ISLAM IN THE CHANGING WORLD

A THESIS
SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Philosophy
IN THE SUBJECT OF

ISLAMIC STUDIES
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF BOMBAY

BY

DR. MAHMUD HUSAIN SIDDIQUI

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF
PROF. N. S. GOREKAR

ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE,
BOMBAY
AUGUST, 1983.
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As a result of constant discussion with the learned scholars in the field of religion, I have long felt the need of treating Islamic studies anew. I believe it is timely. It is the challenge of the age that we justify the very existence of any religion. The call of the time is demanding, and unless we need and respond it properly, it will slip away, and history will condemn our negligence. The problem today is not of the choice between Islam and non-Islam, but the problem is of its very survival. Surely, it is a serious trial for the concerned scholars of Islamic studies. They can no longer repeat the past glories of Islam and relax upon its ancient laurels. They are no doubt, praiseworthy. But, the 'ostrich in sand' attitude can perish a religion with the passage of time. A religion need be surveyed from time to time, so that its survival value is retained.

However, the study of higher religions pose methodological problems. In case of other rudimentary cults, the simple methods of studying the culture and history, if any, could suffice, whereas in a developed religion, the fineries of complex society too are involved. After all, the thought and practice of civilised peoples cannot be cut off clearly from the subtleties of customs and beliefs. Subsequent progress in knowledge does not disturb the fundamental place of customs and beliefs in the body of a religion. As Robertson Smith pointed out at the end of the last century, when evolutionary ideas were still very suspect in theology, ".....
it is a law of science that to know a thing thoroughly, we must know its in its genesis and in its growth. To understand the ways of God with Man, and the whole meaning of His plan of salvation, it is necessary to go back and see His work in its beginnings, examining rudimentary stages in the process of revelation.*

In the long and chequered career of human race, certain elements in society have a permanent survival value. Religion is one such institution, which may have had a slightly different or drastically primitive form than the present one. Social influence has played dramatic role and colouring the main features of a religion. With Islam, this impression is more emphatic and vivid. The religion called Islam, as it was preached initially and the practices that have flourished in its name are varying considerably. In the modern age, the latitude of variance is increasing with in leaps and bounds with every new decade. The questioning lot has not only challenged Islam in particular but the religion as such in general. It is the pious task of every man of religion particularly Muslim scholar to enlighten his brethrens upon the intense necessity of religion in his life. A Muslim so unique, so distinguished and so sincere to his faith must not go astray and linger after the easy sensuous life, which has already cast its spell of temptation on masses.

* The Old Testament in the Jewish Church (London-1812), P-192.
It is a world which is illuminating technically and waning spiritually. It is a world which is changing rapidly, thanks to the researches in science and technology. However, the progress in matter need not imply a regress in spirit. A synthetic and total development is a dream which science will definitely realise if the society respects the religion, and practices its fundamentals.

Instead, this century has witnessed the most unfortunate events, especially at the political level and that too, in the name of religion. Forty-five nations, more than one-fourth of those in the world, are currently engaged in wars, a defence research group has reported. Internal conflicts in the name of religion, more so Islam, are commonplace. Moreover, political leaders are pathetically interested in securing their own position in ranks of the powerful nations. Hence, they ruthlessly use the holy name of Islam and bargain their positions. At times, they interfere with the writings of Quran and interpret them to suit their selfish motives. Even for such a change, there is after an argument that Islam always stood for reason, change and flexibility. Under the garb of modernism and scientific approach, the very soul of a religion is often tampered with, and its genuine voice, silenced. Whenever there is an appeal to the world of Islam to revive the practice of Ijtihad, so that Islam remains relevant to the requirements of modern times, there has been consternation in orthodox circles. After all,
Islam has always laid down such prescriptions that man can never complain of any confusion or ambiguity. The present work is an attempt to expose the tenets of Islam, most relevant to the modern world. Keeping in view the western influence, the emphasis is exerted in practising Islamic code of conduct. For, in its following lies the general happiness of man. Islam is a religion of contentment. The nature of man with his greed for power, wealth and pleasures has driven him to insanity. In his folly, man has neglected his glorious culture and rich heritage of Islam.

There is an humble attempt to avoid verbosity which is quite common in subjects such as the present one. However, in order to make clear a point, or to emphasise it the author may have taken some liberty of expansion without being redundant. The consciousness through out the work is the due awareness and elite concern of the modern Muslim/for Islam.

There are learned works on traditional Islam, and enlightened accounts of modern western influence on Islam. However, some such issue like the actual place that Islam has in modern world was long overdue. An account which considered the direct applicability of Islamic ideas, the extent of their genuineness and the attitude of Muslims in adopting them, would make a relevant addition to the advancing knowledge.
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The work will prompt further research along the lines of Islamic studies, especially the issues in the scientific discoveries and religion. Not that the two disciplines need to compare or contradicted. Such approach is bareless, and it violates the spirit of many facts of universe. This universe may be approached through various dimensions. Though, of course, religious approach would be the most integrated approach.

Islam has carved out the most convenient and efficient path to the interpretation of this universe and its master. This is the faith of the author.

Every religion of the world is a system of conduct and value. Some religions emphasis one aspect more than the other. Accordingly, they are recognized as divine religions or humanistic religions. These categories are not mutually exclusive and there is no apt example that leaps to the mind but Islam. Like other major religions of historic value, Islam is also an organic whole which is equally concerned with practical way of living and divine life. Truly speaking, Islam has no such bifurcation, and this very aspect of Islam raises its status in the eyes of renowned world scholars. Islam speaks of a life continuous. It has allotted all the attention to the betterment of life here on earth, and sufficient indications of life after death. In its Shariah, it has taken note of the major aspects of human life. With the change of time, Islam has continued to remain the religion that aspires reverence, awe and a sense of sublimation.
in man. Anticipating the variations of human life, it has left room for appropriate interpretation of strictness, which is really ingenious. Being revealed religion, it has the characteristics of Christianity and Judaism, though its unique structure is never mistaken for any of these. The greatness of Islam is fundamental, for it is the only religion which has no history of dualistic worship. Allowing some differences of opinions on the ways of practicing Islam, it has remained an uncontroverted fact that the unity of God has never been made the matter of dispute. Such is the quality of the unquestioned submission to one God. It has paid the dividends in the long run and all through. Despite spatial diversities, Muslims all over the world unite under this abstract banner of oneness.

The inherent nature of man tries to cling to divinity, although worldly currents drift him away. Hence, there is a ceaseless and silent battle between the divine and mundane, ever since the inception of mankind. In his ignorance, he followed tribal worship, till the merciful God sent a messenger to guide him properly. This Islamic faith in prophethood prevails amongst the Muslims of almost all creeds. Even after being enlightened through revelation, man fell short of making the best of his superior disposition; for there are men in the world who grope in the dark abyss of ignorance for want of proper light. It is the problem of those modern men, who, in their zeal for western ideologies, let their exoteric part decay in books, or
mis-represented by the critics. With all the respect for objectivity, it should be remembered that a society without religion would be like a ship without an anchor. Muslim society has no need to begin from the scratch, when it can exclaim such rich heritage as Islam.

Though Islam is ultimately the result of revelation, it does present the hues and views prevalent in sixth century. Being the result of Arab atrocities, barbarism and ignorance, Islam was the essential need of the past and the relevant institution of the modern complex society. It will never cease to find application; such flexible is its structure. In this age of the survival of the fittest, nothing would be more befitting than to have a fresh look at this ancient religion. Present Muslim societies may not be satisfied in all respects with traditional interpretations, but that is no comment on Islam. On the contrary, the thought system, the practice and the value systems of modern Muslim societies have unsuccessfully tried to mould their lives in western casts. As a result, their own status in modern world is ambiguous to themselves. Their seeds of faith are too deep-rooted as to be affected harshly by western windfall. Nevertheless, the deed has been done, and the modern Muslim is never the same, pious, religious man that Islam ordained him to remain. Islam has given an elaborate account of living a virtuous life here on earth, and to be prepared righteously for the day of judgement after death. The glory of
human existence has been poignantly brought forth in Islam. The human virtues of politeness, meekness and forgiveness are just the part of the entire value system which does not differentiate between the utility and divinity. Right from birth to the day of judgement man is accountable for his deeds. This life is the chance given to man by the merciful so that he rests in the eternal stage of bliss everafter.

The basic contribution of universe supplies enough scope for a happy life. Apart from the permanent features of universe like harmony, beauty, natural order, human moral sense, struggle for survival and other fundamental instincts, there is a large vista of human interaction which is guided by human will, and affected in human action. It is this very field where man exercises his freedom that he needs some indications to follow. This function of religion may be efficiently performed only by making religion livable, followable and rational. Else, it will remain an ornamental piece of work, decorating the shrines, celebrating Idd and more often than not, creating conflicts. Islam possesses the quality of assimilating all that is the best in an age. It has served to remain the appropriate response to man's instinctive thrust for the truth, the good and the beautiful. The path of divinity is no more mystic and spiritual than everyday life lived righteously. A Muslim need not fear his fate in future if he has led a virtuous life. Today, however, this very apprehension of life after death is being
feresaken. The concept of the day of judgement and the future of soul are the objects of sly mockery at the hands of modern youth. He is more concerned with his share of pleasure here and now, than with the treasure of happiness promised to him after death. Nor is he deterred in his un-Islamic actions by the wee of hell and its tortures. A pin-prick worries him more than the punishment after death. To this mentality and melody, there is no remedy. It is a cruel shock to the religious minded, to have realised that the Islamic ideas of the day of judgement, hell and heaven are bluntly interrogated and secretly negated by most modern Muslims. These are the very people whose shoulders lie the responsibilities of salvaging Islam. Instead of offering an acceptable interpretation of the metaphoric symbols like hell and heaven, they conveniently find solace in some kind of explanation. On, they have created around themselves, their own little cosmos of modern, westernised Muslims who do not think it necessary to bother about the state of Islam, as long as they are handled for their sophistication. A dangerous trend is fast in circulation and it promises to threaten those sections of Muslim community who for some reason, are yet Islamic.

Islam has come to stay as the major world religion. This status has been an appellation which is hard won. Many a religion of earlier origin lost all traces in the current of time. It is the very fibre of Islam with its enduring warp and woof that continuous to stand the challenge of time.


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am deeply indebted to Professor Dr. N.S. Gorekar for his intelligent comments and critical guidance. He has taken deep interest in the development of my thesis and encouraged me to work in an atmosphere most democratic. As a result I feel I could express my views freely and independently. It was a pleasure to work with him.

I am thankful to the Principal of St. Xavier's College, Bombay and the staff for rendering me prompt services whenever I approach them.

I am also grateful to the library staff of Maulana Azad Library of Aligarh for helping me with the books.

In particular, I cannot properly express my gratitude to Mr. Liyakat S. Vohra, simply because he is my bosom friend, who has tolerated my irregularities and whims during the typing of my thesis.

Dr. M.H. Siddiqui.
CHAPTER - I

THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT OF ISLAM

(i) ITS SIGNIFICANCE

(ii) ITS STATUS

(iii) STABILITY - ELEMENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR
The Religious Spirit of Islam

(1) Its Significance

The thrust for religious belonging is one of the inevitable needs of humanity. It is easy to study the anthropology and its observations. Interestingly enough, man has always clung to some object in order to feel himself secure amidst the strange world, which he attempted to understand step by step. Ancient man bowed down before the Unseen Power, be it a totem or any powerful creature that signified superiority, or generated a feeling of awe. By and by, with the advancement of his own knowledge, Man's attitude to nature began taking a definite shape. His refinement cultivated different groups and each large group emerged as a religion. Often this phenomenon was headed by a human being, who claimed superior knowledge, gifted to him from above. Thus, there were revealed religions. There is only one surviving religion that allot its origin to the impersonal scriptures which the 'seers' of truth gathered. This religion is Hinduism. Rest of the religions may be broadly classified under semitic and the non-semitic religions. The three semitic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Chronologically this order may be accepted. Islam, being the later revelation, may be traced to the old Testament revealed to Moses and the New Testament of Christianity. However, such a phenomenon would just be natural with any doctrine which follows some earlier doctrines. Islam, of course, had its typical origin under special circumstances and hence its independent status and influence is not ruled out. Practically speaking, it has engulfed the majority of humanity despite its obvious
similarity with the same principles of Judaism and Christianity. Hence, there need be proper understanding regarding those specific characters of Islam, which has rendered its survival and spread, possible. These factors, strangely enough, are not easy to distinguish from the total factors which constitute a religion. Chance factor is not ruled out either. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to imagine that a religion has such unsure foundations for its glory. Amongst other factors such as the strictness it has spelt out, it is also hailed for the simplicity of its rites and rituals. The commands it gives, and the path it traces out are quite practicable and within human limits. There are some other non-semitic religions such as Buddhism and stricter still, Jainism where the followers have to strip off almost all their personal feelings and enter into a state of total self annihilation. Islam has saner means to offer to its disciple. Apart from the positive aspects that this religion may express, there are quite a number of thinkers especially from West who allot its popularity to the general lack of enlightenment amongst its followers. Now this charge if true, will have to be accepted in the right spirit of academic challenge and met with accordingly. Even otherwise, enlightenment amongst muslim population has remained these days, a concerned topic. But, if this charge is misplaced, it remains for Islam to lay open, its superior factors that has led to its numerical success. There has been a constant appeal on the part of the religious
leaders, not to judge the status of any particular religion by the number it carries. On the contrary, a single-sincere devout must truly outnumber thousands of hypocrites. Islam will have to map out its spread all over the world, not by the sway of terror or coercion that history letters, but by the touch of love and peace, which truly is its message.¹

A historic assessment of Islam is a totally dispassionate manner which would go a long way in helping Islam secure the place which is due to it. No doubt, it must inculcate within its structure, all the modern changes that is the consequence of the technical age. The fibre of Islam has been flexible, given the challenge. This fact will have to be observed in the context of today, when the entire world at large is passing through the period of crises in values. Religion is one such value or the sum-total of values, as per the nature and nationality of the followers, whereas it is fashionable to adopt religion, especially the rituals, as one of the other values of life, there still remains a formidable class of masses which considers religion as the sum-total of all values. It is this class, which has often forgotten the cause of religion. Islam is not free from such disciples. On the contrary it abounds in them.

¹ This religion, unlike most others named after their founder has the distinct appellation 'Islam'. Salam (Salama), in its primary sense, means to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, to have paid up, to be at perfect peace.
The urge to the followers of Islam today is not to under-rate the importance of enlightenment, and also, to have a deep foresight regarding the future. Mere observance of Islamic precepts would not be sufficient in order to procure their own dignified position as the citizen of the changing world. They will have to adopt themselves through proper understanding of Islam. Their interpretation will have to be faithful, and rational. It is the followers of the religion who degrade or elevate a religion. Islam too, has been struggling to keep its own esteemed place in the atmosphere so polluted by technical waste, just like any other religion. However, its plight is increased due to some elements of aversion to adopt anything experimental on the parts of its followers. It is through experiment that any doctrine survives in the long run. Religion is no exception. Change has been forced upon it, whether we like it or not. The current development can no longer be bypassed on the sheer grounds of material aspect. Their concrete existence is a reality, fully staring us right in face. It is the religion which will have to be benevolent and bestow its accommodative spirit, which is its very fibre. Dogmatism has always been looked down upon the religion. Islam too has shown maximum catholicism which only has to be understood in the right spirit. It will have to find interpretation in this new context and retain the graceful dimension that only a religion could afford to give to the humanity. For the society, which is a religious, has not found proper atmosphere to breathe in.
Such societies crop up like mushrooms, and are as short-lived. History is full of such beliefs and even similar one where often a temporary totem was worshipped. The factors which help a religion to survive with consolidation are interestingly common amongst the present major religions of the world. The principle factors are - (1) The founder (if any), (2) The scripture and (3) Worship.

Rest of the titles are just the combinations of these in different proportions. Wherever a disproportionate stress on one of these factors, to that extent a religion becomes more or less ritualistic, spiritual or ethical.

When the character and personality of the founder is emphasised, the religion becomes too narrow, and fails to cast a spell upon the masses in large number. Only that specific class, strictly in relation and close contact with the founder or his ways, are attracted to the religion. Nevertheless, spread of religion is no indication of its holy impact either; often, a religion spreads through sheer chance of its followers being an ignorant lot. They have no power to discriminate but to succumb to that which is powerful. They are overpowered by the tyrants, often by coercion than their own free will. Such criticism and severe still has often blotted spread of a religion. Islam too has been a regular victim of it.

The religion which has emphasised scriptures either due to the probable non-existence of the founder as in Hinduism,
or due to the glory of the scriptures themselves as in many
religions form an important class of religion. With Islam,
however, there is no distinction between the religion as a divine
experience of the founder and the religion as a code of conduct
for the welfare of the humanity. These concepts have created
a great deal of controversy so much so, that some major religion
of today emphasise the code of conduct alone, notwithstanding
its origin. It is important for them to respect truth, beauty
and goodness in day-to-day life rather than spend hours of
or a temple or a Church
devotional worship at a mosque/or a synagogue. Humanism is a
fashionable name in industrial countries like Japan. Fidelity
to nation is held in the highest esteem, and so is individual.
Citizenship to the welfare society is a coveted aim that is
comparatively more appealing than the teachings of a religion.
Civic sense is appreciated even in the total absence of any
religious foundings of its political system. Apart from the
desirability of such a system, it may be observed without
doubt, that Islam has left no room for a life which is just
ethical, apart from its existence as a religious one. On the
contrary, there is only one way of living, and that way is
prescribed in Quran. Worship too, is interwoven with it, and
it cannot be mentioned separately or emphasised to the slight
of any of the other prescriptions. Worship has been highlighted
by some religions may be inadvertently, and then the scriptures
are found decaying in a state of total diapallation. These
state of affairs, if unchecked, has often been responsible for the unwanted noise about the rites and rituals. Every sect straight away adopts its form of worship from its ancestor without caring to interpret the prescriptions of the scriptures. Most of the mischief is due to this negligence. Consequently, religion as a whole is the direct victim of it.
(ii) **Its Status**

The Muslim community (Ummat-i-Islami) is the bearer of the Last Message which controls all its deeds and actions. Its place is to guide, lead and to supervise the mission of Islam. The Quran has reminded the Muslims that "Ye are the best community that has been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and Ye believe in Allah".\(^2\)

"Thus we have appointed you a middle nation that Ye may witness against mankind".\(^3\)

However, it cannot be overemphasized. Muslims today have proved far from the promise that the prophet cherished for them. The main reasons that the religion has been found in the bad books of some renowned western thinkers is due to the lacunae, not so much in the revealed religion, but the masses who followed it. Instead of hailing the highlights of Islam they fell into unpardonable fanatism and plundered in the name of religion. Whereas their situation may have remained a passing phase today, there is another part of the picture. Today the Muslims have chosen to resign themselves to the subversion and invitation of the western glare. Basically, the Muslim attitude towards material world is characteristic of East, and not of West. The Muslims are by faith, spiritually oriented community, who fear the Master alone, and keep him as witness in all their worldly dealings. It is a happy sign

\(^2\) Quran, iii:110
\(^3\) Ibid, ii:143
that even to this date, it is hard for a true Muslim to accept deceit in the name of religion. Even when other religions deal in business under the religious symbol such as the Swastika, the entire transaction is without question accepted to be totally fair, because the person has kept Lord as witness through his particular symbol. This narration is a recent fact in one of the Arab countries, where the judgement in favour of an Indian merchant was passed simply by the sight of the divine symbol of Swastika on the front page of his accounts. 4

So, when such an implicit faith forms the very foundation of the Muslim life, it is really a painful sight the way this community is aping the West in all that is rejected, dejected and shameful. For the West, it may have been the only way to live, in the absence of proper guidance and true knowledge. But, those who claim to be the descendents of such a noble person such as the Prophet and those who receive the light of East from all around, have no such excuse.

However, inspite of the numerous drawbacks of this community, it carries with it, some rare qualities of huminity, not found elsewhere so abundantly. Islam has definitely gifted it with the vital religious feelings, the readiness to suffer in the cause of God and the spirit of earnestness, fidelity and love that have become extinct among the materialistic nations of the West. Inspite of their prominent ignorance and

4 Times of India, 3 June 1982.
backwardness, Muslim community will provide the raw material from which the finest model of huminity can be made.\textsuperscript{5}

Today, Islam exists along with the other religions of the world. Being spread over a vast number of people over a short span of time, it deserves the expert attention of the educated, as to the reasons for its spread. Doubtless, its rapid spread and remarkable hold over the multitudes has been awe awakening. However, intellectuals all over the world are rather slow to appreciate its basic role in uplifting huminity and placing them all equal. Rather the specks of its religious works, the ignorance of the Muslim people, lack of general enlightenment, fanaticism, neglected reason and such negative concepts have been held to be responsible for the spread of Islam. The circumstances under which Islam is accepted are not happy ones. On the contrary, the religion as a whole was held with suspicion by some thinkers, leave alone its advocate and his authenticity. Inspite of its feable rationale and ideas, Islam occupies a definite place in the world religion which will have to be fortified by the review of its historic development. Islam today, has been influenced by various other forces, of other religions, cultures and, of course, western technology. Needless to emphasize the impact of Hinduism on the Islam, particularly in India. Some varied customs, not exactly the idol worship but such other gestures as kissing the

\textsuperscript{5} Nadvi S.A. Hasan Ali, Western Civilization, Islam and Muslims, P-211.
tomb, offering veriminals and burning the incence etc, have been followed at times. Such non-Islamic practices have tarnished the image of Islam of the 6th century.

Apart from the religious change, Islam has been perturbed at other fronts too. Strictly speaking, it is the sincere observance of the principles which mark a Muslim. They are Tawhid (assertion of Divine Unity) the belief in one God, Salat (Prayer), Saum (Fast), Zakat (Alms-giving) and Hajj (Pilgrimage). With variations in emphasis, every Muslim must live by this five standards in general. There is no other alternative, for example, that of substituting prayer by a good deed, or alms-giving by postponing till a convenient date. A Muslim has no excuse, except on health grounds, and economically weak position in society, where holy travel is concerned. Otherwise some part of income must be laid aside for the needy, no matter how meagre one earns. It is now obvious that such excellent norm was enforced so that a balanced social order automatically emerges. But, the questioning mind of the Muslims has conveniently dropped all that was disciplinary in Islam, and has retained only that which requires no special sacrifice, such as the belief in the unity of God; or the more affluent amongst them may be benevolent some times, by giving some donations. Even, they may perform Hajj. But, when it is mandatory to follow all five principles in the true spirit, often, Hajj has come to stay awefully merchantile. As regards prayers and fast, there is no inner drive to perform them.
faithfully and often, under the pretext of ill health, they are avoided. Such is the attitude of modern Muslim towards Islam. He does not respect the word of Quran any more than he trusts his own instincts. His instincts and the baser aspects of his personality crave for ease comfort and luxury in place of the strict following of Islam. So to say, Islam is much milder a religion to follow than most other religions, like Jainism, and at times, even Buddhism. Herein, personal annihilation is high-lightened to such an apex, that the sight becomes pathetically unbearable to the onlooker. Now, Islam has just shown some plain ethical rules, which are practicable and easy to follow, without inflicting any physical agony as such. And there is so much fuss regarding its strictness. It is the lax age through which humanity as a whole is passing. All standards of life are diluted, and little heeded are the awes of religious consequences. No one is seriously concerned with one's fate after death. At least, death is the solitary phenomenon which no human being can sanely challenge. After death, the soul meets its end according to its deed here on this earth. Now, it is the very concept of life after, which is forgotten in modern times. We are so busy improving our lives here on earth materially that we find it hard to give its pursuit for something non-material and that too, after we are no more in this form. To be honest with ourselves, how many of us faithfully accept our soul as different independent principle, which will have to persist even when this body
parishes? If there was a genuine field work carried out, the results would be alarming. Baffled as we are today confused as we are, facing all sorts of dilemma more than we ever did before, the question is, whether Islam as a religion will henceforth continue in its original form/is, just on its own credentials.

**Stability: The elements responsible for**

The greatness and nobility of a religion lies in the benevolence of its outlook so as not to deny the claims and authority of other religion to Truth. On the contrary, a sense of respect and tolerance raises a religion to loftier heights. Islam has these qualities. This faith is constituted of a line of Prophethood. The claim of any religion or Prophet to the vision of truth is denied. Nevertheless, it is believed that later followers adulterated that Truth by their own inventions. That is why God sent Prophet Muhammad (S.A.) to purify God's religion. Each religion manifests some aspect of the main Truth, but the emphasis may differ according to the need of Man of that period or age or race. Islam is the religion that has message most relevant for the entire mankind. This characteristic of universality of appeal for all times, is an important fact that constituted to its stability. Despite a long line of prophethood, the religion continued to throb in the very structure of the society, which speaks a great deal of the stabilising factors.
Again, the lineage of Islam is remarkable. Islam is in the line of all religions whose prophets belonged to the family of Abraham. The Jewish tradition which had its roots in Abraham's son Ishaq (Isaac) found its culmination with Christ, who was the last prophet in that family tree. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was the descendant of the other son of Abraham, Ishmael. Prophets in other lines among the descendants of Adam have been hinted at, but not referred to except Noah, as examples in Quran. However, just because Quran mentions the widespread impact of Islam allegorically, other traditions and other religions cannot be denied their existence. All that Islam contends to indicate is the adulteration of that Truth; the continuous addition of human word, to the word of God. It is difficult to discriminate the authenticity of any revealed religion in its original form, from the form it has come to acquire with the passage of time.*

An important factor that consolidates a religion is the life and personality of the founder. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)'s life had been exemplary in the then prevailing conditions. He lived a pure and simple life of an average respectable citizen. He was honest, upright and truthful. However, he was spectacularly a meditative type of person who spent hours together in secluded caves of Hira, in the Mount Nur. It was

* Of course, the authenticity of Quran is unquestionable.
here that in his fortieth year, he received his first revelation and direction to preach. He was severely persecuted by his people. When his execution was plotted at Mecca, he received divine instructions to migrate to Madina where the first Muslim State was established. Upon his death in 632 A.C., he conquered the entire Arabia religiously, and Islam emerged as an established religion. Then after, there were controversies between the Islamic states and the Byzantine and Persians. This revolutionary wave of spread through Arabia and crossed its outskirts. The earlier four Caliphs has the practical and spiritual visions of the religion. They conquered the Byzantine and Persia and gradually spread up to India, China, Morocco, Spain and Sicily. Recent records show the chart that there are 750 million Muslims in the world; 550 Muslims in 50 Muslims states, or countries with Muslim majority and around 200 millions in the rest of the world. Europe too can claim 25 to 30 million muslims.

As in past, so in present day context of conflict and afflictions in moral, cultural and religious dimensions of social life, Islam has proved an ace of crises. Its principles and simple code of conduct has appealed to majority, ever since its inception. Even without any coercion or threat, modern men of the West, men of science and technology, antagonists and atheists, hail the magnitude of this faith with much

\[ \text{12th of Rabi I., II A.H. - 8th June 632 A.C. Ibn-Hisham, P-1109.} \]
\[ \text{While the latest gazette reads 1 billion.} \]
esteem. The strength of any religion may not be judged by the quantity, but certainly by the quality. The enduring allurement of this faith has been due to some such universal factors of human interest at large.

There is the purpetual faith in the message of this religion. If at all the religions have lost relevance in modern times, it is because their important factor, the very essence of religion, is ruled out. This age of science and technology has held in high esteem, the human capacity and his intelligence, no doubt. But it has been overdone, to the serious neglect of religious spirit. Not that Islam has become irrelevant, it is the followers of Islam who have become antagonists. Too much obsession with modernization and western life style has inflated their minds, so as puff off the last modicum of religion. Most Muslims bear the name merely because they have been born to the faith of Islam. Nothing else discriminates them from the atheists or antagonists. They do not carry any glorious bearings, nor do they pride their heritage in manner or conduct.

The nature of revealed religion, in itself, is a consolidating factor which adds to its stability. The life and teachings of revealed religion do constitute the grounds for its stability, much so in case of Islam. It was the emphasis with which Prophet Muhammad (S.A.) hailed the authenticity of the divine message. Thus, Quran is not the whimsical product of the prophet's thinking and imagination, as some western
scholars have belittlingly mentioned. Rather, every utterance of that book is the word of God which was communicated to him through the Gabriel. Being the revealed word of God, it imparts knowledge which is immune to doubts, on the part of the followers. When the scriptures are accepted with such dedication and subjugation, the respect it commands is multiplied, unvitiated by the shallow and worthless arguments. There is no room for any attack on the faith and hence less chances of the religion being shaken at the roots. Faith is the foundation of the religion, and deeper its roots, stabblier is the religion.

There are other factors which have persistently kept Islam in its full stature on religious rostrum. The idea of communal brotherhood and universal fraternity is substantiated by the modern concept of humanism. Those non-confirmist or tired of traditional taboos have no hesitation in following those essential and practical teachings of Quranic text. And hence, even if there is nothing else to distinguish a Muslim from others, he still carries on his person, the gratification of belonging to the faith of Islam, due to some fundamental teachings of human relevance, which he has assimilated with his own person. Added to this, is the idea of communal prayer. It is a suggestion to rise above one's own petty wants, and consider the benefit and welfare of the community at large. Other religions like Christianity too emphasise communal prayers. However, the sincerity in its attendance and the seriousness
with which this particular stricture is accepted, is quite peculiar to Islam. It is not the social apprehension, but the very form of Islamic teaching.

Sir T.W. Arnold remarks that the supreme importance in the missionary history of Islam is its ordain of an yearly gathering of believers of different caste, creed and nationality. Whether in praying in public or privately, their faces are set towards the same direction. The religious genius of the propounder is excellent. It impresses upon the mind of the faithful, a sense of their common life and of their brotherhood in the bonds of faith. Men living poles apart, are in common bondage, and thus, they are sympathetic towards each other.7

Also the institutions of pilgrimage and the payment of legal alms perpetually remind the Muslims that 'the faithful are brothers. This religious theory is strikingly realized in Muslim society, though it may also have experienced slight regressions due to changing economic conditions in general.

Even as change of perspectives has brought about a general change in Old and New Testaments, not so with Quran.

Even from the point of view of a piece of library work, Quran is regarded as the specimen of the purest Arabic; it is an admixture of prose and poetry and the combination shows

aesthetic acumen, and practical craftsmanship. F.F. Arbuthnot opines that Arabic Literature has yet to produce a work parallel to the standards of Quran. Quran was compiled in 632 A.D., that is, twenty years after the death of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). Till this date, it has remained unchanged. A changing religious text often disturbs the stability of religion. Islam could keep its initial form, despite the enthusiastic attempts by the interpreters and critics, to alter it. However, this is not the case with the epics of other religions, like Judaism and Christianity. Scriptures thus gathering the opinions and commentaries, ages after ages, do achieve historical and cultural value. But then, in such cases, for example, Hinduism and its related religions and even Christianity, it is difficult to discriminate between the initial religious teachings and mythologies. Where the religion and politics are indistinguishable, there is an example of the sovereignty in the name of divinity, Islam has legalistic outlook. As in law, so in religions, there are sanctions, taboos and orders. An action leads to definite consequences and practical punishment, if there is any breach. Islam has adopted the legislature of Quranic teachings. According to its commands and decrees, any breach in the action denotes wrong attitude to God and false pride. It may lead a man to generating practices of irreligious life, or even to atheism. However, such waywardness is acquired ————

and not inherited. Hence it speaks volumes about the unflinchable principles of this religion. It indicates the unshakable foundations upon which this religion is based.

Islam has inculcated a feeling of general contentment in its followers. All possibilities of complaints mangle in the unquestionable will of Allah. As such, religious stability has found spontaneous ground to steadfast itself. It is discontentment and unfulfilment which often leads to turbulence in religion. In contact with other religions like Christianity which has undergone constant change.

Quran is a text which has abundant moral fragrants. Each fragmentary verse is rich in meaning. The dictates are such that they appeal equally, to the sage and the commonest of the man. Instead of elaborate and complicated codes of conduct, at times, even terminating into rituals, it is the very matter of facts, relevant and practical rules which stand the test of time. Such an account of religious teachings with universal appeal has fortified this religion. Philosophers, scientists, politicians and laymen all stand on common platform to hold in high esteem, this simple religion. Its simplicity is its greatest asset. Even though Quran may be read and re-read, there is no weariness about it. Rather, it becomes lucid and charming with every repetition. It shakes the deepest of the

cores, even of the one who listens to it. It gives rise to a profound feeling of awe and respect. Hence it was neither violence or coercion nor any missionary institution that resulted in the rapid spread of Islam and its stability, but it was through the message of The Book. It is remarkably down to earth in its discussion of the good life. This practical instruction, combined with dedication to one God, makes Islam unique. Moreover, Islam is proclaimed as the first religion to have practiced practical democracy. It is a magnificent sight of the democratic attitude par excellence, when the king and the servant kneel side by side and proclaim "God alone is great". It is this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man distinctively a brother, whatever be their caste, creed or position in life.

Its humanistic approach is heartening. No other society has such a record of successes in uniting in an equality or status, of opportunity and of endeavour, so many and so various races of mankind. The great muslim communities of Africa, India and Indonesia and the small muslim community of Japan show that Islam does possess the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. It has survived and quite firmly the severe criticism, attacking its very

10 Introduction to The Kuran by George Sale (London), PP-V-VII E Denison Ross
11 Lectures on "The Ideals of Islam vide Speeches' and Writings of Sarojini Naidu (Madras-1918), P-169.
genuineness, and labelling it as fraud and fanatic. Had it been so it would have met subsequent end after Prophet's death. On the contrary, it emerged as a religion for the society, for the well-being and disciplined conduct of man. It did not feign lofty metaphysical ideals like identity with God, being God-like etc. It simply ordained man to live like a human being. While Christianity, very recently, and very many religions and a religious institutions have been able to articulate this concept under the label of humanism, Islam had defined it from the very beginning.

The statements of Quran, strongly enough, confirm to modern scientific phenomenon in all respects. There is no contradiction between the observed fact and the statement of Quran, as is the case with Old Testament and the Gospels. In Old Testament, it is right in the first book, the Genesis, where some statements are totally in contradiction with scientific facts. Quran does not contain a single statement that is vulnerable from the modern scientific point of view.

In this age of spiritual void, Islam has yet to say meaningful thing to its people. This spiritual expression is found to have converted the lives of many a wayward. It has stabilized the life of the shaky, it has pacified the afflicted. The essential spirit of Islam will be re-captured thought

13 The Bible, The Kuran and Science, P-15 by Dr. Maurice Bucaille.
when not stray incidents, but humanity at large will realize
the malign effects of sheer material mode of life. Only
religion can accomplish what law can never enforce. The
sanctions are deeper. They are internal, not external.
CHAPTER - II

RELIGIOUS STABILITY

(i) Permanent Values
(ii) Code of Conduct
(iii) Social Virtues
Any religion can survive and become assimilated with the very fibre of society when its own fundamentals are strongly founded. The foundation of Islam is so general and so human that its relevance for all times stands uncontroverted. Though Islam stands posterior to other Semitic religions, it has developed its own philosophy of religion, which is simple and beyond any reproach, or challenge. Being a religious doctrine, Islam has centred around Godhood. Not only that, it has accepted the belief in God, as its first among the five principles. The five principles of faith, prayer, alms giving, pilgrimage to Kaaba in Mecca and Jehad (at times) are named as the pillars of Islam. These are no doubt, the basic guidelines even to the day today life of any man, whether accepting or not, the Islam. In order to maintain the 'golden path', the balance in social structure, these five principles were judiciously imposed upon every Muslim. He cannot but follow them with sincerely, but he should suffer deadly consequences, in the life hereafter. The functions of religion, to stabilise, society to maintain its harmony and to promote its welfare are well guarded in Islam. Equally ingenious is its argument for the consequences in the breach of religious conduct. They are formulated so as to find a definite place, in the per-view of the laymen. Instead of indulging into the metaphysical and oral allegorical language labyrinth, it has plainly mentioned some such phenomenon which have parallels in our own life. Not only that, they are the actualities in heaven, as
much as they are here on earth. Thus, the concepts of hell and heaven and the concept of the day of judgement may be the topics commonly discussed and alluded to in Semitic religions. However, Islam's advocacy of the doctrine of faith in one God is peculiar to it. Islam has equated it with the basic purpose of the life of every Muslim. God is to be worshipped in his Oneness, bi-at-Tawhid, and not through the trinity of the Christians, nor the idolatry or henotheism of other religions.

Such a concept of God forms a strong pillar of their faith, and a revered value in its code of conduct. It is a mode of being face to face with the Divinity, at least five times a day. When a Muslim prays, it is an attempt to regularise any misconduct of daily life, or any breach of conduct. For, if not enforced, then atleast a desirable practice is automatically adopted. Any other pillars of Islam are thus duly, implicable; such foresighted is its formation. Faith, no doubt, is the pragmatic principle of practical life. A Muslim has so adopted it, that in many Muslim societies, even to this date, grand transactions are manouvered without a single written record anywhere. This pious Islamic value though, is vitiated by the vulgarity of modern faithlessness and greed. Still, every Muslim can yet legitimately be proud of the genuineness with which the Islam has propounded this doctrine. It is this very faith, which sows the seeds of further acceptance of the other principles, and other elaborate and simple virtues of Quran. Thus, faith, the first pillar, inculcates a sense of believing in our own creed. Prayer sustains daily practise fasting attempts
discipline, control and a kind thought for the deprived the
wealth tax redistributes wealth within society, and family, the
pilgrimage to Mecca, only if we can afford, is to consolidate
our faith in the religion.

Thus, Islam builds up its religious doctrine keeping in
view the parallel value system. This value system is double-
edged. Permanently, this system will continue to revere and
regard the five basic values as the five principles of Qur'an.
Yet, plainly sneaking, the other edge functions as the indicator
which reads the social times. Islam has so set up its value
system that it works effectively, whenever practised, and yeilds
the expected results. It is a unique machinery and Muslim
societies have benefitted a great deal by its efficacy. Despite
constant external attacks, Muslim societies have managed to keep
secure their identity and individuality.

Initial requirement of a Muslim must be his individual
unambiguous faith in Deity, and to pray to Him unflinchingly,
with devotion. Only after this accomplishment, is he competent
to enter further ahead, and qualify himself for this life and
death here after. For which, he has been guided throughly in
Qur'an. Disbelief, antagonism and arrogation are serious hurdles,
since they strike directly at the roots of faith, and this blur
our clear vision of God.

The rest of the concepts follow directly from the concept
of faith. For that matter, any number of values may be listed
as the principles, values, or code of conduct, once the basic
Idea of faith is enrooted. It may be recalled that the Islamic way of viewing these values or standards is different. To start with, it is based upon a clear vision of the world and the Deity, which is responsible for its creation and existence. The Arabic word for 'religion' is din, which means something we 'owe' to God; hence, it is binding upon every man to recognise His existence and to present oneself in the manners indicating gratitude. The religion thus, strives genuinely to invoke a sense of balance and view the experience of life in proper perspective. Failure to do this would lead to misery. The temptations and weakness is common to most people. For, deep in the heart of man there dwells a restless thirst for bliss and he expects the world to quench it. Man considers his own will the measure of his rights; but the world takes its own course. Upon disappointment, man looks up to God or chides his fate, as per his religious background. An orientalist of Hinduism and the allied religions will blame his own past deeds instead of blaming God. A western perhaps will feel regret and reproach his tools, more medically oriented amongst them would perhaps accept the will of God. Islam does suggest the autonomous will of God, which cannot be challenged. Though, of course, freedom of action is not ruled out in Quran. Evidently, Quran places no restriction on man's movement either in thought or knowledge or action save those which should suggest themselves to him through a proper exercise of what the Quran calls the 'sense of balance set in the nature of Man'. The provision is of primary importance. One
must know one's limits and at the same time, appreciate the appropriateness of a move in a given situation, exercising his sense of judgement. This sense of balance or the law of harmony, which, as the Quran proclaims, binds and permeats the entire universe; is in the sphere of human life, the supreme moral law. Freedom of will must permeate all human activities, both, in relation to himself, and in relation to the external world, and guide his energies harmoniously to the highest aim. This is the crux of the fundamental Islamic concept of faith, to 'believe and work righteously'.

Righteous activity consists in following some general codes of conduct. Today, though there is laxity in total acceptance of the code of ethics as such, a muslim society, especially in middle east, like Iran and in Asia, such as Pakistan, tend to claim their success in maintaining maximum Islamic standards in daily life. Politics and apprehensions of punishment apart, such maintenance of ethics is a welcome sign, though, Islam never propagates any use of power, politics or coercion. However, any constitutional society, like the Indian society, which accepts seculiarism can also enforce the desired code of conduct and enlist fundamental human rights and duties, binding upon every Indian citizen, irrespective of his religion attachments. But when an Islamic based politics enforces some such legal codes, they cease to be mere legal and carry a more concerned meaning.

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1 Syed Abdul Lateef, Concept of Society in Islam, 1937; P.69.
inducing amongst people, a sense of togetherness, which quickly catches the gregarious nature of man. While secular state does guarantee religious freedom, it falls to bind its people by one single chord of religiosity. That India cannot afford such luxury, is an undebted fact. Elsewhere, muslim societies have enjoyed unity, partly because of the political backing. Whenever a religion is upheld politically, the chances of its longivity and spread are tremendously raised. Strangely enough, this sense of balance is the unerring force in man to which all his activity is to be referred. It should be brought home without any ambiguity that even as he is to confirm to the general laws of nature for a life of order. 'There are signs even in your soul'. The laws of life having an inherent divinity and yearning for excellence, are to be respected. They spell the 'Will of God' and one should confirm to them. In order to achieve peace and perfection, one has to exert from one state to another. Then alone can one confirm the will of God. No doubt, man will have to be at odds with circumstances, if he has to attain moral and spiritual perfection. Such hazards are inevitable, for they do examine the sincerity and faith of the follower. We try you with evil and with good, by way of an ordeal'. That is the way of God, and one must accept it cheerfully, ungrudgingly, with unshaken faith. It is in man's own interest.

2 Quran 51.21 40 Q 84:19
3 Quran 2: 150-151
It will elevate him. Instead of grabbing the opportunity in its entirety, modern man wastes his time in questioning, in doubting and in criticizing him. It has stood the test of time, and of men of authority. "God does not accept belief, if it is not expressed in deed; and does not accept deed, if it does not confirm to belief."  

Being essentially a code of conduct, Quran is particularly different from abstract ethics, and elaborate theories of moral philosophy. Even those who seek, especially in modern age, to follow a simple, unambiguous and practically clear life, without any religious commitments, can also rely upon Quran. To them, Quran has a specific message of having faith in themselves, and to be at peace with their own selves and with the world. This generous perspective cannot be subscribed only to Muslims following Islam. Hence, we have numerous examples of people with highest intellectual and rational standards accepting to live their lives, the Islamic way. It has beyond the purview of abstract ethics, or of any other secular concept of life. This observation is deduced from the concept of life after death, even without which of course, Quran can impose its authority on all men alike, believes in religion or humanists, who do not prefer to carry any religious titles.

In order that the elevated religious standards are attained, Quran has prescribed a way of life, to all who acquire such goals,

4 Quran 2: 2-5.
or even to a layman deserving a general happiness. So universal are its standards, that their formal prescription appears just immaterial, except that, when brought under the banner of religion, their practice is somewhat guaranteed.
(ii) **Code of Conduct**

Any revealed religion such as even Islam, is essentially fortified by the propounder, and also by the scriptures. The scriptures may be the compilation of the founders very own teachings, or, they may be the works of various other followers too, who might have successively added to the original teachings. This act is carried on through comments and counter comments in case of the faiths which have room for public opinion. In case of Quran, it is difficult to envisage any such critical process at work. Nevertheless, it has been attempted to be analysed in modern times, as a genuine book on ethics, or the code of conduct. As much is attempted in the holy scripture itself. 5 It has a unique style of guiding everyone; those who need it, and even those who have fortunately grasped the meaning of life. To them, it has a special appeal to make, in the name of humanity, the down-trodden, and the suffering masses. It has by far, trespassed abstract ethics, into the concrete life of strife and conflict. These are the grounds upon which the wars between good and evil, strong and weak, the tyrants and the oppressed, are waged. It is here, that a Prophet should stand up to the values which are universal. Quran has shown all traces of a sound religious book which has thus heard the cry of the ailing humanity and accordingly given the code of conduct. Being a religion with godhead at the top, it has easily found the technique of communicating with the devotees through manipulating  

5 Quran 2: 2-5.
even their concepts of joy, happiness, pleasure and those of misery and woe. Thus, Quran as a code of conduct will stand any test of time where it has so sincerely observed human psychology and behaviour.

Quran differs from abstract ethics in this, that it purports to possess a religious sanction for those who choose to follow it. Even to those who emphasise rationality, a line of conduct which is chalked out by Quran does not break down into a mere religious dogma to be placed high and respected. Those who do not believe in any established religion, or may not hold in high esteem, anything in the name of religion. To them, Quran can yet remain a doctrine which lays codes for the development of human personality worth name a civilized human being, of a modern society. Its purpose would be served when man learns to live in peace with himself and with his external world. If he chooses not to believe in God, he still has sufficient reasons to respect the code of conduct, since he cannot refuse the membership of a social environment, which is fundamentally ethically oriented. Belief in God according to Quran, however, simply does not form an issue, because Islam is a god-oriented religion whose very existence is to qualify man for that peace and joy which God has reserved for man, if he lives like a true Muslim. Thus, Quran may serve the Muslim society to work within its own socio-cultured frame and yet adopt progressive ideas of modern society. For the others, it cannot but aspire the awe for the simple manner in which a common man is beckoned to better himself up to the
universal standards of truth, beauty and goodness. This wider applicability which is certainly not confined to the abstract ethics or any narrow concept of life. The idea of the life beyond death is a sufficient indicator of the width of Islamic view on the importance of a good life. Death is the state where new activities await the human soul. 'From state to state, from lower to the higher shall ye more forward'. The life hereafter is not in isolation from one's activities here on earth. Life at present is the very means towards perfection of one's self and perfection is the uncontroverted virtue that decides the happiness of man. Thus, the life on earth is purposive. It is the very mission of this holy scripture, this training that the mind must undergo. The span of man's life is just not limited to that which is visible. On the contrary, it extends to the life after death. Its 'movements are adjusted accordingly'.

The crux of Quranic prophesy is summed up in the message 'Believe, and work righteously'. It is the only way to develop the mind favoured by Quran. It is the power of belief which produces the person of strong character and it is the belief again, which allots all moral and spiritual subtleties to the mind, and if strongly willed, translate them into action. There is then, no conflict of any kind between the mental and the physical.

Together, they work in unity. The consonance that rings through the expressed actions of such men is the reflection of this

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6 Quran 84:19.
7 Quran 31:28
unity. In order to cherish beliefs, it is necessary for the mind to rest on some sound basic principles. They will inspire him to strengthen his belief in the spiritual, and hence, such principles are worth examination. It is essential thus, to consider the role that is played by the concept of unity of God.

Unity of God

It is the concept most fundamental. It initiates human mind into belief. Quran has given it this status of priority. Being one of the five pillars of Islam, belief in God has attained even popular appeal, since it does not involve any elaborate rituals or intelligent arguments. Belief in God aspires awe simply by the power of its simplicity. 'Lailaha illallah'. There is no one worthy of worship, except God is the concept from which the entire Islam has derived its esteemed place in the world religions of all times. The emphasis is so strong that the rest of the Quranic teachings may find their interpretations and meaning therein. The whole Quran has drawn implications from this statement, and has expressed this belief in varieties of expressions. The equation of Quran with this message is not at all far fetched. It is only a natural consequence of so rich a concept.

Pragmatically, this belief in the unity of God has helped society. It has learnt to accept at least theoretically, that barring caste, creed and colour, all are equal before God. The distinctions are only social and hence, superficial. It has
restored to man, his dignity as being 'next to God'. The only distinction worth making is that of conduct. Herein, and here alone, one man is superior or inferior to the other.

**Unity of Man**

The related concept is that of the unity of man. The Quranic concept of 'Tawhid' has two aspects; The unity of God and the unity of man. Unity of man has immensely served the cause of brotherhood and equality. Any discrimination, which is made on the criterion other than human conduct, is condemned by Quran. There is no room for any castism or racialism. The Quranic mission was certainly revolting during the period where the conditions were heavily charged with discriminations. It reads, 'O, mankind, your God is one and you have but one father. You are all progeny of Adam, and Adam was made of clay. O! the noblest among you, in the sight of God, is the best in conduct. No Arab has any preference over a non-Arab save by his piety.'

It was this very foundation which fed the Islamic definition of peace. Through peace alone, progress may be inculcated. The very concept of common lineage of God enhances the feeling of fraternity. This spiritual principle of human equality is hailed in Quran as the virtue of the highest order.

The Prophet has considered the entire human society as one

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8 Quran III; 103 - 3; 1:1
9 Quran V, 18
10 Kanz-al-Anwar - Quoted by Dr. Mohd Kanzoor Alam in Islam - Western Civilisation and Muslim Youth, P-26.
family. 12

"All creatures of God are His family, and he is the most beloved of God who loveth best this Creatures." 13

"Respect the ways of Allah and be affectionate to the family of Allah." 14

The Quran observes - So it was that we laid down for the Israelites that if one slayeth another for other than man slaughter or of spreading disorder in the land, it shall be as if he hath slain all mankind. But if one saveth the life of a single person, it shall be as if hath saved the life of all mankind. 15

"The emphasis of Quran has always been on the one human race idea, as such, it did not hail high the different social strata as The Prophet has earnestly urged "Everyone of you is a keeper unto every other and will be accountable for the welfare of his fold." 16

The unity of man is a logical consequence of the unity of God. It has impact on all social activities, this central theme of Quran. It needs be taken without question that the human personally will have to inculcate the characteristics of a true benevolent person. The followers of other faith should also be

13 Ibid, 505
14 Ibid, 505
15 Quran 5:32
16 Bukhari, Kitab al-Ahkam.
taken into confidence in an atmosphere of fraternity.

"To you hath He prescribed the Faith which He had commended unto Noah and which, we have revealed to thee and which we had commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus enjoining. Adhere to this Faith and do not divide yourselves into sects". 17

"Say, we believe in God and in that which has been sent down to us and that which was sent down to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and his descendants, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord; no distinction do we make between any of them and to Him are we resigned". 18

"(Bear in mind) we have sent thee rightly equipped to function as a bearer of good things and as a warner; and there hath been no people among whom a warner hath not passed". 19

"And truly, this community of yours is one but single community". 20

So wide is the catholic attitude of mind intended to be stimulated that the Quran promises salvation not merely to the people of the Quran but to those also among other scriptures have been delivered not merely to those, but to every human being not believing in any established church, but who nevertheless acknowledges the value of Divine Unity in human life and recognises

17 Quran 42:13
18 Quran 3:84
19 Quran 35:24
20 Quran 26:52
responsibility for his actions and lives uprightly.\textsuperscript{21}

The Catholic attitude shown in the Quran is exemplary. It promises salvation not only to the staunch followers of Islam but even to others who are truly desirious of divine knowledge. The privilege of salvation is extended to those who are not attached to any established faith.\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{Universality of Quran}

'O Ye mankind! Surely we have created you a male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may identify and care for each other; Surely the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one among you most mindful of his duty. Allah is knowing fully awake'.\textsuperscript{23}

It is interesting to note that the Prophet had envisaged that the religious thought may lead to religious conflict. Hence he unambiguously encircled the entire humanity as a 'family of God'. Parallel though is glaringly available in Hinduism.

"Vasudava Kutumbakam" - This is the universal character of Quran that it propounds fraternity as the one important virtue of a true muslim.

\textsuperscript{21} Quran 2:62
\textsuperscript{22} Quran 46; 13-14
\textsuperscript{23} Quran 49:13
(iii) **Social Virtues**

Thus, not only a divine **aspirer** but every man must find solace in the religion. As the members of civic society, we are faced with innumerable responsibilities. The responsibility of the individual is two-fold. At one level, he has to fight back his own personal short-coming and temptation in order to qualify himself for the favourite of God, or even, for this personal peace. At the other level, he has to remain a virtuous human being as a member of the society, and discharge duties in different contexts. Thus, the complex life of the aware and conscious individual is more demanding, trying and challenging than that of a sage, the unaware, ignorant or those who have renounced the unwritten laws of society for some reason or the other. According to Quran, individual responsibilities are clear because of the commanding presence of God, who is the only authority to make each one of us, acutely aware of his duty throughout the world. Such minute analysis of one's duties in all walks of life is unique to Quran. No questioner or doubter in dilemma can ever be turned away without a satisfactory solution. For example, **assures** of the wealth tax/redistribution/wealth among the poor and needy so that no one is bereft of bare necessities of life. Being himself an orphan, Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) had the immediate experience of being deprived of the basic necessities of life, and hence he immensely valued public charity.

That such common sense dictates cannot be revealed as such, but are the direct deduction from the world around is the cheap
and vulgar criticism of Quran, challenging revelation.
Another change attaches the psyche of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.)
whose true personality was sober, and his nature was meditative.
Constant pondering upon some aspects of life, such as divinity,
led to the obsession that he was receiving divine revelation.
In fact, they were his own unconscious projections. Such pheno-
menon is psychological laboratories are commonplace. In like
manner, critics can celebrate their false verbal success. As
for practical life, the details of Quran are taken seriously
by Muslims, and any luxury in their practice is only due to
human weakness.

The ethical conduct as outlined by Quran falls under
two heads:

a) Those which enable a man to abstrain from inflicting
injury upon his fellow men and

b) Those which enable him to do good to others

Under the first classification, these rules which
regulate the motives, designs and actions of man, so that he
may not injure the life, property or honour of our fellow beings
through speech, thought and action.

The next class includes all rules calculated to guide
the motives and actions of man, making him capable of affecting
social good. He is able to extend his own endowment, personal
and material, for the kind deeds. He esteems the honour and glory of others and always refrains from vengearance or punishment.

**Chastity**

Chastity is a noble quality which is thus attained.

"Say to the believing men that they should restrain their eyes (from looking upon strange women whose sight may excite their carnal passions and that on such occasions they should cast down their eyes). Say to them also that they should observe continence for this is the best way of having pure sights and hearts. Surely Allah is aware of what they do". 24

"Draw not near unto fornication (le. keep away from paths which might lead to a commission of this sin) for he who commits fornication does an extremely wicked deed, and it is an evil way, (for it keeps back from the goal and is a dangerous obstacles in attaining the desired perfection." 25

"Some people have devised methods of their own restraining themselves from sexual relations as by adopting celibacy or

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24  Al Nuh, 31-32

25  Bani Israil 33
monasticism or by submitting themselves to castration, but all these methods have been invested by people themselves. We did not prescribe these to them, and the result was that they could not observe these innovations as they ought to have observed.

One who detests passion and wins over them thoughtfully is the genuine aspirer. Unless a person so qualified for social life, he will not be able to donate to chastity, for he will indulge in his own pleasures.

Honesty (AMAANAT)

Another social virtue worth consideration is honesty. It consists in possessing only that which is our own right, and not acquire anything or accumulate any wealth that does not properly belong to us.

"And those who are dying and leave behind them young and weakly offspring should be careful lest they make a bequest detrimental to the rights of children. Surely they who swallow the substance of orphans unjustly, swallow but free and they shall at last themselves be drawn into the fire. (Al Nisa 10.11).

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26 Al Quran Ladid 28
Instead of putting this material and simple quality on lofty alters of religious teaching, Quran has rightly advised that honesty must spring spontaneously in all dealings.

The Holy Quran guides - "Do not consume each others' wealth unjustly nor offer it to judges as a bribe so that with their aid, you may seize other man's property dishonestly". 27

"Verily God enjoins you to give back your trusts to their owners". 28

"For verily God does not love the treachery". 29

"Give hast resume when you measure out and weigh with an exact and true balance. And defraud not men in their substance and do not walk upon the earth with the intention of acting corruptly therein (i.e. committing theft or dacoity, or picking pockets, or otherwise unlawfully usurp other man's property)" 30

All trends of dishonesty is severely condemned by Quran. However, any dealing which does not bear the stamp of honest dealings, but not always so, is an act performed merely out the force of habit. There is no exercise of reason and hence, such acts are to that extent devalued.

27 Al Baqara, 189
28 Al Nisa, 59
29 Al Anfal, 59
30 Al Shuara, 182-184.
Meekness (Hudna or Houp)

Meekness is another quality prescribed by Quran. It ordains human beings to try and establish peace upon this earth. It commands men to practice kindness and refrain from harmony their fellowmen. This inclination for peace is natural, though it is disturbed only because of the misbehaviour of men, by neglecting the virtue like charity, honesty and meekness. However, until and unless any of these values are consciously followed, with full respect to rationality, they cannot be called moral. The Holy Quran commands:

"And live peacefully with another". 31

"And if they incline to peace, do thou also incline to it." 32

"And the servants of the Merciful are those who walk meekly upon the earth" (Al Furqan 64).

"And when they hear frivolous discourse (which they fear might lead to altercation) they pass and with dignity (and do not pick up quarrels over trifling matters) i.e. they do not take up a combative attitude so long as no substantial injury is inflicted upon them". 33

The ordain is that amidst opposition, or even if there are unfavourable suggestions violating one's own wish one should keep cool, and not behave insultingly towards those responsible for

31 Anafal 62
32 Anafal 2
33 Al Furqain 73
controversy. Words can injure, and this offense should not be committed over any trivial material issues.

Politeness (Rifa)

The Holy Quran contains the following injunctions upon this point.

"And speak that which is good to men." 34

"Let not men laugh other men to scorn who happily may be better than themselves, neither let women laugh other women to scorn who happily may be better than themselves. Neither defence are another, nor call one another by nicknames." 35

"And accuse not another of a crime if you have no sure proof of his guilt; verily the hearing and sight and the heart shall all be called to account for this." 35

Forgiveness (AFW)

It is easier to err, but difficult to forgive. Hence, the saying goes that to err is human, to forgive is divine. It demands considerable generosity, not to punish those who have caused us harm. Forgiveness induces in the offender, a feeling of awareness which helps reforming his personality. The Quran says-

"They are the doers of good who master their anger and forgive others when it is proper to do so." 37

"The recompense of evil is a penalty proportionate thereto, ---

34 Al-Baqara 24
35 Al-Hujurat 12
36 Al-Imran 135
37 Ibid 135
but if a person forgives and this forgiveness is exercised on
the right occasion so that matter amend thereby, he shall
receive his reward for it from God". 38

Though, forgiveness should never be meant that the wrong
action and injustice should not be opposed. Quran does not
teach the exploitation of this virtue, so that even the intolera­
table vices may pass unresolved. On the contrary, the wronged
is called upon to exercise his judgement, and decide objectively
where he should be harsh, and where he should be gentle. Else,
the medicine for one, can prove poison for another, and thus,
instead of mending the offender's life, forgiveness may pamper
and further spoil his criminal nature.

That forgiveness is weakness in which the offender uproots
chastity, nobility and self-respect. Such an act would attack
all reason, and hence, can never be called a virtue. Hence,
forgiveness is a virtue, of practiced discreetly.

Veracity.

Unless there is an incentive to speak the untruth, man is
naturally tended to tell the truth. No one appreciates falsehood,whatever he himself is. Normally, unless there is sound
reason, or apprehension of whatsoever kind, one does not tell a
lie. However, it is only in contrary situations that a persons
veracity is tried. It is no virtue, to tell sound truth, and
hide some other truths. Truthfulness, when it prevails under
all circumstances alike, is a moral virtue of a high quality.
"Shun ye the pollution of idol, and shun ye the word of falsehood" 39

"And conceal not true testimony for he who conceals it has surely a wicked heart." 40

"And when you speak a word or pronounce a judgement, be true and just, though the person concerned be your kinsman." 41

"Hold fast to truth and justice and let your testimony be only for the sake of God, and speak not falsely, although the declaration of truth might injure yourself or your parents, or your kindred (such as children etc.)." 42

"And let not hatred towards any induce you not to act uprightly." 43

**Goodness**

Acts of kindness, in return of a kind act is goodness. Kindness, goodness and tenderness are all virtues which qualify a man as Insan. Qur'an says -

God commands you to do good in return for good, and (if you can avail yourself of an opportunity of doing more than mere justice) to do good without having received any benefit, and (if it befits the occasion) you should bestow gifts with the natural kindness of kindred, and He forbids exceeding the limits

39 Al Hajj 31
40 Al Baqara 284
41 Al Anam 153
42 Al Nisa 138
43 Al Maida 9
of justice and directing goodness to a wrong end, the carrying to excess or fixing upon an improper object the feeling of tenderness". 44

The suggestion is to perform a good action without any expectation of reward, or return, not even an acknowledgement.

"The truly righteous are those who, in order to please God, assist their kindred out of their wealth and support orphans and take care of the needy, give to the wayfarer and to those who ask, and spend also in ransoming and in discharging the debts of those who cannot pay". 45

**Courage (Shajaat)**

Courage is a quality which is found in man and beast alike. A beast is naturally disposed to face any threat to his life, or possession. The act is instinctive when thus reflected in human beings, for example, on battle field or in moments of cries, then the act is instructive, and hence, cannot properly be termed as virtuous. Courageous acts, are the result of rationalisation and discretion. Only when displayed after such elaboration, does it become an exhausted moral virtue. The Holy Quran directs in the following ways -

"The truly brave are those who lose not their heart but stand firmly and behave patiently under ills and hardships and during battle". 46

44 Al Nahl 91
45 Al Baqara 178
46 Ibid 178
"Their patience in adversity and during battle is only for the sake of God and not display their bravery."

"Their courage is not like the poweress of wild beasts, a mechanical reaction stimulated by passion and therefore flowing in one direction only. They utilize their courage in two ways. Through it they resist and overcome the passions of the flesh and again resist the attacks of an evil doer. When it is advisable to do so, not in obedience to brute force but in the cause of truth. They do not, moreover, trust their own selves but have their confidence in the support of God at the time of trials."

Again -

"Be not like those who marched forth from their homes in an insolent manner and to be seen of other people."

The sole factor which should drive a person to bravery should be his will to please God. Not cowardness, but total consideration of the entire line of action, along with its consequences, is truly, an act of bravery. The difference between rashness and courage is thus, the difference between rationality and sensitivity. An ingeneous definition of courage calls it a rational apprehension of danger, without the emotion of terror.

**Patience (Sabr)**

That life is an admixture of happiness and unhappiness, of
fortunes and misfortunes, is an uncontroverted fact. While none can claim total fortune, there are more fortunate amongst us. However, members of such a class are outnumbered. "Those who suffer the strokes of misfortune, form a far greater class. The reason for this disparity is not far to seek. It is man's own deeds which often lead him to deplorable state. That apart, Quran has reminded such men to suffer their misfortunes, illness and afflictions patiently. When the initial depression, which is only human, is overcome, man is able to reconcile to the will of God, and believe firmly that God is the best judge of the situation which are beyond human control. A virtuous person submits completely to His will, and endures that which cannot be cured. Quran observes -

"He will surely prove you by afflicting you in some measure with fear and hunger, and decrease of wealth, and loss of lives, and making failure to attend upon efforts or bringing death upon your offspring; but bear good tidings to the patient who, when a misfortune befalls then say, "We are God's creatures and His charges and must relize to the Owner of the Charge". Upon them shall be blessings from their Lord and Mercy and they are the rightly guided". 50

A contended person necessarily is the one who has surrendered to divine judgement. For, God is not the punishing agent, when he has blessed man with some good things of life.

50 Al Baqara 156-158
Sympathy (Kuwaasaat)

It is also a noble virtue worth cultivating. It qualifies the entire nation, as being sympathetic towards others. However, when this is absent, nation's attempt to destroy other nations from the face of this earth. Sometimes, a zealous action springs from instinct, and then, there is absence of reason. An action which has no grounding in reason, cannot legitimately entitle a person to a virtuous being. In order that sympathy receives moral applause, it must be exercised with full awareness, justice and equity, weighing fully, the pros and cons of actions arising out of sympathy. The Holy Quran ordains -

"Sympathy and assistance for your people must be shown in deeds of goodness and piety, but you should not aid one another in evil and malice". 51

"And Slaken not in your zeal from prompting the good of your people". 52

"And be not an advocate for the fraudulent." 53

"And plead not for those who defraud one another, verily God loves not him who is deceitful and a doer of evil." 54

Thus, no virtue whatsoever is hailed as a moral quality by Holy Quran, unless it carried out with full respect to rationality.

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51 Al Maida 3
52 Al Nisa 105
53 Ibid 106
54 Ibid 108
CHAPTER - III

EXTERNAL FACTORS - THEIR IMPACT ON -

(i) WESTERN IDEOLOGIES AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

(ii) ISLAM AND OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS

(iii) ISLAM AT CROSSROADS
(1) Western Idiologies and Education System

It has been observed currently that every existing system of oriental culture has somewhere been under the systems of western culture. At times, the impact is glaringly observable, at times, it is latent. As the scientific phenomenon of latent heat being more powerful, the latent impact has been more effective. It has caused deep concern for those who have rightly valued the oriental monopoly in their lives. The intrusion was inevitable, with the advance of science and technology. However, it could always be argued in favour of the occidentalists that they could have been more discriminative and choosing, rather than blatantly blaming the western society outright.

There are several evident fields where western influence has been deep rooted. History records the modern western civilization to have had its roots in Greek, Roman and Christian philosophies. General opinion regards it as the direct result of the revolt against ecclesiastical class, of society. It has also been recognised by its dazzle, its economic progress, its technological heights and its glare for materialism. But, if each social phenomenon is observed in the framework of its historical connection and development, then history has often noted that "every form of human organisation came into existence with the seeds of its own destruction." ¹

The main characteristics of western ideology may be thus summed up in a few headings like secularism, Liberalism, Democracy, Nationalism and Materialism. These ideas have quietly crept into the strict and staunch followers even of Islam. Like any other religion, it had to succumb, if not in principle, but in practice, to the western influence. We can multiply recent examples. We can study minutely the lives of Muslims all over the world. The impact has been there. It has played its role, whether the upholders of Islam may accept it or not. The secularistic and liberal ideologies have vitiated Islam less than the idea of democracy. This doctrine has finally ousted God, the Sovereign the Creator and the sustainer from the arena of power. There was a change, even on religion front. The idea prevailed that sovereignty should rest with the people rather than the representatives. As in political power, so in religious authority, it is the masses that are the true sources of power and the rightful wielders of sovereignty. There is hence, no conflict between the two classes. "Sovereignty could be reconciled with the liberty".  

2 Abdul Hamid Siddiqui, "Main Springs of Western Civilisation", (Lahore, 1975), P-XI.
Some thinkers may condemn it as a doom but the deed has been done, and the results are here for us to observe. Such an attitude had given birth to the idea of humanism. Herein, the question of religious state, or religious political power is replaced by human type morality. The criterion of goodness is not only material success, as has been wrongly suggested by some scholars. The only criterion is the welfare of the individual in society, irrespective of any religious establishments. Even if the modern muslim keeps aloof of his Quranic scriptures, he, nevertheless, has no qualms about it. The change in perspective is two definite to be refuted by any theoretical commentaries. It is evident, this spirit of secularism, even in the organised religious groups.

There is the sarcastic observation, at places. Very true, that the places of religious worship churches and synagogues are transformed into places of public entertainment. It is quite clear that the west achieved its material progress which may be called Renaissance movement. It was a novel method of inquiry, of approach and of investigations. It involved challenge to all establishments, in all fields. Religion was not exempted, thanks to the idea of political democracy.

However, it is preposterous to assume that progress in material world allots those nations, the authority to remain even moral dictators, far from it. On the contrary, it is a fact that such a

3 Dr. Yohd. Manzoor Alam, "Islam Western Civilisation and Muslim Yough", P-13.
progress has proved to be lop-sided. The moral aspect of these nation's have swung off to such a latitude that any attempt at its revival seems futile, at least in near future. Mere acquaintance with the external world does not guarantee the entire development of man. So much is his involvement with matter, that man has come to the state of identifying his entire existence with it. "Absorbed in fact, he is entirely cut off from the unplumbed depths of his own being", observes Dr. Mohammad Iqbal.  

In this rush for material wealth, the west has been driven to catastrophic consequences. It has lost its stability in family life, which is the foundation of any healthy society. In its mad fold, it has tried to embrace even the east. The charms and glares dazzled the visions of the estern societies and now, they are also facing the consequences which are disturbing. Muslim societies all over the globe have experienced the light of west, some of them now at the point of taking drastic measures to restore Islam, its old glory. Even if that is least necessary, the drift from it is equally disheartening. To the staunch muslim, it is blasphemy of the most shameful order. Thus, the influence of West is more infamous than welcome. 

The original message of Islam is forgotten, rather neglected today. The reasons, we have noted, are the changes in the world, even the influence of other religions. However, it is worth noting

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that Islam has not made any demarcation between secular and spiritual life. There can be no separation nor division nor dichotomy between the harmoniously integrated part of the unity. Hence, it could be aptly asked as to how such lofty ideals which Islam prescribes, are rather given up than followed. How is it possible that the shallow theories of west could penetrate and shake the depths of the religion? The answer lies with the propounders of Islam. It is their own attitude towards the others that has deteriorated and spoilt the name of Religion. Religion does not preach anything contrary to human welfare. It is the followers whose limited sources of intelligence and understanding mis-presented the entire religious spirit. Instead of emphasizing the love and the peace and the benevolence of Islam, they brought to the limelight, for their own petty ends, the importance of religious wars, some strict social customs and some other unpleasant aspects like intolerance of other faith. Quranic teachings were distorted by the priestly class, as was the case with almost all major religions of the world. Within muslim society itself, ample laxity has crept in, indulgence into sensuous pleasures to the total neglect of Quranic teachings has led to this state of diapalation. This impact of the western civilisation is more or less common all over the world. This observation need not console


6 Khurshid Ahmed, "Islam or Socialism, 111-50."
the orientalist on large, because the latter can proudly claim rich cultural heritage from past, whose dilution can never be excused. The present state of affairs is a challenge to the systems of education and culture and it calls upon both, faith and reason to work in a team. The society is called upon to imbibe the Islamic ideology instead of aping the wester ideologics. The religious ideologies have the characteristic touch of being imbibed with the spiritual rather than mere material. This responsibility should be shouldered by "Men who have ability to build a complete system of theory and practical life based on Islamic principles and who have strength enough to challenge effectively the intellectual leadership of the present godless thinkers and scientist."  

Education Systems

It is typical of western civilisation to impart education formally. There were systems in oriental countries where education had the texture of entwining all aspects of life, not only verbal proficiency. Education had carved the meaning of personality development, which was carried out at the hands of those teachers whose characters were beyond doubt. The consequences were rich, the entire society faced less problems, less maniacs, and no perversion and obsessions. The picture today is different. Inevitably, the systems of education are those charted out by the western civilisation. Every educational system is characteristic of its

own social structures and its own goals in view. For instance, as the western system of education foresaw its society at material apex, it framed its educational policies accordingly. Ancient orientalists regarded the excellence of mind and spirit as the final good and that was reflected evidently in their mode of imparting education. When the western system of education is introduced in Islamic society, it will not yield due results; on the contrary, it will harm its very fibre. It will result into mental and religious apostasy.

In the previous chapters some reasons have been given for the opinion that Islam and the Western civilisation being built on diametrically opposed conceptions of life, are not compatible with each other. This being so, how could we expect that the education of Muslim youth on western lines, an education based entirely a western cultural experiences and exigencies, would remain free from anti-Islamic influences?

"We are not justified to expect this, except in rare cases, where a particularly brilliant mind triumph over the educational matter, the Western education of Muslim youth is bound to undermine their will to believe, their will to regard themselves as representatives of the peculiar theoretic civilisation of Islam. There can be no doubt whatever that the religious belief is rapidly loosing ground among the 'intelligentsia' educated on western lines".

"If the tuition of European literature in the form it is prevalent today in many Muslim Institutions, contributed to the
estrangement of young Muslims from Islam, the same in a still larger remark is true of the European interpretation of world history. In it, the old attitude, Romans versus Barbarians very distinctly comes to its own. Such a presentation of history has for its unavowed goal to prove that the western races and their civilisation are superior to anything that has been or could be produced in this world, and so to give a sort of moral justification to the western quest of domination and material power.\footnote{Muhammad Asad, "Road to Mecca", 1954, P-85.}

Muhammad Asad further writes:

"The only aspect such historical training can have upon the minds of young non-European people will always be the feeling of inferiority so far as their own culture, their own historical past and their own future possibilities are concerned. They are systematically trained to disdain their own past and their own future - unless it be a future surrendered to western ideals."

"In order to counteract these evil effects, the conscious leaders of Islamic thought should do their best to revise the tuition of history in Muslim institutions. This is a difficult task, no doubt, and it will need a thorough overhauling of the historical investigation, before a new history of the world, as seen with Muslim eyes, is created. But if the task is difficult, it is, none the less, possible, and, moreover imperative. Otherwise our young generation will continue to be fed with undercurrents..."
of a contempt for Islam; and the result will be a daily deepening inferiority complex."

Further the author boldly states that -

"If Muslims have been negligent, in the past, of scientific research, they cannot hope to repair that mistake today by an unrestricted acceptance of western learning. All our scientific backwardness and our poverty stand no comparison, whatever with the deadly effect which our blind following of the western educational structure would have on the religion possibilities of the Muslim world. If we wish to preserve the reality of Islam as a cultural factor, we must guard against the intellectual atmosphere of the western civilisation which is about to conquer our society and our inclinations. By imitating the manners and the mode of life of the west, the Muslims are being gradually forced to adopt the western outlook; the imitation of outward appearance leads, by degrees, to a corresponding assimilation of the mental disposition."

Many other western scholars have thought similarly. One of them was Macaulay who observed "we must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, opinions, words and intellect".9

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9 Basu B.B. "History of Education in India under the rule of East India Company", P-87.
Such a system of education in favour of western ideologies were in fact, a cruel imposition upon the eastern people. They manipulated their position in interfering within the infrastructure of the eastern social institutions. The results were devastating ever since, though brought to limelight only during this century that is, after Indian independence. The west tried to mould countries into their own caste regardless of their social contexts. Undoubtedly, schools and colleges bore the name of educational institutions, where practically speaking, only clerks were trained. W.G. Smith has interesting observation to make. He says "To some extent, these were imposed, to some extent, sought after, some Muslims resisted some welcomed them, or were brought up to or gradually came to welcome them, eventually many came to take them for granted. The process has continued apace."

Western thought and civilisation along with the educated Muslim class all over the world has faced the change in the values of life. The situation today is dilemmatic. Today's muslim has become so poignantly ambiguous that he neither accepts the western authority unwillingly and completely nor is he in a position to denounce his age-old religion and customs. Any religion at crossroads faces transition. In order that it may be revived, institutions in power may make serious attempts. Whether they will succeed fully is doubtful simply because of the fact that modern muslim society, has lost its identity beyond recognition and it

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10 W.C. Smith, "Islam in Modern History", (1957), PP-63-64.
Itself is reluctant to accept more, the bondage of religion, once they have freed themselves. The retreat is difficult, if not physically, then mentally. Islamic values have passed through a period of transition. They have been tested and retested, only for the modern muslim to denounce most of them. This is not a remark on the respectability or aestheticity or the status of the values as such. It is rather a comment upon shifty attitude of modern man towards ultimate values of life. It is a remark on the lax and hedonistic nature of man, which found expression, once the authority of religion was unheeded. However, there are the unpleasant reminders of barbarous customs in some muslim countries. They practice cruelty in punishment, encourage submissiveness in women, hail bloodshed in the name of religion, and practice outdated costumes of many wives. Statesmen and politicians can easily amend these mal-practices and atrocities in the name of religion, if they are seriously concerned. Moreover, most of the laxity/looseness that is found in muslim life style is the direct result of the western educational systems which are bereft of any spiritual touch. Pre-Islamic part and its obsolete ideology held sacrosant by modern muslim is the weakness with him, yet to be overcome. Instead of reading the enlightened achievements of the west, the muslim has slyly blamed it for its waywardness from morality. True, but a phenomenon which, if avoided, could turn the defeat of muslim societies into their healthier growth.

The picture though, is not as hopeless. Discrimination in the choice of educational systems will go a long way. That aim
of education lies in the inculcation of basic values of life, is something which cannot be controverted. To impart civic sense and human values, is the minimum curriculum of any civilized society. Then, the community which aims to shape its society spiritually should rightly choose its system of education. Right from literature, philosophy and culture, down to science and technology, the entire approach should be goal-oriented, or at least spiritually oriented. Instead of neglecting everything that is western, there should be sufficient maturity to accept all that is the best in all systems. The constant endeavour should be towards enlightenment and modernisation. No one can afford to put the clock back. The reality that science and technology has brightened up the world of matters and brought together the human beings all over the world cannot be overlooked. The western contribution will have to be appreciated fully. It has allotted the mulims, the down-trodden and the submissive and meek women the power of expression, which is everyone's birth right. It has illuminated the dark, ignorant mind, blindly following the dictates of ecclesiastic moral class, without any ray of hope for better life here on this earth. It has released the voices which were choked so far, with pseudo religious apprehensions of hell and hell-fire. Any religion with traces of aboriginal practices cannot stand parallel with the modern concept of humanism and hence their downfall. Islam can stand and prove better than any ism, for a religion has a plus point which every ism even humanism, lacks. This qualification is the history and the men and the
religious dogmas. Over and above all, it is the touch of spirit, which has always entered human mind to a religion. The fact of isms is temporary, the ecstasy of religion is universal.
(ii) **Islam and other world religions**

Having its inception in Judaism and Christianity, Islam shows the characteristics peculiar to these Semitic religions. Initially, Islam did not claim a total independence of approach. Nor did it claim the novelty of its message. The message was presented by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.), who applauded it as the message of all prophets of God to mankind. It is the meaning that this Arabic word carries, submission, surrender, obedience and peace. As a religion, it is Divine Guidance for the entire humanity. It was revealed by God to the mankind from Adam, through Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.). However, some proficient religious thinkers do believe that this message had been misrepresented to the masses from time to time, till Prophet Muhammad (S.A.) sanctified the religion and parallel to the world in the name of Islam. He was the last of the prophethood and hence was entitled to receive the message word by word. He was ordered by God to take up the responsibility of delivering it to the masses, and show them the path to salvation.

The aim of any religion is to attempt an answer to the ultimates; why we are born, who created us, why we must die, what is the purpose of our lives, and what will happen to us after death. These questions are profound, and profounder still, are

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11 Quran 11:36 ii:19, 67, 83-85 XI 72 84; XII:101, VI 44, 111; XXVII:44

12 Quran XLII:13, XV:9 LXXXV 21-22
the answers. In the process, a religion is born, be it Judaism, Christianity or Islam. However, the characteristics of these Semitic religions are that they believe in the revelation, in the prophethood and in the holy book.

Both Judaism and Christianity became static and stagnant due to the extremities in their practice. Ecclesiastical class was powerful to the extent of influencing the status. This class held in contempt the members of the lower social strata. Jesus Christ came forth as their sevior, but he too met the infamous end at the hands of Jews. However, Christianity has the widest following today, next comes Islam. Number of followers do not contribute to the greatness of any religion; true but it has been a general observation that greater the number, wider is the space over which it is spread.

The moral and the religious condition of Arabs was diplorable. Neither Christianity nor Judaism had succeeded in raising them in the standards of human values. Both Jews and Christians cherished monotheistic ideas. The Jews had entered Arabia at various times, and under the pressure of various circumstances. They had the tendency to lapse repeatedly with idolatry, akin to that of heathendom of Arabs. With an idea of the "God of Abraham" they would naturally combine a materialistic conception of the deity, and hence we find them rearing a stature representing Abraham, with the ram beside him ready for sacrifice in the interior of Kaaba. However, such drifts in the monotheistic religions just indicate the fact that human nature craves for a concrete object
of worship. Abstract worship, though widely practiced and possible fails to fulfil his total personality. Hence, the slightest chance, makes room for some kind of idolatry; though Abraham himself was neither Jew nor a Christian. Both, Moses and Abraham are mentioned frequently in Quran. The influence of Jews on Islam is on other fronts too. All the three monotheistic religions attribute to Ishmael, the son of Abraham. This is a significant remark on the Muslim ancestry. It is an important remark on the spiritual foundation of the Muslim world in general, and of the Arabs in particular, in that the Quran associates him and his father Abraham with the founding of Kaaba in Mecca. Thus, the Arabs are the physical members of the family of Abraham through Ishmael. However, Islam does not subscribe to the Judeo-Christian tradition which considers Abraham as the founder of a hereditary community of a chosen people. Quran views Abraham as the guide or leader of a non-hereditary community of God’s people. Quran specifically calls attention to Abraham’s role as the founder of monotheism. He has been given full credit for disdaining idol worship, or associating any other totems with God. Once and for all, he fortified the monotheistic way of worship.

As with Judaism and Christianity Monotheism is the most outstanding and distinguishing mark of Islam. This trend did face

strong opposition from pagan Arabs who had dragged into polytheistic practices. To them, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.) reminded that he was just following what Abraham had innovated. It was because that tradition was genuine.

The Judaism and Christianity too are revealed religions, like Islam. Islamic tradition of revelation includes Prophet Abraham and Prophet Noah. Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) declared to all antagonists that be thy Arabs, Jews or Christians, they must adhere to the true tradition. This point is particularly significant, because it is a remark on the priority of Abraham even before Jews and Christians.

The most fundamental principles that Islam shares with Judaism and Christianity are the basic principles of monotheism, revelation and the holy scriptures. Chronologically, Judaism is accepted to have been established in 1500 B.C., Christianity in 1 A.D. and Islam in 570 A.D.

The lives of those who received the revelation, however, are spectacularly and strikingly varied. The common man is honestly and genuinely baffled at the choice of the Almighty and is not able to strike any definite criterion of selection. However, one rests content with the idea that the purity of heart, that is the inculcation of some fundamental human values, forms a very noteworthy aspect of the persons receiving revelation in these three religions.

The religious scriptures of the religion, as most any/religions, meet in all major aspects of their message. There is no
disagreement in the values and their hierarchy. Apart from these similarities in the revealed religion, non-revealed religions have also similar points of remembrances.

Thus, the influence of the religion on Islam, mainly Judaism and Christianity with whom it resembles in major points, is quite noteworthy.

Further, the impact of neo-platonic philosophy is worth consideration. To relate the Allah of the Quran with Pantheistic One Being, Man and Phenomenal world - everything else in fact, except Allah - they identified with Not-Being which reflects Being like a mirror. Since man is endowed with the spark of Real Being, he is Contingent Being. (A kind of Being which is and is not, as Plato world say) so long as he remains in his present probationary state. He is subject to laws and creeds to restrain his evil tendencies. But the end of man is to return to that from which he emerged.

Thus, even Sufi Mysticism tends to pantheism and Al-Ghazali accused the philosophers, of denying resurrection altogether, Averroes denied the change, affirming that "that which will be resuscitated will be a representation of what is seen in this world. It will be not the very thing 'in essentia'. For that which has perished cannot be revived, except that it can be individualised and existence can be bestowed only on the semblance of what has perished in its identity". He concluded that this proves that the future existence has a kind of generation. More

15 E.I.I. Whinfield. The Gulshan-i-Raz (London 1880),
elevated then that of actual existence and constitute a more
elegant order than the order of the world. But he admitted
then he was not able to establish immortality on philosophical
grounds. Though he held the belief as a religious tenet, in the
eyes of St. Thomas and the scholastics Averroism, was as incompati­
bile with Christian teaching as it was with orthodox modern
Theology. Even if the Arabian commentator was thought to have
presented a rather difficult picture of the Puripatetic tradition,
he was always treated with courtesy and respect by both Aquinus
and Dante, and his influence in Europe continued until the begin­
nning of the scientific renaissance in the seventeenth century,
which marks the period of enlightenment on scientific and
technological fronts. Its effects on religion through were
slightly disheartening. In some aspect or the other, all
religious practices received a set back. Some religion survived
it, other vanished, still others, intermingled with the major
religions of the world today. Fundamental teachings of revealed
religion cannot be altered. They may be mis-interpreted never­
theless. With Islam, it is not the strictures that have suffered
change, but the followers. The impact of some such factors indul­
ged the Muslims in the enticement of material life, and the
neglect of the glorious religion they had so fortunately inherited.

16 Tahafut al Tahafut (Cairo A.H. 1303) Renan Averroes ell
Averrolsome (Paris 1896), PP. 158 ff
(iii) Islam at cross-roads

This phenomenon in the life of any religion is the natural outcome of modern age. Modern lives have created a rather alien atmosphere for the free and spontaneous survival of any religion. At least it is difficult to catch the initial spirit. Even Islam faces the dilemma of reconciling itself to the complicated, incomprehensible external factors, some of which we have discussed. This age expects any religion, to make endless compromises of its principles with moral, social, political and economic evils. Most institutions today are filled with corruption and hypocrisy. It is natural for the modern man to be curious about any faith historically. But, in the process, he becomes an atheist or an antagonist of the gravest order, so much so that the whole life appears to have lost all charm, meaning and purpose. Religion at the hands of such frivolous intellectuals, such a mode of thinking has created great havoc. It has adversely affected the modern muslim in particular position, by inducing him a feeling of inferiority.

"Throughout the Middle East, modernist intellectuals were shaped with western system of thought and valuation. Many of them went to school in the West or were educated in Western Universities between Cairo and Istanbul. They were trained to think like modern men."17

"The progressive young Syrian bureaucrat echoed dozens of respondents interviewed. He said, "When we see the lives of the

17 Daniel Lerner with an introduction by David Reisman, The Passing of the Traditional Society, Modernizing the Middle East, The Free Press, a Division of Macmillan Co, N.Y. 1964, P-408."
people in the West at the cinema and compare that with our own lives, we find that we still have a long way to go before obtaining their level. The films are like a teacher to us who tells us what to do and what not". 18

"Among the common people, the psychological problems of modernization are much more rudimentary. What is required is to 'motivate' the isolated and illiterate peasants and tribesmen who comprise the bulk of the area's population, to provide them with clues as to what the better things of life might be". 19

Such is the consequences of shallow criticism and borrowed western materialism. Moreover, it has been a fashionable practice among most modern muslims to indulge in far-fetched interpretation of Quran in order to justify their weaknesses and short-comings. Islam has to face the choice between being ridiculed and scorned by the western society and the life, or follow those strictures of Quran which in Islam, are most keenly appreciated and esteemed. However, Islam would surely go a long way if in the world of religions only its followers were more discriminative than fanatics, more sincere than just following the dictates like slaves. There should be, in the followers themselves, an urge to respect Islam, for it has shown the path of right way of living here on earth, and promised peace, hereafter. Even for those who refuse to entertain the concept of life hereafter, would sometime in their lives, discover that they inwardly

18 Daniel Lerner with an introduction by David Reisman, The Passing of the Traditional Society, Modernizing the Middle East, The Free Press, a Division of Macmillan Co, N.Y. P-400
19 Ibid, P-411.
urge to know the purpose of their present lives. The problem of food and shelter no doubt, over rule and over power every other query on this earth. The excuse lies with such masses, but not with the rest of the people. And hence the inner need to clinch to something superior, something powerful. Religion has its seeds in the interior of the man whatever be its external manifestations. Primitive man expressed it in totems; refined men expressed it through religions. Thus, Islam being one of the major eleven religions of the world has nevertheless, primitive characteristics carried along its development, inspite the fact that it is the revealed religion. Such practices do creep in the body of the religion, not theoretically but practically. It is not possible to add or subtract what the revealed religion has stated.

However, it may be observed that the influence of other religion, its customs may be adopted. But such adoptions are just ethical and hence do not pose any serious harm to the very fibre of the religion.

Recent age cannot escape the enigmatic task of striking a compromise between two different religio-cultural systems. Especially, the relationship of Islam with West has peculiar dimensions. For the reasons, both historical and political, Europe was in a position to feel threatened by Islam. At times, such pressures resulted in projecting a distorted image of Islam. Upon its dominance over Eastern Asia, Europe viewed Islam as an obsolete, timid and irrelevant religio-cultural system. Its attitude towards Islam was negative. However, such obsessions
had not come to stay forever. Recent approach is more balanced and mature. Islam will remain indebted to Western Scholars for bringing limelight, its glories, teachings and lofty ideals. Nevertheless some sporadic political interests tried to distort some Islamic concepts like God's revelation of the religion, to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.), his authority to receive the revelation, his life and his mission. These aspects have remained targets of attack, misinterpretation and ridicule. Islamic teachings too were questioned for their originality. They are said to have been borrowed from Judaism and Christianity. Not only throughout the middle ages, but even up to our times, there were the common themes of criticism. Instead now, a healthier approach of comparative studies is adopted, where no religion can ever claim total independence of its surroundings. As a result, all contemporary religions will reflect, more or less, the doctrines prevalent then.

However, the general impression remained that these western thinkers were not interested in the genuine information of Islam. Rather, they selected controversial issues like crusades, polygamy and paradah system. Needless to elaborate that these stricures of Quran are not strictly followed today in the spirit of religious doctrines. If followed, then they are practiced for different reasons. This fact speaks a great deal about the non-relevance many religious teachings of Islam, but then, with the change in social pattern, this was long overdue.
The position of Islam today has been made ambiguous by the factors external to it, as well its followers. Eternal factors mainly constitute of the opinions and influence of the western societies. For example, the western author seems to be strongly influenced, even unconsciously, by the difference between the two cultures. At times, there are striking remarks suggesting the superiority of western culture, at times, it is brought out in refined manners and elegant language. Yet, the fact remain that the tendency of the western thinker is less favourable in the estimation of Islam. However, their phenomenon may be whiped aside, as there is often an urge, almost instinct, to judge one's own culture as superior to the rest.

William Robertson Smith observes -

"It is indeed a great fault of the religion of the Prophet that it lends itself so easily to prejudices of the race among whom it was first promulgated, and that it has taken under its protection so many barbarous and obsolete ideas, which even Mohammad must have seen to have no religions worth, but which he carried over into his system in order to facilitate the propagation of his reformed doctrines. Yet many of the prejudices which seem to us most distinctly. Mohammedan have no basis in the Koran."20

Formidable tendency as yet, is the one in what, at one stroke, 'orientals', 'Arabs', 'Semitic', 'Muslim' etc, are reduced

20 Quoted by Edward W. Said in his Orientalism, P-236.
to the level of monolithic object, denying any separate existence, or individuality to them.

The new era has created tensions in Islam, but it has also been at a time of renewed political success. Muslim countries from Morocco to Pakistan have gained or maintained their independence. Though the hope of a union or alliance of Muslim nations has not been realized, Islam has experienced a new resurgence of power. The Muslim faith is spreading in Africa, where the attraction of its simple monotheism, its emphasis on brotherhood and the contra sting intolerance and race consciousness displayed by some Christians have made Islam a powerful rival of Christianity for the all gaze of the uncommitted Negro mind.

Such sweeping generalisations about different people following Islam has been possible because the western scholars have accepted a criterion of entitling a people as Muslims. This criterion has the characteristics of the Muslims following Islam in 18th century, as is presented by the classical literature. According to modern western scholars, Islam of today is revived from classical literature, where it lay dormant. In practical life, Muslims had to face the idignation of being regarded as the worthless and down graded remnant of that standard image of the Muslims of 18th century. However, the political freedom of Muslim states from western yoke after the second world war has changed the status of Islam. Now they can sprawlingly re-establish in their countries, the tarnished image of Islam, if they attempt. There can be the revival of the sound cultural values, now with
renewed zeal and enlightenment and the gravity of experience. The Muslims of today cannot be denied their reality and existence; the west has come to terms with his fact.

The significant distinction between the other revealed religions and Islam is that the Testaments are a revelation of God, while the Quran is a revelation from God. Any religion having its hold on people for last fourteen centuries must have something, fundamentally significant and meaningful to say to its people, to every man. Islam has carried out this difficult task efficiently.
CHAPTER - IV

STATUS OF ISLAM IN MODERN MUSLIM WORLD

(1) SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE

(ii) MODERN MUSLIM SOCIETIES IN MAJOR MUSLIM COUNTRIES

(iii) PSYCHOLOGY OF THE FOLLOWERS
(1) **Socio-Political Change**

An age of religious establishment has its own peculiarity. Whenever a new religion was founded, it was always related to its social background. A break-through in the current order of society, or an overture of social dogmas or exaggeration in following social customs. Whenever the extremes were reached, there was an emergence of something new, a religion, a doctrine, or a new wave theory, engulfing and commanding the attention of the locale.

Though the present age is full of extremeties and contradictions, it cannot offer the situation for any other religious doctrine, though, there may be some isms, which have flourished for sometime. Unless there is the quality of spiritual dimension, unless a doctrine has the inherent hint at the permanence of soul or spirit, no dogma, degree of theory can reach the standards of religiosity. Religion is essentially not limited to this life here on earth, it is basically spiritual, and above mandane affairs of life. It presupposes divinity and also the possibility of dialogue with it, which we call prayers.

Prayer is a universal phenomenon. Even in primitive tribes of totemism and henotheistic practices, prayers play an important role. With the advent of sophistication, some vulgar practices have been replaced by refined ones. Thus, even if modern age may claim to have nurtured many novel doctrines, it cannot dream of setting up a new religious system. The very fibre of modern society makes it impossible. As it is, all that a religion has to say, has been exhausted, and is repeated in some other religion. A
particular religion is not fundamentally different from any other religion of the world. It may differ in details, not in dogmas. A comparative study of all religions especially the eleven major religions of the world would lead to the consequence that there are happy signs of all men attempting to gather under the one single banner of world citizenship though they may adhere to their own individual faiths. At present, the world sociologists are deeply concerned over some serious facts of the present age. The cause of concern is genuine and the degree of seriousness is alarming. Unless a drastic reform is introduced in some sectors of social life, the drift of society ashore, will drown it in the whirlpool of materialism. Then there would be no retreat, as the last trace of religiosity would have been lost, predicting from the present waywardness. Religion is the binding force of society; it is the rectifying factor and guide, as has been remarked by considering some of the virtues treated in Quran.

It is the grip, the anchor, the reins which holds society stable. Religion, thus is the stabilising force, more so is Islam, because more than anything else, it has concentrated on the way of life, here on earth. Earnestly, this is the case, though of course, it has elaborated upon the concept of life after death. Though, one of the serious facts of this present age is that, the old norms have failed to convince and hold our youth. Once more, as it were, we are face to face with spiritual bankruptcy, a total cultural blankness. This state is reached partly because of the wrong and undue insistence upon Western values, or simply aping them. After the 18th century, that when the age of Enlightenment
had already awakened the Western Europe and North America. The old prejudices were shaken off, and were replaced by irreligiocity and freedom from tradition.

Having reached its esteemed place amongst the major religions of the world, it can claim a grand following of about one billion, spread throughout the world. Many of the Asian and African countries are nearly or totally Muslim. It is, therefore, quite natural that they have not yet abandoned the medieval practices which may or may not be directly relevant to Islam. Islam was embraced by the people of various continents with their own native culture, customs and traditions.

There are the more backward tribes and other peoples in different Muslim countries. With more urbanisation and consequent pressure for change, sociologists call it a process of Islamisation. Though, there is no constancy or permanence in time, it is simply another name for alteration. But that is not the case, time is combination of both, change and permanence. Yet, the change that has been found on religious fronts are disappointing. Modern age in general, has wrongly chosen the path of destruction. This is a glaring example of the misuse of freedom of will. It is rather unjudicious. Instead of clinging to religious faith and the simple codes of conduct, modern age is now bent upon self-destruction and driving mankind to death. It is producing heaps of evidence against the utility of the human race in the divine tribunal. There are some destructive forces at work, inspite of the religious sections and taboos. Islam has sincere claims to make. It promises the
society a stable life, and save it from future devastation. The crises are more ethical and moral, than anything else. Once there is laxity in the following of social norms, those are ample, shaky grounds for many a social vices, to thrive. Such vices grow in the society which has little respect for any religious values. The virtues enlisted in quran are very simple to follow, and yet they have been given up. That has resulted into the complicated and tedious lives, both materially and psychologically. Modern Western society in particular, is crazy towards orient standards. It is owing to them, as a matter of fact, the oriental culture is often presented and revived from time to time. The West is now at the apex of its material achievements. Any change now, would be downfall. Their obsession for peace which they rightly believe, they pine in the East, and Eastern Religions. Their L.S.D., drugs cocaine, sleeping pills and various other tranquilisers have given only temporary escape from reality. Though Karl Marx called religion the opium of masses, it was not one of the material ones. Its ecstasy lends peace to the tortured mind, and there is no escapism from reality. The situations are visualised in different perspective, and their centralisation of one particular issue is different in religious solace. Hence, religion as such, does not hinder the progress of society, but solidifies its structure. Though, it is human weakness to be able to stand upto the codes of Quran, the scripture is often held in criticism. At times, its principles and laws have been distorted, ignored or violated. Though an unbiased study of Quran would reveal its genuine concern
over social welfare. Truly, both ethics and religion have been proportionately advocated in Quran. Ethics merely states the code of conduct, Religion bades their following. No Muslim society ceases to be so just because it has outwardly adjusted itself with the external world. There is no inherent change in the fundamental principles of Islam, there can never be such a basic change in the constitution of such a major religion.

The religious authority is too awe-inspiring, too dignified and respectful to be trifled by any trivial comments. However, it cannot have place for anyones whim, obsession or prejudice. "The creed of the slaves is that defective is the Book", rightly observes Iqbal, "For it teaches not the Muslims the ways of surveillity". There is like justification when Quran is attempted a different kind of interpretation in order to make some such perversions, acceptable. The caste, which is the other way about, that is instead of following the dictates of Quran, it is Quran which takes their dictation. Thus, Quran has been disgracefully lowered, so that it suits the standards of social degradation, where the only legitimate topic of discussion is that pertaining to the problems of material well-being economics and political power. All idealistic talk has been shifted on the shelves of librates, for reference works. Thus, the issue at stake is not the salvage of Islam as such, but the salvage of modern age in general. A sobre and mature religion like Islam can well take care of its survival, as it has done in all ages. It appeals alike, the unlearned unlettered men of huts, or the intellectuals of ivory towers. Islam has respectfully secured its place in
society. It, on no account will ever thrive upon the mercy of its followers. Granted that followers are flesh and bones of a religion, it is the spirit of the religion itself which breathes life into them. Till then, there is no importance of the mere class of followers, simply indicating huge numbers. A religion, whatever it has lacked such spirit has failed to survive over a period of time. Islam if it had failed to throb in the very nerve of the social structure, would have long given up its claim to stability.

A religion is one of the institutions of society. "Every religion is a cultural product, and like all cultured products, it must grow and develop if it is to survive as a living cultural organism".¹

Though there may be some staunch Muslims who believe in the "follow, do not innovate" doctrine, Muslim society, at large, has moulded and reformed some of its doctrines. This change has, in no way, degraded Islam. On the contrary, it has made Islam available to all like, irrespective of historical period, or social context. Islam has never opted for rigidity. As it was necessary that the social order be maintained, the above quoted maxim of total submissiveness was relevant when men were not lettered. Today, in the period of enlightenment when the entire literature on any subject is available to the scholars, it can properly be maintained message to convey. To blur that Quran had much sobre/its image with the hazy concepts like

that Quran had much more message to convey. In the eyes of fanaticism, would be wrong. Quran as has been previously maintained in this chapter, has always stood for rationalism. It has advised the followers to avoid extremes, especially in the following of certain virtues like mercy, forgiveness and sympathy and to use one's judgement before performing any action. There cannot be a sounder evidence of the benevolent and rational character of Islam. Iqbal was one of the prominent Muslim intellectuals who propounded creative interpretation which is called the principle of Ijtihad, signifying movement. He looks upon God as co-worker. He argues that if the man does not become the initiative, if he does not evolve the inner richness of his being, if he ceases to feel the inward punch of advancing life, then the spirit within him hardens and he is reduced to dead matter. Now, this argument for change is appealing. Even if Iqbal is considered to be the person who hesitated an approval of concrete reform, was the person nevertheless, who hailed the Turkish reformation held it in high esteem. The conviction that such thinkers carried, was that the evolution in modern direction was in keeping with the basic principles of Islam. As is evident from the cryptic nature of Quranic quotation, it left sufficient scope of various interpretation. Modern context can furnish ample ground for their veracity.

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As for the circumstances favourable for any reform, Muslim society has remained rather slow and obstinate. The obstinacy of the dogmatic followers was understandable, since any reform in society will naturally be reflected in the scriptures. That was considered to be blasphemy. No orthodoxy would venture any comment or any contrary opinion upon the unquestioned authority of Islam. Times, however, have changed in favour of healthy, natural room for controversy. Though it must be kept in mind, while fumbling with the interpretation of any religious authority, that the principles upon which they are based, are above controversy. Even then, there are noteworthy reforms in political, social, religious and economic spheres. Not that political reforms have been very smooth. As it is, there was the problem over the concept of Islamic State, which cannot have an existence in the original form. Truly speaking, most concepts will have to remain satisfied with the modern referents, if they must exist. Even Saudi Arabia cannot properly be called an Islamic State. Legal imposition of Sharia does not make a state Islamic. An Islamic State has no room for hereditary, legacy to Caliphat, nor was there any constitution, other than Quran and the Hadith. It is a peculiarity with this religion that it does not make a distinction between codes of conduct for different sections of life. The hackeneyed practices, occupy a permanent place in social life, and thus, a practice, not even applauded in Islam is accepted. For example, the recent happenings in the Muslim societies other than India, are alarming. They practice barbarism under the name
of Islam, and tarnish its humanistic image. In order that they may be honoured with the pseudo titles of Islamic State, they have imposed ruthless penalties like chopping off hands as a punishment for stealing, and stoning to death, or lashing for adultery and illicit relationship. This is a cruel joke with the Muslims, in the name of religion. It clearly takes no account of the earnest appeal made in Hadith to rationalism. It has been clearly maintained there that any virtue may be interpreted only in the light of reason, and only after considering fully the relevance of a particular action, should it be carried on. Moreover, Hadith has clearly pointed out that if the person who is affected by the action should be punished or rewarded for his own good in particular, and consequently, for the social good. A person committing a particular crime, say theft, should be given all chances of sympathetic consideration before chopping out his hands. In most cases, such persons are often the victims of circumstances of psychic disorder. However, there are some judicious Muslim societies, quite a number of them, who constitute the civic courts for such minor offences. Awkwardly enough, there are some notorious politicians, who satisfy their sadiset instincts through murder and genocide. Personal vengeance and some such filthy acts of criminal nature are often attempted justifications, by seeking Quranic sanctions. Enlightened masses, however, do make distinctions between the genuine religious purpose and selfish, dire motives. It is a great and grave challenge to the scholars of Islamic studies, to rectify the literal and soulless translation
of Islamic strictures, without referring to its clear reference to reason. After all, the religion is for the upliftment of man, and certainly not for disrespecting his power to rational and consistent thinking. To deny such a fundamental quality, is to defy the very definition of man. It is rationality which qualifies a human being, and happily enough, Quran has taken a serious note of it. Ambiguity has been retained, without a clear reference to the full consideration of reason, so that the leaders in power, both religious and political could enjoy their unquestioned authority, uninterpreted. Modern age has now realized the need to re-interpret the decayed slogans, if Islam is to be respected in the systems of changing values. Islam never preached rigidity genuinely. Any stress on the dictum, was only the necessity of time. Had it not been the case, Islam would certainly have remained the religion of the backward, the down-trodden and the uneducated. On the contrary, we have the enlightened elites of the various sections, not only embracing Islam, but hailing it as the most practicable and humanistic religion of all times. Not that Islam thrives upon such conversions or begs the applause of the intellectuals. Even without any external sanctions to its universality, it would continue to remain so, such basic is its structure.

Though, certainly, this is the age of transition, and Islam is

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passing through an interesting phase of social change. Islam has always shown stresses of urbanisation. This is because it originated in a non-agricultural, commercial society. Hence, it does not get involved into the mythical and ethereal aspects, like those religions which originated in peasant society. Most of the theoretical formulations of early Islam were more business oriented than anything else. This characteristic is evidently reflected in the contractual nature of marriage and divorce. A drastic reform in marriage has been introduced socially, especially, the recent insistence on monogamy, and the general cry for a permanent marital institution, than easy divorce. A religion which originates in commerce is more practical and more applicable to social problems than a sacramental doctrine. But then, it being flexible, it is equally exposed to change. Any insistence on its permanance would give rise to funny deductions, which are often irrelevant to modern technically complex social structure. Islam has the advantage over other religions in retaining its urban structure, and thus remain relevent even to the modern age. Max Weber in his article "Major Features of the World Religion" observes "religiosity of bourgeois strata seems to originate in urban life. In the city a religious experience of the individual tends to lose the character of ecstatic trance, or dream and to assume the paler forms of contemplative mysticism or a low-keyed, everyday piety. For the craftsman, steady work with customers can suggest the development of concepts like 'duty' and 'recompose' as basic orientations towards life". It is a general observation that Islam
adheres to piety and strict adherence to laws. There are quite a number of progressive laws, rarely found in a religious system, for example, the law of inheritance, and the right of women to own property independently. They have a voice in the contractual nature of marriage. They could propose marital conditions before entering into the relationship. Though polygamy was in vogue in early ages, it is almost obsolete now. This reform is autonomous and self-oriented, thus vindicating the commercial and urban characteristics of Islam. Even divorce has now been exercised in favour of women's rights.

There is marked change in the policy of taking interest on capital and investment. Another important reform in the problem of divorce marks an interesting and healthy attitude amongst spouses. As it is clear that the Muslim Law which permits four wives to man has not found much reverence in modern age, mainly because a self-respecting enlightened woman would normally consider it as self-mutilating to grant such a concession; so is the case in divorce. A conscious man with self respect, thanks to the age of education and enlightened world never tolerate his previous spouse having matrimonial relations with another man, before he accepts her once more, whatever may be the reasons for his repentence. However, some Mohammedan scholars have avoided the religious complications by introducing convenient modifications that the divorce uttered in fit of anger, and then repented, may be pardoned for a time.\footnote{Syed Ameer Ali, "The Personal Law of the Mohammedans", P-259.}
occupies her prior position in her spouse's life. A welcome change of attitude has grasped the Muslim societies at large, in spite of the Quranic promises that the Lord will feed the children, and hence parents should never take recourse to abortions or use of contraceptives for family planning. It is more of a reaction to adjust with the tense economic condition and hygiene problems, than as a revolt or lack of reverence for Islam. The illiterate lot of Indian Muslims, for example, produce many offsprings in the name of religion, but fail to apply industry for a decent living. Lacking formal education, they end up as labourers or rickshaw drivers. In turn, these very lot creates their prototype, and thus, the vicious circle would never end, but for the family planning acceptance. It is a sheer necessity of times, if population explosion is to be checked. Hence, any reform in this direction is a welcome one, and must be fully appreciated, instead of discouraging the Muslims by pointing out religious retaliation. On the contrary, if anything be remembered throughout, is the respect for reason and judgement, which Hadith has so unambiguously referred to. Egypt has set an example, by bringing out a legal consultation which permitted deposits of money in the saving banks where they earned interest. Despite some initial resistance from the dogmatists, the practice has become popular because it is practicable. Other Muslim societies would soon follow the lead. Being egalitarian in principle and spirit, Islam has retained in its value system equality and fraternity. These, and such others
are the ideas with which Islam has never tampered or compromised. However, it suggests suitable interpretations, so that the two do not conflict, for example, the right to private property may lead to class-conflict, and thus disturb the value of fraternity. In order that all values function in symphony, extremities should be avoided with the help of reason. Modern Islamic followers would benefit from the experience of the ancient Muslims, and would rather enjoy a balanced life by judicious redistribution of wealth. It would be preposterous to expect set answers to all our problems. Religion is not a computer; it would lose its relevence if it is so considered. If progress is in tune with faith, values and intellectual vigour and sincerity of purpose, Islam can legitimately vouchsafe the standards of modern society. The entirety of problem-section cannot be searched in Islam. Whateoer and to whatever extent they are sensibly applicable the scriptures may be consulted. In rest of the cases, which are naturally peculiar to the particular context, it behoves that man uses his own sense of judgement, his own discretion. He should, under all circumstances, satisfy himself that his actions and decisions would not hurt divinity. It is the basic rule for every Muslim, who has faith in Islam. Islamic Jurisprudence in the constitution which is the result of the experience of the men of religiosity and authority who compiled the typical problems and tackled them most rationally, where they thought Quran was silent or cryptic.
It follows quite logically that the problems peculiar to current context may likewise be approached rationally. Modern Muslim Societies in major Muslim Countries

The over-enthusiasm in some of the Muslim societies has blotted modern scientific and technical progress with unpleasant consequences. To ensure their own place in the changing world, adaptation to the change was necessary for the Muslim societies. The only other alternative would be to remain materially and socially backward. Needless to comment that such a progress need not have implied moral regress. Unfortunately it has occurred in many a Muslim societies. The stone was set rolling by Turkey. Though it was this land that accepted in practice, the impact of West and changed its own social costumes, it had only served as the mouthpiece of the cry of other Muslim societies. They too, were suffocated and pent up with irrelevant and out-dated social practices. With the sophistication of mass media of communications, they could evaluate their inconsequential position in the competitive world. Moreover, Turkey discovered some enlightened sociologists and theoreticians like Zia Gokalp, Namik Kemal and Ataturke. Zia justified the choice of western civilisation as natural, because that was according to him, a continuation of the ancient, Mediterranean Civilisation, whose founders were their own early forefathers. As such he had no qualms regarding Turkey, being turned Western. On the contrary, he firmly argued that such a state would not necessarily mean anti-Islamic. He cited the examples of Jews and who Japanese share the same civilisation with European nations, although
they differ from them both in culture and religion. Being most influential, he laid the spiritual and social spheres, he was an apt person to lay the theoretical foundations of the modern Turkish State. Though, of course, in practice, it was more imitation of West, than adopting it for social welfare. In the process, Turkey adopted a new face socially, materially and politically. An internal breach was created between the people and the ruling class, since the change introduced was so sudden. The new society was faceless. It lost the distinguishing characteristics of its rich, cultural past, and could not genuinely cast itself in Western world. This resulted into a chasm between the common masses and the ruled class. The imitation thus was devoid of all critical apprisement, originality of outlook and high-mindedness. As a result, Turkey is now struggling as a third-rate power, awaiting favourable glances from the West.

There was Namik Kemal who circulated the concept of liberty. Yet it was the zeal and concern of Kemal Ataturk which translated Zia Gokalp's philosophy into action, till he has completely succeeded in bringing about total social change. During his period, the remarkable change was that Turkey was reorganised as a secular state. A religion, which claimed divine kingship to the throne, thus was unseated. For the first time ever since its inception, Islam, for that matter any religion, was treated as a totally

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5 Niyazi Berkes - Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization (1959), PP-266-275.
6 Ibid, P-18.
personal affairs. Politics had no authority over it. Nor could
religion interfere with the working of the state. Thus, it was
an end of Caliphate and Islamic Law. Instead, the Turkey was cast
into different legal systems (like criminal law, trade law) after
the pattern of Switzerland, Italy and Germany. The Muslim personal
law was subordinated to the civil law of Europe. Religious
instructions were not a part of the school curriculum. Women
were asked to drop pardah, and could take education along with
men. The education was imparted through Latin, instead of Arabic.
The national costume was made compulsory, which included hat
on the head, instead of headgear. Armstrong flays that Ataturk
had destroyed the whole religious basis and outlook of the
Turkish State and peoples.  

However, the personal impact of Ataturk had done the deed,
and Turkey was westernised. After his death, there are some
indications that point out the deep-rootedness of Islam in its
people. Had it not been so, Muslims would have turned non-
Islamic, like Spainards. It is an unbiased observation that the
reforms introduced by Ataturk were merely an echo of what had been
passing in the minds and hearts of the national leaders of all
the Muslim countries. It was an unprecedented experiment of the
unique type. Its success was complete. Today, Turkey carries
the deep-rooted impressions of Ataturk’s reform, without any
fundamental rivalry with the traditional Islam. The change

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7 Armstrong, H.C. Grey Wolf (1932), P-287.
introduced, has been retained, only proving the fact that the clock cannot be put back. The natural tendencies are too strong to be refuted theoretically. A political power may show temporary success, but then, the security of Islam is not guaranteed, unless the followers are aware and conscious of their own position in history and the modern world.

The condition of Muslims in India has remained ambiguous ever since India was under British Rule. Muslims in India considered it as their prime duty, their fidelity to Indians. The terror of British Masters, however, created awe, and this community suffered a set-back on all fronts. At times, they were considered responsible for the internal conflicts in India. Sadly enough, this blot is yet to be wiped out, even after Independence. However, the secular state of India has not interfered with the practice of any religion. It is now upto the modern Muslim youth to brighten up the tarnished image of Indian Muslims, as a defeated, dejected and insignificant group, which cherishes 6th century ideology in the twentieth century. There may be an over-enthusiastic attempt at modernism, and it is peculiar to Muslims who do not form majority. There is a tendency to drift along with the majority and remain in the general current. For which, there is no justified argument, rationale, or re-interpretation of Islam. There have been major changes in Indian Muslim societies in the customs of marriage, divorce, trade and commerce. They have a slow and definite strok towards secularism. Their outlook is coloured with future speculations regarding the significance of
religion's dogmas, no matter how quiet or hesitant they are regarding this confession. Their personal and social lives supply ample illustrations to vindicate their change of percepts. The concept of religiocity is in the process of gathering a new meaning which is functional. It should prove to be a welcome sign, for then the religion would be placed on the soundest grounds of reason, with no room for any future refutation. At present, the religious factions have ended up into the narrowing down of the extent of formal religious parameter, within its arena, however, most activities have flourished. Thus, a pragmatic concept of religion is gradually finding ground in Egypt, Iran and somewhat in Pakistan. This is in wide constrast to Ataturk's coersive westernisation in Turkey. Further, there is an unjustified apprehension that the secularisation process would weaken the minority muslim community. It constantly faces the danger of self-erosion. They fear the loss of group identity. This apprehension however has yielded positive results, at some social dimensions by enjoying full attention and intense action. But it is always a healthier practice to progress, not due to apprehensions but due to need and the very necessity of it. The Islamic code could be modified in accordance with the principle of reinterpretation, Ijtihad which is an integral part of the grand Islamic tradition. It is useless to have nostalgic obsession with the pious and glorious Islam of the history. As the history of Turkey has already eroded the age-old impression that a religion could never become mundane, that it could never be unseated from its spiritual
status. There is no guarantee that the unquestioned and total supplication was truly, an expression for the divine reverence. At times, religion is thrust upon a bewildered community, if it has to be brought up to the level of decent living. The minor misconcepts in the body of a major religion are commonplace. They could be straightened up by the intellectual Muslims of Indian society.

The Indian Muslim community for secularism was optional and not forced. Hence there is a great deal of spontaneous following of Islam. May be an Indian Muslim has been coloured by the ethics and culture of his surroundings, and as a result, he may be practising some rituals as are not mentioned in Quran like the gay celebration of Moharrum. Some such lacunae are of course not encouraged, but they are tolerated at individual levels. By and large Muslims in India have complete freedom, which they choose to utilise in becoming westernised, semi-westernised, or more correctly, arriligious. This is a sad picture of any religion where political interference is absent, or it is a secular state. However, the responsibility of directing the freedom of will in the right direction is the main concern of modern Muslim elite. It is this class which is rightly entitled to take the initiative in this matter. It is the solemn duty of the religious as well as the intellectual leaders of the Indian Muslims. That the religious leaders have also played their esteemed role in keeping Islam integrated, is a fact. Many leaders of Jama'at-i-Islamia like, Maulana Maudoodi and others have greatly helped Islam retain its form despite enormous
western influence throughout the oriental regions. This body constantly reminds Muslims of his fundamental duties, lest they should lose all contact with tradition. At times, meagre knowledge of Islam puts Muslims in an awkward position. They are not fully equipped to defend their own faith, nor are they prepared by the western bombardment of materialism. The latter position is never sought for by the natural orientalist. For the former, he has to be an aware, enlightened citizen of the world.

Pakistan stands in more or less similar position where the attitude to change is concerned. However, political influence does play a vital role in the enforced practice of religion. Pakistan has now taken up the responsibility of serving as a platform for Islamic reformism.
In their zeal to regain ancient form of Islam, some Muslim societies have taken recourse to extreme means. This must be condemned by all means. "Nations are not destroyed by God only because of unbelief, if they otherwise follow just and progressive laws. Muslims are merely potentially and by no means necessarily, the 'best among the peoples'.  

After Indonesia, Pakistan forms one of widest muslim communities. Indian history has a chequered picture of the down and fall of political power, so has Pakistan. Consequently, Islam met an ambiguous treatment at the hands of the foreign masters. Now, in independent India and Pakistan, the basic difference of approach to the problem of change by the modernist and the Ulema has had a paralysing influence on law, constitution and institutions in modern Pakistan. Modernist have been finding it hard to free the people from the shoulders of undue traditionalism, more so in Pakistan. It will be quite some time and trial before Pakistan comes to terms with modern world and accept it as reality. However, the recent non-Islamic fervour is equally disturbing.

"The dopatta is slipping from the head of the slim news reader who looks prettier in rouge and lipstick on colour TV.

The petite assistant editor of "The Muslim" shakes hands with you at a reception hosted by her newspaper for Indian journalists. She tells you in so many words that women do better than men not only in journalism but in other jobs too because they are more dedicated and more serious than men.

8 Quran 13.12.
The bare-headed, ivory complexioned college girl strolling about the casual wear puts you on the right track when you get lost in Lahore cantonment.

Inside Lahore's Badshahi mosque the Mujavirs—or whoever they are having their siesta. They push aside the pullows as they see the intruding visitors from India.

In short the Islamic fervour this correspondent saw in Pakistan in 1981 is tapering off.

The short-haired air hostes, who greeted you with a melèdius "assalam Alikum two years ago, just gives you a polite smile as you board the PIA aircraft.

The waiter at Islamabad Hotel welcomes you to the coffee shop with a "good morning" as he presents the menu card. No "assalam Alikum".

New Ministers of civil servants preface their interviews with Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim (in the name of God, the most merciful and the most munificent) as they address the press. Like Gen. Zia-ul-Haq did when he began his press conference in 1981, during the External Affairs Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit to Islamabad for talks with his counterpart, Mr. Agha Shahi.

Foreign Minister Sahabazada Yaqub Khan met the press twice but not once did he invoke God.

The personable secretary of the ministry of information and broadcasting, Lt-Gen. Mujib-ur-Rahman Khan, who hosted a dinner for Indian journalists, uttered no qalma before he lifted his fork and knife.9

9 Times of India, 25th June 1983
The laxity in behaviour has crossed all standards of decency. A Lahore Gazettee brought out astounding statistical results were public behaviour is concerned. It noted that there were only 14 cases of kissing and embracing in public during July-1981. This number suddenly galloped to 116, in July-1982.10

The religion at this stage requires genuine and intense attention at the hands of experts and scholars.

Undoubtedly, it is high time that the developed countries drew curtain over the melodramatic behaviour in the name of Islam. It is a pity that such a magnanious religion yet awaits full justice at the hands of enlightened muslims. Non-Muslims have done a great job in bring Islam to lime light.11 However, their attempts sometimes are looked upon as prejudiced or biased, no matter how sincere the author has really been. At times, he has genuine limitations of not being fully acquainted with Muslim ethic or Arabic, in which Quran is composed in a mystic style.

There is an awful confusion concerning the theory of change amongst Muslims. It works on two different levels. Change is required for cultural adjustment on the one hand and for the general progress and betterment of the community on the other. Muslim communities of India and Pakistan have found the first kind of change rather challenging, and hence they take up some explosive issues ensured by 'Ulema' and resist. The result is conflict of cultures. This issue, of course, is also political and hence it

10 By a correspondent - Adam Sumero, Chitralekha, P-13, Vol-IX-82
11 For details see, Dr. Radha Krishna, Eastern Religion and Western Thought (Oxford).
is many dimensional. However, no other community has reacted so fiercely to the change of times. Hence the observation "Few culture areas have been subjected to so much and so violent change as that of Islam; none perhaps has so consistently referred to accept the ontological reality of change".12

It is significant that Pakistan chose to call itself an 'Islamic State' in its first constitution and the amendment to its second constitution. A tactfull collaboration of religio-political groups led to the amendment. An Islamic State by definition is committed to the administration in accordance with historical process of law developed by classical jurists. However, a Muslim State, can be a secular or secularized state, just like Tunisia, which declares itself as Arab Muslim State. The majority of the citizens of such States are attached to Islamic Culture, history and the ethics of Quran. The inevitable change in religions and social life of muslims has purturbed Islamic States more seriously than Muslim States. The categorical rejection of the divine state theory, or to put naively, the admixture of religion and politics is evident elsewhere in the world. Its silent echoes are audible in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. For a considerable long time historically, Turkey has remained Muslim State, and not Islamic State. Religio-political theory is to be rejected because of its 'brutality which thrives upon the confusion as to the proper limit of authority.

12 G.E. Von Grunebaun 'Modern Islam', P-209
Bangladesh, was the consequence of India-Pakistan war in 1972. Ever since, it has remained an independent country. However, it has mated the ill-fate ever since its inception. Its father founder Mujibur Rahman was brutally and inhumanly murdered and there was a take over by military coup Abdul Sattar came to power, who tried to put straight the disturbed country. But the following president Ziaur Rahman was a more accomplished politician and administrator who played astute, balancing game. He was able to remain efficient both, at home and abroad that is, internal and foreign policies.

This chequered history of Bangladesh had dire consequences on social structure. Before the country tried to adjust its newborn eyes to the realities of the world, it was busy adjusting its own internal changes, which push back stabilisation. Poverty of Bangladesh has remained proverbial and politicians are more concerned with their personal gains than care for the progress.

"General Ershad seems to lack General Zia's political sophistication but his handling of foreign policy for one has not been unstatesmanlike. Not only was his performance at the recent non-aligned summit well received, his handling of bilateral relations with the countries which matter the most for Bangladesh has been competent. For historical and geopolitical reasons, two such countries have been Pakistan and India. Bangladesh's relations with both can be said to have improved. General Zia of Pakistan is now scheduled to visit Dhaka while General Ershad's state visit to India late last year placed bilateral relations on
a sounder footing. For the economic compulsions of a grossly poor country, Dhaka's relations with some rich Islamic nations, particularly Saudi Arabia, have also begun to matter crucially. This relationship too has progressed satisfactorily during General Ershad's reign, though certain domestic difficulties may have been compounded on account of this progress.

Domestic performance must remain the litmus strip with which to test a head of state's competence. Here the General's record is mixed. His sudden proposal and rash steps to Islamicise Bangladesh seem to have been prompted partly by external economic causes and partly by his own need for a political constituency. A storm protest made him eventually ease his foot on the acceleration but he has by no means given up the idea. His responses to political furor have been erratic at best. He has used the strong arm injudiciously though he has now announced that the ban on political activities would be lifted "in a limited way" from April 1. His government's ban last year on a wide range of useless and harmful drugs was hailed by many as a progressive measure. On the other hand, his desire to involve the military 'constitutionally' in state administration has aroused suspicion about his personal ambition. In his address to the nation on the eve of National Day (March 26), he reaffirmed his plan to hold elections in phases to "give back democracy to the nation". He may be more serious about keeping promises than another General in the western part of the subcontinent; but reports say he may be toying with various models of guided democracy, particularly the Indonesian model. His proposals to check the mushroom growth of political
parties, to ensure a powerful opposition in the national assembly and to decentralise rural administration look good on paper but the response of major political parties has been cynical. In short, Gen. Ershad is on slippery ground at home. His ability to say on his feet remains to be proved.

A country infamed for its thorough puritanion and devotion to traditional forms and ideals, succumb to the enticement of modernism. But before it adopted it in its extermeties, it had initially resisted it cruelly enough to foresake its own benefit. This obstinacy to its dogma cost it its rightful legacy to new advantages of modernism. As a result of such unwanted attitude, Afghanistan was negligent to its own development. Its geographical position demands such attention all the more. Its ignorance of modern technique till this century has expanded it critically to Russia, Great Britain and other new forces. Zafar Hassan, has given a picturesque account of the state of affairs when he writes- "Except Kabul, there were no schools. There were no rails in Afghanistan. Communication was in miserable state. In the whole country, there was only one civil and one military hospital in Kabul."14 Incompetent men occupied the highest posts in the administration and no questions were asked about their merit or qualification.

Recently, of course, the conditions are better, yet not quite upto the mark. Afghanistan has now welcomed Western lifestyle in its entirely condemnable form. During this twenty seven

14 Zafar Hasan Aibak - Aap Biti (1964), PP-54-55.
it has changed beyond recognition. A report of European in Ritchie Calder is quite informative. "Three years ago, that women would have been in purdah. All that has changed. There are plenty of women in the theory at the festival still with the hood of segregation. They have not quite got used to the idea that they are now free to uncover their faces. But the vast majority are now unveiled. It will be difficult for people outside Afghanistan to realise what a revolution this has meant in the lives of Afghan women. Thirty seven years ago King Amanullah was driven from his throne by the "Mullas" because he allowed his queen to appear unveiled.

"It would be almost fair to claim that the release of Afghan women from purdah began from mother and child health clinics. Today there is co-education in the University where girl students used to arrive in their Chadars and had to study separately from men.15

However, the far-fetched effect or westernisation could never have been foreseen. It was too complicated for any logical prediction. The reason is simple. Afghanistan engaged its modern knowledge against its own people, and thus, ended up in constant civil wars. In 1978, Sir Daud Khan's leadership was challenged till he was dethroned. In his stead, the communist spirit within Afghanistan found place, till Russia overtook this tiny nation in its huge fold. The policy, though internationally condemned, the fact remains that Afghanistan is under Russia control though

a small group of Mujahidins are trying to fight tooth and nail to drive out foreign rule. The success of Muslims is for the future to decide. However, the cause which led to this surfdom is clear, its unceasing attraction to West, at the total neglect of Islamic culture, the present president Babark Karmal too is playing in the hands of Russia.

It appears that Yemen too will follow the same fate. It will be pawn in the hands of some vested interest, and head towards self-annihilation. Its recent history is full of venomous internal politics. Its conflicts and its causes for internal disputes are meaningless. Yemen has no definite destiny to reach. Though some hopeful observers like W. Erich Bathmann had some time before twenty years predicted Yemen has before it a fundamental choice to make. The alternatives are fast pressing, and if Yemen does not yield to the western wave, it will fortunately gave it face. Though, of course, the recent times have proved the situation far from such fanatics. The reality is that Yemen is fast becoming westernised, with immediate prospects of turning Islamic in near future. It is undoubtedly based on the changes quite irreligious. Soon it will find the communist grip strengthening on it, and strangling its existence.

At present North Yemen Republic is backed by America while the South Yemen peoples democratic is a tool of Russia, and both are constantly at war.

16 Erich Bethmann, Yemen on the Threshold, PP-71-74
Amin Saeed: El-Yemen, P-281
The other Muslim countries like Egypt faced the ups and downs in social life which is the result of shifty political policies. In general, the purely materialistic ideas and urges and the Western cults of nationalism and socialism have gone straight to the head. Their pride prevents them from accepting even the general and fundamental aspects of the revealed faiths.

An enlightened modern Muslim scholar no less than Dr. Taha Husain observes -

"Egypt has become a part of Europe. Dr. Taha Husain observes "All these things indicate that today, we seek an ever increasing contact and identity with the West till we become a part of it, apparently a well as truly, in form as well as substance."¹⁷

Taha Husain urges his countrymen to emulate Western Civilization and to act as partners of the Western people in their social and cultural heritage. He writes -

"We should follow the way of the Europeans and adopt their habits, customs and manners so that we may be their equals and partners in all the aspects of civilisation, good as well as bad, sweet as well as sour, desirable as well as detestable. We must convince the European that the look at life from the same angle as he does, our evaluation of things is not different from his evaluation, and we hold the same opinions about them as a Westerner holds."¹⁸

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¹⁷ Mustaqbil-us-Thaqafat Fi Misr, P-36
¹⁸ Ibid, P-44.
Iran has likewise followed the suit. After the Turkey pattern, it tried to alter its cultural and intellectual structure by adopting a series of far reaching 'reforms'. The process was set into motion by Emperor Reza Shah Pehlavi (1925-41). The consequences were anticipated, and the plans were cleverly conceived so as to yield coveted results. Muslims of Iran have faced unprecedented and speedy changes in their culture. If they had forgotten their own cult and creed, and had almost fallen into Western labyrinth, they were cruelly awakened from their exhostotic slumber and rudely reminded that they were Muslims belonging to Islamic faith. The duration of this era of force and terror is for the future predictions. Though it yet remains for anyone to deduct that a religion where is compelled by one political power, may easily be expelled by another. However, the plight of Muslims is regrettable. They could not be fully enlightened in the pious sense of the word, because they were glared by Western illumination. Now there is an attempt to lure them back to abyss of ignorance. If a religion gets back popularity by forceful means, then it is a blot on our civilization. But, in the age where atrocities of extreme orders are performed without slightest prick of conscience, this crude way of respecting Islam is pardonable to some extent. At least there is the awareness that the way in which the societies have been fast losing faith in anything spiritual, is alarming. It will lead to devastating results of not only irreligiocity, but to a selfish and barbarous society. For, it is due to some religions fundamentals that the noble ideas of

19 George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, P-180
sacrifice and charity have flourished. If the roots are destroyed, there is no hope for any verdour. Life will bare a horrible face of greed, want, selfishness, corruption and bloodshed. We have witnessed these and other wretched aspects of human behaviour in our own century. The consequences are logical. The very fundamentals which gracefully carry the society are collapsing increasingly.

In spite of some unwarranted religious beliefs and practices, some movements for Islamic revival and unity are to be appreciated and should be given the widest publicity and a prominent place in literature.

King Raza Shah was deposed on 1st April 1979 and the seeds of Islam revolution thus, were fructifying. Ayatullah Khomeini in Paris was successful in instigating the people of Iran against the westernised Shah.

Khomeini could not stop the world wide condemnation which he acquires due to mass execution of the intelligentsia and trained warriors.

Khomeini's concern over Islam is highly controversial. He backons people to shed blood in the name of Islam, whereas he himself indulges into the unpardonable non-Islamic practices. During the latest battle at Sabbil Zehab, Iraqi forces found prints of the Holy Quran containing Khomeini's photograph printed on the inside of its first cover, a phenomenon strongly rejected by the Islamic religious traditions and teaching which prohibit --------
any addition to the Holy Quran other than the Lords quotation.20

The general sentiment that he is a leader imposed upon the people, is not totally misplaced.

He has proved inefficient in checking loss of lives and property in the name of war. The recent Iran-Iraq war has also proved expensive and non-conclusive.

Indonesia is one of the biggest Muslim countries in the world today. It is no exception to its lukewarm attitude to Islam. Its craze for modernisation has resulted in its present state of affairs. It has not headed the blow it received from the bloody tussel of Dar-us-salam. Like Turkey, contemporary Indonesia has almost lost all Muslim appellations. This is also a secular republic though in 1945 and 1950, Constitutions declare that the state is based on belief in God. Yet, no government official of whatsoever rank was required to be a Moslem or to take an oath of office in the name of God or Mohammad. Both these constitutions guarantee freedom to one's faith, Islamic or non-Islamic. Some non-Islamic segments provocative attitude has initiated the longest and the costliest guerilla war. Though the government has its own reason for secular state which it calls the existent of other cults, it quietly leaves untouched the essential factor. It is the very difficulty of the government to translate the precepts of Quran in modern systems, both legal and social. The justification for secularism is thus, the need of time. Most of the Indonesians of today's Muslim community are enlightened

intellectuals who vouchsafe secularism.

"And secularism for Muslim state is Western". At present, the legal, political and social institutions are coloured by the prominent concepts borrowed from the West. There was also a temporary communal surge, when under the leadership of President Soekarno, some communist elements in army attempted the seizure of power. Of course, there was a remarkable resistance from young Muslims, and communism remained ineffective by and large. Like any other Muslim legal system, Indonesia will also be required to react to the challenges vested.

The human rights group of Indonesia has recently propped up the problem of political disappearance for power. A report from The Times of India sheds light on its recent situation.

"A belated report by an Indonesian human rights group which has popped up without notice in book stores here mentions for the first time "political disappearance" in the South-east Asian country.

The report by legal aid institute also mentions openly for the first time the question of East Timor, urging Jakarta to respect human rights in the former Portuguese colony annexed by Indonesia in 1975.

The institute's 220 page report for 1981, which came out a year late, says that Indonesia suffers from political repression, a lack of social justice, infringement of universal liberties, a muzzled press and worker exploitation.

The book by the 12-year-old institute, now Indonesia's principal human rights group, appeared without publicity on bookshelves just a few days after President Suharto's re-election early this month.

The report, the third and most comprehensive evaluation of human rights in Indonesia backs up its accusations with a 50-page chronology of alleged violations in 1981. It does not specify how many people vanished for political reasons but speaks of 'political disappearance' after the March 18 hijacking of a Garuda Airlines DC-9 in Bangkok by five young Muslim extremists.

Imran Mohammad Zain, leader of the radical band the hijackers' belonged to, was condemned to death. The Legal Aid Institute estimated that at least 400 Muslims from various groups have been detained.

"We appear to be facing a new form of judgement, political disappearance, the institute said, "We are in danger of going from that to political murder".

The institute also protested against what it called the arbitrary detention of Muslim separatists in Aceh, north Sumatra, and Irian Jaya, the former Dutch Colony integrated into Indonesia in 1963. It said the prisoners "must be able to be judged and freed if their guilt cannot be proved".

In a brief assessment of the situation on East Timor, the institute acknowledged that it was difficult to know exactly what was happening in the province with access guarded tightly.22

22 The Times of India, 30th March 1983.
"The Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, has told his party's general assembly that the government was reviewing the legislation to be implemented to preserve Islamic values in the country.

Dr. Mahathir, who is also the party president responded to a resolution adopted by the convention of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) asked Government to enact laws to safeguard the sanctity of Islam and prevent misuse of religion by any one.

The resolution was adopted unanimously in the context of the severe criticism of the opposition Pan Malayan Islamic extremist teachings.

Members said that "deviationist teachings" were sought to be spread among the Malays (all of whom are Muslims) particularly in some of the Eastern and Northern states of the peninsula.

In line with the leadership changes of last year, the youth-wing of the party also chose a new president—Mr. Anwar Ibrahim, a comparative new comer to UMNO politics and a protege of the Prime Minister.

On the Islamic issue, which drew a large part of the assembly's attention, Dr. Mahathir in his presidential address said the party had a three fold task; "to bring about a change of attitudes among the 7.5 million Malays, to meet the modern needs of Islam and to enhance Islamic practices and ensure true adherence to the religion." This means that Malays must be hard-working, knowledgeable and efficient in all fields", he said.
Dr. Mahathir pointed out that the government had planned three major projects -- to set up an international Islamic university, to establish an Islamic bank and to introduce the study of Islamic civilisation into the country's universities.  

There is nothing very special about other Muslim countries. As in Turkey, India, Pakistan and Indonesia, the leadership everywhere shows a determined step in the direction of Western intellectualism, with all their political, economic and cultural attitudes. The impression that the political leaders give is that as if they are at dagger's ends with the fundamentals of Islam. They would do better should they listen to the conscience of their people. People at large are religious minded. Supplemented by political leaders, they would gladly accept a reasonably religious life, rather than present day laxity. They are inwardly aware of its futility in the long run, but for the lack of any grip or support from above system, they just drift in the common current without conscious resistance. Muslims are a unique people, well-known for their spiritual stamina and undeterred faith in God. However, these very rocks of religion are systematic shaken by some vested interest. If unchecked they will succeed in their sordid game of ruining the spiritualism from the face of this earth. It is no use simply drumpeting the glories of Islam, and priding over its huge following. It is time to girdle the loins and put in some concrete effort to save human beings from transforming into living machines or dreadful vultures.

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One more country which is newly emancipated Arab country is Tunisia. Naturally enough, it followed Turkey example, being established as late as 1956. The ruling parties' interest lies westward, especially France. At first instance polygamy is totally abolished. Women have been given equal stand with men. They can vote, and even contest for the political membership. Women are abounding all spheres of public life. Tunisia has gone a long way in tracing the path of Kemal Atatürk, and its changes are fast and distinct. 'Pardah' is fast disappearing and it is almost given up in urban sections.

The argument of President M. Habib Bourguiba remains that he always desisted using compulsion to bring about the change. He preferred worn-out garments to fall off naturally, and subsequently. He never believes he is an atheist, and at the same time, shows full reverence to Islam. He argues that the reforms may not exactly conform Quran, nevertheless, they are not in contradiction with anything divine, ultimately. As such, it is quite acceptable that modern Tunisia has entered "progressivism". Succeeding with the total abolition of polygamy, it prevented public waqfs and their assets became the property of the state. No amount sympathetic interpretation can accommodate the justification of code of personal status as that with the traditional Islamic Law. Here is a summary of the speech delivered by President Bourguiba at the International Cultural Seminar held at Tunis in March 1974, in which some significant and curious suggestions were given to Tunisian intellectuals.

Es-Sabah (Tunis) March 21, 1974.
(i) The Quran is full of contradictions which the intellect is no longer willing to accept. The President quoted these two verses to illustrate this point:

Say: Naught befalleth us save that which Allah hath decreed from us (IX:51); and Lo ! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts (XIII:11). 25

(ii) The Holy Prophet was an unsophisticated man who often travelled to countries lying beyond the desert land of Arabia. He used to listen keenly to parables and other traditional legends that were popular at that time but had no foundation in history and transferred these to the Quran, as for example, the Rod of Moses (which the mind cannot accept after the discovery of Bastour, and Ashab-i-Kahf (the people of the Cave).

(iii) The excessive veneration of the Prophet by the Muslims has gone so far that they have exalted him to the position of God, a proof of which is that they always call him Mohammad, Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon whom and his descendents, i.e. God may send His blessings on to the Prophet which is the equivalent of regarding a man as God.

25 There is contradiction pointed out by President Bourguiba between the two verses is either due to his ignorance of the Arabic or because he never got an opportunity to study the commentary of the Quran or enquire even from an ordinary scholar of Islamic theology. Quoted by S. Abul Hasan Ali NadWi: Western Civilization, Islam and Muslims, PP-137-142.
At a meeting of advisory committee of the University of Madina, the scholars were rigidly and rudely shocked at such blasphemy. Their reaction was serious, which expressed that such views cannot entitle a person to be called Muslim. The speech met indignation at the hands of many journals. It has clearly been public that such leaders have controversial views on Prophet and Islam, together with the dreaded fact that they have been systematically carrying out their profane motive to its goal.

Algeria's hard won independence through the Algerian Muslims' love for martyrdom and the inherent spirit of Jehad. However, the present Algerian Muslims are conveniently following the same systems of secularism, materialism, socialism and Western civilization. A report in the Jewish Observer of London dated August 31, 1963.26 is an example of the sincere reaction.

"The religious leaders of Algeria have declared that Islam and Arabic language will be supreme in their country. In a statement they have severely criticised the national leaders who in keeping with the general trend are in support of modern socialist state in which religion will not be allowed to preexist itself in the affairs of the State.

"The Ulema stressed that the Algerian War of Independence will be remembered as betrayal of the martyrs who laid down their lives in the cause of national liberation and an utter failure so far as its purpose was concerned if Islam was not recognised as the

26 Western Civilisation, PP-143-44.
official religion and Arabic as the official language of the new State.

"The cease-fire agreement of Irian specifically provides that religious freedom will be guaranteed to all citizens equally and both Arabic and French will be the state languages. It was also agreed that the Constitution will be drafted by the representatives of the people who were to meet on September 9, but owing to the differences between the Army officers and political leaders the proposed meeting could not take place.

"Now for the first time since the liquidation of the French rule the Algerian Ulema have stated categorically that freedom and economic progress could not be the sole objectives of the revolution. In their statement they say, 'Every independent nation possesses an individual existence. Were it not so, all the nations would get mixed up with each other, as the fish did in water, and there would be nothing to distinguish among the Algerians and the French and the Spaniards. It would mean the transformation of Algeria into an undisguised international state. We are opposed to it from the first to the last. We are Algerians; we have a distinct, independent, national personality, and this is the verdict of our Islamic faith, our language our tradition and our history.

"The Ulema have denounced the move for the separation of Islam from government and politics as a betrayal of the revolution and an assault on Islam in the home of the Muslim mullet itself and an insult to the entire Algerian people."
In order not to appear so Kafirs as is the picture truly, some leaders of Muslim societies make unsuccessful attempts to disguise their antagonism, by making some displays in favour of Islam. More often than not, Islam is used for political goals as it is the unquestionable way of taking masses into confidence. However, their idea of Islam consists in keeping the religion aloof of government, a religion strictly confined to its beliefs and morality. Islam has no doubt, met radical interpretation at the hands of these westernised leaders. Modernity, in order that it is accepted without confrontation by masses is guised as idealised Islam.

The double edged policy of the immature leaders cannot last for long. The hypocrisy lies in presenting Islam in a form which it is not. Though some reforms are of course a welcome sign, yet, they cannot carried out at the state of ethical blankness. The progress today is lopsided with the balance religion and morals showing an alarming pointer. It is difficult to give an exemplary Muslim leader, who had the insight, maturity, so as not to be dogmatic nor, a revolutionist of the extreme kind. Whereas leaders are extravagant in ideologies, the bulk of the Muslim people everywhere are not willing to forsake their faith and historical legacy. In order to deal sternly with any meek resistance of the low masses, the leaders use coersion and baad about the desired reforms. Thus, the chasm between the leaders and the masses becomes wider. It will become unbreachable forever if proper measures are wanting. The only same approach would be to recognise fully, the voice of
the people, and to respect the faith they cherish for Islam. It is something which no iron hand, no matter how formidable can crush or curb. Any number of catch words will fall short the superior standards of Islam. At any moment of destiny and at every critical turn-out of history, or even political emergency or forgery victimisation or hyjack incidences, any human hands are raised in the name of divinity, for mercy for help. The helpless soul is prove to fall back upon the soul-stirring concepts of religion. However, this faith should not be that of an opportunists. Nobility marks a noble sound, and hence it upon all to respect the faith which gives solace to the soul. The very concept of gratitude demands that religion should be treated with all the reverence.

It is a sad realization that such valuable potentialities of Muslims are wasted by their leaders. The Western form of life cannot suit the Muslims anywhere in the world. It is artificial adoption and hence, it meets periodical oppositions. A muslim cannot accept the concept of free intercourse between men and women. The laxivious and lewd character of the Western is condemned by Muslims. The cheap methods of advertising the nudity of woman, the sexual laxity, drinking and gambling are only few instances which are against the conscience of a Muslim. If forced into a different culture, he will ruin his mental and physical person beyond recovery. The only hope lies in turning back to one's own culture, ethics and religion. It is absured to imitate West; the sooner the leaders realize it, the better they will serve
the cause of Humanity in general and Islam in particular. The masses look upon the responsible Muslim elites to guide Muslim societies through their crises. Certainly this is a critical stage in history which is unprecedented. It calls upon the genius and the selfishness of a devout Muslim, whose unbiased and objective account should be palatable even to a Westerner.

Socio-political change in Arabia has conveniently laid aside the fundamentals of Islam. Muslims in name only, these new rich Arab magnats have indulged in a life of unpardonable practices by Islamic standards. Their attitude to women and sex has crossed all barriers of human decency. They exploit poor young girls, especially of India, and use them as the mere objects of lust. They drink heavily, live lavishly and spend aimlessly on their own physical wants, about which they have no qualms.

Tragedy of one kind or another has awaited the Arabs at every turn ever since they re-entered history as active and independent participants at the end of World War-II. The steady expansion of the boundaries and the power of Israel has been only an outward expression of this tragic fate. Its inner complement the never ending conflicts among them - has been, if anything, more corrosive and debilitating.

Despite all this, however, it appeared in October 1973 that the Arabs might be able to master their destiny and, indeed, became a factor of immense importance to the whole world. But this was

not changed its course. The Arab 'Century' has turned out to be among the briefest in history. In modern times only Hitler's Third Reich had a similar brief span of glory. Just as the Germany turned out to be the worst victims of Nazism, it is possible that the Arabs may turn out to have been the worst sufferers as a result of the black gold rush of the seventies. It has certainly disrupted their society as nothing else ever. Unearned wealth corrupts and debilitates. And never before in history have any people seen so huge a flood of unearned wealth.

Girilal Jain observes correctly:

"The power was, of course, illusory - like a mirage in the desert. The wealth came from under the earth and power, in order to be effective, has to be securely based on the ground. There was no such base in the Arab case. The Arabs had not discovered the oil; they had not drilled it, they had not marketed it. The Europeans and the Americans had done it for them... While they were, as usual, thoroughly divided, Israel stood there amidst them, like a monolith, arrogant and defiant Arafat and his colleagues fulminated against them and cursed them in anguish but in vain. Despite all their passionate speeches in support of the Palestinian cause, no Arab government was willing to take on Israel. The result is there for everyone to see. The Israelis have got away with their flagrant invasion of Lebanon".

Most oil-rich Arab countries do not possess the necessary skilled manpower. So they have imported it on a colossal scale. But to do what? Build palaces, of course. But even places are
better than the so-called industrial plants which cannot cater for the domestic market because it is too small and cannot compete in the world market, because the production costs are too high.  

Unfortunately for Arabs, they are not even technically equipped to defend themselves. All their expert knowledge is borrowed. Arabs have no original history in technology. Even their military force has to be peopled by Pakistanis, since Arabs are not fully enlightened upon the workings of the sophisticated armaments (but practically useless) which they were bought worth billions of dollars from America, Russia and other European countries. The West was also sold them development plans which have devoured hundreds of billions of dollars mostly to add to the process of social disruption in the Arab world.

Upon such nations then, the nature avanges with double the stroke. Arab nations are gradually but definitely losing their oil market in the world transactions. Crude oil has hopelessly lost demand in twenty percent in an year's time. Technical nations like Israel and Japan have already stroke remarkably along the path of solar energy. Their further success would leave Arabs nowhere, since they have nothing to rely upon but crude oil. The tactful Russia has already bargained it for lesser dollars, knowing the tides of time.  

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28 The Rise and Fall of the Arabs, Times of India (Sunday Review), May 29, 1983.

29 Chitra Lekha, 28 March 1983, PP-35-42. (Guj.)
In such an eventuality the future would be unpredictable. But whatever the course of developments, the Arab 'Century' seems to have come to an end.

**Islam in the Soviet Union:**

In 1917 (i.e. before the revolution) there were 40 millions of Muslims in Soviet Russia, distributed in Azbikstan, Kazakhistan, Azarbaijan, Jajistan, Turkmania, Tataria and Dagistan.

On 10 December, 1955, former Soviet Prime Minister Khrushchev said in Srinagar that there are now 15 million Muslims in the Soviet Union. If Khruschev's figure is correct, we are moved to ask the grave question: Where are the other 25 million Muslims? Leaving aside the natural increase in population during last 38 years at the rate of 1.5% per annum (which comes to 23 million) and giving due allowance to natural mortalities? Have they been physically exterminated or compulsorily registered as atheists?

Majority of the Muslims belong to Hanafi, Islam has followed a constant path of decline in this part of the world. It will cross the fatal mark of total annihilation if it continues to remain neglected by the propounders of Islam.

An account of Dr. Baymirza Hayit the Muslims in the Soviet Union is quite informative. He accounts that from 1928 onwards, all the influential Muslim personalities such as Muftis, Kazis, Ulema, Imams etc. were imprisoned, all the Shariat courts were

30 A Turkistani Muslim scholar now settled in Germany. Radiance, March 27, 1983, P-9.
abolished, mosques were either demolished or converted into prisons, tourist hotels and stores. More than 14,000 religious primary schools and about 500 Madrasas were closed. Printing and publishing of all religious writings was prohibited by the government. From 1929 to 1936, the police seized every copy of the Quran it could get its hands on and these were burned.\footnote{Oizil Uzbekistan, 6th April 1963 (Soviet Newspaper).}

The present day methods of combating Islam include principally anti-religious lectures, anti-religious publications, question and answer, everything with atheists, film shows the public slandering of those Muslims who go to the Mosques, campaigning against fastings and religious celebrations within the family as well as the education of young people to the advantage of atheism.

Particularly characteristic was the establishment of the first university of atheism at Ashkhabad in 1959. At present, in Uzbekistan above there are 14 such universities, to train atheist propagandists against Islam.

The alarming statistics shows that there were 24,000 mosques in Soviet Union before 1940. Gradually, the number reduced to 12,000 upto 1960, and at present the number is hardly 300 and that too in a state of ruins.

The truth is that the non-Russian peoples ruled by Russia enjoy neither freedom, nor equality nor any form of rights. Soviet propaganda in the Orient Spread lies about the freedom of the people and of religion in order to win over the Muslims of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Arab countries. We saw that the Muslims of Turkistan hate the Russians and that independence
movement is very strong. The religious administration in Tashkent is not a body, which supports religion and takes over responsibilities for religious education, but is simply a government office enabling the Communist Russians to control religion.

Indeed, the campaign today against Islam is in no way weaker than it used to be. The periodical Partynaja Zhizni is informative about the methods used: "Do not defend yourselves, but attack! Remnants of religion and superstition possess great powers of existence and continuance. They stand in the way of many people becoming active builders of communism. For that reason, He (Communist) party has always waged an ideological struggle against religions".

Soviet Russians anti-Islam policy is at present directed particularly against Turkistan because the Islamic spirit is especially alive there. Assault against Islam is part and parcel of Soviet Russia's colonial policy in Turkistan, regardless of whether brutal force or the art of propagandist persuasion is applied. The end of the fight between the Soviet and Islam is nowhere in sight.

The Islamic practices too are fast deteriorating in Russian Muslims. The mosques are peopled only by the retired aged military officers, while the young lot drowned themselves in intoxication of 'Vodka' with which they shamelessly wipe their faces and utter 'Amin'.

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Mufti Ziya-ud-din baba Khanof, a religious head at Tashkent has gone to the extent of issuing Fatwa regarding Paradah as non-Islamic with the rationalisation that it is uncomfortable to women. 33

Islam in Modern China

Islam began to be established on a larger scale, on Chinese territory by several thousand Arab soldiers who settled down in the Northwest after having helped the T'ang troops to put down the rebellions started by An Lu-shan in the 8th century. At the beginning of 9th century, Islam penetrated into the Southwest, when 'Abbasid and Samarkani soldiers, allied with the Tibetans, surrendered to the T'ang and settled down in the present Yunnan province. In the 13th century, they were augmented by many 'Arab and Tartar invaders who came" into Yunnan with the Mongols. At the same time the so-called Semu people, the majority of whom were Moslems, began to settled down as permanent residents at all the important cities and towns in China proper. Islam was also firmly established in Canton, Ch'uanchou, Hangchou and Yangchou during the T'ang Sung-Yuan times (618-906, 960-1279 and 1280-1367 AD respectively). In these coastal cities, there were large Arab and Persian Moslem communities and they had their own living quarters, mosques and trading centres. Although Chinese Moslems, in the course of time, became Sinicized through intermarriage and adoption of Chinese customs, they will still have remained not only a religious

33 Al Arabi, (Kuwait Newspaper) by Fehmi Horedi, P-3.
group but also an ethnic minority but enjoyed a peaceful life. This was the golden period of Chinese Islam, which ended with the Manchu rule of China. This golden age lasted almost one millennium, 651-1648 AC.

But after the downfall of the Ming Dynasty, owing to a policy of racial discrimination and political suppression by the Manchu and Han authorities, the Moslems in Shensi, Kansu, Yunnan and Sinkiang provinces staged at least ten important rebellions between 1648 and 1878 AC. It is claimed that as many as 10,000,000 Moslems were killed as a result of these upheavals. The establishment of the Republic of China in 1912, however, promised new hope for the Moslem minority.

Although the Chinese Moslems were persecuted by the Manchus and Hans, there was at the same time a renaissance movement under way. It was begun by Chang Chung, Ma Chu and Liu Chin, who were Moslem leaders and scholars of the 17th century. They translated into Chinese the teachings of the Quran, the deeds and words of the Prophet (PBUH), and the rules and customs of Islam, on the one hand, in order to educate the Moslem community and on the other, to introduce their religion to the Chinese.

Islam under Nationalist Government

The Revival Movement And Its Early Accomplishments

In 1912 the Republic of China recognized the Chinese Moslems as the Hui race which was one of the five races— the Hans, Manchus, Mongols, Moslems and Tibetans — comprising the Republic. This racial policy was partly in agreement with the Doctrine of Nationalism of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. With this new status the Moslems became
very enthusiastic in pushing forward their revival movement and expanding their activities into many fields.

Newspapers and religious periodicals, together with the translation of the Quran inspired many brilliant scholars with Islamic zeal. All these accomplishments should be attributed to the leadership and wisdom of Shaykh Abd al-Rahman.

Spiritually and personally influenced by Abd al-Hamid II (1842-1918 AC), the 26th Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, the Chinese Shaykh also preached Pan-Islamism in China. Although this movement had a great impact on the attitude and activities of many of the younger Chinese Moslem leaders, the majority of the Islamic community was primarily concerned with causes of the Chinese Republic. The role of the Chinese Moslems in Nationalist China (1928)

China was unified by the Nationalists in 1928 when the Northern Expeditionary Forces reached Peking under the command of General 'Umar Pai Ch'unghsi (1893-1965) and Arab descendant.

Like 'Umar Pai, all the Moslem political and military leaders in the Northwest, such as Ma Fuhsiang (d.1932) and Ma Ch'1, were staunch supports of the Nationalist government in the cause of unification. The unanimous stand of the twenty-six Moslem generals may have been one of the main factors in the release of Generalissimo Chiang-Kai-shek from the 1936 Sian Coup.

In 1949, about 40,000 Chinese Moslems escaped to Taiwan. They preserve Islamic traditions, customs and ceremonies as usual, and they formed the nucleus of Chinese Islam in Taipei. In 1960, they built a new mosque where the Chinese National Moslem League is located.
Islam Under Communist Government

Chinese Moslems attitude towards the Communists before 1949.

Chines Moslems have in the past cooperated with any dynasty or government as they were allowed religious freedom. They also fought against any government in order to preserve Islam. Before 1949, the Chinese Islamic community, for the most part, remained loyal to the Nationalist government. Moslem generals led their troops in many battles against the Red army and scored at least four big victories during 1935-1947 in Kansu, Ninghsa and Shensi. But when the Nationalist lost the war against the Communists, the Moslems also had to surrender the Northwest. Mao Tse-tung formed a provisional Moslem Soviet government in the Northwest and even recruited whole regiments of Moslems, granting them full freedom of religion. Since the moslems living in the occupied areas have been influence by the Communists, their cooperative attitude, however did not change their religious faith. According to Nyn Wales, "They were prepared to march under the Red and the Crescent, but had not yet embroidered the name of 'Karl Marx' on their prayer rugs".

The role of Chinese Moslems in Communist China

Since the early years of the growth of Communism in China, Moslems have been active in the party.

In 1953, the China Islamic Association, a national organization, was established. It has recently issue two editions of the Quoran and an annual called Chinese Moslems in progress or Moslems in China. Since 1955, the Association has sent Hajj (pilgrimate)
missions to Makkah every year. In the same year, the Chinese Islamic Institute, the highest instruction of Islamic Studies in China, was founded. According to its reports, the mosques, numbering more than 40,000 in China, seem to have been maintained in good conditions. By 1957, twenty-four Moslem-inhabited autonomous areas were set up. Although the Moslems constitute only 1.66% of China's population, in the first National people's Congress, they were represented by forty-one deputies or 3.34% of the total.

But the available information suggests that the situation of Islam in Communist China is not uniformly bright. Since 1949, many mosques in rural areas have been used for other purposes, such as slaughter-houses, the use of old textbooks on Islam has not been allowed in all Moslem schools, all the A.hungs now have to participate in the Agrarian Reform Work Corps, assisting Moslem peasants in their struggle against the landlord class, or otherwise be replaced by Communist-trained Moslem cadres. All the A.hungs also have been forced to interpret the Quoran from the Marxist-Leninist point of view, and numerous Moslem youths working in producing centres have been compelled to take the same meals as non-Moslems.

Even more unfortunate was the fate of all religions in China, which reached its saddest point during the infamous 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution under the merciless rule of the "Gang of Four" led by Chiang Ching, Mao Tse-tung's widow. During this period, thousands of Moslem leaders and scholars were persecuted and jailed.
As a result of the collapse of the 'Gang of Four' in November 1976, the Chinese Communist government revised its Constitution in 1978, of which the Article 46 reads:

Citizens enjoy freedom to believe in religion and freedom not to believe in religion....

Since then the Moslems in leading cities began to go to the mosques to say prayers without police interference.

During the last three years, the Chinese Communist government has spent tremendous amount of money to have some of the old mosques in Peking, Nanking, Shanghai, Canton, Hangchow, Sian and other cities beautifully repaired or rebuilt. In Peking there are now many Moslem restaurants open to the public. Of all the religions in China, Islam seems to be the government favourite.

The future of Islam in China

It seems that as long as the Islamic World is strong enough to play politics between the East and the West, and as long as the Afro-Asian Islamic nations possess the 'surplus values' that attract the wooing of Communist China, and as long as the Moslem "shahadah" that is, "There is none worthy of worship, but Allah and Muhammad is the (final) Messenger", has not been supplanted by the Communist profession of faith, Islam will be respected and its believers will be tolerantly treated by the Communist Chinese.

It seems also that the Chinese Moslems will continue to consider themselves as racial minorities and, at the same time, they will struggle to preserve their Islamic faith. In principle, as Communism will not co-exist with religion in the long run, there will
remain always a danger to Islam that sooner or later it will be persecuted in China.

We may conclude:

1. Islam will remain strong and sound enough to survive the difficulties and hardship that the Communists have imposed upon religions in China.

2. The Chinese Moslems, who are mutually related in blood and religion, not only form an ethnic minority but also a religious group, and therefore, they are different from the Han Chinese. It also appeals that continued recognition of the Moslems, by the Communists, as ethnic minority, will aid in maintaining their racial solidarity which will, in turn, result in strengthening their belief in religion.

3. The size of the Chinese Moslem population is neither 48 million nor 10 million but it should be no less than 40 million in a conservative estimate. As far as their political rights are concerned, they are far from being proportionately represented in the National Assembly in Nationalist China, or in the National People's Congress in Communist China.

4. The Chinese Moslems in Communist China may be members of the Communist party but they most likely would not give up Islam for Marxism as their spiritual faith.

5. The difference between the policies of Communist China towards the Moslem communities in leading cities and those in rural areas, will be, in the course of time, narrowed, until one day, we hope--insha' Allah, all the 40,000 mosques in China may
be open again to the public.  

(iii) Psychology of the followers

Muslim community spread all over the world has various colours. Muslim population in the world will cross one billion mark by the end of this year, according to the World Muslim Gazette.\(^{35}\) A Muslim people of Asia, in particular India, will vary in detail in respect of some socio-religious customs and ways of life. Yet, it is the glory of Islam that such diversities have proved trivial in

35 The gazette published by the Jedah-based "Motamar-Alam-i-Islam" quoting 1975 statistics said there were 890 million Muslims in the world, which constituted about 23 percent of the world population.

It said after Christianity, Islam is the second largest religion with followers numbering one-fifth of the total world population.

The survey, conducted in 172 countries said the population increase in most of the Muslim countries is more than two per cent a year. Many Muslim countries have not accepted the family planning programme as they consider it against Islamic tenets.

The survey showed that India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, China, the Soviet Union and Nigeria had more than 500 million Muslims.

Indonesia tops the list with more than 140 million, India comes second with 130 million, Bangladesh and Pakistan are placed third and fourth with 76 million and 75 million respectively.

Vatican has only 25 believers of Islam with the Muslim population in Tonga and Sen Markes is 75 and 100 respectively.

The gazette says 52 countries mostly Latin America have less than one per cent Muslims. These countries include Nicaragua, El Salvador, Haiti, Cuba and Columbia.

Albania, with about 22 million Muslims constituting more than 75 per cent of the population has the highest percentage of Muslims among the communist countries. The other communist nations which had a sizeable ratio of Muslim population are the Soviet Union has about 60 million Muslims and Bulgaria more than point two million. China is the other communist country where the number of Muslims exceed 65 million.
uniting them all, under one bannor of religion. No matter how strong the Western influence, the footsteps of the wayward Muslim is always homeward, such is the grip of religion. It takes him by and large, his entire self and existence. Unawares, he is lured by some catchwords offered by westerners. Soon he will realize their futility and them their only refuge, which is Islam, will gladly prove their saviour. Such and similar hopes are heartening, and welcome. Efforts to restore Islam its lost glory are at work, though their space is marred by political interference. Islam is often a toy of politicians, and this is a highly wretched practice. Even if political/choose to remain aloof and declare their states as secular or secularised, it is people whose attitude makes all the difference. Beyond doubt, people are happy with change. They have more than welcomed it. It has become a part and parcel of their lives. Modern Muslim prefer western standards and western mannerisms. Further, still, they are considered a mark of sophistication. They prefer education in convents and public school, to their own traditional one. They encourage their children to adopt western style of greeting and addressing and have almost given up the traditional, as old-fashioned. Such changes, although fashionable in affluent classes, new rich classes, middle classes and lower middle classes, the weaker class is not free from its attraction. At times these masses engage themselves in futile competition, only to stake their meagre savings and peace of mind. Muslim themselves are responsible for their pathetic situation. Instead of setting in example by rightly following the tradition and aptly
choosing that which is the best, they have foolishly adopted ever­thing other than religions.

The foremost reason of course, is the yearning for freedom from disciplined way of life, which Islam, prescribes. Certain practices may have lost relevence, but then, only those could have been replaced for better ones, instead of the present western stylism, through and through. In the countries where Muslims are not politically committed to religion, their lax lives are a plati­tude. Perversion has creeped in the serene institute of marriage. It is shamefully used as a means to wealth even by men and women of wealthy countries. The Prophet’s concept of marriage has been wipped out, and pomp and show is being replaced for simplicity. As a recent news item reads -

"An increasing number of young Arabs are reportedly marrying foreigners to escape the dizzy dowry system.

Unlike countries in the Indian sub-continent, it is the boys who suffer from the dowry system and the conditions imposed by the prospective brides in the Arab world.

With the dawn of property in Gulf states, dowries have been rocketing ranging from about $1,500 to as much as $45,000. Wedding ceremonies can add anything upto $40,000 to the expenses, according to reports in the Arabic press.

This compels the youths to obtain loans or borrow money from their relatives. The post-marriage period is devoted to paying back the debts instead of enjoying married life.36

36 Al Jamhoria, Cairo, 17th July, 1982.
Strangely enough, there is no prick of conscience, nor any kind of religious fear amongst them. Nor are they hesitant to be entitled as western muslims. Of course, there is no attempt to condemn such a class, but there is a request to this class to remain exemplary, to become leaders rather than followers. History is the witness that it is only the strong who can foster speedy change and reforms. Evolution from the bottom is also specific and natural, but here, it will be slow, and perhaps, impossible. The only reason for its impossibility is the present practices prevalent in modern Muslim societies at large. The best that was in Islam, unfortunately, is lost. The worst that was in west, is also being passed for the best, and adopted influenchingly.

As regards the following Islam in its traditional form, there are various practices prevailing. The impression that an observer may collect is that, religion, if it hinders comfort, causes inconvenience or disregards modern lives, is often forsaken without much fuss. However, it would yet require much boldness to accept openly, this fact. It is an open secret for all muslims that they speak of Islam with all the relevance, concern and awe, that is due to it. Privately, however, they vary in its application. No amount of theoretical argument will refute this matter of fact state of affairs.

For instance, the acceptance of very fundamentals of Islam have also met different treatment. Faith for one, is the only strong ground upon which this religion has managed to stagger and grow firm despite diversities. Even today, it is not easy to find
a single Muslim who truly denounces faith in Allah; and faith in Mohammad. There is no controversy over any theoretical acceptance of one God, and the prophethood of Mohammad among Muslims. Even if fear of social sanctions or blasphemy may be reasons behind this, the fact remains that Muslims are faithful people basically. It is difficult to find such devote sincerity to faith, such unquestioned submission to Almighty in other religions. Unfortunately some Muslim societies elsewhere on this globe are wrongly exploiting this noble quality of Muslims, for their own selfish ends. This is true especially of political leaders. For the ignorant masses are still keen to put everything at stake for the sake of their faith. Instead of channelising this zeal for social progress, it is used unashamedly for the regress of Muslim community. However, diffusion in faith has resulted into some undesirable forms of devotion and submission to some deity, even Sufis and saints. At times, faith even degerates into superstition. An apt example of ominous beliefs and superstition was recently supplied by the leading newspapers and magazines and air communications.

It runs thus: It was a day of Twenty Fifth February in Karachi when most of it was under curfew, which was laid on account of Shia-Sunni conflicts. In a particular Shah family near Kashmir border, an eighteen year old, miraculously started predicting future happenings which came true. As a result, the girl Naseem was worshipped like a Hindu Goddess by people all round. She claimed to have visited Imam Mehdi of Shia cult whose strange disappearance is associated with his eternal life. Imam Mehdi once bade Naseem to
perform holy pilgrim to Karbala, with the entire family. The queepest part of the order was that the family shall cross the waters unaided. They must just jump in the sea, and Allah will given them through safely to their destiny. Naseem informed her father at his air-force quarters and her uncle at Queta Army Office about her dream experience.

Having full confidence in her word, the two brothers began planning their eternal journey by selling off their belongings. The whole caravan of about forty-two believers reached Karbala and performed several religious duties and Namaz on the banks of the sea, on 23 February. One by one, the male members began taking dips in the sea. The caravan consisted of members aged between seven months to eighty years. Women and children were sailed off on the back of the boxes. It was a high tide and a full moon night blowing blizzards. The boxes began cracking against the rocks and the waves. Similarly, men began gasping for breath in the water. Some of them even returned to shore, looking aghast at the catastrophe before their eyes. Early morning some dead bodies were found floating along the shore, and few men sitting in pondrous moods.

Thoda who survived the enterprize deferred to comment upon it. However, the police thought it better not to legalise the attempt at death under suicide act. On the contrary, a Saeed Anwar Shah was head lamenting that those drowned have reached their destination of which the unfortunate like them are spared. 37

The internal conflict between Sunnis and Shias depict a sordid picture of perversions long nurtured in the name of religion. The Sunni-Shia schism in the body of Islam is, of course, not new. It is almost as old as Islam itself. But it has been greatly aggravated since the Shia fundamentalists seized power in Iran four years ago. Amir Taheri, a leading Iranian journalist, now in exile describes the gravity of the situation as it exists today.38

"It is not often recognised that all attempts at fundamentalism and revivalism aggravate tensions not only between different communities -- as in India between Hindus and Muslims and now between Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab -- but also between different sects within the same community. Muslims in India too have sought to fight sectorial wars since many years especially in Lucknow".

We could have learnt from Pakistan's experience. The partition of India and the establishment of a separate Muslim state on communal religious grounds was, as we all know followed by an anti-Ahmediya explosion in Lahore in 1953 leading to the enforcement of martial law. The Pakistani elite was still strongly under the secular Western influence and was able to contain the Mullah-led campaign of terror and violence against the Ahmediyas. But the problem would not go away. It came to haunt Pakistan in the seventies, forcing so secular a leader as Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to agree to a legislation which put the Ahmediyas outside the pale of Islam. The story did not end there. Success against the Ahmediyas whetted the appetites

of the fundamentalists who pressed their demand for making Pakistan into what they regard as a truly Islamic state. They played an important role in the overthrow of Mr. Bhutto in 1977 and they are an important source of support for General Zia-ul-Haq.

These developments are not accidental, though in Pakistan's case events could certainly have taken a different turn if the coup against Mr. Bhutto was led by a general in the Ayub mould and not by General Zia, a mullah in Khaki. It is unavoidable that revivalist fundamentalism must aggravate tension between different groups in a community.

Fundamentalism is a two-front war, war on co-religionists who are believed to be guilty of heresy and therefore threat to the faith from within and war on the infidels from outside. The two fronts are interrelated. War on one front cannot be waged without doing so on the other. We have seen the same story being repeated in the secular variant of Christianity known as communism. Stalin imposed orthodoxy at home as he waged an ideological battle with the West. And the decline of ideological fervour at home has inevitably produced a policy of détente towards the West.

In Iran's case, there is another factor which deserves attention. Ayatollah Khomeini is not a disguised Iranian nationalist. But Shi'ism has helped Iran for centuries to retain its distinct identity: Greek orthodoxy served the same function in Czarist Russia. As the armed prophet of Shi'ism Khomeini thus promotes Iranian nationalism against the predominantly Sunni Arabs who imposed Islam on Iran. He speaks in the name of Islam and not of Shi'ism and his success,
which seems unlikely, may well create for Iran the kind of problems which the triumph of communism in China did for Stalin.

The Muslim world is threatened with its worst sectarian strife for centuries. Throughout parts of Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other areas, battle lines are being drawn up for Islamic conflict on what could prove an unprecedented scale.

At the heart of the threat is a redoubled feud between two Islamic sects, the Sunnis and the Shi'ites. The Sunnis form the bulk of the world's Muslim population, estimated at about 800 million. The Shi'ites account for only about 15 per cent, but they are in a majority in Iran, Iraq, North Yemen and Bahrain, and they constitute substantial minorities in Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

A Shi'ite force commanded by Iranian revolutionary guards is already active in northern Lebanon. In Afghanistan, the Sunni-Shi'ite feud risks weakening the resistance against the Soviet military presence.

In Pakistan, a former revolutionary guard commander, Abbas Zamani, alias Abu Sharif, is now the Iranian ambassador -- and has made frequent trips to an exiled Afghanistan Shi'ite resistance group based in Pakistan's North-West Frontier region. This splinter group is alleged to have been receiving arms from the Tehran government since at least 1981.

Differences between the Shia'ites and Sunnis date back to the 7th century, when the former split from the main body of Islam in a dispute over who should succeed the prophet Mahomet. The Shi'ites
preferred his son-in-law, Ali, married to Muhammad's daughter Fatima, but the succession were instead to the Prophet's father-in-law, Abu Bakr.

Previously, Islam had only three basic principles - monotheism, prophecy and resurrection. To these, the Shi'ites subsequently added to more, justice and 'Imama' which holds that only the religious leader called the Imam can rule the Muslims on behalf of Allah.

It is from this principle of 'Imama' that the present crisis stems. For the past five years, Ayatollah Khomeini has presented himself as the Imam and, thus, as the only legitimate source of authority in the Islamic world.

The two sects regarded each other as heretics until 1947, when their representatives signed a concordat confirming both versions of Islam as acceptable. In recent months, however, some Sunni theologians have been called for the concordat to be declared invalid, so that Shi'ism would once again be designated as a heresy.

Despite General Zia's drive for 'Islamisation' of Pakistan, the leadership both of the country's Sunnis and of the minority Shi'ites has fallen into increasingly bigoted hands and, for the first time, the religious leaders of both
sects have been openly calling for violence. The obscure image of Islam is unduly presented violent.

There is no controversy over any theological acceptance of one God, and the prophethood of Mohammad among Muslims. Even if fear of social sanctions or blasphemy may be reasons behind this, the fact remains that Muslims are faithful people basically. It is difficult to find such devout sincerity to faith, such unquestioned submission to Almighty in other religion. Unfortunately, some Muslim societies elsewhere on this globe are wrongly exploiting this noble quality of Muslims for their own selfish ends. This is true especially of political leaders. For the ignorant masses are still keen to put everything at stake for the sake of this faith. Instead of channelising this zeal for social progress, it is used unashamedly for the regress of Muslim community.

Many a wars were engaged in the name of Jehad. Though, Jehad had its connotive meaning, which is far more benevolent. A personal sacrifice for a noble purpose is the genuine sense in which Jehad need be interpreted.

Alms-giving (Zakat) is also not followed strictly and according to the prescription of Quran. Granted that the general economic condition of a normal Muslim is rather backward compared to the other citizens, the very attitude of benevolence has been
fast loosing application. By constitution, man is self-preserving species, and then, selfishness gradually follows. It is religion which can check these and such unwarranted indulgencies. But, when religion itself is not headed to, the question of parting a little with one's belonging, is rather far-fetched. Such a well-planned principle of distribution of wealth is regretably, given up. Muslim community had such an ingenious weapons to fight poverty, that no communism can replace. Its restoration can be realized only when a single person willingly parts with his excesses, or religiously puts inside a part of his income for the less fortunate.

Similar is the attitude of the Muslims towards prayers. As it is, they hardly know the correct postures and recitation. Nor is there any serious attempt to learn the meanings of their dialogue with the Almighty. No wonder, Namaz has come to become mechanical. Had it been even mechanically, but regularly followed, it would have far excelled total negligence. For, there are hopes of conceiving some peaceful moments in the lives of such persons who are in the practice of prayers. The Tablighi Jamat aims at

39 Though puritical and revivalisation in character, the Tablighi movement has shown a miraculous tolerance and moderation in its preaching experiments. And this is why its contribution to the creation of a sense of communal solidarity among Indian Muslims, no matter to which region and indigenous tradition they belong and to what life styles they were used, is of historic import and significance and much greater than that of any other religious reform movement organised by the 'Ulema'. Operating simultaneously on both the levels of little and Great Tradition, it has proved itself as a powerful force of Islamization in recent history.
teaching proper postures and meanings of prayers. However, it can quite be appreciated that modern Muslim is time-baund, and hence may not cope up the five time namaz. Though, more often than not, thus is an excuse, the true reason being laxity. Today there is a tendency to live in the least disciplined way, and this regulation of prayers would hinder this freedom. This is pathetic, and surely, the mark of ignoble souls. At least the sense of gratitude demands that a Muslim remembers his Master for all that he enjoys. One more noble aspect of religion is fast disappearing and nothing can prevent its cessation. This picture, if it continues, will become a horrible sight, just after the westerners, who easily lose their mental peace. In search of solace, they incur unhealthy habits of wine, L.S.D. and like tranquilisers. Islam had foreseen the degradation of man, which could have been possible only for a visionary. Hence it had pointed out the death traps and shown the way to avoid it. A constant and consistent link with the supernatural would soothe a man, and would offer him a refreshment for next assignments of the day. Such well-placed are the timings. Moreover, communal prayers would inculcate a sense of equality. Since modern Muslim has ceased to believe in these and such principles, he has learnt to live a life which is self-
concentrated. He is little concerned beyond the problems of his own nuclear family. His negligence or indifference is universal. His arguments for which though genuine, can hardly be pardoned. His merging with modern society is complete. Nothing other than pleasure, comforts and convenience can convince him. All external sanctions are effective but temporarily. Finally he remains a modern Muslim who has given up the traditional practices of regular prayers.

If this is the condition of prayers in Modern Society, the observance of fast is just an added duty, very reluctantly observed. There is a general sway of gaiety during Ramzan, and any amount of preparations await the Id. There is no limitation to the grandeur of celebrations. However, the very spirit of fasting is absent. Not that, fasts are not observed by Muslims, they are. But, there is no enthusiasm regarding the taboos which are to be observed simultaneously, with fasting. Some so-called Islamic states do ban hoteliering and cinema-going. But that is a public sanction. What is needed, is the sanction from within. The need to fast leads to perfect hygiene, is anyone's guesses. Moreover, it would give the affluent, a time and place to think about the starvation, and thus, replace apathy by sympathy. This interpretation of fasting has no appeal for today's Muslim. Either they observe this aspect of Islam just as a general practice of society, or they are indifferent to it. Some fashionable Muslims avoid it on hygiene grounds. Or, they may observe it, once in a while. In brief, the spirit behind fasting is lost sight of fasts, may be observed for any number of reasons, but for the genuine one.
It is one way of beseeching before Almighty, and making some meagre sacrifices in reverence to Him.

A rather vague dictum is that of Hajj. Needless to elaborate the current practice on this code of conduct. Practically, no Muslim takes it seriously, even if he happens to travel to the Holy Shrine of Mecca. The practice has become insignificant even for the wealthy Muslims of Arab countries, to whom money and proximity are at hand. This is an expensive principle to follow, and grounds for not travelling may arouse sympathy. In this age when simple principles like prayers and fastings are forgotten, the insistence on holy travels would appear meaningless.

Thus, the general psychology of Muslims all over the world is mainly responsible for the indifference that Islam has faced. It is the attitude of avoidance of duty, discipline and anything demanding some sacrifice. The tendency is to enjoy maximum material pleasures. The society is heading for hedonism.

There is a renewed effort among modern Muslim, after the discovery of the speedy systems of communication, to identify itself with the modern western society. Before it would even be realized fully, it was their own inward drive which readily lead them to the long awaited modernism. It is not surprising that despite all theoretical justification for the Islamic way of life based on Shariah, with all the praise for simplicity in marriage, secure status of woman, social structure and family life, Muslims

today, have fallen for the western way of life.

For instance, even if Muslim women have not totally adopted the women's liberation, they have got rid of pardah. Some remnants of communities are also following their examples. Recently, the chief of Libiya Qazzafi declared Pardah as unwarranted. The extreme sights are also commonplace. Women clad in bikinis, costumes and women exposing their physique acting as models for advertisement is a common occurrence of the modern age. It is not easy to differentiate the general locate of a Muslim town from an American town. Many recent documents of travellers are available which draw the picture of modern Muslim societies in minute details. Current stream of though is to raise the nations living standards, economic development and industrialization. Automatically in such an age of cut-throat and acute competition, religion remains an armchair luxury. The only aim before the nations is, rather should be, to give the people the benefits of current scientific discoveries and gadgets. Such a situation can be the result of secular state. There is no hesitation in Muslim countries over adopting a comprising interpretation of Shariah over some commercial issues, like banking and selling of wines. However, Pakistans top Islamic law court has rejected the government's plea to revere an order that only non-Muslims can deal in liquor. Yet, Muslims in India and other countries where prohibition is not in force, Muslims are addicted with slyly, or openly. At times, they take up, some such items in order

41 Times of India, February-1983 (New Items)
42 Ibid, June 25, 1982
to mark their superior position amongst their fellow men.

The common excuse often put forward by such westernized Muslims is that their choice is objective, and the criterion is merit. Far from it, such people have nothing else to save as their own, for, they have cast their lives in the categories borrowed from west. There is no attempt to condemn any culture here, the endeavour is only to expose factually, the general trend of the mind of modern Muslims. The thrust for a better, richer and fuller life is natural but, will the 'modernisation' be successful in bringing about this results, is the question.

Muslims of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in particular, have to face an added problem of poverty, illiteracy and disease. Instead of keeping aloof the prevailing customs of the majority, they tried to mingle with it by adopting some of them. Islam has totally denounced dowry whereas, this vice has creped in even the pious Muslim marriage system. Better the disposition of groom, higher are his demands from the other party. Some other noisy rites are also performed during marriages, like inviting the courteson, or going in a musical procession with the groom. The other extreme of marriage would be singing the dirige, wherein muslims have twisted the whole concept of Moharrum. Instead of spending the day in quiet prayer, they engage themselves in primitive displays of physique, like treading the fire, or poking the sword. The elaborate construction of Tazia is also futile, and bidat. Moreover, the fantasy, for idol worship is growing in Muslim communities. In one form or the other, it is observed. The offerings
at the tombs, keeping vows, offering coconuts, flowers and worshipping the 'Durgah' like an idol, handing pictures of Kaaba on the walls of the house, tomb of Prophet, doves and many other practices are taboos in Islam, though liberally followed by many Muslims. Women too have adopted a free movement in the holy premises. They could not have touched the 'Durgah' as they do now, in the strict Muslim societies. At times, these holy shrines become a theatre for 'Qawwali' and music, which is a mark of celebration in the name of some holy saints. The strange custom still, is upon death occasions. In case of a women losing her husband, she is offered some money and presented new clothes after 40 days of his demise. Meanwhile, there are many dinners thrown to the relatives, and they are invited to dine, as though in celebration. At colossal costs decorative mosques are constructed. The entire Muslim society in these countries are vitiated by these and such customs. The genuine observation remains that such misconcepts, omens and rites have been found in Muslim women. This is an obvious mark of the influence of other religions and customs. Maybe, they are easily susceptible and suggestible to anything that promises welfare.

Some serious-minded muslims have given this problem a thought. If Islam is to be defended as a rational religion, its task lies in

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self-purity. The Muslim community need be relieved from superstitions and other mal-practices which have come to stay. The problem of restoring Islam its pristive purity was acute enough, and now, there is an added problem of reforming the community amidst these evils and false nations.

Other countries also have similar stories of superstitions and practices. Females visit the tombs, and perform many un-Islamic practices in the name of religion. For instance, the Egyptians follow an un-Islamic customs of chanting poems and carrying silver lamp before corteges at funeral. Such practices have entered Muslim lives through non-Muslims. Tendering today is that of pleasure seeking, even from religious practices. The serene and sobre spirit of religion is replaced by shallow, frivolous expressions. A religious function has served as an outlet for pent up sentiments. It is an occasion for mundane display of wealth and social position. Instead of refraining from such pervert competitions, Muslims are getting more and more occupied with them. This is a grave matter. The attitude towards Quran exposes profanity. It is the tune or the charm of its recitation that is attended to, instead of the content, they are interested in the verses of aesthetic value, such as the story of Yusuf and Zulekha, rather than the teachings of the Book. In some parts of the world, the birthday of the Prophet is celebrated with.

A number of dervishes and other persons throw themselves under the treading hoofs of the charging horses, and asserted that they did not feel hurt. This performance, is considered as miracle. There are many more atrocities performed in the name of religion. For example, there is a savage pleasure in arranging duets between doves or cocks and other meek animals. The sadist aspect of human personality is given full rest in such inhuman practices.

Some institutions like "Association of Algerian Ulema' 'Muhammadia' of Indonesia,⁴⁵ 'Ahl-i-Hadith' of India,⁴⁶ to mention but few were founded at different periods of time in this century. The slogan "Back to Islam" has remained the permanent cry of the puritans and the fundamentalist reformers. Their success is anyone's guess. What with the renewed zeal of the scientists and the technologists to wipe out every trace of ignorance, religion has definitely been put in an awkward position. Elites of the Muslim society are deeply concerned over the future of Islam, and their efforts to defend it and re-establish it as the needs of time. However, it is their firm belief that the moral regeneration of the society would not be possible, unless every simple Muslim is properly educated in the present systems prevailing all over the world.

The tie, between the traditional fundamentalists and modern elites is more severe and formidable than pretended. In the first place,

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⁴⁵ J.A.R. Gibbs, Whither Islam (1932), P-262, Muhammad Abduh, Al-Manaar, Vol-II, P-872, See also Vol-VIII
the traditional crystallisation of the system of Muslim Jurists (fuqaha) is something which this age cannot digest. Admitted that the Shariah possesses the excellent quality of elasticity, the Muslim jurist make it unhealthy and unduly, rigid. At the moment, it is essential that the basic factors of Islam are recovered and made available to the masses. There should be an appropriate emphasis upon that minimum requirement without which Islam cannot be upheld or professed. Adherence to its history is no solution. Modern Muslim is faced with altogether new problems, the solution of which is not to be found in the books of 'fuqaha'. Time will not wait for the book nor can its direction be averted. Hence this attitude of indifference to Shariah. There is no conscious intention of neglecting the religion, but modern Muslim has been pressed for time, money and convenience to follow it fully. He is no more anxious about its regorous formalism and minute details like salat fasting and so on. He seems to have contended himself with the practice of the simplest form of Islam, which does not try his capacities and patience.
CHAPTER - V

ISLAM PROCLAIMS

(i) Not in contradiction with any religion
   - Surviving or non-surviving

(ii) Human approach and Universal appeal

(iii) Principles - A Modern Outlook
In the constant flux which this world is, man has always craved for something of permanent value. In his zest for the search for permanence, for support and security, he tried one form of worship and the other. Aborigine cult was satisfied with the worship of totem, idols or nature Gods. This was the stage in anthropology when man was unsure of his own purpose of life and universe. He was crude enough to allot any teleology behind creation. It was only his fear of nature and natural calamities like earthquake, rains, hazzards and epidemic that led him to worship. The elevated sense of reverence and gratitude would be too much to expect or infer from this tribes. With the advance of human knowledge, intellect was refined and man cultivated social sense and social qualities. Religion in the present form was the result of human progress and refinement. Despite the changing phase of the universe, where many a kingdom came into existence and parished, many cultures flourished and were extinct, there has remained but one institution which had not changed fundamentally, that of religion. With the advent of each fresh society, there was a religion, which was suitable to it. No society has remained without some form of religion. With Islam, its story must recede to pagan Arabs who had their own confusions. Till Islam received its complete form as we follow it today, it had faced turbulences. Being a revealed religion, it carries the unanimous authority of the prophet, unlike some other major
religions of Hindu origin. Thus, the religious epic is also above controversy where compilation of verses is concerned. However, there may be differences of opinion in the interpretation of the text.

The concept of religion in different religions of the world is worth notice. It will be observed that they agree in the fundamental concept of religion as that which is the way of life, and that way of life sustains life itself. At times, religion is also the social order in which there is an appropriate scope for the development of each individual. Christianity understands religion as the etymological meaning of the word religion, which consists of 'Re' and 'Legere' or 'Ligare'. These words mean 'to re-unite'. Christianity believes that man is created after the image of God. The function of religion is to bring together bring closer one man and the other, and in turn, bringing the entire humanity closer to God. A Jain view on religion is ascetic still. A religion is that which relieves man of his suffering and blesses him with eternal joy. The Japanese Shintoism calls religion 'Kami-no-Michi'. 'Kami' means the divine irreducible elements and 'Kami-no-Michi' means the road of the divine elements which eventually is the road to God. \(^1\) Similar interpretation qualifies the Chinese 'Taoism'. 'Tao' is the word for path. Even the word 'Mazhab' connotes this meaning. It does indicate the concept of progress, of path, but such path which should be travelled

\(^1\) Kato, A Study of Shinto (Tokyo), 1895, P-206 FF
with all awareness for ethics and morals. Then alone, will it lead to joy to bliss and to God. The word 'Islam' is also informative. It is derived from the word 'Salaam' and connotes peace.

Thus, there are various interpretations of religion in the major world religion. They indicate the general nature of the religious belief, and practice. Such path, which, not only should be contemplated, but must also be traded with full reverence and faith. This is the only dimension of life which exhibits uniquely, the unity in the quality of religious experience despite diversity of practices. Like other religions, past and present, Islam too strives to attain the lofty goals of religion.

A religion aims the inculcation of spiritual interest and meaning in the otherwise mundane and meaningless life. If followed faithfully, it promises identity with the Almighty. Amidst conflict, it serves as guide and bestows peace upon the afflicted souls. It eliminates all apprehensions of death, and enlightens man upon the life after death, which is full of hope. It does not treat soul as perishable, just like body. Hence there is the promise of eternal happiness for the soul. Religion enlightens man on the issues of this life, and elevates his spirits to the sublime. It behoves upon every man that he does not remain contended with his lower status here on earth, but aspire for religious heights. For normal human being, with all his short-comings, joy, sorrow, conflicts and achievements, religion remains a necessity. It is all the more poignant in the present age, when man is facing a thorough change in all system,
including the value system.

With Islam, the problem has been two-fold. In the first place, it need uplift its society which is illiterate and poverty-stricken. In the second place then, it must train the followers along the path of religion. Such group of men then would be the apt and befitting example of any healthy society.

Religion functions at various levels of human life. Whatever be its field of action, that is, social, ethical or religious and the like, religious aims to bring out the best in man. The response of the integrated personality is the response of religion. It is this dimension of religion which Islam holds in esteem. It is unique to Islam, because Islam has incorporated in its fold that which is practically ethical, and which alone is the path to reach divinity, though there are Sufi cults which have accepted the path of renunciation. An excellent example of the way a religion proliferates in individual life, to his minutest details, is Islam.

The accounts of the code of conduct have been dealt extensively elsewhere in this work. But, there yet remains an aspect of Quranic teaching which is followed but by the few outnumbered. This is an interpretation of Quran which is accepted and even followed by an important section of Moslems. Islam, just like other religions has its own aspect of mysticism. Muslim mysticism is founded on the elevated feeling of Divine pervasion with which the Prophet was vividly expressive. His devotion was characteristically fervent and ecstatic. His entire life was the concrete example of
his rapture in God's devotion. While such a kind of message may have been exemplified by the religions with the founders, Islam is particularly obvious because its founder was just one amongst the people, and not some inapproachable dervish of jungles leading an unusual life. The mysticism of Islam has not to rely upon some invented fetish and their supposed powers. Nor does it bade a solitary life in order to experience the moments of closeness or exhortation with God.

It is remarkable that the mystic element in Islam was not what the Prophet aimed at. As a matter of fact, he placed the performance of duties before religious speculations. No doubt that the mystical and the contemplative elements exist in all religions. Yet it varies from cult to cult, from context to context. The Hinduism may call it the total identity with God, the Christianity may call it being with God. Mystics and saints are no monopoly to any religion. The only common criterion on the basis of which they may be compared is the quality of their religious experiences. They cannot even be spoken alike in terms of their life and habits. The variation we come across will be amazing and incredible. Yet, the fact remains that there is an under-current of similitude which runs parallel in all religions and hence the possibility of the ecstasy in divine orientation. Superfluous descriptions of a religion may give the impression that it is only humanistic in approach, with a general apathy to supernatural. About Islam, there is also a nobler view that Quran carries a deeper and more inward sense with the words. This is
a genuine observation. There is no attempt to avoid the rigorous comprehension of the texts and the dogmas.

The mystic cult neither in Christianity nor in Islam is a new development. It was well prevalent in Rome and even Jews were quite aware of it. In the ancient India, it had swayed the country with unprecedented authority. Western countries were quite enchanted by it. Unfortunately, even the learned scholars like Sayeed Ami Ali, scholars that mysticism implied the abandonment of all commerce with the outside world, the renunciation of family ties and obligations, and the concentration of the human mind, and the concentration upon the abstract, to the exclusion of others. This is the essence of the mystic cult. It is a well understood theme, especially of mysticism of Islam and India in general, that the crux of it is in the spirit of detachment, and not necessarily renunciation. However, renunciation was preached for those to whom it suited, so as to find proper environment for mystic experiences. Islam has exemplified some aspect of it in sufi cult. However, total self-elimination is not the standard of life recommended by Quran for the general mankind. This peculiar characteristic is only few minds who are obsessed with the idea of absorbing (Fana fillah) in God, their ownself. None can dissuade a mind charged with such sublime mission. However, if the experiences of such mystics are introduced to social welfare, they are regarded as the highest in the social value hierarchy. Essentially,

2 The spirit of Islam, P-459
mysticism is not a social value, but it is within the social structure itself that it is inspired, and can find application. In seclusion it can rapture a person and lead him to ecstasy. Yet, it is the Prophet, the Christ, The Gandhi, The Lincoln, or even the Vivekanand that society cares for; more so as social reforms than religious propegers. Such religious leaders have necessarily carries a deep concern for the welfare of mankind, both, in isolation, and in general. A subtle definition of religion was contrived by Whitehead, the mathematical philosopher, as that which the man does with himself in silence. Everything else, by deduction, would fall in the realm of his society. Thus, every religions has fundamentally dealt with the other worldly or spiritual fate of human soul, and have emphasised the need for its sure, secure and future, by leading a truthful life. It is Islam which has unambiguously proclaimed that every act of life here and now, is an important and indispensable section of total life, which consists of the present life, and life after death. There are no different standards for divine life and mundane life. There is only one standard, that which is the best standard and Quran has prescribed it.

Absorption in Godhood can be of social value only when there is a translation of truthfulness, and goodness, even in the normal activities of life. Society is a complex structure and total annihilation of social values is not desirable for a common man. Islam has taken due note of human psychology in prescribing the code of conduct. It has generously made allowances
for some peculiar contexts and cases, and ordained upon the wise men to thrash out the problem and offer a satisfactory code of conduct. No other religion has shown such magnanimity of approach to human personality with all its complexity. Thus the spiritual values may be applied for the solution of social problems, and should be maximally involved in life. The message of Quran is not total renunciation nor self-annihilation. It is the fulfilment of natural propensities in full confirmation with Islam. Quran has taught to maintain the balance between the extremes of all types. This is known as 'taqwa' or balanced life. It is that which characterises the mind - Quran builds, a mind which looks upon life as a gift from God, as a trust and a sacred privilege to be lived in the presence of divinity. The life of a muslim must be exemplary and such that it serves to guide those who are confused and at still at bay, for lack of proper guidance.

Unfortunately, the legacy of the past is rotting in Muslim homes, in books. Some verses from Quran may find recitation now and then, but that too, is a lip service. And still, in spite of the fact that Islam has been treated like guest in his own home, it has vitiated the Muslim mind ever since it was first preached. However, the religion that passes for Islam today is the Islam of the masses and of the ruling classes in almost all Muslim countries. Some scholars compare it to the Islam of the middle ages, and not exactly the Islam of the Quran and the Prophet. As we have noted, the influence of many a factor has made Islam undergo a social metamorphosis. Islam has changed colours, but
superfluously. Inherently, it has retained its fundamental spirit of doubtless devotion to one Godhood. Its outward form may be a trifle dishevelled. The light of hope to retain this religion in the face of adverse situations, is not extinguished, till every Muslim proclaims his reverence for Islam. Mediaval Muslim history has made grand contributions to the history of Islam, through various disciplines like Arabs, sciences and Philosophy. Yet, it must be admitted that the common Muslim man was kept totally away from their benefits. They formed the exclusive concern of the intellectual elite and bore little relation to the social and religious life of masses who were kept down in ignorance and were simply shepherded by some chosen men of society. At times, such 'Ulema' were paid stipends by political interests, winning over the confidence of the masses. In the present century, some traces of it still prevail in Muslim countries.

It has been necessary to say quite a lot about the political and legal side of Islam because, as we have stressed Prophet Muhammad (S.A.) was more than a preacher of monotheism: he was the creator of a political community. This political dimension of Islam sets it apart to a great extent from the other great religions of the world. It is true that other religions have at various times taken on a political colouring. Confucianism is an example of a religion which is more concerned with the ordinary of society than with anything else. But consistently through Muslim history

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3 Soothill, The Three Religions of China (London-1913), PP 31 FF
there has been concern both for the shaping of the community through the law and for the success of the community as an institution in the world.

The nearest analogue of Islam is Judaism. They are equally politically preoccupied. However, Islam could succeed in breaking the bonds of narrow nationalism, and spread far and wide. Judaism remained confined to a people of particular nation, or to those who claimed descent from that nation. After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 until the creating of the modern state of Israel, Judaism was scarcely political. It was concerned with the religious survival of the chosen people. In Islam, on the contrary, the faith was nourished and sustained by power. Its destiny was manifest, not concealed. Hence even during the last two centuries, when the West has been so strong, and the Islamic peoples so weak, a profound tension has arisen in the Islamic mind. From one point of view, we might single out Islam's contribution to the religious experience of mankind as this has been a demonstration of the way faith can be harnessed to the creation of a complex and successful community upon earth -- not a Utopian one, but a matter of fact one -- a community in which men's chief wishes, needs and ambitions are not denied, but channelled into a pattern of pious brotherhood. Not that Islam has never remained corrupt. It does have its share of this vice. At times, it has displayed a violence which would defame the teachings of Quran. Sometimes it has been socially unjust. Nevertheless, it has preserved the ideal which the Prophet set before himself of a people united in sensible and
sober brotherhood in which Quranic law will promote cohesion and justice.

From the standpoint of religious history Islam is important for its social dimension. Its institutions are not merely temples, churches, mosques, synagogues etc, but they are such that cover the whole life of the community. There is no place for a special institution within society devoted to the ends of the faith. For it is the whole of society which is devoted to the ends of the faith. Throughout the entire life, a Muslim is never out of religion as such.

However, it would be mistaken to stress the political side of Islam to such a degree that we lose sight of the religious experience that practice which have been nurtured within it. The Prophet was vividly aware of the majestic and gorgeous God. He could instigate the Muslim community into an impressive dedication to worship.

The concept of prayer in any religious comprises of pious dialogue with God. The manners and methods differ widely. In some religions like Christianity, they tend to remain more of Sunday gatherings than Sunday services.

A Hindu often prays on his own, though there are occasions for communal prayers. Islam has suggested both ways of worship; communal, and individual. However, the Quran favours communal worship, because it places every Muslim, king and beggar, on the same par in the eyes of Allah. Daily prayers of Muslims continuously express his awe before the Almighty, and thereby he gains
a sense of divine Presence. Islamic monotheism is superior and simpler to others.* It does not contain the Trinity doctrine of Christianity, or the major Hindu cults, who ultimately accept monotheism. The focus of address is directed solely to the invisible Creator.

Most major religions of the world are sacramental. For example, a Christian on an average adheres to sacraments for his religious life. At times it is difficult to differentiate between worship and the sacraments. But there is virtually nothing in Islam corresponding to this aspect of the ritualistic dimension. The ritual of Islam centres simply on prayers, conceived primarily as a mode of worship rather than of petitioning God for favours. In the pilgrimage, sacrifice is retained as one element. But this is in the way of adopting older practice and giving it a purified sanction within the new faith. But though there has been this concentration on the worship of the numinous and holy Being who rules over all and governs men's lives, the mystical impulse was not ultimately denied within the Islamic community.

Though the concept of religious or mystical experience has occupied a central place in all religions of the world, there are some trends sympathetic to mystical experience like Wahhabi. On the whole, Islam could remain pious, but some strands of religious experience have found place in Islamic piety.

* Except in the lax forms of the Shia.
However, in modern times, there has been a steady and marked drift back to the religion of worship, turning away from such mystical or religious experiences. Muslim mysticism was generally known as Sufism, Sufi a word derived from the term Soof, means wool. The Sufi wore wool because of the simplicity and the

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On the origin of the word of 'Sufi' and its adoption, there are many different opinions among the learned. The following is a list of the various Arabic and other words which are supposed to be origin of the word of 'Sufi'.

(i) Saff

Saff means row (those Muslims who always tried to offer their Namaz (prayers) in the coveted first row of the 'five' daily congregations during the Prophet's time).

(ii) Soof means wool

(iii) 'Safa' which means cleanliness, particularly the purity of heart, soul and actions of a man.

(iv) Ahl-i-Saffa

During the life time of the Holy Prophet, there were certain ascetics whose sole occupation in life was nothing but continuous study and recitation of the Holy Quran, meditation, prayers and absolute devotion to God in the Prophet's historical mosque at Medina. (Kashf-ul-Mahjub, B. P. Schukovski, Iran, pp. 34-35.

(v) 'Siyu Soofia'

It is a Greek word which means divine knowledge.
austerity involved. This was one of the indications that the movement had its origin in ascetism. This aspect of Islamic religiosity was influenced by other religions where hermits and world-denying ascetic was a widely respected religious figure. Moreover, the ideal of self-denial which was right there amid the Islamic virtues had found applications though, of course, in an extremely, un-Islamic manner. For, Quran has not encouraged ascetism as such. Though some scholars opine that just because

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Following the above list, there have been many critical investigations by the learned to find out the origin of the word 'Sufi'. According to Abu Raihan at Beruni, (Abu Raihan-al-Beruni, India; an account of the Religion, philosophy, literature, geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about 1030 A.D. by Dr. E. C. Sachu.) 'Sufi' is a Greek word approximately the meaning of the word 'philosopher'. Because, in Greek, 'Sufi' means philosophy, therefore, the philosopher was known as Faila-Soofa or the student of 'Falsafa' (philosopher). As there was a particular group of ascetics in Islam who followed a creed which was somewhat identical with the Greek philosophy, hence this group was generally called by the name of 'Sufi'. But Noldeke's arguments, on the authority of the Arabic and Greek rules of grammar which differ in the two languages, do not help to confirm Beruni's interpretation. According to the consensus of public opinion, however, the word of 'Sufi' is derived from 'Soof' which means wool, therefore, the Islamic mystics followed their sacred tradition and used the same dress of wool and were called Sufis (wearers of Soof).

Generally, this is the confirmed origin of the word 'Sufi', although its varied origins and meanings are differently interpreted by some great Sufis, according to their own experiences and view.
the Prophet had given a political dimension to ethical monotheism, attractions in world negation found place. Sufi mysticism had a trend which could be paralleled in Mahāyāna Buddhism. There was one Absolute, and it embraced and lay within the multiple phenomena of the world. A parallel found in Ibn Arabi, with a logic like that of Shankara, denied that there was such an event as becoming one with God, though it was not generally realized. The mystical experience was the realization of this union, but it did not bring it about. It did not need to.

The concept of punishment is prevalent in other religions as in Islam. Major cults of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and other religions with Upanishadic origin, accepted the law of Karma; even Christianity said 'as you shall sow, so shall you reap'. More or less, the theory of punishment was that of retaliation. The myths of hell and its tortures were also attempted in legends, and literature. Islam has elaborated its theory of punishment while interpreting Islamic Law. In the first two centuries, there were different interpretations of the Law. As a result, there were number of schools. They differed slightly in emphasis, but agreed that the Quran was the inspired word of God. Even then, with the change of times, it was not always easy to apply legislation intended for Arabian conditions. Nor had there been legislation of all possible conditions. Of course, there were gaps to be filled. And the Muslim elites diverged over the right technique to accomplish this task.
It is not unlikely that some such concepts and categories of heaven, hell and the Day of Judgement or life after death are explained colourfully by legends. At the doctrinal and mythological level, Islam has been tenacious in its conservatism. It is the characteristic of Islam that the faith was formed in a remarkably short space of time, during the latter years of Prophet's life. Some other religions were taught and preached by the founder themselves. For instance, it was after four centuries that the teachings of Bible could be named adequately. But in Quran, there was a clearly defined set of teachings. A follower need not over ambiguous references and indirect suggestions or depend on allegory, as in most scriptures of the world. The main structure of belief is already present. Quran being valued as an Eternal Book as such it was the supreme authority. It could not be tempered with or passed over lightly. To this day, Islam retains an incarnational attitude to its scripture. In their initial form, the teachings of Quran remain unchanged.

In comparison to all the world religions of today and yester years, Islam has attained the status because of the reverence for Quran and for all the clarity with which it attempts to conserve the prophetic message. Even though, it passed through trying situations just like other faiths of the world, it could steer off its course to the present day. By and large, the three great Semitic faiths have been alike in their distrust of compromise with paganism. Islam has served as a unique experiment in a universal monotheism which is also blended with political and social dimension of human existence.
(ii) Human approach and Universal appeal

Those of us who have lived through the world wars, may have witnessed the devastation created by uncontrolled selfishness of man, best of all, a sense of consideration for others. This negligence on the part of powerful nations and men wielding power has led to the major world destructions. It was the pet hope of the victorious to resolve to peace everafter, and as a token of their will, a machinery called United Nations Organisation was set up. Needless to discuss its efficacy in preventing wars. That peace, which was cherished after two world wars, is still playing hide-and-seek with us. That which the religious authorities could only dream to achieve, science has materialised. It has reduced distances between men at best physically. The opportunity for mankind to be well-knit and fortify is really unprecedented. The Prophet said, "every man, a brother unto every other".  

The sense of security is universal, and hence follows the need to cultivate some fundamental virtues that will lead to peace. Every religion expresses this basic human sentiment and expectation to peace. Every religion has carved out a path, following which, the situations leading to conflicts will automatically be avoided. The whole drama of blood, terror and woe is acted and enacted with added fervour each time, only because some men are basically non-religious and thus, do not heed future consequences. To them, happiness in every form lies here on earth. The materialist outlook is responsible for creating want, hatred and apathy amongst...

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6 Al Dawud, Sunan, Kitabal-Taharat Bab-al-Wazu
men. Constantly, religion has been preaching to give up the evil, and accept the good. So simple are its dictions but as Napoleon remarked, "...... but the simple is the most difficult". Our difficulty, however, is of a more dire kind. It is rooted in the very ugly face of human nature, the vice of greed, selfishness and sadism.

The task of rooting out this evil is a spiritual function: it is for the religion to fulfil it. Unfortunately, there is an attempt to replace religion by some such a-religious systems like secularism and humanism, but in vain. This is an unwelcome change. Modernism, in any form, sans religion, will surely end up into a useless doctrine which is like ship without anchor. No society can subsist without the spiritual face of religion. All pretex of arrelicity has ended up in hopeless materialism from which there cannot be any retreat; such intoxicating and vain is the material competition in modern nations. Any attempt at peace are made by inadequately furnished nations, whose cry for brotherhood is taken for their weakness and apprehension. It is only religion which can offer spiritual base without which no theory will ever endure. These are the warnings leading to dangerous consequences if secularism or humanism bereft of spiritualism vitiates human life.

The only solace that man can seek is in the healing touch of religion. The unity of God stressed by Islam is to express itself in the unity of man or in the peaceful order of existence, whatever

\[\text{Quran 7:172.}\]
the name.

There cannot be any conflict in the economic uplift of the common man. Here, any ideology that shirks to solve the basic problems of men is sure to decay or worn out in the course of time. Material welfare may be attained by the rulers in power, by their palaces for their nations. Yet, it is the religion which deals with the paradoxical character of human nature. The task of every religion has been to save man from sinking in the scale of life.

There was no other humble attempt made for the revival and benefit of human society in general, than Islam. That too, on such an elevated plane as religion. There is hardly any need for the scholar of comparative religions to behold the superiority of Islam over other world religions. The superiority of Quran over the scriptures of the other world religions lay in its all embracing universality, in contrast to the narrow, rigid nationalism of most scriptures like Judaism, and Sikhism. This universality makes for the superior morality. As such, it has exerted a drastic effect on the historical development of these religious and civilizations shaped by them.

Islam appeals to the mankind in general, because it is the religion of contentment. The man who craves for nothing more than his lot, is the contented person, who will hardly disrupt the order of life. He does not complain his lot, at the same time, strives along the righteous path laid down in Quran. True to the spirit of Islam, he is at peace with himself and the world.
The search for absolute values is also satisfied by Islam. The trinity of Christianity, of Hinduism and the related religions, has found a full fledged application in Islam.

The true, the good and the beautiful are not so much reserved for the life here after. On the other hands, they will together form the reward of the virtuous life here on earth. Often, life on earth is rather untrue, evil and ugly due to many forces which exert simultaneously on human lives. In spite of such adverse situations a Muslim is ordained to live the life mentioned in Quran. The current lay between the scripture and the practice is the result of human negligence. As discussed elsewhere, it is often the way of comfort and each which a man opts for, since he has little faith in future, leave alone the life after death. The entire identification of the matter and the spirit is erroneous. Unless the spirit is recognised, there will be nothing to entice man along the path of Quran. Mere lip service to the fundamentals of Islam will entitle a man as Muslim, but certainly will not qualify him for the grand purpose of spreading peace. Even before any one can realize whether he is Muslim or not, he has always remained so at heart and temperament. So fundamental is the nature of this religion that no religious person can seriously deny his affiliation to Islam. So unique is the faith in Godhood that a parallel such as this is a vindication.

The mind of the Muslim almost all over the world is at a discount today. There is a lag between the life as enjoined on him by the Quran, and the life he has devised for himself. There is a
lag between the social and political institutions, which the Quran desires him to install, and the institutions which he has set up for himself and developed in the course of history. There is a lag between the purpose of the present day Muslim and the abiding purpose of the Quran -- the world purpose. There is, in short, a big lag between the universality of the Quran and the isolationist religiosity of the present-day Muslim. If one should probe the lives of those who profess to believe, in other sacred books-- better the task be undertaken by some ardent follower of each -- we shall not be surprised if similar lags meet the eye.

In his Ihya-ul-'Ulum, Ghazali records an incident in the life of Khalif Omar. The Khalif was travelling from Madina to Mecca. On the way one early morning he noticed a flock of sheep at the base of a hillock. A Negro boy was tending the flock. To test whether the teachings of the Quran had, at least in their elementary form, ever reached this Negro boy living in a remote corner of Arabia and to what extent he had reacted to them in his individual life, he asked him if he would like to sell one of the lambs in the flock. Promptly a definite 'No' was the answer. "But why?" asked the Khalif. "Why? -- Because it is not mine" rejoined the Negro boy. "It is my master's, and I am his slave". "What matters? said the Khalif. "Take this money, give that lamb to me; and go and tell your master that some wolf snatched away his lamb". The boy stared hard at the Khalif. The poor fellow did not know whom he was staring at.

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"I can cheat my master over there on the other side of the hillock. But can I", he stressed, "cheat that Great Master who is overlooking both of us and listening". The boy was an illiterate boy. He had never read the Quran. But the atmospheric influence of its teachings had evidently touched his mind. He must have heard in some manner the Quranic words that God "knows what the soul of man whispereth to him" and that He is "closer to him than his jugular vein," and that "three persons speak not privately together, but He is their fourth; nor five, but He is their sixth, nor fewer, nor more, but wherever they be He is with them". He must also have heard that none can give away or sell anything which does not belong to him. What profound impression the reply of this Negro boy must have created on the mind of a man like Omar, that austere and mighty Khalif of Islam, can easily be imagined. "Tears rolled down his cheeks" says the narrative. Tenderly he asked the boy to lead him on to his worldly master, the owner of the flock. On meeting him the Khalif enquired: "How much did you pay for this slave?" "So much", replied the owner. "Here is that much, take it, and set the boy free".

Further still commendable is the catholocity of Islam. God expresses himself through all languages. So universal is its appeal that the Quran promises salvation not merely to the people of the Quran but to those who may follow some other religion. Any human

9 Quran, 50:16
10 Quran, 58:7
being irrespective of his commitments to any establishment is liable to salvation. This factor in Islam is so important that its relevance need not be over emphasized, especially in modern age of religious intolerance. Religious intolerance is the biggest blot on modern civilization. The larger the preaching of this message of Islam, the better purpose it will serve.

"Verily, they who believe (in the Message of the Prophet of Islam), and they who are Jews and Christians and Sabians—whoever believeth in God and the Day Hereafter, and doeth that which is right—shall have their recompense with their Lord; fear shall not come upon them, neither shall they grieve."

Even those who are not established to any faith, are entitled to this reward.

There was the prophetic attempt to minimise tensions between different belief groups. Believing in One God, the members would cultivate the feeling of belonging to one family. The common good is the altruistic concept, which, if fulfilled, would lessen the friction among Riz Powers which constantly threaten to annihilate peace. The Prophet has anticipated the social order where non-Islamic members too, would flourish: They who may accept God, but would fail to follow every detail of the religion.

To such, Islam has a promise to fulfill.

The concept of 'Family of God' is the strong presence which basically deduces the entire mankind to the same divine lineage.

12 Quran 2:289
The Prophet had visualized an ideal world order where every man Muslim or non-Muslim must belong to 'One Family' by the only relevant criterion of belief in the Unity of God. 'Kafir' is understood to deny this very doting concept of Quran and thus, is destroying the unity amongst men, consequently. Thus, Quran had attempted no compromise with the contradiction. It cannot foresee a scheme of society where unity and disunity may co-exist, leave alone their efficacy to promote peace on this earth. Still, the basic attitude of Quran to those who follow other faiths, is that of tolerance. Quran ordains every Muslim to accept everyone else in the good faith that some deny, the world will genuinely become one family of all men - and the faith that "God will bring them together".

".... God is our Lord and your Lord. We will have, what we have worked for, and you will have what you have worked for. So let there be no dispute between us and you. God will bring us all together and to Him is our final journeying".

Those amongst men who revere the Word of God and live accordingly, are truly speaking, Vicegerents of God on earth. Their worth is measured by their deeds in the society to each and every creature on this earth who together form the Prophetic "Family of God".

Islam has appealed to the very core of Man's faith in the goodness of life. As a matter of fact, any religious person of any faith has accepted the message of the Prophet, either consciously or unconsciously. Such universal are the teachings of Quran, that

Quran 4:15.
no one on earth can seriously challenge. Hence, Islam may not genuinely be concerned over the issue of converting men to Islam, for some time, they are sure to come across the only alternative, which is Truth. If man is at peace with himself and with the world, if he is concerned with the present life as well as the life after death, then he has accepted Islam in its true spirit. "Unto their Lord will all be gathered" in the unfailing and universal Prophet that Quran holds out; it is the cardinal belief of Quran, the idea of Return to God. Therein, the message of fraternity on earth will find full realization, for every one will be treated as the member of a family whose Master is God. Islam has thus viewed the human life whose span extends beyond the perishable body, to the realm of spirit. It has firmly stressed the importance of this life as a chance bestowed by the Almighty, so that the spirit may enjoy eternal bliss.

Here, Islam has not drifted from any world faith. The doctrinal concept of judgement, the Hindu concept of Law of Karma or the ideas of reward and punishment, may just be viewed as the common meaning that a religion attempts to give to the life after death. Islam has not fallen short of discussing in detail, even this ethereal phenomenon.

However, the scholars may bear in mind that the one single point upon which the edifice of religion rests, is this faith in life after death. It necessarily would presuppose further, that man is, beyond his perishable body, also a spirit. Having assured that the religion is preached to such masses, Islam would stand highest in its universal appeal.
(iii) Principles - A Modern Outlook

It is totally unwarranted that the basic concept of Islamic life be challenged its authenticity and relevance in modern life. Any amount of re-interpretation or explanation will ultimately land up in rationalisation of the un-Islamic actions. Granted some genuine physical difficulties in the implementation of the fundamentals of Islam, it still remains for a Muslim to seek satisfactory alternatives or substitutes. On the contrary, he is likely to carry with him the unavoidable and haunting feeling of incompetence. If he is sufficiently frank, then he would admit his lack of sufficient belief in their efficacy in fetching him heavenly pleasures. Or still, it may just be the case of persistent lethargy.

Whatever may be the reasons for not translating into action the code of conduct, it remains an undeniable fact that modern Muslim has deviated from Islamic standards, even from those which are the very basic.

Whether this drift is for the uplift of a Muslim or not is for the future to decide. Presently, the situation needs analysis that can justify the faith of a modern Muslim in Islam without exercising any coercion upon his fundamental faith in the Almighty. This aspect of human personality is difficult to refute, least to eradicate.

Often, a modern Muslim is at loss to decide as to what he should accept, and to what extent. The recent times tinged with the message of superior brain power has all the more been confusing. The difficulty is genuine, and it persists in almost all religions.
It is so because the human intellect functions to two general levels; one, at the level of its own personality make up, and the other, at the social make up, of which religion is one of the constituents. If some religious or ethical values do not harmonise with those values of the individual which, his intellect has accepted as basic then there is a dilemma, which results in a conflict. Now, if an individual is not capable of harmonising the two, then he remains a divided self, who is a chronic, religious hypocrit. The entire society populates them in every field of life. In case where such analysis is absent, an individual blindly follows a faith, and is quite content, though his contentment is the contentment of the frog in the well, who is foolishly happy with the 'vastness' of the well, unaware of the outside world. The validity of a religion is truly tested by its efficacy in evoking man's authentic commitment to its value system. The extent to which Islam has succeeded should be objectively judged by the quality of the followers rather than mere quantity. It is upon the former lot, that the future of Islam relies for its eternal status. However, the quantity is also necessary for receiving the basic message of the Prophet with implicit submission.

The inborn nature of man remains vulnerable to the dictates of divinity, in whatever form he may recognise. Negligence of this aspect in the study of human personality will give rise to the questions unanswerable and problems that are insoluble. Modern age must humbly accept the totality of man with all its facets instead of emphasising just one aspect like reason, to the bewilderment of other finer emotions. In such cases there is apt to remain
an implicit gap between the theoretical aspect of religion and its practical application. Hence it is necessary that there is smooth transition from the lofty religious ideals to the mundane activities. Else, a conflict will arise, and religion will have to accept the enforced place of dignified, unquestionable and pious institution which is totally averse to change. Any attempt at change will be marked as an act of blasphemy. A religion hence is deemed to evolve a sense of relevance and reverence in man. This alone should make a true test of religion. Any compromise with human intellect and rationality results into an unpardonable apprehension, or an intolerable revolt. Both these positions are extreme, and hence, must be avoided in the name of religion.

At times, some religious doctrines are genuinely obsolete for the very reason that man no longer apprehends consequences as seriously, as their statement. Hence, he has accepted a way of life, justifying his conduct. For instance, prayer has been bereft of its aweful hallow that Qur'an accounted for. Instead of observing strictly the obligatory prayer, there is a tendency to become apathetic to it. Today everyone argues that the practice of such prayers tends to become mechanical, and hence any sincere alternative of recognising the merciful God is welcome. Few realise the power of discipline and concentration which lays down the very fundamental dictum of any code of conduct in a religion. The advantages are far too great than any inconvenience. Hence, instead of leading a morally indifferent life, it is advisable to divert it to the call of the ancient saints who have emphasised rightly
the consoling and healing value of prayers. It should be performed in the true spirit of total attunement instead of segmented reward-seeking activity.

Fasting has likewise created sensation in the light of modern concepts of God and his qualities. There is no need to starve in order to please God, or that, one may not observe fast for any petty reason like weakness and general well-being. If it is described as a sacrifice, then fasting has truly not succeeded in convincing the Muslim today.

He may fast in public and eat in private. He may fast for any reason than the religious. In order to strike a balance between spontaneous hunger and mechanical fasting, religion has struck a balance to enable man to inculcate a sense of proportion and discipline. Modern Muslims abstains from fasting because the reason mentioned in Islam are not palatable to his adulterated lifestyle.

Modern Muslim has conveniently rationalised the concept of wealth tax. He despises it in the name of sympathy, which limps the human dignity. Quran has hailed charity in all forms, public or private. However, modern legalisation of tax payment to the government, especially in Islamic states, has saved face of receiver. Instead of personal donation, these states tend to deduct some percentage, and utilise the fund for building up a welfare society.

The problem of poverty cannot be solved by the individual sacrifice. Just because a religion ordains austerity it need not be followed in the sense that the austerity of one man will solve the general problem of want.
payment, the state should feel free to manage the huge personal property so that there is no unnecessary burden upon the poor, and the rich are not spared their appropriate tax just under the garb of five percent tax payment where they must pay even more.

Fasting, prayer and alms-giving are instrumental activities, whereas pilgrimage tends to remain ritualistic. With all the ritualistic activities of Islam are imbued with fresh interpretation, the reason of man. He does not consider it worth while to spend on an activity which he may look upon as just ritualistic. However, it should be admitted that the growth of a sense of group identity and of emotional identification with fellow believers all over the world through joint participation in symbolic activities is more welcome than segmentary unity. It is just true that Islamic brotherhood should be expanded to human brotherhood.

Apart from the new wave interpretation in some fundamentals of Islam, its value system has also been reshuffled, though very subtly and slightly.

Islamic concept of faith is quite vague if not ambiguous. Its vagueness is due to the qualities that constitute this value; they are, belief in God, angles. The Day of Judgement accepting all the prophets of God without any distinction, but Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) is the last of the Prophets, and finally accepting all revealed books of God without any distinctions, Quran of course, being final and perfect.

It is indisputable that none of these aspects of faith constitute a clear cut definition of faith. They are termed as unvariable metaphysical doctrines, whereas Quran condemns hair-splitting
A mature faith must consist of the values which are easily acceptable, practicable and meaningful to man rather than theorisation and speculation. Though of course, Quran has room for metaphorical statements though major part of it is positively categorical imperatives. May be accepted with hesitation at times, though of course, it need not imply that the person is a non-believer. A person may be man of religion and even a Muslim without strictly being able to follow the principles and the values.

It is only the spiritual void that is averse to faith. It is only the total negligence of any principle or value in life that marks a Kafir, and certainly not a believer, Muslim or non-Muslim. It must humbly be admitted that no religion can seriously proclaim to remain the final word upon the universe and its Master. Hence, the claim to selective salvation that was made by the ancient Jews and Christians was condemned by Quran. Unfortunately Islam itself became prey of human weakness to selfishness and the custodians of Islam followed the suit. 

Faith has no colour, climate or creed. It flourishes anywhere and everywhere. Anyone sharing the authenticity of faith is a co-sharer in the common human destiny. It would simply be preposterous for a Muslim to claim the privilege of a higher spiritual status or merit merely because of belonging to the Islamic community founded by the Prophet.

Fear of God in Islam has been held responsible for piety. That, however, is one of the reasons, and it certainly reflects upon the attributes of God that a religion so authentically claims to have allotted to Him. Can God be retributive and fearful? Instead, the attribute of justice could conveniently solve the problem of the nature of God. Islam has made an outright rejection of any such discussion. Though the point mentioned above certainly churns the intellect of the most devout Muslim. Though, of course, Islamic value system includes higher type of piety, which means something more than mere divine apprehension. Positively, it ordains the cultivation of basic human values and their further refinement. The traditional Islamic value system includes this higher type of piety.16

One singular concept which will never lose its validity is the concept of brotherhood. With the value that respects human life, the value of brotherhood should also be earnestly preached and rigorously practiced. This idea should be understood and accepted in the intra-Islamic sense rather than in the inter-religious sense. The only criterion of judgement for superiority or inferiority in the rank of human value, is the piety. Mature opinion on brotherhood is certainly non-discriminative. Some common factors and life-style may suggest some segmentation indeed. But that is quite harmless and innocent as long as the wider concept

16 Morality having roots in the lower sense of Taqwa is certainly inferior to the sense of 'Taqwa' which is motivated by the love of God.
of universal brotherhood is valid.

The concept of Justice is the natural consequence of accepting that every human soul has right to salvation. Islam commands impartial justice. Justice is closer to social consideration than anything other-worldly, or reward-seeking tools. Justice functions in all fields of life and yet none of the definitions of justice may claim to have exhausted its attributes. Islam is not against social strata or gradation by the criterion of power or wealth. Hence, no need fear Islamic inequality in any walk of life. But the equality, rank, status, power or property must be righteously earned than inherited. It must be appreciated and observed with full implications that no other religion has preached such polymorphous equality.
CHAPTER - VI

FUTURE OF ISLAM

(i) Modern challenge to Religion

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(vi) A religion for all.
(1) **Modern challenge to Religion**

This is an age of challenging authority in every walk of life: it may be parental authority, social authority, political authority or religious authority. The most critical period through which this age is passing, is made poignant still by the resistance of reason to accept any establishment submissively. Religion too had to pass the tests of time before it could hold its sway on the minds of people, or live in their hearts. The sacramental status of religion once considered to be the monopoly of the chosen class, has now become the common privilege of all. Any study in comparative religion has shown that beneath all variations and appositions, there are certain common fundamental assumptions that show them all to be the products of the same spirit. There is no need to postulate a principle outside this world to account for this spiritual unity. However, human beings are confined to an infinitesimal part of space, and such, they seem far removed from the main plan of the universe. Yet, it is the vanity of man which prompts him to consider himself as the final product of the evolution, and so he behaves. If he considers himself to be the unruled master, the situation would be a godless, and a-religious society. So far inspite of the strained relation between science and religion their estrangement is attempted to minimise, thanks to the comparative studies.

The values for which we struggle are only a flash in the pan and will disappear sooner or later. The cosmic process is bit a weaving and unwraving of forms in which the values we cherish find
precarious and brief embodiment. Ethical principles are but general rules for the guidance of human conduct and owe their significance to the developing society in which they arise. It is the function of religion to embody them in social life, so that each waft and weave of social life is indescribable without the inclusion of these values. Islam is one such religion in which the divine and the mundane are separated by any particular code of conduct. There is only one way of living and that is the best way. A religion may rightfully claim its sway over the definition of what may contribute the best way of living. In spite of the changing social standards, it is necessary to have some social standard, for, without such sanctions, life would seem meaningless. Hence, the myth of morality is invented, and they may not necessarily have any divine origin. As a matter of fact, the standards are quite celluloid and hence, they may be accepted at a particular period of time, and rejected at the other. This challenge to the values which the religion cherishes is often posed by those intellectuals who hesitate to accept even the authority of the conscience and call it as that which is purely socially oriented. It certainly does not need any reference to supernatural power. The point becomes poignant in case of the religions which believe in divine origination, and the word of God. Naturally Islam is entitled to the challenge that God does not command us into a prescribed mode of behaviour. And morality is nothing other than convention, and hence the society has a right to alter it. There is no such thing as 'objective moral values or ethical values' in
the sense that they may never be influenced by the individuals of
the society. True that they may not depend on this or that member
of the society. But morality is a working arrangement and its
sanction is socially necessary. Thus, the entire question of
theism from the moral point of view is questioned. Though of
course, no amount of argument will logically satisfy the issue.
The issue which is at stake is whether man's sense of duty
requires a godhood. And if we accept as first premise, this very
statement then the argument becomes fallacious.

The well-known challenges that the religion has to face
today are mostly from science, mainly, scientific method, psycho-
logy and some schools of psychology. The strict method of science
requires us to believe a proposition only when we are in a position
to prove it. Any statement must possess the quality of being
verified, if those who are interested care to verify it in what-
ever sense of the word. Now religion is one of those disciplines
from where such statements are not forthcoming. If there is a
question to their claim to credibility, there are three, rather
awkward answers which are thus framed.
(a) It would be a blasphemy to challenge the divine authority.
(b) Religious doctrines carry the proofs of antiquity, which are
handed down to us.
(c) They are deserving our faith because our ancestors believed
in them.

In case of revealed religions, the authority has doubtlessly
qualified himself for superior knowledge, and hence revealed
religions cannot be doubted their veracity. But, when for example, the New Testament and the Quran conflict, we cannot assume that the author of one is more authentic than the other. In such embarrassing situations, the modern challenge to religion supposes to have gained a point. The suggestion is that now we are deemed to turn to some other criterion than religious authority and that is rationality. If religion has not always presupposed any future conflicts, than the foresight of the authors comes into question. Moreover, it is just proper that religion should make room for rationality in which case, its superior authority is naturally affected. The supernatural nature of religion authority will have to be given up. It is the spirit of free inquiry, rather than the dogmas of any religion which will solve human problems.

Having challenged religion, this is the faith of the modernist. Again, the whole question is about the establishment of truth. The discipline which follows one methodology and attains it, is equally a claimant to the status, as religion. However, there may be controversy regarding the various aspects of truth. In that case, if many-facet truth is an acceptable proposition, then there is no difficulty in striking a peaceful co-existence between various disciplines. This ideal stage would necessarily rob religion of its unquestioned, solitary right to truth which was allotted to it by the interested section of the society. Now we have come to terms with modern views, and without regrets, that if the aim of science is getting nearer the truth, the aim of religion cannot be any different.
And yet, science can never replace religion. It cannot be a substitute for any discipline which claims truth-finding. For, over and above all the qualities, religion is principally a search for the spirit. That spirit, of which Truth is only a part, not the Whole. The 'Whole' consists of Truth, Beauty and Goodness whatever name we choose to give it. Truth alone would never satisfy the need for the divine. Truth in over-doses could be satiating. We have instances of intense scholars losing mental balance, we have yet to come across a man, lost in religious pursuits becoming insane. That insanity, must it be so called is the ecstasy, and the world applauds it with a dignity, either expressed or implied.

In fact, the modern challenge to religion is the challenge to some of the doctrinal statements, that are attempted a translation into practice. Had they remained a decor of the book, they would hardly have stirred a leaf. But instead, these statements were further interpreted to suit the convenience of the situation, and hence, they lost their revered authenticity. Once the authenticity of few such practices was questioned, more often than not, the entire religion suffered a set-back. Islam is one such unfortunate example of faulty induction. Just because a religion is not followed or wrongly followed by the members of the society, the religion cannot be dubbed as erratic. It would be preposterous and an example of unpardonable immaturity if a society neglects such a throbbing and vital nerve-fibre of its body for want of an appropriate conception of its functioning. No amount of rigorous
logic can ever reduce the human complex to the working of robot. No Freud, Spengler, or Eddington can translate the sublimity of human emotions into theories of behaviour, evolution or physicists determinism. The vastness of the variety of human response is a far-fetched calculation, when Hissenbury's principle of indeterminism stands glittering each human personality. We are individual to the very narrow of our bones, and we carry our personality distinctions right flown to our fingerprints.

The schools of behaviorism and psychoanalysis have tried to explain the human response to divinity in terms of behaviour and analysis of human personality. Psychoanalysis has allotted a considerable part to reasoning to human activities. Thinking is a process of rationalising rather than a process of reasoning. This is so, because of the structure of human personality. Human personality is, more than anything else, a playground of instincts. These instincts are kept in check by religious sanction. All responses are reduced to glandular secretion, than ethical strivings and religious aspirations are only illusions.

Moreover, the scriptures which affirm the absolutism of religions and announce themselves as infallible, such as the Vedas, the Bible and the Quran, are treated today, in the same critical and historical spirit as the Dialogues of Plato or the Inscriptions of Ashok. The obvious change is, that they are man-given documents, and hence liable to error. Islam in particular believes that not merely religious strictness, but every code of conduct and custom are supposed to have come from God. The practice was popular to Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian who readily attribute the
first formal institution to the Gods. Now it is a well established fact that all institutions are the result of human trial-and-error method for a better life-standard.

Religion with Godhead at the apex, has displayed the shrewdness of human mind with subtlety. Instead of claiming total responsibility for all his deeds, man has conveniently shifted it to the will of God, Quran is full of expressions which proclaim that nothing happens except as God, wills.\(^1\) Strangely enough, Quran bades man to perform actions which will bring him reward or punishment. Queer still is the fact that Quran states a number of verses which commend man to use his rationality in the choice of his deeds. The attempt to comprise the free human will and the autonomous will of God is an issue which loses emphasis when ample examples in favour of free will outnumber the instances cited for upholding the will of God.

Such criticism is not palatable to a staunch man of religion, be he a Christian, Jew or a Muslim. However, the challenge does glare a religion right in the face, it has shifted the importance of ethical and social authority from God of religion to Man of society.

Thus, the structure of religion is vulnerable. It would require a specific attitude of mind in order to appreciate the inner structure of this institution. It has evoked the deepest in man and help him clamber through the heights, to the apex of

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\(^1\) Basis of Islamic Culture, by Syed Abdul Latif, P-65. Also Quran 13:12, Quran 53:40, Quran 42:29.
mystical experiences. It has stirred the noble emotions like love, sympathy and charity, and helped build social structure on their basis. On the other hand, it has remained a pet toy of the politicians with which they play at their moments of crises. Religion is a singular institution which has universal appeal and uncontested grip over human masses. Critics have taken due notice of these factors, and hence, held out a warning to the elites of society and their founder fathers to beware of the negative contexts in which religion is verbally used. This shameful fact must be agreed upon, and avoided by modern men of religion.
(11) **Islam - Not totally dependent upon the followers**

The existence of a religion on this earth is a reality to encounter. A religion, in some forms, has always pervaded human life, be it primitive or refined. Many an act of cruelty, bravery, charity and nobility are performed in the name of religion. Though, more often than not, the followers do have some vested interest in performing a particular action in the name of religion. Religion itself is a misunderstood concept. Often, it is mixed up with rites and rituals. No doubt, it is the spiritual aspect which is profoundly expected in the constitution of religion. However, even some such acts of cruelty like animal sacrifice have found place in religion and have come to stay. This observation clearly indicates that it is not the profane or the sublime which characterises a religion but it is the consideration of the followers who claim to justify their means in the name of what they have weighted as divine.

The followers of a religion certainly make a bulk of the religious doctrines, which otherwise would have remained abstract messages of epics. Now, the actual practice of these doctrines in the decision of the followers. History bears evidence that the followers have made little difference to the fundamentals of religion. They may have succeeded in altering some of the customs, rites and rituals. The examples are ample, the form of worship, sacrifice and prayers have definitely changed with time. A Christian, a Jew, a Hindu or a Muslim of ancient times was far more adhered
to the word of Bible, Testaments, Geeta or Quran than their modern counterparts. In between, lie the entire structure of change and flux with which every institution is deemed right from its inception. For static state is a sign of decay, and those institutions including religious one, which proved stubborn to change were annihilated beyond redemption. Here, change is accepted in its healthy spirit of offering mobility, and thus help a religion lively and relevant. Had a Christian followed the strictness of marriage code, "Man and wife unto death", modern Christian would have lived up to the hell of marital relations, instead of relaxing happily from it. A Jew would have lived peacefully with all nations, instead of waging a non-conclusive war with the weak. A Hindu would never indulge into the temptation of crossing the threshold of his profession and poke nose in the affairs that are alien to his 'Swadharma'. The Sikhs would think twice before slaying their own brothers, instead of fighting as one nation. Examples could be multiplied, only to show that the followers have drifted away from the dictum of divinity to which their faith held them responsible.

At the inception of Islam, the initial followers was no one less than Khadija, the devout wife of the Prophet. To this unit membership was attached a member of followers that was inconsequential. It is only the current century that can boast of the huge quantity of followers in India, Pakistan, Gulf countries, Bangladesh and elsewhere in reasonably large number. Belonging to the times and contexts highly divine, they followed Islam in
the best way that was possible for them. It was too much to expect a pagan Arab attached to Islam in sixth century, to practice it with the adulterations of twentieth century. His very disposition would compel him to the way of life that was not influenced by external changes. There is no need to give undue credit to those followers who would maintain the religious piety for want of challenging circumstances. The real test of religiosity will lie in the midst of adverse situations. When a Muslim is yet able to retain his religious fibre, it is quite just that he is applauded for his tenure. Granted that the following of a religion is a duty and not a virtue, it must still be agreed on humanistic ground that human nature is vulnerable. It falls prey to ease and comfort sooner than to a life of discipline. Hence, if a modern Muslim has retained the fundamentals of Islam in face of the trying and tempting situations day after day, it is just apt, at least to encourage him along the path of religion tactfully, rather than criticise him constantly for some minor lapses. However, the general picture of the followers is not very pleasing, especially of those Muslims who are lettered, and consider themselves to be the torch-holders of the other ignorant masses. It is not the religion, certainly not Islam, which has erred, it is not even the external forces, over which we have no control, but it is the attitude of the followers which may have shown lack of courage and calibre to carry out Islamic dictates.
(iii) The quality of religious fibre

It is a subdued feeling of the intellectual class that the religion has remained ineffective in inculcating moral values in this age when new knowledge on traditional beliefs is refreshing and rational. There are also some intellectual snobs with him it has become a chronic obsession to defame religious beliefs, and ridicule religion. They consider it to be a sign of their accomplishment. It is old-fashioned to care for religion, and it is to criticise it. However, it is the result of innerfect education and shallowness which has created such superfluous society. This is the very society which rejects religion without even having proper calibre to understand and appreciate the reasons for its claims. It is easy to denounce than to accept; easier still, to doubt than to have faith.

Besides such followers with a negative view on religion, we are fortunate to claim a large number who, no doubt, have outgrown the ancient dogmatic faith, but are not willing to break away from tradition nevertheless. They crave for an adhesive that will cure them of their pseudo-separation caused by present times. Our concern should be with those who find themselves willing and yet incapable of belief. This is the difficult dilemma of modern Muslim. With education and environment, they have sharpened their minds and made their souls more sensitive. Their difficulties are genuine and their questions profound. Their doubt is no less than a way of expression of piety. In their protest, they reveal their loyalty. It is only the concerned who quarrel; the un-concerned are indifferent. As long as there is dialogue, disputes, disagreements
and discussion, there is a room for the survival of a religion in its most dynamic spirit.

Within the fibre of religion is interwoven the human passion for truth, for righteousness, for justice. Even without a religion telling us, we strive for these values. If a religion has to teach that which is the deepest constitution of human spirit, it is a welcome gesture; a religion in proper perspective and right proportion, can appeal to the emotions sublime, by its choice of the media of communications, and religious leaders. Fortunately for Islam, it has not to grope about in search of an ideal fatherhead. The very life and personality of the Prophet is so impressive that its impact alone can stir the divine urge latent in man. Religious fibre has always booked to the religious leaders for its colour, texture, charm and durability. Such is its fortification that it cannot be shattered to pieces despite fretful storms. Religion is not the product of shaky arguments and changing facts. It is the result of creative genius. The prophecy of the Prophet, and other leaders of other religion was an insight and not a deduction of intellect. Rationalism, no doubt, is preferable and far superior an attitude to dogmatism. However, it must be appropriately channelised to spiritualism. Human bondage is certainly ignoble but laxity is unpardonable. Islam has stressed human equality and rationalism through out Qur'an. But for lack of due interpretation its impact is not brought out with due emphasis. Nevertheless, the very strength, spread and popularity of Islam is an evidence in itself. Apart from the universal appeal it carries with it,
Islam has bestowed a tenacity worth observation. Islam did not have a royal origin like Jainism and Buddhism, hence it did not cater to the favourism of doteful masses. The Prophet was a commoner, and hence, carried with him all the limitations of a common class of society. Islam rarely received political support in its early times. It had to make its own presence felt amidst other Semitic religions quite prosperous and well established. Within the short period of about fourteen centuries, Islam has shown remarkable efficacy in remaining at the apex of popularity. The reasons are as simple as the religion, and simplicity is a quality which is difficult to achieve. With Islam, it is natural and not acquired, because the religion is smoothly and lucidly revealed to an apt person at an appropriate period of transition. Even those who care to question the authenticity of revelation, cannot but stand in perfect awe before the towering spiritual personality of the simple person like the Prophet. The awe itself is telling, it speaks of total submission to the Almighty which Islam hails.

Islam is constituted of the leader and the message which are above all controversies. Mandane charges of social significance may be levied by some sectors, which question many codes of conduct mentioned in Quran. In the huge body of religion such misgivings if at all they are, make little difference to its fundamental structure. Islam has been founded on the principles which are palatable to any sensible human mind. Truly speaking, it is not only a religion for the Muslims, but a religion for all. Every human being with some religion attachment has followed Islam may be without naming it. Such is the quality of its religiosity, that even if there are
no followers, for the sake of argument, Islamic principles will remain relevant as long as there is human existence on this earth. No other religion would be able to claim as much, because they may have based their religion on the criterion of piety, deservedness, sublimity and strictness which define persons eith extraneous qualities. Religion then, becomes a competition to enter in, win and deserve an award. Islam is defined for all alike, with no complexity to complete with, no strictness which try human endeavour. Its approach is tender, its code of conduct is endearing and its promises are human. There is nothing super-natural about it which taxes human imagination. Its concept of life, death, reward and punishment are real, relevant and earthly. It does not preach self-annihilation which will hold promise to some abstract state of bliss. Its statements are understandable and comparable to life experiences. Without becoming Mundane, Islam has remained spiritual, it is a religion whose fibre is not opaque but transparent. Every man has an opportunity to see through his present life so fully so as to foresee his future.
(iv) **The concept of Life after Death**

Every religion has given a thought to the concept of life after death. In order to have faith in the possibility of life after death, it is essential to believe in the concept of spirit or soul, and hold firmly its eternal life which does not end with the perishable body.

The major unrevealed and revealed religions of the world have had a definite ideal to achieve. Except Shintoism, whose ideal is the satisfaction of immediate wants and whose mission is nothing in particular, other religions are specific on these details. For instance, Hinduism is particularly concerned over the issues of ideal and mission of this life. It has been termed as 'Mukti', 'Noksha' or salvation from the cycles of births and death. It is ordained to every individual that he shall break the chains of his karmas, if he is to avoid repeated evils of birth and death. He is fully equipped and properly disposed at any moment of his life to realize that he is a pure spirit which has wrongly identified itself with the body and the world. The movement of realization is the moment of his salvation here on earth. There are elaborate accounts of the types of salvation in both, philosophical and popular Hinduism. However, salvation does remain the only ideal and mission of Hinduism. Same is the account of other religions like Jainism and Buddhism and others who had common Vedic fountainhead. The revealed religion like Judaism restricted its previlege

* Dr. Cench Fute, The eminent Japanese scholars account on Shintoism.
to salvation to the Israelites. Christianity proclaims proudly its well-known mission of leading its followers into Divine Grace through the practice of Christian faith.

The concept of life after death has been the principal factor which has helped to survive religion. Amidst trying times, there are occasions when it is just not possible to remain satisfied with empirical explanations of every phenomenon. In spite of notable scientific data on human philosophy the science of soul or spirit is yet an enigma. Just brandishing the reference to other worldly or cultism, one cannot consistently argue for their non-existence. There is ample mystery that surrounds life on earth, and hence, life after death is a subject which vividiates imagination. Religion attempts to give an account of life which is the combination of the spiritual and the mundane. A basic belief in the reality of spirit or soul is essential. Without such presupposition, all talk of life hereafter deems meaningless. There have been such specific schools of thought especially in ancient India who did have a thorough materialistic view of life. They rebuked religion and mocked the concept of soul. Believing fully in the idea of material pervellence and superiority of matter alone, it was obvious that the life was without any religious basis. Religion accepts belief in God and spirit of man as an unwritten, unproclaimed and subtle prescription. It is taken for granted. It is an assumption which, if doubted would invalidate any divinity. Religion has profound faith in divine order. There is adequate explanation which justifies the law of causation here on earth. 'As you sow, so shall you reap' is the old maxim which
is accepted without any deliberations. Such a simple explanation is elementary, and universal, may it be any religion or any institution. By similarity and extension, this very doctrine is applied to or rather, carried across the boundary that separates life and death. Every explanation of the life after death involves a very peculiar usage of the world 'life'. It is understood in the sense of the activeness and consciousness of the spirit without body. The spirit retains completely and succinctly, each and every impression of its life in embodied condition. On the basis of his deeds here on earth, he shall be judged for future reward or punishment. This is the general statement of the belief especially of revealed religions. Such religions have detailed out a programme of life after death till the Day of Judgement. Upon being judged by the Lord Almighty on that occasion, the soul shall be eternally blessed or eternally condemned. This life thus, remains the only chance for deciding the fate of the soul. Other Vedic religions do accept the concept of judgement, rather in a modified form of the law of Karma. They are, however, particularly unique in explaining the passage of souls through various forms of life previous and life hereafter, which are adopted as their share on the basis of their Karmas. Thus, in some form or the other, the concept of life after death has been accepted. All deistic religions believe that the affairs of the world are under the total control of a supernatural Being. His Will grants some concession to human will, and to a certain extent, Man does enjoy the freedom to exercise his will as he pleases. At least, he is
pleased to think that he has freedom of will. There is an unebated controversy over the issue of freedom of will and Divine Will. Some religions like Hinduism has evaded the whole concept of Divine Will by the flawless explanation of the Law of Karma. So much so, that some schools of Indian Tradition like Charaka, Jainism and Buddhism do not even think it necessary to accept the authority of Vedas. Their concept of God is also colourless, especially in Buddhism. Though Charvaka were totally materialistic, Jainism and Buddhism believed in God more for tradition than anything else. Divine interference in human affairs was in one way or the other kept in the background. The origin and end of this universe metaphorically explained as the divine play called "Lila". Christianity hold the concept of grace in high esteem, and hence, the performance of Christian duties and prayer have found a prominent place in deciding the fate of man both, here on earth and after death. The three semitic religions have more or less similar attitude towards life after death. They predict the Day of Judgement, upon which God would wind up the affairs of the cosmos. After that, there will be total prevalence of divine justice. The freedom of will given to man will be withdrawn. All contradictions of this life will melt away and the supremacy of moral law will prevail.

As per the supremacy of good deeds or evil deeds, judgement shall be passed in favour of Heaven or Hell. In Quran, there is a vivid description of life after death. It appeals to the common man, because the parallels drawn and the examples cited do not
vouchsafe any stretch of imagination. To the intelligent and the rational minded, the limited role of allegory and metaphors is quite palatable. Hence, Islamic concept of life after death has enticed human nature of every generation, because it is very becoming to the cult and climate of every age. Even if modern Muslim finds it difficult to accept the colourful of Heaven and the horrible picture of Hell, he surely accepts the maxim thus as you shall sow, so shall you reap. Since this life is the solitary chance of choosing one's righteous life is own fate, a man leading a righteous life is only helping himself. This infallible supremacy of moral law which prevails on earth and by implication even in life after death has justification in Divine personality of God. Amongst innumerable divine qualities, justice is one, and it is exercised fully on the Day of Judgment. Those who have accepted Islam and lead a righteous life will be rewarded suitably in Heaven and those atheists and wrong doers must await their turn for Heaven after having passed through the orgies of Hell. Total purity of soul is existable for Heavenly occupancy. Quran describes Hell and Heaven spatio-temporally, and hence there is time limit to the placement of Hell, or Heaven. Quran holds out a promise for Heaven to one and all, for God, in His kindness has provided for Hell only to purify the evil doers. However, there is an idea of partial salvation in Quran for those who believe in one God, but not in the Quran as the final revelation,
and Muhammad as the last Prophet. Though they may be spared the worst regions of hell, they will not enjoy the highest bliss of heaven.

The religious account of all life after death accounts for the belief in continuity of life after death and the triumph of value over disvalue. There is ample scope for modern Muslim to adhere to the tradition without appearing dogmatic or irrational. Provided that a man is committed to these beliefs, he may well remain non-committed to any particular concrete conception of life after death found in Semitic milieu of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He may analytically make distinction between the life after death that actually remains his prediction, and the concept of life after death that a religion offers. There is, however, no need to believe that the two differ very widely, nor need it be accepted that they are identical. Any doubt regarding a particular explanation, need not be interpreted as total disbelief in life after death. Accepted that the material body is also an abode of spirit, which is not perishable, it logically follows that the spirit must survive the perishable body to some end. Even without clinching to any established religious cult, it is possible for man to hold the unshakable value of justice. Such is the command of moral law which sublates every detail and discrimination. The Qur'an condemns those who prefer this perishable, transitory and imperfect world to the eternal and everlasting, unbounded and faultless life after Death which is free from every kind of evil, and meaningless, grief and distress, fear and loss and disease and ill-health.
Yet, belief in ethical doctrines and life after death is not a scientific hypothesis. They are believed on grounds other than mere logical. Though of course, the explanation of life after death is an existential interpretation of man on earth. Islamic faith in life after death consists of two correlated beliefs - the resurrection of the individual and his everlasting survival either in heaven or in hell and the Divine notice of man's mundane activities upon which final judgement is passed. If God's existence be accepted, the above beliefs do not raise any theoretical difficulties. Even about resurrection, it may be accepted without further elaboration that God, who initially creates an individual, can resurrect them after any length of time.

There are thinkers in favour of the explanation of life after death. Belief in life after death helps to solve many a difficulty raised by the presence of pain and evil in a universe which has been created by God in his own free will.

Any amount of deliberation will prove that the concept of life after death is more than a logical doctrine or rational account, a conviction which is socially oriented. In order to implement a general law of discipline, social systems of reward and punishment are instituted. Social order also need social sanctions. On similar pattern when world bestows teleology in many an aspect, it is but natural that the cosmic order must be obeying some law, which we may call, moral law. It is difficult to convince a modern rationalist to believe in life after death unless he initially
believes in the existence of God, in some forms or the other.

A very mundane factor which reinforces the pre-logical faith in life after death is man's love for life. A yearning to live forever is so deep rooted in man that he likes to believe that he will survive his perishable body.

Thus, these three factors namely the search for values and their permanent establishment, the belief that personal immortality is the postulate of morality and the passion to live forever supply all the impetus necessary for the belief in life after death.
Future of Islam and Universe - Islamic and Scientific Views.

The future of any religion is basically dependent upon the followers. The older its history, graver are the challenges it faces from time to time. The calibre of its survival value is totally dependent upon the very fibre that constitutes the body of the religion. Attempts have been made now and again to replace religion by some such institutes like humanism. Modern men, who are not totally disinclined to accept some basic human values, but are reluctant to accept religious doctrines, are attracted by some such currents.

Religion has a function to perform which no institution in particular, can carry out that efficiently. Of course, discipline through apprehension may be induced in man, but that is distorted. Apart from this, a man who accepts some restraint on himself in order to uphold and live up to that which is the highest, is certainly a balance personality. Truly religious men are admirably balanced. Needless to stress the point that purity is easier than discipline, more so, with the modern youth who is already distracted by modern life-style. An urge to perform something daring and different characterises youth all over the world. The easiest thing in the world is to persuade people, especially young people, to be materialistic, selfish, greedy and even delinquent when one has all the educational institutions, cinema, television, radio and the press at one's disposal. Had it not been for the quality of contentment which Islam, in particular, preaches the poor lot would strain under the feeling of discontentment created by the
inevitable went in their lives. Else, even the youth will fix
the ideas in their mind regarding material well-being. It is
attractive to be persuaded towards wealth and fashion rather
than virtue or piety. If the spectacular alternative to poverty
ever remains the glare the comfort and the ease, then it requires
no stretch of imagination to accept squarely that if the substitu-
tude for religion remains the materially prosperous life that
modern age has to offer. Moreover it requires no effort to invite
the young to be disrespectful instead of allying insolent instead
of humble and contemptuous instead of tolerant.

A virtuous Muslim through, is rarely better-off, than his
western counterpart. The fact remains that the Muslims have faced
no better than most of the non-European people or culture. The
impartial historians place Muslim civilization, which proclaims
Islam as the supreme universal, eternal truth and the only route
to salvation in this world and the Hereafter, on the same level
as the pagan Chinese. Hindus, Buddhists, African animists and the
hated and despised Jews. The Muslims have to admit with woe that
they have lagged far behind even the heathens like American Indian
tribes in putting up a strong opposition, despite its centuries
old civilization.

Such considerations bring us to the crucial question which
is latent in all account of Islam. The question is whether there
is anything inherently wrong with Islam and its moral, cultural
and social order.
The reply to this question brings us to the sharp distinction that need be made between Islam and Muslims. The ideal expectation would be to consider the two as identical. However, we must also accept the reality and admit that a Muslim is as vulnerable to worldly temptations as any other man. A Muslim has his share of laxity in maintaining the ideal Islamic standards. Muslims could not remain immune to the same weakness, short-comings, trials and temptations as other people. Their stride off the Quran is so wide that the Muslims have almost lost their laudable identity. A Muslim is virtually indistinguishable in their conduct and behaviour from a non-Muslim. Like all other traditional people in traditional societies, the average Muslim practices, his faith out of mere custom and tradition rather than any personal conviction. Most of his actions to deny are worldly goal-oriented, and are not performed to earn the pleasure of God and a rewarded life after death. His actions have come to remain a social formality, from which he has ceased to draw divine satisfaction. Added to all-over temptations offered by the western culture, is the Muslim illiteracy and lack of rationality in judgement which marks a sober mentality. Hence, masses could not appreciate fully, leave alone avail, the heights and the spiritual truths of Quran. If not totally forgotten, the message of Quran ceaselessly cry out for a sympathetic hearing. Islam is doubtlessly divine, and Muslim has never ceased to be human. This discrepancy between the ideal and the real has staked Islam, not only its spiritual origin, but its deserving status in the ranks of the rational and balanced religion.
It need be remembered that Islam allows within proper limits, striving and endeavour in the path of life and knowledge provided that it is for the noble purpose, elevating humanity. In fact, it is maintained that God has hailed the believer who subjudges the external physical forces. However, even at the height of his power and glory, he is advised to repose his faith in God, submit to him and believe in the life hereafter. For, Islam does not regard the earthly life and the present world to be the highest goal of man.

The Quran says:

"The comfort of the life of the world is but little as against the Hereafter". (IX 138)

Further it says:

"This life of the world is but a pastime and a game. Lo! the home of the Hereafter - that is life, if they but Knew" (XX IX: 64)

The Quran asserts that the life of this world is the bridge of the Hereafter and . . . . .

Contd....
Some misunderstandings are the sheer result of misinterpretation. Hazrat Ali, hence has suggested to meet people at the level of their own understanding. Transcendental truths may be presented to them in the modes and methods which they understand. He explains the point thus, "Do you want the teachings of God and His apostle to be confuted?" God and the Apostle are being confuted not because their precepts are absurd but only because they are obscurely presented.

Islam does command its own esteemed place in the ranks of the world religion. It has all the flexibility required of a religion to fit and adjust itself to the changing times. History is the witness of the fact that a religion truly noble, has never belittled human intellect but lived up to its challenges. Despite changes in the life-style, Muslims can no longer ignore the value of the transcendental truths in human life. However, life may change, there will always remain a place for transcendental truths. The whole existence must fall under one Divinity and one faith, else no scientific miracle will prove sufficiently powerful to save man from personal and social disintegration.

Today, Muslim world is facing a peculiar problem which slightly social and partially legal. In the past, 'Ulema' performed the function of checking the community from going astray. Their efforts were for revivalism. But now, the functions of 'Ulema' have been replaced by the states. It will be observed that the current Muslim countries alter or re-interpret the 'shariah' to suit the changing situation. On the other hand, the 'Ulema'
contend that the 'Shariah' is immutable. Hence, modernization, reinterpretation or alteration of 'Shariah' is out of question. This conflict characterizes modern Islam, and it continues under various garbs of social reform. If unchecked, it may adversely harm the fine and sober times of religious fibre. It predicts a course of history which is not at all pleasing to the religious-minded.

The problem of saving modern world is graver than saving Islam. But 'What is it to save and from what'? The question is blunt, and the answer is evident. We have a colossal task of saving the entire existence from the threat of deadliest wars that are the results of human greed, understanding, sympathy and above all, fear of life hereafter and faith in the Almighty. The age expects the intellect to be more extravagant in sacrifice and set an example by maintaining the severest and the austerest standards of living.

The essential function of the religion is to stabilize the existing order by endowing the accepted social tradition with sacredness. The transcendent reference does give a permanent value to the social custom and belief by seeking divine sanctions. The struggle for existence demands co-ordination of purpose and activities, and religious sanctions supply the necessary dynamic. The conditions of life make adherence to explicit faith in tradition essential to the continuity of the group, but this inevitably tends to produce a static order. Islam in particular has not drawn any line of distinction between the sacred and the Mundane. Its code
of conduct is so well-manipulated and balanced that it requires no such external standards.
Future of Universe - Islamic & Scientific Views

Every religion prophesises upon the future of universe either metaphorically or with the help of attempted factuality. The Quranic view of the future of Universe is mentioned in the para

When the Sun will be wound up and the stars will be scattered (Quran 1:2)

With the help of the sun's doom. It explains the scientific phenomenon of the cause of light and heat as hydrogen, which are truly responsible for the glory of the sun, stars and the moon. The constitution of sun is basically hot, and it emits tremendous heat. Due to this heat, hydrogen gas is gradually being converted into helium gas. With this slow, but steady change, it is not difficult to predict the total annihilation of the heat of the sun, at a future point of time.2

The sun is constantly losing energy and is losing its two billion tonnes of its weight every second.3 Consequently, the sun must necessarily lose its heat and remain a dark, dull, spot, although the sun, at present is 1,280,000 times larger than our own earth. This scientific account is in tune with the Quranic concept of the sun's doom.

However, there are differences of opinion regarding future predictions which are the mark of diverse religious beliefs and

2 George Ganice: "Birth and Death of the Sun", PP-220-221
3 Margrate Ouhaid: "Zamin aur Khuda ki Khoj", P-54
cultural practices. Society does leave its impact upon the formation of religions doctrines.

Still objectively speaking, we can say that universe is constituted of basic features, which may be called its warp and woof. They remain unchanged throughout the recorded and unrecorded human history, e.g. the law and order, harmony, symphony and beauty in nature, man's sense of moral order as distinct from concrete moral codes, the struggle for existence, pain and suffering, hope and joy, birth and death, growth and decay. Natural sciences are just descriptive and physical sciences are interested in establishing cause-effect relationship. One such interesting human enterprise is to attempt future predictions either on the basis of science and technology, or religion and philosophy.

For instance, it has always fascinated man, this question about the future of Universe. All that is possible of any future predictions, is just their possibility. It may become an actuality provided that the hypothesis is almost mature beyond any challenge. There are two hypotheses which claim their efficiency in the prediction of the future of Universe. One, that the Universe will freeze continuously till it reaches zero temperature; and the other, that it will die in a fiery blast as its component parts rash together faster and faster until they all meet in an enormous fireball. These hunches are not altogether guess works, but have some definite sponsor of some scientific theory.

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4 For details see Albert Einstein and L. Infeld, The Evolution of Physics.
Or, will this constant mechanism of contraction and expansion go on forever, in a relentless succession? It is an ultimate question that man can ask and answer: the answer may have the overtones of theology and philosophy. Yet, astronomers somehow are optimistic beyond comprehension. They are confident that they will soon know the answer, credible enough to put before the world. They may be having their own reasons for their intuitions backed by their few past successes.

Recent physics assigns some mass to neutrons. They are no longer mere theorized concepts as believed in 1932, but have been actually indentified in 1956. Now, if their conclusions stand, then the balance between an ever expanding Universe and the one that will eventually contract, is duly tipped. Accordingly to the current atomic theory, each thimbleful of space in the cosmos contains about 100 neutrons. The mass of all neutrons could more than double the total mass, and perhaps provide enough gravitational pull to cause an eventual contraction. If that happens, Reines (heading the team of physical sciences from the University of California) thinks that "there was no beginning and will be no end". One is correctly reminded of the Advaita philosophy of Indians, wherein this Universe has no beginning nor an end. This scientist too prophesied when he announced his results at a physics meeting, "the consequences are theological".

5 For details see B. Russell, Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy, Principles of Mathematics, Mysticism and Logic.
As often is the case, progress in one area poses problems for another area, quasars, for instance, have become enigma, even theoretically. How to explain such an immense power which such a limited volume possesses? But the theorists now have a formidable candidate, the black hole. Though of course, they are no less mysterious than the quasars. They do not obey the normal rules of physics. They are, for instance, inherently invisible. Yet, most astronomers accept their existence. They are bizarre, and probably real.

Inspite of the fact that the fundamental question regarding the future of Universe remains controvertial, the evidence that does exist points towards an open Universe, how strongly is debatable. However, some astronomers hesitate to think likewise, backed by philosophy and religion. They have worded their doubt in what they call the antropic principle. It states simply that the type of Universe that we can observe is a Universe that allows human life to be created and survive. If the Universe is open then it is perhaps the only one that ever existed. If we were to survive in an inhospitable cosmos, then our probability of survival would be one to ten. On the other hand, a closed Universe would keep on bouncing back and forth in a cycle of different Universes and then, the Universe that we inhabit would just be one of the many.

Not that this philosophy appeals to many. They would rather use their instruments than instincts or intuitions, to decide whether our cosmos is open or closed. Other questions about creation should

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6 Waismann. How I see Philosophy.
also be tackled likewise. An humble astronomer, full of awe and wonder would possibly utter, "We certainly do not understand cosmology, press reports notwithstanding". Knowledge is humbled before its own vastness. Nevertheless, the fact that cosmologists can seriously try to solve the problem of the fate of the Universe attests to their progress in recent years and to enter into a new era and prospects, that would read the future of Universe more and more accurately. It is worth observing that the very act of exact knowledge calles in for vagueries. When the future of Universe itself has remained problematic to man, he is much to dwarfed to tackle the question of future of a religion, because religion is a very complex dimension of human life. It is a challenge to all exactness and calculations, because, without it, a man feels uncomfortable and with it he is not exactly satisfied. Statistical data computarised with the help of most refined scholarship may perhaps reveal interesting and astonishing results. Future of any religion or future of Islam will then be predicted with better judgement aided by scientific sophistication.

\[\text{\small Cited in Y.G. Mignoskar's Concepts and Clarity, PP 40-43, (Baroda-1982).}\]
A religion for all

All religions have a goal which has some important base in the 'other world'. Some religions do emphasise the life on earth for the benefit and betterment of this very life. However, most major religions have particularly elaborated on the life hereafter. It is this concept of life hereafter which is mainly responsible for its major acceptance and minor criticism. That this relatively short span of life is insufficient to bear fruits of all actions, and hence the cycle of birth and death, is the claim of Vedic religions. While the Semitic religions advocate a Day when their deeds will be judged just Being in proper perspective by the most just Being.

Islam has bestowed remarkable magnanimity when it promises salvation for all, Muslims and non-Muslims. Its concept of Just God is unwaveringly definite and objective, and thus, there is absolutely no room for any injustice or partiality. The very concept of Islamic brotherhood and prayer vindicates the point that all are equal before Him.

Islam has claimed a universal message when it has emphasised in the very fundamentals, the very roots of human value. Of course, all religions are the responses to the cosmic change and the nature of cosmos, as it is A divine guidance is also postulated so that every order, mystery and enigma is explained. Moreover, the concept of God is equally soothing and brings solace and nurtures a sense of being under the divine protection. Islam has envisaged
God of every human being. Such that He is of equal avail to all alike, irrespective of status, birth and deeds. Islam does not hail the saints nor does it condemn the common man.

It does not hold the other world in direct contrast or superior to this world. On the contrary, Islam has marked out a simple path which uplifts an individual from state to state. There is a continuity that travels in a direction to the life hereafter. Islam believes in one life change, and hence, it sticks out a warning to all human beings, so that they are not lost to this singular opportunity of seeking permanent blessings. Islam has chalked out a very convenient path of earning an excellent life here on earth and hereafter.

The reasons for the spectacular spread of Islam are not far to seek. Islam had always remained catholic in its approach. It welcomed the peoples of many diverse religions, so long as they behaved themselves and paid taxes.

"I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and the educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of the Quran which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness".

With such a religion, that has survived the tests of the severest of times, it could safely be predicted that Islam would remain forever, a religion for all.

8 Bonarthe et L'Islam Faras, France, PP 105-126 by Cherfilsd.
Moreover, the concern over jurisprudence in Islam is simply unique. The Law of God is binding on all alike, irrespective of western power and birth. The law is interwoven with the social system, and thus, the law has come to remain active, effective and applicable in day-to-day life.

Moreover, the nobility and tolerance of this creed which accepts as God-inspired all the real religions of the world will always be a glorious heritage for mankind. There is no doubt that Islam has already qualified itself to be declared as the perfect world religion. "The foundation itself is so strong and worthy that a magnificent religious structure would be permanently built up for the benefit of the entire mankind.

"On it could indeed be built a perfect world religion".

In this century of atom-analysis and nuclear energy, disintegration of human personality at individual level and dispersion at social level have become commonplace phenomenon. Yet, they need be decided in the interest of humanity, and hence, he prevented earnestly. Moreover, pluralism of culture has remained an added enigma. Any adhesive that places every segment together or any link that creates a sense of belonging to common human family, is the religion. Islam has never remained a mute spectator to any such human catastrophe, risking at times, its status and inviting condemnation. "For, even today, that which is at stake is far more important and urgent than any prestige issue.

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Islam has accepted the challenge of the modern age and entered the dialogue to discuss the issue of re-establishment and revitalisation of basic human values. Islam invites participation of each and every individual so that the religion becomes a personal choice and a conscious commitment. Islam is the torch-holder amongst world-religions who accept that the dividing lines between different faiths no longer run in the same direction as before. It has made it crystal clear that if anyone, while being naturally convinced in his heart of the veracity of the Quranic message, wants to practice another religion for opportunistic or other reasons, this will not be accepted from him.

"In the next world he shall be among the losers". 10

It is this deep and permanent spirit that we must rediscover to-day in order to clear the path of a happy life which has been unduly polluted by some insane and immature decisions, regarding science and religion.

10 Quran 3:85
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