحْنَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (يس: ٨٣) قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ ... (آل عمران: ٢٦)

¹⁵Praised, therefore, is Allah, in Whose hand is dominion over all things. To Him will you all return (36:83)... [When you pray to Allah] Say, O Allah, King of all dominion, Owner of all things (3:26).

... أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ قُوْا إِلَيْهِ ... (هود: ٦١) وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (النور: ٥٥)

¹⁶Adore Allah and serve Him. There is no god but He. He brought you forth from earth that you may settle therein according to His pattern. Repent therefore to Him and seek His forgiveness (11:61)... Allah promised such of you as believe and do good that He will make them His vicegerents on earth as He did to those that went before them, that He will establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, that He will turn their fear into reassurance and security. For they worship and serve only Him without associates. Henceforth, whoever disobeys Allah commits great evil (24:55).

hand over his trust to God in a better state than it was when he received it.

Second, the order of nature is subject to man, who can bring to it such changes as he wills. Nature has been created malleable, capable of receiving man's intervention into its processes, of suffering deflection of its causal nexus by his deeds. No realm or area of nature is out-of-bounds. The firmament with its suns, moons and stars, the earth and the seas with all that they contain are his to explore and to use, for utility, for pleasure and comfort or for contemplation.¹⁷ All creation is "for" man and awaits his usufruct of it. Its disposal is utterly at his discretion.¹⁸ His judgement is the only efficacious instrument of intervention, the only arbiter. But nothing relieves him of responsibility for the whole of creation.

Third, in his usufruct and enjoyment of nature, man is enjoined to act morally, for theft and cheating, coercion and monopoly, hoarding and exploitation, egotism and insensitivity to the needs of others, are unworthy of him as God's vicegerent and are therefore strictly forbidden.¹⁹ Islam also frowns upon extravagance and forbids wasteful and osten-

... وَزَيَّنَّا لِلْفِطْرِ بَيْتَ (الحجر: ١٦) ... مِنْ كُلِّ رَوْحٍ بِهِمْ (الحج: ٥) قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ... (الأعراف: ٣٢)

¹⁷And We decorated the sky and made it beautiful for men to enjoy (15:16)... We planted on earth a pair of everything beautiful (22:5)... False is the prohibition of beauty which Allah brought forth for His servants' enjoyment, and the delicacies of food and raiment which He provided. Say, (Muhammad): They belong to the believers to enjoy in this world (7:32). See also: *Supra*, n. 5.

... سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَافِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَافِي الْأَرْضِ ... (لقمان: ٢٠) وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبَيْنِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ (إبراهيم: ٣٣) ... هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ خَلْقَافِي الْأَرْضِ ... (فاطر: ٣٩) أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَافِي الْأَرْضِ ... (الحج: ٦٥)

¹⁸Allah has made what is in the heavens and on the earth subservient to you (31:20)... He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon, predetermined in their orbits, and the day and night (14:33)... It is Allah Who made you His viceregerents on earth (35:39)... Can you not see that Allah has made all that is on earth subservient to you? (22:65).

وَالسَّارِقَ وَالسَّارِقَةَ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِنَ اللَّهِ ... (المائدة: ٣٨) وَلَكُمْ فِطْرُ الْيَتَامَى (المائدة: ٤٤) وَبِئْسَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ لَظْمًا زَلِيلًا الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَا لَا وَعَدْدَ لَهُ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ (الحجرات: ٣١) أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يَحْصُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْيَتِيمِ (الماعون: ١-٣)

¹⁹As to the thieves, whether male or female, cut off their hands for punishment due in return for their offence against Allah (5:38)... Nor were we of those who fed the indigent (74:44)... Woe to the scandal-makers and backbiters, among whom stand the collector and hoarder of wealth, thinking that that would make him immortal (104:1-3)... Will you consider the denier of all religion? That is the person who pushes away the orphan, who does not enjoin the feeding of the destitute (107:1-3).

tatious consumption.²⁰ Islamic culture is incompatible with any of these. Not poverty or want, but contentment is what the refined Muslim ought to have and show, expressing his satisfaction with what God has provided.

Fourth, Islam demands of man to search for and understand the patterns of God in nature, not merely those which constitute the natural sciences, but equally those which constitute nature's general order and beauty. The fact that nature is God's handiwork, His plan and design, the actualization of His will, casts upon it a halo of dignity. It must not be abused or raped or exploited, though it is subject to the usufruct of men. Sensitivity to nature and tender care given to it as garden or forest, river or mountain, is in accord with the divine purpose.

... وَلَا تُبْذِرْ بَذِيرًا (الإسراء: ٢٦) إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا (الإسراء: ٢٧)
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ ... (الإسراء: ٢٩) ... وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُسْرِفِينَ (الأَنْعَام: ١٤١)

²⁰Do not squander your wealth away (17:26)... Squanderers are the devil's kin, doomed to the eternal fire with him for his disobedience to Allah (17:27). Be not spendthrifts. Allah loves not the spendthrifts (6:141)

CHAPTER VI

THE PRINCIPLE OF ETHICS

Al tawhīd affirms that the unique God created man in the best of forms to the end of worshipping and serving Him.¹ Obedience to God and fulfillment of His command are therefore man's *raison d'être*. *Al tawhīd* also affirms that this purpose consists of man's vicegerency for God on earth.² For, according to the Quran, God has invested man with His trust, a trust which heaven and earth were incapable of carrying and from which they shied away with terror.³ The divine trust is the fulfillment of the ethical part of the divine will, whose very nature requires that it be realized in freedom, and man is the only creature capable of doing so. Whenever the divine will is realized with the necessity of natural law, the realization is not moral, but elemental or utilitarian. Only man is capable of realizing it under the possibility of doing or not doing so at all, or doing the very opposite or anything in between. It is this exercise of human freedom regarding obedience to God's commandment that makes fulfillment of the command moral.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات: ٥٦) لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (التين: ٤) ثُمَّ رَسَوْنَاهُ فَوَضَعْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رَوْحِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ (السجدة: ٩)

¹I have not created the jinn and humankind but to serve Me (51:56)... We have created man in the best of forms (95:4)... We have perfected his (man's) creation and breathed into him of Our spirit. Indeed, Allah has created hearing, your sight and discerning heart. Little do you express your gratitude (32:9).

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ٣٠)

²And when your Lord announced to the angels that He was about to create man and to establish him on earth as vicegerent for Him, they said: Would You establish on earth a creature that sheds blood and works evil, while we adore and praise You constantly? Allah answered: I have a purpose which you do not know (2:30).

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ... (الأحزاب: ٧٢)

³We offered Our trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains; but they refused to carry it and were frightened by its burden. However, man accepted to carry it (33:72).

I. THE HUMANISM OF ISLAM

Al tawhīd tells us that God, being beneficent and purposive, did not create man in sport, or in vain.⁴ He has endowed him with the senses, with reason and understanding, made him perfect—indeed, breathed into him of His spirit—to the end of preparing him to perform this great duty.⁵

Such a great duty is the cause for creation of man. It is the final end of human existence, man's definition, and the meaning of his life and existence on earth. By virtue of it, man assumes a cosmic function of tremendous importance. The cosmos would not be itself without that higher part of the divine will which is the object of human moral endeavor. And no other creature in the cosmos is known who can substitute for man in this function. If man is said to be "the crown of creation," it is certainly on this account, namely, that by his ethical striving and action, he is the only cosmic bridge through which the moral—and hence higher—part of the divine will enters the realm of space-time and becomes history.

Al taklīf (responsibility or obligation) laid down upon man exclusively knows no bounds, as far as his possible scope and theater of action. It comprehends the whole universe. All mankind is object of man's moral action; all earth and sky are his theater, his *matériel*. He is responsible for all that takes place in the universe, in every one of its remotest corners, for man's *taklīf* is universal, cosmic. It comes to end only on the Day of Judgement.

Al taklīf is the basis of man's humanity, its meaning and content. Man's acceptance of its burden puts him on a higher level than the rest of crea-

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى (القيامة: ٣) أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى (القيامة: ٣٦) أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ (المؤمنون: ١١٥) وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَإِغْوٍ (الأنبياء: ١٦)

⁴Does man think that We are unable to resurrect his bones? (75:3)... Does he think he will be left alone, without reckoning? (75:36)... Do you think, O men, that We have created you in vain? That your return is not to Us? (23:115)... No! We have not created heaven and earth and all that is between them in sport (21:16).

أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ وَلَئِنَّا وَشَقْنَاهُ وَضَعَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ (البلد: ٧-١٠) فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي (الحجر: ٢٩)

⁵Does man think that nobody will watch over him? Have We not created for him his eyes [to see]? His tongue and lips [to speak]? Have We not given him his orientation between the path of righteousness and that of evil? (90:7-10)... And when I perfected man's creation, I breathed into him of My spirit (15:29).

tion, indeed, than the angels, for only he is capable of it. It constitutes his cosmic significance. A world of difference separates this humanism of Islam from other humanisms. Greek civilization, for instance, developed a strong humanism which the West has taken as model since the Renaissance. Founded upon an exaggerated naturalism, Greek humanism deified man—as well as his vices. That is why the Greek was not offended by representing his gods cheating and plotting against one another, or committing adultery, theft, incest, aggression, jealousy and revenge, and other acts of brutality. Being part of the stuff of which human life is made, such acts and passions were claimed to be as natural as the perfections and virtues. As nature, both were thought to be equally divine, worthy of contemplation in their esthetic form, of adoration—and of emulation by man of whom they were the apotheosis.⁶ Christianity, on the other hand, was in its formative years reacting to this very Greco-Roman humanism. It went to the opposite extreme of debasing man through “original sin” and declared him a *massa peccata*.⁷ The degrading of man to the level of absolute, universal, innate and necessary state of sin from which it is impossible for any human ever to pull himself by his own effort, was the logical prerequisite if God on High was to incarnate Himself, to suffer and die in atonement for man’s sinfulness. In other words, if a redemption has to take place by God there must be a predicament so absolute that only God could pull man out of it. Thus human sinfulness was absolutized in order to make it “worthy” of the crucifixion of God.⁸ Hinduism classified mankind into castes, and assigned the majority of mankind to the nethermost classes—of “untouchables” if they are native to India, or to that of *maliicha*, the religiously unclean or contaminated of the rest of the world. For the lowest as well as for the others, there is no rise to the superior privileged caste of Brahmins in this life; such mobility is possible only after death through the transmigration of souls. In this life, man necessarily belongs to the

⁶Murray, *Five Stages*... pp. 65-6, 73.

⁷See: *Supra*, chap. II, n. 21.

⁸Their words are full of deadly deceit, wicked lies roll off their tongues, and dangerous threats, like snake’s poison, from their lips (Romans 3:13)... But by the free gift of God’s grace all are put right with Him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free. God offered him, so that by his sacrificial death he should become the means by which people’s sins are forgiven through their faith in him. God did this in order to demonstrate that He is righteous. In the past He was patient and overlooked people’s sins; but in the present time He deals with their sins, in order to demonstrate His righteousness. In this way God shows that He himself is righteous and that He puts right everyone who believes in Jesus (Romans 3:24-26)... Law was introduced in order to increase wrongdoing; but where sin increased, God’s grace increased much more. So then, just as sin ruled by means of death, so also God’s grace rules by means of righteousness, leading us to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:20-21).

caste in which he is born. Ethical striving is of no consequence whatever to its subject as long as he is alive in this world. Finally, Buddhism judged all human and other life in creation as endless suffering and misery. Existence itself, it held, is evil and man's only meaningful duty is to seek release from it through discipline and mental effort.⁹

The humanism of *al tawhīd* alone is genuine. It alone respects man and creaturely, without either deification or vilification. It alone defines the worth of man in terms of his virtues, and begins its assessment of him with a positive mark for the innate endowment God has given all men in preparation for their noble task. It alone defines the virtues and ideals of human life in terms of the very contents of natural life, rather than denying them, thus making its humanism life-affirmative as well as moral.

In Islam, ethics are inseparable from religion and are built entirely upon it. The Islamic mind knows no pair of contraries such as "religious-secular," "sacred-profane," "church-state," and Arabic, the religious language of Islam, has no words for them in its vocabulary. This first principle of Islamic knowledge is therefore the unity of truth, just as the first principle of human life is the unity of the person, and the first principle of reality is the unity of God. All three unities are aspects of, and inseparable from, one another. Such unity is the ultimate principle. The existence of God was not a question for Islam. It has correctly assumed that man was indeed a *homo religious*, a being whose consciousness has always worked around a pivotal presence of the godhead. But its call for the unity of God was fresh as most men repeatedly mixed up the godhead with other beings, powers or human wishes, thus spoiling its unity. However, anxious to save mankind and the whole of human history from any assumed loss before its advent, it affirmed this divine unity to have been known to Adam, the first human, and his descendants, and called its absence wherever divine unity was not in evidence a human aberration.

The presence of this unity in the mind is what Islam calls religious experience, *īmān* or certain conviction. It is not an "act of faith," a "decision" which man takes where the evidence is not conclusive. Nor is it dependent, as it were, on him and his assessment on a case from which apodeictic certainly is ruled out—not a wager *à la Pascal*! It is so crushingly compelling by its own evidence and reality that man must acquiesce to it as to the conclusion of a geometrical theorem. Percep-

⁹Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 443.

tion of the divine unity, Islam holds, happens to a man just as the presence of a "hard datum" enters consciousness. Its "truth" is as rational, as critical, and as inevitable. The meaning of divine unity is that God alone is God; that nothing absolutely nothing in creation, is like unto Him in any respect whatever, and hence absolutely nothing is associable with Him. He is Creator of all that is, Lord and Master, Sustainer and Provider, Judge and Executor. His will is the law in nature, and the norm in human conduct. It is the *summum bonum*.

Such awareness on the part of man is at once enchanting to him and the world around him. It is possessive, its object being both *tremendum* and *fascinosum*. To be sized by it is to live one's whole life, not excluding the most personal secret of it, under the all-seeing eye of God, under the all-relevant norms of His divine will, under the shadow of impending judgement according to a scale of absolute justice. There can be no more perfect self-discipline, no more effective self-motivation. In the perspective of this awareness of divine unity, everything in the universe is created for a purpose and sustained at every moment of space-time by the Author of that purpose. No law of nature operates automatically; for its necessity derives not from blind fate or a clockwork cosmos, but from the benevolent God Whose will is to provide man with theater and materials wherein his action is ontologically efficacious. Hence, the doors of natural and humane science and technology are wide open to the most thorough-going empiricism possible without the least alienation or separation from the realm of moral and esthetic value. Fact and value are here synthesized as one datum proceeding from God and fulfilling His will. The world is, under this view, animated; for every atom of it moves by the divine agency, in a divine dependency, for a value that is divine desire.

This, in brief, is the essence of the *shari'ah*, of culture and civilization. The Muslims have called it *al tawhid*, meaning the three unities of God, truth and life. It is at the base of their representation of reality, of their collective mind, action and hope. The question—what ought man to do?—is answerable only in its light.

II. PURPOSE OF MAN'S CREATION

Islamic ethics therefore begins with the identification of the divine purpose in man. What is his *raison d'être*? the purpose of his creation, of his continued sustenance in life and history?

Using the religious as well as the ancient Semitic terminology, Islam holds that man was created to serve God. God said in the Quran, the scripture of Islam, "I have not created men and *jinn* except to serve Me."¹⁰ In philosophical terms, this is tantamount to saying that the purpose of man's existence is the realization of the *summum bonum*. Obviously, what is being asserted here is the purposefulness of human life. Its denial is the cynical assertion of meaninglessness. It is another matter whether the meaning of human life is heroism, saintliness or covering the world with yellow paint. Indeed, this question itself cannot be raised without assuming a positive answer to the first, namely, that there is meaning or good in human life. Such meaning or good, which is the purpose of all creation is, according to Islam, the fulfillment of the divine will. Whereas this fulfillment takes place involuntarily as in the physiological and psychic function; and freely, as in the ethical. The ethical functions realize the moral values and these are the higher occupants of that realm, the higher imperatives of divine will. The divine will includes imperatives of a lesser order such as food, growth, shelter, comfort, sex, etc.; for everything in creation partakes of the divine purposiveness; and in fulfilling them, in the hierarchial order proper to them, man realizes the divine will. But his vocation lies in the moral realm where fulfillment of the divine will can take place only in freedom; that is, under the real possibility of man's capacity to do otherwise than he ought. It is in this sense that he is God's vicegerent on earth; for only he can realize the ethical – and hence higher values, and only he can have for an objective the realization of the whole realm in its totality. Hence, he is a sort of cosmic bridge through which the divine will, in its totality and especially the higher ethical part of it, can enter space-time and become actual.

In a dramatically eloquent passage of the Quran, God tells us that He offered His trust to heaven and earth, but these shied away from it; that man alone accepted it.¹¹ The Quran also tells us in another passage that the angels objected to God's plan for creating man, knowing that man was equally capable of evil, which they are not. God, however,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الدَّارِمَات: ٥٦)

¹⁰I have not created the *jinn* and humankind but to serve Me (51:56).

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ... (الأحزاب: ٧٢)

¹¹We offered Our trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains; but they refused to carry it and were frightened by its burden. However, man accepted to carry it (33:72).

rejected their claim and assigned to man a higher destiny.¹² In cosmic economy, man's capacity for evil is indeed a risk. But this risk is incomparable with the great promise which he may fulfill if endowed with freedom. What the Quran meant to say is that only man may realize ethical value because only he has the freedom necessary therefor; that only he may pursue the totality of values because only he has the mind and vision requisite for such pursuit. Upon his creation, God gave him of His wisdom, proved him superior to the angels and ordered the latter to prostrate themselves in honor of him.¹³ No wonder then that in Islam man is regarded as the crown of creation, higher than the angels precisely on account of his unique ethical vocation and destiny.

III. MAN'S INNOCENCE

Islam holds that man is created innocent, and plays out the drama, as it were, after his birth, not before. No matter who his parents were, who his uncles and ancestors, his brothers and sisters, his neighbors or his society were, man is born innocent. This repudiates every notion of original sin, of hereditary guilt, of vicarious responsibility, of tribal, national or international involvement of the person in past events before his birth.¹⁴ Every man is born with a clean slate, it asserts, basing its

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ٣٠)

¹²When Allah announced to the angels that He was about to create man and to establish him on earth as vicegerent for Him, the angels said: Would you establish on earth a creature that sheds blood and works evil, while we adore you and praise you constantly? Allah answered: I have a purpose which you do not know (2:30).

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ... وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ (البقرة: ٣١-٣٤)

¹³Allah taught Adam the names [essence] of all things (2:31). We commanded the angels to prostrate themselves to Adam. They all did except Iblis, who felt too proud to do so. But Iblis is ungodly (2:34).

أَلَمْ نَزِرْكَ وَزُرَّكَ وَنَزَّلْنَاكَ مِنَ الْأَنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى (النجم: ٣٨-٣٩) لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ ... (البقرة: ٢٨٦)

¹⁴No person is responsible for the guilt of another...To every person belongs the merit or demerit of what he has wrought (53:38-39)...Allah does not charge a person with more than he can bear. Therefore, to everyone belongs the credit or discredit which he has personally earned (2:286).

stand on the absolute autonomy and individuality of the human person.¹⁵ No soul, the Quran declares, will bear any but its own burden.¹⁶ To it belongs all that it has itself personally earned, whether merit or dismerit.¹⁷ None will receive judgement for the deed of another, and none may intercede on behalf of another.¹⁸ Islam defines man's responsibility exclusively in terms of his own deeds and defines a deed as the act in which man, the sane adult person, enters into bodily, consciously, and voluntarily, and in which he produces some disturbance of the flow of space-time. That guilt and responsibility are ethical categories and are incurred only where a free and conscious deed is committed is a "hard datum" of ethical consciousness.

A number of modern Christian thinkers sought to reestablish the old doctrine of original sin by giving it a new, descriptive base. Such a base, they claimed, was furnished by the discoveries of biologists and psychologists and their analyses of human nature. The will to

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنِ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِهَا ...
(الزمر: ٤١) وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ قَمَنَ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَنِ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفِرْ ... (الكهف: ٢٩)

¹⁵We have sent down to you [Muhammad] the Book in truth. Whoever is guided by it is so to his own credit; whoever goes astray does so to his own discredit (39:41)... Say [O Muhammad], the truth has come from our Lord and become manifest. Whoever wishes to believe, let him do so; whoever wishes to disbelieve, let him do so (18:29).

... وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا نُزِرْ وَأُزِرْهُ وَذُرْ آخِرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ... (الأنعام: ١٦٤)
أَلَا نُزِرْ وَأُزِرْهُ وَذُرْ آخِرَىٰ وَأَنْ لِّسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ (النجم: ٣٨-٣٩)

¹⁶No soul will be charged but what it has wrought upon itself. No person is responsible for the guilt of another. To Allah is your return (6:164)... No person may be asked to reckon but for his own deeds. His record will be manifest; and he will be given exactly what he deserves (53:38-9).

مَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا نُزِرْ وَأُزِرْهُ وَذُرْ آخِرَىٰ وَمَا كُفَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ بَعَثَ رَسُولًا (الإسراء: ١٥) مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَالَمِينَ (فصلت: ٤٦)

¹⁷Whoever guides himself by Our revelation does so to his own credit. Whoever goes astray does so to his own peril. Nobody will be responsible for another's deed, and we will not judge but after a messenger is sent [to proclaim and warn] (17:15)... Whoever does good will have that good reckoned for him. Whoever does evil will have that evil marked against him. Your Lord commits no injustice to His servants (41:46).

قُلْ لَا تَسْأَلُونَنَا عَمَّا آخَرَمَنَا وَلَا شُئِلَ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ (سبا: ٢٥) فَلْيَوْمَ لَا يَمْلِكُ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا وَقَوْلُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ بِهَا تَكْذِبُونَ (سبا: ٤٢)

¹⁸Say: You are not accountable for our crimes; nor are we for the evil you do (34:25). On the Day of Judgment, no person will be of any avail to another, neither for good nor for ill.. Those who committed injustice will be assigned to the Fire which they denied (34:42).

live, to survive, to satisfy the instincts, the desire for pleasure and comfort, man's will to power, his egotism and even the undeniable fact of his imperfection and otherness than God—all these have been claimed to constitute in their opinion so many loci of original sin, which they then define as the self-centered direction of all these natural or psychic inclinations.¹⁹

Surely, man is made of all that the biochemist, physiologist, pathologist, psychologist and all the sciences study in him, and the object of their studies is certainly "given," another "hard datum," predetermined before birth. But all this, whether physical or psychic is natural and necessary. Man does not have it by choice. The baby and the adult are determined by their bodily frames, the one not to climb a mountain and the other not to carry an elephant. But it would be repugnant to reason to call either of them "guilty" of their failures to climb the mountain or carry the elephant. The Quran has declared that no man may be responsible for any more than he can bear.²⁰ Determination by nature is consonant with innocence and constitutes no valid ground for incrimination, for ethical responsibility is commensurate with capacity for the controlled use of one's natural equipment with a view to produce the objective contemplated by one's consciousness. Where there is no capacity, there can be no freedom and hence neither responsibility nor guilt. Modern advocates of original sin have often fallen back upon the endowment of nature for justification of their theory. Their most common plea is: Consider the self-centeredness of the newborn infant, not to speak of the adult person. Topping all modern Christian apologetics in bombast is the grandiose claim of Paul Tillich who defined original sin as the personal guilt incurred by passage from essence to existence within the mind of God of the idea of man.²¹ The sweeping assertion of some Indian thinkers, not forgetting Guatama, the Buddha, that man—indeed the whole realm of nature—is both evil and unreal, is of the same kind.²²

¹⁹Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, part I, chap. IV, chap. XIV, pp. 35 ff; Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 pp. 44 ff; Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Scribner, 1941), pp. 245, 263-269.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا... وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَآ مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ... (البقرة: ٢٨٦)

²⁰No soul will be charged with more than it can bear... Our Lord, grant that we may not have to carry that which is beyond our power (2:286).

²¹Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, 29-44.

²²T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955), 330-331; also Radhakrishnan *Indian Philosophy* 362 ff

IV. IMAGO DEI

Man, the Quran claims, in agreement with the Jewish and Christian views, is created in God's image.²³ Like Judaism, and unlike Christianity, however, it regards this image as innate in all men and permanent; that is to say, being part of nature, it cannot be lost. Islam does not follow Christianity in distinguishing between a natural *imago dei* (as *actus*) and an ethical one (as *reatus*). Neither does it allow either or both of them any ontological status, as the theological term *inquinamentum* indicates. The Christian distinction is needed to make the fall something ontological, something true of all human beings, and this would constitute the necessary predicament from which no man can save himself by his own effort—which is the assumption of the Incarnation.²⁴ Islam did not share these assumptions and could hence regard every man at all times as embodying the divine image.

Islamic thought built upon this notion of God's image in man is philosophic anthropology. The Quran asserted that man was endowed with a soul, and defined the latter as "of the breath of God."²⁵ Man's soul was then analyzed into an animal component which gave man his sentience and desires, and a rational component which gave him his mind. The Quran told of man's endowment with the senses, with a capacity for knowledge of nature, of God and of His will, strong enough to be

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ، وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ (الحجر: ٢٩) اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا
وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ
اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (غافر: ٦٤) خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ
(التغابن: ٣)

²³And when Allah perfected the creation of man and breathed into him of His spirit, the angels prostrated themselves to him (15:29)... It is Allah who granted to you the earth in which to settle, Who raised the sky for your protection, Who formed you in the best of forms, and Who gave you the good things to enjoy. Such are the deeds of your Lord. Blessed be Allah, Lord of the universes (40:64)... He created heaven and earth in truth; and He created you in the best of form. To Him is the ultimate return. (64:3).

²⁴St. Augustine, "Against Two Letters of the Pelagians," *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978) First series, Vol. 5. p. 378. But I see a different law at work in my body—a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body. What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death? Thanks be to God, who does this through our Lord Jesus Christ! This, then is my condition: on my own I can serve God's law only with my mind, while my human nature serves the law of sin (Romans 7:23-25).

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ، وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي ... (الحجر: ٢٩)

²⁵And when I have perfected man's creation, I breathed into him of My spirit (15:29).

trustworthy—indeed to substitute for revelation or to be its equal.²⁶ Muslim philosophers have universally equated the two. Reason was the part of man which made him godlike; and being the breath of God, it is man's most godlike organ and hence the faculty by which like can know like, by which man can know God.

This divine image is ubiquitous in all men. It cannot ever be destroyed or lost and it constitutes man's essential humanity. It is his noblest and most precious possession. It is divine. Where it is missing, there is no human being; and where it is deficient, the condition of the patient is called insanity. Here Islamic humanism is one with the philosophic humanism of the Greeks (Socrates, Plato and Aristotle), with the difference that whereas the highest object of Greek rationality was *paideia* (culture), for the Muslim it is *taqwā* (piety, righteousness). On second look, however, Islam's piety turns out to include Greek *paideia*, for in Islam, the recognition of God as God, i.e., as Creator, Lord and Judge, is the highest rationality ever.

Islam is radically different from Greek humanism, as the latter recognized the free citizen and assigned the slave to another inferior category. It is equally different from Jewish humanism which, while asserting the *imago dei* to be present in all men by nature, differentiates between men on the level of birth and nature by assigning an elect status to its own adherents. It is different from Christian humanism when the latter distinguishes between *imago dei* as a natural *zelem*, possessed by all men and an acquired *demuth* which only its adherents possess as a result of their faith and baptism. Finally, it is different from secular European humanism which defines itself in terms of European culture exclusively, and thus relegates the Asians, Africans and other non-Europeans to a subhuman level. Even the great Kant, the noblest prince of the Enlightenment, the advocate of the categorical imperative, was unable to push his own rationalism to its logical conclusion and assigned

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِنَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ (السجدة: ٩)
وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُ مَائِدَةً يَدِئِلُهُمْ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ كُلُّهَا إِلَيْكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا (الأنعام: ٣٦) سُبْحَانَ رَبِّهِمْ
مَا يَتَّبِعَانِ الْآفَاقَ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَقٌّ يَبَيِّنُ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ... (فصل: ٥٣)

²⁶Allah then perfected the creation of man and breathed into him of His spirit. It is Allah Who created your hearing, your sight and your discerning heart. Little do you feel grateful (32:4). O man! Follow not that whereof you have no knowledge. As faculties of knowledge, your sights your hearing and your hearts are indeed responsible (17:36)... We shall show them Our evident signs in all horizons as well as within their own selves, that they may be convinced Our revelation is the truth. (41:53).

inferior status to the Asians and Africans. Islam regards all men alike; and God is repeatedly reminding man in the Quran: "We have created you all from one pair—all from dust—Higher among you is he who is higher in righteousness ... and knowledge."²⁷ Those who know and those who don't, are they equals?" the Quran asks rhetorically.²⁸ On the day of his farewell pilgrimage, the Prophet (SAAS) received a revelation signalling the completion of the revelation and of Islam. On that solemn occasion he found fit to remind the Muslims who were almost all Arab in race and were Arab in language and culture without exception: "No difference whatever between an Arab and a non-Arab can exist except on the level of righteousness."²⁹

The second faculty constitutive of the soul as mind or reason is man's capacity for responsibility. The Muslim philosophers insisted on defining this capacity as *qadar* (capacity for action), and the theologians, as *kasb* (capacity for acquisition of the consequences of action, action being exclusively a divine prerogative). This difference between *qadar* and *kasb* is a theological nicety. On the ethical level they are equal for both have the same effect of attributing responsibility to man for his deeds.

Man's capacity to know the good or the will of God, his capacity to fulfill or not to fulfill the imperative and his responsibility for his deeds constitute his humanistic "equipment." All men are endowed with this equipment without exception.

Islam has no soteriology. "Salvation," in its purview, is an improper religious concept with has no equivalent term in the Islamic vocabulary. Man stands in no predicament from which he is to be "saved." Adam, the first man, committed a misdeed (eating from the prohibited tree); but he repented and was forgiven.³⁰ His misdeed was an ordinary human

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَاُنْثٰى وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّوَقَاِیْلَ لِتَعَارَفُوْۤا اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَتْقٰىكُمْ ...
(الحجرات: ۱۳)

²⁷O humankind, We have created you out of a single pair, a male and a female. We have made you differing peoples and tribes that you may come to know one another. Noblest among you in the eye of Allah is the most righteous (49:13).

... قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِی الَّذِیْنَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ وَالَّذِیْنَ لَا یَعْلَمُوْنَ اِنَّمَا یَذْكُرُ اُولُو الْاَلْبَابِ (الزمر: ۹)

²⁸Say: Those who know and those who don't, are they equal? Certainly not. Indeed only those with mind will reckon (39:9).

²⁹Amin Duwaydar, *Şuvar min hayāt al Rasūl* (Cairo: Dār al Maārif bi Mişr, 1372/1953), p. 593.

فَنَلَقٰۤی اٰدَمَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ فَكَتَبَ عَلَیْهِمْ ذُنُوْبَهُمْ ثُمَّ هُوَ الْوَّابُ الرَّحِیْمُ (البقرة: ۳۷)

³⁰Adam received a revelation from his Lord and repented. Allah accepted his repentance, for He is the Merciful Forgiver (2:37).

mistake; it was the first error in ethical judgement, the first misconduct, the first crime. But, for all its firstness, it was the deed of one man, and hence his own, personal responsibility. It had no effect on anyone else beside him. Not only was it devoid of cosmic effect, but even of any effect upon his own children. It constituted no "fall," either for Adam himself, or for anyone else. It did send Adam from Paradise to earth but it changed nothing in his nature, his capacities, his promise, his vocation or his destiny. Man is not "fallen" and hence there is no need to "save" or ransom him. Rather, man stands under an imperative, an ought-to-do, and his worth is a function of his fulfillment or otherwise of the imperative. Rather than "fall," Islam asserts innocence; rather than "salvation," felicity. Being an exact function of his own deeds, man's felicity or infelicity is his own work, totally. Such felicity does not depend on anyone's blessing or agency; it is not the effect of a sacrament, or of an ontic participation in a mystical body such as the Church. Islam is free of both.

The moral imperative to which man is subject neither looks towards, nor refers to, any past event, whether a "fall" or a "ransom" effected by someone else. It does not arise out of such past events, but is totally constituted by something present or future. Hence, Islam knows no "justification by faith," no history of *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation). The only relevant past it recognizes is the revelation of divine commandments and past men's felicity or infelicity as obedience or violation of these commandments.

Instead of flowing from faith in a salvific drama that happened in the past, man's mortality issues from the Muslim's faith that God is. In this perspective, the existence of God is the existence of truth and value both of which lay a claim to his loyalty and energy. Such a claim consists in the positive disturbance of space-time to the end of actualizing therein the divine pattern. Faith and all the attendant faculties by which values and their relations are cognized and their materials are selected and assigned are only preparations for concretization. Spirituality itself, the whole realm of it, Islam asserts, is nothing unless it is concretized in real men and women. Assuming that at birth man stands on the threshold of ethicality, at the zero point of the ethical dimension, Islam conceives of his duty as positive deeds, as the doing of something new, not as the undoing of something past. Its ethics is wholly forward-looking, even when it is archconservative and stagnant. It is this ethical affirmativeness which gave the Muslim his *élan*. Not weighed down by shackles from

the past, he became an exemplar of worldliness and activism, an inveterate enemy of world-denial and history-depreciation.

V. ACTIONALISM

Carrying the internalizing ethical insights of Jeremiah and later Semitic men of religion to their logical conclusion, Jesus (AS) was sent as prophet to the Jews in order to promote the personalist ethic of intention against the growing externalism and literalism of the Pharisees and Sadducees. It was natural that such extremism was contrasted with an opposite extremism in order to expose the aberrating exaggeration. Jesus taught the principle that the moral character of an act is a function, not of its effects or consequences which are measured by the values of utility, but of its accompanying and motivating intent, exclusively. In numerous parables, he illustrated beautifully the point that what seems to be evil in its effect is really not so because of its motivation, that where the intent is pure, where the heart is determined by the noble purpose of love of God and obedience to Him, the act is wholesome and the person saved.³¹ It was thus that Augustine could say, "Love God and do what you will," and Immanuel Kant, "The intrinsically good thing is a good will." Jesus' sublime effort was therefore oriented toward the internal, radical self-transformation of the person. It was not part of that ethic to deprecate the effects of moral action and hence of the world, of space-time and history. Its strength lies in its single-minded determination to cleanse and purify the spring of all action—the will. If it defined the moral good as a state of the will when it is determined by the love of God, it did rightly; for the slightest violation of this principle is *ipso facto* vitiation of any deed whatever. This was Jesus' divine answer to rampant externalism, to a law enthusiasm that had lost the spirit of the law.³²

Islam acknowledged the revelation of Jesus, and confirmed its ethical insights with enthusiasm. Indeed, in the interest of furthering this insight, it ordered its adherents to pronounce verbally, before entering into every morally or religiously significant deed, the formula, "I intend the projected act for the sake of God," whether a ritual of worship, or removal of a nuisance from the public road. Islam declared no act ethically

³¹See this author's *Christian Ethics*, chap. VI.

³²*Ibid.*

meritorious unless it was so prefaced, so dedicated to "the Face of Allah (SWT)." Islam has thus institutionalized the good intention, and almost externalized it in the process—a practice adopted thereafter by Judaism in the Middle Ages under Islamic influence in order to guarantee its presence in the moral agent.

This notwithstanding, Islam went beyond intentionalism to an ethic of action. Having assured the good intention as a *conditio sine qua non* of morality, it prescribed passage from the will to action, from the realm of personal consciousness of space-time, to the rough and tumble of the market place, the murky business of history-in-the-making. Values, or the divine will, must not only be the object of human intention. They must become actual, and man is the creature meant to actualize them in freedom and for the sake of God. He must therefore disturb the ontological poise of creation. He must reknead and cut nature so as to actualize therein the moral dimension of the divine pattern revealed to him. He must bring the world's latent tendencies to full fruition or self-realization. The extent to which he is successful in achieving this is the criterion of his *falāḥ*. While the good will is an entrance ticket to the arena of ethical striving and endeavor, actionalism or the efficacious actualization of the absolute in history is the entrance ticket to Paradise bearing upon the closeness to God of one's residence therein. This is not a return to the utilitarian or casuistic ethics of consequences, for the good intention is presupposed. It is a plus that Islam is seeking not a substitute, nor a minus. The ethic of Jesus correctly saw that personal conscience is the ultimate judge of one's moral status on earth, for only the conscience knows the determinants of the will and its judgement is alone capable of setting the will right. Action, on the other hand, is by nature public, altruistic and goes beyond the self. It is visible to the world and measurable by external means, whether its object is self, other selves, or nature. Hence, it is necessary that it be regulated by public law—the *sharī'ah*; administered by a public office or state—the caliphate; and its disputes adjudicated by a public judiciary—*qaḍā'*.

With this in mind, Islam declared action the necessary concomitant of faith.³³ God's commandments to act are innumerable in the Quran,

³³The necessity of action as a concomitant of faith is amply demonstrated in the Quran's repeated joining of *īmān* with good works, as so many verses indicate.

...مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا... (الكهف: ٨٨)... الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ... (النساء: ١٧٣)
He who has faith and does works of righteousness (18:88)... Those who have faith and do good works (4:173).

tion) is no less emphatic. Even where solitude, selfsolation or inaction is sought for cultivation of the personalist virtues of the inner self, as in the case of Christian monasticism, Islam condemned it blatantly. "Monkery," the Quran said, "is the invention of priests, not a divine prescription ... [Moreover] they [the Christians] have abused it."³⁴

VI. UMMATISM

Actionalism, we have seen, demands man's transcendence of himself to what is other than himself. When this other-than-self is nature, Islamic actionalism means to transform the world into Paradise. Everything that natural science and technology prescribe for such a transformation becomes a religious duty incumbent upon every Muslim. When, on the other hand, the other-than-self is another human being or beings, Islamic actionalism means to transform humankind into heroes, saints and geniuses, in whom, i.e., in whose life and activity, the divine will is fulfilled. This involvement with other humans is not what is meant by ummatism. Moral altruism, or such involvement with the welfare of others, can well be, and is in many cases, the concern of nonummatists; indeed, of monastics. The Christian need for such altruism was the chief concern of Pachomius, over the personalist isolationism of Antonius, in early Christian Egypt.³⁵

It is in what concerns the doer or agent as the subject of action that Islam brought the new notion of ummatism, requiring that the doer involve others in the action as co-doers or co-operators. Its purpose was to make actionalism collective, to bring the other self or selves into sharing the action as subjects, and hence incurring its moral merit or demerit. If an altruism seeking to improve or perfect man as object will not do, a regimented society whose members act together as subjects out of habit or custom, or of fear of a political tyrant, will not do either. Since the

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَائِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَائِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ... (النساء: ٩٥)

³⁴Surely, they are not equal: those believers who witness no battle while fully capable, and those who fight in the cause of Allah, sacrificing themselves and their wealth. Allah raised the latter a degree over the former (4:95).

³⁵*The New Scaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977). s.v. Monasticism, vol. 8, pp. 462-3.

desired end is moral, its achievement must be the work of the subject in a condition of moral freedom. It should be willed and done for the sake of God, if it is to be moral at all. The achievement of the automation of duty is morally worthless: and so is that of external coercion. Only that action which can be otherwise than it is, depending on the unencumbered vision and will of the subject, has moral worth.

Islam therefore prescribes that the other selves be invited, educated, warned, and adequately moved to join in every deed, willing the objective in question. While coercing them might well realize the utilitarian values in nature, and regimenting them might well realize the moral altruistic objective in men, the realization itself would never be moral. And yet, this is precisely what Islam requires. It can be achieved if and only if the other selves are approached with a view to convincing them of the desirability of the action; and once convinced, they would engage in it and bring about the *matériaux* (real existents) of values voluntarily and consciously. Since realization of the divine will is infinite, relevant to all activities, to all persons, at all times and places, it follows that the society Islam projects is one perpetually stirring to convince and be convinced, to pursue and actualize value in freedom. Such a society is a society properly speaking in the *Gesellschaft* sense of the term, not the *Gemeinschaft* sense. Such society is the *ummah* Islam seeks.³⁶ Its members constitute a threefold consensus: in the mind or vision, in the intention or will, and in the realization or action. It is the brotherhood of the believers under the *shari'ah*, set into perpetual motion. It is a school, *Grosser Stills*, where the business of "convincing" the mind is eternal, a gymnasium of the heart where the will is eternally subject to disciplining and cultivating; and an arena where destiny is seized by the horns and history is made. Unlike the political theories of liberalism, the ummatist theory is one where government governs most, not least, and where sovereignty belongs to God and His law, not to the arbitrary will of the majority; and where the ultimate good is the divine pattern, not the *eudaemonia* of the members. As a member of the *ummah* the individual Muslim is not a conscript, but a volunteer for life, perpetually

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ...
(آل عمران: ١١٠)

³⁶You are the best *ummah* brought forth unto mankind, enjoining good works, prohibiting evil, and putting your faith in Allah. (3:110).

monized to bring about actualization of the absolute on earth. The *ummah* is a society where actionalism is totalist, not totalitarian, authoritative but not authoritarian.

All this flows from the fact, proclaimed in the Quran, that human life is not a sport, that existence is not a game, but a serious matter.³⁸ The *engagé* Muslim is a serious being who lives for a cause. God said in His Book: "We have not created you, mankind, except that you may prove yourselves the worthier in the deed."³⁹ Hence the Muslim's career is replete with danger. But his precarious existence is his pride; and his vision of the divine will, his nourishment. His constant awareness of God is not a hollow obsession. Under it, he sees himself as the cosmic median between God and creation. Because of it, he is the vortex of cosmic history.

VII. UNIVERSALISM

The totalism of the divine will leaves no human being outside of its relevance, just as it leaves no point outside of its relevance, just as it leaves no point outside of space-time. The whole world is the object, and the whole of humankind is the object and subject of moral striving. The earth is therefore the object of the Muslim's endeavor, and all humankind is to be involved in its and their own transformation. The universalism of Islam is absolute and without exception just as God is Lord and Master of all without exception. The world can hence be either within or without the world-order of Islam. That is why classical Islamic theory regarded the world as divided between a *Dār al Islām* (The House of Islam) and *Dār al Ḥarb* (House of War), for there is no third alter-

³⁷For a further discussion of the ethical role of the world *ummah*, see this author's "On the *Raison d'être* of the *Ummah*," *Islamic Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (June 1963).

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ فِي مَنَاقِبِهِمْ وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رِسَالًا مَا خَلَقَتْ هَٰذَا بَطِلًا مُّسَبِّحِينَكَ فَوْقَنَا عَذَابُ النَّارِ (آل عمران: ١٩١) وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لِلْعَيْنِ (الأنبياء: ١٦)

³⁸Those are the righteous who are mindful of Allah in their standing, sleeping and reclining; who ponder His creation of heaven and earth and pray: Our Lord, Praise be to You, Who created all this not in vain. Protect us from the Fire (3:191)... We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in sport (21:16).

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَفُوفُ (الملك: ٢)

³⁹It is Allah Who created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds. He is the Merciful, the Exalted. (67:2).

native between the order of ethical freedom, responsibility and peace, and that where these are denied—there is no middle ground between lawfulness and lawlessness. Just as the individual stands under the obligation of transcending himself to the others, so does society. Isolationism is moral lethargy and uncharity for both individuals as well as societies; and when it is practiced in face of injustice, aggression, crime, hunger, ignorance and nonactualization of values, it is downright criminal, a thumbing of one's nose at God in defiance. Cynicism is a diametrical contradiction of God's affirmation of His purposiveness, of the meaningfulness of all that is. However, the real opposite of universalism is particularism which has taken the form of henotheism and tribalism in the past, and of racism and nationalism in our day. The Hebrew-Jewish tradition has never been entirely free of a strand of particularism under which its people regarded themselves as the elect of God for no rational or moral reason, but simply because God had chosen them. And their modern descendants have upheld the biological definition of Jew in face of their claim to an equal status which they had hitherto been denied by the nations.⁴⁰ The Christians of history have on the whole heeded the advice of St. Paul: "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek."⁴¹ It must be admitted though that from Augustine to the Crusades, Luther, Calvin and American Puritanism, the doctrine of predestination has served as cover for crass racism against other Christians and non-Christians. The Christians' conduct toward one another throughout their history, and toward the Africans, Asians and Americans during the last centuries, has brought dishonor to Paul as well as to Jesus who answered, when he was requested to give special attention to his kin because they were sons of Abraham: "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham!"⁴²

Islam has always been universalist; and the Muslims have, as far as this problem is concerned, the cleanest record in history. The religion, as represented by its supreme authority, the divine word or the Quran speaks with utmost emphasis and clarity, "O mankind, We have created you of one pair, male and female, and constituted you in tribes and peoples that you may complement one another. Nobler among you is only the

⁴⁰See, for example, Obert Gordis, *A Faith for Moderns* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 322 ff; or, for a more subtle presentation, the last two chapters of Martin Buber, *On Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).

⁴¹So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

⁴²And don't think that you can escape punishment by saying that Abraham is your ancestor. I tell you that God can take these rocks and make descendants for Abraham (Matthew 3:9).

more righteous ... and I mean, that your Lord created you from one and the same soul."⁴⁴ The qualities and equipment constitutive of humanness are recognized by Islam to be possessed by all mankind by nature. It does not discriminate against anybody, on the grounds that the said qualities or equipment were never present, or were once present but subsequently lost because of a guilt incurred by the individual, or by his ancestors or fellows. Nor does it bind this egalitarianism to a specific culture or civilization. The ethical principles constitutive of Islamic humanism are not denied of any human being even though he may belong to another faith; to another culture, civilization or age; or if, by some accident of his people's involvement in history, he was or still is, a slave.⁴⁵ The universalism of Islam transcends all human distinctions. It reaches to the *fitrah*. There, it recognizes what nature has given or what, by virtue of being born, the man is entitled to.⁴⁶

Certainly Islam assigns privileges to knowledge and wisdom, to piety, virtue, righteousness, good works and self-eversion for God's sake: "Unequal are those who have spent their wealth and exposed their lives in the cause of Allah, and those who remained behind"⁴⁷ And it states

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْتَكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ (الحجرات: ١٣)

⁴⁴O mankind, We have generated you all from one pair, a male and a female. We have constituted you into peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Noblest among you is the most righteous. Allah is Omniscient, All-Knowing. (49:13).

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَجَدَّوْ ... (النساء: ١)

⁴⁵O mankind, fear your Lord Who created you all of a single soul (4:1).

⁴⁶Abū Hamīd al Ghazālī, *Al Munqidh*...p. 58, quoted the ḥadīth as given in *Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī* as follows: "Every child is born with natural religion. It is the parents who later make of the child a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian."

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَئِنْ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (الروم: ٣٠)

⁴⁷Turn your face to the primordial religion as a *ḥanīf*. That is the natural religion which Allah made innate to all humans. This pattern of Allah is immutable. It is the worthy religion; but most people do not know (30:30).

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاتِلُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاتِلِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاتِلِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ٩٥)

⁴⁸Surely they are not equal: Those believers who witness no battle despite their capacity to do so, and those who fight in the cause of Allah, sacrificing themselves and their wealth. Allah raised the latter a degree over the former. To each, Allah promised a reward; but those who fight for His sake He will grant a greater reward (4:95).

unequivocally that such differentiation remains true only as long and insofar as the adherent is wiser, more pious, more righteous and self-exerting: "If they turn away from this cause, then God will bring forth another people [to take their place] who will not be like them."⁴⁸ All Semitic religions have represented the God-man relationship in terms of a covenant wherein man is to serve God and God is to bless man with crops, children, well-being and happiness; and all of them were keenly aware of the opposite, namely, that where man does not serve God, he would be invested with suffering and punishment. Only Judaism and Christianity have altered the "covenant," a concept which implies the two directional activities of God and man, into the "promise." For Judaism, this is the one directional commitment on the part of God to favor the Jews regardless of their piety or righteousness—nay, even in their a-whoring after other gods, to use the image of Hosea. And for the Christians, this is the unilateral commitment of God to love and ransom His "partner," namely man, even through he sins—nay, because, he sins—against God. Islam has maintained the Mesopotamian "covenant," which gives rise to obligation on both parties, the one to serve and the other to reward; and to privileges to both parties, the one to defy and not serve, and the other to punish.⁴⁹

⁴⁸And if you turn yourselves away [from spending your wealth in the cause of Allah], Allah will exchange you for others who will not be like you (47:38).

⁴⁹Those who have believed [in this revelation], those who are Jews, Christians and Sabaeans, all those who have faith in Allah and the Day of Judgment, and who do good works, will have their reward with their Lord. No fear shall befall them and they will have no reason to grieve. A covenant We established with them raising over them the Mount of Sinai [the revelation that came to Moses in Sinai] that they shall hold firmly to its revealed commandments and abide always by them, in fear of Allah (2:62-63)... Whether you do good works or works of evil, the same will be reckoned unto you (17:7). And if you return to your evil deeds, We shall return to Our punishment of you (17:7-8).

VIII. LIFE AND WORLD-AFFIRMATION

It follows from the essence of religious experience in Islam that God has placed man in a world which is to be the theater for his service to Him. If God is not to be a malevolent trickster, man's service must be possible. This possibility requires that the world be malleable, capable of receiving man's action, transformable into the pattern which God has revealed. A complete ontological fitness of man and world to each other is a necessary consequence of the divine arrangement.

Unlike speculative Hindu thought and unlike Buddhism and Jainism, Islam does not regard the world as alien to righteousness or religious felicity. In itself, the world is not to be denied and combated. On the contrary, it is innocent and good, created precisely to the end of being used and enjoyed by man. The evil is not in it, but in its abuse by man. That is the villain which deserves to be denied and combated: the immoral use of the world. That is why the ethic of Islam is not that of asceticism. The Prophet (SAAS) has directed his followers against overextended rituals of worship, against celibacy, against exaggerated fasting, against pessimism and the morose mood. He ordered them to break the fast before performing the sunset prayer, to keep their bodies clean and their teeth brushed, to groom and perfume themselves and wear their best clothes when they congregate for prayer, to marry, to take their time to rest and to sleep and recreate themselves with sports and the arts. Naturally, Islam ordered its adherents to cultivate their faculties; to understand themselves, nature, and the world in which they live; to satisfy their innate craving for food, shelter, comfort, sex and reproduction; to realize balance and harmony in their relations with men and nature; to transform the earth into a producing orchard, a fertile farm and a beautiful garden, to express their understanding, craving, doing and realizing in works of aesthetic beauty. All this is history as well as culture. To make history and create culture and to do so well is the content of the divine will. It is righteousness. Indeed, Islam regarded every act capable of adding, however little, to the total value of the cosmos, as an act of worship, of service to God, provided of course it is entered into for His sake. Hence the Muslim has no obsession about his body, or the satisfaction of his instincts. As a conscious believer, such satisfaction is for him a "taste" of the joys of Paradise to come if he continues to fulfill his duty to God. "Who dared prohibit the niceties of this world and the delicacies of His providing?" the Quran asks rhetorically, and

answers emphatically: "They are indeed rightful for the enjoyment of the faithful in this world, and will all be purely theirs on the Day of Judgement."⁵⁰ Repeatedly, the Quran commands, "Eat, drink and enjoy yourselves, but do not abuse."⁵¹

This clearly presupposes honoring work, success and achievement in the transformation of nature. If the world is to yield its fruits, it must be cultivated. Thus the ancient Mesopotamian principle of agricultural service to God is recrystallized as the general transformation of the earth into the orchard wherein man is to find his nourishment and pleasure. The Quran affirms that God has created the world for man; and hence, that everything in creation is for man to use and to enjoy. The oceans, the rivers and mountains, indeed the skies and stars, sun and moon—all have been created for man's usufruct and aesthetic *zīnah* (pleasure).⁵²

The ummatism of Islam blesses man's will to power. "He who has not participated in at least one *bay'ah* (conventional election of a caliph, or a chief of state) dies a non-Muslim," says a famous tradition of the Prophet (SAAS).⁵³ It is God Who instituted the state and the political

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ... (الأعراف: ٣٢)

⁵⁰Say, O Muhammad, who made prohibited the beautiful ornaments which Allah made available for His servants' enjoyment? Say, they belong to the believers in this life as well as in the life to come, in purity (7:32).

يَبْنَىءُ آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ (الأعراف: ٣١)

⁵¹O Sons of Adam, look to your adornment at every place of worship. And eat and drink, without excess. Allah loves not those who exceed the limits (7:31).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لَنَا كُلًّا لَوْ آمَنَهُ لَحَمًا طَرِيدًا وَقَسَتْ فَرْجُهَا مِنْهُ جَلِيَّةٌ تَلْبَسُوهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلَ الْكَلْبَ مَوَاجِرْفِهِ وَلَنْ تَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (النحل: ١٤) وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ عُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَصْوَادِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا أَتُتَابَعُ إِلَى الْجَنِّ (النحل: ٨٠)

⁵²It is Allah who made the sea subservient to you, to extract from it soft meat to eat, beautiful jewelry to wear, and you see the ships ploughing it and bring to you of His bounty. Perchance, you will feel grateful (16:14). Allah has ordained for you your homes as places of rest and quiescence; the furs, wool and skins of animals as materials of which to make your clothing and tents and from which to derive other advantages during your life on earth (16:80).

⁵³*Shāhiḥ Muslim*, summary by al Mundhiri, vol. 2, p. 94, *ḥadīth* no. 1233. The text of the *ḥadīth* reads as follows: "Whoever pulls a person out of obedience [to the ruler of an Islamic order or state] will face Allah on the Day of Judgment devoid of cause. Whoever dies without having entered into any *bay'ah* will have died a *jāhili* [a non-Muslim]." It was told by 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar and narrated by Nafi'.

duty. The ruler is to execute the law of God; and the ruled is to obey the law, and to advise the ruler and help him in upholding the law. Both are to mobilize their efforts perpetually to extend this application depthwise in fulfillment of the requirement of totalism, and breadthwise in fulfillment of those of universalism. This is the ultimate realization of the absolute Islam seeks and declares possible in this world and in time. It has no use for a "Kingdom of God" conceived as an alternative to this kingdom, as a messianic age where what is denied here will be realized, in an "other world" in which the *summum bonum* is realizable at the cost of "this world." Such other worldly categories Islam has rejected altogether. With this rejection went equally all mortification of the flesh, world denial, monasticism and asceticism. So strong was this rejection by Islam and so strong was its world-affirmation that it was too often accused of "pure worldliness." The truth is that Islamic worldliness is not "pure," but tempered; and that is precisely the role played by the consciousness of God and the spirituality of Islamic life. Pursuit of the world, Islam commands, must be carried out as the fulfillment of God's commandment to pursue the world and hence, in obedience to the ethical limits set by God's other commandments. This is really what Islamic spirituality means: not a disembodied life of constant prayer and meditation, of self- and world-denial, and of pining after a kingdom hopelessly unrealizable in spacetime, but a full and innocent enjoyment of this world, combined with persistent activism for its betterment and regulated by ethical precepts opposed to exaggeration, injury, injustice, hatred and discrimination.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL ORDER

I. UNIQUENESS OF ISLAM

In its social dimension, Islam is absolutely unique among the religions and civilizations the world has known. In contrast to the religions of the world, Islam defines religion itself as the very business of life, the very matter of space-time, the very process of history — which it declares innocent, good and desirable in itself because it is the creation, the gift of God. The very business of life, the very matter of space-time, the very process of history, are in turn declared by Islam to constitute religion. They are piety and righteousness when well conducted, impiety and unrighteousness otherwise. Hence, Islam sees itself relevant to all of space-time, and seeks to determine all of history, all of creation, including all of mankind. What is of nature is innocent, good and desirable as such. Neither piety nor morality can be based on its condemnation. Islam wants humans to pursue what is of nature to eat and drink, to have lodging and comfort, to make of the world a garden, to enjoy sex, friendship and all the good things of life, to develop the sciences and to learn, to usufruct nature, to associate and build socio-political structures—in short, to do all these things, but to do them righteously, without lying and cheating, without stealing and exploiting, without injustice to self, to neighbor, to nature, to history. Islam calls man the *khalīfah*, precisely because to do all these things well is to fulfill the will of God.

As we shall see in the sequel, Islam regards the aforementioned goals as the natural objectives of all humans, their basic human rights; and it seeks to guarantee them. On this purpose, Islam found its social theory. The social order, it holds, is necessary if that purpose is to be realized at all. Granting that human association is natural, Islam adds to this quality that of necessity. The social order and its felicity, the *ummah* or *Dār al Salām* (the House of Peace) is the ultimate goal of Islam in space-time. The relevance of the religion of Islam to it is not only crucial, but definitive. Only a tiny section of the law of Islam has to do with

law deals with the social order. Indeed, even the personal aspects of the law, those which concern the rituals of worship, and the rituals themselves, acquire in Islam a social dimension so grave that denial or weakness of that dimension is *ipso facto* invalidation of them. Some rituals like *al zakāh* and *al ḥajj* are obviously social in their nature and effect. Others like *al ṣalāh* and *al ṣawm* are a little less so. But all Muslims recognize that prayer which does not "imply the cessation of evil" on the part of the worshipper is invalid;² and that pilgrimage which does not "bring social benefits to the pilgrims" is incomplete.³ The social order is the heart of Islam, and stands prior to the personal. Indeed Islam views the personal as a necessary prerequisite for the societal, and regards human character as warped if it rested with the personal and did not transcend it to the societal. It agrees with all the religions which cultivate the personalist values, and recognizes those values (the fear of God, faithfulness, purity of heart, humility, love for and commitment to the good, charity, the whole galaxy of meanings expressed by the traditional term *la bonté chrétienne*, all that Immanuel Kant could have meant by "the good will") as absolutely necessary; indeed, as conditions *sine qua non* of all virtue and righteousness. But it regards them and their pursuit as empty unless their cultivators effectively increase the good and benefit of others in society.

A. UNLIKE THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA

In some religions, particularly Upanishadic Hinduism and Buddhism, the world is regarded as evil, and salvation or felicity is understood as its negation, namely, as freedom from the world. Moreover, these

¹The larger portion of the corpus of Islamic law belongs to *mu'āmalāt* which is obviously social in its purport. If the portions concerning the state, the family, the judiciary and criminal law, which are equally social, are added to *mu'āmalāt*, they would constitute all but a small fraction of the corpus, which deals with rituals and personal ethics.

...إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ... (العنكبوت: ٤٥)

²The *Ṣalāh* prohibits the works of shame and evil, the sinful acts (29:45).

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ كَلْبٍ مُّسَامِرٍ ۚ إِنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ فِجٍّ عَمِيقٍ لِّشَهِدُوا مَنَافِعَهُمْ ... (الحج: ٢٧-٢٨)

³Proclaim the pilgrimage a duty to all. People will come [to perform it] on foot or riding from every corner of the world, that they may achieve benefits provided for them therein (22:27-28).

religions hold salvation to be a personal, individualistic affair, since they define it in terms of states of consciousness which can only be personal. Interaction with the world, with a view to promoting it, and hence in increasing it, intensifying the objectification process within it, is evil. Interaction with the world is tolerated at all when its object is the opposite, namely, achieving total freedom from the world's clutches, from its *karma* (the law of its self-perpetuation), for the subject alone—in Hinduism, or for the subjects as well as others, and hence in missionary activity—in Buddhism. In both cases, the personal dimension is not only primary but constitutive by itself of the whole process of ethics and salvation. On the other hand, the social action of man, whether in the political or the economic field, is essentially evil, for by nature, it is meant to prolong or increase the world, i.e., the biological, material, economic and political life, in short—the world.⁴ If the Hindus have developed a social order—a state, an empire, a civilization, a distinctive human community persisting to this day, they did that in deviation from their Upanishadic vision. If their social order has even found sanction in their religious tradition, it did so on sufferance, i.e., as a compromise with the inevitable, a tolerance of that which Brahman would be better off without. The Buddhists, on the other hand, could affirm and give positive support to the political effort of an Ashoka, for example, as an attempt to help others achieve the desired release from the world. In this regard, the Buddha has organized a social order in the *sangha*, the first community of monks or persons in search of salvation.⁵

B. UNLIKE JUDAISM

At the other end of the spectrum, and no less diametrically opposed to Indian religiosity, is the case of the Hebrews. As they have seen themselves, and had their vision recorded in their scripture, the Torah, they constitute a people apart from mankind. They are God's "sons and daughters," whose special relation to the Creator demands their differentiation from the rest. The revealed law of God applies to them, not to the others. The social order it enhances by its imperatives and prohibitions belongs to them alone. Theirs was a tribalist religion which defined good and evil in terms of tribalist benefit and harm. Their social order

⁴Murti. *The Central Philosophy...* vol. 1, p. 19; Robert Zaehner. *Hinduism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 125-26.

⁵John B. Noss, *Man's Religions* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 5th ed. pp. 126-27.

had a biological base: only born-Jews are Jews, and conversion of non-Jews to Judaism must be emphatically discouraged and kept at a minimum. That is the racism of *jāhiliyah*, without the cult of values, *murū'ah* (courage, chivalry, generosity), attenuating its basic evil. For Hebrew history, as idealized or simply sanctified by the Torah, the prophetic and other literature constituting the Old Testament is, as it is commonly known, full of the very opposites of these values.⁶ Here, with the Hebrews and their descendants, the Jews, survival of the tribe is pursued at any price to honor or justice; and survival of the race, at any price to piety or morality. Even Israel's own holiest social laws—the laws against incest and adultery—are not immune against breach, when continuity of “the seed of Abraham is in question”.⁷

C. UNLIKE CHRISTIANITY

Christianity began as a reaction to this terrible ethnocentrism which, by the time of Christ, had fossilized into dispirited legalism. Necessarily, the call of Jesus was universalist, and personalist or internalist. Indeed, Jesus was so sensitive to the evils of Jewish racism that he got angry at the slight suggestion that his own relatives deserve more because they were his relatives.⁸ This call of Jesus, whose essence is thoroughly ethical (his God and his scripture being essentially identical with those of the Jews) would have developed into a reform movement correcting the exaggerations of the Jews had its adherents remained Semites, i.e., the Palestinians and their neighbors. But, taken over by the Hellenes, the call was transubstantiated into another “mystery religion”.⁹ The transcendent God of the Semites became a “father” in a trinity whose second member was constructed in the image of Mithras and Adonis, dying and rising to provide salvation through catharsis.¹⁰ Jesus' inter-

⁶Isma'il R. al Fārūqī, *Uṣūl al Ṣaḥyuniyah fī al Dīn al Yahūdī*, (Cairo: Ma'had al Dirāsāt al 'Arabīyah al 'Alīyah, 1963).

⁷The younger daughter also had a son, whom she named Benammi (Genesis 19:38).

⁸Jesus was still talking to the people when his mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside, asking to speak with him. So one of the people there said to him, “Look, your mother and brothers are standing outside, and they want to speak with you.” Jesus answered, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” Then he pointed to his disciples and said, “Look! Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does what my father in heaven wants him to do is my brother, my sister, and my mother” (Matthew 12:46-50). This is also recounted in (Mark 3:31-35).

⁹Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 210.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 117, 134: M. John Robertson, *Pagan Christs* (Secaucus, N.J.: University Books, 1911), p. 108 ff; Carl Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and Its Non-Jewish Sources* tr. Robert G. Nisbet (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), pp. 182 ff.

nalism was wedded to the morbid hatred of matter characteristic of Gnosticism; and his critical attitude toward Jewish tribalist politics into a totalist condemnation of the state as such, of all political life. The separation of citizens from slaves and the civil and political impotence of the latter, was the beginning of the doctrine of separation of Church and state. That the Christian Church has achieved political dominion, and a "theory of the two swords" was at one period commonly accepted political theory, but ran against the pristine Christian conscience. That conscience rebelled in the person of Luther and pushed the Church back into the cage its early doctrine had built around it. Today, hardly any Christian subscribes to the Middle Ages theory. Hardly any Christian would agree to give the Church a share in the political life, other than that of the detached critic.¹¹

Christianity today has no theory of society.¹² Its condemnation of space-time, of the political process, its holding of every worldly activity, the social order itself, as futile and irrelevant to the salvific process, precludes it from having a theory, apart from regarding the social order as necessarily evil, standing outside the "order of grace." Even the Church, as far as its worldly existence is concerned (not its eternal existence as body of Christ which is neither of nor in this world) is a transient palliative where charity and faith are the order of the day, but where neither programmatic action nor law are worth the effort; where history itself is irrelevant and devoid of importance. We should recognize that since the Industrial Revolution, Christian thinkers in Europe and North America have increasingly asked for and worked out plans of higher measures of social justice in the name of Christianity. But all their work so far has not shaken Christianity out of its anti-worldliness. Though necessary and highly beneficial to alleviate the miseries of the poor or to inject a sense of morality and justice into the political system, intellectually, their work has been worthless.¹³ What is indeed a reform of the basic premises of the faith which hardly anyone has yet dared to do; namely, the nature of God, the purpose of creation, the nature and destiny of man. Unless this is done, Christian thought will remain at contradiction with itself, whatever advances it may make on blueprints for social justice.

¹¹Karl Barth, *Against the Stream* (London: SCM Press, 1954), pp. 29-31.

¹²Reinhold Niebur, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Scribner's, 1955).

¹³See this author's *Christian Ethics*, pp. 279 ff.

D. UNLIKE MODERN SECULARISM

Evidently, the social system of Islam is the diametrical contrary of modern secularism. The latter seeks to remove the public affairs of society from every possible determination by religion. Its main argument, as the history of secularism in the West has presented it, is that religion is a vested interest of one section of society, the Church, over all others. Since the internal structure and the decision-making process of the Church are authoritarian, and since all society is not therein represented, determination of public affairs by the Church is tantamount to tyranny, a form of exploitation and suppression of the nation by one group. This argument is certainly true of the West where the Catholic Church represented a part of the population, and where religion, namely, Catholic Christianity, established itself as authoritarian, and developed vested interests in competition with the people. Because the Catholic Church was for many long centuries the wielder of the greatest political and economic power in Europe, it was natural for any movement of social, political and economic liberation to assume the form of a struggle against the Church.¹⁴

More recently, secularism has presented its case as the opposition to the determination of public affairs by values stemming from religion, a source which it declares untrustworthy.¹⁵ That source, it is claimed, is irrational, superstitious and dogmatic—charges with which one can sympathize when directed against Christianity and those religions which based their doctrines upon dogma; or when directed against other religions in certain decaying periods of their history. But it is irrelevant to those religions endowed with a natural—i.e., rational—theology which acknowledges the universal validity of the criteria of reason; or to those religions seeking to outgrow their period of stagnation and decay by rational appeal to premises which they present critically, as embodying real humanistic values. In most cases, however, secularism is pursued on superficial grounds claiming its identification with the age of science, with realism and progress while religion is charged with the promulgation of the opposite values—a claim at the farthest possible remove from the truth. Indeed, the claim is in most cases hypocritical since no society

¹⁴For references to the long list of theories and theoreticians who analyzed the Reformation into its social, economic, political, and ethnic components, see: *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, s.v. "Reformation" (I. Theories of the Reformation), vol. 9, pp. 417-418.

¹⁵Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan, 1956).

can claim determination of its affairs by no values at all, or by values totally not derived from its own religious legacy.

II. AL TAWHĪD AND SOCIETISM

To acknowledge that there is no god but Allah (SWT) is to recognize Him as sole Creator, Lord and Judge of the world. It follows from this witnessing that man was created for a purpose, since God does not work in vain; and that this purpose is the realization of the divine will as it pertains to this world in which human life finds its theater. This commits the Muslim to take space and time seriously, since it is his fulfillment of the divine patterns pertinent to that space and that time in which he stands that constitutes his felicity, or his damnation. God has commanded him to act and to do so in cooperation with his fellows. Under *al tawhīd* the life of the Muslim falls under constant monitorship. Allah (SWT) knows everything, and everything is recorded and counts for its author whether for good or ill. God's will is indeed relevant, and His patterns are to be observed. Man's objective therefore ought to be the worldwide actualization of the divine patterns.

In His Holy Book, God commanded: "Let there be of you an *ummah* which calls [humanity] to righteousness, which enjoins the good and forbids the evil. Only such an *ummah* is felicitous."¹⁶ This command is the charter of the *ummah*, creating it as well as giving it its constitution. It is an association of humans for the purpose of actualizing the will of God. It is a cosmic institution, since only through such association does the higher, i.e., moral, part of the divine will become history. Because being moral requires the freedom of the agent, the *ummah* which is an association of moral agents, must be free and open. It is guided in its life by the divine will alone which constitutes its *raison d'être*.¹⁷

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
(آل عمران: ١٠٤)

¹⁶Let there be of you an *ummah* which calls men to good works and prohibits evil. Such are the felicitous (3:104).

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ...
(آل عمران: ١١٠)

¹⁷You are the best *ummah* brought forth unto mankind, for you enjoin the good works, prohibit the evil and have faith in Allah (3:110)

The divine will has been revealed in the Quran and the *sunnah* of the Prophet (SAAS). It is in nature, empirically or actually, for reason to discover and establish; and it is in nature potentially for the faculties of reason and intuition to deduce or to perceive. Furthermore, the divine will has been figurized in the Arabic language of the Quran, and concretized in the deeds of the Prophet (SAAS). The *hadith* is its form *in percipi*. It has been translated into prescriptions for daily observance by the Prophet (SAAS), his companions (RAA) and the jurists of the *ummah*. Whereas in its normative form the law is divine and immutable, it is in its perspective form always subject to the requisites of justice and equity, to the empirical and spiritual advantage of the individual and the *ummah*.

The *ummah*, therefore, is ruled neither by its rules, nor by its people, the ruled. Both of them are under the law. The ruler is a mere executor of the law. The rules, whether the agent who acts or the patient who suffers the action of others, are instruments of instantiation of the law. The *ummah* is not a legislative assembly; it does not make the law. Nor is the law an expression of the general will of the people. The law is divine. It comes from God. As such, it is supreme. When the Muslim says, "No sovereignty but to Allah," or "Allah is the sole King, Sovereign, Lord, Master," which is the very core and essence of his religious experience, he commits himself to obey the will of God. God, the Sovereign, holds absolute power over all creation. In the *ummah*, the holder of political power is the divine law, not the ruler who merely executes it. Hence, the *ummah* is a nomocracy, a republic where rule belongs to the law. Obviously, the *ummah* is not a "theocracy" since no one may assume the divine post and rule in the name of God. It is not a "democracy," an "oligarchy" or an "autocracy" since nobody, whether the individual, a group or the totality of people, enjoys as such any right to rule. None of them is a source of the law so that it can be said that the purpose of political rule is satisfaction of that person, group, or totality. The *ummah's* existence and action are legitimate when they fulfill the divine commandments. The moment Islamic law is no longer enforced in the *ummah's* affairs, that *ummah* loses its Islamic privilege. It is then ripe for revolution. Indeed, in such a case, revolution is the duty of the Muslim citizens, which should be observed in fulfillment of the divine commandment, "Let there be of you an *ummah*"¹⁸

¹⁸Ibid.

III. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Realization of the divine will, or actualization of value, requires the *ummah*, i.e., a corporate body of humans held together and moved to action by the divine will. The need for the *ummah* is dictated by the following consideration, all of which flows from the nature of religious experience in Islam.

A. PUBLIC NATURE OF THE ISLAMIC LIFE

In the ethic of intention where moral merit is a function of the self's commitment in its personal moment, and hence of the subject's state of consciousness, there can be no judge other than the subject's own conscience — and God. For, since the matter is entirely personal and subjective, no one knows the purity of the heart, of its motivation and its inner workings, except the subject himself. That is why any social system based on the ethic of intent has to operate on an honor system where the judge is always the person's conscience. The only role which another person may play in the process is that of advisor. Even where conscience has declared the moral agent guilty and passed a verdict of atonement or compensation, it alone is the judge of the implementation of the judgement. At any rate, the transformation sought is of conscience, in, by and through conscience. Obviously, only conscience is needed to determine the guilt as well as the reform. The real existence of the neighbor, of "other men" is not necessary. Such could well be the "idea" of neighbor or other men, since presence (even if only a hallucination) of this idea in the subject is sufficient to make his will, act or intention, moral. It is otherwise with the ethics of action, where space-time has been disturbed and measurable effects have been wrought which constitute the merit or demerit of the deed. Here, law is not possible; it is necessary, along with its organs of research, legislation, promulgation, a hierarchial judiciary system and an executive machinery. These organs and machineries are constitutive parts and functions of society, i.e., of the *ummah*. This in no way invalidates the conscience which continues to operate as well here as in the ethics of intent. Over and beyond it, the new machinery of society (the legislative, judicial and executive) has to enter the field and govern men's lives; nor men's intentions, but their deflections of the causal nexus of creation, their distur-

bance for better or worse of nature's cosmic equilibrium. Beyond the conscience, therefore, Islam set up the law; and beyond the church and clergyman as elder, teacher and exemplar, it set up the court of law and the state.

B. NEED FOR A REAL-EXISTENT, CONCRETE, SOCIAL FABRIC

It follows from Islam's conception of the moral religious imperative as the transformation of space-time, and of the nature of the *amānah* (divine trust) as a moral value, that Islam is impossible without mankind and the world. It is obvious that a transformation of space cannot take place unless there is space-time and it exists in such relation to mankind, its users, as it does, for unless the earth is usufructed by men, its transformation is meaningless. It cannot take place more than once, and certainly not throughout time as Islam demands, unless the fruits of transformation are consumed by mankind. A toiling, suffering and enjoying mankind is then necessary, one which cannot live or survive without social order.

As for the realization of the moral part of the divine will, it is possible only in the context of human interrelationships such as exist among members of a social order. For the *matériel* of a moral value is precisely the fabric of human relations and inter-human intercourse. Where there is no buying and selling and no exchange of goods and services, for instance, there can be no exercise of equity and honesty, *ipso facto*. Where there is no scarcity, where some human beings do not stand in abundance and others in want, and where nobody suffers and needs comforting, there can be no exercise of charity. Society, then, as we know it today, is the *sine qua non* condition of morality, for it is no more and no less than the context of free individuals interacting with one another and mutually affecting creation in one another's person. *A fortiori*, therefore, society is a condition of religious *falah*. Conversely, no society can continue to exist, or survive in the long run, without morality. Otherwise, there would be no escape from what Thomas Hobbes called the *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Even a band of bandits has to establish some moral discipline for its members if it is to continue as a band of bandits.

C. RELEVANCE OF AXIOLOGY

Fulfillment of the divine will necessitates knowledge of it. This knowledge is not the same under individualism as under societism, because the divine will itself is not the same in the views of the two ideologies. Firstly, societal pursuit of value produces qualitatively different results from the personal. Under societism, the order of rank of any given value is different because everything has to be reconsidered in light of the interest of the societal whole. From this perspective, new axiological relations obtain between various values; old antinomies may be solved and new ones discovered; and, in fact, new values may be established which could have never been the object of consciousness on the personal level. Secondly, while the ought-to-be depends upon value alone and is indeed only a modality of it; the ought-to-do of value is inextricably connected with the real existential materials it is supposed to transform. A fuller realization of value which is the first desideratum of deontology, may not be possible without consideration of all possible ought-to-do's of that value. Ought-to-do's vary structurally from one theater of realization to another. The societal theater does not mean a mere quantitative increase. Thirdly, because values are transitive, i.e., because they move other persons besides those upon whom they first exerted their moving appeal whenever their realization is public, it would be a definite loss to the total value of the universe if their transitivity is in any way restricted, for group perception and group actualization may issue in the discovery of a "field of causes and effects" which none can fathom *a priori*. Fourthly, there is the benefit of an existential dialectic of vision and fulfillment which far transcends anything theoretical discussion can bring.

IV. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The last group of considerations makes it imperative that the realization of the divine will be societal. Together with the first two axioms of the ethic of action and the real existence of an ongoing social fabric these considerations, as constitutive of Islamic religious experience, imply three major principles affecting the practice, activity or life of Islamic society. These are universalism, totalism and freedom.

A. NO PARTICULARISM

The identification of the divine will with value realizes the latter from all particular bodies usually cognized as normative sources of value, such as tribe, race, land and culture. Since God alone is God, and every other being is a creature, and the two orders of reality are mutually exclusive, all creatures are equally creaturely. This means that the unity of God, understood as unity of truth as well as value, implies that value is value for all, and so, independently of all; that moral obligation and ethical vocation, being predicated of the creature, fall equally upon all. Just as the patterns of God in nature apply to all of creation, thereby making creation an orderly cosmos, so His will for man applies to the whole of mankind. As far as ethical vocation is concerned, any distinction between man and man is a threat to the unity of value and, in consequence, to the unity of God. Value, or the moral imperative, is therefore one for all. Its claim or obligatoriness, its ought-to-be and ought-to-do, cannot be restricted to any segment of humanity.¹⁹

Two consequence follows from this principle for Islamic society. In the first place, Islamic society can never restrict itself to the members of any tribe, nation, race or group. Certainly it can, indeed must, begin somewhere, with somebody. And for a limited time, in a limited way, it can impose any restrictions it likes under considerations of strategy. But it can never close its doors on principle; nor can it ever rest until it has included all mankind. It would have betrayed its very *raison d'être* if it ever hindered any man from joining its ranks. Man's right and title

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ نَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (البقرة: ٤٤) مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِمَّنْ ذَكَرَ أَوْ أَنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (النحل: ٩٧) إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُظْلِمُ شَيْئًا قَالَ ذَرُونِي أَتَعْبَثُ بِكَ حَسَنَةً يُضَاعِفُهَا وَيُؤْتِي مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ٤٠) لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ نَجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ١١٤)

¹⁹Would you command the people to do good works and absolve yourselves from the same? Would you do this while in full possession of the Book? Will you contradict yourself so manifestly? (2:44)... Whoever does a good deed out of faith in Allah, whether male or female, shall be granted a good life and shall be rewarded in proportion to the best of their deeds (16:97). Allah does not deprive anyone of an atom's weight of good deeds he has earned. The reward for good deeds is double. Great reward from Allah awaits good deeds (4:40)... Much of their deliberations are futile, save for the enjoining of charity, a good deed, or peace-making among people. Whoever performs any of these for the sake of Allah and in obedience to Him will be granted a great reward (4:114).

to membership is a natural birthright conferred upon him by his very creatureliness. In the second place, Islamic society must expand to include humanity. It cannot rest until it has done so and succeeded. The society's claim to Islamicity, and hence to legitimacy under Islam, issues from its activist acquiescence to the call of God.²⁰ This call is not merely a call to existence, nor to affluence and the pursuit of personal happiness, nor to an Islamic existence of a number of humans, but a call to transform all men, all space, and all time. Islamic society is both the means and the end. It is the end when it covers it all.

The utilitarian theories of society run counter to the Islamic claim because they represent society as an instrument of material survival, as a means to specialized labor and additional comfort. Though these are certainly elements in the growth of Islamic society, to explain society in their terms is to commit the reductionist fallacy.²¹ The other theories which do not require society to expand on the grounds of "chosen people," race, or language and culture, are relativist; and they contradict Islamic universalism as well as *al tawhīd*.

The two consequences aforementioned have been well understood by Muslims throughout history. The Quranic verse proclaiming all men descended from one and the same pair, asserted that men were constituted into peoples and nations that they may cooperate and mutually enrich one another.²² This and other similar verses have been on every lip,²³ as is the Prophet's proclamation at his farewell pilgrimage: "All men issue from Adam and Adam issued from dust. Therefore, no Arab may claim distinction over a non-Arab except in piety and righteousness."²⁴

ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا تَفْرِقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ (البقرة: ٢٨٥)

²⁰The Prophet Muhammad believes in the truth of what was revealed to him, and so do the believers. All of them believe in Allah, His angels, books and other prophets. They do not discriminate between the prophets of Allah. Rather, they acknowledge what was sent through them, obey Allah and seek His forgiveness. To Him is everybody's ultimate return (2:285).

²¹Harold A. Larrabee, *Reliable Knowledge* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945), pp. 305-6.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّاُنْثٰى وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّقَبَاۤىِٕلَ لِتَعَارَفُوْا اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَتْقٰىكُمْ ...

(الحجرات: ١٣)

²²O Mankind, We created you male and female; and We constituted you into peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Noblest among you is the most righteous (49:13).

²³Such are the innumerable verses of the Qur'an which affirm the felicity of those who believe and do good deeds, or of the pious, the righteous, etc, which are exempted from a general condemnatory judgment, or a general derogatory description of all humankind.

²⁴Duwaydar, *Ṣuwar...*, p. 593.

Evidently opposed to these implied principles of Islamic society, tribalism and nationalism are identical in their foundation; though the "tribe" of the one may be far more restricted and smaller than the "nation" of the other. Both claim that value is value for members of one group only because, they argue, it is the group that makes values what they are. It is their source and creator. This view at once entitles every other group to set up its own standard, its own value, if it so wishes; for "groupness" can never be shown to belong exclusively to any one group. Since it is the ultimate criterion, any number of men who constitute themselves into a group may claim the same right. Relativism, therefore, necessarily implies pluralism, and this *ex hypothesi* necessarily implies difference or divergence without supplying an overarching means valid for the contending groups. Here, if the contention is not solved by accidental similarity or identity of the two views, or by voluntary acquiescence of one group to the other, conflict becomes absolutely inevitable. The assumption here is that the group is the ultimate source of its own values, and hence that no standard transcending the group is valid in terms of which the issues and differences between the conflicting parties may be composed. On this very account the conflict is *ex hypothesi* insoluble. If, under his own terms of reference each contender conceives of the conflict as ultimate, there is no resource except *ad baculum*, with the resultant vanquishing or destruction of one by the other. Relativist axiology, however, does not permit any peace even to the victor who has vanquished his opponent, for just as being a cohesive group has enabled that group to establish and defend its case, any members within it has equal right to set itself up as a different group with a different cause. The larger group has no defence against its splinter sub-groups except force. Soon the fabric of society itself falls apart. Rival tribes, or clans within the same tribe—very much like the situation in Arabia which Islam confronted at the turn of the seventh century—would engage one another in endless and hopelessly insoluble conflicts. The history of Europe since the Reformation has hardly been different, though the struggling units were considerably larger.

Under Islam, we may conclude, there can be no discrimination between man and man. Islamic society is open; and every man may join it either as a constitutive member or as *dhimmi* (covenantor). Secondly, Islamic society must seek to expand itself to include mankind, or lose its claim to Islamicity. It may continue to exist as a Muslim community, waiting to be absorbed by another Islamic or non-Islamic community.

B. EVERYTHING IS RELEVANT

The second practical implication of *al tawhīd* for society may be defined as the application of Islamic society's determination to every department, aspect and concern of human living. The will of God, or value, includes all goodness wherever it is to be found; and goodness is certainly ubiquitous, found or capable of being found in all departments of human life. It follows that society ought to seek actualization of the divine will on all fronts wherever it can reach and influence that front for better.²⁵ This does not mean that society does not establish a hierarchy of priorities; and no one would cavil at it devoting a fair portion of its total energies to *al da'wah* (mission), defence, education, or economic development.

Islamic jurisprudence and ethics have conveniently classified human activities into five classes: obligatory, prohibited, recommended, recommended against, and neutral. Islam promulgated public laws, viz., the *sharī'ah*, for the first pair. It projected a model of conduct out of the personalities of the Prophet (SAAS) and his companions (RAA), and taught its men and women to emulate it in their pursuit of the second pair. Further, Islam developed a style of life which it promulgated through folklore, poetry, court pageantry and public functions. Although these measures differ in the degree of coercion and censure they prescribe against the violators, and of praise and respect in favor of the conformers, they are one in their assumption of the relevance of Islam to the activities they govern. Any Islamic society would lose its claim to Islamicity if it were to restrict its activities to any one or two departments of life. In that case, it would degenerate into a public corporation club, or cooperative society whose justification is the satisfaction of one or more economic, social, cultural or political needs of its members. Islamic society is consistent because it is ideological. What it prescribed for itself, it sought to get implemented by the state. Totalism was therefore not only a desideratum for society but an administrative policy for the state (caliphate) as well.

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ (الحج: ٤١)

²⁵Righteous are those who, if given dominion on earth, uphold the *ṣalāh*, pay the *zakaḥ* with good heart, enjoin kindness and prohibit all deeds of evil. To Allah will be the reckoning for all things (22:41).

Such consistency is wanting in Western society because society and state are assigned different roles. Whereas the societies do in fact exercise great power in homogenizing their citizens and acculturating the newcomers, their status is restricted in their exercise of power, largely because of the long history of abuse and struggle between kingship, feudalism, the Church and the masses. In consequence, constitutionalism means for them that political power may be used by the state only to the minimum extent necessary to establish internal peace, to maintain an external defence and to provide the minimum services required by the public welfare.²⁶ Only in very recent times did the concepts arise of a public welfare for the destitute, of recreation and leisure, of control of basic industries and services.²⁷ The basis on which the state's political power was restricted in the past is the principle that the pre-social state of nature is good and hence needs no interference by organized society, or that it is evil and hence needs the minimum power necessary for restraining it.²⁸ The latter view, which is the more common, bolstered its position with the skeptic's claim that the good is unknowable, that all that is given is diversity of desire and moral purpose, and hence that relativism, or *laissez-faire*, is the only alternative to tyranny. None of these bases agree with the Islamic view that all nature is good and innocent; that nature needs to be remolded so as to fulfill the divine pattern; that the divine will, or the good, is knowable through reason as well as revelation; that in this exercise, man may do right as well as wrong but he is responsible for either.

C. RESPONSIBILITY

The third practical implication of *al tawhīd* for society is the principle of responsibility. Totalism is forever exposed to becoming totalitarianism, where regimentation and collectivism rob society's effort of achieving moral value. Another principle is hence needed to guard against such degeneration.

Every man, Islām tells us, is *mukallaf* (charged) with the realization of the divine will. This *taklīf* is based on his natural endowment which

²⁶See this author's analysis of the relevance of Christianity to society in his *Christian Ethics*, chap. VII, pp. 248 ff.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 293-94.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 254-56.

constitutes his *sensus communis* which he shares with humanity. This innate but educable *sensus* is the faculty by which he recognizes his Creator and perceives His will as the ought-to-be of his life. Islam therefore not only declares every man responsible but categorically denies every assumption of non-*taklif* to any being who is neither a child nor clinically deficient. It expects every man to carry his own personal burden in full consciousness; and metes out its respect in proportion to his realization of that responsibility. This follows from the nature of the *amānah*, entrusted by God to man. Certainly God could have created a world in which value is realized as irrefragable, with the necessity of natural law. In fact He did create such a world, namely, nature. Only man He fashioned differently, endowing him with the freedom to realize or violate the divine will and thus enabling him to be responsible for his deeds. This responsibility is of the essence of morality, for wherever it is absent, no deed can have moral value, and the higher, greater part of the divine will will not be realized. Consequently, the divine will would be frustrated; and a God Who suffers frustration is not the One, Transcendent and Absolute God of *al tawhīd*.

Totalist and universalist as it may be, value realization by Islamic society must be responsible if it is to be morally worthy. The Quran has emphasized the personal character of responsibility and denied every possibility of vicarious responsibility, whether for the good deed or for the ill.²⁹ Hence it decreed that there shall be no coercion,³⁰ and required at least every religiously-worthy act to be prefaced by the subject's *nīyah* (personal, internal decision) to take it, as a final proof of its deliberateness, of the subject's responsibility.

Responsibility arises from moral vision, that is, the perception of

... فَمَنْ أَهْتَدَىٰ فَأَنَا مَهْتَدَىٰ بِتَقْوَىٰهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَأَنَا ضَالٌّ بِغِيٍّ ۖ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِمُكَلِّمٍ (يونس: ١٠٨)
 ... وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ... (الإسراء: ١٥) فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ
 مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (الزلزلة: ٧-٨)

²⁹Whoever follows the revelation which has just come from Allah is rightly guided. This will be reckoned for him. Whoever goes astray does so at his own cost. I [Muhammad] was not sent to compel you to follow me [but to persuade and warn] (10:108)... Nobody is responsible for the deeds of another (17:15)... Whoever does an atom's weight of good or evil deeds will be judged accordingly (99:7-8).

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ... (البقرة: ٢٥٦) ... أَفَأَتَىٰ تَكْرُهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ (يونس: ٩٩)

³⁰No compulsion in religion (2:256)... Would you [Muhammad] compel the people to believe? (Accordingly, see 1:106-107)

values, of their ought-to-be's and ought-to-do's in their proper order of rank. Because men can be coerced to do but never to perceive, moral responsibility provides its own guarantee. When coercion has taken place, responsibility is absent and morality has in fact been violated. But granted value-perception cannot be coerced, it can certainly be induced through teaching, whether by concepts or percepts, through dialectics and through example. This defines the work of Islamic society in these terms: to assist the whole of mankind to perceive and, having perceived, to actualize the values constitutive of the divine will. This is education in its noblest and greatest sense. Islamic society is a school of cosmic size where every effort is calculated to be educative; to the end that the realization of value such education would engender may be responsible and hence moral. For only thus would be the higher scales of the divine will be actualized.

Such are the implications of *al tawhīd* for social theory. In effect, these implications produce the *ummah*: a corporate, organic, civic body, which is not limited to land, people, race, culture; universalist, totalist, and responsible in its corporate life as well as in that of every one of its members; and indispensable for every man's achievement of happiness in this world and the next, for every actualization of the divine will in space-time.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE UMMAH

I. TERMINOLOGY

The social order of Islam is therefore unique. None of the terms known in the Western languages can be used to refer to it. In English the expression "social order" means the system of values or principles which govern the life of a society. Any system of any values or principles qualifies for the appellation, since even what may be described as chaos is a form or order of social living. Hence, it is proper to speak of a capitalist, communist, democratic, fascist social order, or an English, American, French, Chinese or Indian social order. When it comes to "social," the adjectival derivative from society, the meaning is more restricted. The term "society" means a voluntary grouping of humans designed to achieve certain ends (what the Germans would more precisely call *Gesellschaft*. It is not to be confused with "community" which is defined as the involuntary grouping of humans who are one or alike in race, language, history, culture, geography. The Germans call the latter *Gemeinschaft*. "Society" and "community" may and may not coincide. In the case of the French and of the English, for example, they do; in that of the Germans, the Slavs and Chinese, they do not. Community membership is natural and inevitable, except by emigration, naturalization, and systematic acculturation. Society membership, *per contra*, is instant; for it is the result of decision. That is why it is nearly always restricted in effect to some common denominator or denominators shared by the members of the group. Such denominators may vary from economic interest such as the members of a cooperative housing society enjoy, to a whole range of cultural values implied when we designate a specific class or group within the group.¹ The political entity is hardly ever a society. Though some exceptions may be found (Switzerland,

¹In the West, in modern times, a common need and a decision to meet it have provided the foundation for economic associations such as commercial companies, corporations and cooperative societies of all kinds (credit and thrift, consumers, housing, marketing, etc.). But never for a state.

Yugoslavia [and formerly] the U.S.S.R.), they are all of recent origin and the result of special factors. Most political entities coincide with communities. If not total, their coincidence is nearly so, a fact which justifies the political entity as a "nation" as well. Hence, it is possible in Western political theory to define the state as a territory with definite boundaries within which lives a specific community whose affairs are governed by a sovereign power capable of enforcing its decisions.²

In Islam, two terms corresponding to community are *sha'b* and *qawm*. They may not be used to denote society without violence to their meaning, i.e., to the consciousness of the people denoted by the appellation.³ The Arabs, Turks and Persians are each a *sha'b* or a *qawm*, if we mean thereby to speak of them as communities varying from one another; if our purpose is to focus on their differences in language, customs, geography, genealogy, etc. But they are not "societies," either individually, or severally, insofar as this category is not applicable to them exclusively, but would at once include the Malays, Indians, Hausas, Bantus and Slavs, etc. Insofar as all these communities and more share in Islam, in its culture and civilization, they are integral parts of one and the same *ummah* or "society" of Islam. The *ummah* is a universal society⁴ whose membership includes the widest possible variety of ethnicities or communities, but whose commitment to Islam binds them to a specific social order. The matter is further complicated by the fact that each one of the Muslim communities is the *ummah*, the microcosm. For it is necessarily and legitimately responsible for speaking and acting for the world-*ummah* as long as the latter has no legally-constituted government or institution capable of enforcing Islamic law, of effectively representing the universal *ummah*, or of assuming responsibility therefor. The reason for this is the fact that it is Islam which provides them with all the important categories of culture and civilization, of social differentiation and classification, of evaluation in all personal, and most social

That is supposed to rest exclusively on ethnic characteristics which are innately common, and hence permanent, See: Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press 1962), p. 393.

²This is the traditional, classical definition of the state in Western culture. It is the opposite of the Islamic state which is limited neither by territory, nor by ethnic, cultural, religious, or political boundaries. See, for example, George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947), pp. 764-65; and James B. Hastings, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, s.v. "The State."

³Al Zubaydī. *Taj al Arūs* s.v. q-w-m, vol. 9.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ (الأنبياء: ٩٢)

⁴This is your *ummah*—one, united and integral—and I am your Lord. Serve Me (21:92).

and inter-societal affairs. Hence, there is far more justification for their identification on the basis of Islam which they share with the world Muslim brotherhood than on the basis which makes them a community. The latter, i.e., the differing elements which their respective communities furnish, are not denied; but being relatively unimportant in comparison with those which Islam provides for them, they are recognized and put in the places which properly belong to them.

The term *ummah* is not translatable and must be taken in its original Islamic Arabic form. It is not synonymous with "the people," or "the nation" or "the state," expressions which are always determined by either race, geography, language and history, or any combination of them. On the other hand, the *ummah* is translocal, not determined at all by geography considerations. Its territory is not only the whole earth, but all of creation. Neither is the *ummah* restricted to any race. It is trans-racial and regards all humanity as its actual or potential members. Nor is the *ummah* the "state" because it is a transtotal world-state, within which it may include and contain several "states." Equally, the constituents of the *ummah* constitute the *ummah* even though they may not fall under the political sovereignty of one state, not even that of the Islamic state. The *ummah* is a sort of "United Nations" with one strong and comprehensive ideology, a world-government and a world-army to enforce its decisions. The *ummah* is the social order of Islam; and the movement which pursues it, or seeks to actualize its goals, is ummatism.⁵

II. NATURE OF THE UMMAH

A. AGAINST ETHNOCENTRISM

The social order of Islam is universal, enveloping the whole of mankind without exception. By virtue of being human, of being born, every person is an actual member of the social order, or a potential member whose recruitment is the duty of all other members.⁶ Islam recognizes the nature

⁵See this author's *On Arabism: 'Urūbah and Religion: An Analysis of the Fundamental Ideas of Arabism and of Islam as Its Highest Moment of Consciousness* (Amsterdam; Djambatan, 1962), chap. VI.

⁶The obligatory nature of the *Sharī'ah*, concerning the divine imperatives, falls on all humans without exception or discrimination, because the desiderata of values of Islam are so for all. Hence, every human being ought to be called to Islam by the Muslims, who already acknowledge this normativeness of the contents of the Islamic revelation. For further analysis of this point, see this author's "On the Nature of Islamic *Da'wah*," *International Review of Mission*, vol. 65, no. 260 (October 1976).

grouping of humans into families, tribes and nations, as a God-created and God-ordained arrangement.⁷ But it rejects every ultimization of such groupings as definitive of man, as constituting a final criterion of good and evil. While extending the legal notion of the "family" to include all the relatives who can show any genealogical relation to one another however remote, and governing their mutual relations of inheritance and support by law, Islam established for the larger groupings of tribes and nations the function of complementing and cooperating with one another for the benefit of all.⁸ Above all humans, individuals as well as groups, stands the law. Ethnic diversity is a fact. It is also to a certain measure a desideratum. Beyond that measure, Islam regards it as *matériel*, subject to the dictates of the law. When ethnicity becomes ethnocentrism, Islam condemns it as *kufṛ* (apostasy), because it implies the setting up of another source for the law, for good and evil; namely, the ethnicity itself. Juristically, ethnic considerations fall within the realm of the *mubāḥ* (permissible), and is limited to the realms of the *ḥarām* (the prohibited) and the *makrūh* (the recommended-against) on the one side, and of the *wājib* (the obligatory) and *mandūb* (the recommended) on the other.

Islam is not inimical to ethnicity going as far as constituting its own political state, its own *khilāfah*, a position recognized as legitimate since the days of al Māwardī, as long as the *sharī'ah* is observed in full.⁹ Since observance lays down upon a sovereign ethnic entity the duty of making peace and war only in step with the *ummah* as a whole, and so to conduct its affairs as to prevent evil from befalling the others and to bring good to them. Beyond these measures, Islam tolerates no particularism, and lays upon all Muslims the religious obligation to fight it with all their strength wherever and whenever it shows its face.¹⁰ The law of Islam

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُمْ ...
(الحجرات: ١٣)

⁷O Mankind, We have created you male and female. We have constituted you into peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Noblest among you in the eye of Allah is the most righteous (49:13).

⁸Ibid.

⁹The legitimacy of more than one caliphate was defended by al Ash'ari, and condemned by al Māwardī. However, Islamic juristic opinion at the time achieved a near consensus in favor of tolerance, as the issue concerned the Umayyad caliphate in Cordoba and the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt.

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبَغَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَأْتِيَ إِلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاتَتْ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ (الحجرات: ٩)

¹⁰And if two factions of believers fight each other, seek to reconcile them, If, thereafter, any of the two factions returns to aggression, then fight them until they comes back to their senses, and

is one for all on account of its divine source. Just as God is One, the God of all creatures, certainly of all humans, His law is one and the same. He has no favorites. He makes no exceptions. Islam regards ethnocentrism as gravely as it does, because favoritism is an attack upon the very transcendence of God. For God to be the Ultimate Reality, the Ultimate Judge (i.e., the Ultimate Principle, Criterion and Source), His stance *vis-à-vis* all creatures must be one and the same. For Him to regard any ethnic group as His favorite, i.e., as different in relation to Him, to His law, to His cosmic order, to His system of reward and punishment, is to necessarily impair His ultimacy or transcendence. The claim that ultimate reality is plural is a contradiction unworthy even of the small mind. And so is every variety of ethical relativism, whether human, such as eudaemonism; cultural, such as utilitarianism, the Anglo-Saxon tradition of political liberalism, and all nationalism; or Protagorean, such as hedonism, the new-old religion of the West.¹¹

B. UNIVERSALISM

The social order of Islam is universalist in tendency.¹² Though it may currently exit in one nation or another, a group of nations, or merely a group of individuals, it is one in that it seeks to comprehend mankind. Islamically speaking, therefore, there can be neither an Arab nor a Turkish, nor a Persian nor a Pakistani, nor a Malay social order, but one: the social order of Islam. However, the social order of Islam may begin in any country or group; but it sours and turns non-Islamic if it does not move continuously toward including all of mankind. The ideal of the universal community is that of Islam, expressed in the world-*ummah*. It is not *dépassé*, out of tune with the times, an absolute ideal of the Middle Ages. In the West, the ideal of the universal community ruled for a millennium and a half, from the *Imperium Mundi* of the Romans to the Reformation. It was attempted again under the Enlighten-

reconcile the two again in justice. Be just and equitable, for Allah loves the just (49:9).

¹¹See this author's essay, "The Metaphysical Status of Values in the Western and Islamic Traditions, *Studia Islamica*, Fascicle xxviii, 1968, pp. 29-62.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ ... (الحجرات: ١٠) إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ
(الأنبياء: ٩٢)

¹²The believers are indeed brethen to one another, constituting one brotherhood (49:10)... This is your *ummah*—one, united and integral—and I am your Lord. Serve Me (21:92).

visions of both democracy and communism. At every one of these occasions, the ideal was corrupted, violated, assassinated and laid to rest by the particularistic, nationalistic, and ethnic subversion of its enemies. Nor is any one of those movements inimical to the universalist ideal, or describable as genuinely opposed to the ideal as such. The ethnic forces which rallied the people around their princes in the Reformation were opposed to the corruption of the ideal as practiced by the Roman Church; and those nationalist forces which countered the Enlightenment ideal of the French Revolution were opposed to its corruption by Imperial France. Likewise, the breakdown of the ideal after World War I and II was due to the machinations and manipulations of Zionism and neo-colonist imperialism. In other words, the ideal failed because of a lack of genuine subscription to it; because of a failure of nerve on the part of its adherents. The faith of the Western masses in the ideal continued. But it has met its final disaster at the hand of contemporary skepticism where not only is nothing holy, but nothing has any precise or definite meaning at all.

C. TOTALISM

The Islamic social order is totalist, in the sense that it holds Islam relevant to every era of human activity. The base of the social order is the will of God which must be relevant to every creature insofar as God had endowed it with constitution, a structure, and a function.¹³ Human beings, in their physical, personal, social and spiritual natures, do have a God-given constitution which they ought to fulfill. No activity of theirs escapes God's determination; and they can project for themselves no goal in any field of endeavor that does not fall under the *sharī'ah* categories of *wājib* through *ḥarām*. Moreover, it is a sign of a developed mentality and a refined vision that the realm of the *mubāḥ* (permissible) is as much

¹³Qur'an 25:2. While the universalism of Islam is evident in the fact that the injunctions of Islam are addressed to all humans by virtue of their humanity, its totalism is so in the fact that where it left any area of human behavior not specifically legislated for, it placed that burden upon the Muslim. The Muslim is obliged to seek the application of the revelation to the everyday affairs and problems he encounters. *Ijtihād* is a universal duty incumbent on all Muslims, as Allah affirmed in the Qur'an (6:38).

occupied by the desiderata of Islam as possible. The juristic principle.¹⁴ of no prohibition without a text (the rule is permissibility) is a preventive against the unjust and invalid extension of prohibitions, not against their valid extrapolations. To analyze, to deduce, induce, to extend and extrapolate the laws of Islam and make them relevant to all that there is, is both worthy and necessary. Otherwise the comprehensiveness of the will of God on which the *sharī'ah* ultimately rests would become questionable. The best social order is, in consequence of this truth, that which orders as much of human activity as possible, not as little as possible; and the best government is that which governs most, not least. Let us remember that the Islamic social order is not merely a club, a learned society, a chamber of commerce, a trade union, a consumers' cooperative or a political party in the Western sense of the term. It is all these and much more, as Ḥasan al Bannā used to say, precisely because of the relevance of the will of God to all things.¹⁵

The totalism of the Islamic social order does not only pertain to present human activities in all times and places, as well as all the humans who are the subjects of these activities and whom it regards as its necessary members. While it holds all Muslims as conscripts in its programs and projects, it holds non-Muslims as potential members who ought to be persuaded to join. There is hence no end to the social order of Islam because of the endlessness of life and activity in this world. The task is to interfere in everything that is or moves to the end of making it, him, her, or them, the more and better fulfillers of the divine will.¹⁶ *Falāḥ* is the genuine transformation of the earth into the garden of God (the real meaning of the Quranic concept of *isti'mār al arḍ* [reconstruction of the earth]), and of mankind into heroes, geniuses and saints fulfilling the patterns of God. We must of course remember that to do so immorally would not constitute *falāḥ*. *Falāḥ* requires that the acts of transformation themselves fulfill the divine law as they seek to bring about its fulfillment in their objects.

¹⁴This is one of the "general principles of law making" (al qawā'id al kullīyah) Subḥī al Mahmasānī, *Falsafat al Tashrī' fi al Islām* (Beirut: Dār al 'Ilm li al Malayīn, 1380/1961), pp. 261 ff. 'Abd al Wahhāb Khallāf calls these general principles "al qawā'id al uṣūliyah al tashrī'iyah." See his *Ilm Uṣūl al Fiqh* (Cairo: Dar al Qalam, 1392/1372), pp. 197 ff.

¹⁵Iṣḥāq Mūsā al Husaynī, *Al Ikhwān al Muslimūn* (Beirut: Dar Beirut li al Ṭibā'ah wa al Nashr, 1955), p. 79.

... مَا قَرَأْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نُرِيدُ بِكُمْ بِهِ مُشْرُوكَاتِ (الأنعام: ٣٨)

¹⁶In the Book, We have left nothing out. Everything is recorded and, on the Day of Judgment, all will be brought up before Allah for judgment (6:38).

The social order of Islam is free. If it is built by force, or if it executes its programs through coercion of the people, the social order would lose its Islamicity. Regimentation may well be necessary; but it can be legitimate only if it is restricted to the area of implementation. Prior to that, Islam requires *shūrā* (mutual consultation) on the very instituting of regimentation which can, at any rate, only be temporary and pertinent to specific projects. Where regimentation is the rule and coercion is resorted to on principle, the outcome may well be a successful actualization of the divine pattern, but it is an actualization whose value is utilitarian, not moral. For it to be moral, it would have to be entered into by its subject voluntarily, as a free decision taken out of personal commitment to the value, or divine pattern in question.¹⁷ There is no doubt that Islam seeks the actualization of both, the utilitarian and the moral values, but it does not tolerate, and it pays no respect to the former without the latter. The actualization that counts in its eye is that which realizes both at once. God has taught us this lesson eloquently in the Quran. To the suggestion that humans were about to be created, the angels who can do no wrong but fulfill God's commandment, demonstrated: "Would you then [O God] create a creature that is capable of corruption and homicide, when we do [nothing but] praise and glorify You?" God answered: 'I have a purpose which you do not know.'¹⁸ Were humans like angels, incapable of evil, their deeds would fulfill every divine desire or imperative, but they would not be moral. The moral is the highest part of the divine will. Certainly, therefore, it must be the highest of what is required of a man, for a will that does not enjoin the moral can-

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ. وَمَنِ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ (الزمر: ٤١)

¹⁷We have revealed to you the Book in truth. Whoever decides to be guided by it does so to his own credit. Whoever goes astray, does so to his own discredit. O Muhammad, you cannot do more than to convey and warn (39:41).

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ٣٠)

¹⁸And when your Lord announced to the angels that He was about to create man and establish him as His vicegerent on earth, the angels said: Why would You establish on earth a creature that sheds blood and works evil, while we adore You and praise You incessantly? Allah answered: I have another purpose which you do not know (2:30).

not be divine because it would then be in contradiction with itself. The same truth is stressed in the Quran in yet another passage, still more dramatic than the first and as eloquent: "We offered the trust to heaven and earth and mountains," God said, "but they rejected it out of fear. Man carried it."¹⁹ Throughout heaven and earth, the will of God is actualized with the necessity of natural law; the creatures of heaven and earth are not free to do or not to do so. Hence, their actualization is not moral. Only man's is moral, because only he is free before the divine imperative. That is why only he carries the divine "trust".²⁰

To cause humans to actualize value, if it cannot mean to coerce them into such actualization, must mean to persuade them to do so of their own accord. This means that for value-actualization to be moral, it has to mean no more than teaching and convincing humans that values are values, that divine commandments are the desirable patterns. This makes of the social order of Islam a seminar or school on a large scale where the business of government and leadership is to teach, to educate, to convince, to persuade, to enlighten and to guide.

E. MISSION

Evidently the *ummah* is not an accidental growth of nature. It does not exist for its own sake, and much less for the sake of any of its constituents. It exists solely as an instrument of the divine will which seeks, through the *ummah*, to find concretization in space and time. It constitutes the matrix of God's definitive revelation, the instrument of His will, and the point at which the divine meets the cosmos, and here the cosmos is launched on its infinite march toward fulfillment of the divine purpose. As the Quran has put it eloquently, the *ummah* exists so that "the word of God may be supreme."²¹

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ...
(الأحزاب: ٧٢)

¹⁹We have offered Our trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains. But they frightened by and refused to carry it. Man however accepted and carried it (33:72).

²⁰Ibid.

إِنَّا نُنْصِرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ... وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (التوبة: ٤٠)

²¹If you do not render assistance to Muhammad, it will not matter; for Allah has committed such help to him... He brought the unbelievers low and made the word of Allah supreme. He is Almighty, Wise (9:40).

A. NO ISLAM WITHOUT THE UMMAH

God commanded: "Let there be of you an *ummah* to call to the good, to enjoin virtue and forbid vice. Those who do so are the felicitous (Holy Quran 3:104). Clearly, the Muslims are commanded to form themselves into an *ummah*, i.e., a social body organized in a special way. The Quran text has given us the *'illah* (sufficient reason) of the commandments, namely, "to call to the good, to enjoin virtue and forbid vice." This *'illah*, however, is only the "final cause" or ultimate purpose which the *ummah* is supposed to serve. A less final "final cause" (hence, an instrumental cause) is the fact that it is the *ummah* which makes possible the calling to the good, the enjoining of virtue, the forbidding of vice. The *ummah* is the source of the Muslim's rights, as well as of his duties; and it is the body in which those rights and duties can be exercised.

The Prophet (SAAS) rules: "It is not permissible for three Muslims to find themselves in a land without their assigning one of them to their leadership." Since their purpose is to uphold the rights, enforce the divine injunctions, realize justice, execute the *hudud*, and fulfill happiness in this and other world, there is no escape from forming themselves into an *ummah*, an organic society with *'imārah* (government).²²

Someone may object that the realization of personalist values does not need the *ummah*. He may assert that, on the contrary, society spoils such a realization, since virtue is highest when it is secret. Our answer as Muslims is that that is a Christian view. Certainly, Islam enjoins the personalist values, collectively known as *ikhilāṣ* (*nīyah*, *ṣidq*, *ibtighā'* *wajh Allāh*, *ṭuhr*, *amānah*, etc.), but it equally forbids monasticism

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ (الحديد: ٢٥)
إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِنَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ... (النساء: ١٠٥) وَإِن أَحْكَمَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَمَا أَنزَلْ
اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ... (المائدة: ٤٩)

²²We have sent Our messengers with the necessary evidence. We revealed to them the Book and the balance [criterion of justice] so that the people may establish justice on earth. We have given them steel, an instrument of great power, that benefit to mankind may be actualized; and that those who wish to help the cause of Allah and His messengers may do so. Allah is Almighty and Exalted (57:25)... We have sent down to you [Muhammad] the Book in truth that you may mete out justice to the people according to His revealed criteria (4:105)... And judge between them [O Muhammad] by what Allah has revealed to you, and do not follow their prejudices (5:49).

(Quran 56:27). Its uniqueness is that of holding that no *ikhlās* is credible unless it translates itself into visible acts in space and time, as well as of enjoining *ikhlās* upon the community as such. In Christianity, society and the state are the realm of Caesar. This has been the traditional understanding of Christianity, based upon the scriptural texts of Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17, Luke 20:25. Efforts at widening the scope of Christian ethics so as to make them relevant and applicable to society began in earnest after the Reformation—Calvinism being the ideal example; but they were all rejected by the majority and never became part of the orthodox dogma except in the view of their own sectarian followers. It was not until after the Industrial Revolution in England had brought man's exploitation of man to superlative levels of cruelty and degradation that the Christian conscience was moved to extend the relevance of Christ to social relations and public legislation. Only in the last two or three decades, and largely in reaction to racism, communism and World War II did the concern become general. Even so, the Christian mind has not opted for an outright affirmation of an *ummah*-like Christian ethic. Where it is convinced of the need for Christ on the political and social levels, it asserts the relevance of Christ ambiguously as being in opposition to what the Caesars of the earth do. It never sees Christ as telling those Caesars what they should do.²³

In Islam, everything is God's concern and falls within the scope of the religious imperative. Indeed, the *ummah* is the *sine qua non* condition of all piety and morality. That is why God described the faithful as "men and women who are protectors of one another, enjoining virtue and forbidding vice to one another" (Holy Quran 9:71). Still more directly, He commanded us to "cooperate with one another for the good, to the purpose of achieving piety" (Holy Quran 5:3). On the side, God commanded us to "disagree with and oppose one another so as to prevent evil, to avoid crime and stop aggression" (Holy Quran 5:3). Didactically, He described the condemned as people who "did not forbid one another the evil which was practiced among them" (Holy Quran 5:79). That is why the Prophet (SAAS) said: "Where people see vice committed and do not seek to change it, Allah would inflict upon them His punishment"; and explained his judgement with the reasoning that "when evil is secret, it hurts only its doer; when it is public and not prohibited, it hurts everybody."²⁴

²³Barth, *Against the Stream*, pp. 29-31.

²⁴Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1388/1969), s.v. Qur'an 5:79, vol. 2, pp. 83-84.

Further justification for the *ummah* may be derived from the analysis of ethical consciousness and of personalist ethics. The former reveals that a moral imperative is one which derives from, is applied in, and has meaning only in the context of, the web of relations with nature and other persons in which the moral subject stands and lives his life. The service of God being the realization of His will, and the divine will being, *in percipi*, the values, or the *prius* which makes everything valuable, it follows that if man is to serve God, he must stand in the interhuman relations which can actualize the moral values. Just as it is meaningless to require a disembodied soul, unrelated to the world of space-time, to actualize the utilitarian values, it is meaningless to expect that a hermit-monk unrelated to other men in relations of trade, friendship, marriage, neighborhood, production and consumption of material goods, war and peace, trial and judgement, mission and teaching, recreation and esthetic enjoyment, fraternization, to actualize the moral. Moral values are ideal essences in a transcendent supernal plenum unless they are actualized in the very body of such interhuman relations. Morality presupposes such relations and is impossible without them. Every relation forsaken or withdrawn from means that the value relevant to it, i.e., the value to which that relation is the substrate or carrier, is condemned to non-actualization. The life of solitude which the individualist, hermit, anchorite or monk leads is based, in the final analysis, on a truncation of the realm of values, for it is guided by the principle that the values of which the carrier is the consciousness or soul of the subject in itself, i.e., in its uniqueness and solitude, are alone constitutive of the realm of value, or are the highest values for the sake of which all other values may be violated. The former is evident blindness to the existence of other values, a forced axiological monism or exclusivism; the latter, an insensitivity to the real moving power of other values, a false judgement of their order of rank—indeed a denial of their axiological finality. No wonder that all solitary men, the famous hermits and anchorites of history, have led a life of hardness, intemperance and often, of cruelty.²⁵

Whenever the moral dimension is defined in personalist terms, it necessarily issues into an individualism which finds its logical conclusion in egotism. For it must, in the final analysis, depend upon the inner determinants of the moral subject of which only his own conscience can be the judge. The moral agent may will the loftiest and most altruistic

²⁵William James, *The Variety of Religious Experience* (New York: Mentor Books, New American Library, 1953), pp. 269 ff, pp. 276 ff.

ideals. What makes his willing moral, is, *ex hypothesi*, not the loftiness or altruism of the content willed, but the manner in which his own faculty has disposed itself in the act. It is this priority—nay exclusiveness—of his personal internal determination in the constitution of ethicality that makes him an egotist, forever obsessed with himself. If it is claimed that the obsession with self is itself altruistically motivated, as in the case of the self-willed example, it must be acknowledged that since the more involved with nature and other men the conduct of the moral agent is, the less confidently is exemplarity predicted of that conduct whether by him or mankind. The tendency would hence be to seek exemplarity at the cost of involvement. Historically, the exemplars of ethical inner determination have been the monks and hermits of all ages and nations, men who are guided by an ethic of isolation from the world, of anti-world, of resignation and asceticism. It is common knowledge that Islam is a religion of private as well as public life, of the individual as well as the state, of everyday living as well as lofty contemplation. Hence it is not possible without men standing in the web and woof of relations with nature and other men, mutually influencing and being influenced, determining and being determined by other men. Indeed, the famous statement of the Prophet (SAAS) "Religion is rather the matter of dealing with others," is an expression of this bent of Islam towards involvement in the affairs of other men in this world.²⁶ The fact is also expressed in Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān's yearning for a community of humans after his discovery of the truth, and after his attainment of all the happiness the personalist pursuit could possibly furnish, as we have seen earlier.²⁷

B. ONE AND ONLY ONE *UMMAH*

God said: "This *ummaḥ* of yours is one *ummaḥ*" (Holy Quran 21:29; 23:53). In saying this God meant that the believers shall have one fulcrum around which to rally, one overall purpose, a keystone value, which brings all their endeavors under one all encompassing meaning, namely, the service of God. The *ummaḥ* is and must always remain one because God is One, and His service is one. His will for all mankind, all places and all times, embodied in the Quran and the *sunnah* of the Prophet

²⁶Or rather, "Religion consists in counselling others to do the good."

²⁷Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, tr. George N. Atiyah, in *A Sourcebook in Medieval Political Philosophy*, ed. Ralph Lerner and Muḥsin Mahdi (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1936).

(SAAS) and crystallized in the *sharī'ah* is one. His will is for all people, all men being absolutely equal in His vision. He does not expect of any people or race more or less than He expects of all others. The oneness of the *ummah* is therefore religious and moral, not biological, geographic, political, linguistic or cultural. Because of this the Prophet (SAAS) has called the Jews an *ummah* even though they were within the same locality as the Muslims and belonged to the same political, linguistic and cultural group. Because their ideology—religious and moral—is different, he deemed them to constitute a separate *ummah* of their own. Islam does not recognize any *ummah* based on biology, geography, politics, language or culture; but on religion. Hence, the nation, the race, the state, the continent—all these categories, are known in modern Western culture, but not recognized in Islam.

To say this does not mean that the religious unity of the *ummah* is not reinforceable and complementable by these other kinds of unity. The unities of space or geography, of language and culture, of biological descent and race can, and in fact do, help support the religious unity. "The nearer relations are more entitled to man's good deed" is a principle of Islamic law.²⁸ What Islam is saying here is that no kind of physical nearness should ever be allowed to determine the conduct of either the Muslim individual or the Muslim group, over and above the religious and moral factor. "We have created you all of one male and female," God said, "and made you tribes and nations that you may fraternize with one another. Noblest among you shall be the most virtuous" (Holy Quran 40:13). Evidently, physical nearness is subservient to virtue and piety; it is secondary to ethical worth and personal merit, not the reverse.

The *ummah* therefore is not a matter of birth and geography and language. These are independent of one's will and hence necessary. The *ummah*, as a religious and moral brotherhood, is a free association of individuals to the end of actualizing in and for themselves and humanity the whole realm of values; in traditional Islamic terms, "happiness in the two abodes, this life and the hereafter." One is not born into it by blind chance, but elects and decides to join it as a rational being. The *ummah* is not a *gemeinschaft*, but a *gesellschaft*, not a community-by-nature, but a community-by-decision, a "society."

At the launching of the Islamic movement right after the *hijrah* in 1 A.H., the tribe, the simple form of *gemeinschaft*, and the empire, a

²⁸*Al aqrabun awlā bi al ma'rūf*, one of the general principles of law-making.

political *gesellschaft* founded upon a *gemeinschaft* of race, language, culture, and history, were known; and they were prospering. Islam knocked both about. It established a pure *gesellschaft*, a universal brotherhood under the religious and moral law and invited all mankind to join. This was and still is the greatest innovation in the social history of man. True, Christianity has succeeded in establishing a *gesellschaft*, or society, based purely on religion and morals. But, unfortunately, the religious and moral content essential for Christianness was reduced to the minimum; namely, the ineffable experimental act of faith and the purest ethic of intent. Both are personal, secret or internal, and depend totally upon the conscience of the individual for execution, criticism and evaluation. As soon as it was given any significant public or societal content, Christendom split and partly lapsed into the older forms of *gesellschaft* based on *gemeinschaft*. The early Church divisions which appeared at Nicaea and Chalcedon involved to a preeminently high degree the Semitic versus the Greek factionalism of the people. Likewise, the great schism of 1058 A.C. was a division of East *versus* West. Finally, in the Reformation movement of the sixteenth century, the national tendencies of the Germans, the English, the French, the Italians, the Dutch overwhelmingly determined the outcome of the ninety-five theses the personally disturbed Catholic monk Luther proposed to his superiors.²⁹

In Islam, therefore, no religious diversity and no moral independence or division within the *ummah* is legitimate. Divergence from the *ummah's* religion is heresy; for in the religious and moral senses, the *ummah* is indubitably a monolithic system. To entertain the opposite is to allow Muslims to practice religions and follow moral principles other than Islam—which is absurd. Furthermore, to allow religio-moral diversity within Islam is to renounce *al tawhīd*, the principle of the unity of all truth and knowledge. This is tantamount to allowing two diverse claims to the truth to coexist. Such is not a critical attitude; for the problem here is not one of denying the possibility of claims and counterclaims but the possibility of an overarching, critically knowable truth in terms of which the opposition of claim and counterclaim might be solved and differences might be composed. Islam is definitely against pluralism of ultimate truth, not of opinions about the truth. It demands that opinions be responsible. It has assigned the maritimation of *ijmā'* (consensus) for this responsibility to channel itself. Islamic jurisprudence allows every consensus of the *ummah* to be broken by the creative, in-

²⁹The details of the ideational history of the Church may be read in Henry Bettenson's *Documents...*

novative interpreter; but it prescribed upon him the duty to seek the consensus of the *ummah* for it, or suffer it to be rejected as *bid'ah* (condemned innovation).

However, to say that the *ummah* is one religiously and morally does not mean that the *ummah* admits no administrative division. Indeed, there can be as many administrative divisions within the *ummah* as efficiency requires. In the determination of the first of *Ramaḍān* for fasting purpose, the first of *Shawwāl* for *Īd al Fitr* and the disposal of the *zakāh* funds, the Shafi'i school has countenanced divisions within the *ummah* as small as twenty-four *farsakhs* in extent (192 kms.).³⁰ Today, it may well be argued that the extraordinary developments in communications technology have made the whole world a single province. At any rate, public administration is not merely a matter of communication, and the *ummah* may be said to be as divisible as efficiency and service demands.

It should be noticed that administrative autonomy within a division of the *ummah* does not give the province legislative autonomy. Law-making in Islam is governed by a complete system of jurisprudence. In this system, general principles are distinguished from their application. The former admit of no change, for they are both divinely ordained and rational. Where man's creativity is called for is in the matter of translating a principle or value into specific, concrete directive for conduct—prescriptivization of the law—and that of carrying out or realizing those directives—its implementation. Only the prescriptivization of the Prophet (SAAS) is normative; and it is so by divine sanction: "In the Prophet's *sunnah*, there lies a good example for whosoever looks up to God ..." (Holy Quran 33:21). Everybody else's prescriptivization is a human effort subject to the test of coherence with the Quran and the *sunnah* as a whole, and to the test of the consensus of the *ummah*. The creative effort of any division of the *ummah*, whether it be in prescriptivization or implementation, is a contention on its part in Islamic law which that division ought to universalize by convincing the Muslims of the world of its validity, or to avoid or change when in the ensuing debate Muslim world opinion stands out solidly against it.³¹

Excluding our own time, the *ummah* has been, throughout its history, a monolithic unity in as much as it was all governed by one and the

³⁰Abd al Raḥmān al Jazīrī, *Al Fiqh 'alā al Madhāhib al Arba'ah* (Cairo: Al Maṭba'ah al Tijāriyah al Kubrā, n.c.), s.v. "Beginning of Ramaḍān" and "Beginning of Shawwāl," vol. 1, pp. 548-55.

³¹This seems to be the only way in which dynamic and creative *ijtihād* can be reconciled to the equally desirable purpose of unanimity and consensus. Both values are integral to the Islamic worldview and its normative system.

same Islamic law. Politically, the *ummah* was united under one suzerainty only during the *Rāshidūn* and Umayyad periods (10-131 A.H./632-749 A.C.). The rest of its history, over twelve centuries, it has been split into many political divisions. The unity of law was the stronger. It gave the Muslim world its institutions, its ethic, its style of life and its culture. It educated the Muslims of all races and cultures in one and the same ideology and welded them into one brotherhood dedicated to the same ideals. The unity of Islamic laws successfully withstood all the threats of fragmentation, including conquest by foreign powers, during the fourteen centuries of Islamic history. It may rightly be said that the *sharī'ah*, is both the spearhead and spine of Muslim unity across the world. And it is the fact which makes the *ummah* a truly universalist brotherhood in which all men are members, potentially by virtue of birth, and actually by virtue of a free personal, ethical decision to enter into the world-fellowship of the law.³²

C. THE NATURE OF UMMATIC UNITY

1. Comprehensiveness

No one, it is hoped, requires proof that Islam is a comprehensive system of life. Islam does not divide the world into sacred and profane; nor does it divide life into religious and secular; nor does it divide men into priesthood and laity. All such divisions are deemed by Islam to be artificial, unnatural, unreasonable. Historically, they all belong to non-Muslim traditions; to Christianity *par excellence* slave of the *Imperium Romanum* in which Christianity was born and formed.

Islam is indeed relevant for the philosophy of religion, i.e., for the highest principles of metaphysics, as well as for the small details of personal everyday living. It is in the Holy Quran that we read the affirmation of the duality of being, the actual creature and the transcendent Creator, of the nature and destiny of man, of his freedom and responsibility, of the instrumentality and malleability of all creation, of the orderliness of the universe, of the unity of truth and value. And it is in the same Book that we read the commandments to return a greeting

³²A parallel might be drawn here between the integrative role of the *Shari'ah* and that of the laws of Solon which were responsible for welding the dispersed groups of Greeks around the Aegean Sea into one cultural unity.

with a better one (Quran 4:85), to seek permission to enter a house before entering (Quran 24:26-28); to address others with a soft voice without yelling (Quran 31:19). Between themselves the Quran and the *sunnah* have given us a complete ritualistic, political, economic, ethical and social system. True, the Quran did not give us all the details but all the principles and some details as examples. In some fields it gave us more detail than in another in order to drive its point home. And so did the *sunnah*. But there can be no doubt of the relevance of Islam's holy writ to everything. The detail which Allah (SWT) or His Prophet (SAAS) has not spelled out was left to the Muslims to elaborate and to specify. Certainly, the Muslims have risen to the task and elaborated the most comprehensive legal system ever devised.³³

The theoretical basis of this comprehensiveness is the axiom that every human activity is a would-be carrier of some value. Since the purpose of the *ummah* is the actualization of value, it follows that the *ummah* would seek to promote such actualization wherever a possibility of it is in evidence. This implies that the *ummah* would have something to say on every human activity; that since the law is relevant thereto, no activity may lie beyond the reach of the *ummah's* executive and judicial arm.

2. Materiality or Contentuality

The comprehensive nature of any unity can be formalistic and abstract. Indeed, the greater the comprehensiveness, the more formalistic and abstract the unity; and a whole religion, or worldview, or ethic can be pressed into a few abstract words which by meaning everything, mean nothing. Islam's comprehensiveness was not achieved at the cost of materiality or content. On the contrary, it was matched by the concrete content, namely, specific legal prescriptions for every moral desideratum and, where the matter lay beyond the reach of law, specific dicta as guides for every area and corner of human activity.

Examples of comprehensiveness without content abound. The Hindu speculative thinker means everything under the sun and beyond it by merely saying *OM* and our Sufi speculator has matched the Hindu by

³³The Quran and the *Sunnah* are the two ultimate sources of all Islamic laws. The huge, expansive corpus of *Shari'ah* prescriptions has covered all areas of personal and social ethics. Evidently, none of Islam's prescriptions would be valid without some ideational relationship to one provision or another contained in the two primary sources.

saying *HŪ*. For philosophers, it is an interesting game to push ever upward towards the one formula which includes all. The sad truth is however that, under such monosyllabic key term, men went all the way from the life of saintliness to that of vice and idolatry. Both the Hindu and the Sufi know that nothing in the term could stop such aberration. Likewise, whereas the primary concern of Jesus (AS) was to break up the petrified legalism, the literalism or reification of the Jews, his disciples chose to blow his essentially ethical and divine insight into an absolute system in which all morality is internalized. Instead of *OM*, the metaphysical boodlebag of the Hindu, they installed "Love," the moral category which includes everything. Augustine's "Love God and do what you will" became a precept which anybody could use to justify any cause.

God, we must assume, is a good historian of religion who knows the pitfalls of man and observes the shortcomings of the religions as so many verses of the Quran testify. It is therefore only natural that in Islam, which came as a reformation of the historical religions, God did not merely give us one or more general principles, but the content, the specific materials of morality, the particular commandments and prohibitions. Where specific content is missing, Islam laid it down on man to seek it and to establish it.

Evidently, by being both comprehensive and contentual, Islam is monolithic. It seeks to build one system, complete in its every detail, wherein human life is regulated from birth to death. The non-Muslims have criticized the *sharī'ah* for being perfect (i.e., comprehensive).³⁴ They are right: Islam's comprehensiveness and contentuality are indubitable facts. But they constitute the religion's distinction and uniqueness as well as merit.

3. Dynamism

By definition, a monolithic system is exclusivist and closed as far as foreign or new materials are concerned. That is the substance of the orientalist's criticism of the *sharī'ah*'s comprehensiveness and content. As a complete and full system, the *sharī'ah* is alleged by them to have had one and only one truly great moment in its history, namely, the moment it reached perfection. Once this apex was reached, it could only

³⁴William MacNeil, *The Rise of the West* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964), s.v. "The Shari'ah."

decline; for its eternal self-renewal would have to pass it by. A monolithic system cannot change in order to adapt itself to new situations and would necessarily find itself opposed to innovation. And every change is a *bid'ah*. This too is a valid criticism, not of the *sharī'ah*, but of the Muslim jurists and their followers who deliberately arrested the growth and development of the *sharī'ah*. It was indeed our ancestors in the Middle Ages who took Islam on this road. They closed the gates of *al ijtihād*, declared *al ijmā'* to be first the *ijmā'* of the *salaf* (preceding generations) and then the *ṣaḥābah*, (the Prophet's companions) so that no innovation could be introduced. We can today sympathize with their vision of the need of their time and excuse them. But it is ridiculous for the Muslim of today to follow their example.

The *Uṣūliyyūn* who crystallized the *sharī'ah* in the Middle Ages and brought it to the highest level of perfection were careful to include therein the finest machinery for self-renewal of the law.³⁵ They have provided the Muslim with both the perfect law as well as the institutions and means to renew it, and either make it still more perfect than it was or maintain its perfection relevantly workable for all times and places. Except for a few attempts in modern times, the Muslims made no use of the self-renewal machinery of the *sharī'ah*, (namely, *al ijtihād*, *al qiyās*, *al ijmā'*, *al istiḥsān*, *al maṣāliḥ al mursalah*, etc.). This is not the place to analyze that machinery; but we must consider the theoretical base on which it rests.

Islam is the religion of the golden mean: "And thus, We made you (the Muslims) an *ummah* of the golden mean, that you be an exemplary median unto mankind, and that the Prophet (SAAS) may be an exemplary median unto you" (Quran 2:143). It is both general and particular, universal and specific, formal and contentual, monolithic and pluralistic, individualistic and specialistic; and that is its strength. It gave us the general principle, as well as permitted us to violate it where necessary, i.e., where a higher value may be violated in the very pursuit of the value embodied in the general principle. The Quranic injunctions against theft, murder, consuming pork and those for prayer, fasting, respect of parents, even

³⁵The details of the machinery for self-renewal may be read in any textbook of *uṣūl al fiqh* (sources of jurisprudence) under the titles *al ijtihād*, *al qiyās*, *al istiḥsān*, *al maṣāliḥ al mursalah*.

وَلَا يَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا (الإسراء: ٢٩)

Be neither miserly, tightly holding your hand, nor a spendthrift, dissipating all your possessions away and becoming a rebuked destitute in need (17:29).

pilgrimage—all these and more may be violated where their realization violates a higher Islamic value, or threatens the realization of such value. The only principle which admits of no exception in Islam is *al tawhīd*. “God does not forgive associationism; but He will forgive anything else less grave to whomsoever he pleases” (Quran 4:47, 155). This openness of Islam to interference in its very commandments constitutes its dynamism. Islam has indeed given man many rooms with closed doors. If in the last centuries the Muslims have not used those keys and kept themselves locked in, no one is to blame but themselves. Other than this, no principle is absolute and inviolable. Islam is the religion of balance. As in the case of its art—all its arts inclusive of the literary—which is built upon this very principle of *al tawāzun* (balance), its very axiology is always a delicate balancing between two evils or a subtle combination of disparate values. In his *Al Siyāsah al Shar‘īyah*, Ibn Taymīyah put it so beautifully: “Islam is the religion of God, standing between the doer of too much and the doer of too little.” And it is this quality that entitles Islam to call itself *dīn al fiṭrah* (the religion of God, of nature and reason, of balance and the golden mean) of life itself. Matchlessly expressive of the *tawāzun* balance of Islam, of Islamic balance, golden-mean-ness and dynamism, is the response the Prophet (SAAS) gave to those who, carried by their enthusiasm for Islam itself, came to him saying: “Henceforth, we shall fast every day of our lives, we shall pray all night long, and we shall never touch a woman.” He said: “As for me, I shall fast some days of the year and shall eat on others; I shall pray and I shall sleep; and I shall take women in marriage. Whoever wishes not to follow my example should not be said to belong in my fellowship.” In passages too numerous to list, the Quran has given the essence of Islam’s ethos as cool common sense in presence of valuational materials which contain equal potentialities for good and evil.³⁶ These are all the goods of the earth. The Book mentions but a few: “women, children, gold and silver, horses, cattle and plantations,” thus gathering all that was then and still is commonly associated with “the world” in the human mind. In verse 3:14, these are declared evil and the Muslims are enjoined to beware, while in 7:31 they are declared good and the Muslims’ pursuit of them is defended. The governing principle is given in 9:25 where the sourness is ascribed to a false order of rank, to man’s preference of them over God, His Prophet and self-exertion

³⁶An eloquent example of Islamic emphasis on the “golden mean” between two exaggerated values of the spendthrift and the hospitable is found in Quran 17:29.

in His cause. The "golden mean" is obviously a mean between two disvalues; but it is also a balance between two pursuits of one and the same value, which happily combines it with all other values and gives each its due.³⁷

4. Organicness

Ummatic unity is organic, that is to say, the *ummah* is like an organic body whose parts are mutually and severally interdependent with one another and with the whole. For the part to work for itself is for itself to work for each of the other parts as well as for the whole to work for itself, is for itself to work for each of the parts. God described the felicitous as "those in whose wealth they recognize a right of the needy and the deprived" (51:19), and the followers of the Prophet (SAAS) as "hard on the unbelievers but soft and merciful to one another"; as "brethren ... whose hearts have been wound up around Him in mutual love of one another" (48:29). The Prophet (SAAS) hit the nail on the head when he described the *ummah* as "the well-settled and consolidated building, each part of which buttresses the others, and compared it to a body which reacts *in toto* with discomfort and fever whenever a part of it is hurt."

This last *hadith* of the Prophet (SAAS), comparing the *ummah* to an organic body, is perhaps the most apt description of Islamic society. The organic body is alive, and its very life is its organicness, i.e., the interdependence of its various parts to the end sustaining the whole, and their continuous sustenance by that whole. Organicness is not only a quality of life; it is life. For the *ummah* to be otherwise is for it to lapse into the pre-Islamic tribalism of the desert. Even that order, however, is built upon the assumed organicness of the tribe without which it could not exist. The *ummah* merely widened the tribe to include humanity. To deny organicness, therefore, or the need of the *ummah*, is to assume as good the detached existence of individuals isolated from one another in a way which not only makes Islam impossible but equally makes civilization—indeed human life itself—impossible and unthinkable.

Interdependence can be exaggerated; for it can be intensified to the point of rendering the human person a mere cog in a larger body or machine, impervious to the cog's own advancement, self-fulfillment and

³⁷See the phenomenal analysis of contradictory values in Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethics*, tr. Stanton Coit (New York: Macmillan, 1932), vol. 2, section 2.

happiness. The evils of regimentation and collectivism have always weighed heavily in man's consciousness, whether in the age of the tribe, the city, the nation, or the universal community. Here again, Islam has prescribed *tawāzun*, the golden mean, and declared its purpose to be the achievement of felicity of the person as well as that of the group. Between the absolute individualism of Christianity and the absolute tribalism of Judaism and pre-Islam, Islam has indeed struck the middle ground, asserting both values in the middle, and denying both disvalues at the end, of the spectrum of interhuman relations.

D. POSSIBILITY

Such an *ummaḥ* as has been described is not only possible; it is the only condition of success, indeed of history. No society and no religion, no tribe and no state, no empire and no history has ever been made, or made successful, without realizing in some measure or another, this ummatism. The greater the ummatism, the greater and more lasting the realization; the lesser the ummatism, the more ephemeral the success or the greater the failure. Indeed such ummatism is a guarantee, though temporary, of success for the devil himself. If the devil and his legions of evil fulfilled the requirements of ummatism, he and they will necessarily meet with success, though their success could not be final or decisive for human history. The Zionists are successful, the Spaniards under Ferdinand and Isabella who expelled us from Spain, and the British, French, Italians, Dutch, etc., who colonized our land—even the savage Tartars who massacred the millions and put our greatest cities to the flames—all these were or are successful because they were or are more ummatist than the Muslims were or are today. Hence our sure weakness. Repeatedly in modern literature, the unanswerable question has been raised: "Why is it that when a Muslim shouts *wā Islāmah!*, nobody responds?" Obviously, the answer is our lack of ummatism, our shortcomings in the fulfillment of the provisions and principles of ummatism.

The inevitable question must therefore be: How do we generate ummatism in the Muslims? Assuming our knowledge of what ummatism is, and our knowledge of what the message of the *ummaḥ*—namely, the ideology of Islam—is, let us address ourselves to the practical question. Step by step, how can we bring about and promote ummatism? The question, practical as it may be, is the question on which the Sufis spent

all their genius while losing sight of the final objective. It was Ibn Bājah who saw through their shortcoming and wrote the treatise, *Risālat Tadbīr al Mutawāḥḥid*, for which we, as historians of ideas, may invent the term "Societal Sufism." The Sanusiyyah movement in modern times has been a close approximation of such ummatist Sufism.

To ask, How can I generate ummatism between two Muslims? is to ask the question, How can I produce a chemical relation between them which results in *al taḥābub* (mutual loving), *al tawāṣī wa al tanāḥī* (counselling), *al ta'ākhī* (brothering), *al ta'āwun* (cooperation), *al ta'ālum* (teaching), *al tazāwuj* (mixing), *al tawāṣī* (consoling) and *al taṣāduq wa al ta'ānus* (befriending)? What kind of action and inaction, reality or unreality, activity or passivity can produce the ummatic cement which, once present, will issue in all these values and thus bring about the *ummah*? In short, this is the question of how can two or more people be caused to love one another? To bring about such transformation in men is not the work of man, but of God, as a hundred or more verses of the Holy Quran proclaimed,³⁸ for it is He Who is the Author of any transformation-for-better, of any transfiguration (*al hidāyah*, *ta'līf al qulūb*, *sharḥ al ṣadr*) of any predisposition toward ummatism. What man can do here is no more than propose, i.e., provide the material context in which the divine initiative might act. It is certainly possible that such human preparation for divine action may never produce any result. But that is the case where human initiative is defiant, vainly cocksure of itself. Where it is combined with a humble recognition of divine power, it cannot but succeed. Otherwise the divine command for any human action falls down and becomes equally presumptuous.

We may then rephrase our question: What specific action or situation may serve as material context to the divine initiative? The only answer possible here is that the humans in question meet one another, recognize and worship God together, seek knowledge and wisdom jointly, work out and achieve the concrete results together, and finally, eat, celebrate, enjoy themselves and intermarry together. If these activities are entered into candidly, and for no other motive than seeking God's face, they can well be trusted to generate the ummatic cement. No other road will lead to that cement. Presumably, Islamic society meetings on the local, regional and national levels are steps in that direction. So are the Jumu'ah meetings in the Islamic associations and centers around the world. All

³⁸Consult Muḥammad Barakat, *Al Muṣṣid ilā Ayāt al Qur'ān al Karīm* (Cairo: Al Maktabah al Hāshimiyah, 1957), under the aforementioned words for a listing of the verses which contain them.

these, however, are still truncated, irregular, infrequent, haphazard, undisciplined and incomplete. Far more than we have so far done is needed, namely, an institutionalization of the ummatic meeting.

For this purpose it is suggested that each Muslim who reckons in himself a potential for leadership, a commitment to Islam which transcends his own and his family's interest, to become a *āmil* (a founder, organizer and leader of a *ʿurwah wuthqā* [an association of ten adult Muslims inclusive of their families]). A *ʿurwah wuthqā* has one purpose and one *raison d'être*: Islam. The *āmil* identifies and calls the ten members. He assumes the responsibility of maintaining contact with them, of communication between one another, and between themselves and the *ummah's* larger institutions. The *āmil* institutes in his *ʿurwah* the Friday evening Jumu'ah, by inviting its members and their families to his home every Friday evening for three to four hours of Islamic fellowship. Invariably, the evening-Jumu'ah includes a group performance of *ṣalāt al 'ishā'*, of reading a part of the Quran, of some relation to Islam, and finally, of some food and socializing. All four items are absolutely necessary; but they should constitute no hardship and no monotony. The Quranic reading, the exercise in Islamic knowledge, the food and socializing — these three, unlike of course the ritual prayer, can be infinitely variable. As soon as convenient and possible, the evening-Jumu'ah should be held at another member's home. Eventually, every member ought to have the occasion to have the evening-Jumu'ah held at his home. Ideally, the evening-Jumu'ah would be held on a rotating basis at the home of each member of a given *ʿurwah*.

In choosing constituent members of the *ʿurwah*, the *āmil* must consider the distance between their homes and his. Linguistic and cultural affinities, national and racial backgrounds and levels of culture constitute in Islam no base for discrimination. It has always been and will always be the strength of Islamic society that it is open, multiracial, culturally diverse, color-blind and free of generation gaps. Muslim children and grandparents should be as much part of the evening-Jumu'ah as member-adults. Where apathy, lethargy, recalcitrance, difference or opposition develops, whether in regard to the evening-Jumu'ah or Muslim activities on the city, state or country level, the *āmil's* own sense of fairness, his encouragement, consolation, initiative, leadership and personal responsibility are the only recourse.

As the *ʿurwah wuthqā* brotherhoods multiply, there will arise the need to organize them, to plan for their needs and to satisfy those needs. The

experience of one should be shared by the others; and a common Muslim pool of talent, information, influence, finance and leadership ought sooner or later to constitute a headquarters for the Islamic movement as a whole. This is where the movement can assume the great burden of leadership. Periodical seminars should be held for the *ʿāmil*s to enable them to share experiences with one another, and to be trained for a more felicitous and efficacious discharge of functions. The Islamic leadership in the geographic unit could furnish the *ʿurwah*s with a printed "Lessons of the Week," which also assigns the Quranic portion for reading, so that the selections might issue in a systematized presentation of Islam as well as be responsive to events affecting Muslims everywhere.

As the *ʿurwah*s multiply and the movement grows, further organizational structures would be incepted. Ten *ʿurwah*s would make an *usrah*, ten *usrah*s a *zāwiyah*, and ten *zāwiyah*s a *jamāʿah*. At each of these levels an administrative organ would be set up to attend to the regional needs of the *ʿurwah*s involved. Organization and structure should come after that which is to be organized has come to be. Let us not idly build up structures on the blackboard, but enable them to rise out of the growing realities. The question which we should ask everywhere is how to bring about these realities. The answer, to repeat, is for each Muslim to do the innocent things with his fellow Muslims, to participate together in the activities of worship, of continuing Islamic education and of *al amr bi al ma'rūf wa al nahy 'an al munkar* (of the promotion of the good and prevention of evil).

CHAPTER I

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

I. *AL TAWHĪD* AS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

At the core of religious experience stands God. The *shahādah* (confession of Islamic faith; the witnessing that there is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger; witness; witnessing) asserts: "There is no god but God." The name of God, "Allah," which simply means "The God," occupies the central position in every Muslim place, every Muslim action, every Muslim thought. The presence of God fills the Muslim's consciousness at all times. With the Muslim, God is indeed a sublime obsession. What does that mean?

Muslim philosophers and theologians have battled it out among themselves for centuries, and the issue culminated in the arguments of al Ghazālī and Ibn Sīna. For the philosophers, the issue was one of saving the orderliness of the universe. The world, they argued, is a cosmos (a realm in which order and law prevail), where things happen by a cause and causes cannot be without their proper effects. In this stand they were heirs to the Greek, the Mesopotamian and the ancient Egyptian legacies of religion and philosophy. Creation itself was these traditions' passage from chaos to cosmos. The Muslims entertained the highest ideas of transcendence and nobility of the divine Being, but they could not conceive of that Being as consistent with a chaotic world.

The theologians, for their part, feared that such an emphasis on the orderliness of the universe necessarily renders God a *deus otiosus*; that it leaves Him little to do once He has created the world and built therein the clockwork mechanism necessary to set everything in causal motion. They were right. For a world in which everything happens according to a cause and where causes are all natural—i.e., in and from the world — is one in which everything happens necessarily and hence is a world which does not need God. Such a God would never satisfy the religious feeling. Either He is He by Whom everything is, by Whom

everything happens, incapable of initiating or controlling it or there is some other god besides Him, who is the real cause and master of all. Hence, they rejected the philosophers' view and invented the doctrine of "occasionalism." This is the theory that at every moment of time, God recreates the world and thus makes happen all that happens therein. They replaced the necessity of causality with the trust that God, being just and righteous, will not deceive but will see to it that the right effect will always follow upon the right cause. The upshot of the matter was not the establishment of causality, but of divine presence, and of accommodating causality to that presence. The theologians carried a sweeping victory over the philosophers.¹

Behind the theologians' position stands the Muslim's experience, where God is not merely an absolute, ultimate first cause or principle but a core of normativeness. It is this aspect of God that suffers most in any theory where God becomes a *deus otiosus*; and it is the Muslim's responsiveness to this core of normativeness that the philosopher's theory throws out of joint.

God as normativeness means that He is the Being Who commands. His movements, thoughts and deeds are all realities beyond doubt; but everyone of these, insofar as man conceives of it, is for him a value, an ought-to-be, even when, in the case where it is already realized, no ought-to-do flows from it. Besides being metaphysical, God's ultimacy is not, for the Muslim, isolable from or emphasizeable at the cost of the axiological. Were we to allow the Muslim here to use the category of "the value of knowledge," he would say the value of the metaphysical is that it may exercise its imperativeness, its moving appeal or normativeness.

God is the final end, i.e., the end at which all finalistic nexuses aim and come to rest. Everything is sought for another which in turn is sought for a third and so on, and hence demands the nexus or chain to continue until a final end is reached which is an end-in-itself. God is such an end, an end for all other ends, a chains of ends. He is the ultimate object of all desire. As such it is He Who makes every other good; for

¹ This is evidenced by the poor reputation which "philosophy" (i.e., the tradition of abstract thought begun by al Kindī and continued by al Fārābī, Ikhwān al Ṣafā, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd) and philosophers had enjoyed, by the names by which they were called (e.g., *Hilliniyīn*, *Manāṭiqah*, *Mashshā'ūn*, *Riwāqiyūn*), and by the treatment the philosophers and their books were given throughout Muslim history. No doubt this sad fate was due to the philosophers' distance from the basic intuition of the *ummah*. For an excellent analysis of the Hellenic roots of Muslim "philosophy" and of its rejection by Islamic thinkers, see: 'Alī Sāmī al Nashshār, *Manāhij al Baḥth 'ind Mufakkirīn al Islām wa Naqd al Muslimīn li al Mantiq al Aristāṭālīsī* (Cairo: Dār al Fikr al 'Arabī, 1367/1947).

unless the final end is posited, every link in the chain is undone. The final end is the axiological ground of all chains or nexuses of ends.

It follows from this conception of God as the ultimate, finalistic terminus and axiological ground that He must be unique. Obviously, if this were not the case, the question would have to be raised again regarding the priority or ultimacy of one to the other. It is of the very nature of a finalistic end to be unique, just as it is the nature of the ultimate cause of chain to be unique. Ultimacy precludes the possibility of the ultimate's dependence upon another.² It is this uniqueness which the Muslim affirms in his confession of faith, "There is no god but God." In the long history of religions, the Muslim's assertion of God's existence would have come late. Indeed God had told him in the Quran that "there is no people unto whom He had not sent a prophet,"³ and that "no prophet but had been sent to teach the worship and service of God."⁴ But the assertion of the uniqueness of God is new. It brought a refreshing iconoclasm at a time and place where dualism and trinitarianism were the higher, and polytheism the lower, state of religious consciousness. And, in order to purge this consciousness for once and for all, Islam demanded the utmost care in the use of language and precepts appropriate to the unique God. "Father," "intercessor," "savior," "son," etc., were utterly banished from the religious vocabulary; and the uniqueness and absolute transcendence of the divine Being were stressed that no man may claim any relation to God which all other men cannot claim. Islam held as a matter of principle that no man or being is one iota nearer to God than any other. That all creation is creaturely, that it stands on this side of the line dividing the transcendent from the natural, is the necessary presupposition of God's axiological ultimacy.

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (الأنبياء: ٢٢)

² If there were more than one god...Heaven and earth would have collapsed into disorder and chaos. Praised be Allah, Lord of the Throne, Transcendent beyond all their descriptions of Him (21:22).

... وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ (فاطر: ٢٤) وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا... (النحل: ٣٦) ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرًا كُلًّا مَلَأَ أُمَّهُ رُسُوهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَاتَّبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا... (المؤمنون: ٤٤)

³ There is no *ummah* but unto it We have sent a prophet to warn (35:24)... unto each *ummah* We have sent a messenger (16:36)... One after another We sent Our messengers to the peoples of the world, though they were belied and rejected (23:44).

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ... (النحل: ٣٦)

⁴ Unto every *ummah*, We have sent a messenger to teach them that service is due to Allah alone, that evil ought to be avoided (16:36).

The relevance of this “unicity” of God to the religious life of the person is easier to grasp. Man’s heart always harbors lesser deities than God, and the human intention is nearly always beclouded with desiderata of varying orders of rank. The noblest intention is, as Kant had taught, the purest, i.e., purified from all objectives of “*die Willkur*.” And the purest, Islam after all *Willkur* objects are removed and banished.

To perceive God as core of normativeness, as an end whose very being is imperativeness and desirability, is not possible unless there are beings for whom this normativeness is normative. For normativeness is a relational concept. For it to be, there must be creatures for whom the divine command is both perceivable (and hence knowable) as well as realizable. Relationality is not relativity and should not be understood as implying that God is dependent upon, or needful of, man and his world. In Islam, God is self-sufficient; but this self-sufficiency does not preclude the creation of a world in which men find the imperativeness and realize its ought-to-bes. At the core of the Islamic religious experience, therefore, stands God Who is unique and Whose will is the imperative and guide for all men’s lives. The Quran has put it dramatically. It portrays God as announcing to His angels His intention of creating the world and placing therein a vicegerent to do His will. The angels object that such a vicegerent who would kill, do evil and shed blood is unworthy of being created. They also contrasted such a vicegerent with themselves, who never swerve from fulfilling the divine will, to which God answers, “I know something which you do not know.”⁵ Obviously, man would indeed do evil for that is his prerogative as a free being. But for anyone to fulfill the divine will when it is perfectly in his power to do otherwise is to fulfill a higher and worthier portion of the divine will. The angels are ruled out precisely because they have no freedom to violate the divine imperative. Likewise, in another still more dramatic Quranic passage, God offered His trust to heaven and earth, mountains and rivers. These were struck with fear and panic and

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّیْ جَاعِلٌ فِی الْاَرْضِ خَلِیْفَةً ۗ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِیْهَا مَنْ یُّفْسِدُ فِیْهَا وَیَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ اِنِّیْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ (البقرة: ۳۰)

⁵ When your Lord announced to the angels that He was about to create a vicegerent for Him on earth, they said: “Would you establish on earth a creature that sheds blood and works evil, while we do nothing but adore and praise You?” Allah answered: “Yea, I have a purpose (for what I am about to do) which you do not know” (2:30).

rejected the truth. But man accepted the trust and assumed its burden.”⁶ The trust, or divine will, which no heaven-and-earth can realize is the moral law which demands freedom from the agent. In heaven-and-earth, the will of God is realized with the necessity of natural law.⁷ It is His inalterable *sunnah* or pattern which, implanted in creation, causes creation to run as it does. Natural law cannot be violated by nature. Its total fulfillment is all that nature is capable of doing.⁸ But man, who boldly accepts the trust, is capable of doing as well as not doing the will of God.⁹ Only he, therefore, of all creatures, satisfies the prerequisites of moral action, namely freedom. Moral values are more conditioned than the elemental values of nature since they presuppose them. Equally, they presuppose the utilitarian or instrumental values and therefore stand higher than either of these. Evidently, they are the higher part of the divine will which necessitates the creation of man and his appointment as the vicegerent of divinity on earth.

Because of this endowment, man stands higher than the angels, for he can do more than them.¹⁰ He can act morally, i.e., in freedom, which

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ...
(الأحزاب: ٧٢)

⁶ We offered Our trust (amānah) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains. They shied away from it in fear, panic-stricken. But man accepted to carry it (33:72).

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ (القمر: ٤٩) وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ (هود: ٦) وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيرِ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ (يس: ٣٨-٤٠)

⁷ Everything We have created and prescribed for it its measure, its character and destiny (54:49)... No creature creeps on earth but Allah provides for it its sustenance. He knows its purpose and destiny. For it is He Who prescribed them in His eternal order (11:6)... The sun rises and sets, traversing its orbit exactly as the Almighty has ordained. And the moon passes regularly through its phases, returning to its original thin crescent form. Neither sun nor moon overtakes the other; neither night nor day deviates from their preordained courses. Each moves in the orbit Allah has ordained for it (36:38-40).

⁸ Ibid.

إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ ۖ ...
(الزمر: ٤١)

⁹ We revealed to you the Book in truth, that you may proclaim it to the world. Whoever decides to be guided by its guidance does so to his own credit. Whoever rejects its guidance does so to his own discredit (39:41).

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا ... (البقرة: ٣٤)

¹⁰ And We commanded the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam. They did... (2:34).

they cannot. Man equally shares the necessity of natural causation in his vegetative and animal life, in his physical presence as a thing among things on earth. But as the being through whom the higher part of God's will can be realized, he stands absolutely without peer. His is a cosmic vocation, a genuine *khilāfah* (vicegerency) of the divine order.

It would indeed be a poor, uncoordinated work on the part of God if He had created such a cosmic creature as man without enabling him to know His will; or placing him on earth which is not malleable enough to receive man's discharge of his ethical vocation; or one where the doing or not-doing of that will would make no difference.

To know the divine will, man was given revelation, a direct and immediate disclosure of what God wants him to realize on earth. Wherever the revelation was corrupted, perverted, or forgotten, God has repeated the performance, taking into consideration the relativities of history, the changes in space and time, all to the purpose of keeping within man's reach a ready knowledge of the moral imperatives. Equally, man is endowed with senses, reason and understanding, intuition, all the perfection necessary to enable him to discover the divine will unaided. For that will is imbedded not only in causal nature, but equally in human feelings and relations. Whereas the former half takes another exercise of the discipline called natural science to discover it, the second half takes the exercise of the moral sense and the discipline of ethics. The discoveries and conclusions are not certain. They are always subject to trial and error, to further experimentation, further analysis and to correction by deeper insight. But, all this notwithstanding, the search is possible, and reason cannot despair of reexamining and correcting its own previous findings without falling into skepticism and cynicism. Thus, knowledge of the divine will is possible by reason, certain by revelation. Once perceived, the desirability of its content is a fact of human consciousness. Indeed, the apprehension of value, the suffering of its moving appeal and determinative power, is itself the "knowledge" of it. For to know value is to lose one's ontological poise or equilibrium and to roll in the direction of it, that is to say, to suffer change, to begin the realization of its ought-to-be, to fulfill the ought-to-do which issues therefrom. As the leading American empiricist, C. I. Lewis, used to say: "The apprehension of value is an experience and is itself a 'value-ing'."¹¹

¹¹ C.I. Lewis elaborated upon this idea in his *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (La Salle: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1946), 416-17.

So much for the consequences of religious experience in Islam for the theory of man. We ought now to consider the implications for soteriology and history. We have already mentioned the malleability of the world, its readiness to be informed, rekneaded, remolded and cut so as to make it a concretization of the divine pattern. This preparation, together with the availability of revelation and the promise of a critical establishment of the divine will by reason, all render unpardonable the failure of man to fulfill his vicegerency. Indeed, fulfillment of his vocation is the only condition Islam knows for man's salvation.¹² Either it is his own doing or it is worthless.¹³ Nobody can do the job for him, not even God, without rendering him a puppet. This follows from the nature of moral action, namely, it is not itself moral unless it is freely willed and undertaken to completion by a free agent. Without the initiative and effort of man, all moral worth or value falls to the ground.¹⁴

Islamic soteriology therefore is the diametrical opposite of that of traditional Christianity. Indeed, the term "salvation" has no equivalent in the religious vocabulary of Islam. There is no saviour and there is nothing from which to be saved. Man and world are either positively good or neutral, but not evil.¹⁵ Man begins his life ethically sane and sound, not weighed down by any original sin, however mild or Augustinian.¹⁶ In fact, at birth he is already above the zero point in that he has the revelation and his rational equipment ready for use, as well as a world all

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات: ٥٦)

¹² And I [Allah] have not created the jinn and humans but to serve Me (51:56).

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ... (الملك: ٢)

¹³ It is Allah Who created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds (or, that you may excel one another by deeds of righteousness).. (67:2).

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ... (البقرة: ٢٥٦) ... فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُزِمْنِ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفِرْ ... (الكهف: ٢٩)

¹⁴ There is no compulsion in religion. Truth and righteousness are henceforth manifestly distinguished from their opposites (2:256). Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will let him disbelieve (18:29).

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ... (السجدة: ٧) الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى (الأعلى: ٢)

¹⁵ It is Allah Who created everything in the best form (32:7)... It is He Who created and perfected all things (87:2).

¹⁶ Saint Augustine, *The Enchiridion*. chap. 26. For an analysis of the Christian conception of sin, see this author's *Christian Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Analysis of Its Dominant Ideas* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), chap. VI.

too ready to receive his ethical deed.¹⁷ His *falāh* (felicity; felicity through works; ethical felicity; success; happiness and ease), a term Islam uses which comes from the root meaning "to grow vegetation out of the earth," consists of his fulfillment of the divine imperative.)¹⁸ He can hope for God's mercy and forgiveness, but he may not count on it while refraining from doing the divine will whether out of ignorance, laziness or blatant defiance. His fate and destiny are exactly what he himself makes them to be.¹⁹ God's government is just, neither favorable nor unfavorable. Its scale of justice is absolutely that of the most precise and perfect balance. And its system of worldly and other worldly rewards and punishments disposes for everyone, whether blest or unblest, exactly what he deserves.²⁰

Islamic religious experience has great consequence for world history. The fire of the Muslim's vision caused him to hurl himself onto the stage of history, therein to effect the realization of the divine pattern his Prophet (SAAS) had communicated to him. Nothing was for him worthier than this cause. In its interest, he was prepared to pay the maximum price, that of laying down his life. True to its content, he regarded his stage as consisting of the whole world; of his *ummah* as consisting of mankind minus a few recalcitrant people whom he sought to bring within

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ (البلد: ٨-١٠) وَسَخَّرْنَا لَكُمْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
بِجَمِيعٍ... (الجمالية: ١٣) الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ
(الزخرف: ١٠)

¹⁷ Have We not created for men their eyes, their tongues and lips? Have we not granted them their senses of orientation? (90:8-10). Allah has indeed made all that is in heaven and earth subservient to humankind (45:13)... It is He indeed Who made the earth men's dwelling place; Who made for you roads thereby you may find guidance (to destinations) (43:10).

¹⁸ M.M. al Zubaydi, *Tāj al Arūs* (Dār Maktabat al Hayah, 1965), s.v. "f-l-h," vol. 2, 199.

يَوْمَ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْنَاءًا لِّبُرُؤِ أَعْمَالِهِمْ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ
مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (الزلزلة: ٦-٨)

¹⁹ On that day [the Day of Judgment], all people will be resurrected and shown their own deeds. Whoever does an atom's weight of good will behold it then, and whoever does an atom's weight in evil, it will be reckoned unto him with equal precision (99:6-8).

... وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ (آل عمران: ١٨٢) فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَائِلٍ
مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى... (آل عمران: ١٩٥)

²⁰ Allah never treats His servants unjustly (3:182). Allah accepts the prayers of those who pray to Him, that He will never lose account of any good deed by anyone, whether male or female (3:195).

the fold by force of arms. His *pax Islamica*, which stood on his arms, was never conceived as a monolithic society in which Islam alone predominates. It included Jews, Christians, Sabeans by Quranic authority, Zoroastrians by Muhammadan authority, and Hindus and Buddhists by the jurists' extrapolation of that authority. The ideal remained the same, namely, a world in which, as the Quran puts it, "the divine word is supreme," and everybody recognizes that supremacy.²¹ But for such recognition to be worth anything at all it must be free, the deliberate decision of every person. That is why to enter into the *pax Islamica* never meant conversion to Islam, but entry into a peaceful relationship wherein ideas are free to move and men are free to convince and to be convinced. Indeed, the Islamic state put all its resources at the disposal of Jewish society, Christian society, Hindu and Buddhist society, whenever these sought its authority to bring back into line with Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism any member who defied or transcended that line. The Islamic state was the only non-Jewish state where the Jew was not free to de-Judaize himself, or to rebel as a Jew against the authority of Judaism. The same applied to the Christian, Hindu or Buddhist. Whereas, up to his emancipation in the nineteenth century, the European Jew who defied the directive of this *Bayt ha Din* could only be excommunicated—such excommunication making of him a lawless man, awaited just outside the walls of the ghetto by the Christian state or any non-Jew to be dispossessed and killed—the oriental Jew who defied *Bayt ha Din* was corrected by the Islamic state in the name of his rabbis. This constitutes an ultimate proof of the Muslim understanding of the divine trust as ethical.

II. *AL TAWHĪD* AS WORLDVIEW

Traditionally and simply expressed, *al tawhīd* is the conviction and witnessing that "there is no god but God." This seemingly negative statement, brief to the utmost limits of brevity, carries the greatest and richest meanings in the whole of Islam. Sometimes a whole culture, a whole

... وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَىٰ وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا (التوبة: ٤٠)
 ... وَيَكُونُ الَّذِينَ يُلَهُ ۖ (البقرة: ١٩٣)

²¹ It is He Who humbled to the depths, the word of the unbelievers; He Who made His word supreme (9:40)... That religion be all His alone (2:193).

civilization, or a whole history lies compressed in one sentence. This certainly is the case of the *al kalimah* (pronouncement) or *al shahādah* of Islam. All the diversity, wealth and history, culture and learning, wisdom and civilization of Islam is compressed in this shortest of sentences - *lā ilāha illā Allah* (There is no god but God.)

Al Tawhīd is a general view of reality, of truth, of the world, of space and time, of human history and destiny. At its core, stand the following principles:

A. DUALITY

Reality is of two generic kinds, God and non-God; Creator and creature. The first order has but one member, Allah (SWT). He alone is God, the Eternal, the Creator, the Transcendent. "Nothing is like unto Him."²² He remains forever absolutely unique and devoid of partners and associates.²³ The second is the order of space-time, of experience, of creation. It includes all creatures, the world of things, plants and animals, humans, *jinn* and angels, heaven and earth, paradise and hell, and all their becoming since they came into being. The two orders of Creator and creation are utterly and absolutely disparate as far as their being, or ontology, as well as their experience and careers, are concerned. It is forever impossible that the one be united with, infused, confused with or diffused into the other. Neither can the Creator be ontologically transformed so as to become the creature, nor can the creature trans-

فَاطِرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ... لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ (الشورى: ١١) ... وَتَعَلَّى عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ (الأنعام: ١٠٠) لَا تَدْرِيكَ الْبَصَرُ وَهُوَ يَذَرُكَ الْأَبْصَرُ... (الأنعام: ١٠٣)

²² Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the earth... Nothing is like unto Him. He is All Hearing, All Seeing (42:11)... Transcendent is He beyond all their descriptions of Him (6:100). Sight can never reach Him; His sight reaches all things.. (6:103).

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَكِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ (الإخلاص: ١-٤)
وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوا لَافِيزِينَ وَبَنَتِ بَغْيَ عَلَيْهِمُ... (الأنعام: ١٠٠)

²³ Proclaim: Allah is One, Eternal. He neither begets nor is begotten. Nothing is ever comparable to Him (112:1-4)... They ascribed the *jinn* as associates to Allah, (though Allah did create the *jinn*). They even ascribed to Him sons and daughters. All this they did with no knowledge (6:100).

cent and transfigure itself so as to become, in any way or sense, the Creator.²⁴

B. IDEATIONALITY

The relation between the two orders of reality is ideational in nature. Its point of reference in man is the faculty of understanding. As organ and repository of knowledge, the understanding includes all the gnoseological functions, such as memory, imagination, reasoning, observation, intuition, apprehension, etc. All humans are endowed with understanding. The endowment is strong enough to understand the will of God in either or both of the following ways: When that will is expressed in words, directly by God to man, or "the laws of nature," the divine will is deductible through observation of creation.²⁵

C. TELEOLOGY

The nature of the cosmos is teleological; that is, purposive, serving a purpose of its Creator, and doing so out of design. The world has not been created in vain or in sport.²⁶ It is not the work of chance, a hap-
penstance. It is created in perfect condition. Everything that exists does

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا إِلَهًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ هُمْ يُنشِرُونَ لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلَهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ
لَا يَسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ ... (الأنبياء: ٢١، ٢٢، ٢٣، ٢٤)

²⁴ Or, have they chosen a deity from the earth who raise the dead? If there were therein gods beside Allah, then verily both (the heaven and the earth) would have been disordered. Glorified be Allah, the Lord of the throne from all that they ascribed (to Him). He will not be questioned as to that which He does but they will be questioned. Or have they chosen other deities beside Him? Say: Bring your proof (of their deity)... (21:21-4).

... فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا (فاطر: ٤٣)

²⁵ As to the patterns of Allah in creation, you will never find exception. The patterns of Allah are immutable (35:43).

... وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ ... (آل عمران: ١٩١)
وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَإِبْعَادٍ (الأنبياء: ١٦)

²⁶ [Righteous are] those who ponder the creation of heaven and earth and affirm, "O Allāh! You have not created this creation in vain" (3:191)... Certainly, We have not created heaven and earth and what is in between in sport (21:16).

so in a measure proper to it and fulfils a certain universal purpose.” The world is indeed a “cosmos,” an orderly creation, not a “chaos.” In it, the will of the Creator is always realized. His patterns are fulfilled with the necessity of natural law, for they are innate in the way other than what the Creator has ordained for it.²⁸ This is true of all creatures — except man. Human action is the only instance where the will of God is actualized not necessarily, but deliberately, freely, voluntarily. The physical and psychic functions of man are integral to nature, and as such they obey the laws pertinent to them with the same necessity as all other creatures. But the spiritual function, viz., the understanding and moral action, fall outside the realm of determined nature. They depend upon their subject and follow his determination. Actualization of the divine will by them is of a qualitatively different value than necessary actualization by other creatures. Necessary fulfillment applies only to elemental or utilitarian values; free fulfillment to the moral. However, the moral purposes of God, His commandments to man, do have a base in the physical world, and hence there is a utilitarian aspect to them. But this is not what gives them their distinctive quality, namely, that of being moral. It is precisely their aspect of being fulfillable in freedom, that is, the possibility of being fulfilled or violated remaining always open, that gives them the special dignity we ascribe to things “moral.”²⁹

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ... (السجدة: ٧) الَّذِي خَلَقَ نَفْسِي (الأعلى: ٢) اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ
فَكَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ... (غافر: ٦٤) ... وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي
إِمَامٍ مُبِينٍ (يس: ١٢)

²⁷ [Allah] Who created everything and did so perfectly (32:7)... [Allah] Who created and perfected His creature (87:2)... [Allah] Who made for you the earth a place of settlement, the firmament a protective canopy and Who formed you in the best of forms (40:64)... To everything Allah has prescribed its nature and fixed its place in the eternal order (36:12).

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ... وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَقَدَرَهُ مَقْدِيرًا (الفرقان: ٢) قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا
كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا... (التوبة: ٥١)

²⁸ Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of heaven and earth. He created all things. To each and everything He prescribed its measure [its character, course or destiny] (25:2) Say: Nothing will happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us. (9:51).

²⁹ Qur'an 33:72 (quoted earlier). This is the lesson of the dramatic account given in the Qur'an of the *amānah* Allah offered to nature, but which nature could not bear, and which man voluntarily accepted and carried. In essence, it is the moral principle that *taklīf* (obligation) necessarily implies *qudrah* (capability to act) and *ikhtiyār* (freedom to choose).

D. CAPACITY OF MAN AND MALLEABILITY OF NATURE

Since everything was created for a purpose—the totality of being no less so—the realization of that purpose must be possible in space and time.³⁰ Otherwise, there is no escape from cynicism. Creation itself, the processes of space and time, would lose their meaning and significance. Without this possibility, *taklif* (charge, moral obligation, responsibility), falls to the ground; and with its fall, either God's purposiveness or His might is destroyed. Realization of the absolute, namely, the divine *raison d'être* of creation, must be possible in history, that is, within the process of time between creation and the Day of Judgement. As subject of moral action, man must therefore be capable of changing himself, his fellows or society, nature or his environment, so as to actualize the divine pattern, or commandment, in himself as well as in them.³¹ As a subject of moral action, man as well as his fellows and environment must all be capable of receiving the efficacious action of man, the subject. This capacity is the converse of man's moral capacity for action as subject. Without it man's capacity for moral action would be impossible and the purposive nature of the universe would collapse. Again, there would be no recourse from cynicism. For creation to have a purpose—and this is a necessary assumption if God is God and His work is not a meaningless *travail de singe*—creation must be malleable, transformable. capable of changing its substance, structure, conditions and relations so as to embody or concretize the human pattern or purpose. This is at once true of all creation, including man's physical, psychic, and spiritual natures. All creation is capable of realization of the ought-to-be, or the will or pattern of God, or the absolute³² in this space and in this time.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي (الذاريات: ٥٦) الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ...
(الملك: ٢)

³⁰ I [Allah] have not created jinn and humans but to serve Me (51:56)... [Allah] Who created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds (67:2).

³¹ Ibid.

تَسْبِيحُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ ... (الإسراء: ٤٤)

³² The seven heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, praise [obey] Allah. Nothing exists but it praises (obeys) Allah (17:44).

E. RESPONSIBILITY AND JUDGEMENT

We have seen that man stands under the obligation to change himself, society and environment so as to conform to the divine pattern. We have also seen that he is capable of doing so, since creation is malleable and capable of receiving his action and embodying its purpose. It follows from these facts that man is responsible.³³ Moral obligation is impossible without responsibility or reckoning. Unless man is responsible, and somehow and somewhere he will be reckoned with as far as his deeds are concerned, cynicism becomes once more inevitable. Judgement, or the consummation of responsibility, is the necessary condition of moral obligation, or moral imperativeness. It flows from the very nature of "normativeness."³⁴ It is immaterial whether reckoning takes place in space-time or at end of it or both; but it must take place. To obey God, i.e., to realize His commandments and actualize His pattern, is to incur *falāḥ*. Not to do so, i.e., to disobey Him, is to incur punishment, suffering, unhappiness, and the agonies of failure.³⁵

The foregoing five principles are self-evident truths. They constitute the core of *al tawḥīd* and the quintessence of Islam. They are equally the core of *Ḥanifism*, of all the revelations that came from heaven. All the prophets have taught these principles and built their movements upon them. Equally, these principles are built by God in the very fabric of

...وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ (الأنبياء: ٢٣)

³³ And they [all humans] shall be reckoned with (21:23).

(There are numerous other passages in the Qur'an whose main support is the affirmation of man's responsibility.)

³⁴ This is what Islam understands by the idea of *ḥisāb*. *Yawm al Ḥisāb* is the Day of Judgment. The idea that Allah (SWT) is going to "reckon" (to do *ḥisāb*) with humans is ubiquitous in the Qur'an and it may be said to be the very foundation of the whole moral/religious system.

³⁵ Any casual reading of the Qur'anic *sūrah(s)* revealed in Makkah will confirm this understanding of Allah's relation to man as covenantal. It is equally the understanding of all previous prophets and their followers. The same covenantal spirit provides the religious and moral foundation of the ancients. It is evident in Mesopotamia's *Enuma Elish* and the codes of law of Lippit Ishtar and Hammurabi. See James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955).

فَأَنذِرْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (الروم: ٣٠)

³⁶ And turn yourself to primordial religion as a *ḥanīf*, true to the innate religion with which Allah endowed all humans. Immutubale is Allah's creation. It is the true and valuable religion; but most people do not know (30:30).

human nature, constituting the unerring natural religion or natural conscience upon which human acquired knowledge, rests. Naturally, all Islamic culture is built upon them, and together they form the core of *al tawhīd*, knowledge, personal and social ethics, esthetics and Muslim life and action throughout history.

F. CONCLUSION

The essence of religious experience in Islam, we may say in conclusion, is the realization that life is not in vain, that it must serve a purpose the nature of which cannot be identical with the natural flow of appetite to satisfaction to new appetite and new satisfaction. For the Muslim, finality consists of two utterly separate orders, the natural and the transcendent, and it is to the latter that he looks for the values by which to govern the flow of the former. Having identified the transcendent realm as God, he rules out any guidance of action that does not proceed therefrom. His rigorous *al tawhīd* is, in final analysis, a refusal to subject human life to any guidance other than the ethical. Hedonism, eudaemonism and all other theories which find moral value in the very process of natural life are his *bête noire*. In his view, to accept any of them is to set other gods besides God as the guide and norm of human action. *Shirk* (the association of other gods with God, violation of *al tawhīd*), is really the mixing up of the moral values with the elemental and utilitarian which are all instrumental and never final.

To be a Muslim is precisely to perceive God alone (that is, the Creator, and not nature or the creature) as normative, His will alone as commandment, His pattern alone as constituting the ethical desiderata of creation. The content of the Muslim's vision is truth, beauty and goodness; but these for him are not beyond the pale of his noetic faculties. He is therefore an axiologist in his religious disciplines of exegesis, but only to the end of reaching a sound deontology, as a jurist. Justification by faith is for him meaningless, unless it is the simple introduction into the arena of action. It is there that he claims his best, as well as his worst. He knows that as man, he stands alone between heaven and earth with none but his axiological vision to show the road, his will to commit his energies to the task and his conscience to guard against pitfalls. His prerogative is to lead the life of cosmic danger for no god is there to do the job for him. Not only is the job done if and when he has done

it for himself, but he cannot withdraw. His predicament, if he has any by nature, is that he must carry the divine trust to complete realization or perish, as a Muslim, in the process.³⁷ Surely, tragedy lurks behind every corner in his path. But that is also his pride. As Plato had put it, he is "doomed to love the good."

³⁷ Consider in this regard the answer of the Prophet (SAAS) when his uncle Abū Tālib asked him to desist and put an end to the sufferings of the Hāshim clan at the hands of its enemies in Makkah because of Islam. "O my uncle," he said, "if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I would never forsake this call [to preach the new religion] even if I should perish." Muhammad Husain Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, tr. Ismā'īl R. al Fārūqī (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1976) 89.

CHAPTER II

THE QUINTESSENCE OF ISLAM

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF *AL TAWHĪD*

There can be no doubt that the essence of Islamic civilization is Islam; or that the essence of Islam is *al tawhīd*, the act of affirming Allah (SWT) to be the One, the absolute, transcendent Creator, the Lord and Master of all that is.

These two fundamental premises are self-evident, not subject to doubt by those who belonged to Islamic civilization or participated in it. And only very recently have missionaries, orientalist and other enemies of Islam subjected them to doubt. However, it is for us, Muslims, self-evident. Islam, Islamic culture and Islamic civilization have a knowledge essence, namely, *al tawhīd*,¹ which is capable of analysis and description. Analysis of *al tawhīd* as essence, i.e., as the first determining principle of Islam, its culture and civilization, is the subject of this chapter.

Al tawhīd is that which gives Islamic civilization its identity, which binds all its constituents together and thus makes of them an integral, organic body which we call civilization. In binding disparate elements together, the essence of civilization in this case, *al tawhīd*—impresses them by its own mould. It recasts them so as to harmonize with and mutually support other elements. Without necessarily changing their natures, the essence transforms the elements making up a civilization, giving them their new character as constitutive of that civilization. The degree of transformation may vary from slight to radical. It is slight when it affects their form, and radical when it affects their function; for it is the latter that constitutes their relevance to the essence. That is why the Muslims developed the science of *ilm al tawhīd* and subsumed under it the disciplines of logic, epistemology, metaphysics and ethics.

¹ Ismā'īl R. al Fārūqī, "Jawhar al Ḥadārah al Islāmīyah," *Al Muslim al Mu'āsir*, vol. 7, no. 27 (1901/1981), 1-27. This article was published along with "Critical Response" and "Response to the Response" in *Al Islām wa al Ḥadārah* (Riyadh: W.A.M.Y. Publications, 1401/1981), vol. 2, 583-668.

Allah (SWT) has said: "I have not created *jinn* and mankind except to serve Me ... And to every people We sent a prophet to convey to them that they ought to serve Allah and avoid *al tāghūt* ... Your Lord has decreed that you shall serve none but Him. Serve Allah and do not associate aught with Him ... Come, let me tell you what your Lord has forbidden you; namely, that you do not associate aught with him."²

These verses from the Holy Quran clearly indicate that the very purpose of man's creation is the service of God alone. Only God is worthy of worship; only He is worthy of service. His "Face," i.e., His sake, should be the end of human desire, of all human action. This is the whole essence of the message of our Prophet Muhammad (SAAS), which he could hardly express but in the words of God: "Come, let me tell you what your Lord has forbidden you; namely, that you do not associate with Him."³ That *al tawhīd* is the highest and most important commandment of God is evidenced by the fact of God's promise to forgive all sins but the violation of *al tawhīd*. "Allah will not forgive any associating of other gods with Him; but He will forgive the lesser sins to whomsoever He wills. Whoever associates aught with Allah, has perpetrated a very grave sin."⁴

Obviously, no commandment in Islam would hold without *al tawhīd*. The whole religion itself, man's obligation to serve God, to fulfill His commandments and observe His prohibitions would fall to the ground the moment *al tawhīd* is violated. For, to violate *al tawhīd* is to doubt that Allah (SWT) is the One and only God. But to do so means to assume that other beings may share His divinity. This cannot be done without

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات: ٥٦) وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
وَلَجِّنُوا الطَّغُوتَ ... (النحل: ٣٦) وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ... (الإسراء: ٢٣) وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ... (النساء: ٣٦) قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَن تَشْرِكُوا بِهِ
شَيْئًا ... (الأنعام: ١٥١)

² I have not created the *jinn* and humankind but to serve Me (51:56)... Unto every people We have sent a messenger to teach that service is due only to Allah, and that evil ought to be avoided (16:36)... Your Lord has prescribed that you shall serve none but Him (17:36)... Serve Allah and do not associate aught with Him (4:36)... Say [O Muhammad] to the people, "Come now, let me tell you what your Lord has prohibited; First, that you associate no god with Him" (6:151).

³ (6:151).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ٤٨)

⁴ Allah does not forgive any ascription of associates to Him, but He forgives all other offenses to whomsoever He wills. Whoever, therefore, ascribes partners to Allah has committed a sin most heinous indeed (4:48).

doubting the obligatoriness of Allah's commandment. For if two or more gods were possible, it is logically necessary that one should seek an individual relation with his creation or his dependents; that one should rise above the other in mutual competition.⁵ Such gods would be of no avail to men unless one were to destroy or subjugate the others, for only then could he be the "ultimate" being the definition of "God" requires. Only an "ultimate" source could stand as the final good, the final authority, the final principle. Otherwise, the authority of a subservient god, of a god with whom there may be other gods, would stand always open to question. That is why Allah (SWT) said in the Quran: "If in them (heaven and earth) there were other gods than Allah, they would have fallen into chaos."⁶ Nature cannot obey two masters; it cannot operate in orderly manner and be the cosmos it is if there are two or more sources of authority, two or more ultimate movers.

Without *al tawhīd*, therefore, there can be no Islam. Certainly, not only the *sunnah* of our Prophet (SAAS) would be subject to doubt, and its imperatives shaken; the very institution of prophecy would fall to the ground. The same doubt which pertains to the plural gods would apply to their messages. To hold on to the principle of *al tawhīd* is therefore the cornerstone of all piety, of all religiosity, and all virtue. Naturally, Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAAS) have raised observance of *al tawhīd* to the highest status and made it the cause of the greatest merit and reward. He said: "Those who believed and mixed not their *īmān* (belief, faith) with injustice, to them belong security. They are the rightly guided,"⁷ Likewise, it was related by 'Ubādah ibn al Ṣāmit that the Prophet of Allah (SAAS) said: "Whoever witnesses that there is no god but Allah, alone, without associate, and that Muhammad is His ser-

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا أَذْهَبَ كُلَّ إِلَهٍ مِمَّا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَنَ اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ (المؤمنون: ٩١)

⁵ Allah never beget or adopted a son. Never did He have an associate. Otherwise, every god would have sought exclusive dominion over his part of creation as well as dominion over the others. But Allah is beyond all their descriptions (23:91).

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَنَ اللَّهُ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (الأنبياء: ٢٢)

⁶ If there were other gods beside Allah, heaven and earth would collapse in disorder and chaos. Praised therefore be Allah, Lord of the Throne, Transcendent beyond all their descriptions of Him (21:22).

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ (الأنعام: ٨٢)

⁷ The rightly guided, who believe and do not vitiate their faith by committing injustice. Theirs is safety and guidance (6:82).

vant and apostle, that 'Īsā (Jesus) is the servant of Allah and His apostle, His command unto Mary and of His spirit, that Paradise and Hell are true, Allah would on that account enter him into Paradise." This *ḥadīth* was reported in both *Ṣaḥīḥ(s)* which also recorded the report of 'Itbān that the Prophet (SAAS) said: "Allah will not permit to be consigned to Hell anyone who witnesses 'There is no god but God,' seeking thereby nothing but Allah's face." The Prophet (SAAS) is also reported by Abū Sa'īd al Khudrīy as saying: "When Mūsā (Moses) asked Allah to teach him a prayer to recite whenever he remembered or called upon Him, Allah answered: "Say, O Mūsā, there is no god but Allah," Mūsā said: "O Lord, all your servants say these words." Allah said: "O Mūsā, if the seven heavens and all they hold, and the seven earths as well, if all these were weighed against this word of 'There is no god but Allah,' the latter would outweigh the former." It is also reported by al Tirmidhī that Anas heard the Prophet (SAAS) say: "Allah said: 'O man! Were you to come to Me with all the bags of the world full of your sins, but with the witnessing that you associate naught with Me, I would come to you with those bags full of mercy and forgiveness.'"⁸

It is no wonder therefore that the Muslim is definable by his adherence to *al tawḥīd* by his profession of its *shahādah*, by his observance of the absolute unicity and transcendence of Allah (SWT) as the ultimate principle of all creation, of all being and life, of all religion.

II. DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Being the youngest world religion and stemming from the same Semitic roots out of which Judaism and Christianity had previously emerged, Islam had to relate itself to these religions. It regards them as it did itself. They and it constitute successive moments of Semitic consciousness in its long march as the carrier of a divine mission on earth and hence as the vortex of human history. While it thus identified with Judaism and Christianity, Islam found fault with them and sought to correct their historical manifestations. The error most grievous to Semitic consciousness and hence least pardonable in the eye of God (Quran 4:47, 155) Islam identified as that of misconceiving the transcendence of God.

⁸ Quoted by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb in his *Kitāb al Tawḥīd*. See: tr. by this author under same title (Kuwait: I.I.F.S.O., 1399/1979), 9.

Judaism and Christianity, it asserted, have made themselves guilty of it; not their primeval form, in the revelations they received from God, but in their historical form, in the texts they accepted as scripture and in their expressions of their faith for the instruction of men.

A. ISLAM'S CRITICISM OF JUDAISM

Islam charged Judaism with speaking of God in the plural *Elohim* throughout the Torah; with claiming that the *Elohim* married the daughters of men (Genesis 6:2-4); that Jacob and his wife stole "the gods" of Laban because they cherished them (Genesis 31:32); that God is a ghost whom Jacob beheld "face to face" and with whom he had wrestled and nearly defeated (Genesis 33:24-30); that God was the father of Jewish kings (Psalms 2:7; 89:26; II Samuel 7:14; I Chronicles 17:13, etc.); that God was father of their nation in a real sense (Hosea 1:10; Isaiah 9:6; 63:14-16) which does not become invalid even by their "a-whoring" after other gods (Hosea 2:2-13). Islam also charged that the relation Judaism claimed to bind God to "His People" straight-jacketed Him into granting them favors despite their immorality, their hardship and stiffneckedness (Deuteronomy 9:5-6). A "bound" god, bound in any sense or degree, is not the transcendent God of Semitic consciousness.

B. THE OFFENSE OF CHRISTIANITY

The offense of Christianity against transcendence was even greater. Islam charged Christianity with extending the nontranscendent concept to God's "fatherhood of the Jewish kings" to Jesus and giving it, besides its moral signification of compliance with God's commandments, the de-transcendentalizing ontological connotation of unity of substance between God and Jesus.⁹ Indeed, Christian catholicity defined itself with terms of this "substantial" identity of Jesus with God, as distinct from plurality of their "personalities." characters and consciousness. Obviously, the source of this new departure from transcendence of the divine being within the Semitic stream was not the Jewish inheritance of Christianity. This had given Christianity the concepts, not their connotation. Neither

⁹ H. Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 61, 68-69.

was gnosticism the source of that departure, whose argument "If he suffer, he was not God; if he was God, he did not suffer" was hurled against their fellow Christians in defence of transcendence.¹⁰ The source must be the non-Semitic influence of the "mystery religions." It was from this source that Christianity derived its "suffering God" who saves by dying and returning to life and whose *mana* (grace) is imparted to the communicant thought sacrament.¹¹

This anti-transcendence influence on Christianity at its formative stage was partly responsible for its success among non-Semitic peoples unfamiliar with the notion of God as "totally-other." It is equally responsible for the misinterpretation of innocent Hebrew and Aramaic concepts current among Jesus' contemporaries. *Barnash* or *bar-Adam* meant a well-bred and hence virtuous person. But it acquired in St. Paul a mysterious metaphysical dimension. Any righteous person could claim what Jesus did, namely, "I and my father (God) are one," in the sense of total compliance with God's will. Christians, however, took this to mean that Jesus claimed divine status. Whereas *Kurie*, *D. Kurios*, *Mar Mari* and *Maran* were among Semites attributable to anyone in authority, Christians took this attribution to Jesus by his Semitic disciples as their evidence of assuming him to be God. Finally, Christian theologians, taking all these elements for granted, searched the Hebrew scripture for evidence of plural divinity. With typical intellectual clumsiness, Augustine, Tertullian and many others thought they found in the plural pronouns of Genesis, "Let *us* create man according to *our* image" (Genesis: 1:28) the evidence for three persons in the deity! This has remained a Christian "argument" to the present day held by such a notable thinker as Karl Barth. Indeed, Barth shamelessly claimed that maleness and femaleness were intrinsic to the divine nature because Genesis had reported immediately after the above-mentioned statement, "Male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:28). Since the former statement ends with the word "image," he thought, the latter statement must be an apposition to the term and hence indicating maleness and femaleness as constitutive of the divine image!¹² Christians have committed themselves to divine non-transcendence so resolutely that it had become with them an *idée fixe*, enabling Paul Tillich to declare *sub specie eternitatis* that the transcendent God is unknown and

¹⁰ Couched in this form, the argument is known as "the Arian Syllogism." See Bettenson, 56.

¹¹ G. Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), 156-57.

¹² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* tr. G.W. Bromley and T.F. Torrence (London: T. & T. Clark, 1960), III, part 1, 190ff.

unknowable unless He is concretized in an object of nature and history.¹³

Since this was the state of "God's transcendence" in Christianity, the language expressing it was equally improper. Although Christians never ceased to claim that God is transcendent, they spoke of Him as a real man who walked on earth and did all things men do, including the suffering of the agonies of death. Of course, according to them, Jesus was both man and God. They never took a consistent position on Jesus' humanity or divinity with accusation of apostasy and heresy. That is why their language is always confusing, at best. When pinned down, every Christian will have to admit that his God is both transcendent and immanent. But his claim of transcendence is *ipso facto* devoid of grounds. To maintain the contrary, one has to give up the laws of logic. But Christianity was prepared to go to this length too. It raised paradox above self-evident truth and vested it with the status of an epistemological principle. But under such principle, anything can be asserted and discussion becomes idle. The Christian may not claim that the trinity is a way of talking about God; because if the trinity discloses the nature of God better than unity, a greater plurality would do the job better. At any rate, to reduce the "Holy Trinity" to a status of *in percipi* is heretical as it denies *una substantia* as metaphysical doctrine.

III. DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE IN ISLAM

A world of difference separates Islam from Judaism and Christianity on this question.

Islam declares the transcendence of God to be everybody's business. It asserts that God has created all humans capable of knowing Him in His transcendence. This is an innate endowment, a *fitrah* (*sensus communis*, the state of nature in which every man is born) which all humans share.¹⁴ Its nature is that of a faculty with which humans recognize divine ultimacy, unity and transcendence. Islam thus tolerates no discrimination *à la hindoue* between humans who may contemplate the Absolute in its transcendence and those who may perceive Him only through other

¹³ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), vol 2, 40.

¹⁴ Rudolph Otto came close to the Islamic position when he affirmed that all men are endowed with a faculty—which he names *sensus communis*, borrowing an expression of Immanuel Kant—which enables them to perceive the Holy in His mysterious of numinous existence, as well as in His might and moving appeal or fascination. See his *The Idea of the Holy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), chap. 5.

gods or idols. Since recognition of divine transcendence is something innate to humanity and hence necessary, Islam attributes all departures from that norm to nature and history. Forgetfulness, mental laziness, passion and vested interest, Islam explains, are the causes of such and continue from generation to generation.

This is the first assertion of the Islamic creed that “There is no god but God,” which the Muslim understands as denial of any associates to God in His rulership and judgship of the universe, as well as a denial of the possibility for any creature to represent, personify or in any way express the divine Being. The Quran says of God that “He is the Creator of heaven and earth Who creates by commanding the creature to be and it is ... He is the One God, the ultimate ... (2:117, 163). There is no God but He, ever-living, ever-active (3:2). May He be glorified beyond any description! (6:100) ... No sense may perceive Him (6:103) ... Praised be He, the Transcendent Who greatly transcends all claims and reports about Him (17:43).” In fulfillment of this view, the Muslims have been all too careful never to associate in any manner possible, any image or thing with the presence of the divine, or with their consciousness of the divine; and in their speech and writing about the divine to use only Quranic language, terms and expressions which, according to them, God has used about Himself in the Quranic revelation.

A. TRANSCENDENCE IN ART

The association of things and sensory images with God was meticulously avoided by Muslims at all times and places. Never has any Muslim mosque contained any object associated with divinity. The mosque has always been an empty building. Its walls and ceiling would be decorated either with verses from the Quran or with abstract arabesques. The latter were designs made of stylized stalk, leaf and flower, deliberately denaturalized and symmetrically repeated to dispel any suggestion of the creaturely natural as vehicle of expression for the divine. The arabesque could also consist of geometrical figures which by their very geometrical nature bespoke the denial of nature as expressive of the divine. The arabesque was expansive by nature, to suggest an infinite field of vision to which the interlacing of its figures propelled the imagination *ad infinitum*. It generated an “idea of reason” — the infinite continuation of itself—and demanded the imagination to produce the con-

tinuation beyond the given wall, panel, facade or floor plan. The imagination failed to produce the infinite continuation every time it was asked by an arabesque to do so; and, in the process, gave the subject an aesthetic intuition of infinity, a facet of transcendence.

All the arts of Islam developed in fulfillment of divine transcendence acting as supreme principle of esthetics. All Islamic arts developed stylization as denaturalization; all were nondevelopmental and nonfigurative; and all did their best to transubstantiate the natural forces of gravity and cohesion, the natural elements of mass, space and light, of water and color, of melody and rhythm, of physiognomy and perceptive—in short of everything natural and creaturely, into floating, air-suspended patterns suggestive of infinity. To my knowledge, transcendence in the fine art of Islam has known no exception worthy of consideration.¹⁵

B. TRANSCENDENCE IN LANGUAGE

Transcendence in language was equally well maintained by Muslims around the globe, speaking all sorts of languages and dialects and belonging to all sorts of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This was the objective of the Quranic dicta, “We (God) have revealed it an Arabic Quran” (12:2; 20:113)... We have sent it (the revelation) down an Arabic judgment (13:39); “We have revealed it in the Arabic tongue” (39:28; 41:3; 42:7; 43:3); “It is We Who shall collect it. We Who shall explain it” (75:16-19). Abiding by these dicta, Muslims treated only the Arabic original as the Quran and regarded the translations as mere aids to understanding it, not as text. Liturgical use of the Quran could be made only in Arabic. *Al ṣalāh*, the institutionalized worship, kept the form it was given it by the Prophet (SAAS) on divine instruction. Moreover the Quran gradually molded the consciousness of the non-Arab speaking converts and furnished the categories under which religious matters could be thought out and religious feelings could be expressed. Any God-talk by Muslims became exclusively Quran-talk, one adhering scrupulously to the Arabic categories of the Quran, and to its Arabic terms, its Arabic literary forms and expressions.

How did the Quran express transcendence? It gave 99 or more names for God expressing His Lordship of the world, and His Providence in

¹⁵ Ismā'īl R. al Fārūqī. “Islam and Art,” *Studia Islamica*, Fasc. xxxvii, 81-109.

it; but it emphasized that “Nothing is like unto Him” (42:11). Anything belonging to His realm or associated with it like His words, His time, His light, etc.—the Quran described as something to which empirical categories cannot apply. “If all trees were pens and all seas were ink with which to record God’s speech,” (31:27); it asserted, “they would be exhausted before God’s speech runs out” (18:109); “A day with God is like a thousand years of man’s” (22:47); “The light of God is that of heaven and earth. Its likeness is the light of a lamp whose glass is a celestial star, whose fuel is from a blessed olive tree that is neither of the East nor of the West, incandescent without fire . . .” (24:35). Thus, empirical language—figures and relations from the world are used; but with the unmistakable denial that they apply to God *simpliciter*.

In time, some non-Arabic speaking Muslims fell into the error of anthropomorphism as they attempted to achieve a more intimate acquaintance with Quranic teaching. Coming from religions where anthropomorphic representation of the deity was common, it was difficult for these new Muslims to shake off their anthropomorphic habit of mind. The Mu’tazilah rose to the defence of transcendence, and argued that the divine attributes had to be taken allegorically, not literally. In their enthusiasm, the Mu’tazilah asserted that God would not be visible to the righteous even in Paradise. The Quranic passage promising the same (75:22) was to be allegorically interpreted so as to nullify the apparent lexicographic meaning of the terms. The Muslim masses feared that any legitimization of allegorical interpretation would inescapably reduce the term as such, as well as of its lexicographic meanings; that once the lexicographic anchoring of terms is lifted, nothing is left to moor the meanings down and prevent them from floating downstream indiscriminately. That is the very risk that Judaism and Christianity had taken under the pressure of Hellenization, and as a result of which both suffered radical transformations.¹⁶

The task of articulating this fear fell to al Ash’arī (died 322 A.H./935 A.C.) who began his career as a Mu’tazilah member and then rebelled against them. The divine attribute, he said, is neither God, nor not God. *Al tashbīh* (anthropomorphism) is false; and so is *al ta’līl* (neutralization of the attributes through allegorical interpretation of them). The former is contradictory to transcendence; the latter, to the fact of the

¹⁶ See the debate of this author with Maurice Wiles, Regius Professor of Theology at Oxford University, on the subject of the expression of divine transcendence in language, in “World Faiths,” *Journal of the World Congress of Faiths*, no. 107, (Spring 1979), 2-19.

Quran's predication of the attributes to God, which is tantamount to denying the revelation itself. The solution of the dilemma, he reasoned, was first, in accepting the revealed text as it is, i.e., as one whose meaning is anchored in the lexicography of its terms; and second, in rejecting the question, "How the commonsense meaning is predicable to the transcendent being" as illegitimate. This process, he called *bilā kayf* (without how).¹⁷

Obviously, al Ash'arī meant to say that anthropomorphism is inevitable if the question of the how of predication of the attribute is raised in the expectation of an answer similar to that analyzing the relation of the predicate to subject in the empirical world. Since the subject and predicate are transcendent, the question itself is invalid. Obviously too, al Ash'arī meant that once the lexicographic meaning of the predicate is acknowledged and understood and then denied, it acts as a springboard for the mind to create a new modality for the predication in question, other than the empirical. But no new modality is possible. Therefore, the mind perceives the impossibility of empirical predication while the understanding is still anchored to the lexicographic meaning of the term. The imagination is thus compelled to produce the needed modality once the denial of empirical predication and transcendence both are upheld. In this suspense, an intuition of transcendence is obtained, not unlike that of infinity and sensory inexpressibility engendered by the arabesque. The lexicographic meaning of the term serves as anchor while the imagination soars in search of an applicable modality of the meaning in question, a modality that is impossible to reach. Indeed, the Quran likens the word of God to "a tree whose roots are firm in the earth, and whose branches are infinite and unreachable in the skies above" (14:24).

C. THE PRESERVATION OF ARABIC

The total preservation of the Arabic language with all the categories of understanding imbedded therein and its continuous use by the millions to the present day, eliminated most of the hermeneutical problems confronting the modern reader of the fourteen-centuries-old revelation. The

¹⁷ Abū al Ḥasan al Ash'arī. *Maqālāt al Islāmīyīn* (Cairo: Maktabat al Nahḍah al Miṣrīyah, 1371/1954), vol 1. 224-229. See also the discussion of al Ash'arī's views on the divine attributes in Muḥammad 'Abd al Karīm al Shahrastānī, *Al Milāl wa al Niḥāl* (Cairo: Al Azhar Press, 1328/1910), 149 ff.

application of Quranic directives to the ever-changing affairs of life will always be new; and so would the translation of its general principles into concrete prescriptive legislation speaking to contemporary tasks and problems. This, Islamic jurisprudence always recognized. But the meaning of the terms of revelation, the categories under which those meanings are to be understood, are certainly realizable today exactly as they were for the Prophet (SAAS) and his contemporaries fourteen centuries ago. The latter, not the former, is the problem of expressing transcendence. Understanding the meanings of the Quran as the Prophet (SAAS) had understood them is the assumption of the application, or misapplication, of those meanings to contemporary problems.

The capacity of any student to understand the revelation today exactly as it was understood on the day it was revealed, is indeed a "miracle" of the history of ideas. It cannot be explained by the distinction of "disclosive" and "creative" functions of the language. The former suggests an esoteric level of meaning which is disclosed to the initiates only, and by means of exegesis; and the latter, a fabricative role whose product is not distinguishable from the constructs of pure fiction. Moreover, the "creative" function is not immune against the charges of relativism and subjectivism which render impossible any claim on behalf of Christianity and Islam as such, and treats all claims as personal and dated. The Muslim-Christian dialogue offers little reward if all it can purport itself to be is a dialogue between two persons, not two religions.

That language changes so that it is never the same is not necessary. Arabic has not changed, though its repertory of root words has expanded a little to meet new developments. The essence of the language—which is its grammatical structure, its conjugation of verbs and nouns, its categories for relating facts and ideas, and the forms of its literary beauty—has not changed at all. The Heraclitean claim that everything changes and is never the same is a fallacy, because there must be something permanent if change is to be change at all and not the skeptic's "stream of the manyfold." Far more safe and accurate in the definition of language were the Muslim linguists who recognized in language one and only one function, namely, the purely descriptive. Characteristically, they defined eloquence as "descriptive precision." The terrain of lexicography thus became for them sacrosanct—"God Himself taught Adam the names of things" (2:31); and they laboriously produced for the Arabic language of the Quran the most complete lexicographic dictionaries of any language. Creativity, they ascribed to the human mind,

where it properly belongs; and, in pursuit of more precision, they defend it as the capacity to discover and place under the full light of consciousness, aspects of reality which escape the less creative or capable, but which genius captures. The more precise the description of such apprehended reality, the more eloquent and beautiful it is, as well as more didactic and instructive. Language — in this case Arabic—thus remained an ordered and public discipline, open to inspection, capable of accurate judgement, and compelling whoever has the requisite intelligence say to the good author or critic, “Yes! That’s just it!” It was natural that the Islamic revelation would do all this. For without it, considering the transformations the revelations of Moses, Zoroaster, the Buddha and Jesus had gone through as their original languages were lost, forgotten, or “changed,” the transcendent God Himself would be a poor student of the history of religions!

IV. ISLAM’S SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CULTURE

The essence of religious experience in Islam is *al tawhīd*; that is, the recognition that there is no God but God (*lā ilāh illā Allāh*). What is distinctly Islamic — and hence novel — in *al tawhīd* is the negative aspect of its statement. That no being of whom godhead is predicated is God except God, strikes Jewish, Christian and pre-Islamic Arab notions of associating other beings with God. The gods of Arabia represented in stone and wood, to whom worshippers addressed praise, thanks, and whom they appeased with divination and sacrifice, relegated Allah (SWT) to the position of a *deus otiosus*. Christian trinitarianism postulated three persons in the deity each of whom is fully God, and asserted that God had become human, thus violating both the divine unity and the transcendence, or absolute otherness, of God. Judaism addressed God in the numerical plural *Elohim*, and described *Elohim* as engaging in sexual intercourse with the daughters of men, thus violating God’s unicity as well as His transcendence. Moreover, by calling Ezra, the Jewish kings, and the Jews at large, “son” or “sons” of God, and by calling God the Jews’ “father,” to whom they are related in ways other than those of any other creature, Judaism compounded its compromise of the transcendence of the divine being *vis-à-vis* the One to Whom everything is equally a creature *ex nihilo*, not a generated progeny. Apparently, the redactors

of the Old Testament sought thereby to assert the superiority of the Hebrew race over all other races. Through *al tawhīd*, therefore, Islam sought to purge religion absolutely clean of the godhead. Thereby, it accomplished a double purpose: that of acknowledging God as sole Creator of the universe, and that of equalizing all men as creatures of God, endowed with the same essential qualities of creaturely humanity, with the name cosmic status.

By its brief statement, *lā ilāh illā Allāh*, *al tawhīd* expresses on the axiological level three novel meanings. The first is that the creation is the material in which the absolute, as divine will, is to be actualized. Every component of creation is therefore good, and creation is not only the best of all possible worlds; it is flawless and perfect.¹⁸ Indeed, creation filled with value by man through moral vision and action is itself the divine purpose of creation.¹⁹ Consequently, enjoyment of its elemental or utilitarian values is innocent;²⁰ a value-full world is a monument to God, whose preservation and enhancement are acts of praise and worship on the part of man. As an instrument for the realization of the absolute, every object in creation is invested with higher, cosmic value. *Per contra*, Christianity had deprecated the world as "flesh," mankind as *massa peccata* (fallen creature), and space-time as that in which the

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ... (السجدة: ٧) ... مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوُّتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ
مِن فُتُورٍ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ (الملك: ٣-٤)

¹⁸ It is Allah Who created everything and did so perfectly (32:7)... There is no flaw in Allah's creation. Look into it once, twice and more for any discrepancy or shortcoming. You will find none. Your quizzical sight will return to you humbled but convinced [of the perfection of Allah's creation] (67:3-4).

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (الكهف: ٧) الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ
أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا... (الملك: ٢)

¹⁹ We have created what is on earth as ornament, an enjoyment to you, that We may test who among them are best in conduct. (18:7)... He created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds (67:2).

يَبْنَیْءَ آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي
أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ... (الأعراف: ٣١-٣٢)

²⁰ O Sons of Adam! Put on your best ornaments when you go out to the mosque [for a communal prayer or function]. Eat and drink [of Allah's bounty], but do not go to excess. Allah does not love those who do so. Say: [O Muhammad], who prohibited the ornaments [the delicacies, beautiful things] which Allah provided for His servants? Say, Such belong in this very world to those who believe. And they will enjoy it once more in purity in the other world (7:31-32).

realization of the absolute is forever impossible.²¹

The second is that man stands in no predicament out of which he cannot pull himself. That man's road is full of obstacles, that he is inclined to lose himself in egocentrism, or to take the easier path of lazy hedonism and euphoria, are facts. But they are no more factual than their opposites. Man therefore needs no savior, no Messiah and no salvation; but, rather, to apply himself to his cosmic duty and to measure his worth in direct proportion to his achievement. Against Christianity, Islam therefore taught that spirituality—i.e., pursuit of the divine will without disturbance of the ontological poise of creation, without deflection of the causal threads of nature on all levels of space-time, in short, without politics and economics—is false and futile pretension. It called men to felicity rather than salvation, and promised them rewards in this world and the hereafter directly proportionate to their deeds.

The third novel meaning *al tawhīd* expresses on the axiological level is that since the good to be realized is the divine will, and since the divine will, because of its creatorliness is the same for all creatures as all of them must fall under its ought-to-be, there can be no discrimination between places or men as objects of moral action. This meaning was adequately assured by Jesus and the apostolic fathers; but it was hardly observed by their Christian followers, thus necessitating a fresh restatement for their benefit. Judaism, on the other hand, has persistently denied it on principle and has always taught the opposite. That there can be no discrimination between points of space-time as foci of centrifugal political action, thus none between men as subjects of moral action, thus making the moral life necessarily universalistic and societistic at the same time, was a novel discovery unknown and unpracticed when the Islamic movement was born.

All this seems to fall within the perspective of the Semitic religious tradition. From a wider, world-perspective, Islam constituted a genuine breakthrough from the fixation into which the world had fallen, divided as it was between Indian religiosity and Hellenic religiosity. Indian religiosity maintained that the universe was itself the absolute (Brahman), not in its ideal form, but in an objectified, individuated and particularized form which it condemned. Objectification and materialization of the absolute spirit, Brahman, is an undesirable event. Hence, salvation was conceived of as escape from the religious/moral imperative. The realm of objectification (creation) was regarded as evil, while the realm of the

²¹ St. Augustine, "De Diversi Quaestionibus," *Ad Simplicianum*, i.g., 1:4 and 10.

absolute (brahman, Nirvana), was praised as bliss and *sumum bonum* (the plenum of values, the sublime). Under this view cultivation of the world, i.e., procreation, mobilization for food production, education, rendering the world into a garden and making history, are definitely evil because they spread, intensify or prolong the state of objectification. Evidently the only morality which harmonizes with this view is individualistic and world-denying. Judaism and Theravada Buddhism remained true to this essential vision of the Upanishads. Hinduism accepted the vision for the endowed elite. It propounded a popular religiosity in which the castes look forward to release from their travails only in the after-life, while continuing to labor in their appointed stations in this life with no little amount of joy and complacent satisfaction that they are fulfilling the purpose of their existence. Likewise Mahayana Buddhism kept this vision as a background and constructed its religiosity out of native Chinese worldly morality; and appointed Bodhisattvas (human ancestors apotheosized into saviors) to redeem men from the afflictions of existence.

Combining elements of Egyptian and Greek religions, of Mithraism and Near Eastern mystery cults, Hellenism engulfed the Semitic movement of Jesus which sought to reform the legalism and ethnocentrism of Judaism. Hence, the Greco-Egyptian element which identified God with the world was retained but modified and diluted in the doctrine of the incarnation which made God become man and enabled man to associate himself with divinity. Hence too, the resentment of the downtrodden of the empire, Gnostic aversion to matter and the world, and the redemptionist hope of Mithraism and Judaism, all combined to give historical Christianity its judgement of creation as fallen, of the world as temporary evil, of state and society as the devil's handiwork, and of the moral life as individualist and world-denying.

It was a refreshing clarification that Islam achieved. It put aside both claims of India and Egypt which identified the absolute with the world, the Creator with the creature, whether to the advantage of the creature as in Egypt and ancient Greece, or to that of the "creator" as in India. It reaffirmed the ancient Mesopotamian vision of the utter desperateness of Creator and creature, and of man as servant in the manor of God. Benefitting from history, Islam's reaffirmation was to be a crystallization of this ancient Mesopotamian wisdom as well.²²

²² Ismā'il R. al Fārūqī, *Historical Atlas of the Religions of the World* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1974), "The Ancient Near East," chaps. 1, 2 and 3.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPLE OF HISTORY

Al tawhīd commits man to an ethic of action; that is, to an ethic where worth and unworth are measured by the degree of success the moral subject achieves in disturbing the flow of space-time, in his body as well as around him. It does not deny the ethic of intent where the same measurement is made by the level of personal values affecting the moral subject's state of consciousness alone, for the two are not incompatible. Indeed, Islam demands the fulfillment of the requirements of the ethic of intent as a preliminary prerequisite for entering into fulfillment of those of the ethic of action.¹ By so doing, Islam prevents its ethic from becoming one of consequences, or utilitarianism, however noble the ring.

Disturbing the flow of space-time, or transformation of creation, therefore, is expected of the *engagé* Muslim. Having acquiesced to God alone as his Master, having committed himself, his life and all energies to His service, and having recognized His Master's will as that which ought to be actualized in space-time, he must enter the rough and tumble of the market place and history and therein bring about the desired transformation. He cannot lead a monastic, isolationist existence unless it be as an exercise in self-discipline and self-mastery. Even then, if the exercise is not conducive to the end of achieving greater success in the transformation of space-time, it is doomed as unethical egocentrism; for the purpose would in that case be self-transformation as an end in

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ... إِنْ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ (الزمر: ٣) بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (البقرة: ١١٢) إِيَّا مَنْ أَىَّ اللَّهُ يَغْلِبُ سَلِيمٌ (الشعراء: ٨٩) إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ (ق: ٣٧)

¹ Religion in all its purity belongs only to Allah... Allah will not guide anyone guilty of lying, of ungodliness or unfaith (39:3)... Whoever turns his face to Allah in loyalty and does the good works will have his reward with Allah. Such persons will not grieve; and no fear shall befall them (2:112)... Allah will forgive none but those who turn to Him with candid hearts (26:89)... In this is a lesson, a reminder, to those who have a sincere heart, or to those who stop arguing when evidence confronts them squarely and acquiesce to it readily (50:37).

itself, not as a preparation for transforming the world into the likeness of the divine pattern.

The Quran has amply justified creation and described it as that in which man is to undertake his cosmic vocation. Emphatically the Quran asserted that the world is the realm where the absolute is to be realized, and so by man. "Excellence in the deed," (*falāḥ*) in terms of which the Quran describes the purpose of creation as a whole, can have no other meaning than the transformation of the materials of creation, i.e., men and women, earth, town and country.² To the question, who is the denier of the religion ("religion" being a more comprehensive term than "God") the Quran answers: "it is he who repulses the orphan; who does not urge the feeding of the poor."³ Evidently, filling this world, this space, and this time with value, even the material value of food, is not only important for religion, but the very whole business of religion. For this reason, Islam's eschatology is radically different from that of Judaism and Christianity. In the former, the "Kingdom of God," is an alternative to the Hebrew situation in exile. It was the Kingdom of David projected nostalgically by those who had lost it and who presently stand at the nethermost level of captivity and degradation. As for Christianity, its main thrust was to combat the materialist, externalist, enlandising ethnocentrism of the Jews. Hence it was necessary for Christianity to spiritualize the Kingdom of David and remove it altogether from space-time. This trend already existed in later Judaism, and Christianity developed it further by universalizing it as the salvation of mankind and purging it clean of earthly attachment. In both cases the "Kingdom of God" became an "other world" and thus this world became the temporary theater of Caesar, the devil, the flesh, "where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."⁴

... يَنْقُورُوا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ (هود: ٦١)

² O People! Serve Allah alone. You have no god other than Him. It is He Who established you on earth that you may settle in it [according to His pattern]. So do seek His forgiveness and repent to Him. He is our Lord, near and responsive [to those who call on His mercy] (11:61).

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّبِّ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يَحِضُّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْيَتِيمِ (الماعون: ١-٣)

³ Have you considered the denier of reckoning? It is he who pushes away the orphan, who does not enjoin the feeding of the destitute (107:1-3).

⁴ Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal (Matthew 6:19).

Islamic eschatology did not have a formative history. It was born complete in the Quran, and bears no relation to the situation of its contemporary adherents as in Judaism and Christianity. It was conceived as a moral climax to life on earth, a climax consisting of rewards and punishments.⁵ This world was not to be repeated, as it were, under different auspices and with different lots for men than their present miseries. It was the one and only kingdom, the one and only spacetime. All that ought-to-be, ought to and can happen in it through man's agency. Once it comes to an end, only award and execution of judgement, consummation of reward and punishment can take place. This happens in a way totally other than the ways of this space-time, a transcendent way utterly removed from human knowledge, except the allegorical description of it given us by revelation.

In consequence, the affairs of this world acquire in Islam a significance of utmost gravity and seriousness. History is as crucial for the Muslim as it is for the communist except that the Muslim knows himself, not the Absolute, as responsible for history. The Muslim is confident that what God disposes history to be in the end is the direct consequence of his own conduct in history, on the personal, individual level, as well as on the communal or societal. Whereas for the communist, history is itself the absolute and hence necessary, and for the Christian, history is irrelevant, superfluous and evil, it is for the Muslim the theater, the material, the test, the substance, and the very purpose of creation. It follows that Islam defines its adherent as he who is existentially "serious," who ponders creation and exclaims, "Praise be to You O Lord! for you have not created all this in sport!"⁶ who leads the dangerous life of interfering with the processes of nature and history to the maximum degree possible; and who is willing to be judged by his achievements and failures in history. *Al tawhīd* thus enables the Muslim to see himself as the vortex

⁵ Every page of the Qur'an contains either an element of *targhīb* (promise of reward in this life or the hereafter) for good conduct, the good deeds or works of man, or an element of *tarhīb* (a threat of punishment, of suffering and of, ill) for misconduct, the works of evil. This continues a tradition of morality as old as man. Islam only paints its scenarios more vividly and strikingly than they were ever described before.

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ (آل عمران: ١٩١)

⁶ Righteous are those who are always mindful of Allah in their work, in their rest or in their sleep, who ponder the creation of heaven and earth, and who conclude: O Lord, You have not created all this in vain. To You is the praise. Protect us from the punishment of eternal fire! (3:191).

of history because he is the only vicegerent who can bring the will of God to fulfillment in history.

This is the only perspective capable of explaining the conduct of the Prophet (SAAS) as well as of his companions (RAA) and early generations of Muslims. Muhammad's vision in the cave of Ḥirā' and his communion with divinity through Jibrīl, sent him into Makkah to act and transform men and history. It did not hold him in the state of the experience, nor taught him to desire and seek its own recurrence, nor teach his companions to desire it for themselves. Rather, it commanded him with oppressive clarity to reknead and recut the real world of space and time according to the likeness of the divine pattern. This is probably the ultimate distinction of Muhammad's experience over that of Christianity's Jesus; namely, what while it reaffirmed the personalist values Jesus, it built over them as precondition the vision that to behold God, to love God and be absorbed in Him, to live in Him is nothing unless it actually lifts this world, this history, this matter to the plenum of value which is God's will. It was this plus of religious experience which caused the Prophet (SAAS) to answer his uncle's plea to give up upsetting the *status quo* which Islam had caused in these worlds: "If I were given the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left that I relinquish this task before God gives it victory or I perish in the process, I shall not accept."⁷

Rather than surrender passively to his enemies and make of himself another sacrificial lamb, Muhammad (SAAS) outwitted them, emigrated to Madīnah and in the first week established the first Islamic state and gave it its constitution. His apostleship consists of no more than receipt and conveyance of the message. But the message had a content and Muhammad (SAAS) was the first to fulfill what it demanded. This content dictated to him to interfere in the processes of nature, in the lives of his people and all men, there to bring about the desired transformation. After an illustrious career of leadership on all fronts of life—from the most personal to the military, political and judicial—during which he unified Arabia and mobilized it for the dramatic interference in world-history, he died while a mobilized army stood on the ready to bring Islam to the world outside Arabia.

Caught by the Prophet's vision and his personal fire, the early Muslims plunged headlong into the arenas of history, changing the internal constitution of individuals of all races and cultures, and the patterns of their

⁷ *Supra*, chap. I, n. 37.

daily lives, the cultures of whole societies as well as the maps, contours and skylines of villages, cities and whole empires. ‘Uqbah ibn Nāfi’ ’s famous speech on the shore of the Atlantic in the Maghrib, “O Ocean, if I knew that there is earth beyond you, I would cross you on horseback!” is typical of the spirit of that new generation brought up by Islam. The task the Muslim conceived was global; and he wanted to be sure he had fulfilled it all. The nature of the task was moral and religious, for the Muslim was concerned neither with political office nor with economic advantage. It was an earth governed by a new world order that he sought to establish; an earth where no injustice can escape without meeting its just redress; where ideas are free to travel and men are free to convince and be convinced; and where Islam can call men to the unity of God, of truth and of value. Had history itself not existed before and cried, as it did in the Muslim’s ears, for re-formation, the Muslim would have created it. For, like Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, having discovered God and the divine will, he had to carve out of the trees a raft with which to cross the seas, to end his individualist isolation, to seek society and the world and to make history.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCIPLE OF KNOWLEDGE

I. NEITHER SKEPTICISM NOR THE "FAITH" OF CHRISTIANS

In today's world, and especially in the West, skepticism has grown to very grave proportions. It is the dominant principle among the "educated" and is found quite often among the unlettered who emulate the "intelligentsia" in their societies. This spectacular spread of skepticism is partly due to the success of science which is seen as the continuing victory of the empirical, over the religious, mind. The latter is defined as that which adheres to notions taught by the Church. In the opinion of the empiricists, the Church lost its *magisterium*, or authority to teach the truth, a long time ago. It was an authority of which the Church was never worthy, precisely because its position is necessarily dogmatic; i.e., it assumes certain propositions to be true without first subjecting them to empirical testing and critical examination. The Western world, and all those who emulate it, are still intoxicated by that easy victory of the scientific mind over the Christian Church. Under its transport, they jump to the false and double generalization that whereas all religious knowledge is necessarily dogmatic, all ways to the truth must be empirical, finding their ultimate confirmation only in the given of sense, as presented by the controlled experiment. Anything not so confirmed, they hasten to conclude, is doubtful; and, if it is thus unconfirmable, is necessarily false.

Dogma, therefore is in their view adherence to a view known to be unconfirmable in experience, and hence worthless. Truth is unknown and unknowable. Faith, in consequence, is an act, a decision, by which a person resolves to accept as true that which is *scandalon* (stumbling block to the mind).¹ Pascal described it as a "wager" which one makes

¹ Jews want miracles for proof, and Greeks look for wisdom. As for us, we proclaim the crucified Christ, a message that is offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles. St. Paul, I Corinthians 1:22-23.

on something the veracity of which forever escapes him. The irreligious among the Christians have described the Christian faith as the blind man's belief in a black cat in a dark room where there is no cat. In the nineteenth century, at the apogee of this intoxication induced by the victories of science, Schleiermacher, a German theologian, advised his fellow Christians in reply "to the despisers of religion"² to base the Christian truth not on fact, or critically observe reality, but on subjective experience. The revolution of romanticism had apparently completed its domination of the European consciousness. Even God, in the romantic view, is to depend for His reality upon the feeling of the experiencing subject of faith.

That is why the Muslim should never call his *īmān* "belief" or "faith." When used in a general sense, these English words carry today within them an implication of untruth, of probability, of doubt and suspicion. They carry some validity only when they are ascribed to a particular person or group. Even then, they mean only that that person or group holds a certain proposition to be true. Never does either term mean that such a proposition is true. Obviously, this is the exact opposite of the meaning of the term *īmān*. This term, deriving from *amn* (security), means that the propositions it covers are in fact true, and that their truth has been appropriated (i.e., understood and accepted) by the mind. In Islamic as well as Arabic parlance, a man can be *kādhīb* (lying) or *munāfiq* (cheating); but *īmān* cannot be false in the sense that its object is nonexistent or otherwise than it purports to say. That is why *īmān* and *yaqīn* are synonymous terms. Before *yaqīn* one may deny, and may question, the truth. But when *yaqīn* is present, the truth is as established and convincing as sensory evidence.³ It has become indubitable; the only response possible to the person who continues to doubt is *Voilà!* (see here for yourself!). *Yaqīn* therefore is certainly of the truth, as apodeictic as it can come. *Īmān* is hence "conviction," absolutely free of doubt of probability, of guessing and uncertainty. It is not an act, not a decision, not a resolution to accept, or put one's trust in, that which is not known to be true, a wager to place one's fortune in this rather

² Friedrich D. Schleiermacher, *Religion - Speeches to Its Cultural Despisers*, tr. John Oman (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1958) pp. 94 ff.

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (التكوير: ٧-٥)

³ Rather if you only knew the truth with apodeictic certainty, you would then be convinced of the reality of hell as you would when beholding it with your very eyes (102:5-7).

than that basket. *Īmān* is something that happens to man, when the truth, the factuality of an object strikes him in the face and convinces him beyond doubt of its truth. It is of the nature of a geometrical conclusion which, given the antecedent premises, one recognizes its truth and inevitability; or as the Quran has put it, an object whose existence is doubted, is produced and placed before the spectators for all to see and touch.⁴

Unlike the faith of the Christians, the *īmān* of Islam is truth given to the mind, not to man's credulity. The truths, or prepositions, of *īmān* are not mysteries, stumbling blocks, unknowable and unreasonable but critical and rational. They have been subjected to doubt and emerged from the testing confirmed and established as true. No more pleading on their behalf is necessary. Whoever acknowledges them as true is reasonable; whoever persists in denying or doubting is unreasonable. This cannot be said of Christian faith, as it were, by definition; but of the *īmān* of Islam, it is a necessary description. That is why Allah (SWT) described the truth of Islam in these terms: "(With this revelation) the truth has become manifest; falsehood is confuted, just as it should be ... Wisdom is now manifestly shown; error is something else."⁵ The reasonableness of Islam consists in its appeal to the mind at its critical best. Islam is not afraid of counterevidence nor does it operate in secret, exercising its appeal to some "gut" feeling, some "inner" doubt and uncertainty, some wishful anxiety or desire for the realities to be otherwise than they actually are. The claim of Islam is public. It is addressed to reason, seeking to convince it of the truth, rather than to overwhelm it with the incomprehensible,⁶ to coerce it into surrender by that which "passes all understanding."⁷

⁴ The contrast of Islamic *īmān* is strongest with the faith of Pascal who argued for faith as a wager which one places on an outcome which is by definition unknowable. Whereas in Pascal's thinking, man can never be demonstrably convinced of Allah's existence, of His commandments, and final judgment, Islam has taken up the challenge to give such demonstration. Every form of argument was hence used by Muslims to bring about such rational conviction. The arguments from creation and change, from design and purpose, and from the moral consciousness received their best formulation in the Qur'an.

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا (الإسراء: ٨١) ... قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ (البقرة: ٢٥٦)

⁵ Say, O Muhammad, the truth is now manifest: untruth is confuted, as it should be (17:81)... Truth has become [by this revelation] manifestly distinct from error (2:256).

⁶ Contrast this rationalism of Islam, its insistence on clear and distinct proofs, its admiration and promotion of knowledge and wisdom, its exhortation to science and the discovery of the patterns of Allah (SWT) in the whole of creation, in nature, in the sky, in the human psyche, with Paul's description of faith in Christianity in I Corinthians 1.

⁷ I Corinthians 1:1-20.

II. *ĪMĀN*, A GNOSEOLOGICAL CATEGORY

Īmān, it should be said in conclusion, is not merely an ethical category. Indeed, it is firstly a cognitive category; that is to say, it has to do with knowledge, with the truthfulness of its propositions. And since the nature of its propositional content is that of first principle of logic and knowledge, of metaphysics, of ethics and esthetics, it follows that it acts in the subject as a light which illumines everything. As al Ghazālī has described it, *īmān* is a vision which puts all other data and facts in perspective which is proper to, and requisite for, a true understanding of them.⁸ It is the grounding for a rational interpretation of the universe. It itself, the prime principle of reason cannot be nonrational or irrational and hence in contradiction with itself. It indeed is the first principle of rationality. To deny or oppose it is to lapse from reasonableness and hence from humanity.

As principle of knowledge, *al tawhīd* is the recognition that Allah, *al haqq* (the Truth) is, and that He is One. This implies that all contention, all doubt, is referable to Him; that no claim is beyond testing, beyond decisive judgement. *Al tawhīd* is the recognition that the truth is indeed knowable, that man is capable of reaching it. Skepticism which denies this truth is the opposite of *al tawhīd*. It arises out of a failure of nerve to push the inquiry into truth to its end; the premature giving up of the possibility of knowing the truth. as an epistemological principle, it is a counsel of despair, resting on the a priori assumption that man lives in a perpetual dream where no reality can ever be distinguished from unreality. It is inseparable from nihilism, or the denial of values, for the apprehension of values requires the acknowledgment that man may reach the truth of values. Whether what is claimed to be a value is indeed so, whether it is realized or violated in a given instance, and whether the given instance is in fact what it is described to be, are questions without which no valuational claim could be ascertained. Unless it is possible to answer them with certainty, i.e., to know the truth of them, the knowledge of value founders. The valueness of a value, its instantia-

⁸ Abū Hāmid al Ghazālī, *Al Munqidh min al Ḍalāl* (Damascus: University Press, 1376/1956), pp 62-63. Here al Ghazālī says that *īmān* does not deny, contradict, or go against the evidence of reason but confirms it. "...I sought a cure for my doubt, but it was impossible except with rational evidence. However, no evidence stood unless it was based on the primary sciences [metaphysics]. And since the bases of these sciences were not secure, their conclusions and anything built upon them were equally insecure... But after (i.e., under, or with *īmān*)... all these rational foundations [of science and metaphysics] became secure, rationally sound and acceptable, fully supported by their foundations in knowledge" (p. 62).

tion in the given situation, may be just as subject to doubt as any other datum. Unless one begins, therefore, with an assumption contrary to skepticism, namely, that the truth may be reached regarding these matters, nihilism becomes inevitable.

III. UNITY OF GOD AND UNITY OF TRUTH

To acknowledge the Godliness of God and His unity is to acknowledge the truth and its unity. Divine unity and the unity of truth are inseparable. They are aspects of one and the same reality. This becomes evident when we consider that truthfulness is a quality of the proposition of *al tawhīd*, namely, that God is One. For if truth was not one, then the statement "God is One" could be true, and the statement "some other thing or power is God" could also be true. To say that truth is one is therefore to assert not only that God is One, but that no other god is God but God, the very combination of negation and assertion that the *shahādah* conveys. *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*.

As methodological principle, *al tawhīd* consists of three principles: first, rejection of all that does not correspond with reality; second, denial of ultimate contradictions; third, openness to new and/or contrary evidence. The first principle rules out falsehood and deception from Islam, as it lays everything in the religion open to inspection and criticism. Departure from reality, or failure to correspond with it, is sufficient to vitiate any item in Islam, whether it be a law, a principle of personal or social ethics, or a statement about the world. This principle protects the Muslim against opinion, i.e., against making an untested, unconfirmed claim to knowledge. The unconfirmed claim, the Quran declares, is an instance of *ẓann* (deceptive knowledge), and is prohibited by God,⁹ however slight is its object. The Muslim is definable as the person who claims nothing but the truth, who presents nothing but the truth, even at his own peril. To dissimulate, to mix the true with the false, to value the truth less than one's own interest or that of his kin, is as hateful in Islam as it is contemptible.

The second principle, namely, no contradiction on one side, and paradox on the other.¹⁰ This principle is of the essence of rationalism.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ... (الحجرات: ١٢)

⁹ O People who believe! Avoid suspicion of your fellows. Even a little suspicion is a crime (49:12).

¹⁰ For more analysis of this point, see this author's article and response in *Al Ḥadārah al Islāmīyah*, chap 11, n. 1.

Without it, there is no escape from skepticism; for an ultimate contradiction means that the truth of either contradiction can never been known. Surely contradiction does happen in the thinking and speech of men. The question is whether or not contradiction is avoidable, another principle or fact overarching the contradictories in terms of which their contradiction can be solved and their differences composed.

The same is valid when contradiction occurs between revelation and reason. Islam not only denies the logical possibility of such contradiction, but it furnishes in the second principle under discussion a directive for dealing with it once it occurs in the understanding. Neither reason nor revelation may lord it over the other. If revelation was prior, there would be no principle with which to differentiate between one revelation and another, or between two claims of revelation. Even the simple contradictions, the disparities, or apparent incongruencies between the letter of any two statements or positions claimed to be revealed, would not be soluble. No revelation would thus want to deprive itself of the means of harmonizing itself with itself, of putting its own house in order. On the other hand, revelation may run counter to reason; i.e., to the findings of rational examination and cognition. Where such is the case, Islam declares the contradiction not ultimate. It then refers the investigator either to review his understanding of the revelation, or his rational findings, or both. Having rejected the contradiction as ultimate, *al tawhīd* as unity of truth requires us to return the contradictory theses with the intention of looking into them once more. It assumes that there must be an aspect which had escaped consideration and which, if taken into account, would compose the contradictory relation. Equally, *al tawhīd* requires us to return the reader of revelation—not revelation itself—to revelation for another reading lest an unobvious or unclear meaning may have escaped him which, if considered, would remove the contradiction. Such referral to reason or understanding would have the effect of harmonizing not revelation *per se*—revelation stands above any manipulation by man!—but our human interpretation of it. It makes our understanding of revelation agree with the cumulative evidence uncovered by reason. On the other hand, acceptance of the contradictory or paradoxical as ultimately valid appeals only to the weak-of-mind. The Muslim is a rationalist as he insists on the unity of the two sources of truth, viz., revelation and reason.

The third principle of *al tawhīd* is unity of truth, namely, openness to new and/or contrary evidence, and protects the Muslim against

literalism, fanaticism and stagnation-causing conservatism. It inclines him to intellectual humility. It imposes upon him to append to his affirmations and denials the phrase *Allāh a'lam* (Allah knows better!), for he is convinced that the truth is bigger than can be totally mastered by him at any time.¹¹

As the affirmation of the absolute unity of God, *al tawhīd* is the affirmation of the unity of the sources of truth. God is the Creator of nature from whence man derives his knowledge.¹² The object of knowledge is the patterns of nature which are the work of God.¹³ Certainly God knows them since He is their Author; and equally certainly, He is the source of revelation. He gives man of His knowledge; and His knowledge is absolute and universal.¹⁴ God is no trickster, not a malevolent agent whose

... وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَعِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (الأنعام: ٨٠) اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْثِرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِيُعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَعِلْمًا (الطلاق: ١٢) إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (الأنعام: ١١٧)

¹¹ The knowledge of my Lord encompasses all things. Will you not mind His commandments (6:80)... It is Allah Who created the seven heavens and the seven corresponding earths. His commandment permeates them all, that you may know that He is Omnipotent: that He knows each and every thing completely (65:12)... Your Lord knows better who strays from His path and who is rightly guided (6:117).

¹² This is the meaning of the Qur'an's description of the world, or the phenomena or nature, as full of *āyāt*, signs, ("sign: lit., index or evidence") of Allah. In all these instances, the Qur'an is referring to an inference which is obvious to those who have the mind to see, between creation and its Creator, Whose existence and constant activity is implied by the phenomena of nature.

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ (الذاريات: ٢٠) هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِيُعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السَّاعَاتِ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّ فِي آخِزَاتِ الْأَيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ (يونس: ٦-٥)

¹³ The earth is full of signs evidencing the work of Allah. They are perceived by those who are certain of the truth (51:20)... It is Allah Who gave you the sun and moon for light; who ordered them in their orbits that you reckon the seasons and years. He created all this in truth; and He clarifies the evidence to those who have the mind to know... In the succession of day and night, as in all that Allah created in heaven and earth, are evident signs to those who fear Allah (10:5-6).

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (النساء: ٣٢) وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَعِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (الأنعام: ٨٠) وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ... (البقرة: ٣١) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (العلق: ٤-٥) ... وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ١٥١)

¹⁴ Allah is knowing of all things (4:32)... The knowledge of my Lord encompasses all things. Would you not heed His commandment? (6:80)... Allah taught Adam the names [essences] of all things (2:31). He taught man the use of the pen. He taught him what he did not know (96:45)... Allah taught you the Book [religion] and wisdom. Yea, He taught you what you would never know otherwise (2:151).

purpose is to misguide and mislead. Nor does He change His judgement, as men do when they correct their knowledge, their willing, or their decision. God is perfect and omniscient. He makes no mistakes. Otherwise, He would not be the transcendent God of Islam.

IV. TOLERANCE

Al tawhīd is the acknowledgement that God alone is God. This, we have already seen, means that Allah (SWT) is the ultimate source of all goodness, of all value. To assert this is therefore to hold God as ultimately good; i.e., as the highest good for the sake of Whom every good thing is good. Allah (SWT) gives the good its goodness, value its valueness. The goodness of the source of ultimate goodness cannot ever be in doubt. One must always assume that whatever Allah (SWT) has disposed, He has disposed it for a good purpose which is His own. To hold the opposite is to deny *al tawhīd*. That is why the Quran emphatically prohibited the Muslims from thinking ill of God,¹⁵ and condemned those who do in no uncertain terms. Allah (SWT) does not create us to torture and to misguide us. Nor did He give us our faculties of knowledge, our instincts and desires, to lead us astray. What we recognize with our senses is true, unless our senses are evidently deformed or sick; what seems coherent to our common sense is true unless it is proved otherwise. Similarly, what our instincts and desires want is basically good unless God has expressly forbidden it. *Al tawhīd* prescribes optimism on the epistemological and ethical levels. That is also what we call tolerance.

As an epistemological principle, optimism is the acceptance of the present until its falsehood has been established; while as an ethical principle, it consists of accepting the desires until the establishment of their undesirableness.¹⁶ The former is called *sa'ah*; the latter, *yusr* (ease,

وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظُنُّكَ السَّوْءَ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ
وَعَصَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعْنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا (الفتح: ٦)

¹⁵ Allah will certainly punish the pretenders, the associationists, and those who think ill of Allah, whether males or females. Theirs is the circle of evil; They have incurred Allah's wrath and His curse. For them, He has prepared the worst fate, the eternal fire (48:6).

¹⁶ Inspired by this principle, the jurists of Islam have laid down the principle that, "Generally, all things are permissible except those which have been prohibited by Allah" as a foundation for the law.

tolerance). Both protect the Muslim from self-closure to the world, from deadening conservatism. Both urge him to affirm and say yea to life, to new experience. Both encourage him to address the new data with his scrutinizing reason, his constructive endeavor, and thereby to enrich his experience and life, to move his culture and civilization ever forward.

As a methodological principle within the essence of *al tawhīd*, tolerance is the conviction that God left no people without sending them a messenger from among themselves to teach them that there is no god but God and that they owe Him worship and service,¹⁷ to warn them against evil and its causes.¹⁸ In this regard, tolerance is the certainty that all men are endowed with a *sensus communis* enabling them to know the true religion, to recognize God's will and commandments. It is the conviction that the diversity of religions is due to history with all its affecting factors, its diverse conditions of space and time, its prejudices, passions and vested interests. Behind religion diversity stands *al dīn al ḥanīf* (the primordial religion of God) with which all men are born before acculturation makes them adherents of this or that religion.¹⁹ Study of the history (in the plural) is what tolerance requires the Muslim to undertake with a view, first, to discover within each the primeval endowment of God,²⁰ which He had sent all His apostles at all places and times

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي (الذاريات: ٥٦)

¹⁷ I have not created the jinn and humankind but to serve Me (51:56).

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ (النحل: ٣٦)

¹⁸ Unto each and every *ummah* We have sent a messenger to teach them to serve none but Allah and to avoid evil. Some were rightly guided by Allah. Others were misguided and earned the evil consequence. Go out into the world, and see for yourselves what were the consequences of unfaith (16:36).

¹⁹ "I have been sent as a prophet to preach tolerant *Ḥanīfism*." In answer to the question, Which of the [past] religions do you like best? the Prophet (SAAS) answered: 'Tolerant *Ḥanīfism*,' or the religion of Ibrāhīm." The *ḥadīth* has been reported by Ibn 'Abbās (al Zubaydī, *Taj al Arūs*, s.v. *Ḥanaf*, vol. 6, p. 78); al Imam Muslim. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, summary of: al Ḥāfiz al Mundhirī, *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Muhammad Nāṣir al Dīn al Albānī (Kuwait: al Dar al Kuwaytiyah li al Ṭibā'ah, 1388/1969), vol. 2. p. 249, *Ḥadīth* No. 1982.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (الروم: ٣٠)

²⁰ And turn yourself to the primordial religion as a *ḥanīf*, true to the innate religion with which Allah endowed all humans. Immutable is Allah's creation. This natural endowment is universal and immutable for Allah's human creatures. It is the true and valuable religion, but most people do not know (30:30).

to teach; and second, to emphasize this primordial religion and draw men to it, with comeliness and arguments ever more sound.²¹

In religion—and there can hardly be anything more important or prior in human relations—tolerance transforms confrontation and reciprocal condemnations between the religions into a scholarly investigation of the genesis and development of the religions to the end of separating the historical accretions from the original given of revelation. In ethics, the next all-important field, *yusr*, immunizes the Muslim against any life-denying tendencies and assures him the minimum measure of optimism required to maintain health, balance and a sense of proportion, despite all the tragedies and afflictions which befall human life. God has assured us, “With hardship, We have ordained *yusr*.”²² And as He commanded us to examine every claim and make certain before judging,²³ the *usūliyyūn* (doctors of jurisprudence) had recourse to experimentation before judging as good and evil anything desired which is not contrary to a clear divine injunction.

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَحَدِّ لَّهُم بِاللَّيْلِ إِذَا أَحْسَنَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (النحل: ١٢٥)

²¹ Call unto your Lord with wise argument and comely exhortation. Dialogue with others and present to them the better view. Your Lord knows who has strayed from His path and who is rightly guided (16:125).

... يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ ... (البقرة: ١٨٥)

²² Allah wants your life to be full of ease, not of hardship (2:185).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمُ فَاسِقٌ مِّنْ بَنِيكُمْ أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِمَآذِبِهِمْ فَخُذُوا عَلَىٰ مَآفِعِكُمُذِهِمِ (الحجرات: ٦)

²³ O believers! If the unrighteous come to you with news, do not believe them and investigate for yourselves. Otherwise, you will be led to aggression without justice, and you will regret having committed your deeds (49:6).

CHAPTER V

THE PRINCIPLE OF METAPHYSICS

Hindu cosmology regards nature as an unfortunate event that happened to Brahman, the Absolute.¹ Creation (i.e., every individual creature) is an objectification of it (the Absolute) that should not have taken place because it is a degradation of its perfection as absolute. Everything in nature is hence regarded as an aberration, as something encaged in its creaturely form, pining for release and return to its origin in and as Brahman. While it continues as a creature in the world, it is subject to the Law of Karma through which it is upgraded, or further degraded, according to whether it acknowledges and complies with this first cosmological principle, namely, that it is merely an ontological mishap of the Absolute.² Christian cosmology regards nature as creature of God which was once perfect, but which was corrupted in the "fall" and hence became evil.³ The evil of creation, ontological, essential and pervasive, is the reason for God's salvific drama, of His own self-incarnation in Jesus, of His crucifixion and death. After the drama, Christianity holds, restoration has and has not come to creation, theoretically. Practically, the Christian mind continued to hold creation as fallen, and nature as evil. The great enmity to matter which characterized Gnosticism pass-

¹That the creation, or as the Hindu thinkers prefer to call it, "the world of manifestation" of Brahman, the Absolute, is not ultimately real and is therefore a debasement of the Absolute, a departure from its transcendental perfection and hence an unfortunate aberration, is affirmed in several *Upanishads*. A favorite passage is *Svetasvatara*, IV, 9-10. The same ideal is elaborated in medieval Hindu thought by Sankara (e.g., in the *Adhyasabhasya*) and by Ramanuja in the conception of the world as constituting the body of Allah, the body possessing a dependent existence in relation to the soul (*Brhadaranyaka* 3.7.3). In modern times the idea is expressed though more guardedly by such thinkers as S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1951, 1923), vol. 1, 38-39, 197 and M. Hiriyanna *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961, 1932), 63-65.

²Ibid.

³Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned. There was sin in the world before the law was given; but where there is no law, no account is kept of sins. But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses death ruled over mankind, even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam did when he disobeyed God's command (Romans 5:12-14).

ed on to Christianity and reinforced its contempt and antagonism for nature and "the world" so avidly pursued on every level by Christianity's first enemies—the Romans. Nature, with its material potentialities and propensities, was the realm of Satan. On the material level, its momentum is the pull away from "the other world" to "the flesh," to "sin." On the social, it is temptation to politics, to will power and self-assertion, to "Caesar." Programatism—the will to order the movement of history toward transformation of nature—is by Christian definition vain.⁴ For a millennium or more, "nature" was contrasted with "grace" as its opposite. Both were treated as mutually exclusive; pursuit of the one was necessarily violation of the other. Under the impact of Islamic thought first, and later of the Renaissance, of scholasticism and the Enlightenment, Christians opened themselves to life—and world affirmation. World denial and condemnation, however, were never eradicated but only muted. In more recent times, with the triumph of romanticism and secularism following the French Revolution, "naturalism" came to occupy and sometimes dominate the Christian's attitude to nature and the world.

In Islam, nature is creation and gift. As creation it is teleological, perfect and orderly; as gift it is an innocent good placed at the disposal of man. Its purpose is to enable man to do the good and achieve felicity. This treble judgement of orderliness, purposiveness and goodness characterizes and sums up the Islamic view of nature.

I. THE ORDERLY UNIVERSE

To witness that there is no god but God is to hold that He alone is the Creator Who gave to everything its being, Who is the ultimate Cause of every event, and the final End of all that is; that He is the First and the Last. To enter into such witnessing in freedom and conviction, in conscious understanding of its content, is to realize that all that surrounds us, whether things or events, all that takes place in the natural, social or psychic fields, is the action of God, the discharge of His causal efficacy and ontic power, the fulfillment of one or another of His purposes. This does not mean that He is directly and personally the cause

⁴This is why I tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? And isn't the body worth more than clothes? Look at the birds: they do not plant seeds, gather a harvest and put it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them! Aren't you worth much more than birds? (Matthew 6:25-26).

of all, the immediate agent behind every event, but that He is the ultimate Agent Who may and does bring events about through other agents or causes. Nor does it mean that God, rather than us, is responsible for our deeds. We must reckon that the moral worth or unworth of our deeds is solely our individual responsibility; but that the ontological power which diffuses being and non-being is God's alone to have and to exercise. Humans are not creators. They can neither give being nor take it away, though they act as agents of such giving or taking away. Once made, such realization becomes a second nature to man, inseparable from him during all his waking hours. One then lives all the moments of his life under its shadow. And where man recognizes God's action in every object and event, he follows the divine initiative because it is God's. To observe it in nature is to do natural science,⁵ for the divine initiative in nature is none other than the immutable laws with which God had endowed nature.⁶ To observe the divine initiative in one's self or in one's society is to pursue the humanities and the social sciences.⁷ And if the whole universe itself is really the unfoldings of fulfillment of these laws of nature which are the commandments of God and His will, then the universe is, in the eye of the Muslim, a living theater set in motion by God's command and action. The theater itself, as well as all it includes, is explicable in these terms. The unization of God means therefore that He is the First Cause of everything, and that none else

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ (الذاريات: ٢٠) هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّ فِي آخِذَاتِ الْبَيْتِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ (يونس: ٦٥)

⁵The earth is full of signs of evidence for those who have certitude (51:20)... It is Allah Who gave you the sun and moon for light; Who ordered them in their orbits that you may reckon the seasons and years. He created all this in truth; and He clarifies the evidence to those who have the mind to know. In the succession of day and night, as in all that Allah created in heaven and earth, are evident signs to those who fear Allah. (10:5-6).

... وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا (الإسراء: ٧٧) ... سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا (الأحزاب: ٣٨) ... سُنَّتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ ... (غافر: ٨٥) ... وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا (الأحزاب: ٦٢) ... لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ... (الروم: ٣٠)

⁶In Our path, you will find no change of pattern (17:77)... That is the divine pattern in dealing with your predecessors. Allah's will is always done (33:38)... The pattern of Allah today is the same as that of the past (40:85)... No variation is observable in the pattern of Allah in creation (33:62)... His pattern is forever immutable (30:30).

⁷Isma'il R. al Fārūqī and A. O. Naseef, *Social and Natural Sciences* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), chap. I.

IS SO. GOD'S power is not so remote, and His causation is so direct, as to render Him a *deus otiosus*, a "retired" kind of God. That was the mistake of the philosophers who pushed God's causality back to creation, and conceived of the cosmos as a woundup mechanical clock which does not need the clock maker to operate. The *mutakallimūn* have repudiated such a view; and so do we. Our God is a living, active God, Whose action is in everything that happens, though it happens through the causal mechanism proper to it. Our God is indeed present and everywhere active at all times. He alone is sole ultimate Agent of all events, the Cause of all being.⁸

Necessarily then, *al tawhīd* means the elimination of any power operative in nature beside God, Whose eternal initiative is the immutable laws of nature. This is tantamount to denying any initiative in nature to any power other than God's above all, the elimination of magic, sorcery, spirits, and any theurgical notion of arbitrary interference with the processes of nature by any agency. Through *al tawhīd*, therefore, nature is separated from the gods and spirits of primitive religion, from the superstitions of the naive and ignorant. As Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb has amply shown in his *Kitāb al Tawhīd*, every superstition, every piece of sorcery or magic, involves its subject or "beneficiary" in *shirk*. *Al tawhīd*, or the subjection of all creation to one transcendent God, made it possible for the first time for the religio-mythopoeic mind to outgrow itself, for the sciences of nature and civilization to develop under the blessing of a religious worldview which has renounced once and for all any association of the sacred with nature. Necessarily, therefore, *al tawhīd* achieves for natural science what it desires and needs most, namely, the *sine qua non* condition without which it cannot operate. And that is the "profanization" or "secularization" of nature. In the history of science, these terms have meant no more than the removal from nature of the many theurgical causes, of ghosts and spirits, which superstitious people and mystery-mongers have falsely ascribed to natural events. Science does not require the removal of God from nature, but that of ghosts and spirits that act arbitrarily and unpredictably. God, on the other

أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَجَعَلَ خِلَالَهَا أَنْهَارًا وَجَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسٍ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَكْبَرُ هُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (النمل: ٦١)

⁸Would you ascribe associates to Allah? Is it not Allah [the One] Who made the earth (your) place of settlement? Who placed rivers in the folds thereof and established its anchorage? Who made a barrier between the two seas? (27:61).

hand, never acts arbitrarily; and His *sunan* (laws and patterns) are immutable.⁹ Rather than being its enemy, God is the necessary condition of natural science, for unless the scientist assumes that the same causes will always produce the same results—which is precisely what the determination of nature by God means—science cannot function. *Al tawhīd* gathers all the threads of causality and returns them to God, rather than to occult forces. In so doing, the causal force operative in any event or object is organized so as to make a continuous thread whose parts are causally—and hence empirically related to one another. That the thread ultimately refers to God demands that no force outside of it interferes with the discharge of its causal power or efficacy. This in turn presupposes the linkages between the parts to be causal, and subjects them to empirical investigation and establishment. That the laws of nature are the immutable patterns of God means that God operates the causal threads of nature through patterned causes. Only causation by another cause which is always the same constitutes a pattern. This constancy of causation is precisely what makes its examination and discovery—and hence, science — possible. Science is none other than the search for such repeated causation in nature, for the causal linkages constitutive of the causal thread are repeated in other threads. Their establishment is the establishment of the laws of nature. It is the prerequisite for subjecting the causal forces of nature to control and engineering, the necessary condition for man's usufruct of nature, and hence the presupposition of all technology.

The modern scientists of the West rejected God and removed Him, as it were, from nature, out of their hatred for the Christian Church and the false *magisterium* it had imposed for itself on all knowledge including that of nature. Only when they did so, could natural science flourish and prosper in their midst. For a millennium, the Christians produced no science because of this dominion by the Church. Its paradoxical method, incarnational theology, and an authoritarian scripture which spoke *ex cathedra* on questions of natural science, stifled every possibility for the scientific spirit to move. Myth and superstition were backed by Church authority. Removal of the former was regarded as threat to the latter. In putting the scientists to the stake, the Church sought to guard

... فَلَنْ يَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ يَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا (فاطر: ٤٣)

⁹You will never find exception to the patterns of Allah in creation. His patterns are immutable (35:43).

its own foundations. Nonetheless, the scientists gradually won and the Church was defeated. What they succeeded in doing was "secularization" insofar as it meant the removal of the Church *magisterium* from the science of nature. Their accomplishment was valid and extremely worthy.

What is needed therefore for science to function and develop is a nature free of spirits, ghosts, *mana*, *numens* and all kinds of magical elements. Nay, more is needed. Beyond nature "secularized" in this sense, science needs to assume that nature functions according to patterns—that is an orderly system. This requirement is absolutely essential for science. Without it, i.e., with the possibility that natural behavior is arbitrary, erratic, and happenstance, no science is possible. Science rests its whole claim on the assumption that every time a cause is provided, its effect will follow upon it, that what the scientist has discovered is a true law of nature. This means that given the same causes, the same effects will indeed reappear.

Whence the authority for this assumption? Some Western scientists, notably those of the nineteenth century, have claimed that the patterned fabric of nature is deducible from nature itself; i.e., from empirical observation. The same position was advocated by Muslim philosophers a millennium earlier, and al Ghazālī has refuted both with equal philosophical finesse.¹⁰ Against their claim, he rightly argued that from the observable given of nature, one may conclude with the scientists that X follows Y, and that X has followed Y so many times in past experiments or observations. That X follows Y, however, is a far cry from the scientists' claims that X was brought about, or caused, by Y; or that X will always follow upon Y because it is its necessary effect. And yet it is precisely such causal linkage and necessary or infallible predictability that are needed by science and assumed by the scientist to exist between "causes" and "their" presumed effects. Twentieth-century philosophers of science have exposed this prejudgment on the part of the scientists. In consequence, the scientists have grown to be much more humble, and many of them have returned to religion, to God, once their "faith" in the orderliness of nature has been exploded by Einstein's relativity, and Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy. It was philosophy that contributed the most to the questioning of the inductive leap. And it was George Santayana, the skeptic, who called the scientists' trust in cosmic

¹⁰Abū Ḥāmid al Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al Falāsifah*, tr. Sabīḥ Aḥmad Kamalī (Lahore: The Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1958), pp. 186 ff.

orderliness a piece of “animal faith.” His obvious contempt for their trust is due to the fact that it is utterly without foundation in empirical truth. Thus, with but a little twist, Santayana repeated the same criticism al Ghazālī had directed to the philosopher-scientists in the sixth century AH/eleventh-century AC. Santayana derived his expression “animal faith” from the Pavlovian example, cited *ad nauseam* by all, of the dog becoming so accustomed to finding food upon hearing a bell ring that it “believed” the ring was the cause of the food.¹¹

For us, as Muslims, Allah (SWT) is the cause of this orderliness. The cosmos is indeed a cosmos, not a chaos, precisely because He implanted in it His eternal patterns. These patterns are knowable, i.e., discoverable by observation and intellection, faculties with which Allah (SWT) has equipped humans to enable them to prove themselves by their deeds to fulfill His purpose through such deeds. Rather than being a hindrance to science, Islam, especially its *al tawhīd*, is the condition of science. The Muslim is convinced beyond doubt that Allah (SWT) is, that He is the ultimate cause, the only Agent, by whose benevolent action all that is, and all that happens, happens. Nature, thus perceived through *al tawhīd*, is fit and ready for “scientific” observation and analysis. For the Muslim scientist, the so-called “introduction-leap” is not a leap at all, but another step in an ethymematic syllogism which begins with *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* as its major promise.

II. THE TELEOLOGICAL UNIVERSE

The order of nature is not merely the material order of causes and effects, the order which space and time and other such theoretical categories make evident to our understanding. Nature is equally a realm of ends where everything fulfills a purpose and thereby contributes to the prosperity and balance of all. From the inanimate little pebble in the valley, the smallest plankton on the surface of the ocean, the microbial flagellate in the intestine of the woodroach, to the galaxies and their suns, the giant redwoods and whales and elephants—everything in existence, by its genesis and growth, its life and death, fulfills a purpose assigned to it by God, which is necessary for other beings. All creatures are interdependent, and the whole of creation runs because of the perfect harmony which exists between its parts. “To everything,” God says in

¹¹George Santayana, *Skepticism and Animal Faith* (New York: Scribner's).

the Quran, "We have given a measure proper to it."¹² This is the ecological balance which the contemporary pollution of nature has brought to the consciousness of modern man with alarming threat. The Muslim has been aware of it for centuries, and has seen himself as standing within it, for he is as much a part of it as any other creature.

That each element of creation feeds on another and is fed upon by a third is certainly a nexus of ends, perhaps the most obvious among the higher creatures. The dominion of the same nexus over the unseen world of algae, microbes and enzymes is harder to observe, to establish and to imagine in all its reaches. But it is no less real. Still more difficult to discover is that the feeding patterns of vegetal and animal life are the chains of interdependence in the very activities of all creatures, activities other than feeding whether or not connected with it, in the continuous action and reaction of the elements on one another, whether in earth, in the waters, in the air and among the bodies of outer space. Our knowledge of the intricacies of nature's ecology is still at an infant stage, although the sciences of nature have revealed enough of it for the imagination to construct the system as a whole.

As a teleological system, the world presents us with a sublime spectacle. The size and comprehensiveness of the macrocosm, the delicate minutiae of the microcosm, as well as the infinitely complex and perfect nature of the mechanisms of the balance, are overwhelming and fascinating. The mind is literally "humbled," as the Quran says, before them; but it is the humbling of love and admiration, of appreciation and value-apprehension,¹³ for the world as the purposeful creation of the Almighty is beautiful, indeed sublime, precisely on account of its teleology. The exclamation of the poet, "How wonderful is the rose! In it is visible the Face of God!" has no sense other than this, that the rose serves the purposes of man and insects by its fragrance and visible beauty, purposes which have been endowed to it by God and which it renders

إِنَّا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ يَقْدَرُ (القمر: ٤٩) لَقَدْ أَخَصَّصْنَاهُمْ وَعَدَّاهُمْ عَدًّا (مریم: ٩٤) ... إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِّغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ
اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَقْدًا (الطلاق: ٣)

¹²Everything We have created and assigned to it its measure, its character and destiny (54:49)... Allah keeps all things in census (19:94)... Certainly, His will will be done. To everything He prescribed a measure (65:3).

ثُمَّ أَتِيعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ (الملك: ٤)

¹³Look into Allah's creation once, twice and more [for any flaw or discrepancy]. You will find none. Your quizzical sight will return to you humbled but convinced [of the perfection of Allah's creation] (67:4).

to perfection, reflecting, to those with the eye to see, the glorious efficacy and sublime workmanship of the purposive Designer and Creator—God.

A. NATURE AS DIVINE MANOR

So much for the metaphysical arm of Islamic doctrine. The other arm is the ethical. Islam teaches that nature was created as a theater for man, a “field” in which to grow and prosper, to enjoy God’s bounty and in doing so to prove oneself ethically worthy.¹⁴ First, nature is not man’s property but God’s.¹⁵ Man was granted his tenure therein by God and to the end prescribed by Him.¹⁶ Like a good land-tenant, man ought to take care of his Master’s property. The right of usufruct which man certainly holds does not entitle him to destroy nature, or to so exploit it as to upset and ruin its ecological balance. The right of usufruct which is all he possesses is an individual right which God renews with every individual at his birth. It is neither vicarious nor hereditary, and hence, does not entitle man to preempt the future of others’ enjoyment of it. As steward of the earth—indeed of creation—man is supposed at death to

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ (الملك: ٢) إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّهَا لِيَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (الكهف: ٧)

¹⁴It is Allah Who created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving (67:2)... We have made everything on earth an ornament unto it that you may prove yourselves worthy in deeds (18:7).

فَسُبِّحْنَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (يس: ٨٣) قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ ... (آل عمران: ٢٦)

¹⁵Praised, therefore, is Allah, in Whose hand is dominion over all things. To Him will you all return (36:83)... [When you pray to Allah] Say, O Allah, King of all dominion, Owner of all things (3:26).

... اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوا لَهُمْ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ ... (هود: ٦١) وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (النور: ٥٥)

¹⁶Adore Allah and serve Him. There is no god but He. He brought you forth from earth that you may settle therein according to His pattern. Repent therefore to Him and seek His forgiveness (11:61)... Allah promised such of you as believe and do good that He will make them His vicegerents on earth as He did to those that went before them, that He will establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, that He will turn their fear into reassurance and security. For they worship and serve only Him without associates. Henceforth, whoever disobeys Allah commits great evil (24:55).

hand over his trust to God in a better state than it was when he received it.

Second, the order of nature is subject to man, who can bring to it such changes as he wills. Nature has been created malleable, capable of receiving man's intervention into its processes, of suffering deflection of its causal nexus by his deeds. No realm or area of nature is out-of-bounds. The firmament with its suns, moons and stars, the earth and the seas with all that they contain are his to explore and to use, for utility, for pleasure and comfort or for contemplation.¹⁷ All creation is "for" man and awaits his usufruct of it. Its disposal is utterly at his discretion.¹⁸ His judgement is the only efficacious instrument of intervention, the only arbiter. But nothing relieves him of responsibility for the whole of creation.

Third, in his usufruct and enjoyment of nature, man is enjoined to act morally, for theft and cheating, coercion and monopoly, hoarding and exploitation, egotism and insensitivity to the needs of others, are unworthy of him as God's vicegerent and are therefore strictly forbidden.¹⁹ Islam also frowns upon extravagance and forbids wasteful and osten-

... وَزَيْنَاهَا لِلتَّظْهِيرِ (الحجر: ١٦) ... مِنْ كُلِّ رَوْحٍ بِهِيج (الحج: ٥) قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ... (الأعراف: ٣٢)

¹⁷And We decorated the sky and made it beautiful for men to enjoy (15:16)... We planted on earth a pair of everything beautiful (22:5)... False is the prohibition of beauty which Allah brought forth for His servants' enjoyment, and the delicacies of food and raiment which He provided. Say, (Muhammad): They belong to the believers to enjoy in this world (7:32). See also: *Supra*, n. 5.

... سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَافِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَافِي الْأَرْضِ ... (لقمان: ٢٠) وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبَيْنِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ (إبراهيم: ٣٣) ... هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْخَلِيفَةَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ... (فاطر: ٣٩) أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَافِي الْأَرْضِ ... (الحج: ٦٥)

¹⁸Allah has made what is in the heavens and on the earth subservient to you (31:20)... He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon, predetermined in their orbits, and the day and night (14:33)... It is Allah Who made you His viceregents on earth (35:39)... Can you not see that Allah has made all that is on earth subservient to you? (22:65).

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِنَ اللَّهِ ... (المائدة: ٣٨) وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَنُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِينَ (المدثر: ٤٤) وَبَلْ لِكُلِّ هُمْزَةٍ لَعْنَةٌ أَلَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ، يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ (الهمزة: ٣-١) أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَكْذِبُ بِالذِّينِ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ (الماعون: ٣-١)

¹⁹As to the thieves, whether male or female, cut off their hands for punishment due in return for their offence against Allah (5:38)... Nor were we of those who fed the indigent (74:44)... Woe to the scandal-makers and backbiters, among whom stand the collector and hoarder of wealth, thinking that that would make him immortal (104:1-3)... Will you consider the denier of all religion? That is the person who pushes away the orphan, who does not enjoin the feeding of the destitute (107:1-3).

tatious consumption.²⁰ Islamic culture is incompatible with any of these. Not poverty or want, but contentment is what the refined Muslim ought to have and show, expressing his satisfaction with what God has provided.

Fourth, Islam demands of man to search for and understand the patterns of God in nature, not merely those which constitute the natural sciences, but equally those which constitute nature's general order and beauty. The fact that nature is God's handiwork, His plan and design, the actualization of His will, casts upon it a halo of dignity. It must not be abused or raped or exploited, though it is subject to the usufruct of men. Sensitivity to nature and tender care given to it as garden or forest, river or mountain, is in accord with the divine purpose.

... وَلَا تُبْذِرْ بَذِيرًا (الإسراء: ٢٦) إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا (الإسراء: ٢٧)
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ... (الإسراء: ٢٩) ... وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُسْرِفِينَ (الأنعام: ١٤١)

²⁰Do not squander your wealth away (17:26)... Squanderers are the devil's kin, doomed to the eternal fire with him for his disobedience to Allah (17:27). Be not spendthrifts. Allah loves not the spendthrifts (6:141)

CHAPTER VI

THE PRINCIPLE OF ETHICS

Al tawhīd affirms that the unique God created man in the best of forms to the end of worshipping and serving Him.¹ Obedience to God and fulfillment of His command are therefore man's *raison d'être*. *Al tawhīd* also affirms that this purpose consists of man's vicegerency for God on earth.² For, according to the Quran, God has invested man with His trust, a trust which heaven and earth were incapable of carrying and from which they shied away with terror.³ The divine trust is the fulfillment of the ethical part of the divine will, whose very nature requires that it be realized in freedom, and man is the only creature capable of doing so. Whenever the divine will is realized with the necessity of natural law, the realization is not moral, but elemental or utilitarian. Only man is capable of realizing it under the possibility of doing or not doing so at all, or doing the very opposite or anything in between. It is this exercise of human freedom regarding obedience to God's commandment that makes fulfillment of the command moral.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي (الذاريات: ٥٦) لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (التين: ٤) ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي وَجَعَلْ لَكُمْ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ (السجدة: ٩)

¹I have not created the jinn and humankind but to serve Me (51:56)... We have created man in the best of forms (95:4)... We have perfected his (man's) creation and breathed into him of Our spirit. Indeed, Allah has created hearing, your sight and discerning heart. Little do you express your gratitude (32:9).

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ٣٠)

²And when your Lord announced to the angels that He was about to create man and to establish him on earth as vicegerent for Him, they said: Would You establish on earth a creature that sheds blood and works evil, while we adore and praise You constantly? Allah answered: I have a purpose which you do not know (2:30).

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ... (الأحزاب: ٧٢)

³We offered Our trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains; but they refused to carry it and were frightened by its burden. However, man accepted to carry it (33:72).

I. THE HUMANISM OF ISLAM

Al tawhīd tells us that God, being beneficent and purposive, did not create man in sport, or in vain.⁴ He has endowed him with the senses, with reason and understanding, made him perfect—indeed, breathed into him of His spirit—to the end of preparing him to perform this great duty.⁵

Such a great duty is the cause for creation of man. It is the final end of human existence, man's definition, and the meaning of his life and existence on earth. By virtue of it, man assumes a cosmic function of tremendous importance. The cosmos would not be itself without that higher part of the divine will which is the object of human moral endeavor. And no other creature in the cosmos is known who can substitute for man in this function. If man is said to be "the crown of creation," it is certainly on this account, namely, that by his ethical striving and action, he is the only cosmic bridge through which the moral—and hence higher—part of the divine will enters the realm of space-time and becomes history.

Al taklīf (responsibility or obligation) laid down upon man exclusively knows no bounds, as far as his possible scope and theater of action. It comprehends the whole universe. All mankind is object of man's moral action; all earth and sky are his theater, his *matériel*. He is responsible for all that takes place in the universe, in every one of its remotest corners, for man's *taklīf* is universal, cosmic. It comes to end only on the Day of Judgement.

Al taklīf is the basis of man's humanity, its meaning and content. Man's acceptance of its burden puts him on a higher level than the rest of crea-

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى (القيامة: ٣) أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يَتْرَكَ سُدًى (القيامة: ٣٦) أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُخَلَقْتُمْ عَبَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ كُنتُمْ لَا تَرْجِعُونَ (الزمر: ١١٥) وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَإِغْوٍ (الأنبياء: ١٦)

⁴Does man think that We are unable to resurrect his bones? (75:3)... Does he think he will be left alone, without reckoning? (75:36)... Do you think, O men, that We have created you in vain? That your return is not to Us? (23:115)... No! We have not created heaven and earth and all that is between them in sport (21:16).

أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ لَمْ يَنْجَعِلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفْهَتَيْنِ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ (البلد: ٧-١٠) فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي (الحجر: ٢٩)

⁵Does man think that nobody will watch over him? Have We not created for him his eyes [to see]? His tongue and lips [to speak]? Have We not given him his orientation between the path of righteousness and that of evil? (90:7-10)... And when I perfected man's creation, I breathed into him of My spirit (15:29).

tion, indeed, than the angels, for only he is capable of it. It constitutes his cosmic significance. A world of difference separates this humanism of Islam from other humanisms. Greek civilization, for instance, developed a strong humanism which the West has taken as model since the Renaissance. Founded upon an exaggerated naturalism, Greek humanism deified man—as well as his vices. That is why the Greek was not offended by representing his gods cheating and plotting against one another, or committing adultery, theft, incest, aggression, jealousy and revenge, and other acts of brutality. Being part of the stuff of which human life is made, such acts and passions were claimed to be as natural as the perfections and virtues. As nature, both were thought to be equally divine, worthy of contemplation in their esthetic form, of adoration—and of emulation by man of whom they were the apotheosis.⁶ Christianity, on the other hand, was in its formative years reacting to this very Greco-Roman humanism. It went to the opposite extreme of debasing man through “original sin” and declared him a *massa peccata*.⁷ The degrading of man to the level of absolute, universal, innate and necessary state of sin from which it is impossible for any human ever to pull himself by his own effort, was the logical prerequisite if God on High was to incarnate Himself, to suffer and die in atonement for man’s sinfulness. In other words, if a redemption has to take place by God there must be a predicament so absolute that only God could pull man out of it. Thus human sinfulness was absolutized in order to make it “worthy” of the crucifixion of God.⁸ Hinduism classified mankind into castes, and assigned the majority of mankind to the nethermost classes—of “untouchables” if they are native to India, or to that of *malitcha*, the religiously unclean or contaminated of the rest of the world. For the lowest as well as for the others, there is no rise to the superior privileged caste of Brahmins in this life; such mobility is possible only after death through the transmigration of souls. In this life, man necessarily belongs to the

⁶Murray, *Five Stages*... pp. 65-6, 73.

⁷See: *Supra*, chap. II, n. 21.

⁸Their words are full of deadly deceit, wicked lies roll off their tongues, and dangerous threats, like snake’s poison, from their lips (Romans 3:13)... But by the free gift of God’s grace all are put right with Him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free. God offered him, so that by his sacrificial death he should become the means by which people’s sins are forgiven through their faith in him. God did this in order to demonstrate that He is righteous. In the past He was patient and overlooked people’s sins; but in the present time He deals with their sins, in order to demonstrate His righteousness. In this way God shows that He himself is righteous and that He puts right everyone who believes in Jesus (Romans 3:24-26)... Law was introduced in order to increase wrongdoing; but where sin increased, God’s grace increased much more. So then, just as sin ruled by means of death, so also God’s grace rules by means of righteousness, leading us to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:20-21).

caste in which he is born. Ethical striving is of no consequence whatever to its subject as long as he is alive in this world. Finally, Buddhism judged all human and other life in creation as endless suffering and misery. Existence itself, it held, is evil and man's only meaningful duty is to seek release from it through discipline and mental effort.⁹

The humanism of *al tawhīd* alone is genuine. It alone respects man and creaturely, without either deification or vilification. It alone defines the worth of man in terms of his virtues, and begins its assessment of him with a positive mark for the innate endowment God has given all men in preparation for their noble task. It alone defines the virtues and ideals of human life in terms of the very contents of natural life, rather than denying them, thus making its humanism life-affirmative as well as moral.

In Islam, ethics are inseparable from religion and are built entirely upon it. The Islamic mind knows no pair of contraries such as "religious-secular," "sacred-profane," "church-state," and Arabic, the religious language of Islam, has no words for them in its vocabulary. This first principle of Islamic knowledge is therefore the unity of truth, just as the first principle of human life is the unity of the person, and the first principle of reality is the unity of God. All three unities are aspects of, and inseparable from, one another. Such unity is the ultimate principle. The existence of God was not a question for Islam. It has correctly assumed that man was indeed a *homo religious*, a being whose consciousness has always worked around a pivotal presence of the godhead. But its call for the unity of God was fresh as most men repeatedly mixed up the godhead with other beings, powers or human wishes, thus spoiling its unity. However, anxious to save mankind and the whole of human history from any assumed loss before its advent, it affirmed this divine unity to have been known to Adam, the first human, and his descendants, and called its absence wherever divine unity was not in evidence a human aberration.

The presence of this unity in the mind is what Islam calls religious experience, *īmān* or certain conviction. It is not an "act of faith," a "decision" which man takes where the evidence is not conclusive. Nor is it dependent, as it were, on him and his assessment on a case from which apodeictic certainly is ruled out—not a wager *à la Pascal*! It is so crushingly compelling by its own evidence and reality that man must acquiesce to it as to the conclusion of a geometrical theorem. Percep-

⁹Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 443.

tion of the divine unity, Islam holds, happens to a man just as the presence of a "hard datum" enters consciousness. Its "truth" is as rational, as critical, and as inevitable. The meaning of divine unity is that God alone is God; that nothing absolutely nothing in creation, is like unto Him in any respect whatever, and hence absolutely nothing is associable with Him. He is Creator of all that is, Lord and Master, Sustainer and Provider, Judge and Executor. His will is the law in nature, and the norm in human conduct. It is the *summum bonum*.

Such awareness on the part of man is at once enchanting to him and the world around him. It is possessive, its object being both *tremendum* and *fascinosum*. To be sized by it is to live one's whole life, not excluding the most personal secret of it, under the all-seeing eye of God, under the all-relevant norms of His divine will, under the shadow of impending judgement according to a scale of absolute justice. There can be no more perfect self-discipline, no more effective self-motivation. In the perspective of this awareness of divine unity, everything in the universe is created for a purpose and sustained at every moment of space-time by the Author of that purpose. No law of nature operates automatically; for its necessity derives not from blind fate or a clockwork cosmos, but from the benevolent God Whose will is to provide man with theater and materials wherein his action is ontologically efficacious. Hence, the doors of natural and humane science and technology are wide open to the most thorough-going empiricism possible without the least alienation or separation from the realm of moral and esthetic value. Fact and value are here synthesized as one datum proceeding from God and fulfilling His will. The world is, under this view, animated; for every atom of it moves by the divine agency, in a divine dependency, for a value that is divine desire.

This, in brief, is the essence of the *shari'ah*, of culture and civilization. The Muslims have called it *al tawhid*, meaning the three unities of God, truth and life. It is at the base of their representation of reality, of their collective mind, action and hope. The question—what ought man to do?—is answerable only in its light.

II. PURPOSE OF MAN'S CREATION

Islamic ethics therefore begins with the identification of the divine purpose in man. What is his *raison d'être*? the purpose of his creation, of his continued sustenance in life and history?

Using the religious as well as the ancient Semitic terminology, Islam holds that man was created to serve God. God said in the Quran, the scripture of Islam, "I have not created men and *jinn* except to serve Me."¹⁰ In philosophical terms, this is tantamount to saying that the purpose of man's existence is the realization of the *summum bonum*. Obviously, what is being asserted here is the purposefulness of human life. Its denial is the cynical assertion of meaninglessness. It is another matter whether the meaning of human life is heroism, saintliness or covering the world with yellow paint. Indeed, this question itself cannot be raised without assuming a positive answer to the first, namely, that there is meaning or good in human life. Such meaning or good, which is the purpose of all creation is, according to Islam, the fulfillment of the divine will. Whereas this fulfillment takes place involuntarily as in the physiological and psychic function; and freely, as in the ethical. The ethical functions realize the moral values and these are the higher occupants of that realm, the higher imperatives of divine will. The divine will includes imperatives of a lesser order such as food, growth, shelter, comfort, sex, etc.; for everything in creation partakes of the divine purposiveness; and in fulfilling them, in the hierarchial order proper to them, man realizes the divine will. But his vocation lies in the moral realm where fulfillment of the divine will can take place only in freedom; that is, under the real possibility of man's capacity to do otherwise than he ought. It is in this sense that he is God's vicegerent on earth; for only he can realize the ethical – and hence higher values, and only he can have for an objective the realization of the whole realm in its totality. Hence, he is a sort of cosmic bridge through which the divine will, in its totality and especially the higher ethical part of it, can enter space-time and become actual.

In a dramatically eloquent passage of the Quran, God tells us that He offered His trust to heaven and earth, but these shied away from it; that man alone accepted it.¹¹ The Quran also tells us in another passage that the angels objected to God's plan for creating man, knowing that man was equally capable of evil, which they are not. God, however,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات: ٥٦)

¹⁰I have not created the *jinn* and humankind but to serve Me (51:56).

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ...
(الأحزاب: ٧٢)

¹¹We offered Our trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains; but they refused to carry it and were frightened by its burden. However, man accepted to carry it (33:72).

rejected their claim and assigned to man a higher destiny.¹² In cosmic economy, man's capacity for evil is indeed a risk. But this risk is incomparable with the great promise which he may fulfill if endowed with freedom. What the Quran meant to say is that only man may realize ethical value because only he has the freedom necessary therefor; that only he may pursue the totality of values because only he has the mind and vision requisite for such pursuit. Upon his creation, God gave him of His wisdom, proved him superior to the angels and ordered the latter to prostrate themselves in honor of him.¹³ No wonder then that in Islam man is regarded as the crown of creation, higher than the angels precisely on account of his unique ethical vocation and destiny.

III. MAN'S INNOCENCE

Islam holds that man is created innocent, and plays out the drama, as it were, after his birth, not before. No matter who his parents were, who his uncles and ancestors, his brothers and sisters, his neighbors or his society were, man is born innocent. This repudiates every notion of original sin, of hereditary guilt, of vicarious responsibility, of tribal, national or international involvement of the person in past events before his birth.¹⁴ Every man is born with a clean slate, it asserts, basing its

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ٣٠)

¹²When Allah announced to the angels that He was about to create man and to establish him on earth as vicegerent for Him, the angels said: Would you establish on earth a creature that sheds blood and works evil, while we adore you and praise you constantly? Allah answered: I have a purpose which you do not know (2:30).

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ۖ ... وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ (البقرة: ٣١-٣٤)

¹³Allah taught Adam [the names [essence] of all things (2:31). We commanded the angels to prostrate themselves to Adam. They all did except Iblis, who felt too proud to do so. But Iblis is ungodly (2:34).

أَلَّا تَرَىٰٓ ذُرًّا وَّزَرًّا ثُمَّ وَرَأٰٓنَا نَارًا ۚ وَنَارُ الْإِنسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ (النجم: ٣٨-٣٩) لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ ... (البقرة: ٢٨٦)

¹⁴No person is responsible for the guilt of another...To every person belongs the merit or demerit of what he has wrought (53:38-39)...Allah does not charge a person with more than he can bear. Therefore, to everyone belongs the credit or discredit which he has personally earned (2:286).

stand on the absolute autonomy and individuality of the human person.¹⁵ No soul, the Quran declares, will bear any but its own burden.¹⁶ To it belongs all that it has itself personally earned, whether merit or demerit.¹⁷ None will receive judgement for the deed of another, and none may intercede on behalf of another.¹⁸ Islam defines man's responsibility exclusively in terms of his own deeds and defines a deed as the act in which man, the sane adult person, enters into bodily, consciously, and voluntarily, and in which he produces some disturbance of the flow of space-time. That guilt and responsibility are ethical categories and are incurred only where a free and conscious deed is committed is a "hard datum" of ethical consciousness.

A number of modern Christian thinkers sought to reestablish the old doctrine of original sin by giving it a new, descriptive base. Such a base, they claimed, was furnished by the discoveries of biologists and psychologists and their analyses of human nature. The will to

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ ۖ
(الزمر: ٤١) وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ۚ ... (الكهف: ٢٩)

¹⁵We have sent down to you [Muhammad] the Book in truth. Whoever is guided by it is so to his own credit; whoever goes astray does so to his own discredit (39:41)... Say [O Muhammad], the truth has come from our Lord and become manifest. Whoever wishes to believe, let him do so; whoever wishes to disbelieve, let him do so (18:29).

... وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا نُزِرُ وَأَنْزَرُ ۖ وَزُرْ أَخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ۚ ... (الأنعام: ١٦٤)
أَلَا نُزِرُ وَأَنْزَرُ ۖ وَزُرْ أَخْرَىٰ وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ (النجم: ٣٨-٣٩)

¹⁶No soul will be charged but what it has wrought upon itself. No person is responsible for the guilt of another. To Allah is your return (6:164)... No person may be asked to reckon but for his own deeds. His record will be manifest; and he will be given exactly what he deserves (53:38-9).

مَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا نُزِرُ وَأَنْزَرُ ۖ وَزُرْ أَخْرَىٰ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ
رَسُولًا (الإسراء: ١٥) مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ (فصلت: ٤٦)

¹⁷Whoever guides himself by Our revelation does so to his own credit. Whoever goes astray does so to his own peril. Nobody will be responsible for another's deed, and we will not judge but after a messenger is sent [to proclaim and warn] (17:15)... Whoever does good will have that good reckoned for him. Whoever does evil will have that evil marked against him. Your Lord commits no injustice to His servants (41:46).

قُلْ لَا تَسْأَلُونَنَا عَمَّا أَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نَسْأَلُكُمْ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ (سبا: ٢٥) قَالِیَوْمَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ نَفَعٌ وَلَا ضَرَرٌ
وَقَوْلِ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ (سبا: ٤٢)

¹⁸Say: You are not accountable for our crimes; nor are we for the evil you do (34:25). On the Day of Judgment, no person will be of any avail to another, neither for good nor for ill.. Those who committed injustice will be assigned to the Fire which they denied (34:42).

live, to survive, to satisfy the instincts, the desire for pleasure and comfort, man's will to power, his egotism and even the undeniable fact of his imperfection and otherness than God—all these have been claimed to constitute in their opinion so many loci of original sin, which they then define as the self-centered direction of all these natural or psychic inclinations.¹⁹

Surely, man is made of all that the biochemist, physiologist, pathologist, psychologist and all the sciences study in him, and the object of their studies is certainly "given," another "hard datum," predetermined before birth. But all this, whether physical or psychic is natural and necessary. Man does not have it by choice. The baby and the adult are determined by their bodily frames, the one not to climb a mountain and the other not to carry an elephant. But it would be repugnant to reason to call either of them "guilty" of their failures to climb the mountain or carry the elephant. The Quran has declared that no man may be responsible for any more than he can bear.²⁰ Determination by nature is consonant with innocence and constitutes no valid ground for incrimination, for ethical responsibility is commensurate with capacity for the controlled use of one's natural equipment with a view to produce the objective contemplated by one's consciousness. Where there is no capacity, there can be no freedom and hence neither responsibility nor guilt. Modern advocates of original sin have often fallen back upon the endowment of nature for justification of their theory. Their most common plea is: Consider the self-centeredness of the newborn infant, not to speak of the adult person. Topping all modern Christian apologetics in bombast is the grandiose claim of Paul Tillich who defined original sin as the personal guilt incurred by passage from essence to existence within the mind of God of the idea of man.²¹ The sweeping assertion of some Indian thinkers, not forgetting Guatama, the Buddha, that man—indeed the whole realm of nature—is both evil and unreal, is of the same kind.²²

¹⁹Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, part I, chap. IV, chap. XIV, pp. 35 ff; Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 pp. 44 ff; Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Scribner, 1941), pp. 245, 263-269.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا... وَلَا نُحْمِلُنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ... (البقرة: ٢٨٦)

²⁰No soul will be charged with more than it can bear... Our Lord, grant that we may not have to carry that which is beyond our power (2:286).

²¹Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, 29-44.

²²T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955), 330-331; also Radhakrishnan *Indian Philosophy* 362 ff

IV. IMAGO DEI

Man, the Quran claims, in agreement with the Jewish and Christian views, is created in God's image.²³ Like Judaism, and unlike Christianity, however, it regards this image as innate in all men and permanent; that is to say, being part of nature, it cannot be lost. Islam does not follow Christianity in distinguishing between a natural *imago dei* (as *actus*) and an ethical one (as *reatus*). Neither does it allow either or both of them any ontological status, as the theological term *inquinamentum* indicates. The Christian distinction is needed to make the fall something ontological, something true of all human beings, and this would constitute the necessary predicament from which no man can save himself by his own effort—which is the assumption of the Incarnation.²⁴ Islam did not share these assumptions and could hence regard every man at all times as embodying the divine image.

Islamic thought built upon this notion of God's image in man is philosophic anthropology. The Quran asserted that man was endowed with a soul, and defined the latter as "of the breath of God."²⁵ Man's soul was then analyzed into an animal component which gave man his sentience and desires, and a rational component which gave him his mind. The Quran told of man's endowment with the senses, with a capacity for knowledge of nature, of God and of His will, strong enough to be

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ (الحجر: ٢٩) اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا
وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَلِكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ
اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (غافر: ٦٤) خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ
(التغابن: ٣)

²³And when Allah perfected the creation of man and breathed into him of His spirit, the angels prostrated themselves to him (15:29)... It is Allah who granted to you the earth in which to settle, Who raised the sky for your protection, Who formed you in the best of forms, and Who gave you the good things to enjoy. Such are the deeds of your Lord. Blessed be Allah, Lord of the universes (40:64)... He created heaven and earth in truth; and He created you in the best of form. To Him is the ultimate return. (64:3).

²⁴St. Augustine, "Against Two Letters of the Pelagians," *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978) First series, Vol. 5. p. 378. But I see a different law at work in my body—a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body. What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death? Thanks be to God, who does this through our Lord Jesus Christ! This, then is my condition: on my own I can serve God's law only with my mind, while my human nature serves the law of sin (Romans 7:23-25).

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي ... (الحجر: ٢٩)

²⁵And when I have perfected man's creation, I breathed into him of My spirit (15:29).

trustworthy—indeed to substitute for revelation or to be its equal.²⁶ Muslim philosophers have universally equated the two. Reason was the part of man which made him godlike; and being the breath of God, it is man's most godlike organ and hence the faculty by which like can know like, by which man can know God.

This divine image is ubiquitous in all men. It cannot ever be destroyed or lost and it constitutes man's essential humanity. It is his noblest and most precious possession. It is divine. Where it is missing, there is no human being; and where it is deficient, the condition of the patient is called insanity. Here Islamic humanism is one with the philosophic humanism of the Greeks (Socrates, Plato and Aristotle), with the difference that whereas the highest object of Greek rationality was *paideia* (culture), for the Muslim it is *taqwā* (piety, righteousness). On second look, however, Islam's piety turns out to include Greek *paideia*, for in Islam, the recognition of God as God, i.e., as Creator, Lord and Judge, is the highest rationality ever.

Islam is radically different from Greek humanism, as the latter recognized the free citizen and assigned the slave to another inferior category. It is equally different from Jewish humanism which, while asserting the *imago dei* to be present in all men by nature, differentiates between men on the level of birth and nature by assigning an elect status to its own adherents. It is different from Christian humanism when the latter distinguishes between *imago dei* as a natural *zelem*, possessed by all men and an acquired *demuth* which only its adherents possess as a result of their faith and baptism. Finally, it is different from secular European humanism which defines itself in terms of European culture exclusively, and thus relegates the Asians, Africans and other non-Europeans to a subhuman level. Even the great Kant, the noblest prince of the Enlightenment, the advocate of the categorical imperative, was unable to push his own rationalism to its logical conclusion and assigned

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِيهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ (السجدة: ٩)
وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا (الإسراء: ٣٦) سَتَرِيهِمْ
عَايِنَتْنَاهُ فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ... (فصلت: ٥٣)

²⁶Allah then perfected the creation of man and breathed into him of His spirit. It is Allah Who created your hearing, your sight and your discerning heart. Little do you feel grateful (32:4). O man! Follow not that whereof you have no knowledge. As faculties of knowledge, your sights your hearing and your hearts are indeed responsible (17:36)... We shall show them Our evident signs in all horizons as well as within their own selves, that they may be convinced Our revelation is the truth. (41:53).

inferior status to the Asians and Africans. Islam regards all men alike; and God is repeatedly reminding man in the Quran: "We have created you all from one pair—all from dust—Higher among you is he who is higher in righteousness ... and knowledge."²⁷ Those who know and those who don't, are they equals?" the Quran asks rhetorically.²⁸ On the day of his farewell pilgrimage, the Prophet (SAAS) received a revelation signalling the completion of the revelation and of Islam. On that solemn occasion he found fit to remind the Muslims who were almost all Arab in race and were Arab in language and culture without exception: "No difference whatever between an Arab and a non-Arab can exist except on the level of righteousness."²⁹

The second faculty constitutive of the soul as mind or reason is man's capacity for responsibility. The Muslim philosophers insisted on defining this capacity as *qadar* (capacity for action), and the theologians, as *kasb* (capacity for acquisition of the consequences of action, action being exclusively a divine prerogative). This difference between *qadar* and *kasb* is a theological nicety. On the ethical level they are equal for both have the same effect of attributing responsibility to man for his deeds.

Man's capacity to know the good or the will of God, his capacity to fulfill or not to fulfill the imperative and his responsibility for his deeds constitute his humanistic "equipment." All men are endowed with this equipment without exception.

Islam has no soteriology. "Salvation," in its purview, is an improper religious concept with has no equivalent term in the Islamic vocabulary. Man stands in no predicament from which he is to be "saved." Adam, the first man, committed a misdeed (eating from the prohibited tree); but he repented and was forgiven.³⁰ His misdeed was an ordinary human

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ...
(الحجرات: ١٣)

²⁷O humankind, We have created you out of a single pair, a male and a female. We have made you differing peoples and tribes that you may come to know one another. Noblest among you in the eye of Allah is the most righteous (49:13).

... قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ (الزمر: ٩)

²⁸Say: Those who know and those who don't, are they equal? Certainly not. Indeed only those with mind will reckon (39:9).

²⁹Amin Duwaydar, *Ṣuwar min ḥayāt al Rasūl* (Cairo: Dār al Maʿārif bi Miṣr, 1372/1953), p. 593.

فَنَلَقَىٰ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَلِمَتَ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (البقرة: ٣٧)

³⁰Adam received a revelation from his Lord and repented. Allah accepted his repentance, for He is the Merciful Forgiver (2:37).

mistake; it was the first error in ethical judgement, the first misconduct, the first crime. But, for all its firstness, it was the deed of one man, and hence his own, personal responsibility. It had no effect on anyone else beside him. Not only was it devoid of cosmic effect, but even of any effect upon his own children. It constituted no "fall," either for Adam himself, or for anyone else. It did send Adam from Paradise to earth but it changed nothing in his nature, his capacities, his promise, his vocation or his destiny. Man is not "fallen" and hence there is no need to "save" or ransom him. Rather, man stands under an imperative, an ought-to-do, and his worth is a function of his fulfillment or otherwise of the imperative. Rather than "fall," Islam asserts innocence; rather than "salvation," felicity. Being an exact function of his own deeds, man's felicity or infelicity is his own work, totally. Such felicity does not depend on anyone's blessing or agency; it is not the effect of a sacrament, or of an ontic participation in a mystical body such as the Church. Islam is free of both.

The moral imperative to which man is subject neither looks towards, nor refers to, any past event, whether a "fall" or a "ransom" effected by someone else. It does not arise out of such past events, but is totally constituted by something present or future. Hence, Islam knows no "justification by faith," no history of *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation). The only relevant past it recognizes is the revelation of divine commandments and past men's felicity or infelicity as obedience or violation of these commandments.

Instead of flowing from faith in a salvific drama that happened in the past, man's mortality issues from the Muslim's faith that God is. In this perspective, the existence of God is the existence of truth and value both of which lay a claim to his loyalty and energy. Such a claim consists in the positive disturbance of space-time to the end of actualizing therein the divine pattern. Faith and all the attendant faculties by which values and their relations are cognized and their materials are selected and assigned are only preparations for concretization. Spirituality itself, the whole realm of it, Islam asserts, is nothing unless it is concretized in real men and women. Assuming that at birth man stands on the threshold of ethicality, at the zero point of the ethical dimension, Islam conceives of his duty as positive deeds, as the doing of something new, not as the undoing of something past. Its ethics is wholly forward-looking, even when it is archconservative and stagnant. It is this ethical affirmativeness which gave the Muslim his *élan*. Not weighed down by shackles from

the past, he became an exemplar of worldliness and activism, an inveterate enemy of world-denial and history-depreciation.

V. ACTIONALISM

Carrying the internalizing ethical insights of Jeremiah and later Semitic men of religion to their logical conclusion, Jesus (AS) was sent as prophet to the Jews in order to promote the personalist ethic of intention against the growing externalism and literalism of the Pharisees and Sadducees. It was natural that such extremism was contrasted with an opposite extremism in order to expose the aberrating exaggeration. Jesus taught the principle that the moral character of an act is a function, not of its effects or consequences which are measured by the values of utility, but of its accompanying and motivating intent, exclusively. In numerous parables, he illustrated beautifully the point that what seems to be evil in its effect is really not so because of its motivation, that where the intent is pure, where the heart is determined by the noble purpose of love of God and obedience to Him, the act is wholesome and the person saved.³¹ It was thus that Augustine could say, "Love God and do what you will," and Immanuel Kant, "The intrinsically good thing is a good will." Jesus' sublime effort was therefore oriented toward the internal, radical self-transformation of the person. It was not part of that ethic to deprecate the effects of moral action and hence of the world, of space-time and history. Its strength lies in its single-minded determination to cleanse and purify the spring of all action—the will. If it defined the moral good as a state of the will when it is determined by the love of God, it did rightly; for the slightest violation of this principle is *ipso facto* vitiation of any deed whatever. This was Jesus' divine answer to rampant externalism, to a law enthusiasm that had lost the spirit of the law.³²

Islam acknowledged the revelation of Jesus, and confirmed its ethical insights with enthusiasm. Indeed, in the interest of furthering this insight, it ordered its adherents to pronounce verbally, before entering into every morally or religiously significant deed, the formula, "I intend the projected act for the sake of God," whether a ritual of worship, or removal of a nuisance from the public road. Islam declared no act ethically

³¹See this author's *Christian Ethics*, chap. VI.

³²*Ibid.*

meritorious unless it was so prefaced, so dedicated to “the Face of Allah (SWT).” Islam has thus institutionalized the good intention, and almost externalized it in the process—a practice adopted thereafter by Judaism in the Middle Ages under Islamic influence in order to guarantee its presence in the moral agent.

This notwithstanding, Islam went beyond intentionalism to an ethic of action. Having assured the good intention as a *conditio sine qua non* of morality, it prescribed passage from the will to action, from the realm of personal consciousness of space-time, to the rough and tumble of the market place, the murky business of history-in-the-making. Values, or the divine will, must not only be the object of human intention. They must become actual, and man is the creature meant to actualize them in freedom and for the sake of God. He must therefore disturb the ontological poise of creation. He must knead and cut nature so as to actualize therein the moral dimension of the divine pattern revealed to him. He must bring the world’s latent tendencies to full fruition or self-realization. The extent to which he is successful in achieving this is the criterion of his *falāḥ*. While the good will is an entrance ticket to the arena of ethical striving and endeavor, actionalism or the efficacious actualization of the absolute in history is the entrance ticket to Paradise bearing upon the closeness to God of one’s residence therein. This is not a return to the utilitarian or casuistic ethics of consequences, for the good intention is presupposed. It is a plus that Islam is seeking not a substitute, nor a minus. The ethic of Jesus correctly saw that personal conscience is the ultimate judge of one’s moral status on earth, for only the conscience knows the determinants of the will and its judgement is alone capable of setting the will right. Action, on the other hand, is by nature public, altruistic and goes beyond the self. It is visible to the world and measurable by external means, whether its object is self, other selves, or nature. Hence, it is necessary that it be regulated by public law—the *sharīʿah*; administered by a public office or state—the caliphate; and its disputes adjudicated by a public judiciary—*qaḍāʾ*.

With this in mind, Islam declared action the necessary concomitant of faith.³³ God’s commandments to act are innumerable in the Quran,

³³The necessity of action as a concomitant of faith is amply demonstrated in the Quran’s repeated joining of *īmān* with good works, as so many verses indicate.

... مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ... (الكهف: ٨٨) ... الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ... (النساء: ١٧٣)

He who has faith and does works of righteousness (18:88)... Those who have faith and do good works (4:173).

tion) is no less emphatic. Even where solitude, selfsolation or inaction is sought for cultivation of the personalist virtues of the inner self, as in the case of Christian monasticism, Islam condemned it blatantly. "Monkery," the Quran said, "is the invention of priests, not a divine prescription ... [Moreover] they [the Christians] have abused it."³⁴

VI. UMMATISM

Actionalism, we have seen, demands man's transcendence of himself to what is other than himself. When this other-than-self is nature, Islamic actionalism means to transform the world into Paradise. Everything that natural science and technology prescribe for such a transformation becomes a religious duty incumbent upon every Muslim. When, on the other hand, the other-than-self is another human being or beings, Islamic actionalism means to transform humankind into heroes, saints and geniuses, in whom, i.e., in whose life and activity, the divine will is fulfilled. This involvement with other humans is not what is meant by ummatism. Moral altruism, or such involvement with the welfare of others, can well be, and is in many cases, the concern of nonummatists; indeed, of monastics. The Christian need for such altruism was the chief concern of Pachomius, over the personalist isolationism of Antonius, in early Christian Egypt.³⁵

It is in what concerns the doer or agent as the subject of action that Islam brought the new notion of ummatism, requiring that the doer involve others in the action as co-doers or co-operators. Its purpose was to make actionalism collective, to bring the other self or selves into sharing the action as subjects, and hence incurring its moral merit or demerit. If an altruism seeking to improve or perfect man as object will not do, a regimented society whose members act together as subjects out of habit or custom, or of fear of a political tyrant, will not do either. Since the

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ... (النساء: ٩٥)

³⁴Surely, they are not equal: those believers who witness no battle while fully capable, and those who fight in the cause of Allah, sacrificing themselves and their wealth. Allah raised the latter a degree over the former (4:95).

³⁵*The New Scaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977). s.v. Monasticism, vol. 8, pp. 462-3.

desired end is moral, its achievement must be the work of the subject in a condition of moral freedom. It should be willed and done for the sake of God, if it is to be moral at all. The achievement of the automation of duty is morally worthless: and so is that of external coercion. Only that action which can be otherwise than it is, depending on the unencumbered vision and will of the subject, has moral worth.

Islam therefore prescribes that the other selves be invited, educated, warned, and adequately moved to join in every deed, willing the objective in question. While coercing them might well realize the utilitarian values in nature, and regimenting them might well realize the moral altruistic objective in men, the realization itself would never be moral. And yet, this is precisely what Islam requires. It can be achieved if and only if the other selves are approached with a view to convincing them of the desirability of the action; and once convinced, they would engage in it and bring about the *matériaux* (real existents) of values voluntarily and consciously. Since realization of the divine will is infinite, relevant to all activities, to all persons, at all times and places, it follows that the society Islam projects is one perpetually stirring to convince and be convinced, to pursue and actualize value in freedom. Such a society is a society properly speaking in the *Gesellschaft* sense of the term, not the *Gemeinschaft* sense. Such society is the *ummah* Islam seeks.³⁶ Its members constitute a threefold consensus: in the mind or vision, in the intention or will, and in the realization or action. It is the brotherhood of the believers under the *shari'ah*, set into perpetual motion. It is a school, *Grosser Stills*, where the business of "convincing" the mind is eternal, a gymnasium of the heart where the will is eternally subject to disciplining and cultivating; and an arena where destiny is seized by the horns and history is made. Unlike the political theories of liberalism, the ummatist theory is one where government governs most, not least, and where sovereignty belongs to God and His law, not to the arbitrary will of the majority; and where the ultimate good is the divine pattern, not the *eudaemonia* of the members. As a member of the *ummah* the individual Muslim is not a conscript, but a volunteer for life, perpetually

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ...

(آل عمران: ١١٠)

³⁶You are the best *ummah* brought forth unto mankind, enjoining good works, prohibiting evil, and putting your faith in Allah. (3:110).

...mobilized to bring about actualization of the absolute on earth. The *ummah* is a society where actionalism is totalist, not totalitarian, authoritative but not authoritarian.

All this flows from the fact, proclaimed in the Quran, that human life is not a sport, that existence is not a game, but a serious matter.³⁸ The *engagé* Muslim is a serious being who lives for a cause. God said in His Book: "We have not created you, mankind, except that you may prove yourselves the worthier in the deed."³⁹ Hence the Muslim's career is replete with danger. But his precarious existence is his pride; and his vision of the divine will, his nourishment. His constant awareness of God is not a hollow obsession. Under it, he sees himself as the cosmic median between God and creation. Because of it, he is the vortex of cosmic history.

VII. UNIVERSALISM

The totalism of the divine will leaves no human being outside of its relevance, just as it leaves no point outside of its relevance, just as it leaves no point outside of space-time. The whole world is the object, and the whole of humankind is the object and subject of moral striving. The earth is therefore the object of the Muslim's endeavor, and all humankind is to be involved in its and their own transformation. The universalism of Islam is absolute and without exception just as God is Lord and Master of all without exception. The world can hence be either within or without the world-order of Islam. That is why classical Islamic theory regarded the world as divided between a *Dār al Islām* (The House of Islam) and *Dār al Ḥarb* (House of War), for there is no third alter-

³⁷For a further discussion of the ethical role of the world *ummah*, see this author's "On the *Raison d'être* of the *Ummah*," *Islamic Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (June 1963).

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ (آل عمران: ١٩١) وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَئِيْعَيْنِ (الأنبياء: ١٦)

³⁸Those are the righteous who are mindful of Allah in their standing, sleeping and reclining; who ponder His creation of heaven and earth and pray: Our Lord, Praise be to You, Who created all this not in vain. Protect us from the Fire (3:191)... We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in sport (21:16).

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَفُورُ (المك: ٢)

³⁹It is Allah Who created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds. He is the Merciful, the Exalted. (67:2).

native between the order of ethical freedom, responsibility and peace, and that where these are denied—there is no middle ground between lawfulness and lawlessness. Just as the individual stands under the obligation of transcending himself to the others, so does society. Isolationism is moral lethargy and uncharity for both individuals as well as societies; and when it is practiced in face of injustice, aggression, crime, hunger, ignorance and nonactualization of values, it is downright criminal, a thumbing of one's nose at God in defiance. Cynicism is a diametrical contradiction of God's affirmation of His purposiveness, of the meaningfulness of all that is. However, the real opposite of universalism is particularism which has taken the form of henotheism and tribalism in the past, and of racism and nationalism in our day. The Hebrew-Jewish tradition has never been entirely free of a strand of particularism under which its people regarded themselves as the elect of God for no rational or moral reason, but simply because God had chosen them. And their modern descendants have upheld the biological definition of Jew in face of their claim to an equal status which they had hitherto been denied by the nations.⁴⁰ The Christians of history have on the whole heeded the advice of St. Paul: "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek."⁴¹ It must be admitted though that from Augustine to the Crusades, Luther, Calvin and American Puritanism, the doctrine of predestination has served as cover for crass racism against other Christians and non-Christians. The Christians' conduct toward one another throughout their history, and toward the Africans, Asians and Americans during the last centuries, has brought dishonor to Paul as well as to Jesus who answered, when he was requested to give special attention to his kin because they were sons of Abraham: "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham!"⁴²

Islam has always been universalist; and the Muslims have, as far as this problem is concerned, the cleanest record in history. The religion, as represented by its supreme authority, the divine word or the Quran speaks with utmost emphasis and clarity, "O mankind, We have created you of one pair, male and female, and constituted you in tribes and peoples that you may complement one another. Nobler among you is only the

⁴⁰See, for example, Obert Gordis, *A Faith for Moderns* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 322 ff; or, for a more subtle presentation, the last two chapters of Martin Buber, *On Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).

⁴¹So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

⁴²And don't think that you can escape punishment by saying that Abraham is your ancestor. I tell you that God can take these rocks and make descendants for Abraham (Matthew 3:9).

more righteous and O men, fear your Lord who created you from one and the same soul.”⁴⁴ The qualities and equipment constitutive of humanness are recognized by Islam to be possessed by all mankind by nature. It does not discriminate against anybody, on the grounds that the said qualities or equipment were never present, or were once present but subsequently lost because of a guilt incurred by the individual, or by his ancestors or fellows. Nor does it bind this egalitarianism to a specific culture or civilization. The ethical principles constitutive of Islamic humanism are not denied of any human being even though he may belong to another faith; to another culture, civilization or age; or if, by some accident of his people’s involvement in history, he was or still is, a slave.⁴⁵ The universalism of Islam transcends all human distinctions. It reaches to the *fitrah*. There, it recognizes what nature has given or what, by virtue of being born, the man is entitled to.⁴⁶

Certainly Islam assigns privileges to knowledge and wisdom, to piety, virtue, righteousness, good works and self-eversion for God’s sake: “Unequal are those who have spent their wealth and exposed their lives in the cause of Allah, and those who remained behind”⁴⁷ And it states

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ (الحجرات: ١٣)

⁴³O mankind, We have generated you all from one pair, a male and a female. We have constituted you into peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Noblest among you is the most righteous. Allah is Omniscient, All-Knowing. (49:13).

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَجِدَّوْا ... (النساء: ١)

⁴⁴O mankind, fear your Lord Who created you all of a single soul (4:1).

⁴⁵Abū Ḥamid al Ghazālī, *Al Munqidh*...p. 58, quoted the ḥadīth as given in *Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī* as follows: “Every child is born with natural religion. It is the parents who later make of the child a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian.”

فَاقْبِرْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (الروم: ٣٠)

⁴⁶Turn your face to the primordial religion as a *ḥanīf*. That is the natural religion which Allah made innate to all humans. This pattern of Allah is immutable. It is the worthy religion; but most people do not know (30:30).

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاتِلُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاتِلِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاتِلِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ٩٥)

⁴⁷Surely they are not equal: Those believers who witness no battle despite their capacity to do so, and those who fight in the cause of Allah, sacrificing themselves and their wealth. Allah raised the latter a degree over the the former. To each, Allah promised a reward; but those who fight for His sake He will grant a greater reward (4:95).

unequivocally that such differentiation remains true only as long and insofar as the adherent is wiser, more pious, more righteous and self-exerting: "If they turn away from this cause, then God will bring forth another people [to take their place] who will not be like them."⁴⁸ All Semitic religions have represented the God-man relationship in terms of a covenant wherein man is to serve God and God is to bless man with crops, children, well-being and happiness; and all of them were keenly aware of the opposite, namely, that where man does not serve God, he would be invested with suffering and punishment. Only Judaism and Christianity have altered the "covenant," a concept which implies the two directional activities of God and man, into the "promise." For Judaism, this is the one directional commitment on the part of God to favor the Jews regardless of their piety or righteousness—nay, even in their a-whoring after other gods, to use the image of Hosea. And for the Christians, this is the unilateral commitment of God to love and ransom His "partner," namely man, even through he sins—nay, because, he sins—against God. Islam has maintained the Mesopotamian "covenant," which gives rise to obligation on both parties, the one to serve and the other to reward; and to privileges to both parties, the one to defy and not serve, and the other to punish.⁴⁹

... وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَلَكُمْ (محمد: ٣٨)

⁴⁸And if you turn yourselves away [from spending your wealth in the cause of Allah], Allah will exchange you for others who will not be like you (47:38).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالْمَسِيحِيَّةَ وَالنَّصَارَى وَاللَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلُوا صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (البقرة: ٦٢-٦٣) إِنَّ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَحْسَنَكُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا (الإسراء: ٧) ... وَإِنْ عُدْتُمْ عَدَاً (الإسراء: ٨)

⁴⁹Those who have believed [in this revelation], those who are Jews, Christians and Sabaeans, all those who have faith in Allah and the Day of Judgment, and who do good works, will have their reward with their Lord. No fear shall befall them and they will have no reason to grieve. A covenant We established with them raising over them the Mount of Sinai [the revelation that came to Moses in Sinai] that they shall hold firmly to its revealed commandments and abide always by them, in fear of Allah (2:62-63)... Whether you do good works or works of evil, the same will be reckoned unto you (17:7). And if you return to your evil deeds, We shall return to Our punishment of you (17:7-8).

VIII. LIFE AND WORLD-AFFIRMATION

It follows from the essence of religious experience in Islam that God has placed man in a world which is to be the theater for his service to Him. If God is not to be a malevolent trickster, man's service must be possible. This possibility requires that the world be malleable, capable of receiving man's action, transformable into the pattern which God has revealed. A complete ontological fitness of man and world to each other is a necessary consequence of the divine arrangement.

Unlike speculative Hindu thought and unlike Buddhism and Jainism, Islam does not regard the world as alien to righteousness or religious felicity. In itself, the world is not to be denied and combated. On the contrary, it is innocent and good, created precisely to the end of being used and enjoyed by man. The evil is not in it, but in its abuse by man. That is the villain which deserves to be denied and combated: the immoral use of the world. That is why the ethic of Islam is not that of asceticism. The Prophet (SAAS) has directed his followers against overextended rituals of worship, against celibacy, against exaggerated fasting, against pessimism and the morose mood. He ordered them to break the fast before performing the sunset prayer, to keep their bodies clean and their teeth brushed, to groom and perfume themselves and wear their best clothes when they congregate for prayer, to marry, to take their time to rest and to sleep and recreate themselves with sports and the arts. Naturally, Islam ordered its adherents to cultivate their faculties; to understand themselves, nature, and the world in which they live; to satisfy their innate craving for food, shelter, comfort, sex and reproduction; to realize balance and harmony in their relations with men and nature; to transform the earth into a producing orchard, a fertile farm and a beautiful garden, to express their understanding, craving, doing and realizing in works of aesthetic beauty. All this is history as well as culture. To make history and create culture and to do so well is the content of the divine will. It is righteousness. Indeed, Islam regarded every act capable of adding, however little, to the total value of the cosmos, as an act of worship, of service to God, provided of course it is entered into for His sake. Hence the Muslim has no obsession about his body, or the satisfaction of his instincts. As a conscious believer, such satisfaction is for him a "taste" of the joys of Paradise to come if he continues to fulfill his duty to God. "Who dared prohibit the niceties of this world and the delicacies of His providing?" the Quran asks rhetorically, and

answers emphatically: "They are indeed rightful for the enjoyment of the faithful in this world, and will all be purely theirs on the Day of Judgement."⁵⁰ Repeatedly, the Quran commands, "Eat, drink and enjoy yourselves, but do not abuse."⁵¹

This clearly presupposes honoring work, success and achievement in the transformation of nature. If the world is to yield its fruits, it must be cultivated. Thus the ancient Mesopotamian principle of agricultural service to God is recrystallized as the general transformation of the earth into the orchard wherein man is to find his nourishment and pleasure. The Quran affirms that God has created the world for man; and hence, that everything in creation is for man to use and to enjoy. The oceans, the rivers and mountains, indeed the skies and stars, sun and moon—all have been created for man's usufruct and aesthetic *zīnah* (pleasure).⁵²

The ummatism of Islam blesses man's will to power. "He who has not participated in at least one *bay'ah* (conventional election of a caliph, or a chief of state) dies a non-Muslim," says a famous tradition of the Prophet (SAAS).⁵³ It is God Who instituted the state and the political

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ ... (الأعراف: ٣٢)

⁵⁰Say, O Muhammad, who made prohibited the beautiful ornaments which Allah made available for His servants' enjoyment? Say, they belong to the believers in this life as well as in the life to come, in purity (7:32).

يَبْنِيءَ آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ (الأعراف: ٣١)

⁵¹O Sons of Adam, look to your adornment at every place of worship. And eat and drink, without excess. Allah loves not those who exceed the limits (7:31).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لَكُمْ لَكُمْ مِنْهُ لَحْمٌ طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ مِنْهُ حَبًّا تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاجِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (النحل: ١٤) وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ يَبُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ جُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا أَتْنَا وَمَتَّعْنَا إِلَى حِينٍ (النحل: ٨٠)

⁵²It is Allah who made the sea subservient to you, to extract from it soft meat to eat, beautiful jewelry to wear, and you see the ships ploughing it and bring to you of His bounty. Perchance, you will feel grateful (16:14). Allah has ordained for you your homes as places of rest and quiescence; the furs, wool and skins of animals as materials of which to make your clothing and tents and from which to derive other advantages during your life on earth (16:80).

⁵³*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, summary by al Mundhirī, vol. 2, p. 94, *ḥadīth* no. 1233. The text of the *ḥadīth* reads as follows: "Whoever pulls a person out of obedience [to the ruler of an Islamic order or state] will face Allah on the Day of Judgment devoid of cause. Whoever dies without having entered into any *bay'ah* will have died a *jāhili* [a non-Muslim]." It was told by 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar and narrated by Nafi'.

duty. The ruler is to execute the law of God; and the ruled is to obey the law, and to advise the ruler and help him in upholding the law. Both are to mobilize their efforts perpetually to extend this application depthwise in fulfillment of the requirement of totalism, and breadthwise in fulfillment of those of universalism. This is the ultimate realization of the absolute Islam seeks and declares possible in this world and in time. It has no use for a "Kingdom of God" conceived as an alternative to this kingdom, as a messianic age where what is denied here will be realized, in an "other world" in which the *summum bonum* is realizable at the cost of "this world." Such other worldly categories Islam has rejected altogether. With this rejection went equally all mortification of the flesh, world denial, monasticism and asceticism. So strong was this rejection by Islam and so strong was its world-affirmation that it was too often accused of "pure worldliness." The truth is that Islamic worldliness is not "pure," but tempered; and that is precisely the role played by the consciousness of God and the spirituality of Islamic life. Pursuit of the world, Islam commands, must be carried out as the fulfillment of God's commandment to pursue the world and hence, in obedience to the ethical limits set by God's other commandments. This is really what Islamic spirituality means: not a disembodied life of constant prayer and meditation, of self- and world-denial, and of pining after a kingdom hopelessly unrealizable in spacetime, but a full and innocent enjoyment of this world, combined with persistent activism for its betterment and regulated by ethical precepts opposed to exaggeration, injury, injustice, hatred and discrimination.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL ORDER

I. UNIQUENESS OF ISLAM

In its social dimension, Islam is absolutely unique among the religions and civilizations the world has known. In contrast to the religions of the world, Islam defines religion itself as the very business of life, the very matter of space-time, the very process of history — which it declares innocent, good and desirable in itself because it is the creation, the gift of God. The very business of life, the very matter of space-time, the very process of history, are in turn declared by Islam to constitute religion. They are piety and righteousness when well conducted, impiety and unrighteousness otherwise. Hence, Islam sees itself relevant to all of space-time, and seeks to determine all of history, all of creation, including all of mankind. What is of nature is innocent, good and desirable as such. Neither piety nor morality can be based on its condemnation. Islam wants humans to pursue what is of nature to eat and drink, to have lodging and comfort, to make of the world a garden, to enjoy sex, friendship and all the good things of life, to develop the sciences and to learn, to usufruct nature, to associate and build socio-political structures — in short, to do all these things, but to do them righteously, without lying and cheating, without stealing and exploiting, without injustice to self, to neighbor, to nature, to history. Islam calls man the *khalīfah*, precisely because to do all these things well is to fulfill the will of God.

As we shall see in the sequel, Islam regards the aforementioned goals as the natural objectives of all humans, their basic human rights; and it seeks to guarantee them. On this purpose, Islam found its social theory. The social order, it holds, is necessary if that purpose is to be realized at all. Granting that human association is natural, Islam adds to this quality that of necessity. The social order and its felicity, the *ummah* or *Dār al Salām* (the House of Peace) is the ultimate goal of Islam in space-time. The relevance of the religion of Islam to it is not only crucial, but definitive. Only a tiny section of the law of Islam has to do with

law deals with the social order. Indeed, even the personal aspects of the law, those which concern the rituals of worship, and the rituals themselves, acquire in Islam a social dimension so grave that denial or weakness of that dimension is *ipso facto* invalidation of them. Some rituals like *al zakāh* and *al ḥajj* are obviously social in their nature and effect. Others like *al ṣalāh* and *al ṣawm* are a little less so. But all Muslims recognize that prayer which does not "imply the cessation of evil" on the part of the worshipper is invalid;² and that pilgrimage which does not "bring social benefits to the pilgrims" is incomplete.³ The social order is the heart of Islam, and stands prior to the personal. Indeed Islam views the personal as a necessary prerequisite for the societal, and regards human character as warped if it rested with the personal and did not transcend it to the societal. It agrees with all the religions which cultivate the personalist values, and recognizes those values (the fear of God, faithfulness, purity of heart, humility, love for and commitment to the good, charity, the whole galaxy of meanings expressed by the traditional term *la bonté chrétienne*, all that Immanuel Kant could have meant by "the good will") as absolutely necessary; indeed, as conditions *sine qua non* of all virtue and righteousness. But it regards them and their pursuit as empty unless their cultivators effectively increase the good and benefit of others in society.

A. UNLIKE THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA

In some religions, particularly Upanishadic Hinduism and Buddhism, the world is regarded as evil, and salvation or felicity is understood as its negation, namely, as freedom from the world. Moreover, these

¹The larger portion of the corpus of Islamic law belongs to *mu'āmalāt* which is obviously social in its purport. If the portions concerning the state, the family, the judiciary and criminal law, which are equally social, are added to *mu'āmalāt*, they would constitute all but a small fraction of the corpus, which deals with rituals and personal ethics.

... إِبْرَ الْصَّلَاةِ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ... (العنكبوت: ٤٥)

²The *Ṣalāh* prohibits the works of shame and evil, the sinful acts (29:45).

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ فِئَامٍ بِأَيِّدٍ مِنْ كُلِّ فِجٍّ عَمِيقٍ لِشَهِدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ ... (الحج: ٢٧-٢٨)

³Proclaim the pilgrimage a duty to all. People will come [to perform it] on foot or riding from every corner of the world, that they may achieve benefits provided for them therein (22:27-28).

religions hold salvation to be a personal, individualistic affair, since they define it in terms of states of consciousness which can only be personal. Interaction with the world, with a view to promoting it, and hence in increasing it, intensifying the objectification process within it, is evil. Interaction with the world is tolerated at all when its object is the opposite, namely, achieving total freedom from the world's clutches, from its *karma* (the law of its self-perpetuation), for the subject alone—in Hinduism, or for the subjects as well as others, and hence in missionary activity—in Buddhism. In both cases, the personal dimension is not only primary but constitutive by itself of the whole process of ethics and salvation. On the other hand, the social action of man, whether in the political or the economic field, is essentially evil, for by nature, it is meant to prolong or increase the world, i.e., the biological, material, economic and political life, in short—the world.⁴ If the Hindus have developed a social order—a state, an empire, a civilization, a distinctive human community persisting to this day, they did that in deviation from their Upanishadic vision. If their social order has even found sanction in their religious tradition, it did so on sufferance, i.e., as a compromise with the inevitable, a tolerance of that which Brahman would be better off without. The Buddhists, on the other hand, could affirm and give positive support to the political effort of an Ashoka, for example, as an attempt to help others achieve the desired release from the world. In this regard, the Buddha has organized a social order in the *sangha*, the first community of monks or persons in search of salvation.⁵

B. UNLIKE JUDAISM

At the other end of the spectrum, and no less diametrically opposed to Indian religiosity, is the case of the Hebrews. As they have seen themselves, and had their vision recorded in their scripture, the Torah, they constitute a people apart from mankind. They are God's "sons and daughters," whose special relation to the Creator demands their differentiation from the rest. The revealed law of God applies to them, not to the others. The social order it enhances by its imperatives and prohibitions belongs to them alone. Theirs was a tribalist religion which defined good and evil in terms of tribalist benefit and harm. Their social order

⁴Murti. *The Central Philosophy...* vol. 1, p. 19; Robert Zaehner. *Hinduism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 125-26.

⁵John B. Noss, *Man's Religions* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 5th ed. pp. 126-27.

had a biological base: only born-Jews are Jews, and conversion of non-Jews to Judaism must be emphatically discouraged and kept at a minimum. That is the racism of *jāhiliyah*, without the cult of values, *murū'ah* (courage, chivalry, generosity), attenuating its basic evil. For Hebrew history, as idealized or simply sanctified by the Torah, the prophetic and other literature constituting the Old Testament is, as it is commonly known, full of the very opposites of these values.⁶ Here, with the Hebrews and their descendants, the Jews, survival of the tribe is pursued at any price to honor or justice; and survival of the race, at any price to piety or morality. Even Israel's own holiest social laws—the laws against incest and adultery—are not immune against breach, when continuity of “the seed of Abraham is in question”.⁷

C. UNLIKE CHRISTIANITY

Christianity began as a reaction to this terrible ethnocentrism which, by the time of Christ, had fossilized into dispirited legalism. Necessarily, the call of Jesus was universalist, and personalist or internalist. Indeed, Jesus was so sensitive to the evils of Jewish racism that he got angry at the slight suggestion that his own relatives deserve more because they were his relatives.⁸ This call of Jesus, whose essence is thoroughly ethical (his God and his scripture being essentially identical with those of the Jews) would have developed into a reform movement correcting the exaggerations of the Jews had its adherents remained Semites, i.e., the Palestinians and their neighbors. But, taken over by the Hellenes, the call was transubstantiated into another “mystery religion”.⁹ The transcendent God of the Semites became a “father” in a trinity whose second member was constructed in the image of Mithras and Adonis, dying and rising to provide salvation through catharsis.¹⁰ Jesus' inter-

⁶Ismā'il R. al Fārūqī, *Uṣūl al Ṣaḥyūniyah fī al Dīn al Yahūdī*, (Cairo: Maḥad al Dirāsāt al 'Arabīyah al 'Alīyah, 1963).

⁷The younger daughter also had a son, whom she named Benammi (Genesis 19:38).

⁸Jesus was still talking to the people when his mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside, asking to speak with him. So one of the people there said to him, “Look, your mother and brothers are standing outside, and they want to speak with you.” Jesus answered, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” Then he pointed to his disciples and said, “Look! Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does what my father in heaven wants him to do is my brother, my sister, and my mother” (Matthew 12:46-50). This is also recounted in (Mark 3:31-35).

⁹Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 210.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 117, 134; M. John Robertson, *Pagan Christs* (Secaucus, N.J.: University Books, 1911), p. 108 ff; Carl Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and Its Non-Jewish Sources* tr. Robert G. Nisbet (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), pp. 182 ff.

nalism was wedded to the morbid hatred of matter characteristic of Gnosticism; and his critical attitude toward Jewish tribalist politics into a totalist condemnation of the state as such, of all political life. The separation of citizens from slaves and the civil and political impotence of the latter, was the beginning of the doctrine of separation of Church and state. That the Christian Church has achieved political dominion, and a "theory of the two swords" was at one period commonly accepted political theory, but ran against the pristine Christian conscience. That conscience rebelled in the person of Luther and pushed the Church back into the cage its early doctrine had built around it. Today, hardly any Christian subscribes to the Middle Ages theory. Hardly any Christian would agree to give the Church a share in the political life, other than that of the detached critic.¹¹

Christianity today has no theory of society.¹² Its condemnation of space-time, of the political process, its holding of every worldly activity, the social order itself, as futile and irrelevant to the salvific process, precludes it from having a theory, apart from regarding the social order as necessarily evil, standing outside the "order of grace." Even the Church, as far as its worldly existence is concerned (not its eternal existence as body of Christ which is neither of nor in this world) is a transient palliative where charity and faith are the order of the day, but where neither programmatic action nor law are worth the effort; where history itself is irrelevant and devoid of importance. We should recognize that since the Industrial Revolution, Christian thinkers in Europe and North America have increasingly asked for and worked out plans of higher measures of social justice in the name of Christianity. But all their work so far has not shaken Christianity out of its anti-worldliness. Though necessary and highly beneficial to alleviate the miseries of the poor or to inject a sense of morality and justice into the political system, intellectually, their work has been worthless.¹³ What is indeed a reform of the basic premises of the faith which hardly anyone has yet dared to do; namely, the nature of God, the purpose of creation, the nature and destiny of man. Unless this is done, Christian thought will remain at contradiction with itself, whatever advances it may make on blueprints for social justice.

¹¹Karl Barth, *Against the Stream* (London: SCM Press, 1954), pp. 29-31.

¹²Reinhold Niebur, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Scribner's, 1955).

¹³See this author's *Christian Ethics*, pp. 279 ff.

D. UNLIKE MODERN SECULARISM

Evidently, the social system of Islam is the diametrical contrary of modern secularism. The latter seeks to remove the public affairs of society from every possible determination by religion. Its main argument, as the history of secularism in the West has presented it, is that religion is a vested interest of one section of society, the Church, over all others. Since the internal structure and the decision-making process of the Church are authoritarian, and since all society is not therein represented, determination of public affairs by the Church is tantamount to tyranny, a form of exploitation and suppression of the nation by one group. This argument is certainly true of the West where the Catholic Church represented a part of the population, and where religion, namely, Catholic Christianity, established itself as authoritarian, and developed vested interests in competition with the people. Because the Catholic Church was for many long centuries the wielder of the greatest political and economic power in Europe, it was natural for any movement of social, political and economic liberation to assume the form of a struggle against the Church.¹⁴

More recently, secularism has presented its case as the opposition to the determination of public affairs by values stemming from religion, a source which it declares untrustworthy.¹⁵ That source, it is claimed, is irrational, superstitious and dogmatic—charges with which one can sympathize when directed against Christianity and those religions which based their doctrines upon dogma; or when directed against other religions in certain decaying periods of their history. But it is irrelevant to those religions endowed with a natural—i.e., rational—theology which acknowledges the universal validity of the criteria of reason; or to those religions seeking to outgrow their period of stagnation and decay by rational appeal to premises which they present critically, as embodying real humanistic values. In most cases, however, secularism is pursued on superficial grounds claiming its identification with the age of science, with realism and progress while religion is charged with the promulgation of the opposite values—a claim at the farthest possible remove from the truth. Indeed, the claim is in most cases hypocritical since no society

¹⁴For references to the long list of theories and theoreticians who analyzed the Reformation into its social, economic, political, and ethnic components, see: *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, s.v. "Reformation" (I. Theories of the Reformation), vol. 9, pp. 417-418.

¹⁵Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan, 1956).

can claim determination of its affairs by no values at all, or by values totally not derived from its own religious legacy.

II. AL TAWHĪD AND SOCIETISM

To acknowledge that there is no god but Allah (SWT) is to recognize Him as sole Creator, Lord and Judge of the world. It follows from this witnessing that man was created for a purpose, since God does not work in vain; and that this purpose is the realization of the divine will as it pertains to this world in which human life finds its theater. This commits the Muslim to take space and time seriously, since it is his fulfillment of the divine patterns pertinent to that space and that time in which he stands that constitutes his felicity, or his damnation. God has commanded him to act and to do so in cooperation with his fellows. Under *al tawhīd* the life of the Muslim falls under constant monitorship. Allah (SWT) knows everything, and everything is recorded and counts for its author whether for good or ill. God's will is indeed relevant, and His patterns are to be observed. Man's objective therefore ought to be the worldwide actualization of the divine patterns.

In His Holy Book, God commanded: "Let there be of you an *ummah* which calls [humanity] to righteousness, which enjoins the good and forbids the evil. Only such an *ummah* is felicitous."¹⁶ This command is the charter of the *ummah*, creating it as well as giving it its constitution. It is an association of humans for the purpose of actualizing the will of God. It is a cosmic institution, since only through such association does the higher, i.e., moral, part of the divine will become history. Because being moral requires the freedom of the agent, the *ummah* which is an association of moral agents, must be free and open. It is guided in its life by the divine will alone which constitutes its *raison d'être*.¹⁷

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
(آل عمران: ١٠٤)

¹⁶Let there be of you an *ummah* which calls men to good works and prohibits evil. Such are the felicitous (3:104).

كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ...
(آل عمران: ١١٠)

¹⁷You are the best *ummah* brought forth unto mankind, for you enjoin the good works, prohibit the evil and have faith in Allah (3:110)

The divine will has been revealed in the Quran and the *sunnah* of the Prophet (SAAS). It is in nature, empirically or actually, for reason to discover and establish; and it is in nature potentially for the faculties of reason and intuition to deduce or to perceive. Furthermore, the divine will has been figurized in the Arabic language of the Quran, and concretized in the deeds of the Prophet (SAAS). The *hadith* is its form *in percipi*. It has been translated into prescriptions for daily observance by the Prophet (SAAS), his companions (RAA) and the jurists of the *ummah*. Whereas in its normative form the law is divine and immutable, it is in its perspective form always subject to the requisites of justice and equity, to the empirical and spiritual advantage of the individual and the *ummah*.

The *ummah*, therefore, is ruled neither by its rules, nor by its people, the ruled. Both of them are under the law. The ruler is a mere executor of the law. The rules, whether the agent who acts or the patient who suffers the action of others, are instruments of instantiation of the law. The *ummah* is not a legislative assembly; it does not make the law. Nor is the law an expression of the general will of the people. The law is divine. It comes from God. As such, it is supreme. When the Muslim says, "No sovereignty but to Allah," or "Allah is the sole King, Sovereign, Lord, Master," which is the very core and essence of his religious experience, he commits himself to obey the will of God. God, the Sovereign, holds absolute power over all creation. In the *ummah*, the holder of political power is the divine law, not the ruler who merely executes it. Hence, the *ummah* is a nomocracy, a republic where rule belongs to the law. Obviously, the *ummah* is not a "theocracy" since no one may assume the divine post and rule in the name of God. It is not a "democracy," an "oligarchy" or an "autocracy" since nobody, whether the individual, a group or the totality of people, enjoys as such any right to rule. None of them is a source of the law so that it can be said that the purpose of political rule is satisfaction of that person, group, or totality. The *ummah's* existence and action are legitimate when they fulfill the divine commandments. The moment Islamic law is no longer enforced in the *ummah's* affairs, that *ummah* loses its Islamic privilege. It is then ripe for revolution. Indeed, in such a case, revolution is the duty of the Muslim citizens, which should be observed in fulfillment of the divine commandment, "Let there be of you an *ummah*" ¹⁸

¹⁸Ibid.

III. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Realization of the divine will, or actualization of value, requires the *ummah*, i.e., a corporate body of humans held together and moved to action by the divine will. The need for the *ummah* is dictated by the following consideration, all of which flows from the nature of religious experience in Islam.

A. PUBLIC NATURE OF THE ISLAMIC LIFE

In the ethic of intention where moral merit is a function of the self's commitment in its personal moment, and hence of the subject's state of consciousness, there can be no judge other than the subject's own conscience — and God. For, since the matter is entirely personal and subjective, no one knows the purity of the heart, of its motivation and its inner workings, except the subject himself. That is why any social system based on the ethic of intent has to operate on an honor system where the judge is always the person's conscience. The only role which another person may plan in the process is that of advisor. Even where conscience has declared the moral agent guilty and passed a verdict of atonement or compensation, it alone is the judge of the implementation of the judgement. At any rate, the transformation sought is of conscience, in, by and through conscience. Obviously, only conscience is needed to determine the guilt as well as the reform. The real existence of the neighbor, of "other men" is not necessary. Such could well be the "idea" of neighbor or other men, since presence (even if only a hallucination) of this idea in the subject is sufficient to make his will, act or intention, moral. It is otherwise with the ethics of action, where space-time has been disturbed and measurable effects have been wrought which constitute the merit or demerit of the deed. Here, law is not possible; it is necessary, along with its organs of research, legislation, promulgation, a hierarchial judiciary system and an executive machinery. These organs and machineries are constitutive parts and functions of society, i.e., of the *ummah*. This in no way invalidates the conscience which continues to operate as well here as in the ethics of intent. Over and beyond it, the new machinery of society (the legislative, judicial and executive) has to enter the field and govern men's lives; nor men's intentions, but their deflections of the causal nexus of creation, their distur-

bance for better or worse of nature's cosmic equilibrium. Beyond the conscience, therefore, Islam set up the law; and beyond the church and clergyman as elder, teacher and exemplar, it set up the court of law and the state.

B. NEED FOR A REAL-EXISTENT, CONCRETE, SOCIAL FABRIC

It follows from Islam's conception of the moral religious imperative as the transformation of space-time, and of the nature of the *amānah* (divine trust) as a moral value, that Islam is impossible without mankind and the world. It is obvious that a transformation of space cannot take place unless there is space-time and it exists in such relation to mankind, its users, as it does, for unless the earth is usufructed by men, its transformation is meaningless. It cannot take place more than once, and certainly not throughout time as Islam demands, unless the fruits of transformation are consumed by mankind. A toiling, suffering and enjoying mankind is then necessary, one which cannot live or survive without social order.

As for the realization of the moral part of the divine will, it is possible only in the context of human interrelationships such as exist among members of a social order. For the *matériel* of a moral value is precisely the fabric of human relations and inter-human intercourse. Where there is no buying and selling and no exchange of goods and services, for instance, there can be no exercise of equity and honesty, *ipso facto*. Where there is no scarcity, where some human beings do not stand in abundance and others in want, and where nobody suffers and needs comforting, there can be no exercise of charity. Society, then, as we know it today, is the *sine qua non* condition of morality, for it is no more and no less than the context of free individuals interacting with one another and mutually affecting creation in one another's person. *A fortiori*, therefore, society is a condition of religious *falāḥ*. Conversely, no society can continue to exist, or survive in the long run, without morality. Otherwise, there would be no escape from what Thomas Hobbes called the *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Even a band of bandits has to establish some moral discipline for its members if it is to continue as a band of bandits.

C. RELEVANCE OF AXIOLOGY

Fulfillment of the divine will necessitates knowledge of it. This knowledge is not the same under individualism as under societism, because the divine will itself is not the same in the views of the two ideologies. Firstly, societal pursuit of value produces qualitatively different results from the personal. Under societism, the order of rank of any given value is different because everything has to be reconsidered in light of the interest of the societal whole. From this perspective, new axiological relations obtain between various values; old antinomies may be solved and new ones discovered; and, in fact, new values may be established which could have never been the object of consciousness on the personal level. Secondly, while the ought-to-be depends upon value alone and is indeed only a modality of it; the ought-to-do of value is inextricably connected with the real existential materials it is supposed to transform. A fuller realization of value which is the first desideratum of deontology, may not be possible without consideration of all possible ought-to-do's of that value. Ought-to-do's vary structurally from one theater of realization to another. The societal theater does not mean a mere quantitative increase. Thirdly, because values are transitive, i.e., because they move other persons besides those upon whom they first exerted their moving appeal whenever their realization is public, it would be a definite loss to the total value of the universe if their transitivity is in any way restricted, for group perception and group actualization may issue in the discovery of a "field of causes and effects" which none can fathom *a priori*. Fourthly, there is the benefit of an existential dialectic of vision and fulfillment which far transcends anything theoretical discussion can bring.

IV. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The last group of considerations makes it imperative that the realization of the divine will be societal. Together with the first two axioms of the ethic of action and the real existence of an ongoing social fabric these considerations, as constitutive of Islamic religious experience, imply three major principles affecting the practice, activity or life of Islamic society. These are universalism, totalism and freedom.

A. NO PARTICULARISM

The identification of the divine will with value realizes the latter from all particular bodies usually cognized as normative sources of value, such as tribe, race, land and culture. Since God alone is God, and every other being is a creature, and the two orders of reality are mutually exclusive, all creatures are equally creaturely. This means that the unity of God, understood as unity of truth as well as value, implies that value is value for all, and so, independently of all; that moral obligation and ethical vocation, being predicated of the creature, fall equally upon all. Just as the patterns of God in nature apply to all of creation, thereby making creation an orderly cosmos, so His will for man applies to the whole of mankind. As far as ethical vocation is concerned, any distinction between man and man is a threat to the unity of value and, in consequence, to the unity of God. Value, or the moral imperative, is therefore one for all. Its claim or obligatoriness, its ought-to-be and ought-to-do, cannot be restricted to any segment of humanity.¹⁹

Two consequence follows from this principle for Islamic society. In the first place, Islamic society can never restrict itself to the members of any tribe, nation, race or group. Certainly it can, indeed must, begin somewhere, with somebody. And for a limited time, in a limited way, it can impose any restrictions it likes under considerations of strategy. But it can never close its doors on principle; nor can it ever rest until it has included all mankind. It would have betrayed its very *raison d'être* if it ever hindered any man from joining its ranks. Man's right and title

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ نَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (البقرة: ٤٤) مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِمَّا
ذَكَرَ أَوْ أَنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ
(النحل: ٩٧) إِنْ أَلَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكُ حَسَنَةً يُضْعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَّدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ٤٠)
لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ نَجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ
ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ١١٤)

¹⁹Would you command the people to do good works and absolve yourselves from the same? Would you do this while in full possession of the Book? Will you contradict yourself so manifestly? (2:44)... Whoever does a good deed out of faith in Allah, whether male or female, shall be granted a good life and shall be rewarded in proportion to the best of their deeds (16:97). Allah does not deprive anyone of an atom's weight of good deeds he has earned. The reward for good deeds is double. Great reward from Allah awaits good deeds (4:40)... Much of their deliberations are futile, save for the enjoining of charity, a good deed, or peace-making among people. Whoever performs any of these for the sake of Allah and in obedience to Him will be granted a great reward (4:114).

to membership is a natural birthright conferred upon him by his very creatureliness. In the second place, Islamic society must expand to include humanity. It cannot rest until it has done so and succeeded. The society's claim to Islamicity, and hence to legitimacy under Islam, issues from its activist acquiescence to the call of God.²⁰ This call is not merely a call to existence, nor to affluence and the pursuit of personal happiness, nor to an Islamic existence of a number of humans, but a call to transform all men, all space, and all time. Islamic society is both the means and the end. It is the end when it covers it all.

The utilitarian theories of society run counter to the Islamic claim because they represent society as an instrument of material survival, as a means to specialized labor and additional comfort. Though these are certainly elements in the growth of Islamic society, to explain society in their terms is to commit the reductionist fallacy.²¹ The other theories which do not require society to expand on the grounds of "chosen people," race, or language and culture, are relativist; and they contradict Islamic universalism as well as *al tawhīd*.

The two consequences aforementioned have been well understood by Muslims throughout history. The Quranic verse proclaiming all men descended from one and the same pair, asserted that men were constituted into peoples and nations that they may cooperate and mutually enrich one another.²² This and other similar verses have been on every lip,²³ as is the Prophet's proclamation at his farewell pilgrimage: "All men issue from Adam and Adam issued from dust. Therefore, no Arab may claim distinction over a non-Arab except in piety and righteousness."²⁴

ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا تَفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ
مِّنْ رُّسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ (البقرة: ٢٨٥)

²⁰The Prophet Muhammad believes in the truth of what was revealed to him, and so do the believers. All of them believe in Allah, His angels, books and other prophets. They do not discriminate between the prophets of Allah. Rather, they acknowledge what was sent through them, obey Allah and seek His forgiveness. To Him is everybody's ultimate return (2:285).

²¹Harold A. Larrabee, *Reliable Knowledge* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945), pp. 305-6.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَاهُ...
(الحجرات: ١٣)

²²O Mankind, We created you male and female; and We constituted you into peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Noblest among you is the most righteous (49:13).

²³Such are the innumerable verses of the Qur'an which affirm the felicity of those who believe and do good deeds, or of the pious, the righteous, etc, which are exempted from a general condemnatory judgment, or a general derogatory description of all humankind.

²⁴Duwaydar, *Ṣuwar...*, p. 593.

Evidently opposed to these implied principles of Islamic society, tribalism and nationalism are identical in their foundation; though the "tribe" of the one may be far more restricted and smaller than the "nation" of the other. Both claim that value is value for members of one group only because, they argue, it is the group that makes values what they are. It is their source and creator. This view at once entitles every other group to set up its own standard, its own value, if it so wishes; for "groupness" can never be shown to belong exclusively to any one group. Since it is the ultimate criterion, any number of men who constitute themselves into a group may claim the same right. Relativism, therefore, necessarily implies pluralism, and this *ex hypothesi* necessarily implies difference or divergence without supplying an overarching means valid for the contending groups. Here, if the contention is not solved by accidental similarity or identity of the two views, or by voluntary acquiescence of one group to the other, conflict becomes absolutely inevitable. The assumption here is that the group is the ultimate source of its own values, and hence that no standard transcending the group is valid in terms of which the issues and differences between the conflicting parties may be composed. On this very account the conflict is *ex hypothesi* insoluble. If, under his own terms of reference each contender conceives of the conflict as ultimate, there is no resource except *ad baculum*, with the resultant vanquishing or destruction of one by the other. Relativist axiology, however, does not permit any peace even to the victor who has vanquished his opponent, for just as being a cohesive group has enabled that group to establish and defend its case, any members within it has equal right to set itself up as a different group with a different cause. The larger group has no defence against its splinter sub-groups except force. Soon the fabric of society itself falls apart. Rival tribes, or clans within the same tribe—very much like the situation in Arabia which Islam confronted at the turn of the seventh century—would engage one another in endless and hopelessly insoluble conflicts. The history of Europe since the Reformation has hardly been different, though the struggling units were considerably larger.

Under Islam, we may conclude, there can be no discrimination between man and man. Islamic society is open; and every man may join it either as a constitutive member or as *dhimmī* (covenantor). Secondly, Islamic society must seek to expand itself to include mankind, or lose its claim to Islamicity. It may continue to exist as a Muslim community, waiting to be absorbed by another Islamic or non-Islamic community.

B. EVERYTHING IS RELEVANT

The second practical implication of *al tawhīd* for society may be defined as the application of Islamic society's determination to every department, aspect and concern of human living. The will of God, or value, includes all goodness wherever it is to be found; and goodness is certainly ubiquitous, found or capable of being found in all departments of human life. It follows that society ought to seek actualization of the divine will on all fronts wherever it can reach and influence that front for better.²⁵ This does not mean that society does not establish a hierarchy of priorities; and no one would cavil at it devoting a fair portion of its total energies to *al da'wah* (mission), defence, education, or economic development.

Islamic jurisprudence and ethics have conveniently classified human activities into five classes: obligatory, prohibited, recommended, recommended against, and neutral. Islam promulgated public laws, viz., the *shari'ah*, for the first pair. It projected a model of conduct out of the personalities of the Prophet (SAAS) and his companions (RAA), and taught its men and women to emulate it in their pursuit of the second pair. Further, Islam developed a style of life which it promulgated through folklore, poetry, court pageantry and public functions. Although these measures differ in the degree of coercion and censure they prescribe against the violators, and of praise and respect in favor of the conformers, they are one in their assumption of the relevance of Islam to the activities they govern. Any Islamic society would lose its claim to Islamicity if it were to restrict its activities to any one or two departments of life. In that case, it would degenerate into a public corporation club, or cooperative society whose justification is the satisfaction of one or more economic, social, cultural or political needs of its members. Islamic society is consistent because it is ideological. What it prescribed for itself, it sought to get implemented by the state. Totalism was therefore not only a desideratum for society but an administrative policy for the state (caliphate) as well.

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ (الحج: ٤١)

²⁵Righteous are those who, if given dominion on earth, uphold the *ṣalāh*, pay the *zakaḥ* with good heart, enjoin kindness and prohibit all deeds of evil. To Allah will be the reckoning for all things (22:41).

Such consistency is wanting in Western society because society and state are assigned different roles. Whereas the societies do in fact exercise great power in homogenizing their citizens and acculturating the newcomers, their status is restricted in their exercise of power, largely because of the long history of abuse and struggle between kingship, feudalism, the Church and the masses. In consequence, constitutionalism means for them that political power may be used by the state only to the minimum extent necessary to establish internal peace, to maintain an external defence and to provide the minimum services required by the public welfare.²⁶ Only in very recent times did the concepts arise of a public welfare for the destitute, of recreation and leisure, of control of basic industries and services.²⁷ The basis on which the state's political power was restricted in the past is the principle that the pre-social state of nature is good and hence needs no interference by organized society, or that it is evil and hence needs the minimum power necessary for restraining it.²⁸ The latter view, which is the more common, bolstered its position with the skeptic's claim that the good is unknowable, that all that is given is diversity of desire and moral purpose, and hence that relativism, or *laissez-faire*, is the only alternative to tyranny. None of these bases agree with the Islamic view that all nature is good and innocent; that nature needs to be remolded so as to fulfill the divine pattern; that the divine will, or the good, is knowable through reason as well as revelation; that in this exercise, man may do right as well as wrong but he is responsible for either.

C. RESPONSIBILITY

The third practical implication of *al tawhīd* for society is the principle of responsibility. Totalism is forever exposed to becoming totalitarianism, where regimentation and collectivism rob society's effort of achieving moral value. Another principle is hence needed to guard against such degeneration.

Every man, Islām tells us, is *mukallaf* (charged) with the realization of the divine will. This *taklīf* is based on his natural endowment which

²⁶See this author's analysis of the relevance of Christianity to society in his *Christian Ethics*, chap. VII, pp. 248 ff.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 293-94.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 254-56.

constitutes his *sensus communis* which he shares with humanity. This innate but educable *sensus* is the faculty by which he recognizes his Creator and perceives His will as the ought-to-be of his life. Islam therefore not only declares every man responsible but categorically denies every assumption of non-*taklīf* to any being who is neither a child nor clinically deficient. It expects every man to carry his own personal burden in full consciousness; and metes out its respect in proportion to his realization of that responsibility. This follows from the nature of the *amānah*, entrusted by God to man. Certainly God could have created a world in which value is realized as irrefragable, with the necessity of natural law. In fact He did create such a world, namely, nature. Only man He fashioned differently, endowing him with the freedom to realize or violate the divine will and thus enabling him to be responsible for his deeds. This responsibility is of the essence of morality, for wherever it is absent, no deed can have moral value, and the higher, greater part of the divine will will not be realized. Consequently, the divine will would be frustrated; and a God Who suffers frustration is not the One, Transcendent and Absolute God of *al tawhīd*.

Totalist and universalist as it may be, value realization by Islamic society must be responsible if it is to be morally worthy. The Quran has emphasized the personal character of responsibility and denied every possibility of vicarious responsibility, whether for the good deed or for the ill.²⁹ Hence it decreed that there shall be no coercion;³⁰ and required at least every religiously-worthy act to be prefaced by the subject's *nīyah* (personal, internal decision) to take it, as a final proof of its deliberateness, of the subject's responsibility.

Responsibility arises from moral vision, that is, the perception of

... فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ. وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ (يونس: ١٠٨)
 ... وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ... (الإسراء: ١٥) فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ
 مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ. (الزلزلة: ٧-٨)

²⁹Whoever follows the revelation which has just come from Allah is rightly guided. This will be reckoned for him. Whoever goes astray does so at his own cost. I [Muhammad] was not sent to compel you to follow me [but to persuade and warn] (10:108)... Nobody is responsible for the deeds of another (17:15)... Whoever does an atom's weight of good or evil deeds will be judged accordingly (99:7-8).

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ... (البقرة: ٢٥٦) ... أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ (يونس: ٩٩)

³⁰No compulsion in religion (2:256)... Would you [Muhammad] compel the people to believe?
 (Assumedly not.) (10:100)

values, of their ought-to-be's and ought-to-do's in their proper order of rank. Because men can be coerced to do but never to perceive, moral responsibility provides its own guarantee. When coercion has taken place, responsibility is absent and morality has in fact been violated. But granted value-perception cannot be coerced, it can certainly be induced through teaching, whether by concepts or percepts, through dialectics and through example. This defines the work of Islamic society in these terms: to assist the whole of mankind to perceive and, having perceived, to actualize the values constitutive of the divine will. This is education in its noblest and greatest sense. Islamic society is a school of cosmic size where every effort is calculated to be educative; to the end that the realization of value such education would engender may be responsible and hence moral. For only thus would be the higher scales of the divine will be actualized.

Such are the implications of *al tawhīd* for social theory. In effect, these implications produce the *ummah*: a corporate, organic, civic body, which is not limited to land, people, race, culture; universalist, totalist, and responsible in its corporate life as well as in that of every one of its members; and indispensable for every man's achievement of happiness in this world and the next, for every actualization of the divine will in space-time.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE UMMAH

I. TERMINOLOGY

The social order of Islam is therefore unique. None of the terms known in the Western languages can be used to refer to it. In English the expression "social order" means the system of values or principles which govern the life of a society. Any system of any values or principles qualifies for the appellation, since even what may be described as chaos is a form or order of social living. Hence, it is proper to speak of a capitalist, communist, democratic, fascist social order, or an English, American, French, Chinese or Indian social order. When it comes to "social," the adjectival derivative from society, the meaning is more restricted. The term "society" means a voluntary grouping of humans designed to achieve certain ends (what the Germans would more precisely call *Gesellschaft*. It is not to be confused with "community" which is defined as the involuntary grouping of humans who are one or alike in race, language, history, culture, geography. The Germans call the latter *Gemeinschaft*. "Society" and "community" may and may not coincide. In the case of the French and of the English, for example, they do; in that of the Germans, the Slavs and Chinese, they do not. Community membership is natural and inevitable, except by emigration, naturalization, and systematic acculturation. Society membership, *per contra*, is instant; for it is the result of decision. That is why it is nearly always restricted in effect to some common denominator or denominators shared by the members of the group. Such denominators may vary from economic interest such as the members of a cooperative housing society enjoy, to a whole range of cultural values implied when we designate a specific class or group within the group.¹ The political entity is hardly ever a society. Though some exceptions may be found (Switzerland,

¹In the West, in modern times, a common need and a decision to meet it have provided the foundation for economic associations such as commercial companies, corporations and cooperative societies of all kinds (credit and thrift, consumers, housing, marketing, etc.). But never for a state.

Yugoslavia [and formerly] the U.S.S.R.), they are all of recent origin and the result of special factors. Most political entities coincide with communities. If not total, their coincidence is nearly so, a fact which justifies the political entity as a "nation" as well. Hence, it is possible in Western political theory to define the state as a territory with definite boundaries within which lives a specific community whose affairs are governed by a sovereign power capable of enforcing its decisions.²

In Islam, two terms corresponding to community are *sha'b* and *qawm*. They may not be used to denote society without violence to their meaning, i.e., to the consciousness of the people denoted by the appellation.³ The Arabs, Turks and Persians are each a *sha'b* or a *qawm*, if we mean thereby to speak of them as communities varying from one another; if our purpose is to focus on their differences in language, customs, geography, genealogy, etc. But they are not "societies," either individually, or severally, insofar as this category is not applicable to them exclusively, but would at once include the Malays, Indians, Hausas, Bantus and Slavs, etc. Insofar as all these communities and more share in Islam, in its culture and civilization, they are integral parts of one and the same *ummah* or "society" of Islam. The *ummah* is a universal society⁴ whose membership includes the widest possible variety of ethnicities or communities, but whose commitment to Islam binds them to a specific social order. The matter is further complicated by the fact that each one of the Muslim communities is the *ummah*, the microcosm. For it is necessarily and legitimately responsible for speaking and acting for the world-*ummah* as long as the latter has no legally-constituted government or institution capable of enforcing Islamic law, of effectively representing the universal *ummah*, or of assuming responsibility therefor. The reason for this is the fact that it is Islam which provides them with all the important categories of culture and civilization, of social differentiation and classification, of evaluation in all personal, and most social

That is supposed to rest exclusively on ethnic characteristics which are innately common, and hence permanent, See: Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press 1962), p. 393.

²This is the traditional, classical definition of the state in Western culture. It is the opposite of the Islamic state which is limited neither by territory, nor by ethnic, cultural, religious, or political boundaries. See, for example, George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947), pp. 764-65; and James B. Hastings, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, s.v. "The State."

³Al Zubaydī. *Taj al 'Arūs* s.v. q-w-m, vol. 9.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ (الأنبياء: ٩٢)

⁴This is your *ummah*—one, united and integral—and I am your Lord. Serve Me (21:92).

and inter-societal affairs. Hence, there is far more justification for their identification on the basis of Islam which they share with the world Muslim brotherhood than on the basis which makes them a community. The latter, i.e., the differing elements which their respective communities furnish, are not denied; but being relatively unimportant in comparison with those which Islam provides for them, they are recognized and put in the places which properly belong to them.

The term *ummah* is not translatable and must be taken in its original Islamic Arabic form. It is not synonymous with "the people," or "the nation" or "the state," expressions which are always determined by either race, geography, language and history, or any combination of them. On the other hand, the *ummah* is translocal, not determined at all by geography considerations. Its territory is not only the whole earth, but all of creation. Neither is the *ummah* restricted to any race. It is trans-racial and regards all humanity as its actual or potential members. Nor is the *ummah* the "state" because it is a transtotal world-state, within which it may include and contain several "states." Equally, the constituents of the *ummah* constitute the *ummah* even though they may not fall under the political sovereignty of one state, not even that of the Islamic state. The *ummah* is a sort of "United Nations" with one strong and comprehensive ideology, a world-government and a world-army to enforce its decisions. The *ummah* is the social order of Islam; and the movement which pursues it, or seeks to actualize its goals, is ummatism.⁵

II. NATURE OF THE UMMAH

A. AGAINST ETHNOCENTRISM

The social order of Islam is universal, enveloping the whole of mankind without exception. By virtue of being human, of being born, every person is an actual member of the social order, or a potential member whose recruitment is the duty of all other members.⁶ Islam recognizes the nature

⁵See this author's *On Arabism: 'Urūbah and Religion: An Analysis of the Fundamental Ideas of Arabism and of Islam as Its Highest Moment of Consciousness* (Amsterdam; Djambatan, 1962), chap. VI.

⁶The obligatory nature of the *Shari'ah*, concerning the divine imperatives, falls on all humans without exception or discrimination, because the desiderata of values of Islam are so for all. Hence, every human being ought to be called to Islam by the Muslims, who already acknowledge this normativeness of the contents of the Islamic revelation. For further analysis of this point, see this author's "On the Nature of Islamic *Da'wah*," *International Review of Mission*, vol. 65, no. 260 (October 1976).

grouping of humans into families, tribes and nations, as a God-created and God-ordained arrangement.⁷ But it rejects every ultimization of such groupings as definitive of man, as constituting a final criterion of good and evil. While extending the legal notion of the "family" to include all the relatives who can show any genealogical relation to one another however remote, and governing their mutual relations of inheritance and support by law, Islam established for the larger groupings of tribes and nations the function of complementing and cooperating with one another for the benefit of all.⁸ Above all humans, individuals as well as groups, stands the law. Ethnic diversity is a fact. It is also to a certain measure a desideratum. Beyond that measure, Islam regards it as *matériel*, subject to the dictates of the law. When ethnicity becomes ethnocentrism, Islam condemns it as *kufir* (apostasy), because it implies the setting up of another source for the law, for good and evil; namely, the ethnicity itself. Juristically, ethnic considerations fall within the realm of the *mubāh* (permissible), and is limited to the realms of the *ḥarām* (the prohibited) and the *makrūh* (the recommended-against) on the one side, and of the *wājib* (the obligatory) and *mandūb* (the recommended) on the other.

Islam is not inimical to ethnicity going as far as constituting its own political state, its own *khilāfah*, a position recognized as legitimate since the days of al Māwardī, as long as the *sharī'ah* is observed in full.⁹ Since observance lays down upon a sovereign ethnic entity the duty of making peace and war only in step with the *ummah* as a whole, and so to conduct its affairs as to prevent evil from befalling the others and to bring good to them. Beyond these measures, Islam tolerates no particularism, and lays upon all Muslims the religious obligation to fight it with all their strength wherever and whenever it shows its face.¹⁰ The law of Islam

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ...
(الحجرات: ١٣)

⁷O Mankind, We have created you male and female. We have constituted you into peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Noblest among you in the eye of Allah is the most righteous (49:13).

⁸Ibid.

⁹The legitimacy of more than one caliphate was defended by al Ash'arī, and condemned by al Māwardī. However, Islamic juristic opinion at the time achieved a near consensus in favor of tolerance, as the issue concerned the Umayyad caliphate in Cordoba and the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt.

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَتَمْلِكُوا إِلَيْهَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَتَقِيَا إِلَىٰ
أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ (الحجرات: ٩)

¹⁰And if two factions of believers fight each other, seek to reconcile them, If, thereafter, any of the two factions returns to aggression, then fight them until they comes back to their senses, and

is one for all on account of its divine source. Just as God is One, the God of all creatures, certainly of all humans, His law is one and the same. He has no favorites. He makes no exceptions. Islam regards ethnocentrism as gravely as it does, because favoritism is an attack upon the very transcendence of God. For God to be the Ultimate Reality, the Ultimate Judge (i.e., the Ultimate Principle, Criterion and Source), His stance *vis-à-vis* all creatures must be one and the same. For Him to regard any ethnic group as His favorite, i.e., as different in relation to Him, to His law, to His cosmic order, to His system of reward and punishment, is to necessarily impair His ultimacy or transcendence. The claim that ultimate reality is plural is a contradiction unworthy even of the small mind. And so is every variety of ethical relativism, whether human, such as eudaemonism; cultural, such as utilitarianism, the Anglo-Saxon tradition of political liberalism, and all nationalism; or Protagorean, such as hedonism, the new-old religion of the West.¹¹

B. UNIVERSALISM

The social order of Islam is universalist in tendency.¹² Though it may currently exist in one nation or another, a group of nations, or merely a group of individuals, it is one in that it seeks to comprehend mankind. Islamically speaking, therefore, there can be neither an Arab nor a Turkish, nor a Persian nor a Pakistani, nor a Malay social order, but one: the social order of Islam. However, the social order of Islam may begin in any country or group; but it sours and turns non-Islamic if it does not move continuously toward including all of mankind. The ideal of the universal community is that of Islam, expressed in the world-*ummah*. It is not *dépassé*, out of tune with the times, an absolute ideal of the Middle Ages. In the West, the ideal of the universal community ruled for a millennium and a half, from the *Imperium Mundi* of the Romans to the Reformation. It was attempted again under the Enlighten-

reconcile the two again in justice. Be just and equitable, for Allah loves the just (49:9).

¹¹See this author's essay, "The Metaphysical Status of Values in the Western and Islamic Traditions, *Studia Islamica*, Fascicle xxviii, 1968, pp. 29-62.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ... (الحجرات: ١٠) إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ
(الأنبياء: ٩٢)

¹²The believers are indeed brethren to one another, constituting one brotherhood (49:10)... This is your *ummah*—one, united and integral—and I am your Lord. Serve Me (21:92).

visions of both democracy and communism. At every one of these occasions, the ideal was corrupted, violated, assassinated and laid to rest by the particularistic, nationalistic, and ethnic subversion of its enemies. Nor is any one of those movements inimical to the universalist ideal, or describable as genuinely opposed to the ideal as such. The ethnic forces which rallied the people around their princes in the Reformation were opposed to the corruption of the ideal as practiced by the Roman Church; and those nationalist forces which countered the Enlightenment ideal of the French Revolution were opposed to its corruption by Imperial France. Likewise, the breakdown of the ideal after World War I and II was due to the machinations and manipulations of Zionism and neo-colonist imperialism. In other words, the ideal failed because of a lack of genuine subscription to it; because of a failure of nerve on the part of its adherents. The faith of the Western masses in the ideal continued. But it has met its final disaster at the hand of contemporary skepticism where not only is nothing holy, but nothing has any precise or definite meaning at all.

C. TOTALISM

The Islamic social order is totalist, in the sense that it holds Islam relevant to every era of human activity. The base of the social order is the will of God which must be relevant to every creature insofar as God had endowed it with constitution, a structure, and a function.¹³ Human beings, in their physical, personal, social and spiritual natures, do have a God-given constitution which they ought to fulfill. No activity of theirs escapes God's determination; and they can project for themselves no goal in any field of endeavor that does not fall under the *sharī'ah* categories of *wājib* through *ḥarām*. Moreover, it is a sign of a developed mentality and a refined vision that the realm of the *mubāḥ* (permissible) is as much

¹³Qur'an 25:2. While the universalism of Islam is evident in the fact that the injunctions of Islam are addressed to all humans by virtue of their humanity, its totalism is so in the fact that where it left any area of human behavior not specifically legislated for, it placed that burden upon the Muslim. The Muslim is obliged to seek the application of the revelation to the everyday affairs and problems he encounters. *Ijtihād* is a universal duty incumbent on all Muslims, as Allah affirmed in the Qur'an (6:38).

occupied by the desiderata of Islam as possible. The juristic principle.¹⁴ of no prohibition without a text (the rule is permissibility) is a preventive against the unjust and invalid extension of prohibitions, not against their valid extrapolations. To analyze, to deduce, induce, to extend and extrapolate the laws of Islam and make them relevant to all that there is, is both worthy and necessary, Otherwise the comprehensiveness of the will of God on which the *sharī'ah* ultimately rests would become questionable. The best social order is, in consequence of this truth, that which orders as much of human activity as possible, not as little as possible; and the best government is that which governs most, not least. Let us remember that the Islamic social order is not merely a club, a learned society, a chamber of commerce, a trade union, a consumers' cooperative or a political party in the Western sense of the term. It is all these and much more, as Ḥasan al Bannā used to say, precisely because of the relevance of the will of God to all things.¹⁵

The totalism of the Islamic social order does not only pertain to present human activities in all times and places, as well as all the humans who are the subjects of these activities and whom it regards as its necessary members. While it holds all Muslims as conscripts in its programs and projects, it holds non-Muslims as potential members who ought to be persuaded to join. There is hence no end to the social order of Islam because of the endlessness of life and activity in this world. The task is to interfere in everything that is or moves to the end of making it, him, her, or them, the more and better fulfillers of the divine will.¹⁶ *Falāḥ* is the genuine transformation of the earth into the garden of God (the real meaning of the Quranic concept of *isti'mār al arḍ* [reconstruction of the earth]), and of mankind into heroes, geniuses and saints fulfilling the patterns of God. We must of course remember that to do so immorally would not constitute *falāḥ*. *Falāḥ* requires that the acts of transformation themselves fulfill the divine law as they seek to bring about its fulfillment in their objects.

¹⁴This is one of the "general principles of law making" (al qawā'id al kullīyah) Subḥī al Maḥ-masānī, *Falsafat al Tashrī' fi al Islām* (Beirut: Dār al 'Ilm li al Malayīn, 1380/1961), pp. 261 ff. 'Abd al Wahhāb Khallāf calls these general principles "al qawā'id al uṣūliyah al tashrī'iyah." See his *Ilm Uṣūl al Fiqh* (Cairo: Dar al Qalam, 1392/1372), pp. 197 ff.

¹⁵Iṣḥāq Mūsā al Husaynī, *Al Ikhwān al Muslimūn* (Beirut: Dar Beirut li al Ṭibā'ah wa al Nashr, 1955), p. 79.

... مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَنُفِّرُ إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ (الأنعام: ٣٨)

¹⁶In the Book, We have left nothing out. Everything is recorded and, on the Day of Judgment, all will be brought up before Allah for judgment (6:38).

The social order of Islam is free. If it is built by force, or if it executes its programs through coercion of the people, the social order would lose its Islamicity. Regimentation may well be necessary; but it can be legitimate only if it is restricted to the area of implementation. Prior to that, Islam requires *shūrā* (mutual consultation) on the very instituting of regimentation which can, at any rate, only be temporary and pertinent to specific projects. Where regimentation is the rule and coercion is resorted to on principle, the outcome may well be a successful actualization of the divine pattern, but it is an actualization whose value is utilitarian, not moral. For it to be moral, it would have to be entered into by its subject voluntarily, as a free decision taken out of personal commitment to the value, or divine pattern in question.¹⁷ There is no doubt that Islam seeks the actualization of both, the utilitarian and the moral values, but it does not tolerate, and it pays no respect to the former without the latter. The actualization that counts in its eye is that which realizes both at once. God has taught us this lesson eloquently in the Quran. To the suggestion that humans were about to be created, the angels who can do no wrong but fulfill God's commandment, demonstrated: "Would you then [O God] create a creature that is capable of corruption and homicide, when we do [nothing but] praise and glorify You?" God answered: 'I have a purpose which you do not know.'¹⁸ Were humans like angels, incapable of evil, their deeds would fulfill every divine desire or imperative, but they would not be moral. The moral is the highest part of the divine will. Certainly, therefore, it must be the highest of what is required of a man, for a will that does not enjoin the moral can-

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ اهْتَكَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ ۖ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ (الزمر: ٤١)

¹⁷We have revealed to you the Book in truth. Whoever decides to be guided by it does so to his own credit. Whoever goes astray, does so to his own discredit. O Muhammad, you cannot do more than to convey and warn (39:41).

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ٣٠)

¹⁸And when your Lord announced to the angels that He was about to create man and establish him as His vicegerent on earth, the angels said: Why would You establish on earth a creature that sheds blood and works evil, while we adore You and praise You incessantly? Allah answered: I have another purpose which you do not know (2:30).

not be divine because it would then be in contradiction with itself. The same truth is stressed in the Quran in yet another passage, still more dramatic than the first and as eloquent: "We offered the trust to heaven and earth and mountains," God said, "but they rejected it out of fear. Man carried it."¹⁹ Throughout heaven and earth, the will of God is actualized with the necessity of natural law; the creatures of heaven and earth are not free to do or not to do so. Hence, their actualization is not moral. Only man's is moral, because only he is free before the divine imperative. That is why only he carries the divine "trust".²⁰

To cause humans to actualize value, if it cannot mean to coerce them into such actualization, must mean to persuade them to do so of their own accord. This means that for value-actualization to be moral, it has to mean no more than teaching and convincing humans that values are values, that divine commandments are the desirable patterns. This makes of the social order of Islam a seminar or school on a large scale where the business of government and leadership is to teach, to educate, to convince, to persuade, to enlighten and to guide.

E. MISSION

Evidently the *ummah* is not an accidental growth of nature. It does not exist for its own sake, and much less for the sake of any of its constituents. It exists solely as an instrument of the divine will which seeks, through the *ummah*, to find concretization in space and time. It constitutes the matrix of God's definitive revelation, the instrument of His will, and the point at which the divine meets the cosmos, and here the cosmos is launched on its infinite march toward fulfillment of the divine purpose. As the Quran has put it eloquently, the *ummah* exists so that "the word of God may be supreme."²¹

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ...
(الأحزاب: ٧٢)

¹⁹We have offered Our trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains. But they were frightened by and refused to carry it. Man however accepted and carried it (33:72).

²⁰Ibid.

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ... وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (التوبة: ٤٠)

²¹If you do not render assistance to Muhammad, it will not matter; for Allah has committed such help to him... He brought the unbelievers low and made the word of Allah supreme. He is Almighty, Wise (9:40).

A. NO ISLAM WITHOUT THE UMMAH

God commanded: "Let there be of you an *ummah* to call to the good, to enjoin virtue and forbid vice. Those who do so are the felicitous (Holy Quran 3:104). Clearly, the Muslims are commanded to form themselves into an *ummah*, i.e., a social body organized in a special way. The Quran text has given us the *'illah* (sufficient reason) of the commandments, namely, "to call to the good, to enjoin virtue and forbid vice." This *'illah*, however, is only the "final cause" or ultimate purpose which the *ummah* is supposed to serve. A less final "final cause" (hence, an instrumental cause) is the fact that it is the *ummah* which makes possible the calling to the good, the enjoining of virtue, the forbidding of vice. The *ummah* is the source of the Muslim's rights, as well as of his duties; and it is the body in which those rights and duties can be exercised.

The Prophet (SAAS) rules: "It is not permissible for three Muslims to find themselves in a land without their assigning one of them to their leadership." Since their purpose is to uphold the rights, enforce the divine injunctions, realize justice, execute the *hudūd*, and fulfill happiness in this and other world, there is no escape from forming themselves into an *ummah*, an organic society with *'imārah* (government).²²

Someone may object that the realization of personalist values does not need the *ummah*. He may assert that, on the contrary, society spoils such a realization, since virtue is highest when it is secret. Our answer as Muslims is that that is a Christian view. Certainly, Islam enjoins the personalist values, collectively known as *ikhhlāṣ* (*nīyah*, *ṣidq*, *ibtighā' wajh Allāh*, *ṭuhr*, *amānah*, etc.), but it equally forbids monasticism

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ (الحديد: ٢٥)
إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ... (النساء: ١٠٥) وَأَنْ أَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ... (المائدة: ٤٩)

²²We have sent Our messengers with the necessary evidence. We revealed to them the Book and the balance [criterion of justice] so that the people may establish justice on earth. We have given them steel, an instrument of great power, that benefit to mankind may be actualized; and that those who wish to help the cause of Allah and His messengers may do so. Allah is Almighty and Exalted (57:25)... We have sent down to you [Muhammad] the Book in truth that you may mete out justice to the people according to His revealed criteria (4:105)... And judge between them [O Muhammad] by what Allah has revealed to you, and do not follow their prejudices (5:49).

(Quran 56:27). Its uniqueness is that of holding that no *ikhlāṣ* is credible unless it translates itself into visible acts in space and time, as well as of enjoining *ikhlāṣ* upon the community as such. In Christianity, society and the state are the realm of Caesar. This has been the traditional understanding of Christianity, based upon the scriptural texts of Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17, Luke 20:25. Efforts at widening the scope of Christian ethics so as to make them relevant and applicable to society began in earnest after the Reformation—Calvinism being the ideal example; but they were all rejected by the majority and never became part of the orthodox dogma except in the view of their own sectarian followers. It was not until after the Industrial Revolution in England had brought man's exploitation of man to superlative levels of cruelty and degradation that the Christian conscience was moved to extend the relevance of Christ to social relations and public legislation. Only in the last two or three decades, and largely in reaction to racism, communism and World War II did the concern become general. Even so, the Christian mind has not opted for an outright affirmation of an *ummah*-like Christian ethic. Where it is convinced of the need for Christ on the political and social levels, it asserts the relevance of Christ ambiguously as being in opposition to what the Caesars of the earth do. It never sees Christ as telling those Caesars what they should do.²³

In Islam, everything is God's concern and falls within the scope of the religious imperative. Indeed, the *ummah* is the *sine qua non* condition of all piety and morality. That is why God described the faithful as "men and women who are protectors of one another, enjoining virtue and forbidding vice to one another" (Holy Quran 9:71). Still more directly, He commanded us to "cooperate with one another for the good, to the purpose of achieving piety" (Holy Quran 5:3). On the side, God commanded us to "disagree with and oppose one another so as to prevent evil, to avoid crime and stop aggression" (Holy Quran 5:3). Didactically, He described the condemned as people who "did not forbid one another the evil which was practiced among them" (Holy Quran 5:79). That is why the Prophet (SAAS) said: "Where people see vice committed and do not seek to change it, Allah would inflict upon them His punishment"; and explained his judgement with the reasoning that "when evil is secret, it hurts only its doer; when it is public and not prohibited, it hurts everybody."²⁴

²³Barth, *Against the Stream*, pp. 29-31.

²⁴Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al Qur'ān al 'Azīm* (Beirut: Dār al Ma'rifah, 1388/1969), s.v. Qur'an 5:79, vol. 2, pp. 83-84.

Further justification for the *ummah* may be derived from the analysis of ethical consciousness and of personalist ethics. The former reveals that a moral imperative is one which derives from, is applied in, and has meaning only in the context of, the web of relations with nature and other persons in which the moral subject stands and lives his life. The service of God being the realization of His will, and the divine will being, *in percipi*, the values, or the *prius* which makes everything valuable, it follows that if man is to serve God, he must stand in the interhuman relations which can actualize the moral values. Just as it is meaningless to require a disembodied soul, unrelated to the world of space-time, to actualize the utilitarian values, it is meaningless to expect that a hermit-monk unrelated to other men in relations of trade, friendship, marriage, neighborhood, production and consumption of material goods, war and peace, trial and judgement, mission and teaching, recreation and esthetic enjoyment, fraternization, to actualize the moral. Moral values are ideal essences in a transcendent supernal plenum unless they are actualized in the very body of such interhuman relations. Morality presupposes such relations and is impossible without them. Every relation forsaken or withdrawn from means that the value relevant to it, i.e., the value to which that relation is the substrate or carrier, is condemned to non-actualization. The life of solitude which the individualist, hermit, anchorite or monk leads is based, in the final analysis, on a truncation of the realm of values, for it is guided by the principle that the values of which the carrier is the consciousness or soul of the subject in itself, i.e., in its uniqueness and solitude, are alone constitutive of the realm of value, or are the highest values for the sake of which all other values may be violated. The former is evident blindness to the existence of other values, a forced axiological monism or exclusivism; the latter, an insensitivity to the real moving power of other values, a false judgement of their order of rank—indeed a denial of their axiological finality. No wonder that all solitary men, the famous hermits and anchorites of history, have led a life of hardness, intemperance and often, of cruelty.²⁵

Whenever the moral dimension is defined in personalist terms, it necessarily issues into an individualism which finds its logical conclusion in egotism. For it must, in the final analysis, depend upon the inner determinants of the moral subject of which only his own conscience can be the judge. The moral agent may will the loftiest and most altruistic

²⁵William James, *The Variety of Religious Experience* (New York: Mentor Books, New American Library, 1953), pp. 269 ff, pp. 276 ff.

ideals. What makes his willing moral, is, *ex hypothesi*, not the loftiness or altruism of the content willed, but the manner in which his own faculty has disposed itself in the act. It is this priority—nay exclusiveness—of his personal internal determination in the constitution of ethicality that makes him an egotist, forever obsessed with himself. If it is claimed that the obsession with self is itself altruistically motivated, as in the case of the self-willed example, it must be acknowledged that since the more involved with nature and other men the conduct of the moral agent is, the less confidently is exemplarity predicted of that conduct whether by him or mankind. The tendency would hence be to seek exemplarity at the cost of involvement. Historically, the exemplars of ethical inner determination have been the monks and hermits of all ages and nations, men who are guided by an ethic of isolation from the world, of anti-world, of resignation and asceticism. It is common knowledge that Islam is a religion of private as well as public life, of the individual as well as the state, of everyday living as well as lofty contemplation. Hence it is not possible without men standing in the web and woof of relations with nature and other men, mutually influencing and being influenced, determining and being determined by other men. Indeed, the famous statement of the Prophet (SAAS) “Religion is rather the matter of dealing with others,” is an expression of this bent of Islam towards involvement in the affairs of other men in this world.²⁶ The fact is also expressed in Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān’s yearning for a community of humans after his discovery of the truth, and after his attainment of all the happiness the personalist pursuit could possibly furnish, as we have seen earlier.²⁷

B. ONE AND ONLY ONE *UMMAH*

God said: “This *ummah* of yours is one *ummah*” (Holy Quran 21:29; 23:53). In saying this God meant that the believers shall have one fulcrum around which to rally, one overall purpose, a keystone value, which brings all their endeavors under one all encompassing meaning, namely, the service of God. The *ummah* is and must always remain one because God is One, and His service is one. His will for all mankind, all places and all times, embodied in the Quran and the *sunnah* of the Prophet

²⁶Or rather, “Religion consists in counselling others to do the good.”

²⁷Ibn Tufayl, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, tr. George N. Atiyah, in *A Sourcebook in Medieval Political Philosophy*, ed. Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1936).

(SAAS) and crystallized in the *sharī'ah* is one. His will is for all people, all men being absolutely equal in His vision. He does not expect of any people or race more or less than He expects of all others. The oneness of the *ummah* is therefore religious and moral, not biological, geographic, political, linguistic or cultural. Because of this the Prophet (SAAS) has called the Jews an *ummah* even though they were within the same locality as the Muslims and belonged to the same political, linguistic and cultural group. Because their ideology—religious and moral—is different, he deemed them to constitute a separate *ummah* of their own. Islam does not recognize any *ummah* based on biology, geography, politics, language or culture; but on religion. Hence, the nation, the race, the state, the continent—all these categories, are known in modern Western culture, but not recognized in Islam.

To say this does not mean that the religious unity of the *ummah* is not reinforceable and complementable by these other kinds of unity. The unities of space or geography, of language and culture, of biological descent and race can, and in fact do, help support the religious unity. "The nearer relations are more entitled to man's good deed" is a principle of Islamic law.²⁸ What Islam is saying here is that no kind of physical nearness should ever be allowed to determine the conduct of either the Muslim individual or the Muslim group, over and above the religious and moral factor. "We have created you all of one male and female," God said, "and made you tribes and nations that you may fraternize with one another. Noblest among you shall be the most virtuous" (Holy Quran 40:13). Evidently, physical nearness is subservient to virtue and piety; it is secondary to ethical worth and personal merit, not the reverse.

The *ummah* therefore is not a matter of birth and geography and language. These are independent of one's will and hence necessary. The *ummah*, as a religious and moral brotherhood, is a free association of individuals to the end of actualizing in and for themselves and humanity the whole realm of values; in traditional Islamic terms, "happiness in the two abodes, this life and the hereafter." One is not born into it by blind chance, but elects and decides to join it as a rational being. The *ummah* is not a *gemeinschaft*, but a *gesellschaft*, not a community-by-nature, but a community-by-decision, a "society."

At the launching of the Islamic movement right after the *hijrah* in 1 A.H., the tribe, the simple form of *gemeinschaft*, and the empire, a

²⁸*Al aqrabūn awlā bi al ma'rūf*, one of the general principles of law-making.

political *gesellschaft* founded upon a *gemeinschaft* of race, language, culture, and history, were known; and they were prospering. Islam knocked both about. It established a pure *gesellschaft*, a universal brotherhood under the religious and moral law and invited all mankind to join. This was and still is the greatest innovation in the social history of man. True, Christianity has succeeded in establishing a *gesellschaft*, or society, based purely on religion and morals. But, unfortunately, the religious and moral content essential for Christianness was reduced to the minimum; namely, the ineffable experimental act of faith and the purest ethic of intent. Both are personal, secret or internal, and depend totally upon the conscience of the individual for execution, criticism and evaluation. As soon as it was given any significant public or societal content, Christendom split and partly lapsed into the older forms of *gesellschaft* based on *gemeinschaft*. The early Church divisions which appeared at Nicaea and Chalcedon involved to a preeminently high degree the Semitic versus the Greek factionalism of the people. Likewise, the great schism of 1058 A.C. was a division of East *versus* West. Finally, in the Reformation movement of the sixteenth century, the national tendencies of the Germans, the English, the French, the Italians, the Dutch overwhelmingly determined the outcome of the ninety-five theses the personally disturbed Catholic monk Luther proposed to his superiors.²⁹

In Islam, therefore, no religious diversity and no moral independence or division within the *ummah* is legitimate. Divergence from the *ummah's* religion is heresy; for in the religious and moral senses, the *ummah* is indubitably a monolithic system. To entertain the opposite is to allow Muslims to practice religions and follow moral principles other than Islam—which is absurd. Furthermore, to allow religio-moral diversity within Islam is to renounce *al tawhīd*, the principle of the unity of all truth and knowledge. This is tantamount to allowing two diverse claims to the truth to coexist. Such is not a critical attitude; for the problem here is not one of denying the possibility of claims and counter-claims but the possibility of an overarching, critically knowable truth in terms of which the opposition of claim and counterclaim might be solved and differences might be composed. Islam is definitely against pluralism of ultimate truth, not of opinions about the truth. It demands that opinions be responsible. It has assigned the maritimation of *ijmā'* (consensus) for this responsibility to channel itself. Islamic jurisprudence allows every consensus of the *ummah* to be broken by the creative, in-

²⁹The details of the ideational history of the Church may be read in Henry Bettenson's *Documents...*

novative interpreter; but it prescribed upon him the duty to seek the consensus of the *ummah* for it, or suffer it to be rejected as *bid'ah* (condemned innovation).

However, to say that the *ummah* is one religiously and morally does not mean that the *ummah* admits no administrative division. Indeed, there can be as many administrative divisions within the *ummah* as efficiency requires. In the determination of the first of *Ramaḍān* for fasting purpose, the first of *Shawwāl* for *Īd al Fitr* and the disposal of the *zakāh* funds, the Shafi'i school has countenanced divisions within the *ummah* as small as twenty-four *farsakhs* in extent (192 kms.).³⁰ Today, it may well be argued that the extraordinary developments in communications technology have made the whole world a single province. At any rate, public administration is not merely a matter of communication, and the *ummah* may be said to be as divisible as efficiency and service demands.

It should be noticed that administrative autonomy within a division of the *ummah* does not give the province legislative autonomy. Law-making in Islam is governed by a complete system of jurisprudence. In this system, general principles are distinguished from their application. The former admit of no change, for they are both divinely ordained and rational. Where man's creativity is called for is in the matter of translating a principle or value into specific, concrete directive for conduct—prescriptivization of the law—and that of carrying out or realizing those directives—its implementation. Only the prescriptivization of the Prophet (SAAS) is normative; and it is so by divine sanction: "In the Prophet's *sunnah*, there lies a good example for whosoever looks up to God ..." (Holy Quran 33:21). Everybody else's prescriptivization is a human effort subject to the test of coherence with the Quran and the *sunnah* as a whole, and to the test of the consensus of the *ummah*. The creative effort of any division of the *ummah*, whether it be in prescriptivization or implementation, is a contention on its part in Islamic law which that division ought to universalize by convincing the Muslims of the world of its validity, or to avoid or change when in the ensuing debate Muslim world opinion stands out solidly against it.³¹

Excluding our own time, the *ummah* has been, throughout its history, a monolithic unity in as much as it was all governed by one and the

³⁰Abd al Raḥmān al Jazīrī, *Al Fiqh 'alā al Madhāhib al Arba'ah* (Cairo: Al Maṭba'ah al Tijāriyah al Kubrā, n.c.), s.v. "Beginning of Ramaḍān" and "Beginning of Shawwāl," vol. 1, pp. 548-55.

³¹This seems to be the only way in which dynamic and creative *ijtihād* can be reconciled to the equally desirable purpose of unanimity and consensus. Both values are integral to the Islamic worldview and its normative system.

same Islamic law. Politically, the *ummah* was united under one suzerainty only during the *Rāshidūn* and Umayyad periods (10-131 A.H./632-749 A.C.). The rest of its history, over twelve centuries, it has been split into many political divisions. The unity of law was the stronger. It gave the Muslim world its institutions, its ethic, its style of life and its culture. It educated the Muslims of all races and cultures in one and the same ideology and welded them into one brotherhood dedicated to the same ideals. The unity of Islamic laws successfully withstood all the threats of fragmentation, including conquest by foreign powers, during the fourteen centuries of Islamic history. It may rightly be said that the *sharī'ah*, is both the spearhead and spine of Muslim unity across the world. And it is the fact which makes the *ummah* a truly universalist brotherhood in which all men are members, potentially by virtue of birth, and actually by virtue of a free personal, ethical decision to enter into the world-fellowship of the law.³²

C. THE NATURE OF UMMATIC UNITY

1. Comprehensiveness

No one, it is hoped, requires proof that Islam is a comprehensive system of life. Islam does not divide the world into sacred and profane; nor does it divide life into religious and secular; nor does it divide men into priesthood and laity. All such divisions are deemed by Islam to be artificial, unnatural, unreasonable. Historically, they all belong to non-Muslim traditions; to Christianity *par excellence* slave of the *Imperium Romanum* in which Christianity was born and formed.

Islam is indeed relevant for the philosophy of religion, i.e., for the highest principles of metaphysics, as well as for the small details of personal everyday living. It is in the Holy Quran that we read the affirmation of the duality of being, the actual creature and the transcendent Creator, of the nature and destiny of man, of his freedom and responsibility, of the instrumentality and malleability of all creation, of the orderliness of the universe, of the unity of truth and value. And it is in the same Book that we read the commandments to return a greeting

³²A parallel might be drawn here between the integrative role of the *Shari'ah* and that of the laws of Solon which were responsible for welding the dispersed groups of Greeks around the Aegean Sea into one cultural unity.

with a better one (Quran 4:85), to seek permission to enter a house before entering (Quran 24:26-28); to address others with a soft voice without yelling (Quran 31:19). Between themselves the Quran and the *sunnah* have given us a complete ritualistic, political, economic, ethical and social system. True, the Quran did not give us all the details but all the principles and some details as examples. In some fields it gave us more detail than in another in order to drive its point home. And so did the *sunnah*. But there can be no doubt of the relevance of Islam's holy writ to everything. The detail which Allah (SWT) or His Prophet (SAAS) has not spelled out was left to the Muslims to elaborate and to specify. Certainly, the Muslims have risen to the task and elaborated the most comprehensive legal system ever devised.³³

The theoretical basis of this comprehensiveness is the axiom that every human activity is a would-be carrier of some value. Since the purpose of the *ummah* is the actualization of value, it follows that the *ummah* would seek to promote such actualization wherever a possibility of it is in evidence. This implies that the *ummah* would have something to say on every human activity; that since the law is relevant thereto, no activity may lie beyond the reach of the *ummah's* executive and judicial arm.

2. Materiality or Contentuality

The comprehensive nature of any unity can be formalistic and abstract. Indeed, the greater the comprehensiveness, the more formalistic and abstract the unity; and a whole religion, or worldview, or ethic can be pressed into a few abstract words which by meaning everything, mean nothing. Islam's comprehensiveness was not achieved at the cost of materiality or content. On the contrary, it was matched by the concrete content, namely, specific legal prescriptions for every moral desideratum and, where the matter lay beyond the reach of law, specific dicta as guides for every area and corner of human activity.

Examples of comprehensiveness without content abound. The Hindu speculative thinker means everything under the sun and beyond it by merely saying *OM* and our Sufi speculator has matched the Hindu by

³³The Quran and the *Sunnah* are the two ultimate sources of all Islamic laws. The huge, expansive corpus of *Shari'ah* prescriptions has covered all areas of personal and social ethics. Evidently, none of Islam's prescriptions would be valid without some ideational relationship to one provision or another contained in the two primary sources.

saying *HŪ*. For philosophers, it is an interesting game to push ever upward towards the one formula which includes all. The sad truth is however that, under such monosyllabic key term, men went all the way from the life of saintliness to that of vice and idolatry. Both the Hindu and the Sufi know that nothing in the term could stop such aberration. Likewise, whereas the primary concern of Jesus (AS) was to break up the petrified legalism, the literalism or reification of the Jews, his disciples chose to blow his essentially ethical and divine insight into an absolute system in which all morality is internalized. Instead of *OM*, the metaphysical boodlebag of the Hindu, they installed "Love," the moral category which includes everything. Augustine's "Love God and do what you will" became a precept which anybody could use to justify any cause.

God, we must assume, is a good historian of religion who knows the pitfalls of man and observes the shortcomings of the religions as so many verses of the Quran testify. It is therefore only natural that in Islam, which came as a reformation of the historical religions, God did not merely give us one or more general principles, but the content, the specific materials of morality, the particular commandments and prohibitions. Where specific content is missing, Islam laid it down on man to seek it and to establish it.

Evidently, by being both comprehensive and contentual, Islam is monolithic. It seeks to build one system, complete in its every detail, wherein human life is regulated from birth to death. The non-Muslims have criticized the *sharī'ah* for being perfect (i.e., comprehensive).³⁴ They are right: Islam's comprehensiveness and contentuality are indubitable facts. But they constitute the religion's distinction and uniqueness as well as merit.

3. Dynamism

By definition, a monolithic system is exclusivist and closed as far as foreign or new materials are concerned. That is the substance of the orientalist's criticism of the *sharī'ah*'s comprehensiveness and content. As a complete and full system, the *sharī'ah* is alleged by them to have had one and only one truly great moment in its history, namely, the moment it reached perfection. Once this apex was reached, it could only

³⁴William MacNeil, *The Rise of the West* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964), s.v. "The Shari'ah."

decline; for its eternal self-renewal would have to pass it by. A monolithic system cannot change in order to adapt itself to new situations and would necessarily find itself opposed to innovation. And every change is a *bid'ah*. This too is a valid criticism, not of the *sharī'ah*, but of the Muslim jurists and their followers who deliberately arrested the growth and development of the *sharī'ah*. It was indeed our ancestors in the Middle Ages who took Islam on this road. They closed the gates of *al ijtihād*, declared *al ijmā'* to be first the *ijmā'* of the *salaf* (preceding generations) and then the *ṣaḥābah*, (the Prophet's companions) so that no innovation could be introduced. We can today sympathize with their vision of the need of their time and excuse them. But it is ridiculous for the Muslim of today to follow their example.

The *Uṣūliyyūn* who crystallized the *sharī'ah* in the Middle Ages and brought it to the highest level of perfection were careful to include therein the finest machinery for self-renewal of the law.³⁵ They have provided the Muslim with both the perfect law as well as the institutions and means to renew it, and either make it still more perfect than it was or maintain its perfection relevantly workable for all times and places. Except for a few attempts in modern times, the Muslims made no use of the self-renewal machinery of the *sharī'ah*, (namely, *al ijtihād*, *al qiyās*, *al ijmā'*, *al istiḥsān*, *al maṣāliḥ al mursalah*, etc.). This is not the place to analyze that machinery; but we must consider the theoretical base on which it rests.

Islam is the religion of the golden mean: "And thus, We made you (the Muslims) an *ummah* of the golden mean, that you be an exemplary median unto mankind, and that the Prophet (SAAS) may be an exemplary median unto you" (Quran 2:143). It is both general and particular, universal and specific, formal and contentual, monolithic and pluralistic, individualistic and specialistic; and that is its strength. It gave us the general principle, as well as permitted us to violate it where necessary, i.e., where a higher value may be violated in the very pursuit of the value embodied in the general principle. The Quranic injunctions against theft, murder, consuming pork and those for prayer, fasting, respect of parents, even

³⁵The details of the machinery for self-renewal may be read in any textbook of *uṣūl al fiqh* (sources of jurisprudence) under the titles *al ijtihād*, *al qiyās*, *al istiḥsān*, *al maṣāliḥ al mursalah*.

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا (الإسراء: ٢٩)

Be neither miserly, tightly holding your hand, nor a spendthrift, dissipating all your possessions away and becoming a rebuked destitute in need (17:29).

pilgrimage—all these and more may be violated where their realization violates a higher Islamic value, or threatens the realization of such value. The only principle which admits of no exception in Islam is *al tawhīd*. “God does not forgive associationism; but He will forgive anything else less grave to whomsoever he pleases” (Quran 4:47, 155). This openness of Islam to interference in its very commandments constitutes its dynamism. Islam has indeed given man many rooms with closed doors. If in the last centuries the Muslims have not used those keys and kept themselves locked in, no one is to blame but themselves. Other than this, no principle is absolute and inviolable. Islam is the religion of balance. As in the case of its art—all its arts inclusive of the literary—which is built upon this very principle of *al tawāzun* (balance), its very axiology is always a delicate balancing between two evils or a subtle combination of disparate values. In his *Al Siyāsah al Shar‘īyah*, Ibn Taymīyah put it so beautifully: “Islam is the religion of God, standing between the doer of too much and the doer of too little.” And it is this quality that entitles Islam to call itself *dīn al fiṭrah* (the religion of God, of nature and reason, of balance and the golden mean) of life itself. Matchlessly expressive of the *tawāzun* balance of Islam, of Islamic balance, golden-mean-ness and dynamism, is the response the Prophet (SAAS) gave to those who, carried by their enthusiasm for Islam itself, came to him saying: “Henceforth, we shall fast every day of our lives, we shall pray all night long, and we shall never touch a woman.” He said: “As for me, I shall fast some days of the year and shall eat on others; I shall pray and I shall sleep; and I shall take women in marriage. Whoever wishes not to follow my example should not be said to belong in my fellowship.” In passages too numerous to list, the Quran has given the essence of Islam’s ethos as cool common sense in presence of valuational materials which contain equal potentialities for good and evil.³⁶ These are all the goods of the earth. The Book mentions but a few: “women, children, gold and silver, horses, cattle and plantations,” thus gathering all that was then and still is commonly associated with “the world” in the human mind. In verse 3:14, these are declared evil and the Muslims are enjoined to beware, while in 7:31 they are declared good and the Muslims’ pursuit of them is defended. The governing principle is given in 9:25 where the sourness is ascribed to a false order of rank, to man’s preference of them over God, His Prophet and self-exertion

³⁶An eloquent example of Islamic emphasis on the “golden mean” between two exaggerated values of the spendthrift and the hospitable is found in Quran 17:29.

in His cause. The “golden mean” is obviously a mean between two disvalues; but it is also a balance between two pursuits of one and the same value, which happily combines it with all other values and gives each its due.³⁷

4. Organicness

Ummatic unity is organic, that is to say, the *ummah* is like an organic body whose parts are mutually and severally interdependent with one another and with the whole. For the part to work for itself is for itself to work for each of the other parts as well as for the whole to work for itself, is for itself to work for each of the parts. God described the felicitous as “those in whose wealth they recognize a right of the needy and the deprived” (51:19), and the followers of the Prophet (SAAS) as “hard on the unbelievers but soft and merciful to one another”; as “brethren ... whose hearts have been wound up around Him in mutual love of one another” (48:29). The Prophet (SAAS) hit the nail on the head when he described the *ummah* as “the well-settled and consolidated building, each part of which buttresses the others, and compared it to a body which reacts *in toto* with discomfort and fever whenever a part of it is hurt.”

This last *hadith* of the Prophet (SAAS), comparing the *ummah* to an organic body, is perhaps the most apt description of Islamic society. The organic body is alive, and its very life is its organicness, i.e., the interdependence of its various parts to the end sustaining the whole, and their continuous sustenance by that whole. Organicness is not only a quality of life; it is life. For the *ummah* to be otherwise is for it to lapse into the pre-Islamic tribalism of the desert. Even that order, however, is built upon the assumed organicness of the tribe without which it could not exist. The *ummah* merely widened the tribe to include humanity. To deny organicness, therefore, or the need of the *ummah*, is to assume as good the detached existence of individuals isolated from one another in a way which not only makes Islam impossible but equally makes civilization—indeed human life itself—impossible and unthinkable.

Interdependence can be exaggerated; for it can be intensified to the point of rendering the human person a mere cog in a larger body or machine, impervious to the cog’s own advancement, self-fulfillment and

³⁷See the phenomenal analysis of contradictory values in Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethics*, tr. Stanton Coit (New York: Macmillan, 1932), vol. 2, section 2.

happiness. The evils of regimentation and collectivism have always weighed heavily in man's consciousness, whether in the age of the tribe, the city, the nation, or the universal community. Here again, Islam has prescribed *tawāzun*, the golden mean, and declared its purpose to be the achievement of felicity of the person as well as that of the group. Between the absolute individualism of Christianity and the absolute tribalism of Judaism and pre-Islam, Islam has indeed struck the middle ground, asserting both values in the middle, and denying both disvalues at the end, of the spectrum of interhuman relations.

D. POSSIBILITY

Such an *ummah* as has been described is not only possible; it is the only condition of success, indeed of history. No society and no religion, no tribe and no state, no empire and no history has ever been made, or made successful, without realizing in some measure or another, this ummatism. The greater the ummatism, the greater and more lasting the realization; the lesser the ummatism, the more ephemeral the success or the greater the failure. Indeed such ummatism is a guarantee, though temporary, of success for the devil himself. If the devil and his legions of evil fulfilled the requirements of ummatism, he and they will necessarily meet with success, though their success could not be final or decisive for human history. The Zionists are successful, the Spaniards under Ferdinand and Isabella who expelled us from Spain, and the British, French, Italians, Dutch, etc., who colonized our land—even the savage Tartars who massacred the millions and put our greatest cities to the flames—all these were or are successful because they were or are more ummatist than the Muslims were or are today. Hence our sure weakness. Repeatedly in modern literature, the unanswerable question has been raised: "Why is it that when a Muslim shouts *wā Islāmah!*, nobody responds?" Obviously, the answer is our lack of ummatism, our shortcomings in the fulfillment of the provisions and principles of ummatism.

The inevitable question must therefore be: How do we generate ummatism in the Muslims? Assuming our knowledge of what ummatism is, and our knowledge of what the message of the *ummah*—namely, the ideology of Islam—is, let us address ourselves to the practical question. Step by step, how can we bring about and promote ummatism? The question, practical as it may be, is the question on which the Sufis spent

all their genius while losing sight of the final objective. It was Ibn Bājāh who saw through their shortcoming and wrote the treatise, *Risālat Tadbīr al Mutawāḥḥid*, for which we, as historians of ideas, may invent the term "Societal Sufism." The Sanusiyyah movement in modern times has been a close approximation of such ummatist Sufism.

To ask, How can I generate ummatism between two Muslims? is to ask the question, How can I produce a chemical relation between them which results in *al taḥābub* (mutual loving), *al tawāṣī wa al tanāḥī* (counselling), *al ta'ākhī* (brothering), *al ta'āwun* (cooperation), *al ta'ālum* (teaching), *al tazāwuj* (mixing), *al tawāṣī* (consoling) and *al taṣāduq wa al ta'ānus* (befriending)? What kind of action and inaction, reality or unreality, activity or passivity can produce the ummatic cement which, once present, will issue in all these values and thus bring about the *um-mah*? In short, this is the question of how can two or more people be caused to love one another? To bring about such transformation in men is not the work of man, but of God, as a hundred or more verses of the Holy Quran proclaimed,³⁸ for it is He Who is the Author of any transformation-for-better, of any transfiguration (*al hidāyah*, *ta'līf al qulūb*, *sharḥ al ṣadr*) of any predisposition toward ummatism. What man can do here is no more than propose, i.e., provide the material context in which the divine initiative might act. It is certainly possible that such human preparation for divine action may never produce any result. But that is the case where human initiative is defiant, vainly cocksure of itself. Where it is combined with a humble recognition of divine power, it cannot but succeed. Otherwise the divine command for any human action falls down and becomes equally presumptuous.

We may then rephrase our question: What specific action or situation may serve as material context to the divine initiative? The only answer possible here is that the humans in question meet one another, recognize and worship God together, seek knowledge and wisdom jointly, work out and achieve the concrete results together, and finally, eat, celebrate, enjoy themselves and intermarry together. If these activities are entered into candidly, and for no other motive than seeking God's face, they can well be trusted to generate the ummatic cement. No other road will lead to that cement. Presumably, Islamic society meetings on the local, regional and national levels are steps in that direction. So are the Jumu'ah meetings in the Islamic associations and centers around the world. All

³⁸Consult Muḥammad Barakat, *Al Murshid ilā Ayāt al Qur'ān al Karīm* (Cairo: Al Maktabah al Ḥāshimīyah, 1957), under the aforementioned words for a listing of the verses which contain them.

these, however, are still truncated, irregular, infrequent, haphazard, undisciplined and incomplete. Far more than we have so far done is needed, namely, an institutionalization of the ummatic meeting.

For this purpose it is suggested that each Muslim who reckons in himself a potential for leadership, a commitment to Islam which transcends his own and his family's interest, to become a *ʿāmil* (a founder, organizer and leader of a *ʿurwah wuthqā* [an association of ten adult Muslims inclusive of their families]). A *ʿurwah wuthqā* has one purpose and one *raison d'être*: Islam. The *ʿāmil* identifies and calls the ten members. He assumes the responsibility of maintaining contact with them, of communication between one another, and between themselves and the *ummah's* larger institutions. The *ʿāmil* institutes in his *ʿurwah* the Friday evening Jumu'ah, by inviting its members and their families to his home every Friday evening for three to four hours of Islamic fellowship. Invariably, the evening-Jumu'ah includes a group performance of *ṣalāt al 'ishā'*, of reading a part of the Quran, of some relation to Islam, and finally, of some food and socializing. All four items are absolutely necessary; but they should constitute no hardship and no monotony. The Quranic reading, the exercise in Islamic knowledge, the food and socializing — these three, unlike of course the ritual prayer, can be infinitely variable. As soon as convenient and possible, the evening-Jumu'ah should be held at another member's home. Eventually, every member ought to have the occasion to have the evening-Jumu'ah held at his home. Ideally, the evening-Jumu'ah would be held on a rotating basis at the home of each member of a given *ʿurwah*.

In choosing constituent members of the *ʿurwah*, the *ʿāmil* must consider the distance between their homes and his. Linguistic and cultural affinities, national and racial backgrounds and levels of culture constitute in Islam no base for discrimination. It has always been and will always be the strength of Islamic society that it is open, multiracial, culturally diverse, color-blind and free of generation gaps. Muslim children and grandparents should be as much part of the evening-Jumu'ah as member-adults. Where apathy, lethargy, recalcitrance, difference or opposition develops, whether in regard to the evening-Jumu'ah or Muslim activities on the city, state or country level, the *ʿāmil's* own sense of fairness, his encouragement, consolation, initiative, leadership and personal responsibility are the only recourse.

As the *ʿurwah wuthqā* brotherhoods multiply, there will arise the need to organize them, to plan for their needs and to satisfy those needs. The

experience of one should be shared by the others; and a common Muslim pool of talent, information, influence, finance and leadership ought sooner or later to constitute a headquarters for the Islamic movement as a whole. This is where the movement can assume the great burden of leadership. Periodical seminars should be held for the *ʿāmil*s to enable them to share experiences with one another, and to be trained for a more felicitous and efficacious discharge of functions. The Islamic leadership in the geographic unit could furnish the *ʿurwah*s with a printed “Lessons of the Week,” which also assigns the Quranic portion for reading, so that the selections might issue in a systematized presentation of Islam as well as be responsive to events affecting Muslims everywhere.

As the *ʿurwah*s multiply and the movement grows, further organizational structures would be incepted. Ten *ʿurwah*s would make an *usrah*, ten *usrah*s a *zāwiyah*, and ten *zāwiyah*s a *jamāʿah*. At each of these levels an administrative organ would be set up to attend to the regional needs of the *ʿurwah*s involved. Organization and structure should come after that which is to be organized has come to be. Let us not idly build up structures on the blackboard, but enable them to rise out of the growing realities. The question which we should ask everywhere is how to bring about these realities. The answer, to repeat, is for each Muslim to do the innocent things with his fellow Muslims, to participate together in the activities of worship, of continuing Islamic education and of *al amr bi al maʿrūf wa al nahy ʿan al munkar* (of the promotion of the good and prevention of evil).

CHAPTER IX

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE FAMILY

I. DECLINE OF THE FAMILY INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD

A. EQUALITY

Inspired by their own doctrines of the origin of society, the communists deliberately planned to replace the family with the commune. The communists pictured the ideal conditions of human life as those where people live in dormitories, eat in mess halls, and regard their offspring as children of the state. Although many communes were created, the communists soon realized that the collective method of personal organization is bound to fail, and the traditional family form continued to function. The state's assumption of so many of the duties usually undertaken by the parents towards their children out of love and concern for them has weakened the family bond. Today, there is hardly a foundation on which members of the family may build their relationship except the memory of dependence and company in childhood.¹

In Western Europe and North America, movement into the great urban concentrations in search of employment made everybody anonymous. Mixing of the sexes, loose morality, economic independence of women, a strong brand of individualism, and the traditional absolutization of nature within, have all contributed towards the erosion of the family bond. The licence and sexual promiscuity of the second half of this century express the sad state of affairs to which the institution of the family has sunk. Currently, more than half of all children born in the cities are illegitimate. The family has become animal, in the sense of lasting only so long as the children are physically helpless and need the constant attention of their parents. Once they reach adulthood, the material need

¹See, for instance, Norman W. Bell and Ezra F. Vogel, eds, *The Family* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1960), chap. IV.

disappears and the family bond disintegrates. Nay, worse! the preoccupation of parents with work outside the home, their psychic exhaustion, and the pressure for them to seek emotional satisfaction outside the home, have weakened the family bond even when children are still at a tender age. The family as it has been known, is practically on its deathbed.²

Anthropologists have also contributed to the downfall of the family institution by teaching that other forms of human association are possible and have been successful among animals and primitives. Their constant reference to the animal world when considering the human condition have brainwashed the people that differences from the animals are unnatural; and their deluge of speculative theories that deviant forms of human association, such as matriarchy, polyandry, etc., were once the rule, have contributed towards the family's dislodgement from its traditional place of honor and necessity.

Throughout the communist world and the West, the institution of the family has undergone radical change. Today, it stands inextricably associated with the general decay of society. It is affecting and being affected by the decline of morals, of social cohesion, of the continuity of traditions through the generations. Regardless of which is cause and which effect, civilization and the family seem to be destined for rising together or falling together. The Muslim world and the rest of the Third World, insofar as they preserve their identity from the onslaught of communism and Western ideologies, are the only societies left where the family still keeps its place of honor. The Islamic institution stands the better chance to survive because it is buttressed by Islamic law, and determined by its close relation to *al tawhīd*, the essence of Islamic religious experience.

II. THE FAMILY AS A CONSTITUTIVE UNIT OF SOCIETY

Fulfillment of the purpose of God for mankind requires that humans intermarry and procreate, as well as live together and thus provide the theater of relationships wherein the moral part of the divine will may be fulfilled by human decision and action. This theater can consist of

²William F. Kenkel, *The Family in Perspective* (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1973), chap. V, XII.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ (الأنبياء: ٩٢) وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْعُرْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (آل عمران: ١٠٤)

وَأَن هَذِهِ أَمْتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ ذُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ فَذَرَهُمْ فِي
غَمَرَتِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ (المؤمنون: ٥٢، ٥٣، ٥٤) إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْجُنْهَلِيَّةَ فَأَنزَلَ
اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَىٰ وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (الفتح: ٢٦)

121

dominating criterion in the Roman and Persian empires which preceded Islam, and to which Islam gave the *coup de grâce*. They were responsible for such evil in the affairs of men that they had to be uprooted.

That leaves the family alone as ultimate social unit, flanked by the individual on one side, and the universal *ummah* on the other. Its importance in the cosmic order has been emphasized in the Quran: "It is of the signs of Allah that He has created of yourselves spouses of one another, love and mercy."⁵ Islam does not condemn sex; it regards it as innocent, necessary and good; and it not only permits, but recommends that man and women seek their fulfillment in it.⁶ However, it does not recognize it alone as fulfilling the purpose of marriage. That marriage which is built purely on sex, the love syndrome of romanticism, it declares imperfect and incomplete.⁷ Marriage generates a wide complex of human relations which are the materials of a great part of the moral imperative. The duties of procreating, of loving, supporting, counselling, guiding, educating, helping, befriending, fall upon the person first toward the members of his family. The category *dhū qurbā* (kinship) figures very prominently in the social commandments of God in the Quran.⁸ In short, one can say that Islam regards the family as indispensable for the fulfillment of the divine purpose. And there can be no *al tawhīd* without such fulfillment, for to recognize Allah (SWT) as the One and only God means to recognize Him as He Whose will and commandment are the ought, the good and the purpose for man. To adhere to *al tawhīd* is to experience

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ (الروم: ٢١)

⁵It is one of Allah's signs that He created out of yourselves spouses in whom to find quiescence, that He established between you and them love and compassion. For those who are rational, this is certainly a great sign of evidence (30:21).

يَسَاوُكُمْ حَرْثُكُمْ فَأَتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنْ يَشْتُمُوا وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلْقَوُهُ وَبَشِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (البقرة: ٢٢٣) ... وَيُؤْتِلْنَهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ... (البقرة: ٢٢٨)

⁶Your wives are yours to enjoy in purity. Come unto them as and when you please, but do good deeds beforehand. Fear Allah and remember that you shall confront Him. Bring good tidings to the believers, O Prophet (2:223). And their husbands would do better to take them back in that case if they desire reconciliation. And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness (2:228).

⁷"Treat your women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers. Remember that you have taken them as your wives and enjoyed their flesh only under Allah's trust and with His permission" (Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, "Farewell Pilgrimage", p. 486.

⁸As witness the large number of verses carrying the term *qurbā* (2:77; 4:7, etc).

the command of God as obligatory, and to do so means to seek to realize the real-existent materials which actualize the values implicit in those commands. These are all logically linked up to, and inseparable from, one another. It is not possible to fulfill the one without fulfilling the others. God has indeed commanded not only the actualization of these values, but directed the method and specified the materials for doing so. These are the family and the relations to which it gives rise. The necessity of both can be established rationally. God's specification of them is a confirmation of their rational necessity. There can therefore be no *al tawhīd* without the family.⁹

III. CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS

A. EQUALITY

There can be no doubt that Allah (SWT) has made men and women equal in their religious, ethical and civil rights, duties and responsibilities.¹⁰ There are however a very few exceptions; and these pertain to their functions as fathers and mothers. On the religious level, Allah (SWT) established their equality in the verses 3:195, 9:71-72 and 16:97. The same verses establish their ethical equality. Their civil equality is the subject of verses 60:12, 5:38, 24:2, and 4:32. As to the claim that Islam stands for inequality, on the basis of verse 4:34, the matter does not stand any scrutiny. Firstly, it concerns the domestic relation only. The proof for this lies in the remainder of the same verse which concerns itself with the conditions of application of the first part, all of which pertain to the domestic relation. This other half of the verse is usually omitted from the argument in order to make way for the unwarranted generalization. In this relation, men are certainly prior insofar as patriarchy is the only form of family life mankind has tried and observed

⁹The family is the single area which the Qur'anic revelation saw necessary to regulate with general principles as well as with the most detailed prescriptions, as witness the Qur'anic laws of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. In other areas (i.e., the political, the economic), the Qur'an provided general principles but little or no prescriptive detail.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنَّىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (النحل: ٩٧)

¹⁰Whether male or female, whoever in faith does a good deed for the sake of Allah will be granted a good life and rewarded in proportion to the best of what they used to do (16:97).

since creation. The family is a home which requires defence and for the substance of which full-time struggle outside the home is a necessity. Men are evidently better disposed for discharging this duty than women. Secondly, to interpret this verse in the fashion of the advocates of inequality is to make it run counter to all the other verses cited above which establish equality on the crucial levels of religion, ethics and civil life.

B. DIFFERENTIATION OF ROLES

Islam regards men and women as created for differing but mutually complementary functions.¹¹ The functions of motherhood, of home-care and children's upbringing, and those of fatherhood, home protection, livelihood-earning and overall responsibility call for different physical, psychic and emotional constitutions in men and women. Islam blesses this differentiation as necessary for self-fulfillment of both sexes.¹² Role differentiation is a far cry from discrimination or segregation. Both roles are equally subject to the religious and ethical norms; and both require all the intelligence, talent, energy and self-exertion that the subjects can muster. Equally, this role differentiation says nothing about the areas of activity where men's and women overlap, nor about those other areas where no overlapping is in question. Where natural aptitudes make it desirable, or necessity makes it expedient, men's and women's activities may cross into each other's realm without prejudice to the main role differentiation established by God in nature. Otherwise, the Quran would not have granted to women the full civil rights it did, and which nobody questions.

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۚ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبْنَ وَسَأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (النساء: ٣٢)

¹¹Do not enviously wish for that which Allah conferred on some and not on others. Men and women, to each belong the deeds they have personally accomplished. Ask Allah to give you of His bounty. He is knowing of all things (4:32).

فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمِلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْتِي بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ ... (آل عمران: ١٩٥)

¹²Their Lord responded to them that He will never permit any of their good deeds to be lost, whether done by males or females. They proceed one from another (3:195).

C. EXPOSURE AND INSULATION

There can be no doubt that Allah (SWT) did not intend the Muslim woman to insulate herself from society behind a veil or within the walls of a harem. The evidence is Islam's recognition of her right to participate in government as in 60:12, in public life as in 9:71-72, or even in war as in 3:195. Obviously such participation runs counter to insulation and veiling, and is unthinkable with them. What Islam is most careful to avoid is that kind of exposure which leads to immorality and fornication.¹³ Here, there are two commandments, one general, addressed to both men and women with equal emphasis, if not more for men since the verse mentions them first.¹⁴ The second concerns women, and is found in the same verses as the aforementioned, namely, 24:30-31. True, the Quran did ask women to cover themselves; but it has expressly excepted those parts which custom would have exposed if women were to fulfill her career and destiny as prescribed by Islam. Deliberate exposure of feminine beauty and ornament does lead to temptation, and is therefore prohibited except to minors and those adults who can have no sexual relations with the person in question, like her father, brother, son or uncle.¹⁵ Avoidance of temptation is a high ethical ideal. It has nothing to do with woman's fulfillment of her Islamic duties in society. After all, women have been seen with uncovered faces, hands and feet performing these Islamic functions uninterruptedly since the Prophet's days, and in the Holy Sanctuary of Makkah itself.

... وَلَا تَبْرَحْنَ نَبِجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ... (الأحزاب: ٣٣) قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوْنَ أَبْصَارَهُمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ... (النور: ٣٠-٣١)

¹³[O Women], Do not display yourselves as women of pre-Islam used to do (33:33)... [O Muhammad], Command male believers to lower their gazes to keep their chastity. That is the pure way befitting them. Lo! Allah is aware of what they do. Command female believers to lower their gazes as well, to keep their chastity, and not to display of their adornment save that which is (per force) apparent (24:30-31).

¹⁴Ibid.

وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ (النور: ٣١)

¹⁵Women shall not display their beauty and ornamentation except to their husbands, or their parents (24:31).

D. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

It is religiously and ethically imperative for all men and women to marry.¹⁶ High dowries, lack of housing, education and employment should constitute no impediment to the marriage of either sex. These have become impediments in the West because of the high premium the West puts on material achievement and the little concern Western people have for sexual virtue. The family unit being nuclear, it is necessary for the protective spouses to achieve economic independence before marriage. The Islamic family, *per contra*, is the extended model which includes parents, grandparents, males and their wives and offspring. Since women are entitled by the *sharī'ah* to support by their husbands or those of whom they are the dependents, and since Islam, in accord with the patriarchal system, lays it upon the adult male to support the female, most Muslim men and women have married young. They regarded the ability of the male spouse personally to achieve economic independence before marriage as irrelevant to the question of marriage. Unfortunately, Muslim youth are being Westernized at an alarming rate, with the result that it has become very popular among them to seek personal economic independence and thus to postpone marriage until after achievement of that independence. This is sad and tragic development. Firstly, personal economic independence is by itself not evil; but the criterion of value behind it may well be. Subscription to it as a necessary ideal is a presupposition of a materialist worldview, and adherence to it means a preference for the nuclear family over the extended. This in turn is the result of an exaggerated individualism and subjectivism. Personal economic independence is more often than not the prerequisite of the undisciplined and undisciplinable. Secondly, postponement of marriage exposes both sexes to temptation. Marriage is a shield for virtue. Thirdly, in the extended family, early marriage does not make impossible demands upon spouses. It is possible for both of them to attend school or work, since there would always be loving relatives at home to run the household and bring up the children. Islam, then, would recommend to all Muslims

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ (الروم: ٢١)

¹⁶It is one of His signs that He created of yourselves spouses in whom to find quiescence, that He established between you and them love and compassion. To those who are rational, these are significant signs (30-21).

to marry, to do so at an early age, and always to opt for living in the extended family.

E. THE EXTENDED FAMILY

Allah (SWT) has established the family in its extended form. The *shari'ah* has girded it with legislation specifying the dependents whose support is obligatory and the distribution of inheritance rights among them.¹⁷ Generally speaking, any relative is a dependent, however remote his kinship may be, provided he is in need and there is no capable adult male relative closer to him than the relative in question. Grandparents and grandchildren, uncles, and their offspring, have priority. Agnate relations are prior to cognate ones. In practice, the Muslim family is composed of some twenty or so persons and living in a many-centered compound with one kitchen and one *dīwān* (court) where all members gather around the elders and guests are received.

The Muslim family suffers from no generation gap as three generations live together. Thus, the socialization and acculturation of the young is always complete, guaranteeing the transmission of tradition and culture with as little adulteration as possible. Here, the past is genuinely in touch with the present and the future. Another crucial advantage of the extended family is that it provides its members with instant company whenever he desires it. And there are usually enough to choose from, according to the prevailing mood. There is always somebody ready to play with, to joke with, to discuss with, to contemplate with, to cry with, and to hope with. This is a crucial prerequisite for mental health. The extended family never lacks a child element, an adult element, a feminine element, a masculine element, an elderly element wiser and more experienced than all the others.

True, the extended family does impose upon its members discipline and mutual sacrifice. It may, at times, reduce their privacy. But life and this world do not permit us to carry on with our lives without discipline or sacrifice, as if the world was made for the individual person. Certainly, it is good to have to discipline oneself and to sacrifice altruistically for the others. It is best for us that we learn how to discipline ourselves

¹⁷Consult any text of the *Shari'ah* (e.g., al Jaziri's *Al Fiqh alā al Madhāhib al Arba'ah* for details of the Islamic laws of inheritance.

at home, at the hands of those who love us and whom we love, rather than at the hands of strangers.

F. THE CAREER WOMAN AND THE ISLAMIC WORKER

So many Muslim women are copying the West in seeking a career through which to achieve economic independence and personal freedom, that something must be said about Islam's position on the problem.

As far as the overwhelming majority of Muslim women are concerned, there is little or no doubt but they are moving towards a full-time permanent career as housewives and mothers. It is needless to point out that such career demands as much or more training as any career outside the home. It is to warp that noble career to describe it in terms of cooking and domestic chores. It involves taking care of humans, old and young; and that is the most difficult job on earth. It requires all the mature wisdom, intelligence, artistry, creativity, ready wit and experience the person can have. Training is certainly in order for all the time that the person can spend in it, whether in the discipline of homemaking, or those of education, of literature and the arts, of history, psychology and culture.

Although homemaking, childbearing and childrearing are a universal career, it remains true that it does not exhaust the energies of a woman throughout her life. Her membership in the extended family, whether on her side or on that of her husband, will provide her with assistants and therefore with more leisure. Her childbearing cares may not last beyond two or three decades at the longest. Her life may be three whole decades longer. Is it right that Muslim women waste this valuable time on family gossip when they could be helping the *ummah* with their talents and energies? There are women equally who may not be fortunate enough to marry at all, or to have children or even to live in an extended family. How does Islam perceive their life to be?

Every woman, like every man, must carry the burden of serving Allah (SWT) and benefitting the *ummah*, according to his or her talents and best disposition. This task is doubly imperative today because of the decay and dormancy of the *ummah*. Nobody can and should be spared. Our present circumstances demand that every woman be a career woman at least during some portion of her life. This could be during her stu-

dent days, or during her motherhood period if she lives in a large extended family, or after her motherhood period.

Her first task is to undergo training as an Islamic worker, to awaken her mind to and nourish it with Islamic wisdom, to discipline and exercise herself in Islamic work, and to prepare herself for such work as the Islamic movement may assign to her. She ought to have acquired the skills to awaken and teach other Muslims, and to mobilize them in service to the divine cause. And she ought to develop the skills required by social work in city and village. Through her social work she should awaken the people to their Islamic duty and help them through teaching and good example to render the services Muslims owe to Allah (SWT) and the *ummah*. Practically every field of activity is open to and needs her. There are whole professions which she can monopolize; but Muslim society has far more need for the Islamic woman worker than any mobilization of women can bring in this generation.

CHAPTER X

THE PRINCIPLE OF POLITICAL ORDER

Al tawhīd asserts that "this *ummah* of yours is a single *ummah* whose Lord is God. Therefore, worship and serve Him."¹ That the believers are indeed a single brotherhood, whose members mutually love one another in God, who counsel one another to do justice and be patient;² who cling together without exception to the rope of God and do not separate from one another;³ who reckon with one another, enjoining what is good and prohibiting what is evil;⁴ who, finally, obey God and His Prophet (SAAS)⁵ is the relevance of *al tawhīd* to society.

The vision of the *ummah* is one; so is the feeling or will, as well as the action. There is a consensus in the thought of the *ummah's* members in their decision, in their attitude and character, and in their arms. The

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ (الأنبياء: ٩٢)

¹This is your *ummah*, one, united and indivisible, and I am your Lord. Serve Me (21:92).

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ (العصر: ٣) ... الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا
بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ (البلد: ١٧)

²[Doomed is humankind] except those who have believed, done good deeds, enjoined one another to stand up for the truth and to be patient (103:3)... Those who have faith in Allah, and enjoin patience and compassion (90:17).

وَأَعِصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ
بِرَّعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ
(آل عمران: ١٠٣)

³Hold fast together to the rope of Allah and do not separate. Remember His blessings, your reconciliation when you were hostile to one another, and became as brethren. Or when you stood on the brink of a tragic precipice and He saved you therefrom. So does Allah show you His signs that you may be guided (by His commandments) (3:103).

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْعُرْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
(آل عمران: ١٠٤)

⁴Let there be of you an *ummah* which calls for good, which enjoins good deeds and prohibits deeds of evil. Those are truly felicitous (3:104).

...وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ (الأنفال: ١)

⁵Obey Allah and His Prophet, if you are truly believers (8:1).

ummah is an order of humans consisting of a tripartite consensus of mind, heart and arm. It is a universal brotherhood which knows neither color nor ethnic identity. In its purview, all men are one, measurable only in terms of piety.⁶ If any one of its members acquire knowledge, power, food or comfort, his duty is to share it with the others. If any one achieves establishment, success or prosperity, his duty is to help the others do likewise.⁷ It is an order of human beings who opt to govern their lives, and seek to govern the lives of all other humans, by the *ummatic* values and principles. They may belong to numerous territories and to various communities. Their membership in the *ummah* gives the *sharī'ah* the ultimate authority over their differences. The *ummah* is based neither on race, nor territory, nor language, nor political and military sovereignty, nor past history. It is based on Islam. Whoever opts to make Islam his/her religion and to govern his/her life by its law is *ipso facto* a member of the *ummah*. This is the meaning of the juristic requirement of the *shahādah*. No other requirement is necessary. By choosing such option, any person makes himself entitled to exercise all the rights, and to enjoy all the privileges, and to stand under all the duties recognized by the *sharī'ah*.

The individual Muslim may live anywhere on earth, and may give loyalty to the laws of the land as long as they do not contradict the *sharī'ah* in the areas which affect his own life. When the laws of the residential territory affect his life in a manner adverse to Islam, he has the option of emigrating to an Islamic territory or to bear the adverse effect on his own life in hope of achieving ulterior objectives, whether Islamic or otherwise. The *ummah* is not obliged to intervene on his behalf. It is the duty of every individual Muslim, however, to call others to Islam, and to seek to establish the *ummah* in the territory; it is their duty to seek the promulgation of the *sharī'ah* as the law of the land.

I. AL TAWHĪD AND AL KHILĀFAH

The *ummah*, as defined above, is the agent of world reconstruction,

... إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ... (الحجرات: ١٣)

⁶Noblest of you in Allah's sight is the most pious, the most righteous (49:13).

... وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ... (المائدة: ٢)

⁷Cooperate with one another for deeds of righteousness and piety, not for deeds of sin and aggression (5:2).

or world reformation to fulfill the divine will. It is God's *khalīfah* in creation since this prediction, originally given of man as such, must extend to the *ummah* for the reasons outlined in the foregoing section. The *ummah* is equally the state, in the sense of sovereignty, and all the organs and powers which the exercise of sovereignty requires. As state, the *ummah* should be referred to as *al khilāfah* rather than *al dawlah*. The former is closer to the Islamic tradition and to *al tawhīd* of which it is a direct and Quranic deduction.⁸ The latter is a modern notion, and stands at the farthest remove from the Quranic idea of vicegerency which is the very *raison d'être* of the *ummah*. While we mean the state when we mention the caliphate, we should bear in mind the radical difference between the Western notion of state and *ummah*. The caliphate is therefore the *ummah* as far as regards the *ummah's* exercise of sovereignty which is constitutive, though not exclusively so, of the *ummah's* vicegerency. By analyzing *al khilāfah*, we propose to analyze *al tawhīd's* implications for political theory.

The caliphate is a threefold consensus. It is a consensus of vision, of power and of production.

A. *IJMĀ' AL RU'YAH*

Ijmā' al ru'yah (consensus of vision), is a community of mind or consciousness, and has three components. The first is knowledge of the values constitutive of the divine will and of the movement in history their realization had produced. Evidently it is systematic and historical. The contents of vision are infinite by nature. Hence total comprehensiveness cannot be a requirement. What can and must be so is the essence or core. This is a structure, a methodology of relating, hierarchizing and inferring which, once mastered, would enable one to discover and establish what was missing in comprehensiveness. This is especially true of the systematic knowledge of value, whose sources are revelation, namely, the Quran and the *sunnah*, and reason, through its understanding of its own process (logic and epistemology), of reality in general (metaphysics), of nature (natural science), of man (anthropology, psychology and ethic), and of society (the social sciences). Neither in the case of revelation nor in the case of reason is vision required to be academic, consisting

⁸Indicated by the Qur'anic verses using the terms *khilāfah*, *khulafā'*, *khalā'if*, *yastakhlifukum*, etc.

of a systematized conceptualization of content; but intuitive, i.e., enjoying a perceptual light which can illuminate any area by establishing for the vision an image of the relevance of Islam to it.⁹

Knowledge of the movement in history, the realization of the Islamic values which it had produced, is, on the one hand, primarily an empirical affair.¹⁰ This is why the early Muslims fed themselves constantly with reports about the Prophet (SAAS) and anecdotes culled from his companions' lives. This kind of need accompanies every religious community, for it is of crucial importance to the adherents to move from a speculative understanding of their faith to knowledge of how it embodies itself in the concrete. The particular materials of value actualization exercise a worthy and desirable pedagogic influence on their student, and are easier to penetrate and to remember than the contents of systematic study. Both are equally necessary, however, to produce the vision needed for the *khilāfah*.

A vision composed of both the systematic perception of values and of the historical embodiments of them is still incomplete without knowledge of the present, and of how that present can realize them anew. Since the *khilāfah* cannot be backward-looking and must live and operate in the present and future, it is necessary for it to relate values to the present, and determine which real-existent *matériel* will realize which values, how present conditions affect the order of rank of values in the task of actualizing them.

Ijmā' al ru'yah, as here defined, has been assumed to be a source of religious knowledge. The Prophet's *ḥadīth*, "My *ummah* will not reach consensus on a falsehood," added an aura of near-sanctity to the *vox populi* of the *ummah*. Nonetheless, it is not dogmatic, but remains always open.¹¹ This openness is institutionalized in *ijtihād*, the capacity—nay duty—of every sensible Muslim to appropriate anew the whole or any part of the range of Islamic truths and values. *Ijtihād* is by nature dynamic and creative, and by itself quite appealing to the perceptive mind. It, too,

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
(آل عمران: ١٠٤)

⁹Let there be of you an *ummah* which calls for good, which enjoins good deeds and prohibits deeds of evil. Those are truly felicitous (3:104).

¹⁰It is this attention to the concrete and the implementation of its provisions that earned for Islam its reputation as the practical religion—*orthopraxies*—and contrasted it so starkly with the religions of utopia.

¹¹In Islam, the *vox populi* had never been equated with the *vox die*. Rather it remained absolutely subject to Allah's commandment, authoritative when it agrees therewith and condemnable when it strays therefrom.

the Prophet deemed fit to bless with the *ḥadīth*, "Whoever does *ijtihād* but arrives at error has nonetheless earned a measure of moral merit. Whoever does *ijtihād* and arrives at the truth, has earned double." Together *ijtihād* and *al ijmā'* constitute a dialectical movement constitutive of Islamic dynamism in the realm of ideas. For, while *al ijmā'* is hallowed as the crowning of the effort to understand, it is continually broken by the creative energy of *ijtihād*; and while *al ijtihād* is hallowed as the most highly desired purpose of understanding, it is sobered, purged and made critical by the necessity to convince all fellow Muslims of the validity of its findings—by the need for it to be approved by all (*al ijmā'*).

B. *IJMĀ' AL IRĀDAH*

Consensus of power is a community of will and has two components: *al 'aṣabīyah* (*sensus communis*, social cohesiveness), whereby the Muslims commit themselves to respond to events and situations in one and the same way, in united obedience to the call of God; and *al nizām* (the organizational and logistical apparatus capable of crystallizing decision, of reaching and mobilizing the Muslims for fulfillment of the call, and of translating the ought-to-be's of values into ought-to-do's for individuals, groups and their leaders).

Al 'aṣabīyah, is not equivalent to, or a consequence of the consensus of vision. It may well and should be enriched and deepened by such consensus. Indeed, it is impossible without such consensus, since where nothing is held in common, no cohesiveness will ever be found. *Al 'aṣabīyah* requires more than the consensus of vision. It expresses itself in a decision to identify with the movement, to throw one's lot, as it were, into the ship of the *ummah*, and then to respond with, i.e., to say and do a positive "yes" to the call and all that the call requires. The decision is itself based on a long process of psychic transformation in the course of which the individual identifies himself with the *ummah*, but at the end of which his consciousness veers towards implementation and identifies itself with the *khilāfah* as the *ummah's* historical vortex and spearpoint. This psychic process can be the object of education and pedagogy. Where it is, it would be refined and rich. But it can emerge naturally through birth, and be nursed in the closed quarter of the tribe, in which case it would grow as a fanatic and blind urge to identify with the tribe or race. It was in this sense that Ibn Khaldūn declared it the

base of social cohesion.¹² Since in Islam these material elements have been transcended in favor of ideology of *al tawhīd*, the *ʿaṣabīyah* of Islam would have to be the result of a new process, of a new *paideia* (an active and continuous transfiguration of the self into the image God has willed). *Al ʿaṣabīyah* therefore must be willed, fed, developed and matured. It may not be an involuntary growth by nature alone; nor confused with the nationalist feeling of European romanticism, which is often described as unconscious, nondeliberate, inexplicably internal and dark, which again is really the *ʿaṣabīyah* of tribalism. Islamic *ʿaṣabīyah* is deliberate, clearly explicable as an ethical and responsible act. It is a commitment to, an engagement in, the destiny of the *ummah* in clear light of *al tawhīd*, in full light of *al tawhīd*'s complete range of meanings. It is exemplified at its purest form in the choral cry of the pilgrims at Makkah as they circumambulate the Ka'bah, or as they hustle onto 'Arafat: "*Labbayka Allāhumma labbayk!* (At Your call, O Lord. Here we come! At Your call!) And it is the very opposite of enlandized and/or racialized or culturized particularism, such as Western nationalism has been through the centuries.¹³

Being an element constitutive of a universalist *ummah* covering a wide portion of the globe, *al ʿaṣabīyah* cannot be merely a factum of the Muslim in his personal moment. Nor can it function as a free surge as and when the Muslim wishes or suffers it to act in response to situations and events. Such would be a chaos of global dimension. In order to be Islamic and hence responsible, *al ʿaṣabīyah* must be disciplined to accord with that of all other Muslims in timing, intensity, direction and to translate itself into cooperative action with other Muslims. This is the aspect of *al niẓām* to which the institution of *al ijmā'* has prepared the Muslim's understanding of the meanings of *al tawhīd*. Aiming at *al niẓām*, our forefathers knew well that every Muslim must be literate as well as literary, that he must know large portions of the Quran, be conversant with the *sīrah* of the Prophet (SAAS) and the *sīyar* of the Companions, that he must frequent a *jamā'ah* close to his home and worship (i.e., cooperate and serve with them in God) at a neighborhood mosque. The requirement that in worship the Muslim's shoulders must touch one another was meant to enable the living presence on one's fellows, reciprocal self-identification with one another, and cooperation in the literal sense of the term with

¹²Abd al Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn, *Al Muqaddimah* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, n.d.), pp. 127 ff.

¹³See this author's *Christian Ethics*, chap I, VII: "'Urūbah and Religion," pp. 206 ff.

the *umma* at large, to impinge on the worshipper's consciousness as it turns to acknowledge God as Lord and Master. All this was to lay a groundwork for the institutionalized organization of the *khilāfah*. The mosque was then, as it ought to be now, the hub of Islamic activity, the center of Islam's logistical machinery, for in it the Muslim made a daily appearance, came into living contact with his fellows under the aegis of *al tawhīd*, and received a daily ration of spiritual, moral and political vitamin. The latter could be and was in fact given by any Muslim impelled by his better knowledge and wisdom to speak out to his fellows, not excluding the caliph himself, in fulfillment of the divine command, "Call unto your Lord with wisdom and arguments yet more sound"¹⁴ and the Prophet's idea of predicating for *al naṣīḥah* (freely given advice) the same high merit accorded to *ijtihād*.¹⁵ This contact and intercourse with one's fellows was to culminate in *ṣalāt al jum'ah*, where the speech of the *imām* stands as constitutive pillar. This *khutbah* (speech), was to deal with the situation of the day, with the sociopolitical and economic problems confronting Muslim society. The requirement that the *khutbah* include some Quranic and *ḥadīth* references was meant to bring Islamic wisdom to speak to the situation at hand and thus to voice its relevance. Finally, the practice that the *āmil* (governor) be himself the *imām* of *ṣalāt al jum'ah* was meant to crystallize, for purpose of execution, the consensus emerging from the deliberations of the week; or, reflecting the nonconsensus reached, to furnish the leadership around which men may rally, and provide and test the needed *dénouement* to the issue at hand. In Islam, all this is worship; the actual transformation of earth and men for the sake of which the Quran itself was revealed,¹⁶ the concrete service of the tenant-farmer in the manor of God which

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَخَدِّ لَهُمُ الْبَالِغَ الَّذِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ... (النحل: ١٢٥)

¹⁴Call unto the path of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching. In dialogue with the non-believers, always present better and more comely arguments (16:125).

¹⁵In promotion of legitimate criticism of the ruler, the Prophet (SAAS) said, "Whoever loses his life in the course of bringing the ruler to account dies a martyr" and "If people witness a ruler act tyrannically and do not seek to stop him, they make themselves guilty of a sin heavily punishable by Allah."

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ... (الرعد: ١١) الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاللَّهُ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ (الحج: ٤١)

¹⁶Allah does not change the condition of a people until they have changed themselves (13:11)... [Righteous are] those who, when given dominion on earth, uphold *ṣalāh*, pay *zakah*, enjoin deeds of righteousness and prohibit deeds of evil. Unto Allah all things ultimately return (22:41).

is the earth, not the physical acrobatic devotions of the monk on the desert pillar, the Upanishadic guru; nor the self-mortification, world denial and history-spurning of the ascetic of whatever religious tradition.

C. *IJMĀ' AL 'AMAL*

Ijmā' al 'amal is the climax, in actual event, of all the preceding preparations. It is the carrying out of the ought-to-do's crystallizing out of *al ijmā'*; a process which, like the eternal dynamism of the *ijmā'-ijtihād* dialectic, can never be said to terminate and, as it were, to bring man into possession of his title to paradise. Actualizing the will of God in space-time is for man an endeavor terminated only by the Day of Judgment. It consists of satisfying the material needs of the *ummah*, of giving every member of it an education adequate enough to bring about a full measure of self-realization, and of providing all the material and moral means necessary for successful defence of the *ummah* against its foreign enemies as well as for bringing about the realization of the divine will throughout the world.

To satisfy the material needs of the *ummah* is of the essence of the divine will, and hence, of religion. Since God created man to serve Him,¹⁷ and to do so as a tenant farmer in the manor of God,¹⁸ it follows that God wants man to till the soil, to usufruct the elements and forces of nature, to develop civilization to his satisfaction.¹⁹ In confirming this

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات: ٥٦)

¹⁷I have not created the *jinn* and humankind but to serve Me (51:56).

... يَقُومُوا عِبَادًا لِلَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ وَإِنْ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ (هود: ٦١)

¹⁸O People, serve Allah. There is no other god but He. He created you out of the earth and planted you therein that you may settle in it according to His patterns. Seek then His forgiveness and repent to Him. He is the Lord, near and merciful (11:61).

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (النور: ٥٥)

¹⁹Allah promised those who believe and do good deeds to establish them with dominion on earth, as He established their predecessors. He promised to make strong their religion which He was pleased to accept from them, and to transform their fear and insecurity into reassurance and safety. Their part is to serve Him and associate naught with Him. Those who do not believe are the wrongdoers (24:55).

vision, the Quran described poverty as the promise of Satan²⁰ and identified feeding the hungry and protecting the weak with religion itself.²¹ It is a consequence of the vicegerency of man that he may enjoy the sweets and pleasures of creation, especially if he has done his duty of service to God.²² In the Mesopotamian vision, the very act of creation of man also placed him in God's manor as His servant. But that act was also the commencement of organized agriculture, the building of dams, or irrigation and drainage canals, of *zigurrat* for the pooling and storing of the harvest, of the invention of writing and the keeping of records, and finally of setting-up the government of the village, city, province, nation and world levels. In short, the act of creation was the very pulling of the world out of chaos and the establishment of cosmos.²³

The Semitic mind has never been able to understand the world-denial or mortification of the ascetic. Its has never seen sex and procreation, food and comfort, as intrinsically evil. Evil in its view was always an abuse of them, never themselves, as phenomena of nature. It was the Gnostic legacy, inherited by Christianity, with all its horror of matter, which injected into the Christian movement the seeds of asceticism and world-denial. Surely, Islam has imposed fasting; but it did so for two purposes: exercise in self-mastery and commiseration with the destitute. It also enjoined in the same verse that the fast must be broken at sunset with plenty of food and drink and merry-making.

How much is enough of the material needs of man, that the *khalīfah* must satisfy if it is to fulfill what is expected of it? The minimum is easy to establish; and that is the level at which famine, disease and immature morality could be eliminated for all mankind. The maximum

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ
(البقرة: ٢٦٨)

²⁰Poverty is the promise of Satan. Satan enjoins upon you deeds of shame and sin. Allah promises you His mercy, forgiveness and bounty. He is All-Knowing All-Generous (2:268).

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْيَتِيمِ (الماعون: ٣-١)

²¹Would you consider the denier of reckoning? He is the one who pushes away the orphan, who does not enjoin the feeding of the destitute (107:1-3).

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِمُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ (الأعراف: ٣٢)

²²Say, O Muhammad, who prohibited the beautiful ornamentations and the delicacies of food which Allah provided for His servants? Say, they belong to the believers in this world, and the believers will enjoy them again in the other world in purity. So does Allah show His signs to those with reason (7:32).

²³Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. 60.

is impossible to establish since neither the usufruct of nature nor the food-yielding powers of nature can be determined. Both are functions of an ever-expanding mastery of nature's laws or patterns God had implanted into it for man's benefit.²⁴ Everything in heaven and earth, the Quran tells us, is for man's benefit. The Prophet (SAAS) said: "Whoever retires home at night while a single man within a day's journey is hungry has offended God," and 'Umar (RAA), the second caliph, declared: "I fear that God will indeed hold me responsible on the Day of Judgement for every mule which stumbles or falls down on the unrepaired pavement of the most distant village in the kingdom."²⁵

Certainly Islam commanded charity like every other religion. By calling it *ṣadaqah* (literally, a piece of truthfulness, charity), it meant to institute it as an index and expression of the truthfulness of one's faith. But beyond all the religions, Islam instituted *al zakāh* which is an annual wealth tax of 2.5% collected under sanction of public law. By calling it *al zakāh* (sweetening) it sought to emphasize that our wealth sours yearly unless we share it with our fellowmen. It further assured the deprived that to them belongs not a charity, not a little crumb on sufferance, but a right, a title to the wealth of the rich.²⁶ Islam has forbidden monopoly as well as hoarding, and abolished interest as the main instrument of man's exploitation of man.²⁷ On the other hand, Islam enjoined man to seek His bounty anywhere and everywhere,²⁸ to take off

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (الجمانية: ١٣) هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذُلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهَا وَإِلَيْهَا النُّشُورُ (الملك: ١٥)

²⁴Allah made subservient to you all that is in the heavens and in the earth. In this are signs for those who think and reason (45:13)... It is Allah Who made the earth submissive to your design and action. Strike out in the earth, therefore, eat of the bounty of Allah and remember that it is to Him that you will return (67:15).

²⁵Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Al Fārūq 'Umar* (Cairo: Matba'at Miṣr, 1364), vol. 2, p. 200.

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُورِ (الذاريات: ١٩)

²⁶And in their wealth they acknowledge the right of the poor and the deprived (51:19).

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ (الممزة: ٣-٢) ... وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا... (البقرة: ٢٧٥)

²⁷[Woe to] those who collected and hoarded their wealth, thinking that their wealth would make them immortal (104:2-3)... Allah made selling and buying legitimate, and usury illegitimate (2:275).

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (الجمعة: ١٠)

²⁸When *ṣalāh* is complete, strike out into the earth and seek His bounty, and oft remember Allah in that you may be truly felicitous (62:10).

and emigrate in search of that bounty—indeed to seek the “million” but under the moral law of God, i.e., without treachery, cheating, thieving or robbing. And once earned and collected, the “million” or any part or multiple of it, has to be sweetened with *al zakāh*, and its owner’s “truthfulness” proved with *al sadaqah*.²⁹

It is certainly the duty of the *khilāfah* to make everything possible to enable every member of the *ummah* to earn and enjoy God’s bounty on earth. But this purpose, noble and necessary as it may, quickly degenerates into crass animality and degradation, a warping of human personality and betrayal of the whole divine will, once it is regarded as the sole or final end of human life.³⁰ The material needs of life are innocent and indeed good; they are to be satisfied to as high a degree as possible. But they and the whole material aspect of life which they are to sustain are only a means, an instrument, a carrier for the spiritual, whether for the individual or for the *ummah* as a whole. To hold the material pursuits as the final end is to deny the spiritual.

This is to claim that the spiritual is the empty, disembodied life of ritual and psychic self-transformation, as an alternate to the life of material pursuit. The spiritual life in Islam has three stages to be pursued all at once. The first is the engagement of the individual in the general material concerns of the *ummah*. This is the task of subjecting one’s own material needs to the demands of “ummatic” work. The second is the pursuit of education for oneself and others on a twofold level; viz., that the mastery of natural may make its usufruct by man more possible and easy; and that the dialectic of *ijmā’-ijtihād* may become more dynamic, creative and reach ever higher echelons of the divine will. The third stage is the production of esthetic works crystallizing the yearning, aspirations and career of the *ummah*, as the *ummah* continues to actualize and to embody values or the divine will in history.

The second component of *ijmā’-ijtihād* (consensus of production) is

... خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ
(التوبة: ١٠٣)

[O Muhammad], Take of their wealth a portion to give to the needy. That will purify their wealth and confirm the righteousness of their hearts. Invoke Allah’s blessing upon them. Your prayer on their behalf will bring them reassurance, for Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing (9:103).

²⁹The Qur’anic verses commanding *zakāh* are too numerous to count. See Barakat, *Al Murshid*... s.v. *zakāh*, especially Qur’an 9:103.

³⁰Indeed, the pursuit of any value in exclusion of other values constitutes a tyranny or monopoly by that value. Such exaggerated pursuit vitiates the striving as well as its objective and transforms them into something valueless.

the provision of education to every member of the *ummah* to the extent and height in which a full measure of self-realization may be achieved.³¹ No individual has realized his vocation as a servant of God if his personal potential has not been developed and deployed to the fullest possible. Such an individual will not only feel unhappy and an *ummah* made of such individuals is a frustrated society, but the temptation to seek self-realization outside the confines of the *ummah* or to plot to undermine and subvert the *khilāfah* will continue to haunt the unused talents, the unusufructed energies, and unfulfilled spirits. *Al khilāfah* must do both: to create the need, i.e., to stir up the potential latent in the members, and to provide the means for their self-fulfillment. If it fails in the former, it has on its hand an *ummah* of ignorant and unawakened naive men. If it fails in the latter, it has opened its doors to self-emptying and self-wasting through emigration, or to self-destruction through subversion within, and war and foreign exploitation from without.

Al khilāfah must, in satisfaction of the consensus of production, mobilize the *ummah* to provide all that is necessary for an effective defence of the *ummah* from attack by its enemies.³² No member is a volunteer; all are conscripts in the struggle when the very existence of the *ummah* is in question, or when the issue of making the world of God supreme in the world requires their services.

In final analysis, it is this side of *ijmā' al 'amal* that constitute the highest felicity of the *ummah*, namely, its contribution to the Islamization of the world. It is this aspect of its vocation that raises the *ummah* to the

أَقْرَأَ بِسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ... أَقْرَأَ رَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (العلق: ١-٥) وَمَا كَانَ
 الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا
 رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ (التوبة: ١٢٢)

³¹Recite in the name of your Lord, the Creator (96:1)... Recite, for your Lord is the most gracious. He taught the art of writing. He taught man what man never knew before (96: 3-5)... The believers should not all go out to war. Some of them should stay behind to study religion and cultivate their knowledge of its principles and commandments. For they will be needed to admonish their fellows upon return from war, that these guard themselves against evil (as the religion commands) (9:122).

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَآخَرِينَ مِنْ
 دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ
 (الأنفال: ٦٠)

³²Prepare for your encounter with the enemy all the might you can. Marshal the cavalry in such numbers as to frighten the enemies of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom you may not know, but whom Allah does know. Whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be returned to you with your reward, and no injustice will befall you (8:60).

level of contending in the matter of human history, of world history. Its achievement on this level constitutes the *ummah's* ultimate justification in the eye of God, *sub specie aeternitatis*.

II. AL TAWHĪD AND POLITICAL POWER

A. ISLAM AND THE MUSLIM WORLD: THE SAD FACTS

The Muslim world which now counts more than a billion members residing in an area stretching from the Atlantic eastward to the Pacific, and now beginning to take root and spread in Europe and the Americas, constitutes a great potential for making the word of God supreme in the world. Unfortunately for itself and for the world, it is still far from developing or deploying its capacities in the interest of God's cause. Indeed, it is keeping a very precarious balance between using its own capacities for its own development; and wasting those capacities on futile endeavors at home and constructive endeavors for the benefits of non-Muslims.

The great majority of constitutions of Muslim countries state that Islam is the state's religion. Only one, Saudi Arabia, takes the statement with seriousness, the sign of which is the implementation of the *sharī'ah*. A number of other states, such as Pakistan, Kuwait, come next with a claim for Islam as *raison d'être* of state and *ummah* but add to it the Western descriptive notions that they are nations or states because they combine a people, a territory and sovereignty—a consideration which at once assumes Islam to be inadequate as *raison d'être*. A third class like Egypt, Morocco, the Sudan, etc., regards Islam as necessary icing on top of the cake whose internal structure and texture are molded by Western rather than Islamic notions. Nationalism, a new *shu'ūbiyah*, imitating the Western brand of (*Blut und Boden*) romanticism, determines the immigration and naturalization laws, the active statesmanship of the leaders, the style of life of the intelligentsia and other elite, and the social self-image that is being projected for the education and inspiration of the masses. No Muslim country exists, that keeps itself in the constant mobilization and vigilance in which the Prophet's society had placed itself during the whole span of the Prophet's ministry in Madīnah. And, perhaps the worst of all features of the Muslim world is its bankruptcy

in the field of education. Nowhere is there a single institution which assumes the burden of taking a five-year-old Muslim and handing him back to the *ummah* with fully developed potential. We have no facility which fulfills the task of training the Muslim to transform the world and making materials into the likeness of the divine pattern in consciousness of that divine pattern itself as the ultimate end of his own personal existence. The percentage of educated emigrants and frustrated residents to the total number of Ph.D. or M.D. graduates is frighteningly high. At the other end of the spectrum the percentage of illiterates to literates is horrifying.

It is not upsetting that the Muslims are waking up from their long slumber; that their societies are weak in their economic, social and political momentum; or that their states are staggering out of inertness and lethargy in staccato rhythm. What is upsetting is the lack of vision among Muslim leaders of the moment of the *ummah* at this juncture of the present and future. What we observe is the consequence of this lack of vision, and that is the utter absence of effort to build the Islamic citizen, who is as committed to the ideology of Islam as he is at home in the twenty-first century.

B. THE PROMISE OF POLITICAL POWER

No *engagé* Muslim understands or accepts the apologies usually given by Muslim politicians about the sad shortcomings of the *ummah* in this century. And no one accepts the argument that the masses' initiative must come from the ranks of the masses before it can be exercised by *al khilāfah's* leaders. The elite who know better are certainly there, and in abundance. What is needed at this time in history is the spark to ignite the will of the *ummah* into motion. This can come only from the leaders preparedness to engage in the dangerous business of interfering in history as its subject, not as its patient and object.³³

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُمْ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ قُلْ هَلْ تَرَبَّصُونَ
بِنَا إِلَّا لِأَحَدٍ مِنَ الْحُسَيْنَيْنِ وَنَحْنُ نَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ أَوْ يَأْتِيَنَا...
(التوبة: ٥١-٥٢)

³³Say, [O Believers], nothing will befall us but what Allah has already decreed. He is our Lord. Upon Him shall we believers depend... Say, Do you expect anything to befall us but one of two blessings (martyrdom and paradise or survival and victory over the enemy)? But we do expect that Allah will vest the enemy with severe punishment, either by Him or through our hands (9:51-2).

Interference in history by the Muslim ummah begins at home, in the patient, sober building of *al khilāfah* which cannot be said to exist in any present Muslim state. Once sure of a provisional base on which to anchor itself, *al khilāfah* must mobilize the whole Muslim world and call it to march. No price should be regarded exorbitant to achieve this objective except the dissolution of *al khilāfah* itself. Its personnel can and should be sacrificed if progress towards that goal cannot be made without it. Once the *ummah* stands in readiness, the moment of Abū Bakr's caliphate will be on hand again. That will be the greatest moment ever.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE ECONOMIC ORDER

Muhammad Iqbal, the spiritual founder of Pakistan, is credited with the honor of being the first in modern times to assert in the name of Islam that "Political action is the expression of Islam's spirituality."¹ Muslims around the world have since convinced themselves of that truth and proudly repeated Iqbal's words on every occasion. The place is still open for an Islamic thinker of Iqbal's status to proclaim to the world in the name of Islam that "Economic action is the expression of Islam's spirituality." Muslims would then convince themselves of this new truth as easily as they did of Iqbal's. They will not miss its point, just as they did not miss that of Iqbal's statement; namely, that in contrast to Christianity's separation of Church and state, Islam holds that the "church" demands the "state"; that the existence and good health of the state are of the essence of religion, and similarly, economic activity. The economy of the *ummah* and its good health are of the essence of Islam,² just as Islam's spirituality is inexistent without just economic action.³ This position of Islam distinguishes it from all the religions; for no religion has

¹M. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1977), lecture V.

وَإِذْ كُنَّا مِنْكُمْ بَنِي إِدْرِسَ إِذْ جَعَلْنَا لَكَ خَلْفًا مِنْ بَنِي إِدْرِسَ نَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْ سُوءِ أَعْمَالِهِمْ قُصُورًا
وَنَنْجُوهُمْ مِنَ الْيَجَالِ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّحَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِمْ سَاحِبًا وَقَدْ جَاءَ أُولَئِكَ بِالسَّحَابِ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِمْ سَاحِبًا
أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ (هود: ٦١)

²Remember that Allah made you His vicegerents after the collapse of 'Ad, and gave you dominion in the land. He enabled you to cultivate its plains, build palaces and carve up the mountains for residence. Remember the gifts of Allah to you. Do not spread corruption and pollute the earth (7:74)... O People, serve Allah alone. There is no god but He. It is He Who created you out of the earth and made you settle in it. So, repent to Him and seek His forgiveness (11:61).

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِلْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَحْرُومِ (الذاريات: ١٩) أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ
الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يَعْضُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْيَتِيمِ (الماعون: ٣-١)

³In their wealth [the righteous] acknowledge the right of the poor and the deprived (51:19)... Will you consider the denier of all reckoning? It is he who pushes away the orphan; who does not enjoin the feeding of the destitute (107:1-3).

associated itself with politics as closely as Islam did except ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, where kingship was sacral. But these are condemned as pagan. Likewise, no religion has associated itself with economics as closely as does Islam, except communism where matter has taken the place of God, an ideology which Muslims condemn as a form of *shirk*. True, Islam seems to come perilously close to both these extremes; but it remains so distinct from them that its closeness constitutes no peril at all. Like the previous chapter, with regard to the political order, this one seeks to clarify the essential relation of *al tawhīd* to the economic order, a relation constitutive of the essence of Islamic religious experience.⁴

I. JOINT ESSENTIAL PRIORITY OF THE MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL

A. UNLIKE CHRISTIANITY

Several centuries before the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS), Jesus conveyed a divine message in which the proposition, "Man does not live by bread alone," was of prime importance.⁵ Matthew and Luke, the writers of the Gospels ascribed to them, have linked this proposition of Jesus to a question by Satan testing Jesus' power, allegedly as "Son of God," to turn the stones of the desert into bread in a moment of weakness since he was hungry after a fast of forty days in the wilderness. The attempt to link this statement with Jesus' being the Son of God is so *mal-à-propos* that it does not need to divert our attention from the statement itself which is beautiful and valid without Satan's challenge. To a man who has fasted forty days as Matthew claims with no little exaggeration, readymade bread would be the ultimate challenge, not the sonship of God. Let us note that Jesus' answer as reported by Matthew and Luke was not a straight denial of the proposition that man does live by bread, but of the qualified assertion that man lives by bread alone.

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِاللَّيْلِ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ (الماعون: ١-٣)

"Will you consider the denier of all reckoning? It is he who pushes away the orphan who does not enjoin the feeding of the destitute" (107:1-3).

⁴We quote these verses again for their tremendous significance. They assert, it should be realized, that to push away the orphan, not to assist in the feeding of the poor, is to deny religion itself, the whole of religion—doctrine, creed, ethics, law, spirit—everything!

⁵But Jesus answered, "The scripture says, 'Man cannot live on bread alone, but needs every word that God speaks' " (Matthew 4:4).

Had Jesus' denial been outright denial, and hence, a condemnation of material life itself, this would not have been a pronouncement of a Semitic mind. Rather, it would have been the judgement of a Hellenic and wholly converted against itself, for having first identified divinity with nature, and having then been disappointed and frustrated with its own creation, the Homeric mind turned against itself in Gnosticism, the opposite extreme, and asserted a spirituality utterly opposed to and disparate from nature and matter.⁶ Other passages in the Gospels which express such total condemnation of the material world, notably Matthew 6:11 ff, were dictated by Gnostic attitudes. The statement in question, however, preserved a moral balance typical of *dīn al fiṭrah*, for it sought to condemn not the material, but the violation of the moral. It simply denied that man lives by bread alone. Hence, it represents a singular Semitic, probably prophetic, attitude in a Hellenic world.

In the hands of the Christians of history, however, this statement of Jesus became the cornerstone of an antimaterialist ideology. It grew to a total condemnation of matter, of the world, of history. It developed an isolationist ethic of asceticism, of political cynicism, of monasticism. It became the war cry of a new religiosity, which transformed the religion of Jesus into Christianity, the religion of Paul, Athanasius, Tertullian, Augustine, of the imperial Roman Church.⁷

Jesus was sent to the Jews to put an end to their crass materialism and to liberate them from the extreme legalism to which their rabbis had subjected them. His solution had to be the reemphasis of the spiritual, the internal, the personal which was weakened or lost in the literalist conservatism of the rabbis. The call was corrupted by his followers into another extremism based on the degrading of the material, the external and public, the societal. "Man does not live by bread alone" became the misplaced, abused motto of this movement.

B. THE ISLAMIC ANSWER

1. Islam and the Religions

From a wider, world-perspective, Islam constituted a genuine breakthrough from the fixation into which the world had fallen, divided

⁶Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religions*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 46.

⁷See the author's *Christian Ethics*, part II.

as it was between Indian religiosity and Hellenic religiosity. Indian religiosity maintained that the universe was itself the absolute (Brahman), not in its ideal form, but in an objectified, individuated and particularized form which it condemned.⁸ Objectification of Brahman, the absolute spirit, is undesirable. In consequence, the religious/moral imperative was conceived of as escape from the realm of objectification (creation) which is condemned as evil, to the realm of absolute (Brahman, Nirvana). Under this view, cultivation of the material world, i.e., procreation, and mobilization for food production, education, rendering the world into a garden and making history, are definitely evil because they spread, intensify or prolong the state of objectification. Evidently, the only morality which harmonizes with this view is individualistic and world-denying. Jainism and Theravada Buddhism remained true to this essential vision of the Upanishads.⁹ Hinduism accepted the vision for the benefit of the endowed elite. It propounded a popular religiosity in which the castes look forward to release from their travails only in afterlife, while continuing to labor in their appointed stations in this life with no little amount of joy and complacent satisfaction that they are fulfilling the purpose of their existence.¹⁰ Likewise Mahayana Buddhism kept this vision as a background and constructed its religiosity out of native Chinese worldly morality, and appointed Bodhisattvas (human ancestors apotheosized into saviors) to redeem men from the affliction of existence.¹¹

Combining elements of Egyptian and Greek religions, of Mithraism and Near Eastern mystery cults, Hellenism engulfed the Semitic movement of Jesus which sought to reform the legalism and ethnocentrism of Judaism. Hence, the Greco-Egyptian element which identified God with the world was retained but modified and diluted in the doctrine of the incarnation which made God become man and enabled man to associate himself with divinity. Hence too, the resentment of the downtrodden of the empire, Gnostic aversion to matter and the world, and the redemptionist hope of Mithraism and Judaism, all combined to give historical Christianity its judgement of creation as fallen, of the world as evil, of state and society as devil's handiwork, and of the moral life as individualist and world-denying.¹²

It was a refreshing clarification that Islam achieved. It put aside both

⁸Ismā'il R. al Fārūqī, *Historical Atlas...* pp. 237-8.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Noss, *Man's Religions* pp. 103-4.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 155.

¹²See this author's *Christian Ethics*, pp. 193 ff.

claims of India and Egypt which identified the Absolute with the world, the Creator with the creature, whether to the advantage of the creature as in Egypt and ancient Greece, to that of the “Creator” as in India. It reaffirmed the ancient Mesopotamian vision of the utter desperateness of Creator and creature, and of man as servant in the manor of God, benefiting from history. Islam’s reaffirmation was to be a crystallization of this ancient wisdom, *dīn al fitrah*, as the Holy Quran has called it.¹³

It was in this context that our Prophet (SAAS) was set by Allah (SWT) to redress the balance, to correct the misunderstanding and reestablish the proper relation between the material and the spiritual. What did our Prophet (SAAS) teach? What is the essence of the message he delivered?

2. The Implications of *al Tawhīd*: Worldism

Let us begin at the beginning by taking a look at the presuppositions, or first principles, of Islam. The essence of religious experience in Islam is *al tawhīd*; that is, the recognition that there is no god but God (*lā ilāha illā Allāh*). What is distinctly Islamic—and hence novel—in *al tawhīd* as metaphysical principle, is the negative aspect of its statement. That no being of whom Godhead is predicated is God except God, strikes at Jewish, Christian and pre-Islamic Arab notions of associating other beings with God. *Al tawhīd* purged religion absolutely clean of all doubt regarding the transcendence and unicity of the Godhead. Thereby, it accomplished a double purpose: that of acknowledging God as sole Creator of the universe, and that of equalizing all men as creatures of God, endowed with the same essential qualities of creaturely humanity, with the same cosmic status.

To *al tawhīd* belongs another aspect, namely, the axiological. To assert *lā ilāha illā Allāh* means that Allah (SWT) is the sole and ultimate value, that everything else is only an instrument whose value depends upon God for its valueness, and whose goodness is measured by its actualization of ultimate, divine goodness. It means that God is the final end

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا يَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ
وَلَنْ كُنْ مِنْ أَكْثَرِ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (الروم: ٣٠)

¹³Turn your face to the primordial religion as a *ḥanīf*. This is the innate religion with which Allah endowed humans, without exception. That is the true, valuable religion. Most people, however, do not know (30:30).

of all desire, that He is the one and only Master whose will is the ought-to-be of all that is. Under this view man is a servant whose vocation and the destiny is the service of God, or fulfillment of the divine will; that is, the actualization of value in space and time.

Certainly, God has been loved and obeyed by men before. However, in Indian religion He (the impersonal Absolute) was loved and obeyed as the opposite of the material world and so through denial of that world. In Egyptian and Greek religion God was loved and obeyed as the material world itself, and therefore through attunement with the call of that world. Only in the Semitic stream of religion was God loved and obeyed as non-nature, the immaterial master of nature and matter. But the Semitic stream had fossilized in Rabbinic Judaism dissipated itself in romanticism and hedonism in Arabia, combined with Mithraism and Hellenism to form Roman Christianity out of the liberating breakthrough of Jesus.¹⁴ *Al tawhīd* was hence necessary to restore the Semitic stream to its original position, namely, that creation, or space-time, is the medium, the *matériel*, in which the divine will is to be actualized; that it is certainly good, but that its goodness is that of a *materia prima*, a necessary theater for the embodiment or concretization of the divine will. Every component of the creation is therefore good, and creation is not only the best of all possible worlds; it is flawless and perfect.¹⁵ Indeed, creation filled with value by man through moral vision and action is itself the divine purpose of creation.¹⁶ Consequently, enjoyment of its elemental or

¹⁴See this author's "Urūbah and Religion," 198 ff.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (هود: ٧) الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوتٍ فَإِنْ رَاجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُتُورٍ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ (الملك: ٤-٣)

¹⁵It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, His throne resting on water, that humans may prove themselves worthy in their deeds (11:7)

It is He Who created life and death that you may prove yourselves worthy in deeds. He is the Almighty, the Forgiving. It is indeed He Who created seven heavens beyond one another. Creation by the Gracious displays no discrepancy. Look again and again into His creation! You will never find fault. Even if you look once and again your investigative look will return to you humbled, but wiser in its realization of the perfection of Allah's creation (67:3-4).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ خَلْقَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (الأنعام: ١٦٥)

¹⁶It is He who established you His vicegerents on earth, Who raised some higher than others, all to the end of your proving yourselves worthy of what He has given you. Your Lord is quick of punish, and He is surely Merciful and Forgiving (6:165).

utilitarian values is innocent; a value-full world is a monument to God whose preservation and enhancement are acts of praise and worship on the part of man.¹⁷ As an instrument for the realization of the absolute, every object in creation is invested with higher cosmic value. Just as there can be no discrimination between points of space-time except as to their instrumentality for man's transformation of the world into pattern Allah (SWT) has revealed. No material object is evil *per se*.¹⁸

Two more first principles of Islam corroborate the thesis of Islam's worldism: Islam's ethic of action and its eschatology.

a. Worldism and the Ethics of Action

Al tawhīd commits man to an ethic of action; that is, to an ethic where worth and unworth are measured by the degree of success the moral subject achieves in disturbing the flow of space-time, in his body as well as around him. It does not deny the ethic of intent, but demands fulfillment of its requirements as the preliminary prerequisite for entering into the fulfillment of those of the ethic of action. Disturbance of the flow of space-time, or transformation of creation, therefore, is the moral imperative of the Muslim. He must enter the rough and tumble of history

اللَّهُ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لَتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِمَّا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُفَكِّرُونَ (الجمانية: ١٢-١٣)

... كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (الحج: ٣٧)
أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً (لقمان: ٢٠)

¹⁷Allah did make the seas subservient to you, that your ships may cross it by His leave, that you may obtain of His bounty, and that you may feel grateful. Indeed, He made subservient to you all that is in heaven. All that is on earth is His endowment to you. In this are demonstrations for those who think (45:12-13).

Likewise, He made [all these things] subservient to you that you may glorify Him, that you may thank Him for His guidance. As to those who do good deeds, proclaim to them the good news (22:37).

Don't you see that Allah has made subservient to you what is in heaven and on the earth that He has showered His blessings obvious as well as hidden? (31:20).

... وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَقَدَرَهُ... (الفرقان: ٢) نَسِجَ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَيْدِيهِمْ يَخْلُقُهُ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا (الإسراء: ٤٤)

¹⁸And He created everything, and assigned to it its measure, its character and purpose (25:2).

The seven heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, acknowledge their Creator and praise Him, though you may not understand the way their acknowledgement and praise are expressed. Certainly, Allah is tolerant and forgiving (17:44).

and therein bring about the desired transformation. He cannot lead a monastic, isolationist existence except as an exercise in self-discipline and self-mastery. Even then, if the exercise is not conducive to the end of achieving greater success in the transformation of space-time, it is doomed as unethical egocentrism; for the purpose would in that case be self-transformation as an end in itself, and not as a preparation for transforming the world. You will recall that the Prophet (SAAS) used to retire, to isolate and discipline himself, especially before revelation. Indeed, it may be said that revelation was the climax of his *tahannuth*. The Sufis claim that communication with the divine such as the Prophet (SAAS) enjoyed in the cave of Hirā is the highest good possible for man to achieve in his earthly life, and that Muhammad's coming down from the cave to Makkah was an *untergang*. But we know that it was Allah (SWT) Who ordered him not only to go down, but also to outwit his opponents when they plotted to kill him, to build a community, to emigrate, to build a state, to promote and govern the material life of his people.¹⁹ Muhammad (SAAS) could have been another Christianist Jesus concerned only with the spiritual world, and giving himself to his enemies for crucifixion. That is by far the easier course. Instead, our Prophet (SAAS) faced reality, political, economic, military reality and made history. He was husband and father, tradesman and provider, statesman and judge, military leader, *da'iyyah* and prophet, all at once. The revelation which came to him and of which he was the first embodiment left nothing without guidance or direction.²⁰ Islam is not possible without a state and courts of law to administer it, because Islam is a religion of action, and action is public and societal whereas an ethic of intent is personal and has no need to go out of conscience.

b. Worldism and Islamic Eschatology

Secondly, Islam's eschatology is radically different from that of Judaism and Christianity. In the former, the "Kingdom of God" is an alternative

¹⁹See this author's article "On the *Raison d'Être* of the Ummah."

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُولَئِكَ أَشْهُمٌ مِمَّا فَطَرْنَا فِي السِّبْطِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَنُفِّرُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
يُحْشَرُونَ (الأنعام: ٣٨)

²⁰No animal that creeps on earth or flies in the air but belongs to a species like you [and stands under the commandments of Allah]. Allah's imperatives are relevant to all beings, to all things without exception. All will ultimately have to reckon with Allah (6:38).

to the Hebrew situation in exile. It was the Kingdom of David projected nostalgically by those who have lost it and who presently stand at the nethermost level of captivity and degradation.²¹ As for Christianity, its main thrust was to combat the materialist, externalist, enlandizing ethnocentrism of the Jews. Hence it was necessary for Christianity to spiritualize the Kingdom of David and remove it altogether from space-time. The "Kingdom of God" became an "otherworld" and this-world became the temporary theater of Caesar, the devil, the "Flesh," "Where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."²² Islam, *per contra*, countenanced one and only one kingdom, one and only space-time. All that ought-to-be, ought to and can happen in it through man's agency. Once it comes to an end, only award and execution of judgement, consummation of reward and punishment can take place. *al dār al ākhirah* or *al ākhirah* (the other-world) is not an alternative to this. Here is not *ʾadhāb al ākhirah*, *thawāb al ākhirah* (reward or punishment in the other-world) that is earned in this world; and what is earned by means of *al taqwā* is a transcendent reward, not an exchange of a better kingdom for a bad kingdom. That is why exit from this world by means of asceticism does not mean entry into the other.²³ He did not say: Seek the other world at the cost of this one; nor did He counsel us to neglect this world or allow it to drop from our view.

We may conclude from this first part that Islam is a worldist religion; that for Islam space-time is indeed the realm where the absolute is to be realized, and so by man. "Excellence in the deed," *al falāḥ*, in terms of which the Holy Quran describes the purpose of creation as a whole, can have no other meaning but the transformation of the materials of creation, i.e., men and women, rivers and mountains, forests and wheat fields, villages and towns, countries and peoples. Evidently, filling this world, this space and this time with value is not only important for religion, but the very whole business of religion.²⁴

²¹See this author's *Christian Ethics*, 116 ff.

²²"Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroys, and robbers break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19).

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ (القصاص: ٧٧)

²³And seek the other world in that which Allah bestows upon you in this world. But do not forsake your share in this world. Do good to others as Allah has done good to you. Do not seek corruption, or allow it to happen to earth. Allah does not love the corrupters (28:77).

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّنِّ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يُحِصُّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ (الماعون: ١-٣)

²⁴Will you consider the denier of all reckoning? He is the person who pushes away the orphan, who does not enjoin the feeding of the destitute (107:1-3).

3. Islamic Worldism and Man's Material Endeavor

a. *The Moral Subject and His Own Person*

What does it mean in practical concrete day-to-day terms to say that Islam is worldist? It means that the Muslim—the Muslim in fact, not merely in profession—is the person whose deeds are determined by the *sharī'ah*. Some of these laws have to do with his own person, such as those which pertain to rituals, seeking to affect either his state of consciousness or his body. Those which seek to affect his body are material by nature. To fulfill them is to act economically, i.e., to produce what the subject can in fact produce and to do so in excess of his need so that the excess may be traded for those commodities and services to provide for himself food, raiment, lodging and medical service. His moral merit on that front is directly proportional to his success in seeking Allah's bounty.²⁵

The ethic of Islam clearly counsels against begging, against being a parasite living on the labor of others. *Al sunnah al sharifah* recorded for us a number of occasions on which man's economic endeavor was praised and economic resignation condemned.²⁶ And the *sharī'ah* defined the dependents of a man or of the state in terms of distinct categories such as physical handicap, old age, childhood, womanhood, disease, thus making it illegitimate for the healthy adult male to a dependent of someone else or of the state. Indeed the Holy Quran severely condemned the destitute refugees as people responsible for the politico-economic predicament in which they stood.²⁷

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (الجمعة: ١٠)

²⁵When ṣalāh is completed, strike out in the earth and seek of His bounty; oft remember Allah that you may become truly felicitous (62:10).

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمَوْلَفَةِ فَلَوْبِهِمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَدِيرِ مِن وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (التوبة: ٦٠)

²⁶Charities belong to the poor and the destitute, to those who collect them and those whose hearts are yet to be reconciled to Islam, to the freeing of slaves and debtors, to the wayfarer and generally to the cause of Allah. Charities are a religious duty commanded by Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise (9:60).

²⁷Better than half the categories under which the ḥadīth is classified concern the work of man, his earning and disposal of wealth, i.e., al buyū' (sales contracts), al muzāra'ah (agricultural partnership), jihād (war or self-exertion), foods, drinks, clothing, and decoration, knowledge and its acquisition, and so on.

The other laws which have to do with the Muslim state of consciousness, such as the laws pertaining to the Islamic rituals, do not require performance of purely personal exercises; i.e., activities whose purpose or end is purely a state of consciousness of the subject. As is well known, that *al ṣalāh* which does not produce righteousness in the other activities of daily life, and hence in the subject's dealing with other persons, is worth nothing.²⁸ To enter into the lives of another persons, and to influence or change them for better is the general purpose of all Islamic laws.²⁹ The Muslim is hence the diametrical opposite of the *monaster*, whether Buddhist or Christian, who withdraws from the other persons precisely in order to work on himself, alone. For in their understanding, salvation and felicity consist in a state of consciousness which man alone can bring about in himself and of which he alone can be the judge. On the other hand, to enter into personal lives of the other persons, and there to deflect all activities towards goals prescribed by the Holy Quran and the *sunnah*, is a predicament which makes the Muslim the most gregarious member of creation. The greatest and saintliest state of consciousness in Islam, namely the prophetic state of Muhammad (SAAS), was not meant to be for the personal enjoyment or relation of Muhammad (SAAS), but a means for the remolding of the life of the least as well as of every man on earth.

b. *The Moral Subject and the Other Persons*

The laws of the *sharī'ah* which have to do with other persons—and they are the majority—may again be divided into those which have to do with their bodies and those which have to do with their consciousness.

The latter cover an area which may best be described as education and counselling. The Muslim is obliged to educate his dependents and

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا (النساء: ٩٧)

²⁸Those who die in privation and misery and answer the angels' inquiry regarding them with pleas of oppression, of weakness and impotence, are told: Was not the earth wide enough for you to run away from that predicament? [Could you therefore not have done better than to suffer your oppression and weakness in silence and passivity?] Surely, their abode is Hell, the terrible plight (4:97).

... وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ (العنكبوت: ٤٥)

²⁹Uphold *ṣalāh* regularly. *Ṣalāh* counsels against the works of shame and evil (29:45).

the whole of mankind and give them perpetual counsel—all to the purpose of their making their lives fulfill the divine pattern ordained by Allah (SWT). Education and counselling of Muslims by the Muslim moral subject is so serious and grave a matter that Allah (SWT) has equated it with felicity.³⁰

Commanding of the good and forbidding of the evil is education in its highest sense. Virtue and righteousness are the ultimate end of all education in Islam, a religion which does not at all countenance either a knowledge for its own sake or an art for its own sake. Education for utility, i.e., for the usufruct of nature, production of commodities and services, has an obvious reference to the material needs of man and their satisfaction.

Finally, we come to the laws which have to do with the other man's body, i.e., with the satisfaction of the material needs of the other man. Here we are again faced—and struck—by the totalist declaration of the Holy Quran.³¹ Religion, the whole of it, is made equivalent with the material category of “pushing away the orphan and neglecting the feeding of the destitute.” The brief *sūrah* ends with a condemnation of those who claim Islam and stop in the way of assistance to the needy, as if again, religiosity, the whole of it, is equivalent to satisfaction by the Muslim of the material needs of other men.³²

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ... الشَّيْئُونَ الْمُنِيدُونَ الْمُنَادُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ
السَّاجِدُونَ الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْخَافُونَ لِذُودِ اللَّهِ وَيَنْشُرُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (التوبة: ١١١-١١٢)

³⁰Allah covenanted with the believers to exchange their lives and their wealth for paradise. They will fight for Allah, kill and get killed in the process...(Triumphant) are those who repent to and worship Allah who praise Him, who journey for the cause of Allah, who bow down (to Him), who fall prostrate in worship, who enjoin the right, who prohibit works of evil, who safeguard against trespassing the limits of conduct set by Allah. [O Muhammad], proclaim glad tidings to the believers (9:111-2).

... وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ (العصر: ٣)

³¹Counsel one another in truth and exhort one another to patience (103:3).

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يَحْصُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ فَوَيْلٌ
لِلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ (الاعون: ١-٧)

³²Will you consider the person who denies all reckoning? It is he who pushes away the orphan, who exhorts not to the feeding of the destitute! Woe to those who pray to Allah if they do not heed what their prayer implies. Woe to those who pretend, who prevent assistance from reaching the needy (107:1-7).

Early Islamic history has given us a remarkable exemplification of this Islamic view. That is Abū Bakr al Ṣiddīq's declaration of all-out war against those tribes which stopped paying the *zakah* into the central treasury upon the death of the Prophet (SAAS). What is remarkable is the charge brought against them. They were accused of *al riddah* (apostasy), as if the religion itself was what they denied. Abū Bakr's understanding, like that of the Prophet (SAAS), was indeed that religion and satisfaction of the material needs of others are equivalent.

Furthermore, Islam paid great attention to every aspect of life of men and women and legislated for it. It built its social system around specific patterns of wealth distribution. The conclusion cannot therefore be avoided that in Islam, economic endeavor and the enjoyment of its fruits constitute the be-all and end-all of morality. Islam is indeed an ideology in the sense that the *sharī'ah* its law, has given us a pattern of material wealth distribution with which to order our lives.³³

c. *Worldism and Homo Economicus*

The answer to the question, therefore, if man is definable in terms of his economic pursuits must be affirmative. Man is indeed a *homo economicus*, not in Max Weber's sense of man's subjection to sovereign economic laws which dominate his activity. In themselves, economic laws may be sovereign; but the economic pattern to which man subjects his life is his own deliberate choice. Man is free to govern his life by any one of many economic patterns. He is *homo economicus* in the sense that the economic pattern to which he subjects his life is definitive of his nature, of his idea of himself.

Islam, therefore, regarded religion as the way to conduct life on earth. Religion has no other business than this purpose. It is a dimension of earthly life, realized in full when that life is lived morally under God, i.e., responsibility to nature, to oneself and to society. Unlike the other religions which erect for themselves a whole kingdom other than the world where they rule beyond life on earth, Islam declared itself the conscience of this earth, this life.

Life on this planet is made felicitous or miserable by the attitudes and deeds of men to one another, surely not in the abstract, not insofar as

³³See Muḥammad Ṣāqir. *Al Iqtisād al Islāmī* (Jaddah: Al Ma'had al 'Ālamī li Abḥāth al Iqtisād al Islāmī, 1980).

those commodities devoid of economic value are concerned. The world and life of the inhabitant of the forest is not made happy or miserable by whether his fellow men are liberal in giving him leaves, branches or trees, air or water, but by their liberality in sharing with him the game they catch, the lumber they dress up for construction, or the water already carried from the river to the habitat. In other words, if charity is to have "teeth," if it is to serve as a tool of religion whose purpose is the well-being of mankind, then it must have for its object goods of economic value. Man's economic behavior makes or unmakes the felicity of life on earth. That is why religion seeks to subject it to the norms of morality, of responsibility. Islam, the religion of world-affirmation *par excellence*, naturally seeks to order human life so as to make it actualize the pattern intended for it by its Creator. Hence the Islamic dictum: *Inna al dīn al mu'āmalah* (Religion is indeed man's treatment of his fellows).³⁴

II. UNIVERSALISM OF THE ISLAMIC ECONOMIC ORDER

The foregoing stand of Islam on the goodness and necessity of the material, unique among the religions or ideologies the world has seen, is not for the benefit of any group to the exclusion of others. Nor is it meant by Islam to benefit any group more than any other. The exhortation to rise, to change one's material conditions, to work hard and to seek the abundant life, to usufruct nature and enjoy the goodly things of creation, is addressed to all humanity. The universal *pax Islamica* would come to naught unless it brings about a happier life for all. Its claims would ring hollow unless it seeks to improve the material conditions of the people;—indeed, unless it does so. For there is little justification for changing one's spiritual and/or political state if the miseries of life on this earth continue unchanged. If, according to Islam, the material and the spiritual are connected, it follows that they are so for everybody, and that changes for the better on the spiritual or political level should show visible effects on the material. Any discrepancy or shortcoming anywhere would vitiate the whole system, but first, the very transcendence of God. Divine transcendence does not permit any differentiation bet-

³⁴Reported by Imām Muslim and Imām al Bukhārī.

ween human creatures as objects of divine care or ethical normativeness; or as recipients of God's bounty independently of their personal efforts.³⁵

From this major premise of Islam's implication for the economic order, two main principles follow: First, that no individual or group may exploit another; and second, that no group may insulate and separate itself from the rest of mankind with a few restricting their economic condition to themselves, be it one of misery or of affluence. Human nature predisposes the needy to remove the isolating walls preventing them from sharing the well-being of the affluent. It is hence unlikely that they would uphold or practice isolationism. Even if they did, the decision could hardly be that of the suffering masses. It would rather be that of their rulers exploiting them for the benefit of the few. Since the masses are in that case the exploited, their condition of isolation must be temporary, and would soon be the object of revolution.

If, on the other hand, the condition of the isolationist group is one of affluence, that is more likely to have been the decision of both ruler and ruled. Their objective would be to save their affluence for themselves, and to prevent its spread to others.³⁶ This is plain egotism, practiced by the group as a whole. In human history, this has been the more common phenomenon; and in our age of colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism, the phenomenon has had appalling manifestations. The West Europeans permitted themselves a high rise in standard of living at the cost of cheap labor and natural resources of Africa and Asia. More recently, they have been joined by America, and the world became divided into the rich North and the poor South. For over a century, the colonialist exploitation of Asia-Africa has built up vast capital reserves in the Western countries making their industrial development possible. The technological revolution of today would be unthinkable without the countless millions of Asians and Africans laboring on the plantations and in the mines, without the infinite number of ships carrying the wealth of Asia-Africa—in produce, raw materials; mineral or semifinished products of Europe and America.³⁷

That is all utterly opposed to Islam where the first ethical principle is that every person is entitled to the fruits of his labor: "To every per-

³⁵See this author's "Divine Transcendence and Its Expression," *World Faiths*, no. 107 (Spring 1979).

³⁶Such, for instance, is the purpose of all excise and customs taxes and immigration laws in the nations of the modern world. Their nationalist ideologies prescribe to each and every one to put the welfare of their own people not only above the welfare of humankind but at the very cost of it.

³⁷Ismā'il 'Abd Allāh, *World Chaos or a New Order: A Third World View*, "World Faiths and the New World Order," eds. Joseph Gremillion and William Ryan (Washington: The Interreligious Peace Colloquium, 1978), pp. 48-68.

son whatever gain he/she has earned, against every person whatever loss he/she has earned" (Quran 2:286). To deprive a person of his due is aggression hateful to God, a great injustice which must be repented by the aggressor and compensated for the victim. Otherwise, God would unleash His wrath and punishment of the guilty here and in the hereafter. God is omnipotent and may act to bring such punishment in a variety of ways, but He works through causes by bringing about the effects proper to them. Aggression and injustice breed such hatred and resentment that when they explode into brutal revolutions, the perpetrators of injustice, their institutions and all that their hands had brought are destroyed and wiped out.³⁸

This is not far from what historians tell us about the laws of nature. When one section of society becomes affluent and group egotism causes it to separate itself from its neighbors so as to preserve its affluence to itself, the countdown for its destruction begins. It does not matter whether this happens within the same society or between societies on a continental or a global scale. Indeed, if this law seemed to be inoperative in the past, when communications were slow and societies could maintain their affluence in separation from one another, it is no more the case today. The societies of the world, as well as the various classes and groups within each of them, are as interdependent as their respective economics. None could maintain its affluence and independence for any length of time. Historians like Ibn Khaldūn, Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee have made their fame by illustrating this simple law of human life, which any ancient Mesopotamian commoner had known but in religious cosmic terms.³⁹

The insight of 'Umar ibn al Khattāb (RAA) in this respect is absolutely remarkable. As soon as peace and security were reestablished across the provinces of the new Islamic state, he abolished by one stroke all the frontiers, customs houses and impediments to trade. Barely a decade earlier, the Prophet (SAAS) had pulled down the thousand and one arrangements by which each tribe controlled trade and gained for itself a portion of the gain. It thus became possible for Arabia to grow and to contend with the empires of the world, to support an army which

³⁸This century has witnessed numerous revolutions of the underprivileged against their capitalist exploiters. The next century is certain to see more.

وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْنَا الْقَوْلُ فَنَدْمَرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيرًا (الإسراء: ١٦)

³⁹When a village/city/community has become ripe for destruction, its aristocracy is allowed to spread corruption and thus bring about the total destruction due (17:16).

would substantiate its contentions. From the Indian Ocean and the Far East, trade could now move across the whole Fertile Crescent and North Africa freely. Indeed, the provisions of the *sharī'ah* made it possible for the goods of Byzantium, still an enemy of the Islamic state, and its citizens, to move freely into and out of the Islamic provinces. Interdependence was as much a fact of international trade as it was of the religious consciousness of the Muslims. For the Muslim, the economic fate of groups and nations, just as that of individuals, was ultimately in the hands of Allah (SWT). *Al rizq* is what the Muslim called God's disposition of economic conditions. On every other page of the Quran,⁴⁰ he read again and again that Allah (SWT) grants *al rizq* to some, reduces or denies it to others; that His doing is His pleasure; and that His pleasure is the essence of all justice. His moral sense taught him that Allah (SWT) commits no injustice, and that He gives each the measure due. To believe in God is to be absolutely certain that the disposal of *al rizq* is all His. Not to do so, is to impair His unicity, His transcendence, and His ultimacy—in short, it is to deny *al tawhīd*.⁴¹

The Muslim is therefore bound by his faith in favor of a *laissez-faire* economic policy. Artificial impediments to fair trade are for him prohibited. Globally speaking, protectionism—if its purpose is the establishment of an artificial agriculture or industry where there is neither human nor natural resources to support it—runs against his vision of a world ruled by God. But his faith is quick to rebel, and indeed, to boil, at the first sign of abuse of *laissez-faire* for any purpose of monopoly or exploitation. Should the evidence stand against such immoral entrepreneurs, the Islamic court and the *ummah* behind it will regard the action as tantamount to defiance of the divine imperative. The foregoing discussion is especially relevant to the current tension between the “haves” and “have-nots” of the world. Especially distasteful are the restrictions on entry, naturalization of humans, and entry and transfer of goods and funds, which the “haves” place before the “have-nots” as barriers to their emigration, to their following up their *rizq* wherever Allah (SWT) may be disposed to place it.⁴²

⁴⁰Barakat, *Al Murshid*, s.v. “Rizq”.

⁴¹See this author's article, “Is a Muslim Definable in Terms of His Economic Pursuits?” in Khurshid Ahmad and Zafar Ansari, eds. *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in Honor of Mawlānā Sayyid Abū al 'Alā Mawūdī* (Leicester, UK: The Islamic Foundation, 1399/1979), pp. 183 ff.

⁴²Consider in this connection the foreign status which Yemenis continue to have in Saudi Arabia for three generations. This contrasts starkly with the racist nations of Europe, which are willing to grant citizenship to anyone after a prolonged period of residence or work within their territory.

III. ETHICS OF PRODUCTION

Allah (SWT) has created humankind to serve Him. He has made them His vicegerents on earth, and made everything in creation subservient to them. He expressly commanded them to "strike out in the earth," to seek His bounty, and to enjoy the usufruct of nature.⁴³ He promised that He and His Prophet will proudly behold man's accomplishments.⁴⁴ He made work, the production of food, the reclamation of the earth, the construction of villages and cities, the rendering of services, the building up of culture and civilization, the reproduction and upbringing of men and women to continue, perpetuate and enjoy the fruits of human labor, definitive of His vicegerency.⁴⁵ And, finally, He made all this constitutive of worship, of religion itself, of the *raison d'être* of His creation.⁴⁶ Evidently, then, man ought to produce. No religion, and no ideology has ever exhorted man to work as much or as strongly as Islam did.⁴⁷ Upon arrival in Madinah, after his *hijrah*, the Prophet (SAAS) asked the *Anṣār* (Muslims of Madinah) to adopt the *muhājirīn*, their fellow Muslims who emigrated thence, running away from death the hands of their enemies. Many of the *Muhājirīn* accepted to be adopted, to be thus relieved of the trials of having to reestablish themselves. Some accepted a little loan

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (الجمعة: ١٠)

⁴³When ṣalāh is completed, strike out into the earth and seek what you can of Allah's bounty; oft remember Allah, that you may be truly felicitous (62:10).

وَقُلْ أَعْمَلُوا بِمَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ وَعَمَلَكُمْ وِرْسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسِرْدُوتٌ إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنْشَرُ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (التوبة: ١٠٥)

⁴⁴Command, [O Muhammad]: Do good deeds. Allah will witness the good deeds accomplished, as will His Prophet and all believers. Surely, everyone of you will be returned for reckoning with Allah, Who knows everything manifest or hidden. He will show you the truth of what you did (9:105).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ خُلَافًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (الأنعام: ١٦٥)

⁴⁵It is Allah Who made you His vicegerents on earth, Who raised some higher than others, that you may prove yourselves ethically worthy. Your Lord is quick of punishment; and He is forgiving and merciful (6:165).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (هود: ٧)

⁴⁶It is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and His throne was on the water (the essence of human life), that you may prove yourselves worthy in your deeds (11:7).

⁴⁷The Qur'an's exhortation to 'amal or good deeds is constant and ubiquitous.

to start with, and which they paid back later. Those who pleased the Prophet (SAAS) most, however, were those who were too proud to accept any aid. Without capital, tools, or a profession, they went to the open fields to gather timber for fuel, to carry it on their backs for sale in the city; and, little by little, they made for themselves a niche in the business world.⁴⁸

Islam is therefore for the maximization of production. It expects every person to produce more than he consumes, to render more service than he is rendered. The individual's life ought to terminate with a net gain which would count as his or her contribution to creation. On Judgment Day, every person will be asked to read out his/her ledger, to justify his/her existence on earth.⁴⁹ That person whose productivity in life would entitle him/her to say no more than *j'ai vecu* will not be well received at all. And he may be condemned, depending on the inner motivation which led him to contribute naught to creation, such as cynicism, egotism, laziness or skepticism, or the greatest self-conceit of those who think the world owes them a living.

There are those whose good fortune is such as to enable them to retire early, or never to apply themselves to production because of a bountiful inheritance from their parents or relatives. Whenever such people resolve to withdraw from the production activity, they make themselves thereby condemnable in the eye of Islam. Indeed, Islam does not allow them to retire from production without penalizing them. Their immediate penalty in the world is that the capital out of which they spend in their retirement will be taxed at the *zakāh* rate of 2.5% every year, an equation calculated for any fund to exhaust itself in the span of 35 years, or one generation. Since the person in question is living off that fund, it is certain that it will be exhausted much sooner. In no case whatever could such fund persist after 35 years. The motivation will therefore be all the greater in order to avoid such amortization of the fund, for the owner to reenter production with it. This would increase it, as well as help meet the person's living expenses; for the returns are most likely to be more than 2.5%.

⁴⁸Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, 177-78.

أَقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا (الإسراء: ١٤)

⁴⁹[On the Day of Judgment, man will be told:] Read out your own record. Today, let yourself be the judge of the deeds you have wrought (17:14).

IV. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF PRODUCTION

A. Production involves the extraction of materials and use of its forces by the producer, whether agricultural or industrial. This utilization of nature must be responsible. Islam leaves it to society, acting through its duly constituted organs, to regulate the uses of nature in fulfillment of the responsibility requirement. Responsibility, however, countenances neither waste nor extravagance. The Quran has called those guilty of either "the associates of Satan."⁵⁰ It imposes upon the Muslim to use nature in the amounts and ways required for the production which in turn must be justifiable in terms of human need. Islamic responsibility demands that no damage occurs to nature in process of man's usufruct of it. Islam teaches that nature's materials and forces are gifts granted by God to us.⁵¹ The gift, however, is not transfer of title. It is a permission to use for the given purpose. The owner is and always remains Allah (SWT). As the Mesopotamian used to say: He is the Lord of the manor, and man is merely the servant. This attitude is perfectly Islamic as well. The gift them must be returned to the Creator at our death or retirement, improved and increased through our production. At the very least, it must be returned intact, as it was when received. The Quran has emphatically reiterated that Allah (SWT) everything in creation returns.⁵²

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا (الإسراء: ٢٧)

⁵⁰The spendthrifts are the brethren of Satan, and Satan is ungrateful to his Lord, rebellious against Him (17:27).

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ جُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا أَثْنَاوَمِتْعًا إِلَى حِينٍ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ مِمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلَالًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَكْنَانًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ سَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمْ بَأْسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُونَ (النحل: ٨٠-٨١)

⁵¹Allah gave you your homes as places of rest and quiescence, the skins of animals (tents) for dwellings, which you find so light (and handy) when you travel and when you stop (in your travel). And out of their wool, soft fibres, and hair, furniture and articles of convenience...Of His creation, Allah provided for your shade, and of the mountains shelter. He made garments to protect you from heat and coats of armor to protect you from violence. Thus did Allah shower His blessings upon you that you may submit to Him (16:80-1).

... وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ ... (هود: ١٢٣) ... وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ (البقرة: ٢١٠) ... وَظَنُوا أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ سَنَا لَا يُرْجَعُونَ (القصص: ٣٩) ... إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ (المائدة: ٤٨)

⁵²To Allah all things return (11:123)... To Him, all matters are ultimately referred (2:210)... [Doomed are those who thought that they would not return to Us (28:39)... To Allah is your ultimate return (5:48).

The “rape of nature” and her pollution which are currently plaguing industrialized societies are the result of their irresponsible usufruct of God’s gift of nature. It is capitalism gone mad, inebriated as it is with its success, that leads the Western entrepreneur to dump the harmful refuse of his productive operation in the lake or river unmindful of its fatal effects upon animals, plants and humans. The land is stripped open to yield its minerals and left unfit to use, ugly to look at and causing all kinds of hazards to humans as well as to environment. “Ecological balance” and the “environment,” “recycling” have become common terms in the West by the frequency of their violation. Nature is being “raped” all around us: the plankton of the sea, no less than the ozone of the stratosphere, everything stands threatened by the wasteful and irresponsible production, the “planned obsolescence” of Western industries. For the first time in human history, capitalist entrepreneurs speak of the “planned obsolescence” of their products and do so without the least bit of shame. Evidently, the victim is in the dominating ideology which is incapable of providing its adherents with the psychic mechanism needed for all discipline. It provides neither a vision of the future, not criterion, nor a conscience with which to put a brake upon the insatiable appetite for profit. Nothing is capable of standing up before this capitalist appetite determined to pursue its everfleeting objective *pereat mundus*. *Pereat mundus* is not a figure of speech; it is literally true of the Western capitalist whose product is arms, alcohol, radioactive and other harmful materials. But it is also true of the factories of many products whose production releases toxic wastes.

Such abuse of nature runs diametrically counter to the ethic of *al tawhīd*, and is condemned in the clearest of terms. As Islam sees it, the production operation must be innocent and pure from beginning to end. Neither animal, plant nor human may be hurt by it. Where damage occurs, it must be compensated. Where there is no individual citizen or group to bring the damaging entrepreneur to justice, the Islamic state, as trustee of nature, is obliged to bring the abuser to account for his deeds.⁵³

B. Islam requires that production of goods and services be absolutely free of cheating and misrepresentation. Responsibility for carrying out this requirement devolved upon the *ḥisāb* institution. In order better to

⁵³To pollute the earth or ruin its resources is the opposite of the purpose for which Allah had planted humans on it, viz.. *istīmār* (11:61), (reconstruction or development for the better).

fulfill his duty, the *muḥāsib* was granted by the government the power of the police as well as the court of law. His was the prerogative, and duty, not to sit back and wait until a complaint was placed before him, but to go out into the field and there pry into the open the complaints, violations and incidents of harm.⁵⁴ Today, the duties of the *muḥāsib* are assumed by a variety of government organs. But even today, the aggressiveness of the *muḥāsib*, his initiative to expose them and the summary ways with which he could put an end to it are still missed, because modernity lacks the enthusiasm for the good which faith in Allah generates.

The ingenuity of the producers in beguiling their customers is infinite. In Western business schools, courses of study offer such subjects as "packaging," which has now become an art whose purpose is to sell the product even if the customer does not want it. This is not to mention the subject of advertising, which has become perhaps the most important factor in the production enterprise. From the noble purpose of providing information that may benefit the people, advertising has become the art of deception *par excellence*. The appeal to the various appetites of humans for vanity, sex, pleasure and comfort, the redefinition of happiness and contentment in purely materialist, egotistic and subjective terms, helped to make advertisement the nerve-center of the economy. The consequence was the creation in people of new appetitive needs which only add to their psychic miseries. In fact, false advertisement has changed the worldview of the masses. It has weaned them away from their traditional ideals, and converted them to ideals calculated to serve the entrepreneur and to make production still more lucrative.

Under Islam, the producer stands under four principles directly influencing his production operation: First, neither his religion nor the law permit him to engage in production for the sake of profit alone. Production should aim at providing beneficial and useful items for the people, profit being a by-product of the operation, not its principal purpose. Second, materials which are *ḥarām* or prohibited by the *sharī'ah* may not be produced at all, except in circumstances where the need for them is justified. In this case, necessary precautions are established to prevent the harm from reaching the people. Third, what is produced ought to be presented as it is, not camouflaged as that which people might wish for. Packaging may not be practiced as the art of deception. Fourth, the producer's commitment to *al tawḥīd* provides the needed conscience

⁵⁴Taqīyy al Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymīyah, *Al Hisāb fī al Islām aw Wazīfat al Ḥukūmah al Islāmīyyah* (Madinah: Islamic University Press, n.d)..

to impose upon oneself the code of truthfulness, and observe it regardless of state prosecution. Cases of violation of the ethics of production are, in Islamic law, subject to instant administrative adjudication. Besides compensation for all who were deceived or hurt by the act, these violations carry penalties proportionate to their respective gravity as instances of perjury, for the deception is addressed to all men, to the state as well as to God Himself.

C. Production ought to be a profit-making enterprise. As a private enterprise, it cannot be devoid of the profit motive. In the absence of profit, the operation would stop and the investment would be diverted. *Al tawhīd* requires that justice be realized in the assignment of profits.⁵⁵ There is no *a priori* answer to the question of what is a just price, a just profit. This can be answered only in the concrete, with reference to given situations. A “windfall profit” is not by definition repugnant to the Islamic moral sense, provided the “windfall” is not the design of market manipulation, and its profit does not produce undue harm to the people. Islam is opposed to price controls on principle. Its opposition, however, is more intended to prevent an artificially induced exorbitant rise in prices and to stop immoral “windfall” profits. It is less inclined to a price or wage control designed to prevent loss to producer or merchant, on the grounds that business involves both the possibility of profit as well as risk of loss.⁵⁶

Another important factor determining the just price of a commodity, product or service is wage. A “just wage” is as difficult to determine as a “just price.” However, *al tawhīd* regards every adult a “worker” entitled to a minimum wage guaranteeing a livelihood for himself and his family. The Islamic state cannot countenance anybody working within its frontiers for subsistence-level wages. However, the producers in any Muslim country may not be penalized for the low level of economic development of the country or *ummah* as a whole. That is a collective responsibility for the whole *ummah* and its leadership. At any rate, the minimum wage is not the just wage. The latter is determined by the kind and degree of the preparation of the worker, and the exertion needed for production. Supply and demand have little relevance here, their influence cannot be but temporary. For it is a *farḍ kifāyah* (collective du-

⁵⁵This is an obvious implication of the Qur’anic commands to act, to rule or judge with justice (*‘adl*, *qist*, negation of *ẓulm*, and their derivatives). See also *The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order* (London: The Islamic Council of Europe, 1979), especially part II, pp. 35 ff.

⁵⁶*Thoughts on Islamic Economics* (Dacca, Bangladesh: Islamic Economics Research Bureau, 1979), chaps. 1-4, on “Distribution of Wealth.”

ty) of the *ummah* to provide the training and the trained human resources necessary for all its needs. The *ummah*'s fulfillment of its *fard* would necessarily obviate the effect of supply and demand. The "just wage" has to be considered in light of the general economic conditions prevailing in the area in question. Beside the "just wage," other factors influence the "just price," which cannot be predetermined.

IV. ETHICS OF CONSUMPTION

The principle of world-affirmation which devolves from *al tawhīd* implies the legitimacy of consumption. Consumption, i.e., apprehension of the material values, or satisfaction of desires and wants, is a basic right which belongs to all humans by birth. Its minimum is subsistence, and its maximum is the point at which consumption becomes *tabdhīr* (extravagance, indulgence). That point can be defined as that in which psychic factors play a greater role in determining consumption of material goods than material need. Where the good or service in question is itself psychological, the extravagance point can be defined as that at which consumption is dictated by other psychic needs than those immediately affected by the product or service.

An example of the former would be the person who buys a product not because he needs it but out of vanity; and of the latter, the person who buys a ticket for an orchestral performance, not in order to enjoy the performance, but to "outdo the Joneses." Under *al tawhīd*, a person may consume according to his need. The rest of his income or wealth should be spent on charity, in the cause of Allah (SWT), or reinvested in a business where it may produce more wealth as well as employment and income for others. When the Prophet (SAAS) was asked what portion of their income/wealth should the Muslims spend in the cause of Allah (SWT), the answer was given by revelation: "Answer, what is in excess of their needs."⁵⁷ This answer defines extravagance retroactively, as it were, by the assignment of all that goes beyond the satisfaction of real needs, to charity or the public cause. Of course, increased production and its requirements of investment and entrepreneurship are included in the term "needs" as used by this verse.

... وَتَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْغَيْرُ ... (البقرة: ٢١٩)

⁵⁷They ask what portion of their wealth they should spend in charity. Answer: What remains after you have covered the necessities (2:219).

Charity is as old as humanity. All the religions of the world, and all the ethical systems mankind has known, have regarded charity as a high value and moral virtue and exhorted their adherents and others to practice it. Islam continued this tradition and devoted a fair part of the revelation exhorting people to practice it. The conscience of Islam, however, went further, much further. Seeing the necessity of charity, the perpetual need of the millions who are suffering, the scarcity of materials and the lethargy with which the masses usually mobilize their energies to fill their needs, *al tawhīd* transcended charity with the *zakāh*. It did not abolish charity. On the contrary, it gave it the strongest recommendation and called it *ṣadaqah*. The Quran described it as an atonement,⁵⁸ meritorious of great reward.⁵⁹ Allah (SWT) commanded the Prophet (SAAS) to collect it from the Muslims as means of their purification.⁶⁰ The Quran further warned that unless the *ṣadaqah* is given purely for the sake of Allah (SWT), it is vitiated as a moral value.⁶¹

Al zakāh is a wealth-sharing tax. Unlike *al ṣadaqah*, which is voluntary, and can be given directly to the recipient, at any time and in any amount, *al zakāh* is an annual levy which must be given to the state or the *ummah*'s duly constituted authority. Its rate is 2.5%, and is applicable to all wealth—in excess of a prescribed minimum called *al niṣāb*

الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (التوبة: ١٠٤)

⁵⁸Do not the people know that Allah welcomes the return of the repentant of His servants? He readily accepts their charities. He is the Forgiver, the Merciful (9:104).

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (التوبة: ١٠٣)

⁵⁹Take of their wealth a portion for charity. That would purify their wealth and confirm the righteousness in their heart. Invoke Allah's blessings upon them. Your prayer on their behalf will provide quiescence and reassurance for them. For Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing (9:103).

⁶⁰Ibid., also:

...وَأَتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَحْدُثْهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ (البقرة: ١١٠)

[O Believers], Pay the *zakāh*. Everything worthy which you do will be reckoned as such unto you by Allah (2:110).

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَبْطِلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَمِمَّا
كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ (البقرة: ٢٦٤)

⁶¹O You who believe! Do not vitiate your charities by proclaiming them in amity, or following them up with evil or injury. Such is the person who spends his wealth just to be witnessed by others, but believes neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. He is like the rock with little dirt which rain washes away, exposing its hardness. What they earn with their deeds will avail them nothing. Allah is not the guide of the ungrateful (2:264).

—except that which has not been appropriated and become somebody's property. Stocks in trade are exempt, and so are the tools and media of production, the house and appurtenances of living, but not the personal wealth, liquid, intangible, movable or immovable of the owner. It must be paid to the state, because the state is responsible for its collection and distribution. Distribution of the *zakāh* is specified to fall into eight categories: the poor, the needy, the *zakāh*-collectors, those whose hearts are softened for Islam, the captives, the bankrupt, the wayfarers, and in the cause of Allah (SWT).⁶²

Al zakāh is a foremost duty commanded by Allah (SWT) alongside the worship of Him. Indeed, *al ṣālah* is hardly ever mentioned without *al zakāh* following immediately or in the next verse,⁶³ and the believers are always described as those who have faith, recite the *ṣālah* and give their *zakāh*.⁶⁴ Its literal meaning "sweetened" betrays its spiritual function. Gained wealth is "sour" unless it is sweetened by sharing it with one's fellows. It is not merely a tax, extorted by an impersonal government to pay the expenses of people we will never know; a tax which we pay because we have to do so. Rather, *al zakāh* is a self-imposed duty of sharing God's bounty, entered into for His sake; an institution in which participation brings spiritual rehabilitation to the giver, and economic might to the *ummah*. As to the receivers of *al zakāh*, they need not feel humiliated by their receipt; for it is not a charity. God has recognized their "rights" in the wealth of the affluent.⁶⁵ For the category "the cause of Allah" is susceptible of many interpretations.

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (التوبة: ٦٠)

⁶²Charities belong to the poor and the destitute, to those who collect them and those whose hearts are yet to be reconciled to Islam, to ransoming the captives and to liberating from the bondage of debt, to the wayfarer and generally in the cause of Allah. Charity is a religious duty imposed by Allah Who is All-Wise, All-Knowing (9:60).

⁶³Barakat, *Al Murshid*, s.v. *ṣalāh*, *zakāh*.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ (المؤمنون: ١-٤) هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ (البقرة: ٢-٣)

⁶⁴Prosperous are the believers, who are pious in their worship, who abstain from gossip, who pay the *zakāh*... [This revelation is] a guidance to the pious, who believe in the Transcendent, hold the *ṣalāh* and spend of the bounty We provided for them (23:1-4; 2:2-3).

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ (الذاريات: ١٩)

⁶⁵[The righteous are] those who acknowledge that in their wealth is a right belonging to the poor and the deprived (51:19).

Almost all the duties devolving upon the state are classifiable under that category, including the *umma*'s defence. Indeed, the ideal is a society in which all *zakāh* collections are spent by the state on the category and outside its borders. This would mean that the state is free of destitute, poor or needy people, of captives that need to be ransomed, bankrupt persons incapable of repaying their creditors.

Finally, *al zakāh* and *al ṣadaqah* together ought to bring society as close to the ideal of distributive justice as possible. It was for this purpose that the Quran equated "pushing away the orphan and resisting the feeding of the destitute" with "belying the whole religion." That is also why there is not a page in the Holy Book in which Allah (SWT) has not exhorted the Muslim to give of himself, of his wealth to his fellow humans for the sake of Allah (SWT). It was *al tawhīd*, as first principle of the economic order that created the first "welfare" state, and Islam that institutionalized that first "socialist" movement. But Islam and its quintessence, *al tawhīd*, have done so much more for social justice as well as for the rehabilitation of humanity that it is degrading for them to be described in terms of the best ideals of contemporary Western societies.

Beyond the foregoing, *al tawhīd* laid down the principle that the Islamic state shall be free of monopoly and of hoarding. These are condemned absolutely and without conditions.⁶⁶ It has prescribed support on the capable adult for a large number of dependents and relatives, and buttressed their interdependence with the *sharī'ah*'s laws of inheritance. In short, by its relevance to the economic order, *al tawhīd* prepared the *umma* for felicity in this world and the next, for *al ḥusnayayn* (the two happinesses) as the Quran has called them.⁶⁷ Where the *umma* fails to provide the two happinesses, i.e., to provide material, psychic and spiritual happiness on earth in a moral way which assures God's pleasure

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ، (الهمزة: ٢) ... وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (التوبة: ٣٤)

⁶⁶[Doomed is] the person who collects and hoards wealth (104:2)... Those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the cause of Allah, proclaim to them a dire punishment (9:34).

قُلْ هَلْ تَرَبَّصُونَ بِنَا إِلَّا إِحْدَى الْحُسَيْنَيْنِ وَنَحْنُ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ
أَوْ يَأْتِيَنَا ... (التوبة: ٥٢)

⁶⁷Say, O Believers, nothing will befall us but one of two goods [martyrdom and paradise, or survival and victory over the enemy]; whereas we expect a dire punishment to befall you either by the providence of Allah or through our hand (9:52).

and Paradise, it has failed miserably and its leadership has proved itself unworthy of the *ummah*'s trust. As individual member of the *ummah*, the Muslim is prepared to be led, guided, conscripted and mobilized, even regimented where absolutely necessary, in order to assure himself and his peers of the two happinesses. During his average productive life of forty years, there should be more than enough productive energy to sustain him throughout his productive period as well as in his childhood and old age. The economic life must be ordered well enough to secure the two happinesses. If it does not, it is neither the individual nor nature that is to blame. It is the *ummah* leadership, the rulers. But Islam had taught unequivocally that no people are better than its leaders. Hence, ultimately, the failure is that of the *ummah* collective which calls for more radical change than a change of government.

CHAPTER XII

THE PRINCIPLE OF WORLD ORDER

I. THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

Since Allah (SWT) alone is God, it follows that His commandments are valid for all humans. This universalism applies to humans as subjects, or fulfillers of the commandments, as well as to them as objects, or patients, in whom the commandments are fulfilled. Previously, humans have associated together on the basis of race or culture or both. Islam provided a novel base of human association—the *ummah*.

The *ummah*, we have seen earlier, is a threefold consensus of vision, will and action which only Muslims are expected to share. The universalism implied by *al tawhīd* demands a new formation. Since the Muslim *ummah* is a new society organized not on tribe or race but on religion, non-Muslims are expected to do likewise; i.e., to outgrow their tribal and racial ties and to organize themselves on the basis of religion. Religion is not the backward perspective, and the stagnant, prejudicial, exclusivist principle of association modern Western propaganda has made of it. It is still the most important aspect of human life on earth. Religion gives the highest definition of man possible. The long and bitter struggle of the Western peoples against the Christian Church is responsible for religion's bad reputation.¹ And since loyalty to prince, ethnocentrism and nationalism were forces which led the struggle against the Church, religion as base of association and the universalist community it cherished got repudiated and stood condemned by their association with the Church.² That is why the Western mind returned to the ideal of the universal community under the Enlightenment, where the same Church ideal was pursued but on the basis of reason instead of personal faith. Again,

¹This is largely due to corruption in the Roman Catholic Church whose prelates ruled, extorted wealth from their European subjects, and indulged in spending it on their welfare and the aesthetic reconstruction of Rome.

²Reinhold Niebuhr. *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Harper, 1935), pp. 91. 235, 244.

that ideal was repudiated because of the West's failure of nerve in supporting it against the nationalist imperialism of revolutionary France.

Islam sought to recognize the world on the basis of man's view of reality, of his ideal for himself, his kin and progeny, of his view of ultimate destiny for himself and mankind – all of which constitute religion. Islam would not withhold such an order, which its own adherents enjoy by organizing themselves on the basis of religion, from non-Muslims. On the contrary, it insists on their enjoying the same honor by its refusal to recognize or accredit them as associations on any other basis. Indeed, it is all the more honor to Islam that it sees the nonadherents as contenders in the most important questions of all life on earth, and recognizes them only as societies formed around their answers to such questions.³ Before the *hijrah*, the Prophet (SAAS) had organized the Muslims into an association based upon religion. He united the Aws and the Khazraj tribesmen together, and these with the tribesmen of Quraysh whom he began to despatch to Madīnah. Further, he united the free to the slave, the master to the client, made them all equals, and established the law of God supreme among them. Equally, he set himself as political and judicial chief over them. But as soon as he arrived in Madīnah in July, 622, he dictated a covenant for Muslims and Jews to enter into and to organize their lives in accordance with. This covenant was the constitution of the Islamic state as well as of the world order which Islam sought to build for mankind. The promulgation of this constitution was also the launching of the Islamic state, as well as of Islam as a contending movement in world history. This latter consideration prompted caliph 'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb (RAA) to declare that day that the beginning of Islamic history, the starting point of Islam's reckoning of time.⁴

The constitution was a covenant creating the Islamic state, between the Prophet (SAAS), the Muslims, the Jews and their clients of the tribes of Madīnah. It guarantor was God, in Whose name it was promulgated. This covenant first abolished the system of association which defined man by his tribal affiliation, and articulated his duties, rights and responsibilities in loyalty to his tribe. In place of tribalism, the covenant set

³This is the purport of the *Shari'ah* category of *al dhimmī*. Islam defined humans in terms of their religious adherence. Those who were not Muslims were to be classified as members of their respective religious communities which constituted corporate entities with full legal personality under the terms of Islamic law.

⁴By so doing, Islam struck a new note, different from all the preceding religions, for which the birth or death of the founder or the launching of his ministry was "their" beginning of time. This is equally unlike the case of Judaism which arbitrarily assigns a date to creation and measures all time from that point.

up religion as first principle and united under its aegis peoples of different tribes, social status, and of different races. All Muslims were henceforth to be members of an open, organic *ummah* whose social bond is Islam.⁵ Alongside this *ummah* of Muslims stood another *ummah*, the Jews. Like the Muslims, they are to organize themselves into a single organic entity regardless of their tribal affiliations. Their *ummah* is to be governed by Jewish law (the Torah) and its members' lives to be ordered in accordance with the precepts of Judaism as interpreted by the rabbis. The Islamic state is under duty to protect the Jewish *ummah*, to enforce the decisions of its rabbinic court and to provide it with the freedom, peace and atmosphere necessary for its well-being and growth.

Six years later, the Christians of Najran in southern Arabia met the Prophet (SAAS) in Madīnah to discuss their relation to the Islamic state. The Prophet (SAAS) received them well and called them to Islam. Those who converted were incorporated into the Muslim *ummah*. Those who chose to remain Christian, the Prophet (SAAS) organized into another *ummah*, like the Jews, with the same prerogatives and duties. Later, the succeeding caliphs extended the same status to the Zoroastrians, the Hindus and the Buddhists. As the Islamic state expanded, the new converts swelled the ranks of the Muslim *ummah*; and those who did not convert remained members of those of the Jewish, Christian or other *ummah*(s). The former followed in the footsteps of the Islamic state, incorporated within themselves the new non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state, and rehabilitated them as citizens of the new order. For a long time, after the initial territorial expansion of the Islamic state during the first decades of the *hijrah*, the overwhelming majority of citizens in the Islamic state were not Muslim. Their future and security, their well-being and their institutions, must have accounted for a considerable portion of the state's care.

The Islamic state was not a state in the national sense of the term current today. It was not a homogeneous whole, a nationally integrated unit, as community in the *gemeinschaft* sense of the term, whose *raison d'être* was the defence and service of itself as the measure of all things. It was a strong center supported by a defence force and an *ummah* of Muslims, as well as a federation of autonomous religious communities, each of which was endowed with religious, social, political and economic institutions of its own. Above them all stood the Islamic state, but with

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ (الأنبياء: ٩٢)

⁵This is your *ummah*, one, united and indivisible; and I am your Lord. Serve Me (21:92).

executive power only. The state had no power to legislate. The law to which it regarded itself subject is God-dictated. The state existed in order to fulfill His will. Its mission on earth is to extend itself over it and thus bring all humans together on the basis of obedience and service to God, for God constituted humans into tribes and nations for purposes of identification and cooperation.⁶ Sovereignty in the Islamic state belongs to the law. The state, with all its institutions, is only an executor of the law. This divine law prescribes for the state the mission to transform the world and mankind into the likeness of the patterns, or oughts, revealed by God.

The Islamic state was therefore bound not only to include its Christian, Jewish and other communities as constituents, but the whole of mankind. It was therefore necessary that its constitution be ample enough to provide a *modus vivendi* in which all communities would live in peace, complete in righteousness, and interact with one another with mutual respect. All this, the constitution of the Islamic state provided.

A. THE *PAX ISLAMICA*

The new world order Islam advocated is an order of peace. War and hostility must be banished from the earth forever. The peace is general and open to all mankind, individuals and groups. Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslims: "O you who believe, enter into the order of peace entirely, and do not follow in Satan's steps..."⁷ He commanded them to call all men to peace. "If they [opponents] incline to peace, you ought to incline to it as well and put your trust in Allah."⁸ The order of peace is to be offered to all people; and all are expected to accept it and enter

... وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ ... (الحجرات: ١٣)

⁶We have constituted you into peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous (49:13).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (البقرة: ٢٠٨)

⁷O Believers, enter into the peace of Islam totally and without exception. Do not follow the example of Satan. He is your committed enemy (2:208).

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (الأنفال: ٦١)

⁸And if the enemy inclines to peace, you incline to it also and trust in Allah. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing (8:61).

wholeheartedly into it. The offer of peace may not be rejected. If it is, it is the indication that the party concerned wishes no peace, which is tantamount to a declaration of war. At best, a rejection of the offer of peace may mean a desire not to enter into any relation with the offering party. But that is isolationism, an option as condemnable as war, though not violent, for it implies either a contempt for the claim of peace which the Islamic state is presenting, or a desire to shield the people of the given state against peaceful intercourse with the peoples of the Islamic state. Both alternatives deserve a coercive answer from the Islamic state: the first is because it is inhuman to reject an offer of peace from anyone; and the second, because it is an affront to the dignity of the humans involved who are being invited to enter into such intercourse. Indeed, to place a human being behind such an insulating curtain, to prevent him/her from conversing with another human, is an attack upon his integrity and hence, an act of aggression against the person. The projected intercourse with the citizens of the Islamic state may involve commercial and social relations which the citizens of the other state may find objectionable. But these do not exhaust the would-be relations. Beyond all economic and social intercourse stands the ideational, Islamic claim that mankind is due to have a new order of universal peace, an order of communication where people are free to give and to take, to hear and be heard, to convince and to be convinced of the truth. The Islamic state is duty-bound by its covenant to proclaim the word of God. It asks that it be heard. Whether the message is accepted or not is an independent matter in which humans are absolutely free to decide and choose. But humans are not free not to hear. Coming from the responsible state authority, such refusal is denigration of the people by their leaders, and an irrational response to the critical claim of Islam.

B. ISLAMIC LAW OF NATIONS

If the answer of a given state to the Islamic state's offer of covenant of peace is positive, then that state enters the *pax Islamica*, or new world order, and becomes automatically entitled to all the rights and privileges appertaining to membership therein. The political, economic, social, cultural and religious institutions of the entering member remain intact. Indeed, they are now entitled to the protection of the Islamic state. Henceforth, they may not be changed by means of violence or revolution, or without the consent of the people concerned. Defiance of the

judgements and decisions of such institutions, including above all the courts of law would immediately bring about the might of the Islamic state on their side against the offenders. The internal affairs of that people or state are to continue to be governed by their own laws. The people continue to be free to order their lives in accordance with the precepts of their own faith, as they themselves interpret it or it is interpreted for them by their duty constituted and appointed institutions. Since it is the duty of the Muslims to call all humans to God, to Islam, His religion, the new citizens will be approached by the Muslims and invited to discuss the Islamic option with them. This however is to be carried out with the utmost respect for their persons and their religious traditions. God commanded the Muslims to present Islam to non-Muslims with kindness and sympathy: "Call [men] unto your Lord with wisdom and goodly counsel. Discuss [the matter] with them but in the goodlier, more gently way."⁹ If they accept the call of Islam, they become the Muslims' brothers and sisters. If they do not, their decision must be respected, and they should not be molested under any circumstance. Above all, there is to be no coercion, no cheating, luring or bribing anyone into conversion. Allah's command is absolutely emphatic: "No coercion in matters of religion" (Quran 2:256). To coerce or bribe anyone into conversion is to incur God's wrath. Moreover, it has in the eye of Islamic law no binding and no consequence whatever.

Where everyday living brings the new citizen of the Islamic state into conflict with its old citizens, plaintiff and defendant may each invoke the laws of his *ummah*. The court hearing their case will have to honor this principle and judge accordingly. Where the dispute may not be so composed, the best interest of the two parties as well as the equity of their respective *ummah*(s) will constitute the base of another attempt by the same or higher court.

The *sharī'ah* recognizes the right of each and every person to take advantage of legal process. The new citizens, whether individuals or groups, may do so. And it does not matter whether the complaint is against another Muslim individual, group or against the Islamic state itself. Any member of the non-Muslim *ummah* could sue the caliph, the Islamic state, the *ummah* of Muslims or any Muslim individual. The Islamic court is *ipso facto* empowered to look into the complaint and

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدْ لَهُمُ الْبَالِغَ الَّذِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ... (الحل: ١٢٥)

⁹Call unto the path of your Lord with wisdom and comely preaching. Dialogue with the unbelievers with the best arguments (16:125).

act in accordance with the law. Indeed, the plaintiff does not have to be a citizen of the Islamic state at all for his complaint to be heard by the Islamic court. All persons in the world, including non-Muslims as well as noncitizens, may address a complaint to the Islamic court. It is a great superiority of Islamic international law that it recognizes the right not only of sovereign nations to invoke it, but equally of individuals. The explanation is that Islamic law has for a purpose justice defined in individual terms, whereas Western international law aims at accommodation between sovereign groups, is disregard for the fact that the group's interest may not accord with the individual's; that more often than not, personal individual interest is sacrificed for the sake of the mighty. It may seem incongruous that Islamic law enables a pauper citizen of another state, or of no state, to sue the whole Islamic state and bring its caliph down to his complaint. But in Islam, justice is absolutely free for the person judged by the court to be innocent; the cost being always borne by the guilty. But the equity of that pauper is more important in the eye of the law than the prestige or comfort of the mighty caliph. As Abū Bakr al Ṣiddīq said on his assumption of the caliphate: "The mighty will be small in my eye until I have wrested the right of the weak from them. The weak will be mighty in my eye until I have restored to them their rights."¹⁰

Equally, Islamic international law has paid great care to rehabilitate the prisoners-of-war taken captive in international conflict. Such people are usually the pawns of the groups in negotiating their postwar settlements. At best, their lives and destinies fall under arbitrary conventions entered into by the European powers. Islamic law recognizes the right of the prisoner of war to ransom himself, by himself and on his own initiative, whether with whatever his own relatives and friends can offer for the purpose, or with what he personally can produce by way of material goods or services. The Islamic state cannot refuse a fair offer of ransom presented to it by a prisoner of war or on his behalf, and the Islamic court can force her hand. Islam requires all Muslims, individuals and groups to devote at least one seventh of *al zakāh* funds for the ransom of captives, Muslims or otherwise. And while proclaiming efforts for the ransom of the captives to be highly meritorious, Islamic piety prescribed the freeing of captives an acceptable atonement for grave sins. When a woman captive becomes pregnant, her captive status is

¹⁰Ibn Hishām. *The Life of Muhammad*, tr. A. Guillaume (London: Oxford University Press. 1955), 687.

automatically lifted and she enjoys the full status of a free wife of her captor until death. This interest in encouraging personal justice caused Islamic international law to open possibilities for individual citizens of another state to enter into direct relations with the Islamic state. The right to buy and sell in the Islamic state, to transit persons, goods and funds through its territory, may be subject to particular covenants between the Islamic state and the interested alien individual, called *al isti'mān*. All this points to a dominating concern of Islamic international law, namely, justice and equity, as well as freedom to pursue one's welfare, one's interest and prosperity, whether Muslim, citizen, or other. The interest of humans is, in short, prior to that of the collectives. It is the latter that Western international law honors.¹¹

C. WAR

Standing against all these privileges which entrance into the *pax Islamica* provides for individuals and groups, is one obligation only beside loyalty to the new order. That obligation is the payment of a tax, levied once a year from all non-Muslims. It was called the *jizyah*. This tax is much smaller than the *zakāh* which is incumbent upon all Muslims. The *jizyah* is required of the living lay adult males, and only when they are financially capable. The clergy, the minor, women and inheritances are exempt, unlike their case if they were Muslim. Islamic courts of law have ruled that the Islamic state must refund to Christians and Jews the *jizyah* it collected from them for the same year, if it has failed to protect their border villages from attack or harassment by the Byzantine forces or by an unknown enemy.¹²

Further, non-Muslims are not conscriptable for service in the defence forces of the Islamic state. As the state is ideological, the non-Muslim may not justly be expected to serve and, if necessary, lay down his life for it. He can certainly volunteer; and if he does, he is treated as a Muslim and becomes exempt from both the *zakāh* incumbent upon Muslims as well as the *jizyah*. He can be employed by the Islamic state and rise to the highest civil posts. Many Jews and Christians have risen to the

¹¹See the United Nations Charter, 1945. The same was true of the League of Nations, which the U.N. supplanted, and the International Court of Justice of the Hague, which continues to exist.

¹²See: T. W. Arnold. *The Preaching of Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publisher, 1961), p. 61.

post of premier or grand vizier, as Hasdai ben Sharput in the court of 'Abd al Raḥmān II, and Sergius in that of the Umayyads.¹³

Islamic law has laid down a very precise code for the declaration and conduct of war. The right to declare hostilities is not in the hand of the executive authority, but in that of the courts of law, which require evidence to be furnished when aggression or injustice has been committed against the Islamic state and its citizens. It has made it illegal, i.e., punishable by court action as well as by God, to kill or destroy property wantonly, to attack clergy, women and children unless they are physically engaged in fighting on the battlefield. Above all, Islam prohibited aggression, and hence, any war entered into for self-aggrandizement, booty or power. By the same token, it commanded the Muslims to lay down their lives readily when justice is violated and restoration of it demands the sacrifice. Islam teaches that the Muslim who falls in battle in a just war is *ipso facto* a martyr whose place in paradise is assured. *Al shahādah* (martyrdom) is the highest and noblest crown that can be placed on any human life: "Do not call dead those who fall in the service of Allah. They are alive, though you cannot see them ..."¹⁴ "Those who believed and struggled with the Prophet by spending their wealth and themselves, to them belong the good rewards, and they are the felicitous. Allah has prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow. Therein is their eternal abode..."¹⁵

¹³Phillip K. Hitti. *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan Co., 1963), pp. 195, 524.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ (آل عمران: ١٦٩)

¹⁴Do not count as dead those who fall in the cause of Allah. They are alive with Allah and He provides for them (3:169).

لَٰكِنَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ جَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَيْرَاتُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (التوبة: ٨٨)

¹⁵But the Prophet and those with him have fought with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. To them belong the blessings of Allah. They are the felicitous (9:88).

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRINCIPLE OF ESTHETICS

I. MUSLIM ARTISTIC UNITY AND ITS CHALLENGERS

It is idle to dispute the unity of Islamic art. Although the historian will recognize a large variety of motifs, of materials, of styles differentiated geographically or chronologically, the overwhelming fact of all Islamic art is its unity of purpose and form. From Cordoba to Mindanao, the arts of these lands once converted to Islam betrayed the same constitutive characterization and development; a preference for stylization, for formalism generative of movements, for limitlessness. All Islamic art has resorted to and used the highly emotive words of the Quran and the *ḥadīth*, of Arabic or Persian poetry or of the Islamic wisdom literature, and rendered them in Arabic calligraphy. Likewise, all Muslims across the ages have responded with the deepest emotion to the chanted recitation of the Quran and of the *adhān*, even when they understood little or nothing of the Arabic meanings involved. In such cases, their discursive reason and understanding were not at work, but their sensory and intuitive faculties went into full play, apprehending the aesthetic values in evidence. Indeed, their aesthetic comprehension was just as strong as that of those whose theoretical understanding was competent enough to read and to understand, for in the apprehension of aesthetic value, immediate intuition is always prior. The discursive understanding here plays a secondary role by lending, as it were, a helping hand only.

Such was the power of the aesthetic values of Islam and such was the artistic unity they produced out of the most diverse assemblage of cultures, that the traveller who moved from the eastern shores of the Atlantic to the western shores of the Pacific did so in territory made familiar by its Islamic architecture, decorated with arabesques and Arabic calligraphy. In the daily lives of men of different race, color, language and life-style,

he could behold an identical sensitivity to the literary, visual, and musical values Islam had brought.¹

In an article entitled "Misconceptions on the Nature of Islamic Art," to which the reader is referred,² we have given samples of this so-called "scholarship" of the orientalists in the fields of decoration, painting, architecture, literature, music and theory of art. In each case, we have taken the position of one great Western scholar (e.g., Richard Ettinghausen, H.G. Farmer, M.S. Dimand, T.W. Arnold, E. Herzfeld, K.A.C. Creswell, G. von Grunebaum), whose claim to fame is partly or wholly due to his contribution in this field. In each case, the scholar's argument has been analyzed and refuted. To a man, every one held the erroneous assumption—nay, prejudice—that far from contributing anything to the arts of Muslim people throughout the ages, Islam has impeded or restricted, and thereby impoverished, their artistic tendencies, that the only aesthetic growth Islam was responsible for was the ubiquitous use of Quranic verses in Arabic which Herzfeld called "bigotry" and in the breach of which—through the translation of the Quran into languages—Ettinghausen saw with no little relish as the beginning of the end of that monopoly. Every one of them tried to show that whatever art free of "bigotry" the Muslims have produced was in spite of Islam and against its injunctions. According to them, the Muslim nobility or royalty enjoyed and patronized figurative representations in their palaces and libraries, as well as music which "procures drunkenness and fornication," in spite of Islam. Little did they realize that even these "sinful" arts were fully Islamic, aesthetically speaking, not to speak of the infinitesimal place they occupy in the total artistic production of the Muslim world.

Some of them even attempted psychoanalytic explanations. *Horror vacui* they contended, was the reason why the Muslim artist covered all surfaces with design. Others advanced the opposite: the Muslim artist, they reasoned, was a color-hedonist who naively stimulated a passion for empty, bright flashes of color, thus reducing the toil and ardor of geniuses over centuries to a mere *Reizfähigkeit* of some color-spoilt eccentrics.

¹The evidence for this judgment is the fact that everywhere throughout the Muslim world the same aesthetic values predominate. At the top of the valuational hierarchy stands the virtue of copying the Qur'an in beautiful Arabic calligraphy; decorating with its verses one's house, mosques, and public buildings, chanting it in improvisations based on a few notes of a scale, and utilizing its phrases to decorate literary tableaux.

²See this author's article "Misconceptions of the Nature of the Work of Art in Islam," *Islam and the Modern Age*, vol. 1, no. 1 (May 1970), pp. 29-49.

Unfortunately, it never occurred to any one of them that they were judging Islamic art by the norms and standards of Western art; and no one ever voiced the charge. Their interpretation of the artworks as expressions of Muslim culture were blunders at which intelligence blushes. Except for minor flashes of vision by Titus Burckhardt and Louis Massignon, and the cool self-restraint of Earnst Kuhnel on matters of interpretation, the historians of Islamic art have unanimously judged that art by standards of Western esthetics. Every one of them stood before the absence of figures, of drama, of naturalism, in utter bewilderment. No reader of their works could miss their confusion at not finding something of Western art to which they could relate, or the spiritual revulsion with which they passed their prejudgement of Islamic art.

In yet another article,³ we have analyzed the nature of Greek art, and of the Near Eastern artistic tradition in reaction to Greek art since Alexander's invasion. The essence of Greek art is naturalism. However, this is not to be understood as naive, photographic imitation of nature. Rather, it is sensory representation of an *a priori* idea which nature seeks to embody forth, but hardly ever succeeds, to do so. All creatures are therefore partial instantiations of the ideas of nature. Nature has implanted in each of its creatures, an idea akin to *arete* of ancient Greek *paideia*. Human portraiture in stone is, according to his theory, the highest art. The idea of man is nature's richest and most complex entelechy. Its depth and inner diversity constitute an infinite mine for the artist to probe, to explore and to represent. For this reason, man was "the measure of all things"; he was the crown of creation, the carrier and concretizer of all values, the highest and the lowest. For this reason divinity itself was conceived in his image, religion was humanism, and worship of divinity became a contemplation of the infinite depth and diversity of man's inmost nature. It was necessary that the whole art of Hellenic civilization be made to reflect this essence of Hellenic culture.

The Near East presents us with a diametrically opposite tradition. Here, man is only an instrument of divinity, created by the latter to serve. Man is never an end in himself and certainly not the measure of anything. It is divinity that furnishes the standard. Its norms are the law for man. There is no Prometheus; only a servant in the divine manor, blest when he fulfills the command, unblessed when he falters, and doomed when he defies. God's divinity, however, is a *mysterium*, a *tremendum* and a

³See this author's article, "On the Nature of the Work of Art in Islam," *Islam and the Modern Age*, vol. 1, no. 2 (August 1970), pp. 68-81.

fascinosum. As such, it is man's obsession, his *idée-fixe*. His constant preoccupation is the what and how of the divine will; his destiny is to be God-bound. From this, man drew his significance, his pride and his cosmic status. Just as necessarily, the whole art of Near Eastern civilization was an expression of this aspect of Near East culture. The natural, and above all the human-natural, is the mightiest contender for the divine place, and Prometheus is not at all a story but a mythopoeic chronicle of man's struggle with the divine for supremacy. First, such temptations and such confusion of divinity and nature as nearby Greece and Egypt had produced must be combated and banished from consciousness; and second, all consciousness must be absorbed in the divine realm which is its source, its norm, its master and its destiny. Long before Alexander, therefore, Near Eastern art invented stylization as a breakthrough against naturalism. Certainly, this became far stronger and more emphatic when the Near East was invaded by the Greeks and Hellenism was imposed by force upon the people.

Judaism, another Near Eastern culture and religion, fought imperialist Hellenism valiantly; and Philo was perhaps its greatest casualty in matters cultural. Until its esthetic transcendentalism was partially corrupted by Western culture and religion in modern times, especially since the advent of European romanticism that furious, irrational, particularist naturalist of *la nation, das Volk, Blut und Erde*. Mother Russia, God-King-Country, etc., Judaism managed to keep its art true to the original Near Eastern vision. "Thou shalt make no graven images" was understood by the Jews not only as a defence against idolatry but as a principle of esthetics as well. Their synagogues remained artistically-empty halls except in the Muslim world where they emulated Islamic developments. Their esthetic need was filled to saturation with the poetry of holy writ, and their senses were denied all claims to assist in the vision of the divine. The divine, their faith asserted and reminded, is either intuited without such sensory aids, or it is not the divine at all. The less the senses were involved in intuiting the First Principle of all being, the more transcendent the object of that intuition, the purer the vision itself.⁴

⁴It is a necessary part of the definition of transcendence that the transcendent be perceived immediately by the rational faculty, i.e., if the senses play any role however small in the process of institution, then the object perceived would not be transcendent at all.

II. TRANSCENDENCE IN ESTHETICS

Al tawhīd means the ontological separation of the godhead from the whole realm of nature. Everything that is in or of creation is a creature, nontranscendent, subject to the laws of space and time. Nothing of it can be God or godly in any sense, especially the ontological which *al tawhīd*, as the essence of monotheism, denies. God is the totally-other-than-creation, totally-other-than-nature, and hence, transcendent. He is the only transcendent being. *Al tawhīd* further asserts that nothing is like unto Him,⁵ and hence, that nothing in creation can be a likeness or symbol for God, nothing can represent Him. Indeed, He is, by definition, beyond representation. God is He of Whom no aesthetic—hence, sensory—intuition is whatever is possible.

By aesthetic experience is meant the apprehension through what is given to sense, of an *a priori* metanatural—hence transcendent—essence which acts as the normative principle of the object beheld. It is what the object is to that ought to be. The nearer the visible object is to the essence, the more beautiful it is. In the case of living nature, of plant, animal and especially man, the beautiful is that which comes as true to the *a priori* essence as possible, so that whoever is capable of judging would be right in holding that in the esthetic object nature has articulated itself eloquently, clearly; that the beautiful object is what nature meant to say, as it does so rarely among its thousand and one shortcomings. Art is the process of discovering within nature that metanatural essence and representing in it visible form. Evidently, art is not the imitation of created nature; not the sensory representation of *natura naturata*, the objects whose “naturing” or natural reality is complete. A photographic representation which reproduces the object as it is may be valuable for illustration or documentation, for the establishment of identity. As a work of art, it is worthless. Art is the reading in nature of an essence that is non-nature, and the giving to that essence the visible from that is proper to it.⁶

As it has been defined and analyzed so far, art is necessarily the presumption to find in nature that which is not of it. But that which

فَاطَرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ... لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ (الشورى: ١١)

⁵[Allah], Creator of heaven and earth... Nothing is like unto Him; the One that hears and sees all things (42:11).

⁶Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*. tr. R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited), vol. 1, third book, p. 217.

is not of nature is transcendent; and only that which is divine qualifies for this status. Moreover, since the *a priori* essence which is the object of esthetic apprehension is normative and beautiful, man's emotions are especially affected by it. That is why humans love the beautiful and are determined by it. Where they see the beautiful in human nature, the *a priori* metanatural essence is humanness idealized to a transcendent degree. This is exactly what the Greeks called *apotheosis*, or the transfiguration of a human into divinity. Humans are particularly prone to adore such transfigured humans and regard them as gods. Modern Western man has little toleration for any deity as far as metaphysics is concerned. But as far as ethics and conduct are concerned, the "gods" that he creates out of his idealization of human passions and tendencies are the real determinants of his action.⁷

This explains why among the ancient Greeks the arts of representing the gods as *apotheoses* of human elements, qualities, or passions, visually as in sculpture and imaginatively as in poetry and drama, were the foremost esthetic pursuits. The object they represented, namely, the god, were beautiful because they were idealizations of what human nature ought to be. Their beauty did not hide the innate conflict of each with the other gods, precisely because each was the real object of nature absolutized to its divine, i.e., supernatural, level.⁸

It is only in Rome, the theater of Greek decadence, that the supreme Greek art of sculpture degenerated into realistic, empirical portraiture of the various emperors. Even there, however, this would not have been possible without the deification of the emperor. In Greece, where the theory remained pure for centuries, the art of drama developed alongside that of sculpture precisely in order to represent the eternal conflicts of the gods with one another by means of an unfolding of a series of events in which the characters were involved. The overall purpose was the representation of their individual characters which the spectators knew were human, all too human, but which were the source of immense delight. If the dramatic events unfolding before their eyes led to a tragic end, this was regarded as necessary and innate. Its necessity removed its sting, and through catharsis it helped remove from them the guilt they felt as their immoral affirmations and pursuits. That is why the art of tragedy, born and perfected in Greece, was the apex of the literary

⁷Friedrich Nietzsche, *Works*, tr. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), p. 459; Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton Press, Meridian Books, 1956), p. 102.

⁸Murray, *Five Stages* pp. 57, 60, 63.

arts as well as of all the humanities. In a rare statement of truth, the orientalist von Grunebaum said that Islam has no figurative arts (sculpture, painting and drama) because it is free of any gods incarnated or immanent in nature, gods whose activities conflict with one another or with evil.⁹ Von Grunebaum meant it as a reproach to Islam, though it is in reality Islam's prime distinction. It is the unique glory of Islam that it is absolutely free of idolatry, i.e., of the mistaking of the creature for the Creator.

Al tawhīd is not against artistic creativity; nor is it against the enjoyment of beauty. On the contrary, *al tawhīd* blesses the beautiful and promotes it. It sees absolute beauty only in God and in His revealed will or words. Accordingly, it was prone to create new art befitting its view. Starting from the premise that there is no god but God, the Muslim artist is convinced that nothing in nature may represent or express God. Therefore he stylized everything of nature he represented; i.e., through stylization, he removed it from nature as far as possible. Indeed, the object of nature was thereby so far removed from nature that it became almost unrecognizable. In his hand, stylization was a negational instrument by which he said "No!" to every natural thing, to creation itself. By denying its naturalness altogether, the Muslim artist expressed in visible form the negative aspect of the *shahādah*, namely, no other-than-God is God. This *shahādah* of the Muslim artist is indeed the equivalent of the denial of transcendence in nature.¹⁰

The Muslim artist did not stop here. His creative breakthrough came when it dawned on him that to express God in a figure of nature is one thing, and to express His inexpressibility in such a figure is another. To realize, that God—may He be glorified in His transcendence!—is visually inexpressible, is the highest aesthetic objective possible for man. God is the absolute, the sublime. To judge Him unrepresentable by anything in creation is to hold His absoluteness and sublimeness seriously. To behold Him in one's imagination as unlike all that is in creation is to behold Him as "beautiful—unlike any other object that is beautiful." Divine inexpressibility is a divine attribute whose meaning is infinity, absoluteness, ultimacy or nonconditionedness, limitlessness. The infinite is in every sense the inexpressible.¹¹

In pursuit of this line of Islamic thought, the Muslim artist invented

⁹See this author's... "On the Nature of the Work of Art in Islam."

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹¹See this author's... "Divine Transcendence..." pp. 11-19.

the art of decoration and transformed it into the "arabesque," a non-developmental design which extends in all directions *ad infinitum*. The arabesque transfigures the object of nature it decorates—whether textile, metal, vase, wall, ceiling, pillar, window or page of a book—into a weightless, transparent, floating pattern extending infinitely in all directions. The object of nature is not itself, but is "transubstantiated." It has become only a field of vision. Esthetically, the object of nature has become under the arabesque treatment a window onto the infinite. To behold it as suggestive of infinity is to recognize one of the meaning of transcendence, the only one given though only negatively—to sensory representation and intuition.¹²

This explains why most of the works of art produced by Muslims were abstract. Even where figures of plants, animals and humans were utilized, the artist stylized them adequately to deny their creatureliness, to deny that any supernatural essence is resident within them. In this endeavor, the Muslim artist was assisted by his linguistic and literary legacy. To the same end, he developed the Arabic script so as to make of it an infinite arabesque, extending nondevelopmentally in any direction the calligrapher chooses. The same is true of the Muslim architect whose building is an arabesque in its facade, elevations, skyline, as well as floor plan. *Al tawhīd* is the one denominator common to all artists whose worldview is that of Islam, however geographically or ethnically separate they may be.¹³

A. THE ISLAMIC BREAKTHROUGH IN ESTHETICS

That nothing is *rerum natura* can serve as a vehicle for expressing the divine, does not by itself rule out the possibility of an object of nature serving as a vehicle for expressing that very truth itself, namely, that the divine is indeed infinite and inexpressible. It is one thing not to express the divine because it is inexpressible, and another to express the truth embodied in this preposition. Admittedly, the challenge to express sensorily the truth that God is sensorily inexpressible staggers the imagination of any artist. But it is not impossible. Indeed, it is here that the artistic genius of Islam scored its triumphal breakthrough. We have seen that stylization, which was known and practiced in the ancient Near East

¹²See this author's... "On the Nature of the Work of Art in Islam," p. 78.

¹³See this author's... "Divine Transcendence..." p. 22.

was pushed to a new level of perfection in the reaction to Hellenic naturalism imposed by Alexander and his successors. Under Islam, now confronting that same Hellenism in Christian disguise, the Semitic reaction was as strong in the field of esthetic endeavor as in that of theological endeavor. Islam's vehement denial of the divinity of Christ is matched by its denial of naturalism in the esthetic representation of nature, by its encouragement of stylization. A stylized plant or flower is a caricature of the real object of nature, a not-nature. By drawing it, the author seems to say "No" to nature. May it not be a fitting instrument to express not-natureness, i.e., the mere negation of naturalism? Given alone, however, the stylized plant or flower would express non-nature but in an individuated way which suggests that the death of nature in that object is itself individuated. By giving the denaturalized state of the natural object, it may even express a heightened naturalism, the very opposite of the Islamic purpose, as health is often represented through sickness and life through death. Something else therefore is needed to preserve the inexpressibility of the divine being if Islam was to succeed where Judaism had failed.¹⁴

It is to this challenge that the Muslim artist now rose. His unique, creative and original solution was to represent the stylized plant or flower in indefinite repetition in order, as it were, to deny any and all individuation, and in consequence, to banish naturalism from consciousness once and for all. An identically repeated object of non-nature does express non-natureness. If the artist could, in addition, express esthetically by means of a repeated object of nonnature infinity and inexpressibility, then the result might well be tantamount to the witness, *lā ilāha illā Allāh* expressed verbally and discursively, for the inexpressibility and infinity which are the content of artistic representation would suggest themselves as qualities of non-nature. The Islamic soul therefore thought that there is a way for the visual arts to conform with the primal dictate of Semitic consciousness. But the major hurdle here is how can anything in *rerum nature*, however stylized, be the vehicle for expressing infinity or inexpressibility?

1. Arab Consciousness: Islam's Historical Substrate

To achieve a solution, Islamic consciousness fell back upon its own

¹⁴See this author's... "On the Nature of the Work of Art in Islam."

historical substrate, namely, Arab consciousness. This was the historical matter which the divine revelation informed and used as a *Sitz-im-Leben* for its occurrence, as a vehicle and carrier of divine truth. It was this consciousness, concretized in the person of Muhammad (SAAS), that received the revelation and communicated it to mankind in space and time. It was the medium of prophecy. Its achievement in the art of language and letters was indeed a miracle before Islam, and this fact determined that the mode of the new revelation be that of the literary sublime, for it was ready for and capable of carrying it.

The first instrument of Arab consciousness and the embodiment of all its categories is the Arabic language. Essentially, Arabic is made up primarily of three consonant roots, each of which is susceptible of conjugation into over three hundred different forms by changing the vocalization, adding a prefix, suffix, or "middle-fix." Whichever conjugation is affected, all words which have the same conjugal form have the same modal meaning regardless of their roots. The meaning of the root remains; but attached to it is another, a modal meaning, given to it by the conjugation and remaining always and everywhere the same.¹⁵ The language then has a logical structure, at once clear, complete and comprehensible. Once this structure is grasped, one is a master of the language, knowledge of the meaning of roots being then of secondary importance. The literary art consists in the construction of a system of concepts related to each other in such ways as to put into play the parallelisms and contrasts engendered by conjugation of the roots, while enabling the understanding to move through the web in continuous, unbroken line. An arabesque in which a thousand each of triangles, squares, circles, pentagons, hexagons and octagons are all painted with different colors and interlace with one another dazzles the eye, but not the mind. Recognizing each figure for what it is, the mind can move from one pentagon to another despite their color variance and cross the tableau from end to end, experiencing some delight at each stop with realization of the parallelism provided by the identical shapes, i.e., by the identical modalities of the various root-meanings, and of the contrast provided by the root-meanings themselves.

This constitutive character of the Arabic language is also constitutive of its poetry. Arabic poetry consists of autonomous, complete and independent verses, each of which is an identical realization of one and

¹⁵This role applies to nearly all Semitic languages as any grammatical text would indicate. The triconsonantal structure of roots is one of the most salient characteristics of Semitic linguistics.

the same metrical pattern. The poet is free to choose any one of some thirty patterns known to the tradition. But once chosen, his whole poem must conform in each part to this pattern. To hear and enjoy Arabic poetry is to grasp this pattern and, as the poem is recited, to move with the metrical flow, to expect and to receive what the pattern has anticipated. Surely the words, concepts and percept-constructs are different in each verse. That is what provides the color variation. But the structural form is one throughout.

This basic geometry of the Arabic language and of Arabic poetry enabled Arab consciousness to achieve a grasp of infinity on two dimensions. The root words are many, indeed infinite, since any new combination of any three consonants could by convention be assigned any new meaning. Arab consciousness adopts foreign roots with impervious equanimity, relying upon its conjugation mill to Arabize them thoroughly. The infinity of their number is matched by an infinity of their conjugation. There are known patterns of conjugation; a limited number of roots have been conjugated and their conjugations known and used. But a dictionary of the Arabic language such as Webster or Oxford, wherein all the words can be gathered and listed, is categorically impossible. For not all the traditionally known roots have been conjugated; the root list is never closed; not all modalities of conjugation have been used; and the list of modalities is not closed. New modalities are not ruled out by tradition-consensus, but await the genius who can justify and use them to his advantage. The Arabic language, therefore, like the Arab stream of being, is a system bright at the center (because of tradition) and fuzzy at the edges which spread indefinitely in all directions.¹⁶

To return to poetry. The metric pattern of the verses being constitutive, it does not matter for the verses of a poem whether they are read in the order the poet had composed them or in any other order. Read forward or backward, the poem is just as sweet, for the poet has taken us through the pattern with every verse; and the repetition has delighted us by disciplining our intuitive faculty to expect and to realize what we expected in the variety of facts of meanings and percept-constructs. By definition therefore, no Arabic poem is finished, closed and in any sense completed so that no addition to or continuation of it could be affected or conceived. Indeed, the Arabic poem can be extended in both directions, at its beginning and at its end without the slightest offence to its *esthétique*, if not by any man on account of personal style, then surely

¹⁶See this author's article "Islam and Art," *Studia Islamica*, fasciculi xxxvii (1973), p. 93.

by its own composer. Indeed, if we are good listeners, we would be supposed first to join the poet in his poetry-making as in a live performance and second, to continue his poem for our own benefit now that his recitation has wound us up in the momentum it generated and launched us into its own infinite poetical space. It is not an uncommon phenomenon in the Arab world for a poet, when attended by a good audience, to be "assisted" extemporarily by that audience in the recitation of his poetry which they have never heard before, or to be commented upon by addition to his poetry of more of the same.¹⁷

2. The First Work of Art in Islam: *Al Quran al Karīm*

It was this Arab consciousness which served as substrate and matrix of Islam. The Islamic revelation, *al Quran al Karīm*, came as the *chef d'oeuvre*, the sublime fulfillment of all the ideals and norms of that consciousness at once.

If anything is art, the Quran certainly is. If the mind of the Muslim has been affected by anything, it was certainly affected by the Quran. If this affecting was anywhere deep enough to become constitutive, it was so *in esthetics*. There is no Muslim whom the Quranic cadences, rhymes, and *awjuh al balāghah* (facets of eloquence) have not shaken to the very depth of his being; there is no Muslim whose norms and standards of beauty the Quran has not rekneaded and made in its own image.

This aspect of the Quran the Muslims have called its *i'jāz* (power to incapacitate), its "placing the reader in front of a challenge to which he can rise, but which he can never meet." In fact, the Quran itself defied its audience, the Arabs, with their highest literary excellence, to produce anything "like the Quran" (2:23), and chided them for their failure to do so (10:38; 11:13; 17:88). Some of the enemies of Islam among the Prophet's contemporaries rose to the task and were humiliated by the judgement of their opponents as well as by that of their own friends.¹⁸ Muhammad (SAAS) was called "a man possessed" (18:22) and the Quran

¹⁷The same cooperative interaction between reciter or performer and audience characterized the musical and poetical recitation of medieval salons throughout the Muslim world, as the literature of the period so often indicates (e.g., *Kitāb al Aghānī* by al Iṣṣahānī).

¹⁸Abd al Qādir al Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al I'jāz* (Cairo: Al Maṭba'ah al 'Arabīyah, 1351 H).

“a work of magic” (21:53; 25:4) precisely on account of its effect upon the consciousness of its hearers (69:38-52).

Everybody recognized that although the Quranic verses did not conform to any of the known patterns of poetry, they produce the same effect as poetry, indeed, to a superlative degree. Every verse is complete and perfect by itself. It often rhymes with the preceding verse or verses and contains one or more religious or moral meanings embedded in literary expressions or articulations of sublime beauty. So mighty is the momentum it generates that the recitation impels the audience irresistibly to move with it, to expect the next verse and to reach the most intense quiescence upon hearing it. Then the process starts again with the next one, two or group of three or more verses.¹⁹

Did then the Muslim Arab come out of Arabia in the seventh century with any art? Did he contribute anything relevant to the subsequently developed arts of the conquered peoples? In ignorance or prejudice, and often in a pitiable combination of both, every Western historian of Islamic art has answered, “No.” The grandfather of the discipline asserted: “The men who formed these armies [the first Arab armies of Islam] were mainly Bedouin, but even those who came from permanent settlements, such as Makkah and Madīnah, knew nothing of the art of architecture.”²⁰ The younger generation repeat after him *ad nauseam*: “From its Arabian past, the new Muslim art could draw almost nothing.”²¹

How contradictory to their allegations is the truth! All the new Islamic arts obtained from the Arab past, all that is constitutive and important, namely their spirit, their principles and method, their purpose and the way to achieve that purpose. Surely, Islamic art needed materials and themes for its efforts in the visual fields, and it got these wherever it found them. But it is offensively superficial to point to this as “borrowing” in any discussion of the meaning and significance, history or theory of the art. An art is an art by virtue of its style, its content, its manner of rendering, not by the *matériaux* it uses which, in most part, are derived by geographic or social accident. Islamic art is a unity at all because of this foundation, through Islam, in Arab consciousness. It is the categories of Arab consciousness that determined the artistic productions of all Muslims.²²

¹⁹Abū al Faraj al Isfahānī, *Kitāb al Aghānī* (Beirut: Dār al Thaqāfah, 1374/1955) witnesses to a countless number of such instances.

²⁰K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932-1940), vol. 1, p. 40.

²¹See: Richard Ettinghausen, “The Character of Islamic Art,” *The Arab Heritage*, ed. N. A. Fais (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), pp. 251-67.

²²See: Al Fārūqī, “Urūbah and Religion,” p. 211.

B. ESTHETIC REALIZATION IN THE VISUAL ARTS

Western visual art has relied almost totally on human nature, whether expressed in the human figure, the landscape, the still life or even the abstract design or no-design. Islamic visual art was not interested in human nature, but in divine nature. Since its purpose was not to express new facets of human nature, it did not esthetically discuss the figure, i.e., it did not portray the infinitesimal shifts in human appearance expressive of human nature. Human character, the *a priori* idea of man analyzable into a million details revelatory of another depth or height in the human personality—all this was for the Muslim artist just beside-the-point. The divine is his first love and his last obsession. To stand in the presence of divinity is for him the hallmark of all existence and all nobility and beauty. For this end, Muslims surround themselves with every prop and stimulus inductive of an intuition of that Presence.

First, since stylization produced a denaturalization of nature, the first Arab Muslims pushed that device to its conclusion. Further, stylization means the absence of variation, and of development from trunk to branch and leaf extremities as occurs in the vegetal kingdom. Trunk and branch became of the one thickness, one texture, and one share or shape throughout the drawing. Development was annulled also by the absence of variation. All the leaves and flowers in the same drawing were made alike. Finally, the deathblow to naturalism is repetition. By repeating the stalk, leaf and flower over and over again, and making them proceed one from another indefinitely in a manner impossible in nature, all idea of nature is banished. Repetition produces this effect so assuredly and unmistakably that it even tolerates its own enemy i.e., development—provided what has developed within a portion of the work of art is repeated in the work of art as a whole. Thus, nature is annihilated from consciousness, and un-nature is presented. If stalk, leaf and flower still leave a vestige of nature in the consciousness of the beholder, then the line, straight, broken, circular, jetting or trajecting, in free-lance designs or geometrical figures, will do the job better, beyond all doubt. It may be combined with the stalk-leaf-flower material to tell the beholder still more eloquently the “geometrizing,” un-naturalizing aspect intended. Finally, if repetition is subjected to symmetry, so that it extends equidistantly in all directions, then the work of art becomes in essence an infinite field-of-vision. By accident, only a part of this infinite field is arbitrarily singled out by the artist and framed by the physical ex-

tremities of the page, wall, panel or canvas. Where animal or human figures are used, as in the miniatures of Persia, un-nature is achieved by stylization of the animal, and by giving the human faces and bodies no individuation, no character and no personality. A man, like a flower, can represent un-nature, through stylization. But this is precisely the effacement of personality and character. That is why the greatest Persian miniatures always have a plurality of human figures indistinguishable from one another.²³ Like the Arabic poem, the miniature is made of many parts, detached from one another and each constituting an autonomous center of its own. As the audience takes its delight in holding in consciousness the literary jewels set up in the patterned body of the verses, so the spectator contemplates the minor arabesques in the carpet, door, wall, horse saddle, man's turban or clothes, etc. within a given center in the miniature, bearing in mind that there are other centers *ad infinitum* to which he may move.²⁴

In all painting and decoration in Islamic art there is movement, indeed compelling movement from one unit in a design to another, and then from one design to another, indeed, from one whole field of vision to another as in the great portals, facades or walls, is beyond question. But there is no work of Islamic art where such movement is conclusive. It is of the essence that the vision of the spectator continue; that it see the production of the continuation in the imagination; that the mind set itself in motion requesting to behold infinity. Mass, volume, space, enclosure, grace, cohesion, tension—all these are *facta* of nature to do away with if an intuition of un-nature is to be gained. Only a design, a momentum-generating pattern will surround the Muslim lover of beauty, bursting into infinite space in all directions. This puts him in the contemplative mood requisite for an intuition of the divine presence. Not only the design on the cover of a book, an illuminated page he is reading, the carpet under his feet, the ceiling, front, inside and outside walls of his house, but its floor plan as well, constitute such an arabesque where the garden, patio, vestibule, and every chamber is an autonomous center with its own arabesque generating its own momentum.

But what is an arabesque? We have used the term above assuming the reader's knowledge of it. Rightly so! For the arabesque is immediately distinguishable from any other artistic form. It is ubiquitous in all Muslim

²³T.W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1928), p. 133.

²⁴Stuart Cary Welch, *A King's Book of Kings: The Shah-Nameh of Shah Tahmasp* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), p. 30.

lands and constitutes the definitive characteristic or element in all Islamic art. It is rightly called "arabesque" because it is Arab as Arabic poetry and the Arabic Quran are Arab in their *esthétique*. Its presence transforms any milieu into something Islamic, and it is what gives unity to the arts of the most diverse peoples. It is readily recognizable, indeed unmistakable. Essentially, it is a design composed of many units or figures which join together and interlace in such way as to cause the spectator to move from one figure or unit to another in all directions, until the vision has crossed the work of art from physical end to end. The figure or unit is indeed complete and autonomous; but it is joined to the next figure or unit. The vision is compelled to move on, having followed the outline and perceived the design of the one figure, to seek those of the next. This constitutes its "rhythm." The movement can be dull the more detached the figures are from one another. It can be uninvolved as in the case of a simple weave of straight lines. However, the more closely related the figures are, thus compelling movement, punctuation and rhythm, and the more resistance to the movement is put up by the circuitry and brokenness of the lines, the more power is the arabesque's momentum. The greater the momentum, the easier will the mind generate the "idea of reason" for the imagination's take-off beyond the physical boundary of the work of art, as it attempts to produce what the mind has demanded. It is necessary for this process to be repeated, and so there are many different arabesques in any work of art, each covering one structural part. The purpose is obvious: the launching of the imagination upon its doomed flight. It may come with the second, third, or tenth arabesque, if not with the first.

Arabesques are floral or geometric, depending on whether they use *al tawrīq* (the stalk-leaf-flower), or the geometric *rasm* (figure) as artistic medium. The geometric figure can be *khatt* (linear) if it uses straight and broken lines, or *rāmī* (trajectory) if it uses multicentered curved ones. It may also combine all these together and be called then *rakhwī*. Arabesques are planar if they have two dimensions, as most decorative ones on walls, doors, ceilings, furniture, cloth and carpets, book covers and pages have. They can also be spatial, or three-dimensional, constructed with pillars and arches and the ribs of domes. This kind is the distinguished specialty of architecture in the Maghrib and Andalusia, and has reached its highest exemplification in the great Mosque of Cordoba and al Ḥamrā' palace in Granada. In al Ḥamrā', a whole dome is made of innumerable interlacing arches standing on visible columns,

which only the most fervid imagination can see and trace in their course. There, the momentum is so mighty that it can propel and launch anybody willing to move with its rhythm to immediate intuition of infinity. The grand facade of a tremendous mosque, the portal in a large wall, the panel in the portal, the knob on which vision happens to fall, the miniature on a page of a book, the design on a carpet, or one's own clothes, or belt, or buckle of a belt express to the Muslim: *lā ilāha illā Allāh* by causing him to perceive the infinity and inexpressibility of the transcendent realm of notnature, of not-creation.²⁵

C. ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY: THE ULTIMATE ART OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF TRANSCENDENCE

So possessed has Muslim consciousness been with transcendent divinity that it desired to see it expressed everywhere; and so anxious has that consciousness been to find ways and means of proclaiming the divine Presence that its genius brought forth with the greatest effervescence of pattern-making mankind has ever known. Even the infinite variety of arabesque was not enough for its genius in the visual arts. It has used every conceivable *matériel d'art* and transfigured it into a mirror reflecting its own core. It still stood ready for one more decisive victory.

Pre-Islamic history has known the *esthétique* of the word, in literary prose and poetry. Although it was nowhere as developed as in the hands of the Arabs on the eve of Islam, the Mesopotamians and Hebrews, the Greeks and Romans, and the Hindus had pushed the frontiers of the *esthétique* of the word to no mean degree. In no case, however, was there anywhere—including Arabic—any *esthétique* of the visual word. Writing was crude and esthetically uninteresting throughout the world and, for the most part, still is. In India, Byzantium and the Christian West, writing was used in its proper capacity, namely as logical symbol. The visual (figurative) representations of the arts of Christianity and Hinduism were contemplated by writing, i.e., by the logical symbolism of the letter to express the discursive concept desired. Discursive thought need not come to rescue visual art except and unless that art is visually incapable by itself of expressing the *a priori* idea desired. Apollo and Aphrodite needed no such prop. Visually and visually alone, they spoke "divinity" to the

لَا تَدْرِيكَهُ الْآبْصَرُ وَهُوَ يَدْرِيكَ الْآبْصَرُ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ (الأنعام: ١٠٣)

²⁵No sight can behold Him; and yet He sees all things. He is the Merciful, the All-Knowing (6:103).

spectator; for divinity or the *a priori* idea was intuitable in the very beauty of human form and character given to sense. Not so in Byzantine and Hindu art where the figures were devoid of such suggestive beauty, where they were even stylized. That is why writing was resorted to. Its function in the arts of the West and India is thoroughly discursive, its symbolism thoroughly logical and given to the understanding alone, not unlike numbers written in Arabic or Roman numerals. This was certainly the case with whatever script the Arabic language used before Islam. With the advent of Islam and its drive towards transcendence in the visual arts, a new horizon in writing awaited to be explored; and the Islamic genius rose to the challenge.

The Arabic word of God was written in the *naskh* (cursive) inherited from the Nabatean script or in the *kūfī* (angular) inherited from Aramaic through the Syriac. The signification was logical and discursive throughout as in any other language, perhaps even more so as the Near Eastern peoples knew hardly anything worthy of the name "calligraphy." The Romans had developed some calligraphic capabilities but the signification of the letters remained as logical and discursive as before. The Celtic monks in Ireland produced a few illuminated manuscripts such as the *Book of Kells*. Their calligraphy, however, did not move beyond the Roman level. The letters are rounded and beautified through decoration, but the total signification remained logical. The decoration was superfluous, as it did not change the letters' character, and each letter stood alone. The vision had to jump from one letter to another, the understanding had to mediate; and reason and memory combined to translate the graphic letters into the word or concept of the mind. There was no aesthetic intuition of the written letter, word, line or sentence.

Gradually, but within the space of two generations, the Islamic artist transformed the Arabic word into a visual work of art, carrying in aesthetic signification given to sensory intuition totally other than the discursive meaning given to the discursive faculty, to the understanding. Like the rest of the arts, this new art was subject to the overall purpose of Islamic consciousness. Its visual capacities were developed so as to constitute an arabesque. In the Nabatean and Syriac scripts the letters were detached from one another, as in the Greek and Latin scripts. The Arab artist joined them so that instead of seeing a letter, the eye could at one glance and with one sensory intuition see the whole word, and indeed, the whole phrase or line. Second, the Arab artist plasticised the letters so that he could now stretch them, prolong, contract, incline,

spread, straighten, bend, divide, thicken, narrow down, enlarge in-part or in-whole, as he pleased. The alphabet became an obedient artistic *matériel*, ready to embody and execute any aesthetic scheme or idea the calligrapher might entertain. Third, he pressed into service all that has already been learnt in the art of the arabesque, especially floriation and geometrization, not only the better to decorate the writing, but to make of writing itself an arabesque in its own right. Arabic writing thus became a freely undulating line, capable of bursting here and complete in itself, whether symmetrically arranged or widely scattered. The newly acquired plasticity of the alphabet enabled the calligrapher to do it in either way or both ways following the esthetic overplan he sought to develop. Finally, he "opened-up" the alphabet so as not only to receive the arabesque decorations but to merge with it in constituting one large arabesque. He made it possible for the other arabesque to emerge out of the writing, or for the writing to emerge out of them. The essential character of the letter which gave them their legibility was preserved, and it constituted in writing what metric patterns constitute in poetry, and geometrical and flowery, forms constitute in the planer arabesques. The rendering of the legible shapes gave them their momentum. As an arabesque, Arabic writing transformed the ultimate medium of the discursive understanding barely, the alphabet or logical symbol, into a sensory art material, and aesthetic medium, productive of an aesthetic intuition *sui generis*. This was a triumph for human art as such to overcome the last domain of discursive reason, to annex and to integrate it into the realm of the sensory esthetic. It was Islam's highest and ultimate artistic victory.

Islam holds the word of God to be ideationally the nearest approximation of Him, the most immediate expression of His will. Since as transcendent being He is forever impossible to know or to perceive, His will has been communicated in revelation through His word. The word of the Quran is then *God-in-percipi* and ought to be accorded the utmost in respect as well as beautification. Its writing is then the esthetic sublime in Islam, *par excellence*. All the more reason, therefore, for Arabic calligraphy to be developed so as to bring about a sensory intuition of the divine by realizing to the full, divine inexpressibility and unrepresentability in consciousness. Since Arabic writing has become an arabesque, it can enter any work of art and stand there *de jure*, regardless of its ideational content. Or, it can invade any work of art and ennoble it by complementing its esthetic momentum or value,

whether the writing is integrated with that work or otherwise. With the reverence accorded by all Muslims to holy scripture, the art of writing spread quickly, mobilized the greatest amount of talent and entered every moment of the Muslim's life. In stone, stucco or wood, on paper, skin or cloth, in house, office, shop and mosque, on every wall and ceiling. Arabic writing became the public art of Islam. So pervasive was its influence and presence that no city or village through the centuries could fail to produce masters of this art by the dozen. Even the enemies of Islam were not immune to its influence. In Christian Spain, France and Italy, Arabic writing was ideationally bungled by ignorance and incompetence but still used, esthetically to great advantage.²⁶ The esthetic sensory intuition which it renders is capable of producing the same "launching" of the imagination on its flight towards the idea of reason as any arabesque. Perhaps even more, for to the spectator capable at the same time of reading its discursive content, Arabic writing will produce through intellection—a further specification of the imagination's objective, a further rise in the momentum of its movement towards that objective. No wonder then that Arabic calligraphic copying of the Quran became the most popular art in the Muslim world across the centuries. Kings and plebeians entertained one supreme hope for their whole lives: To be able to copy a whole Quran—and die!²⁷

It was the Vizier Muḥammad Abū 'Alī Muqlah who, according to the report of al Zamakhsharī (in the latter's *Asās al Balāghah*, s.v. "Qalam"), compared writing to poetry and assigned to "composition" the same esthetic function in the two arts. He defined the cardinal virtues of the art of writing as five: *al tawfīyah* (giving the word its full share of the letters of which it is composed so that the relation between the whole and part is balanced and harmonious); *al ilmām* (giving every letter its due of space and power or emphasis); *al ikmāl* (giving every letter all that accords with its visual personality expressed in posture standing arightness, lying flatness, resolute bentness, self abandon, experienced curvedness); *al ishbā'* (giving every letter all that is demanded by its internal-audial personality expressed in finesse or assertion); *al irsāl* (the jetting of the line in free movement unhampered by either hesitation or any inner inhibition, thus generating momentum of high speed).²⁸

²⁶Historians of art have created the word "Mozarabic" to identify a whole tradition of Christian Italian and Spanish decoration involving Arabic motifs and designs.

²⁷This is indicated by the limitless profusion of copied texts of the Quran executed by or belonging to people of all levels—royalty, noblemen, as well as plebeians.

²⁸Nāḥī Zayn al Dīn, *Muṣawwar al Khatt al 'Arabī*. Baghdad: Al Mu'jam al 'Ilmī al 'Irāqī, 1288/1968), p. 372.

And it was Abū Ḥayyān al Tawḥīdī in his *ʿIlm al Kitābah* who said: "Generally, writing is spiritual designing with material means."²⁹ Throughout the ages, the Muslims have recited the sayings of anonymous sages, such as: "The minds of men stand under the teeth of their pens"; "Writing is the irrigation of thought"; "Beautiful writing mitigates poor thinking, but it endows the sound idea with the power of life."³⁰

Many scholars of the Middle Ages who have acquired great names in the humanities, such as Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, Muḥammad Amīn, Ibn al Athīr, Ibn al Nadīm, al Qalqashandī, etc., recognized what had been done by their fellow Muslims in the field of writing. They took pride in the fact that Arabic writing had been more developed than any other; that it had reached heights of beauty, expression and glory which were absolutely without parallel; and finally, that it had been invested with the supreme value—the religious value—as the vehicle and expression of divine wisdom. Even the Quran, they maintained with satisfaction and final conviction of the correctness of their esteem, had hallowed writing in a verse which opens with an adjuration by the pen and writing.³¹

While all art exercises an ennobling and humanizing influence on those who appreciate it, Greek and Renaissance art enhanced man's esteem of himself and inspired his imagination and will to greater heights of self-realization. It did so by teaching him a nobler and deeper humanness, a humanness so great that in his consciousness it merged with the divine, the ultimate standard and hope. In Islam, art attempted and achieved the same task of ennoblement, humanization and self-realization. But it did so by putting man constantly in the divine presence. The divine Being, being something non-human and transcendent, the idealism Islamic art generated was never Promethean, boastful or defiant. Human as it was, it disciplined itself through consciousness of its own transcendence. Is this a limitation? Certainly! But it is limitation by transcendent values which, by definition, begin at infinity; by values which are better "seen" and "appropriated" by standing squarely in front of them than by "confusion" with them. Since both realms of value are a priori, "confusion" with them by man is impossible *ex hypothesi*; and

²⁹Ibid., p. 396, where Zayn al Dīn quoted a whole section of al Tawḥīdī's *Risālah fi ʿIlm al Kitābah*, an unpublished manuscript at the University of Cairo Library.

³⁰Ibid.

بِالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ (القلم: ١) أَقْرَأُكَ الْكَرِيمَ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (العلق: ٣-٥)

³¹Nūn! By the pen and by what it commits to writing! (68:1-2)...Read by your Lord the Most bounteous. He taught the art of the pen, taught man what he did not know (96:3-5).

Prometheus is forever a complacent man! The greatness of Islamic art is identically that of the religion of Islam itself, namely, always to strive after and ever to keep the distance from the supreme, transcendent reality.