

PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

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LECTURE I

INTRODUCTORY :: CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

It is a great privilege to have been called upon to deliver a series of lectures under the auspices of a University so well-known for the high standard of learning which it has maintained throughout the course of its history. I shall cherish the honour all the more deeply for the reason that the University at whose call I find myself here this evening is my own dear old *alma mater*. I am grateful to the University authorities for the opportunity they have given me to come back to my *alma mater* 45 years after I had left its portals to render an account of what I have thought during this long interval on the problems covered by the subject assigned to me. The call I may add has a special personal significance to me, since my discourses are to be associated with an endowment established to preserve the name of a dear friend of my youth, Muhammad Ismail, son of Dr. Muhammad Osman. There are here before me a number of friends of my college days who know how deep was the affection which subsisted between me and the departed friend. It therefore gives me a sense of earnestness to speak on a subject which was of special interest to him and on which we used to hold youthful discussions in days which are now no more.

The subject of my discourses is entitled, "Principles of Islamic Culture." These will deal with the values of life which Islam recommends for man and the manner of implementing them in order that he might live at peace with his own self and at peace with his world of external relations, even as the term 'Islam' signifies. A study of these values resolves itself into a study of Islam as a cultural force operating as a factor for civilization. This being the aim of my lectures, it becomes necessary for me to make clear to you at the very outset what exactly I mean by the term 'culture' and what relation it should bear to the term, 'civilization'.

The term, 'culture' is a much abused term, even as the term, 'civilization', and an endless variety of definitions of it have been advanced from time to time. A number of these have identified culture exclusively with one or other of the several aspects of its manifestation. Some have laid undue emphasis on only a few of the ingredients which compose it to the neglect of other ingredients. Some there are which advocate rather aggressively this or that culture as normative and press it for acceptance on all hands. A good many have confused the term 'culture' with the term 'civilization'. I do not therefore propose to

invoke any of these ready-made definitions in order to explain to you the cultural process immanent in Islam and in what manner it may serve as a factor for civilization. I would rather invite you to follow the way of common sense, and that is to make a direct approach to the term 'culture' itself and ask of it what exactly it means in the context of human life.

Etymologically, the word means "cultivation of the human mind or its improvement by training." The mind is thus the mainspring of culture; and it follows that as the mind is so its expression or the culture which it generates, or throws out or shapes. Culture in this way becomes synonymous with life or its activity, both inward and outward, whether that life be of an individual or of the class or group to which he belongs. In its group aspect, it marks a distinct attitude common to the entire group, and manifests itself in their language and literature, in their art and philosophy, in their customs, manners, laws and modes of worship and obsequies. In a word, it represents their mental get-up. It is this which distinguishes one culture from another and from which flow the peculiarities and characteristics of the different peoples of the Earth.

Every culture, therefore, is at bottom, at its base, an attitude of mind, a living idea, so to say, which inspires and moulds a people's life. An idea such as this is in reality an organism, and it lives or decays and dies according to the vitality which it possesses or its usefulness to life. It is this vitality, this staying power for good in a culture, which determines the scope and duration of its operation. The history of mankind has witnessed the rise and disappearance of countless cultures; because they had not sufficient staying power, because the basis on which they rested had no aiding value to human life. On the other hand, cultures there have been, though few in number, which have had a longer day or have persisted to live on through the vicissitudes of time. And this, because of their greater staying power. But whatever their length of life, there is this to be observed, as a characteristic common to them all, that while they have lasted, the idea on which and for which each one of them has lived, has operated as a religious or almost a religious force. The idea might have been a legacy of tradition, historical or mythological, or it might have been the result of reasoning or necessity, or it might have been a part of what is called Divine Revelation. But it has been there to inspire the activity of those who have believed in it. And it is in that role that it interests us as the basis of their culture. If then, it is an idea, an ideal, an 'ism' which ultimately supplies the motive—the basis—for individual and group activity in its different spheres, it follows that the higher the

basic idea, the 'ism' which a culture embodies or reflects, or the higher its usefulness to life,—and that is the test of its vitality—the higher and the more lasting its influence on mankind. It is why cultures which have been based on certain verities of life, or have satisfied certain universal moral or spiritual laws of life, have had a longer day of operation.

In societies where this truth is not understood in its proper perspective, the term 'culture' is at times confused with the term 'refinement'. In this indifferent or popular sense, the term 'culture' stands for the fashion of the day, primarily in the externalia of life—in dress, in drawing room manners, in material amenities of living, in recreation of diverse forms catering for the senses, and in similar signs of seeming or outward polish. But such a condition or state may not necessarily argue a refined state of mind, the hall-mark of true culture. "One may smile and smile and be a villain", says Hamlet, and he draws attention to what should not pass for 'culture'.

Before I proceed further, let me make clear to you what I mean by another term which we have to use. It is the term 'civilization'. Even here, you are confronted with a variety of definitions advanced by the protagonists of the different types of civilization. I shall simply let its etymological sense, as in the case of the term 'culture', make its appeal to common sense, because it is the common sense view which inevitably should hold the ground.

Etymologically, 'civilization' means 'perfecting of civil life or of the relations of men among themselves.' It is in this sense that we arrange the order of civilizations. The test is the quality of perfection attained; and the higher the quality, the superior the civilization. This quality is determined by two factors, or rather it is a mixture of two ingredients capable of blending into each other. One is this. If civil life is to be perfect, it must represent organized social relations based, on the one hand, on an adequate production of the means of giving strength and happiness to society and, on the other, on an equitable distribution amongst individuals of the strength and happiness so produced. This is the primary condition of civilization. There is another condition which should be fulfilled. Civilization must also represent a process of perfection of the individual himself, of his faculties, his sentiments, his ideas' making organized civil life humane such as may glorify human nature. A nation or a social group may have attained a high standard of material progress, and the distribution of its benefits within its own circle may be equitable; but it may prove a danger to humanity at large all the same. Hence it is that we insist,

in every civilization, on the presence in some degree of the second quality which gives to human relations the touch of humanism. And the greater the degree in which this quality blends with the other quality the higher is the resultant civilization.

The second quality which I have just referred to as being so indispensable to civilization is a cultural strain. But it is a strain which does not proceed from every culture. For, as I have already indicated, cultures have not all the same vitality, the same abiding value or usefulness to humanity. Some have been distinctly pernicious; some, though by no means pernicious, are yet circumscribed in their scope or usefulness that they cannot develop that quality of universal humanism which can give rise to a noble civilization or sustain it. So, if a civilization is to be truly noble, truly great it must for its second quality incorporate in its texture a culture whose foundations lie deep in the eternal and all pervasive spiritual law of life which has struggled through ages to mould mankind into one entity.

A civilization worthy of its name must therefore represent an organized civil life inspired by a culture which stands for the progress not only of the individual but of humanity at large. Where you have this, or where the two objects are served together, you have a civilization which possesses a universal value for all mankind and is a blessing to it. On the other hand, where material progress is confined to an exclusive class or a section of society or community, or where the progress, while comprehending the needs of even the entire community, depends for its sustenance on the continued exploitation of other communities, you have organised life but no civilization. Again, where a community as a community is in the vanguard of material progress, but where the individual has no human status or the individual soul is not allowed a free play but is merged or lost in an impersonal mass-soul or mass-soulness, even here you have no civilization, however sumptuous the fare of sensuous comfort provided to each individual. Or further, where life is organized on a hierarchical basis, one layer of society rising above another, each again vertically divided into sections on the basis of birth or ethnic consideration or rigid social exclusiveness, however complacently satisfying the outward material aspect of the entire organization to those profiting by this hierarchical order of life, or however advanced intellectually or spiritually certain members or sections of such a society, you have not merely no civilization but a deliberate negation of it. Further still, even where a global view is taken of the human need for material comfort, and the more advanced communities even gratuitously offer assistance to the less advanced to raise their standard of living,

the step will not be regarded as a happy state of civilization, if the doles offered have any strings attached to them, whether open or hidden, or are meant directly or indirectly to conserve or advance the self-interest or self-security of those who offer the doles. The stress, in spite of any professions to the contrary, will, in actual practice, be on one's self or own community and only secondarily, on others. Further, we cannot call it a healthy civilized order where humanity is divided into water-tight compartments or nations grouped under blocks or pacts in the name of self-defence, leaving wavering neutrals for the time being either to wander in their fancied paradises, or to 'eddy about in blind uncertainty' and one and all practicing the art of war in the name of peace, and thwarting cultural contacts by raising barriers between man and man by means of pass-ports, visas, emigration laws and similar devices. Any united nation's organisation formed of such self-centred units will, despite its professed objective and any spasmodic attempts to move towards it, inevitably tend to function as a rendezvous for mutual espionage.

In none of these or similar situations will you have a civilization in the real sense of the term, because the cultural strain animating all such organised activities is not conducive to the welfare of humanity as a whole.

Modern European civilization has, in some of its salient aspects, spread over the entire globe, and invaded every sphere of life. It has no doubt, contributed immensely to the material progress of mankind and the physical comfort of the individual. But in the scale of life, its advantages are outweighed by its disadvantages or the weaknesses which it has introduced in human life. It is why this modern civilization of ours which is blatantly European in its colour and texture has succeeded neither in bringing to man, even in the West, the inward peace that he needs nor in promoting peaceful relations between man and man on any lasting basis, the two primary functions which any civilization worth the name has to fulfil.

The protagonists of the European civilization claim that it rests on very noble foundations. They say that it is heir primarily to the glories of the ancient civilization of Greece. In a large sense, it is so. But few care to admit that it is heir to its weaknesses as well. Who can deny that the Greeks through their city state of Athens have given us a high conception of a democratic life, of a democracy where knowledge was free and full, where beauty, both in form and thought was superb, and where the mind of its citizens could reach very high summits? We have been taught by our universities to call this civilization of the

Greek city state as a noble civilization. The charm of its beautiful exterior is so irresistible to its devotees ! But how many of our savants and thinkers have taken the trouble to realize adequately that under the beautiful exterior of the city state, there was stamped, by its very nature, a deep scar on its soul which was eventually to be its undoing? That scar was the slave land permanently fixed as an appendage to the city state—a portion of the city where the slave, the political untouchable, was quartered to sweat for the privileged citizen of the Greek Republic, and provide him with the material amenities of life. Living thus on the labour of the downtrodden, the philosophers of Greece complacently engaged themselves in the task of unravelling the problems of humanity! But bear this in mind. 'Humanity' to the greek mind meant only the Hellense, The Greeks, in contrast to the non-Greeks, styled 'barbarians' living within and without the land Hellos.

That was the mode of classical life which was transmitted to Rome only to intensify an already existing exclusive class consciousness on which the Roman State had been reared. This was the cultural strain which through the wreckage of the Roman Empire was transmitted to the Middle Ages and the continental Renaissance, giving rise to geographical or linguistic, regional or racial nationalism converting Europe into a network of contending rival millitary camps. This is the strain which generated and exploited the Industrial Revolution to metamorphose the old feudal order of lords and guilds into an industrial order of capitalists, and the professional classes of technicians, administrators, and the working classes, and this is the strain which supplied the urge to every geographical nationality in Europe, even the tiniest, to embark on colonial ventures all over the globe outside of Europe, and carve out colonial zones for exploitation. Such is the strain which originally emanated from Greece and Rome and which has till now held under its grip the mind of the western man. Colonialism, no doubt, is now on its march to disappearance. But it is leaving behind for the non-European world a trail of legacies, both in social taste and political ideology, the ultimate effects of which it may not be easy to foresee at this moment.

It is said that European civilization is not all Hellenic or Roman or Teutonic at bottom, and that whatever the strains whch might have proceeded from these sources to shape it, they have all been kept in proper check by the universal humanitarian strains proceeding from Christianity. But is that so? Christianity undoubtedly has done an immense service to the cause of humanity both in Europe and elsewhere. But it could not withstand the Caesarism of Europe. Christ came to

abolish Caesarism. In the Kingdom of God which he earnestly desired to see established on Earth, there was absolutely no place for another king in the form of a Caesar. But Caesarism knew how to get round Christianity. In fact it found a way to have its revenge. It foisted on Christ the unchristian commandment, 'Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's,' thereby pushing the vision of the kingdom of God, of peace and happiness to every human being on terms of equality, into the background. To speak the truth, European Christianity has had the misfortune to witness helplessly the onward march of Caesarism bending all its energy, heedless of Christian ethics, to the colonial expansion of Europe giving to the European or modern civilization a distinctly unchristian aspect.

It is true, that serious minds in every country have been endeavouring, particularly since the first world war, to place civilization on some stable basis. A League of Nations was at first set up, and when that could not stabilise civilization and the world went again through a blood-bath, a United Nations Organisation was brought into being. Even this has not proved to be a guarantee for civilised relationships between man and man. One may give you a lengthy list of the ills which modern civilization is still labouring under. These ills have become universal or chronic in the present state of the world transfiguration when the achievements of science have reduced it to the size of but a small house where even whispers can be overheard from corner to corner and where the evil deeds of one necessarily affect the happiness of others, although the compact nearness of one to every other could easily have rendered the world into a happy single family.

What then is the remedy? The disease is deep-seated and is not entirely material or political in nature. It is up to thinkers in every country to put their heads together to diagnose it. The imperative need of humanity is the creation of a common outlook or mind for humanity which may body forth a concept of a civilization which shall denote peace on earth established through mutual good-will between man and man—a civilization which shall promote not only the progress and perfection of the individual but the perfection of human relations all over the world and knit mankind into a single family, the family of God, as the Prophet of Islam styled it (Baihaqi), or a "fold every member of which shall be a shepherd unto every other and be accountable for the welfare of the fold." (Bukhari). The process in its initial stages will be educative in character and should be the concern of the Universities and other machineries of education functioning throughout the world.

In this process, the religions of the world will have to take a leading part. They came into the life of man as binding forces by supplying an unifying universal emotional content not only to the individual but to mankind as a whole. They were all meant to establish peace on earth. But their tragedy is that they have in the past been very often exploited by divisional forces at work in life to function as factors for exclusiveness and rivalry between man and man, and consequently become engines of disturbance to the human mind rather than agencies for constructive happiness for man. Now that we have had enough of what has been wrought by engineered exclusivism, it is for the thoughtful among the followers of every faith to rescue religion from this bondage, and let it function again for the purposes for which it first came into being. It is for every one of us all over the world to invoke one's religion and ask of its soul to assert itself and release the forces from within it which work for the progress of the individual and the progress and happiness of humanity as a whole.

The purpose of my lectures is to pursue this enquiry in Islam. The choice is dictated by the fact that having been born to it, the field is familiar to me. The idea is to set the ball in motion so that the thoughtful among the followers of other faiths may be induced to make like enquiries in fields familiar to them, so that the results might be coordinated, and a plan evolved, possibly a system of Universal basic education, such as might produce a mind everywhere which shall be a guarantee for the progress of the world and the unity of man—a system of basic education on a world basis serving as an indispensable background to the several intellectual pursuits provided by the different universities of the world. This is a task which may well be pursued under the auspices of the UNESCO.

In my subsequent lectures, I shall deal with the contribution which Islam may make to the fulfilment of the objectives contemplated here. The next two lectures will discuss the principles which should govern human activity, if civilization worthy of its name is to be secured for man, a civilization which shall promote the perfection of the individual on the one hand, and the perfection of society or of human relations on the other. The one is entitled "The Principle of Movement in Islam," the other "The Principle of Unity in Islam". In the three remaining lectures, the working of the twin principles of movement and of unity will be traced successively in the field of ethics, economy and polity or governance.

I may, however, make it clear to you in advance that the purpose of my lectures is to deal with the values of life as presented by the

Qur'an and the authentic traditions of the Prophet or with the ideology which Islam recommends for man and not with the manner in which these values of life have in the course of history been upheld or disturbed by those who have professed the Faith, as that is a subject of history and so outside of my immediate purview.

When we meet next, we shall take up "The Principle of Movement in Islam," for consideration.

In applying this principle to Islam, the question poses itself: What is the process which Islam recommends for man to achieve such a dual objective? In other words, what is the line of action man has to pursue or the principle of movement one has to observe in life in order to promote the two objects together? And then arises the question: Are the two objects ends in themselves or are they to lead on to any further or ultimate objective?

Before we undertake to ascertain the answer which the Qur'an furnishes to these questions, it seems necessary to know what view the Qur'an takes of human life and of life in general. Is life worth living or is one to seek refuge from it? Is it static or is it dynamic? Is it circumscribed by any period, or is it continuously growing from state to state? In other words, is the life of man to terminate with what is called "death," or is it to assume another state? I have posed the questions for the obvious reason that the programme of life one may have to pursue in the present will be dictated by one's belief in one of the alternatives presented here. If one should believe that life is to terminate with death, the character of the programme which such a belief will warrant will necessarily be different from the programme agreeable to a belief that the life lived on earth is not to end with death but has to continue in a new form on yet another plane or in a new state. Further, if one should believe that he has been born with a stigma attached to his soul of some sin committed by some remote ancestor or by himself in a previous birth, the line of action one will have to assume toward perfection will be yet different from every other.

Now what is the view which the Qur'an takes of human life? It divides life into two broad periods. The first period consists of two stages. One is the stage of man in the making. This is the stage of evolution of the human species, or the stage leading to the emergence of the Biblical Adam and Eve. The second stage is the stage of

LECTURE II

THE PRINCIPLE OF MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

In my opening lecture yesterday, I had ventured to suggest that a civilization worthy of the name should promote a dual objective — the perfection of the individual, and the perfection of society or of relation between man and man, and that this was possible only where a civilization was inspired by and rested on a culture which normally operated for the progress of the individual and the progress of society at large.

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Now what is the view which the Qur'an takes of human life? It divides its course into two broad periods. The first period consists of two stages. One is the stage of man in the making. This is the stage of evolution of the human species, or the stage leading to the emergence of the Biblical Adam and Eve. The second stage is the stage of

his reproduction and multiplication. What follows thereafter from the emergence of the child from its mother's womb till it grows and crosses the threshold of death and passes on into a further phase of life, is covered by the second period of life envisaged by the Qur'an.

In regard to the first of the two stages covered by the first period, the Qur'an suggests that the bringing into being of man was not a sudden event in creation but that on the other hand it was the result of a lengthy process. Says the Quran :

"He it is who hath formed you by successive stages" (Q. 71 : 14)

"And it is he who hath created man of water." (Q. 25 : 54)

"And God hath caused you to spring forth from the earth like a plant." (Q. 71 : 17)

In respect of the second stage in the first period or of man's reproduction, says the Qur'an :

"Now of fine clay have we created man: then made We the moist germ a clot of blood; then made the clotted blood into a piece of flesh, then made the piece of flesh into bones, and we clothed the bones with flesh; then brought forth man of yet another make—blessed therefore be God, the Most Excellent of makers." (Q. 23 : 12-14)

"This is He who hath made everything which he hath created in perfect form; and began the creation of man with clay :

'Then ordained his progeny from germs of life, from despised water :

Then shaped him, and breathed of His spirit into Him, and gave him hearing and seeing and hearts; what thanks do ye return?" (Q. 32 : 7-9)

What is noteworthy in this phase of the process is what the Qur'an calls the "breathing of God's spirit" into man as he emerges from his mother's womb.

The second period in the life of man begins with this emergence from his mother's womb and continues after death opening for him a new phase of existence. In respect of this period and particularly of what has to follow death, states the Qur'an :

"Thinketh man that he will be left to drift? was he not a mere embryo in the seminal elements? Then he became a clot; then (God) shaped and fashioned and made of him a pair, male and female, Is not He able to bring the dead to life" (Q. 75: 36-40)

"What think ye of (the seed, the germ of life) that ye spill?

Is it ye who create it? or are We its creator?

It is We who have decreed that death should be among you;

Yet are We not thereby hindered from replacing you with others, your likes or from producing you again in a form which ye know not!

Ye have known the first creation: Will ye not then reflect?" (Q. 56: 58-62)

It needs not therefore that I affirm by the sunset redness,

And by the night and its gatherings,

And by the moon when at her full,

That from state to state shall ye assuredly be carried onward. (Q. 84: 19)

Such is the vision which the Qur'an presents of the course of life man has to take. His present state of life is to be succeeded by another state growing out of it, and followed by yet another and yet another in succession. Life thus viewed is a linear line and not a cycle and allows no return to a previous existence, as that will demonstrate a retrogression and not a movement forward. The essential function of Divinity as the Qur'an asserts is to disclose itself "every moment in fresh glory" (Q. 55: 29), and likewise the primary function of human life is to march on from state to state, from one lower to one higher in an endless linear movement. Any line of action or programme of life which the Qur'an might suggest for him in his earthly sphere, or the role he has to fulfil, will not be intelligible or bear any meaning until we know whether the movement forward, the movement envisaged in the Quranic assertion, 'from state to state shall ye assuredly be carried forward', is a movement in which man will have the option to participate and even propel it, or is it a merely biological movement, as during the initial or first period of human life

leading to the emergence of man through his mother's womb, a movement in which the man in the making has had no conscious share? If the second period of his course in life is also wholly biological, then the entire edifice of religion or what is prescribed by it for human guidance falls to the ground. For, the biologist sees no future for man after his death. In fact, he has not so far developed the courage to accompany the dead into the grave and continue his biological research, nor has he cultivated an open mind on the possibility of a future for man. He is definite that after death there is no further life for man. On the other hand, the Qur'an is emphatic in its assertion that from state to state man will assuredly be carried onward. If it is so, the question will repeat itself: Is this process simply biological pushing man blindly forward from one physiological mould to another? If it is so, where comes in the value of any plan of life prescribed for man by the Quran, since he is to serve only as a meek material in an inexorable biological process and is to have no voice in his movement. This is an issue which needs careful examination before we proceed any further. Let us first see what Muslim thinkers in the past have said on the subject.

The late Sir Mahammad Iqbal in his memorable work, the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, takes a biological view of the course of human life as visualised by the Quran, and quotes in his support a striking passage from the great mystic, Jalaluddin Rumi. Says he:

"It was only natural and perfectly consistent with the spirit of the Qur'an that Rumi regarded the question of immortality as one of biological evolution, and not a problem to be decided by arguments of a purely metaphysical nature, as some philosophers of Islam had thought. The theory of evolution, however, has brought despair and anxiety instead of hope and enthusiasm for life to the modern world. The reason is to be found in the unwarranted modern assumption that man's present structure, mental as well as physiological, is the last word in biological evolution, and that death, regarded as a biological event, has no constructive meaning. The world of today needs a Rumi to create an attitude of hope and to kindle the fire of enthusiasm for life. His inimitable lines may be quoted here:

"First man appeared in the class of inorganic things.
Next he passed therefrom into that of plants.
For years he lived as one of the plants,
Remembering naught of his inorganic state so different ;

And when he passed from the vegetal to the animal state,

He had no remembrance of his state as a plant,

Except the inclination he felt to the world of plants,

Especially at the time of spring and sweet flowers,

Like the inclination of infants towards their mothers,

Who know not the cause of their inclination to the breast.

Again the great Creator, as you know,

Drew man out of the animal, into the human state,

Thus man passed from one order of nature to another,

Till he became wise and knowing and strong as he is now,

Of his first souls he has now no remembrance,

And he will be again changed from his present soul."

Interesting and attractive as is the vision of the evolution of man presented here, the point should not be overlooked that the primary purpose of the Qur'an is not to give any factual account of the rise and development of man as might be upheld by the discoveries of science. The statements of the Qur'an touching the subject do lend themselves to biological interpretation; but they certainly do not substantiate the view advanced by Rumi that before man assumed his present form, he had to live in succession as an inorganic substance, a plant, and an animal, or that he will replace his present form by that of an angel, and so forth, as he states in another passage which I shall have occasion to present to you in a few moments. The Qur'an does postulate that man is the result of an evolutionary process and that this process will continue even after what is called 'death', but does not posit or specify any distinct progressive biological stages therein such as specified by Rumi.

As we have already noticed, the Qur'an divides the movement of human life into two broad periods. Firstly, there is the period of man's making till he emerges from the mother's womb. This is the period which the Qur'an refers to in the verse: "It is He who hath formed you by successive stages." (Q. 71: 14) "The period which begins with this moment when, as the Qur'an states, the spirit of God having been breathed into him, he receives the gift of hearing and seeing and feeling and thinking, (Q. 15: 29) and continues his course of life thereafter crossing the line of what is termed 'death' is the period that matters. It is this which the Qur'an has in view when it asserts: 'from state to state shall ye assuredly be carried onward,' (Q. 84: 19) It is in relation to this phase of life or movement that the Qur'an utters the following words of caution:—

"Those who believe and do right : Joy is for them, and bliss their journey's end." (Q. 13 : 29)

"Those who strive in our way, we shall show them the way." (Q. 29 : 69)

"Whosoever followeth the right course, it is only for the good of his own soul that he doth so ; and whosoever followeth the wrong course doth so to its own hurt. No soul charged with its own responsibility shall bear another's responsibility." (Q. 17 : 15)

"I will not suffer the work of any among you that worketh, whether male or female, to be lost." (Q. 3 : 194).

"By the soul and Him who balanced it and infused into it the sense of discrimination between the wrong and the right, happy is he who keepeth it pure and unhappy is he who corrupteth it." (Q. 91 : 7-10)

"And whatever suffering ye suffer, it is what your hands have wrought." (Q. 42 : 30)

Man shall have nothing but what he strives for.
(Q. 53 : 39)

The earlier movement leading to the emergence of the child from its mother's womb is indeed a biological process—a process of which the emerging child has had no conscious apprehension and consequently no conscious share in its own making. But the subsequent is clearly indicated by the Qur'an to be a conscious movement propelled and controlled, for good or ill, by one's own self. The terms employed by it to distinguish the one from the other bear out the distinction suggested. In the one, 'atwaran' is the expression used, and in the other 'tabaqan an tabaqin'. In the one, the Qur'an states that by successive stages of growth and development or moulds, man has been made ; whereas in the other, it states that from one 'Tabaq' or from one lower plane or state to one higher plane or state, man will assuredly be carried onward. The two terms connote two different types of development. The former refers to a physiological process as in the mother's womb. The biological mould or form or 'tawr' is completed in the emerging child which thereafter merely expands its physical dimensions till death overtakes them. But the 'spirit of God', which, as the Quran points out, is 'breathed' into him as he emerges from his mother's womb endowed with the talent to hear and see and feel and think, gathers increasing consciousness and develops an individuality. It is this individuality or personality or ego, as it is styled by philosophy, which

is addressed by the Qur'an in the verse: "From state to state shall ye assuredly be carried onward." It is that which does not disappear with the disappearance of its physical mould. It assumes an independent existence the moment it discards its temporary physiological appurtenance. It is the development of this personality or ego on which the Qur'an concentrates all its attention. It gives man the heartening assurance that "from state to state, shall he assuredly be carried onward," if only he conforms to the laws of life guided by the sense of balance set in his very nature.

The question may incidentally arise here: what after all is this spirit of God breathed into man as he emerges out of the womb of his mother, and assumes an individuality or personality or ego? Is it any extraneous element infused into the body as the child emerges out of its mother's womb? Or, is it an off-shoot of the body itself, fashioned in its very form at a certain stage in its formation, permeating it through and through and holding it together, and composed of something so delicately elusive or fine that the science of biology, as it has developed so far, cannot apprehend it or bring it within its purview—an offshoot of the body possessing the talent to develop, at first through the instrumentality of the body itself, an individuality such as might outlive it, and thereafter live on its own? An answer to this is not possible to attempt in the absence of any direct aid from science. Nor is that necessary to our purpose. Our interest here is in the progress which this human personality, the ego or the soul of man has to make in his march of life, and not in what it consists of. It is enough to know from the Qur'an that it is styled a spirit breathed by God into the body of man, and that it is called upon to take a consciously active interest in its own movement both here and hereafter. Even if this process is biological, in its structural setting as Mawlana Rumi envisages, the function of human personality, as recommended by the Quran, is to control and regulate the process of its own movement forward from state to state without wilfully creating for itself hindrances, and suffering a set-back in consequence. For, the Quran makes it clear that man has the option to make use of all the laws of nature to advance or retard his pace in life.

And He hath subjected to you all that is in the heavens
and all that is in the earth: all is from Him.

Verily, herein are signs for those who reflect. (Q. 45. 13)

It is this fact of life or assumption that has to determine the role man has to fulfil in life or the principle which should govern his movement in life in order that he might move forward from state to state, from one lower to one higher plane, towards perfection.

What then is the role which the Qur'an assigns to man in the scheme of things and what equipment does it offer him to fulfil the role and move forward in life from state to state? The figurative language and the imagery employed by the Qur'an to denote the role reminds me of a similar picture afforded by the English poet, Matthew Arnold, in his lines entitled "Revolutions":

"Before man parted for this earthly strand,
While yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,
God put a heap of letters in his hand,
And bade him make with them what word he could.

And man has turned them many times : made Greece,
Rome, England, France :—Yes, nor in vain essayed,
Way after way, changes that never cease. The
letters have combined : something was made."

Indeed something was made ; but the poet in sorrow exclaims :

"Ah! an inextinguishable sense
Haunts him that he has not made what he should,
That he has still, though old, to recommence,
Since he has not yet found the word God would.

And empire after empire, at their height
of sway, have felt this boding sense come on,
Have felt their huge frames not constructed right
And dropped, and slowly died upon their throne."

That was Arnold's approach, evidently inspired by St. John's : 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Here the purpose of man was to find out the Word. On the other hand, a reflex process is what is revealed by the Quran. It does not suggest that God merely 'put a heap of letters into man's hand when he parted for this earthly strand and bade him to make with them what word he could.' It affirms that the 'Word' itself was shown to him and its meaning explained. Indeed, lest he forget its structure and composition, this very word was transfixed into his nature, bidding him to preserve it therein and not play with its letters and disturb their arrangement, so that he might live in peace with himself and in peace with his external world of relations and fulfil his role in life. And what is the role assigned to him? States the Qur'an :

"And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo, I am about to place a vicegerent in the Earth, they said: Wilt thou place therein one who will do mischief and shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: Surely, I know that which ye know not."

"And He taught Adam all the names, then showed the objects to the angels saying: inform me of the names of these, if ye are in the right.

"They said: Glorious art Thou: we have no knowledge save that which Thou hast taught us. Surely, Thou alone art the Knower, the Wise;

He said: "O Adam; you inform them of their names," and when he had informed them of their names, He said: "Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth?" (Q. 2: 30-33)

Thus rendered conscious of the purpose of creation and of the 'names' or the meaning of things, or the laws of their existence, it followed as a corollary that man should affirm the unity of existence sustained by his creator, the Lord of all being.

"And when thy Lord took out from the loins of Adam's children their progeny, and made then affirm (saying)

Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea! We affirm."

(Q. 7: 172)

So equipped, man's nature found itself agreeable to bear the trust of vicegerency.

"Verily, we proposed to the heavens and to the mountains to receive the trust, but they shrank from receiving it and were afraid of it. Man alone undertook to bear it."

(Q. 33: 72)

The undertaking was, on the face of it, not an easy affair. The Qur'an is struck by its very audacity as the continuation of the verse suggests: "Lo! How unfair and harsh was man to himself!—Not aware of what exactly he undertook." But the purpose of his creation was nevertheless to carry him "onward from state to state" towards the state of perfection. But to lessen the pang implicit in the ordeal and to help him bear the burden of the trust undertaken, and to keep the life intended for him, or the letters of the 'Word' revealed to him, in proper form, says the Qur'an, a sense of balance was set in his nature and he was told that his march upward would depend on what use he made of it.

Allah it is who hath sent down the Book of Truth, and the Balance. (Q. 42: 17)

By the soul and Him who balanced the same and infused into it the sense of discrimination between the wrong and the right, happy is he who keepeth it pure, and unhappy is he who corrupteth it." (Q. 91 : 7-10)

During the early stage or before the 'spirit of God' is breathed into him, or during the stage of his making, no responsibility is attached to man, since he is not conscious of the movement. The question of responsibility arises the moment consciousness begins to be at play. The first phase of his life in this second period which closes with what is called 'death' is the basic stage of preparation for all subsequent stages. It is the stage of freedom of will and action, or of willing cooperation with the laws of life, helped by the balance set in the nature of man. What follows is but a continuation of it. 'Your creation and resurrection are but like a single moment.' (Q. 31 : 28) Even in this stage, the stage ushered in by death, the march onward is conditioned by a conscious effort appropriate to every new move. This is implicit in the urge one will feel there for what the Qur'an calls "light" and more and more of it. "Our Lord! perfect for us our light" (Q. 66 : 8) will be the perennial prayer of the aspirant. Every fresh instalment of light acquired or vouchsafed is thus a new state of life, accompanied by 'death' that necessary concomitant of life, the birth-pang ushering in a new state of existence. "It is We who have decreed that death should be among you." (Q. 56 : 60). "Blessed is He who hath created death and life to test which of you is best in point of endeavour." (Q. 67 : 2) Throughout, the spiritual purpose persists. The movement is a conscious movement.

It is this aspect, the spiritual, which the Qur'an desires to emphasise for the guidance of man, and not exactly the biological. That this aspect also was probably present in Rumi's mind, notwithstanding his biological obsession as displayed in his lines quoted by Sir Mohammed Iqbal, is clear from a restatement of the same biological process in the following lines :

I died as a mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was man.
Why should I fear death? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as man, to soar,
With angels blest; but even from angelhood,
I must pass on: all except God doth perish.
When I have sacrificed my angel-soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived

Oh, let me not exist ! For non-existence
Proclaims in organ tones : "To Him we shall return."

Here the biological process, even as Rumi conceives it, is rendered dependent upon a conscious effort, upon the 'sacrifice' as he states, of a lower nature in search of a higher. And that is essentially a conscious spiritual process, and applies equally well to the life in the present lived in its material set up and to the life to follow which is expected to be wholly a matter of the spirit.

Such is the course of life which the Qur'an envisages or outlines for man. It is for man to traverse this course with steady steps if he is to profit by life. The way to do it is to conform to the way of God or the laws of life at work in Nature. Says the Qur'an:

Turn steadfastly to the way of devotion, the way laid by God, for which man by his nature hath been fitted. There is no altering in the way laid by God. That is the right way of devotion (or religion). But most people know it not.
(Q. 30 : 30)

In my discourse of this evening, I have touched upon but one aspect of the way of God referred to in the Quranic verse just recited. I mean the Law of Movement at work in life to which man is to conform for his progress in life. But this law does not operate unilaterally in Nature. It works in conjunction with another fundamental law of life to produce order and harmony in life. This other Law is what I may call the Law of Unity in life. Indeed, the Law of movement subserves this other law to let life disclose itself every moment in fresh glory which in reality is its function. (Q. 55 : 29). The implication here for man is clear. He has been fitted by his nature to make progress in life in every direction possible for him, by pressing into his service all the provisions of the earth and the forces of nature. But the Qur'an makes it clear to him that no progress made by him will operate for his ultimate good unless it is expressed in terms of the good of every living object on earth who, in the language of the Prophet of Islam, form together the 'Family of God'. That is what the Qur'an calls 'amal-i-saleh' or the righteous mode of living, which alone at the organizational level, can afford to man a civilized order of life. The two laws of life are therefore to work hand in hand, if life is to give a united happiness for mankind. This Principle of Unity as sponsored by the Qur'an, I shall take up for consideration in my next lecture.

LECTURE III

THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY IN ISLAM

In my last lecture I had endeavoured to give you an idea of the Law of Movement at work in life by conforming to which man might rise from state to state in his onward march to perfection. Today I propose to take you a step forward and suggest that this law of movement is of no value to man if his attempt to move forward does not subserve another law of life, which I call the 'Law of Unity in life.' The Quran points out that everything created in the Universe is so interlinked with every other that the Universe with all that is therein constitutes but a single entity, and functions as such. That is the way of life ordained by its Creator — The Sunnath Allah, the way of God — and man is but to conform to it and fit himself by his activity into the divine scheme of things.

"(Blessed is He) who hath created the seven heavens in layers. Thou canst see no disharmony in the handiwork of the Beneficent God. Then look again. Dost thou see any rifts? Then look again, and yet again; thy sight will return unto thee thwarted and tired."

(Q 67: 3-4)

"The Sun and the Moon follow a system,
And the planets and the trees bend in adoration,
And the sky, He hath reared it on high,
And hath set the balance,
That in the balance ye should not transgress,
But keep it poised and not scant the balance."

(Q 55: 5-9)

The call of the Quran to man is to ponder over the working of the Universe or man's external world of relations and also ponder over the universe that is within himself, and suggests that therein — both in his internal world and in his external world — is at work the eternal principle of balance and harmony to urge on him the need for devoted imitation in his own sphere of activity. That is *Amal-e-Salih* or righteous work expected of man under the Quranic injunction, "believe and work righteously," which sums up the entire cultural process of Islam.

The Quran places little value on any attempt at individual perfection or material advancement which at the same time does not promote the perfection or material advancement of society or perfection of human relations. It emphasises over and over again that mere belief in God without work appropriate to that belief is no belief at all in God. Mere philosophic perception of the essence of divinity or contemplation is barren, if it does not generate volition or give movement to human life in consonance with the qualities or attributes of that essence. Likewise, mere spiritual exercises of the kind which certain religious orders practice, or psychic achievements, however interesting, will not rise above their character as but the exercises of the mind, if they do not subserve a dynamic moral existence for man. This dynamic morality again is not possible for one who seeks his individual spiritual salvation through the life of the cloister or the cave, or for one who through the abnegation of his body fancies his duty to lie in merely "nursing" his soul. The vicegerency of God on earth, the role assigned to man by the Quran, of which I spoke to you in my last lecture, is not possible to fulfil for such types. On the other hand, the possibility is for him who imbues himself with divine attributes to the best of his ability — a process of equipment so earnestly recommended to man by the Prophet of Islam — and manifests them harmoniously in devoted service to himself and his fellow beings. "All creatures of God," says the Prophet, "form the family of God and he is the best loved of God who loveth best his creatures," and exclaims :

"Oh Lord ! Lord of my life and of everything in the Universe ! I affirm that all human beings are brothers unto one another." (Abu Dawood : Ahmed)

"Islam", states the Prophet, "demands a united life for man", and adds : "Unity is bliss ; disunity is misery." He therefore recommends : "In loving devotion to God, live a United life as brothers unto each other." Indeed, the plan of life outlined for man by the Prophet is summed in his memorable words : "Respect the way of God and be affectionate to the family of God" (Baihaqi).

In this advice, the twin principles of life to be kept in view by man are referred to together — the movement forward to be attained by conforming to the laws of life or the ways of God ;

and the promotion of unity to be secured through mutual affection between man and man and tenderness towards every living object, or by attending devotedly to what the Prophet calls *Haq Allah*, on the one hand, or the right of God, or obligations to God by practicing purity in personal life, and *Haq-al-Ibad* or *Haq an Nas*, on the other, or the right of mankind or obligations to others by practicing purity in human relations. The Quran points out that it is along this road or by observing purity within and purity in external relations, both at the individual level and the community level that the happiness of the human race is to be reached.

The Quran therefore points out that man has to move on in life with a steady eye on the need of advance for every other living object. That is the way to fulfill one's role as the vicegerent of God on earth and help mankind to grow, as is the Prophet's ardent wish, into a fold "every member of which shall be a shepherd or keeper unto every other and be accountable for the welfare of the entire fold." That is the order of life towards which mankind will have to move, if an order of civilization worthy of human life is to be established on Earth to fulfil the purposes implicit in the creation of man.

As I have suggested already, the way to the fulfilment of one's role as the vicegerent of God lies in trying to invest oneself with the attributes of God to the best of one's ability and displaying them both in relation to one's own self and in relation to the world around.

The attributes of God are various, as are his "names", or "asma" as the Quran terms them. They cannot be numbered, since the fullest comprehension of Divine activity is scarcely possible for man circumscribed as he is by the nature of his being. But he can understand the significance to his life of such of them as are specifically brought to mind in the Quran. Some of these may fall essentially within the purview of mysticism. But a large majority of them, suggestive of His knowledge and power and justice and mercy and his tender concern for the moral purification of man, may easily form the subject of social study. It is for man to develop his personality by imbibing as many attributes as is possible for him to cultivate and express. But the primary peculiarity of divine

expression is always to be kept in view if the human endeavour to express divine attributes in one's life is to bear fruit.

The Sunnat Allah, or the way of God, it may be pointed out, is not to express any divine attribute singly. Even when it gives us such an impression, it is always blended with every other, the expression bearing, in every case, the over-all impress of His all-pervading attribute of mercy. Even when the attribute, say of *Qahar* or of destruction is at play, it is only in the interests of construction or of the eventual good of life. "My mercy encompasseth everything," says the Quran, (Q. 7: 156) and man has to give this touch of 'mercy' to every aspect of his relation with his external world. The qualities imbibed of God should therefore be expressed in harmonious relation to each other, although in so doing a particular quality may, in a particular situation or a particulate role, become more manifest than every other. It is why, those who undertake this great journey of life in the light of the Qur'anic directions are not all grouped together under a single category. The Qur'an speaks of several types of travellers traversing the path of Allah, according to the manner in which they display divine attributes in their onward march. These types are severally addressed as Salehin, Muttaqin, Muslehin, Muflehin, Muqsitin, Sabirin, Shakirin, Muhsinin, Sadiqin, Siddiqin, Shuhada', Awliya, Muslimin, Muqarribin, Ulul-'Ilm, Ulul-Albab, and so on. But this is to be observed that one common purpose binds them all together, the essential purpose of displaying in their lives the 'balance and harmony' dwelling in the Divine Scheme of things.

As against this order favoured of the Qur'an, there stands the opposite order of those upon whom the Qur'an looks with distinct disfavour. They are those who disturb the 'balance and harmony' that should subsist in life, and 'create mischief in the earth.' They too are classified, by the particular quality of the evil they display in their activity, into several categories — Kafirin, Mushrikin, Zalimin, Mufsidin, Ghafilin, Munafiqin and so forth.

The types of people favoured of the Qur'an are by no means exclusive types. They are classified differently simply on the basis of the divine attribute one displays in one's activity more

noticeably than any other. Indeed the larger the number of attributes one displays more or less in equal measure, one blending into every other, the greater one's capacity to discharge one's responsibilities as the vicegerent of God on earth, and consequently the higher one's station in life.

Of all the divine attributes with which man has to endue himself to discharge satisfactorily his task, knowledge commands precedence. Its acquisition is a "duty on every man and every woman," as laid by the Prophet of Islam :

"Acquire knowledge, 'said he.' It enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong : it lights the way to heaven ; it is our companion when friendless : it guides us to happiness, it sustains us in adversity ; it is a weapon against enemies and an ornament among friends. By virtue of it Allah exalteth communities and maketh them guides in good pursuits, and giveth them leadership ; so much so, that their footsteps are followed, their deeds are imitated, and their opinions are accepted and held in respect."

The Ulul-'Ilm' (those who equip themselves with knowledge or the learned) naturally deserve our primary attention ; for knowledge is the means whereby the qualities characteristic of every good type are cultivated. The qualities, for instance, of Muttaqin (those who level up their path by removing all ruggedness therefrom or abstain from impurities or remove them from their lives), Salehin (those who follow the right path), Muslehin (those who set things right), Muhsinin (those who do good deeds in a manner calculated to stimulate the thought of good deeds in others and help them to rectify their errors and do good deeds), Muflehin (those who reform or improve the condition of society), Muqsitin (those who admit the rights of others and practice equity and not merely urge them to do good deeds, but also help them do so), and Siddiqin (those who meticulously adhere to fact and truth), Muslimin (those who conform their will to the Will of God or the laws of life — the qualities distinguishing these and other like types are not possible to develop except for one who is endowed with knowledge. Hence it is that the Prophet of Islam lays its acquisition as a primary duty on every man and woman and calls upon the

seeker to go to the ends of the Earth in its pursuit even to China, the then known remotest corner of the world, and "receive knowledge from whatever vessel it is presented." "A piece of knowledge" says he "from wherever gained is like a lost property recovered. Let him take it as if it is his own." Says he again "To travel in search of knowledge is to take the road to heaven. Angels spread their wings to smoothen the path of the seeker. Everything in the skies and in the earth, even the innates of water, pray for him. The superiority of a man of learning over a man given to mere worship is like the superiority of a full moon over the stars. He who has gained it, has gained ample fortune" (Tirmizi and Abu Dawud). "He who feels too proud to seek knowledge will never gain knowledge", he adds (Bukhari). "The mind of the son of Adam is always young when engaged in search of knowledge" (Kunuzul Haqaiq).

But one thing the Qur'an makes perfectly clear. Knowledge does not consist in the mere assemblage in one's memory of ideas or material on this or that subject. That does not constitute acquisition. The Qur'an desires correlation and synthesis helpful to a harmonious grasp of the verities underlying them. The Quran, therefore, insists on reflection as an indispensable aid to the proper acquisition of knowledge. Says the Prophet: "There is no good in reading anything over which one does not reflect" and also observes: "A moment's contemplation is better than seventy years' worship" (Kunuzul Haqaiq). "The best form of devotion to God, he emphasises is to seek knowledge."

Wherever attention is drawn to the manifestation of life calling for reflection and introspection, expressions such as 'herein are portents', 'here are signs for folk who reflect', 'for men of knowledge', 'for folk who heed', and 'for folk who understand', echo and reverberate only to emphasise the importance which the Qur'an attaches to reflection as a means of obtaining insight. "Show us the nature of things as they really are" is a characteristic prayer of the Prophet. The first step on the road to it is reflection.

Knowledge, in the Quranic conception, covers every field of life — the life of the vast universe working around man in

immediate contact as well as remote, and the life of man himself moving onward with a knowledge of his past. The acquisition of knowledge therefore imposes on him the exercise of not merely his intellectual and physical faculties, but his spiritual as well, and nothing is prohibited to him except, probably, probing vainly the veil beyond which his reason or intuition has been found incapable of advance. And herein lies the fundamental distinction between the Quranic and the classic Greek culture which forms the essential basis of the modern European civilization. For, while the Greek mind rivetted its essential attention on the study of man as man, the Quranic mind was called upon to take, in one sweep, the entire Universe, not merely the world of man, and of his spirit, but the worlds of plants, birds, animals, insects, planets, the worlds seen and unseen — all interlinked in its consciousness with each other — and understand and reflect on the purposes underlying each creation, and grasp the supreme spiritual principle of their linkage operating for a unified existence

The Qur'an gives man full sanction to harness the forces at work both in him and in his external world, the forces of nature, through an appropriate study of them. But it makes one condition. It calls upon man to bear in mind the balance set in his nature, and to exercise the power acquired through knowledge to help him display in his life such other attributes of God as will equip him to 'show affection to the family of God' for which he has been created with the privilege of representing Him on earth by "being a shepherd or keeper unto every other." If we may so express, the impersonal power of Nature that Science brings into play is to be given a human personality and made conscious of the balance set therein, as in the rest of creation. In other words, it is to be humanised, and "the spirit of God breathed" into it, to use a phrase of the Qur'an. This is the primary function of human activity and is to be kept in mind in order to appraise the full import of the injunction which sums up all that is required of man: "Believe and work righteously" informed by knowledge. The wider and deeper this knowledge of one's own self and one's external world of relations, the greater the chance one has to enter the order of Salehin, Muttaqin, Siddiqin, Muqarribin and the rest, who in one capacity or another fulfil the role of the vicegerency of God on earth.

The last named type — the Muqarribin, or those whom God draws to Himself, are those who aspire, in the language of the Prophet's prayer, to the knowledge of the 'Nature of things as they really are.' This knowledge of Reality, the mainspring or fountainhead of life, is to be gained through what is termed in the language of 'Sufis' as 'Huzur ma' Allah, or attendance on God or a living sense of God every moment, loosely rendered into English as 'Mystic experience', an acquisitive quality more freely developed in certain temperaments or minds spiritually inclined than in those particularly obsessed with the temporal aspects of life. This mystic experience, however incommunicable, has, in the context of the Quranic ideology, to serve as a dynamic source of inspiration stimulating action worthy of the role man has to play as the vicegerent of God on earth. It is in this way that Islam seeks to resolve or eliminate the conflict that subsisted in the past between religion and civilization and forge a harmonious inter-relation between the two.

In the cultural process of Islam, the acquisition of knowledge, such as we have defined above, is an indispensable condition of one's equipment for righteous activity. In fact, it is against the background which knowledge furnishes that the cultural process of Islam, or the development of human personality on righteous lines is to be regulated. This process is aided by certain disciplines which may be divided into two categories. One consists of certain prescribed disciplines more or less ritualistic in complexion. The other are of the nature of self-discipline which one has to impose on oneself in the interest of one's own perfection.

The principle underlying the self-discipline recommended by the Qur'an will be discussed in my next lecture entitled "The Ethics of Islam". But here, I may observe that what are regarded as prescribed disciplines are not to be pursued with an eye merely on gains to be secured in heaven or in the interest of an exclusive personal spiritual exaltation. According to the Qur'an, self-perfection is unattainable unless it is sought with an eye on the happiness and perfection of society at large. In the field of human activity, every move made by man in his personal interests should operate for the good of others as well. These disciplines are regarded as 'Arkan-i-Islam' or pillars of the Faith, and they are :

- (1) Prayer at stated hours,
- (2) Fasting for a month every year,
- (3) The payment of the prescribed poor-rate, 'Zakat' as it is called, and
- (4) Presence at least once in one's lifetime at the annual assemblage at Mecca called 'Haj'.

Of these disciplines, the third discipline, viz. the payment of the prescribed poor-rate or Zakat will be discussed in the lecture which is to deal with Islamic Economy, but the rest may be touched upon here. The importance of the institution of Haj or of the annual assemblage at Mecca where people from all corners of the world assemble to mark their allegiance to a common ideal is obvious. Prayer and Fasting are the two disciplines to which I may draw particular attention here. Ordinarily, the two disciplines may seem to be personal affairs of the individual. But so is not the view which the Qur'an takes of them. God does not need any encomiums from man, a mere thing of His creation. He does not need to be praised. He is above all praise. So states the Qur'an. Prayer is intended to purify the individual himself and stimulate in him the sense of service to others or to enable him, in the words of the Prophet, to show affection to the Family of God. In fact, according to the Qur'an, prayer offered as a matter of mere formality is no prayer at all. Asks the Qur'an :

Hast thou marked him who beliest Faith ?
 He it is who thrusteth away the orphan
 And urges not others to feed the poor.
 Fie on those who engage themselves in prayer,
 But are heedless of what they pray ;
 Who make a show of devotion,
 Yet refuse help to the needy. (Q. 107 : 1-7)

The Qur'an makes it clear that prayer by itself is not a pious action, if it does not generate in the person offering prayer the sense of service to others. Observes the Qur'an :

There is no piety in turning your faces towards the East or the West. But he is pious who believeth in God, and the day of recompense and in the 'malayik' (or

forces of Nature) and the scriptures, and the prophets, who for the love of God disburseth his wealth to his kindred, and to the orphans, and the needy, and the way-farer and those who ask, and-for redeeming the slave, who observeth prayer, and payeth the poor-rate, and who is of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have engaged in them, and endure in patience poverty, sickness and perils — these are they who are staunch in their faith, and these are they who truly fear the Lord. (Q. 2 : 177)

It will thus be seen that Islam does not treat religion as an exclusively personal affair. Religion has to develop the human mind to spiritualize his activity in what is now-a-days regarded as the secular sphere and thus help him bend his energy or movement in life, whatever the field of thought and activity, to subserve the interest of unity in life, and thereby advance the cause of civilization.

In my next lecture, I shall trace the interaction of the twin principles of movement and unity in the field of ethics as presented by Islam.

LECTURE IV

ETHICS OF ISLAM

In the three lectures delivered so far, I have tried to suggest that the culture which Islam aims to promote is to be a reflection of the harmony which prevails in the divine working of the Universe and has necessarily to conform to the twin principles of Movement and Unity at work therein, one co-operating with the other in a manner conducive to individual happiness, as well as, to the corporate happiness of mankind as a whole. It is this interaction which we have now to notice not merely in the field of ethics as we have to do today, but in two other major fields of life to be brought under review in subsequent lectures, the field of economy and the field of polity or governance.

Speaking of ethics today, I may at the very outset make it clear to you that the Scripture of Islam, the Qur'an, is essentially a code of human conduct. That is the claim which the Book itself advances. It is meant to offer guidance to those who seek it. The ethical code of the Qur'an differs from abstract ethics in this that it purports to possess a religious sanction for those who choose to follow it, and covers a wider field of activity than what is envisaged by the latter. This fact does not, however, divest it of its value to those who may fight shy of religion. For, however, wide and deep the religious character of its back-ground, the line of conduct delineated by the Qur'an is to be endorsed in action by a rational approach to it, and is on that account a subject for consideration even by those who may not believe in any established religion, but who, nevertheless, dislike anarchy in thought and action, and recognise the need for some standard of conduct to govern their daily activity. To such it may be told that the essential purpose of the Qur'an is to develop in man a mind the primary function of which is to enable him to live at peace with himself and at peace with his world of external relations, although in so doing he is to serve a deeper purpose as well.

This wider applicability, which is beyond the purview of abstract ethics or any exclusively secular concept of life, is

warranted by the notion maintained by the Qur'an that death is not the end of life, but that, on the other hand, it is a gateway to a new sphere of life, marking a further stage in the making of man. "From state to state shall ye, assuredly, be carried forward" is the vista of possibilities disclosed, and the life to follow is conditioned by the life already lived. The ultimate purpose is perfection of man. It is this purpose which has to govern the character of the life one has to live in the present. The mind which the Qur'an aims to build is, therefore, to view in one sweep the entire course of human life, the present and what is to follow, and treat it as a single entity, and adjust its movement accordingly. "Your creation and your resurrection are but like a single moment," says the Qur'an.

The cultural process recommended by the Qur'an, as already explained in a previous lecture, is summed up in but a simple directive: "Amanu wa amalas Salihati", "Believe and work righteously." The line of action suggested is that one has to grow conscious of certain basic truths of life and to see that whatever one thinks or does is in conformity with them. These verities are expressed in the form of a few doctrinal beliefs which every Muslim has to profess and earnestly attempt to implement in his activity.

Firstly, one has to believe in the unity of God, by recognising that the entire Universe, both visible and invisible, and everything therein owes its existence to one Supreme Being and is sustained by Him, through certain forces of His creation styled 'malaik'. As a corollary to this, one has to accept the idea that the Universe and everything therein are created with a definite purpose, and that this purpose has a special relevance to the life of man and implies a specific message to mankind as a whole. One has, therefore, to believe that such a message — *Ad-Din*, the way of life, as it is called by the Qur'an — has been revealed, from time to time, in every part of the world and to every section of mankind, through godly men styled 'mursalin' or message-bearers or prophets, the last in the line being Muhammad — Peace on him! — through whom this message has been re-affirmed in its final form. Lastly, one has to believe in a life hereafter. The present life is to serve as a preparation for what is to follow. The two phases of life are to carry man further onward from state to state toward perfection.

Such are the fundamental beliefs which one has to entertain in Islam and express in righteous activity. At the cultural plane, or in the process of implementing them, these beliefs, are to develop in man a living sense of God to help him live a life of peace, peace within and peace without, peace in one's own self, and peace in one's relations with the external world around him, in order that mankind might live together, in the words of the Prophet of Islam, as "a family of God" (Bukhari), or as "a fold, every member of which shall be a keeper or shepherd unto every other and be accountable for the welfare of the fold" (Bukhari). **To so live is to live in Islam. In other words, the cultural process in Islam is to develop in man a sense of inward peace operating for peace among mankind, a sense of peace which shall keep him company in the life hereafter as well. The stress is on the perfection of the individual through which the perfection of society is to be sought.**

How is this end to be achieved? According to the Qur'an, man has a dual responsibility to discharge. One is in relation to himself, the other in relation to his external world. The one is to acknowledge in thought and action what is styled as "Haq Allah" or the rights of God in man or what is due to God; the other is to acknowledge in like manner "Haq an Nas" or the rights of the external world of creation or what is due to it. The former has to express itself in a process of self-development — physical, intellectual and moral. In other words, man's primary responsibility is to invite God, so to say, exercise His right to dwell in the individual and urge him to use properly the balance set in his nature in all that he thinks and does in life. The idea is in conformity with the Quranic exhortation: "Believers! If ye help God, God will help you, and set your feet firm." The other responsibility lies in developing social conscience and in caring for others. This is respecting in one's life and activity the rights of others. The two terms may as well be styled as "obligations to one's self" and "obligations to society." The two types of responsibilities are not to be regarded as individually exclusive. They are merely two facets of one and the same attitude towards life, of the same activity proceeding from it and signify the character of the mind one has to develop. It is this mind which matters in determining responsibility for every human action. "Action rests on motives," says the Prophet, because motive is an index to the mind or to the manner in

which the mind chooses to exercise the balance set in his nature. It is why great emphasis is laid on purity of motives. And this purity is promoted by a proper exercise of the "balance" set in human nature by blending the 'Haq Allah' with the 'Haq an Nas' or the 'obligations to self' with the 'obligations to society', or by identifying one's own interests with the interests of the world at large. This is Amal-i-Saleh or righteous work.

The culture of Islam is but an expression of this process. The directive inspiring the process is summed up in the words of the Prophet. "Respect the ways of God and be affectionate to the family of God." The obligations to one's self and the obligations to others are here placed side by side to form integral aspects of every human activity in life. Whatever one's role either in one's family circle, or in society at large, or even in his private closet, one has to be mindful of this dual responsibility. To be so mindful is 'Khair' or 'good', and not to be so mindful is 'sharr' or 'evil'. The distinction is to be upheld in every sphere of life's activity — physical, intellectual, social, economic and political. It is this distinction which underlies also the principle distinguishing the 'halal', the permissible or the lawful, from the 'haram' or unlawful or impermissible. The distinction applies to individual, as well as, to corporate life, and cuts across both Haq Allah and Haq an-Nas. Righteous work in the context of the commandment, "Believe and work righteously", has no other meaning for man except to bear this distinction in mind in all activity, whether it concerns his own self or his relations with his fellow beings, or his conduct towards dumb creatures who also are to be included in the family of God. The personal virtues of kindness, purity, chastity, love, affection, truth, respect for covenants, neighbourliness, tolerance, forbearance, forgiveness, trustworthiness, justice, mercy and the like are not mere luxuries to be indulged in at convenience but are qualities which have to be cultivated in the interests of one's inward peace and of peaceful relations between man and man. And the opposite qualities such as falsehood, and all the weaknesses of the tongue, and suspicion and jealousy, hatred, hard-heartedness, indecency, fornication, adultery, dishonesty, treachery, deceit and hypocrisy, spite, defection, unfaithfulness, intolerance, and racial and religious prejudice and exploitation of the weak,

which work for the disintegration of society, are regarded by Islam not only as vices but as positive sins, and are therefore not merely to be strenuously avoided, but firmly discountenanced.

Such is the wide interpretation given by the Qur'an to Amal-i-Saleh or righteous work — work that helps man to live at peace with himself and at peace with his fellow beings and the rest of creation. To so live is to live in Islam which itself means 'Peace' — peace, realized in the devotion of all our faculties to the Will of God which is nothing but the law of life devised in His infinite goodness to work for harmony in life. The duty of man is to see that every little act of his conforms to this law of harmonious living. That is devotion to the highest in life or devotion to God. Directs the Qur'an: "Say: Verily my prayers, and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah" (or the purposes of life fixed by God).

Life thus viewed, every action of man assumes a spiritual significance. It is this significance which distinguishes Amal-i-Saleh from every other form of human activity. The spirit underlying it, whatever the field of expression, the Haq Allah or Haq-an-Nas, is the result of a harmonious inter-action of the twin spiritual faculties in man — the sense of God, and the sense of fellow-feeling. It is this, which supplies the emotional background to the display in every situation of a third faculty, the sense of "balance set in his nature" — essentially an intellectual force — and gives to the resultant action the quality of righteousness which the Qur'an speaks of. To pursue the path of righteousness or of Amal-i-Saleh is in reality to respect the ways of God, the Sunnat-Allah, and to show affection to the *Ayal Allah* or the Family of God. It is along this path that we meet the noble order of individuals, the Salehin, the Muttaqin, the Sabirin, the Ulul Absar and the Ulul Albab and the rest of the noble types of men and women mentioned in my previous lecture who form the very salt of the earth. Whenever the devout Muslim raises his voice in prayer to God to say: "show us the right path, the path of those whom Thou hast blessed," it is this path of true righteousness or Amal-i-Saleh that he desires to be shown, and guided therein.

The highest aim which a nation or community has, on the analogy of the individual, to aspire to is not material or political superiority over others, as seems to have had a fascination for ambitious people throughout history. The very idea of a distinction on this basis between one community and another is excluded from the concept of international life favoured of Islam, the concept of a "fold" every member of which shall be a shepherd or keeper unto every other." The criterion of superiority must lie in the character of the endeavour a community makes to prove truly useful to every other, an aspect of the Islamic culture which I shall revert to in my last lecture dealing with Islamic polity. Of all the divine qualities which man has to imbibe so as to reach this state of mind and promote for himself peace within and peace without, the quality which calls for particular attention in the context of human relations is the quality of forgiveness. The Quran's lays special stress on the development of this quality in man. This is its perennial theme. Of course, the Qur'an does not call upon man to love his enemy. That may be unnatural. But it certainly calls on him to exercise forgiveness. That will elevate him spiritually and possibly bring the enemy round to the right way of relationship with him. Observes the Qur'an:

"Good and evil are not alike. Return evil with what is good and you will see that he between whom and thyself was enmity, shall be as though he were a warm friend. But none attains to this except the steadfast in patience and none attains to it except the most highly minded. (Q. 41 : 34-35)

The Qur'an does not discourage retaliation altogether. But wherever it is permitted, it has done so in the interest of security of life. But it may be noted that wherever such permission is given, there is always the rider going with it, that forgiveness is a better procedure and that it is graceful to do good to those who wrong you.

If you at all retaliate, then retaliate to the extent that ye were injured; but if ye can endure patiently, best will it be for those who patiently endure. Endure then with patience. But thy patient endurance must be sought in none but God. (Q. 16 : 126-127)

And whose beareth wrongs with patience and forgiveth — this verily is highmindedness. (Q. 42 : 43)

There is no doubt that religion and law have prescribed punishment for wrong-doing for the safety of society. This is necessary. But the thought of punishment is entertained or tolerated for the simple reason that a lesser evil should operate as a preventive of a greater evil. That is the object of punishment from a purely religious standpoint. It is a measure of correction and a sign of mercy. Mercy according to Islam is to be tempered at times with justice in the interest of a balanced life, since otherwise mercy may degenerate into morbid sentimentality and result in imbalance and prove injurious to life. Hence it is that retaliation is allowed by Islam, although, it prefers forgiveness. The Qur'an does not treat ethics and law as separate departments of life. It treats them together. In the first place, it calls upon man to develop the talent for forgiveness. In the second place, it keeps open the door for retaliation in inevitable contingencies, cautioning, however, that retaliation should not err on the side of excess, as that would be decided injustice.

And those who, when a wrong is done them, redress themselves — yet let the recompense of evil be only a like evil — but he who forgiveth and worketh reform in the wrong-doer, shall be rewarded by God Himself, for He loveth not those who act unjustly. And there shall be no way open against those who, after being wronged, retaliate; but there shall be a way open against those who unjustly wrong others, and act insolently in the earth in disregard of justice. A grievous punishment doth await them. And whose beareth wrong with patience and forgiveth, this verily is high-mindedness. (Q. 42 : 39-43)

The emphasis in these verses is on forgiveness. The door of retaliation is necessarily kept open; but the way to righteousness lies primarily through forgiveness. The Qur'an does not regard retaliation as a virtue: it calls it a "like evil"; and surely an evil can never be a virtue. The door is kept open for it, lest a greater evil follow. The forgiver is here regarded as a 'musleh' or one who effects reform in another's life,

To sum up, the ethical code recommended by Islam, if observed in the right spirit, is intended to bring to him who observes it not merely the inward peace that he needs but also the peace which he needs equally in his external relations, and pave the way to the development of an integrated personality for him such as may take him forward, as the Qur'an affirms, 'from state to state' in the scale of life. Every movement of his, whatever the field of activity, will then have to represent a harmonious inter-action of the twin laws of life at work in nature, the law of movement and the law of unity in life to which one has to conform for a life of peace and progress, not merely for himself but for mankind at large.

But this is by no means an easy task. Yet in the interests of an integrated life, both for the individual and human society, it will have to be pursued. "O Allah! make Islam most pleasing to me" is one of the prayers recommended for invocation by the Prophet of Islam. A very brief prayer! But how great is the responsibility which the suppliant is called upon to bear! He is to ask for the path of Islam to be smoothed for him — the path of Islam which is the path of devotion, of strenuous struggle against evil and of bringing our own will into accord with the Supreme Will, or of devoting all our talents to the service of the highest in life. He asks for a life disciplined in the ways of Allah or the laws intrinsic in our nature working for peace. It is a duty in the discharge of which few there are who can claim not to have faltered. Yet, a true Muslim is to ask of God to make such a trying task most pleasing to him.

It is towards this end that every prayer of Islam is directed. Every wish expressed therein is to be rooted in the love of God and has to envisage the welfare of one's own self, both material and spiritual, linked to the welfare of every other. I propose to close my discourse of today by reciting in their English translation a few of these prayers as seem to me pertinent to the occasion. They will give you an idea of the mind which Islamic ideology aims to build for man: They are all taken from the *Hisn-i-Hisin*. The rendering is my own.

"O Allah! I ask of thee steadfastness in every goodly pursuit. I ask of Thee the intent for good action and the power to thank Thee for Thy benevolence and to

render Thee devoted service. I ask of Thee the tongue that speaketh truth, and the mind that erreth not and the gift of true fellow-feeling. I seek Thy refuge from the evil of everything that Thou knoweth ; and I ask of Thee the good that lieth in everything that Thou knoweth ; and I seek Thy refuge from every sin of which Thou hast knowledge. And verily Thou knoweth all that we cannot know."

" O Allah ! Improve my spiritual life, for that is to be my refuge ; and purify my material life for I have to live it, and prepare me for the life to which I shall have to return ; and keep me alive till it is good for me to be alive and call me back when it is good for me to die. Lengthen my life in every goodly state, and turn death into bliss before any evil state supervenes."

" O Allah ! I seek Thy refuge from any wrong that I may do to others, and from any wrong that others may do to me ; from any harshness that I may show to others and from any harshness that others may show to me ; and from any sin that Thou mayst not forgive."

" O Allah ! I ask of Thee a pure life, and a pure death, and a returning unto Thee that shall not call for reprehension or disgrace."

" O Allah ! I seek Thy refuge from misleading others, and from being misled by others ; from betraying others into error, and from being betrayed into error by others ; from doing any wrong to others, and from being wronged by others ; and from drawing others into ignorance, and from being drawn into ignorance by others."

And here is an intensely subjective note :

" O Allah ! pour light into my heart ! Pour it into my eyes, and into my ears. Pour it to my right and pour it to my left. Pour it in front of me and behind me and give me light. Pour light into my nerves and into my flesh and into my blood, and into my hair and into

Verily, God is the sole sustainer ! It is We who apportion to them their subsistence in the life of this world.
(Q. 43 : 31)

The Qur'an points out that this function of God is discharged under a definite plan. Firstly, everything is furnished close at hand for every living creature with all that its particular nature demands for its existence in every changing condition. Take the case of man. The moment he takes his birth, the food that he needs provides itself for him in the exact form that his condition demands, and is provided very close to him. The mother, in the intensity of her affection for the new-born babe, hugs him to her bosom, and at that very place, the child finds the store-house of his nourishment. And then his graded needs are attended to by Nature in a manner agreeable to the successive changes in his condition. In the beginning, the stomach of a child is so tender that a highly diluted form of milk is needed for him. That is why the milk of the mother, even as among other animals, is very thin to begin with. But as the child grows and his stomach becomes stronger as time passes, the milk of the mother thickens ; so much so, that as soon as the stage of his early infancy is over and his stomach develops the capacity to digest the normal food agreeable to this stage, the breasts of the mother dry up. This is the sign of divine providence to indicate that the child should no longer depend upon milk but should be able to try other forms of food. Says the Qur'an :

With pain his mother beareth him ; with pain she bringeth him forth ; and his bearing and his weaning cover thirty months. (Q. 49 : 15)

This is the first fact of life to which the Qur'an draws its attention, the fact that everything is provided to every object in a methodical form peculiar to the nature of each.

Secondly, the Qur'an points out that the things most needed in life are the things most profusely provided, and similarly, those needed in particular climes or only in particular situations are given local habitation and are limited in quantity.

my skin, and into my tongue and into my soul, and increase my light, and transform me into light, and surround me with light. O Allah Bless me with light."

Sublime as is the aspiration expressed here, Islam requires the aspirant to transmit the light vouchsafed to him to those of his fellow beings who may be struggling in darkness.

Hence the invocation, at the society level, in which everyone present may join.

"O Allah ! Make us guides in the path of life, and keep us guided ourselves therein, neither going astray, nor leading astray."

This is the way to let the law of movement in life subserve the cause of unity or of united happiness for mankind.

Tomorrow, I shall try to trace the working of the twin principles in the field of economics as recommended by the Qur'an.

ISLAMIC ECONOMY

Speaking today on the economic plan of life recommended by the Qur'an, I shall have to invite you to trace, even in the field of economics, the working of the twin principles we have been discussing — the principle of Movement and the principle of Unity in life. In approaching this problem, we have to keep in view the Prophet's vision of mankind as a single family, the family of God, of a "fold every member of which shall be a shepherd or keeper unto every other." Under such a concept, exploitation in every form becomes impermissible. This is one of the basic postulates on which rests the economic order of life for mankind proposed by the Qur'an. Another basic postulate which the Qur'an advances and which we have to keep in view is this that "all that there is in the earth and the heavens belongs to God" who is the head of the family. No plan of production and distribution is valid in Islam unless it agrees with this assumption. Man is given the freedom to extract out of the earth all the good things of life that he needs. But the stipulation is that all that is produced is to be pooled and made available to one and all. It should be enjoyed not merely by those who have exerted themselves to extract the good things of life from the earth, but by those as well who, for one reason or another, are incapable of exertion. The condition is implicit in the Islamic concept of mankind as but a single family. This being so, the function of maintaining the economy of this family is to be a joint affair between God, as the head of the family, on the one hand, and the members thereof, on the other. It is why the Qur'an makes it definitely clear that it is the function of God to provide under His scheme of life the means of subsistence for every member of the family, and that it is the function of every member thereof to reach the means so provided and make use of them in the spirit of thankfulness to the head of the family by distributing them in a manner equitable to every member.

Referring to the divine part of this responsibility, observes the Qur'an :

There is no moving thing on earth whose nourishment dependeth not on God. (Q. 11: 8)

And no one thing is there, but with Us are its store-houses ; and We send it not but in settled measure. (Q. 15 : 21)

With Him, everything is by measure. (Q. 13 : 8)

The provisions of life thus afforded, Nature is careful enough to endow every object of creation with a talent appropriate to each, or such as shall enable it to reach and make use of its means of subsistence. This talent is styled 'Hidayat'. The Qur'an refers to several forms of it. Here attention may be drawn only to that primary form of it which opens out for every object of creation appropriate avenue of nourishment and which stimulates its wants and directs it to the means of its satisfaction.

This directing force in its primary aspect, says the Qur'an, is nothing but the instinctive urge of nature, or the talent inherent in sense-perception. It is this inward force which actuates a thing to be drawn to its means of sustenance. The offspring of a human being or of an animal, the moment it is delivered from the womb of its mother, instinctively feels that its means of sustenance is in the breasts of its mother and forthwith draws itself to it. The moment it touches the nipple of its mother's breasts, it automatically starts the process of sucking. We often see how the kitten, the moment they are delivered, and even before they open their eyes and the mother is still licking at them, rush themselves to the breasts of their mother. The infant which has just come out into life and which has not as yet benefited by its external world, instinctively realizes that the breasts of its mother are the store-house of its nourishment, and promptly reaches its mouth to them. It is its instinct which guides the infant to its nourishment, before it is guided to it by its senses.

The next stage in this scheme of direction is that of the senses, and of the reasoning faculty. The lower animals, though they do not probably possess the intellect which helps reasoning and reflection, have in them the talent of sense perception to the extent they need in their particular sphere of life and by means of which they regulate and satisfy their wants of life, their needs of habitation, food, reproduction and safety. But

this talent in them is not uniform. On the other hand, it is given to each in proportion to the demands of its life. The sense of smell is very acute in the ant, for, it is through this sense that it has to fetch its food. The sight of the eagle or of the vulture is very keen, for otherwise, it cannot locate its food from on high.

The provision of 'Hidayat' in man takes a higher form. In addition to instinct and sense perception, man is endowed with the faculty of reason and reflection. This talent he has to use not merely in seeking out the provisions of life provided by Nature, but to make a proper use of them. In his quest for his means of subsistence, God Himself offers cooperation, if it is earnestly sought.

Ye believers ! help me, and I will help you and set your feet firm. (Q. 47 : 8)

In fact, as an earnest of Divine cooperation, states the Qur'an,

He hath subjected to you all that there is in the heavens and all that there is in the earth : All is from Him. Verily, herein are signs for those who reflect. (Q. 45 : 12)

Asks God :

What think ye ? That which ye sow —
Is it ye who cause its upgrowth or do
We cause it to spring forth ? (Q. 56 : 63-64)

The answer is furnished by the Qur'an

It is God who hath created the heavens and the earth, and sendeth down water from the heavens, and so bringeth forth the fruits for your food : And He hath subjected to you the ships, so that by His command, they pass through the sea ; and He hath subjected the rivers to you : and He hath subjected to you the sun and the moon in their constant courses : and He hath subjected the day and the night to you : of everything which ye ask Him, giveth He to you ; and if ye would reckon up the favours of God, ye cannot count them ! (Q. 14 : 32-34)

The acquisition of the means of subsistence in which God promises to cooperate with man covers, in the Quranic sense, every human effort to provide oneself honestly with what are called the good things of life, and covers every activity aiming at material comfort, or what is termed in the language of economics "production of wealth". The Islamic plan of economy makes it obligatory on every man to be engaged in some occupation for which he is fitted by his talent or aptitude (Musnad ; Tabrani) and looks upon idleness with distinct disfavour. It does not approve of even a woman keeping idle at home. "It will do her good," says the Prophet, "if instead of keeping idle, she atleast plies the spinning wheel" (Kunuzul Haqaiq). Islam likewise condemns beggary and parasitism. "It is better for you", says the Prophet, "to work for your livelihood than to appear on the day of judgement with the scar of beggary impressed on your face" (Abu Dawud). The case of those who are infirm or are incapable of earning their livelihood stands however, on a different footing. The case of such people is a charge on the state. As for the rest, it is the concern of the state to provide opportunities for suitable occupation to every member of society, and help him or her to produce 'wealth'. But the wealth produced is to be distributed in a manner which shall preclude the possibility of even a single member of society feeling the pinch of poverty. Such is the simple framework of economy recommended for man by Islam.

The problem of the poor, of those who cannot earn their living through infirmity or old age or for any similar reason, has been an eternal problem of human society. The utmost that could be thought of prior to the advent of Islam was "charity." But Islam would not leave such helpless people to the vagaries of charity. It gives them the right to a share in the wealth of the community. Whatever is produced or extracted from the earth is not the result entirely of human labour, asserts the Qur'an repeatedly. God also has a hand in its production as pointed out a moment ago. The very forces of nature which man presses to his service are clear signs of divine co-operation. God is thus a co-worker with man; in fact, the prime worker. As co-worker, therefore, a share of every produce must lie at God's disposal. And this the Qur'an assigns to those who cannot make an independent living of their own — the orphans and the unprotected widows, the infirm and the

decrepit, the travellers in distress and people who have been deprived of their means of sustenance or opportunities of work through natural calamities over which they have had no control, the slaves seeking freedom and the debtors who cannot afford to pay off their debts. They are all regarded by the Qur'an as a trust of God, in as much as the maintenance of every being brought into existence by God is declared to be a divine responsibility. The Qur'an therefore makes it obligatory on those who earn or produce to pass on to the state a specific portion of their savings as God's share to the indigent among His creatures. The Quranic way of expression is: "Give away a part of your wealth in the way of God" (fi sabil-lillah), and "for the sake or for the love of God" ('ala hub-bihi). "And what hath come to you" asks the Qur'an "That ye expend not for the cause of God, since the wealth of the heavens and the Earth truly belongs to God only" (Q. 58: 10) So great is the stress laid on this levy called 'Zakat', that the compulsory injunction of prayer is always clubbed together with the insistence on the payment of this levy; so much so, that when in the time of the first Kalif, Abu Bakr, some of the Muslim Arab tribes refused to pay Zakat to the state exchequer, he had to threaten a 'jihad' against them till they yielded.

The care of the weak and the economically depressed members of society is thus a state responsibility in Islam. The Quranic plan is to afford to every member of a state at least a minimum of human comfort, for, in the words of the Prophet the birth-right of "every human being is a house to live in, a piece of cloth to hide his nakedness, a loaf of bread and a jug of water" (Tirmizi) — words meant but to emphasise that the economy of a state should be so planned as to allow to every citizen the opportunity of living a life free from want. Indeed the principle in its wider application applies to the basic needs of subsistence of every living object living within the jurisdiction of man, so much so that Kalif Umar once had to issue a circular to all the governors under him to be mindful of this primary duty of the state of securing for every individual life its basic comfort, and observed therein that "even were a dog should die in some remote corner of the state of hunger or thirst, he, as head of the State would, on the day of judgment, be held responsible for its death." So serious is the view which Islam takes of the responsibility of a state in the

matter of providing the means of subsistence to every one under its care.

While guaranteeing thus the necessary immediate relief to those who could not make a living of their own, the Quranic plan allows full freedom of initiative and honest enterprise to the rest to produce wealth and raise, short of extravagance, their standard of living by all legitimate means, while sparing a portion of their wealth for the well-being of the human society at large, and this over and above the payment of 'Zakat' or compulsory levy that should go to the common exchequer for the care of those who need greater attention than the rest. The Qur'an therefore prohibits all forms of economic exploitation in commercial transactions, but permits every form of free enterprise, large or small, individual or collective which has no unsocial strings attached to it. Further, as a deterrent to all urges of exploitation or aggrandisement, the Quranic plan, while assuring every citizen the fullest opportunity of acquiring wealth, makes it impossible for wealth to accumulate in but few hands, and this it does in diverse ways including the enforcement of a law of inheritance which makes it impossible for a property left behind by a deceased to go to any single or specific member of the deceased's family. It is distributed among all near relations — wife, or husband, sons and daughters, mother and father, failing these, collateral near relations. Indeed, if the property is large enough to keep every relation-in-law in comfort with the share accruing to him or to her, a portion of the property is recommended to be willed away "in the way of God" (fi sabil-lillah) or for charitable purposes.

"Within the Western World", Prof. H. A. R. Gibb observes "Islam still maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites. Opposed equally to the anarchy of European nationalism and the regimentation of Russian Communism, it has not yet succumbed to the obsession with the economic side of life which is characteristic of present day Europe and present day Russia alike. Its social ethics has been admirably summed up by Professor Massignon: "Islam has the merit of standing for a very equalitarian conception of the contribution of each citizen by tithe to the resources of the community; it is hostile to unrestricted exchange, to

banking capital, to state loans, to indirect taxes on objects of prime necessity, but it holds to the rights of the father and the husband and the wife to private property, and to commercial capital. Here again it occupies an intermediate position between the doctrines of bourgeois capitalism, and Bolshevik communism.”—*Whither Islam?*

In defining the relation that should subsist between the employer and the employed, Islam takes particular care to uphold the dignity of labour, and protect its interests. In the time of the Prophet, labour was of two kinds — the slave, and the free. The slaves were mostly composed of captives and of those who had sold or mortgaged their freedom in moments of economic distress, and had to live a life of great discomfort. The Prophet turned his first attention to them. This system of slavery was prevalent in one form or another throughout the then known world, and was such an integral part of the economic life of the Arabs that it was not possible to set it aside at one stroke. What the Prophet therefore attempted was to humanize the system and prepare the ground for its total abolition.

To begin with, he made the bondsman a member of the family of his master, and gave him several privileges including the right to own property, and redeem himself if he so chose to. “Those who happen to be your bondsmen”, ran the Prophet’s directive, “are your own brothers. It is meet that he who is in authority over his brother should feed him with the food that he himself eats, and clothe him with the stuff that he himself wears. Do not ask him to do a thing which is not physically possible for him to do; and if such a thing is to be done, do you yourself assist him in his task.” Not merely this, every means was devised to procure his freedom. For every little moral lapse on the part of the rich or of those who maintained slaves, or for every small dereliction of religious duty, the atonement prescribed was the redemption of a slave. And where the chances of lapses were few, the urge for one’s spiritual uplift was invoked to help the process of redemption for the slave. “What is (spiritual) ascent?”, asks the Qur’an, and itself gives the answer: “It is to redeem a slave.” “Nothing pleases God,” adds the Prophet, “better than to free a slave.”

The cumulative effect of the Prophetic care for the slave was so great that slavery had to lose its sting, and restore the slave to a place of honour in society. The story of Islam furnishes examples of individuals drawn from the slave class rising even to the headship of Muslim states. Indeed, one of the loved companions of the Prophet, Bilal, who had the privilege to call the Prophet and the faithful five times a day from the Mosque at Madina to 'salat' and 'falah', to the path of 'prayer' and of 'progress' and who was to add to this early morning call the rider, "prayer is better than sleep", this first "Muazzin" of Islam, was a redeemed Abyssinian slave.

The free labourer was a subject of equal concern to the Prophet. "Pay the labourer his wage before his perspiration dries", was his injunction. He regarded every worker as 'Habiballah' or 'friend' of God. (Baihaqi) The story is told of a labourer who happened to pay a visit to the Prophet. His hands were deeply darkened and scarred. Asked as to the cause of this disfigurement, the man said that he worked for his living in a quarry and had to handle a heavy hammer and a rough rope. The Prophet looked at him tenderly, and taking both his hands into his own kissed them, and exclaimed: "These hands will get into heaven!" The entire trend of the Prophetic directions touching the subject of labour is one of strict enjoining on the employer to be fair and considerate in his dealings with the employed and never to be tempted to exploit his position.

The basic purpose underlying all these arrangements is to let man use his earnings or his wealth with a steady eye on the twin obligations enjoined on him by the Qur'an, viz. the Haq Allah and the Haq al Ibad, or obligations to self, and obligations to society. The standard of living recommended by the Qur'an is not to be expressed in extravagant material comfort or in self-indulgence. On the other hand, it is to be an expression of satisfaction of the normal material needs of life blending into the spiritual by foregoing extravagant comfort "for the sake of God" or for the comfort of the comfortless. That is "righteous living" in Islam, the only human standard of living acceptable to God or the conscience of humanity at large.

Such is the basic principle of the economy which the Qur'an desires should underlie every plan of economy that might be

devised for the welfare of mankind at large — a principle which disallows economic exploitation in every form, and unhealthy competition in the production of wealth, and argues the need of establishing, by the common consent of all the nations of the world, a central agency to pool, in a manner fair to each, their varied resources for the good of mankind as a whole, and thereby open the way to the development of mankind into a truly single family or a fold, as the Prophet of Islam terms it, "every member of which shall be a shepherd unto every other."

I shall revert to this particular aspect of the economic problem of human life in my last lecture tomorrow which will deal with the principle of governance recommended by the Qur'an.

LECTURE VI

ISLAMIC POLITY

In today's lecture, the last in the series, I propose to trace the field of polity, as recommended by the Qur'an, the same interaction of the two fundamental principles of life, of Movement and Unity, which I have so far tried to trace in the field of ethics and economy. As I have pointed out, the primary requisite of any social order which aims to embody in its programme of life the two principles in harmonious relation to each other is the creation in every member thereof of a mind which gives to the world its Salehin, its Muttaqin, its Muqsitin and Muflehin, its Sadiqin and Siddiqin and the rest who, developing the sense of God in them, work for peace within and peace without, peace in one's own self so essential to the development of an integrated life, and peace in one's relations with one's external world. It is to a band of people with a mind so moulded, the comrades or companions of the Prophet and those who followed in their footsteps, that the Qur'an chose to address the appellation of 'Ummathan Wasata', a community standing midway between two extremes or living a balanced life and serving as a pattern unto others even as the Prophet was a pattern unto them. The term but denotes the character which this mind has to assume on the organizational or corporate plane.

It was this Ummatan Wasata which the Prophet organized to a state, the very first state in Islam, — an organization which was intended to serve in the fullness of time as a nucleus of a world order. When I say that the Prophet organized his followers into a state, I do not mean to suggest that this was any basic aim of the Prophetic mission. A growing community has at one stage or other to assume the functions of a state where there was already no state to discharge them. What I mean is that he had time only to lay the foundations of it by giving them the requisite training in righteous thought and living in an organized manner, leaving the task of raising an appropriate edifice thereon to those coming after, in accordance with their varying needs and situations. His primary or immediate concern was to develop the personality of the individual and equip him with the talent to live in peace with himself and in peace with his external world of relations. And this, he did in the

hope that with the creation of the right type of men and women, a political structure appropriate to the corporate living of such individuals would evolve itself as a matter of course.

From the circumstances of its birth and its early nourishment, it is by no means easy to designate this state by any one of the terms applied to the different forms of government known to history. It was certainly not theocracy; for here, there was no sacerdotal caste to exercise political authority under the immediate direction of God, a form of Government which prevailed particularly among the Israelites till the time of Saul. The Qur'an cannot countenance sacerdotalism in any form. The nascent state left behind by the Prophet did develop, during the regime of the first round of Khalifs, the 'Rashidin, certain distinct qualities foreshadowing in practice the leading aspects of a political and economic democracy; but in its attempt to give to its method of government a democratic touch, it would not accept the basic postulate of modern democracy that the sovereignty of a state vested in its people. The Qur'an proclaims that the sovereignty of the Earth belongs to God and to God alone. For that same reason, the new state could not be styled kingship either, much less a dictatorship, for, neither the Prophet nor the Khalifs (Rashidin) would assume a title specifically reserved for God, or claim the right to dictate. The Prophet had simply to follow, even as every other member of the organization, the law or regulations revealed to him from time to time, or as suggested themselves to him in consultation with his companions. A like attitude was observed by the Rashidin, although in their attempt to deal with new situations not covered specifically by either the Quranic regulations or the practice of the Prophet, they made a careful use of the principle of consultation favoured of the Qur'an, of regulating their affairs by 'counsel among themselves'. The principle is styled 'Ijtehad.' The body of people consulted by them, the 'Shura', were men of known integrity and experience enjoying the confidence of the people, the 'Ijma'.

How then are we to designate a state whose function was to maintain by democratic methods the supremacy of law, the basic part of which as laid down in the Qur'an was regarded as divinely ordained, in the framing of which its citizens had no

direct share, but to which in practice they owed sincere or willing allegiance as if they had themselves framed it for their good. The answer is to be sought in the specific purpose which this basic part of the State law had to serve. From its very nature, it was there essentially to supply a distinctive cultural background or a moral tone to the corporate life of the Ummat or the Muslim community. It was against this ideological background that all secular affairs were to be regulated, not by any theocratic machinery, but by counsel among its members. The form given to the new state in the time of the Rashidin was no doubt that of a democracy; but it was a democracy clearly distinguishable in its outlook and responsibility from the earlier types, the Athenian and the Roman, designed primarily in the interests of privileged classes. The voice of the demos composing the republic of Athens, for instance, had its counterpart in the "Ijma" or consensus of opinion among those who formed the Arabian republic. The difference lay in the sense of responsibility with which the voice of the people was exercised and the administration of the state was carried on. The responsibility of the people of the Arabian republic in giving their assent to any act of administration was in the first instance, no doubt, to themselves as in Athens, but it was to be coloured and directed by their responsibility to the law of life revealed through the Qur'an, in other words, by their sense of an ultimate responsibility to a higher power than themselves, viz. God, the true Sovereign of their state and the fountainhead of all their basic law. That sense had to govern the conduct of the 'Shura' or the body of the Khalif's counsellors, and the conduct of the Khalif himself, as of every officer of the state appointed by him in every department of administration.

The new republic of Arabia was thus a republic of God-conscious people and its administration was carried on, in accordance with the Quranic notions of justice and equity, by a band of Salehin, by men of known upright character, affording the fullest opportunity to every citizen to live an upright life. The mere fact that the background against which this republican life was sustained is traceable to the teachings of a religion cannot justify its being designated as a religious state or theocracy. In fact, no state, however professedly secular, can endure without some sort of an ethical or a spiritual background to its activity. Only, it has to keep the distinction clear

between the principles which form the background and the manner and method of putting them into execution. The latter is essentially a secular function, whereas the former is there to give a particular cultural or moral tone to it.

The distinction is implicit in the Quranic view of life which divides its function into the fulfilment of 'Haq Allah' and 'Haq an Nas', 'obligation to God' and 'obligation to society.' The former, the 'Haq Allah' which is intended to work for purity of mind and body, is primarily a **personal** concern of the individual, unless a deliberate public **disregard** of it should prove a source of nuisance to others and come under the purview of the state. The latter, the 'Haq an Nas' or **obligation to society**, on the other hand, forms the **essential jurisdiction of the state**. This relates largely to **secular affairs and secular relationships** between man and man and will have naturally to be regulated by secular means or **common-sense** methods of administration. The "Rashidin" in **view of** the nascent stage through which the 'Ummat' had to pass, did keep a form of patriarchal watch on the observance of the 'Haq Allah'. But this by no means constituted their office into a spiritual headship of the community. The Haq Allah and 'Haq an Nas' were binding on the Khalif, **as they were on any other members of society.**

Mark the view which Abu Bakr took of his office as the first Khalif of the new state. Said he in his very first address to his people :

"My fellowmen ! I call God to bear me out. I never had any wish to hold this office ; never aspired to possess it ; neither in secret nor in the open did I ever pray for it. I have agreed to bear this burden lest mischief raise its head. Else, there is no pleasure in leadership. On the other hand, the burden placed on my shoulders is such as I feel I have not the inherent strength to bear and so cannot fulfil my duties except with Divine help.

"You have made me your leader, although I am in no way superior to you. **Cooperate** with me when I go right ; correct me when I err ; obey me so long as I follow the commandments of God and his Prophet ; but turn away from me when I deviate."

It was an experiment in democracy which the first Khalif here promises to embark upon, inspired by an ever present sense of God in him. But he died within three years of his **accession** to the Khilafat. His work was taken up by 'Umar and energetically pursued. But even, he had not many years to give to the experiment. He was assassinated by a migrant from Persia in the 10th year of his regime. After him, came Usman followed by Ali, both of whom were assassinated in turn apparently as a sequence to partizan rivalry. It is these first four Khalifs who are styled the 'Rashidin', the rightly guided. The period covered by their Khilafat does not occupy more than thirty years. It is this period which may be called the period of democratic experiment in Islamic polity, the spirit underlying it rising to a climax in the time of 'Umar, and reaching its final subsidence in the assassination of Ali.

The state was regarded by the Rashidin as a trust from God to be run for the benefit of the people as a whole. No one had any special privilege attached to his person. The Khalif was at best the first among equals; so much so, that when food and cloth had to be rationed in Madina, he had but to receive his share just as an ordinary citizen. Every man and every women had the right to question him on any matter touching the state affairs. No one was above the law. 'Umar had once to appear before a subordinate judge to answer a charge. Similarly, Ali had to plead before a court a case of his against a Jew, and it was the Jew who was awarded the decree. The economic system of life formulated by the Qur'an laying a special emphasis on the uplift of the economically depressed under which a special levy was to be collected from the rich for the relief of the poor, was rigidly enforced by the state. The Quranic injunctions governing the status of women as economic units functioning in their own individual rights, were scrupulously respected and upheld. Security of life and of property, and freedom of conscience were guaranteed to non-Muslim minorities who were styled Zimmi, "The protected of God and the Prophet." "Beware! on the day of judgment" had the Prophet proclaimed. "I shall myself be the complainant against him who wrongs a Zimmi or lays on him a responsibility greater than he can bear or deprives him of anything that belongs to him." Indeed, so mindful was he of their welfare that a few moments before he expired, the thought of the Zimmi came to

him. He said: "Any Muslim who kills a Zimmi has not the slightest chance of catching even the faintest smell of Heaven. Protect them: They are my Zimmi." In a moment of like remembrance, Umar, as he lay assassinated, exclaimed: "To him who will be Khalif after me, I commend my wish and testament! The Zimmi are protected of Allah and the Prophet. Respect the covenants entered into with them, and when necessary fight for their rights and do not place on them a burden or responsibility which they cannot bear."

"When Jerusalem submitted to the Khaliph "Umar," states Sir Thomas Arnold in *The Preaching of Islam*, the following conditions were drawn up:

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the following are the terms of capitulation, which I Omar, the servant of God, the commander of the Faithful, grant to the people of Jerusalem. 'I grant them security of lives, their possessions, and their children, their churches, their crosses, and all that appertains to them in their integrity; and their lands and to all of them their religion. Their churches therein shall not be impoverished nor destroyed, nor injured from among them; neither their endowments, nor their dignity, and not a thing of their property; neither shall the inhabitants of Jerusalem be exposed to violence in following their religion; nor shall one of them be injured."

Adds Arnold:

"In company with the Patriarch, Omar visited the holy places, and it is said, while they were in the Church of the Resurrection, as it was the appointed hour of prayer, the Patriarch bade the Caliph offer his prayers there, but he thoughtfully refused saying that if he were to do so, his followers might afterwards claim it as a place of Muslim worship."

In the conduct of war, even as in the other spheres of activity, the Rashidin never lost sight of humanitarian considerations enjoined by the Qur'an. "The self-restraint of the conquerors and the humanity which they displayed in their cam-

paigns" observes Arnold, "must have excited profound respect and secured a welcome for an invading army that was guided by such principles of justice and moderation as were laid down by the Caliph, Abu Bakr, for the guidance of the first expedition into Syria :

"Be just ; break not your plighted faith ; mutilate none ; slay neither children, old men nor women ; injure not the date palm, nor burn it with fire, nor cut down any fruit-bearing tree ; slay neither flocks nor herds nor camels except for food ; perchance you may come across men who have retired into monasteries ; leave them and their works in peace."

The State organisation of the Rashidin which certainly displayed in that dark period of human history qualities such as those of a model welfare state, 'Ummatan Wasata', might have grown by now, had it had a free life, into a veritable "fold" of the Prophet's vision, indeed developed into a world-federation of autonomous communities, every constituent member whereof being a "shepherd or keeper unto every other". But that was not to be. The tragedy of Islam is that this tender plant was not allowed to grow. It was cut down by the hands of its own followers within a few years of the passing away of the Prophet, and replaced in the very name of his Faith by varying forms of despotism. But while it lasted, however brief the period of its existence, it functioned, at least during its brilliant moments, consciously as an Ummatan Wasata or model society.

It is not the purpose of my lecture to survey the march of events in the life of the Islamic peoples through the intervening centuries. The Arab State founded by the Prophet had under the Rashidin grown into an empire, lending to the office of the Khalif in post-Rashidinian epochs, in a varying degree, moments of glory and eclipse, eventually opening the door to the formation of an endless series of principalities and empires lasting for varying lengths of time. But the fact stands that the Rashidinian form was an isolated event, and very rarely was it given the opportunity to develop on its original lines. Monarchy, in one form or another, benevolent or otherwise, invariably supported by a feudal sub-structure, was even till

modern times the staple form of a state among Muslims, wherever found during this lengthy period.

These states had however one or two redeeming features about them. The supremacy of the basic law of Islam which, as I pointed out a few moments back, supplied a specific style of cultural background to the individual and corporate life of the Muslims, was and had to be maintained even by the most dominant despots who ever ruled over them. Another feature which continued to distinguish Muslim society even in the days of turmoil was the sense of social democracy which Islam had developed from the very beginning among the followers of the Faith. It is these two assets of Islam which notwithstanding the schisms to which it was subject, have given a continuity of existence to Islamic society through the ebbs and flows of their political history.

It is not, however, easy to visualise the future. The rise of geographical nationalities among Muslims everywhere, and the individual reaction of each of them to the influences exerted by the power blocks of the present-day world, have contributed in no small measure to a variety of internal tensions in the body of Islam. These are incidental to the stage of transition. The general trend among Muslims, in spite of the medievalism still fostered among them by the Ulama or doctors of religion, is to march abreast of the times, and in this, the ideology of Islam of 'saleh' or righteous society, if invoked in the right spirit, might enable them to give to their polity the stability that it needs at this hour, and make it a factor for progress and the peace of the world.

The prospect seems favourable. The world is now marching towards a democratic order of life for all mankind — a purpose so dear to the Qur'an. It has begun notwithstanding the impediments blocking the way, to socialize the resources of the earth — another purpose sponsored by the Qur'an. The world of science is unravelling for man the hidden forces of nature with intense avidity and pressing them into his service — a crying call issuing forth and reverberating from every corner of the Qur'an. There should, therefore, be no difficulty for Muslim countries in falling into line with these leading trends of the modern world. Should they do so with little reference

to their spiritual moorings which, as the Qur'an points out, are fixed in the very nature of man, in other words, just to advance their own interests, unmindful of the world purpose of the Qur'an, the well-being of all humanity, they will go the way the rest of the world are going and share the consequences. If on the other hand, they should evolve for their respective countries a system of democratic polity which should enable the 'Salehin' or the upright type among their people, to be at the helm of affairs in every sphere of administration, even as the Qur'an desires, a polity which shall enable them to cultivate on the group plane, the sense of God on which the Qur'an lays its supreme stress as the mainspring of all life-sustaining activity, even as they have to do on the individual plane, in other words, lay an even emphasis on the 'Haq Allah' and 'Haq An Nas' or obligations to themselves and obligations to mankind, they may still develop into an 'Ummatan Wasata', and serve as a balancing factor between the exaggerated opposites of the world of today.

Whether the Muslim countries will follow the ideology shaped for them by their Prophet now or in the days to come, it is not possible to state with an amount of certainty. But the ideology is there. It was meant not merely for those who followed the Prophet in his time, but for every one who cared to understand and appreciate it. The vision which the Prophet held before mankind of what they were really meant to be, by their very nature, was that of a fold every member of which was to function as a shepherd or a keeper unto every other and feel himself responsible for the welfare of the entire fold. That vision is there and I should think it is worthy of consideration by even those who do not profess his Faith. It is a vision of a democracy of a particular type, experimented by his followers only for a little while in the early days of Islam but which never was tried on any scale, large or small, by any nation till now. The present should be a moment of serious introspection for one and all. The democratic ideal originally mooted in Greece and which in its historic influence has gone to shape the political concepts of Europe has had quite an ample time to demonstrate its worth. It has been tried everywhere and still, it has not brought man nearer to peace. Evidently there is something radically wrong with it, and as long as what is basically wrong or inappropriate to organised life or harmful to it

is not removed from it, we cannot establish a truly democratic order either at the national plane or the international. The weakness of modern democracy, particularly of the parliamentary variety, is its system of franchise. I may ask those who might question this view of mine to lay their hands on their hearts and say to themselves from their own personal experiences whether the system of adult franchise anywhere, even in England which is the most advanced of democracies, gives to its legislature and its government the type of political leaders whom the Qur'an styles as 'Salehin' or those who lay an even stress on their interests and their interests of others, whether on the individual, national or international plane ?

The very idea of any one seeking election or of aspiring to any place of responsibility or a place offering power or influence is repugnant to Islam. The Prophet is definite on the point. Abu Musa, a companion of the Prophet narrates that he once came to the Prophet with two of his cousins. One of them requested the Prophet to send him out as Governor of some province. The other cousin also made a similar request. "By God" said the Prophet; "We do not appoint to the post of Governor any one who applies for it or who aspires for it" (Bukhari, Muslim and others). One must be called to an office on the basis of one's known worth, upright character and merit. How to devise a franchise system which shall give to every country at every stage of its administrative machinery the upright type, the Salehin, that we need to look after the affairs of human society, should engage the serious thought of the thoughtful in every country. It is not for me to point out that the taint of self-interest is noticeable everywhere both at the individual and national level, so much so that, neither has it been possible for the modern democracy to evolve an order of life where the interests of what are called minorities are respected and upheld with the same zest as the interests of the majorities are advanced, nor has it been possible to assure for the smaller nationalities, or the less advanced, the sense of security they need in the international sphere. How to improve the situation and develop the shepherd mind, which I have been speaking of, both for every individual and every nation, so that one may be a keeper unto every other, is a matter which should seriously engage the attention of every one at this hour. It is for the United Nations Organisation to consider

whether the approach which they have so far made to the problem of peace or of civilization does not call for a revision. The defect, for what I may say, in their approach has lain in the fact that each member nation has joined the organization with the consciousness that it is an entity in itself, a world apart from every other, and that it might, in self-interest, be well to avoid conflict by meeting each other through their representatives, and tolerating each other as long as it serves one's purposes. The essential urge is not to forge lasting happy relations, but to avoid or postpone the day of conflict.

Under such an arrangement, you may co-exist for a time ; but you will have to treat each other as a foreign nation, as something alien to each other. So long as this attitude persists, no matter how much money you may waste in placating each other by lavish entertainment of each other's representatives, you will simply be postponing the day of reckoning. The stress in each case is on one's own self and not equally on others as well. The peace that you achieve by such methods will at best be a negative form of it.

If things are to improve, the U.N.O. will have to reorientate their approach to the problem of peace. The one which they have followed so far has not borne fruit. We are still in the midst of tensions. In fact, they are multiplying rapidly. This phase of mere make-belief will have to change. To persist in such an attitude against the lessons of experience is, according to the Qur'an, to tempt the inexorable law of life which, while it gives you respite to steady yourselves betimes, lets you meet the natural sequence to your persistence, the day of Ajal as it calls it, the day of reckoning which inevitably overtakes you unaware or comes to you when you least expect it. That is the law of life which applies to individual as well as corporate activity.

So, the Qur'an warns man to change betimes any attitude that he may have developed of suspicion, distrust and ill-will towards another and begin to behave as a brother to every other. If real peace is to be established on earth and a new civilization, truly human, is to take its rise, the U.N.O. should seriously consider whether it was not high time to resolve at least on one thing, viz. that its members should pledge themselves severally to reorientate their national policies and

programmes, not on the basis that they are nations alien to each other, but as members of a single family, each functioning as a shepherd or keeper unto every other, by pooling together their individual national talents and the material resources of their respective countries for the good of each other or for the good of mankind as a whole. Such a procedure will shift their stress from the avoidance of conflict to the positive enjoyment of peace by every member of the human family — the family of God, as the Prophet of Islam called it. That is the message of the Qur'an to the world of today.

Friends ! I have done. I thank you all for the kindly indulgence which you have shown me throughout the course of my lectures. May I express to you, Mr. Chairman, my profound gratitude for the gentle consideration which you have accorded to me in the presentation of the views such as I have had to advance on the important problems of life which I was called upon to discuss before you. May I also request you to convey to the authorities of the University of Madras my gratitude to them for the opportunity they gave me to spend some happy hours in the intellectual atmosphere of Madras where it was my fortune to have received my University education years ago. I thank you one and all once again.

