PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAM

Behechti & Bâhonar



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&
Bahonar

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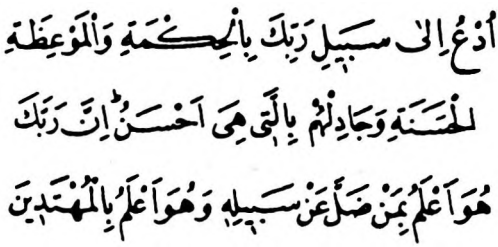


BISM-ILLAH-IR-RAHMAN-IR-RAHEEM

(In the name of God, the most Compassionate, the Merciful)

AL-HAMDU L'ILLAH

(All praise be to God)



Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and good exhortation, and reason with them in the best way. Lo! your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who are rightly guided.

(Qur'an, 16:125)

DEDICATION

We feel pride and pleasure in dedicating this book to *Imam Khomayni*, Leader of the Revolution and Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in recognition of his pivotal role for bringing about the renaissance of Islam and for his most valuable services which led to reawaken the Muslim Ummah.

It is most gratifying that the Muslim governments are celebrating the 15th century of Hijri era on a grand scale. The publication of new books on Islamic teachings is going to be an important and essential part of the centenary celebrations. With a view to do our bit, we are presenting our new publications to the readers. It is hoped that our effort will prove a suitable contribution to the cohension of the Muslim Ummah and the propagation of Islam in its true form.

Dr Muhammad Husayni Behishti was born in Isfahan on October 24, 1928. He belonged to a religious family.

Dr Behishti began his studies at the age of four years and rapidly learned reading and writing and the recitation of the holy Qur'an. He was then sent to a primary school and later joined a high school. In 1942, however, he left his secular studies incomplete and joined the Sadr Theological School of Isfahan where he studied Arabic literature, logic etc.

In 1946, he arrived in Qum to pursue further studies. There he received instruction from eminent scholars of that time. In 1947, he thought of continuing his secular studies. He, therefore, shifted to Tehran and obtained his bachelor's degree from Tehran University in 1951. He then returned to Qum and engaged himself in philosophical studies. It was during this time that he attended Allamah Tabatabai's course of Asfar of Mulla Sadra and Shifa of Ibn Sina.

While at Qum he had warm and enthusiastic discussions with Ayatullah Mutahhary, Ayatullah Montazary and others and these meetings lasted for five years.

In 1950-51, he participated in the oil nationalization movement under the leadership of Ayatullah Kashani and Dr Musaddiq. After the 1953 coup, however, he and his associates realized that in this movement they had few established programmes. They, therefore, decided to form a cultural movement which should be purely Islamic and should lay the foundation for the edification of the youths.

In 1954, he and his associates started the Din-o-Danish High School in Qum with the help of some friends and he was directly responsible for its management from 1954 to 1963. He obtained his Ph.D. degree from Tehran University in 1959.

In the year 1962 the Islamic movement under the leadership of Imam Khomayni created a turning point in Iran's revolutionary struggle and Dr Behishti took active part in it. The Imam appointed a four-member politico-theological council of the various resisting groups and Dr Behishti was also a member of this council.

In 1964, he went to Hamburg (Germany) at the instance of Ayatullah Milani and others to act as an adviser to the management of a masjid which had been founded there by Ayatullah Burujardi. He stayed outside Iran for six years, performed Hajj and visited Syria, Lebanon and Turkey and also Iraq where he met Imam Khomayni. He returned to Iran in 1970.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution Dr Behishti was appointed as chief justice of the Supreme Court of Iran and chairman of the Islamic Republican Party.

On the evening of June 28, 1981 when Dr Behishti was addressing a meeting of the I.R.P. in its headquarters and as many as 90 persons were present in it, bombs installed in garbage cans placed near the stage exploded. As a result of this the building was destroyed and 72 persons including Dr Behishti met martyrdom. Thus the brilliant career of one of the devoted servants of Islam came to an end.

• • •

Dr Javad Bahonar was born in the city of Kerman in 1933. He took early courses in the holy Qur'an in a Qur'anic School and studied religious science in the Masumiah School of Kerman, simultaneously with this he continued his secular education and completed his high school studies in 1953.

After obtaining his high school diploma Dr Bahonar moved to Qum to pursue studies in Islamic sciences at the Qum Theological Centre. Later he obtained his B.A. degree in literature and M.A. degree in educational science from Tehran University.

Dr Bahonar commenced his literary activities by making contributions to various magazines like Maktab-i-Tashayyu'. He continuously preached Islam by delivering lectures and writing books.

Beginning in 1962 Dr Bahonar took part in the Islamic movement which was then active under the leadership of Imam Khomayni. As a result of a series of lectures delivered by him, he was arrested in 1963 and sent to prison.

With the participation of his fellow combatants Dr Bahonar assisted in the establishment of the Islamic Republican Party based on Islamic ideology and following the line of Imam Khomayni. In 1978 the Imam ordered him to organize demonstrations with the assistance of Dr Behishti and others and in the same year he was appointed to serve on the Islamic Revolutionary Council.

Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution Dr Bahonar served in various capacities. He was Minister of Education in the cabinet of Muhammad Ali Raja'i and after the catastrophic I.R.P. headquarters explosion and the martyrdom of Dr Behishti he was appointed as chairman of the Islamic Republican Party.

Dr Bahonar assumed the office of Prime Minister on August 5, 1981, but had not served in this capacity for long when he, along with President Raja'i and others, was martyred on August 30, 1981, as the result of a bomb explosion.

Dr Bahonar was an erudite scholar, an efficient co-ordinator and an intelligent and zealous worker who had a full knowledge of the political system of Iran. With his martyrdom the nation lost one of its very efficient and faithful servants.

PREFACE

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

There is no denying the fact that Islam brought about the greatest revolution known to the history of mankind. A study of the conditions prevailing in the pre-Islamic era shows that the entire world was then plunged in ignorance and darkness and the Arabs to whom this great Divine message was first communicated were the most ignorant and the most backward nation of that time. With the advent of Islam, however, the same backward people took a leap towards virtue, humanity, knowledge and wisdom. They stepped from darkness into light. The teachings of Islam revolutionized their very being and they became the leaders of the civilized world.

In the teachings of Islam all the needs of man have been taken into account and sufficient and perfect instructions have been given in each case. It is a living religion which provides vitality to mankind and is the brightest path and the clearest way to salvation. Its illustrious principles excel all others in glory and nobleness. It has improved the human mind and has raised the standard of human life.

Islam wants man to understand his place in the universe and his relation with the Almighty. It wants to make him realize that he must live respectfully and must not be humiliated or dominated. He is not just the combination

of flesh, bones and blood and the materialistic needs and desires. He must, therefore, be aware, free and creative and should rule over himself as well as his will and life.

Islam is the religion of revolution. It is an ideology which interprets and guides revolutionary movements and elevates the society to its utmost perfection. It spreads Allah's Light and Justice on earth. It tries to change the criteria and values of social and individual life and to establish a new and better system of values.

One must believe in Islam in its entirety and not only partially. It is this perfect belief which gives birth to man's various rights and responsibilities and teaches him the philosophy of life.

Islamic revolution of Iran is the revival of Islam. It is the realization of the dream of great reformists like Saiyyid Jamaluddin Afghani and Dr Iqbal who spent their whole lives to awaken the Muslim Ummah and to make it pursue the path of spirituality, knowledge, Jihad, sacrifice and martyrdom. It is the revival of elevated Islamic values and a rebellion against modern barbarism which has fettered the world with its materialistic and animal values.

This great revolution is based on two important Islamic principles:

The first principle is that of monotheism. It is the negation of worshipping anyone other than Allah, destruction of the vestiges of polytheism, purification of the society from the idols of power and wealth, rejection of satanic values, faith in the unseen and gathering the society around the axis of Allah.

The second principle is honouring man and treating him as the representative of Allah on the earth. The respect accorded to man must be true and real and not a mere slogan. He must not be treated to be subservient to any one except Allah. He must be allowed to choose for himself how to lead his individual and social life in the light of the guidance provided to him by the Almighty.

It is on the basis of these principles that the internal and external policies of the Islamic Republic are determined and explained. We are against domination and acceptance of domination and for this very reason we have started to strive against the dominators, exploiters and colonizers. We have adopted a foreign policy based on an Islamic ideology and reliance on the axiom 'neither East nor West' which inevitably results in our detachment from the super powers and their associates. We are not prepared in any circumstances to take a compromising position. Man is the vicegerent of Allah on earth and enjoys the highest position among the created beings. It is, therefore, necessary for him to discharge his duties efficiently and in accordance with the commands of Allah. It is for this reason that we are keen that the message of Islam, the last and the most perfect word of Allah, should reach every human being on the face of the earth.

We reject the slanderous and irresponsible western democracy as well as the eastern dictatorship and totalitarianism. The Islamic government is the over-all rule of the people in the hands of the people or the rule of the people over the people for the sake of Allah. This form of government is the true version of an Islamic Republic in which decisions are taken by the public devoted to Islam under the guidance of Islam. Hence the above-mentioned two principles of freedom (i.e. negation of captivity

imposed on man by inner and outer demigods) and independence (i.e. negation of dependence on strangers and foreigners) are the corner-stones of our revolution. The purified expression of *La ilaha il lal lah* is the foundation of the creation, history and destiny of man and it is also the origin and foundation of our movement, thoughts and responsibility — the responsibility to ensure that Islam flourishes in all the Islamic lands and spreads to all parts of the world.

This is the message which Imam Khomayni wants to communicate to all the Muslims in the world.

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MAN OF OUR AGE

From the point of view of the availability of the facilities of life, the man of our age has reached a grand stage. The innumerable discoveries and inventions have provided him such opportunities as previously appeared to him totally fantastic.

The automatic appliances and electronic implements have made many such things possible for the man of our age, which were hitherto impossible. By just pressing a button he can obtain whatever he wants. Water, air, heat, cold, food and clothing are all readily available for him.

Radio waves in the twinkling of an eye carry his voice to the farthest corner of the world; not only his voice but his picture also.

The aircraft have subdued vastness of the space for him. With ease and speed he flies from one side of the world to another, even more easily, more lightly and to a greater distance than the legendary flying carpet.

The astronauts have opened the way for him to the planets, and now a journey to the moon and other planets appears to be as simple as going from one city to another neighbouring city.

The new scientific and industrial discoveries have so expanded in our age that it is difficult to enumerate them. It may be said that nature is now bent upon disclosing in the shortest possible time to the man of our century all the innumerable secrets which it held in its bosom for thousands of years.

As the result of his expanding acquaintance with the secrets of nature and his marvellous discoveries in regard to the controlling and exploiting the natural forces, the man of our age has reached the zenith of material well-being and has converted the whole earth into a well-furnished and magnificent place for his own benefit, in order to be able to lead a contented life and secure that happiness of which he has always dreamt.

Greedy Animals

This was one side of the coin, but there is another side of it too. The material civilization of today has solved many problems of human life, and has given man dazzling power to control nature. But at the same time it has so much eulogized and puffed the philosophy of having more and more, that it has made the man of our age a greedy animal, who is day and night worried about only increasing the production and consumption and thinks of nothing else. Materialism and too excessive concern about economic affairs have converted man into a machine. He is always busy with earning his livelihood or finding the means of leading a more and more luxurious life. This situation is so wide-spread that the life of the most men of our times is almost devoid of any other valuable content.

There was a time when man valued his freedom most and even sacrificed his life for the sake of it. Now he has become a slave of production and consumption and has

laid down his love of freedom at the altar of this deity.

With the progress of material civilization, the consuming needs of man have increased and the way of meeting them has grown complex to the extent that many people sacrifice their physical and moral well-being for achieving that end.

In the material society of today all higher human values have been set aside, or, it may be said, that even moral values are looked upon only from material angle. In most parts of the world the real infrastructure of education and training is only material and economic gain. The actual purpose of framing any educational or training programme is only to produce men who can provide better economic return for the pockets of others or sometimes for their own pockets. The motto of every one, from a man in the street to the elite, has become "achieve economic gain and material pleasures ensuing from it". The specialists in higher intellectual and technical fields, the politicians, the writers and the artists are no exception to this rule. Even many of those who are devoted to higher spiritual questions have been affected by material and economic attractions. Missionary work is performed mostly in exchange for financial and material remuneration. This situation is the natural and inevitable result of the diverse material philosophies prevailing during our times.

Day and night man is being told that he is no more than an economic animal, and that wealth and economic prosperity are the sole criterion of good fortune and the only sign of the progress of a nation, a class or a group. It is constantly being drummed into the ears of people that money has a miraculous power and it can solve every problem. There is always a talk of the heaps of money

obtained by chance or by directly or indirectly robbing the fellow human beings and spent for satisfying the lowest animal desires. In these circumstances it is not surprising that men or rather semi-men of our age have turned into greedy animals, bent upon acquiring money from whatever source they can and spending it for obtaining the greatest possible pleasure. They have become the slaves of production and consumption. Their life is bereft totally of the higher values befitting a living human being, and has tended towards vulgarity and degradation.

Quest for the philosophy of life and its aim

It is a matter of great satisfaction that here and there some new voices have arisen in this very world enamoured of production and consumption. They give rise to the hope that perhaps time has come for the deliverance of the man of our age from the shackles of this economic myth. It is more gratifying that these voices pertain to the youth rather than the middle-aged or the aged people.

For some time the youth throughout the whole world have been showing practical reaction and saying loudly that they find their life meaningless and vulgar in the magnificent palace which has been furnished for them.

They want to know:

If people generally are happy in this magnificent palace?

If the boat of their life filled with all sorts of comforts and travel equipment shall carry them to a shore of peace and content?

Whether this splendid civilization attaches any importance to man himself?

Whether all the gadgets invented to facilitate life really serve man, or they themselves have appropriated all his mental and physical capabilities?

Whether this splendid civilization which has so much reduced distance between various cities, continents and planets, and converted them into just a big house, has also brought the hearts of its inmates closer to each other, or in spite of reduction in distances their hearts have gone further apart, or even worse than that, they no longer possess any hearts, as man now has only brain and hands exclusively devoted to serve his stomach, to satisfy his lust and to help him seek pelf, position and similar other objects?

It is true that such voices strike only in the lands where people lead an economically prosperous life and are not preoccupied with the worry of obtaining such primary necessities as bread and butter.

It is also true that in most parts of the world there are still large masses of people who are striken with poverty and they themselves, their families, their dependents and their neighbours are leading a life below subsistence level. Their only hope now is a bloody revolution that may put an end to their material and economic privation.

But the correct foresight makes it necessary that the efforts of these under-privileged people should be channeled in such a direction that they may not have to face such a fate.

Anyhow, it is certain that the people have more or less awakened and have got rid of the charm of material and economic prosperity. Both the big camps of the modern

world now see clearly that:

Though for centuries man has been making efforts to secure the best possible means of living a better life, at present in both the big camps of the East and the West men are being sacrificed ruthlessly in the grand industrial temples at the feet of the diety of industry. Except empty slogans there is nothing left of human dignity, human freedom and real choice in either of the two camps. Both the systems have deprived man of his dignity on the pretext that that is the requirement of the speedy running of the wheels of the complex modern industry and economy.

Anyway, the man of our age is no longer willing to be taught by means of industry and technology how to lead his life.

He persistently insists that he should know what the aim of his life is.

Contrary to what the pessimists think, the voices which are now being raised in protest or otherwise, may be a forerunner of the happy and propitious self-realization. They may give rise to human self-awakening and a renaissance of human society. They may induce man not to take mechanical development for human evolution, and to rediscover the real goal of his life with deeper insight. They may lead him in the direction of real human bliss. What does the Qur'an say in this respect?

The Qur'an emphasizes as a principle that all the pomp and show of life is meaningless, if it is devoid of faith and spirituality and is not consistent with the aim befitting a human being. A man enamoured of such a life is a loser

and all his efforts are in vain.

"Know that the life of this world is only a sport and pastime, pageantry and cause of boasting among you, and a quest for more wealth and more children. It is like the vegetation springing out after rain, delights the farmers, but it withers and you see it turning yellow, and then becoming worthless stubble". (Surah al-Hadid 57:20).

At another place Allah has been described as the light of the heavens and the earth, the truth and the directing spirit of the whole world.

Then there is a mention of the meritorious and worthy men whom their trade and the efforts to earn their livelihood do not beguile from the remembrance of Allah and do not divert them from the basic goal of their life. They consequently secure the best results. Their efforts are always fruitful and conducive to virtue and excellence.

The Qur'an describes the fate of those who have no aim in life and are forgetful of Allah:

"As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty man thinks that it is water, but when he comes to it, he finds that it is nothing. There he finds only Allah, who pays him his account in full, and Allah is swift at reckoning. Or as darkness in a deep ocean covered with dashing waves and overcast with clouds. Several kinds of darkness, one upon another. If one stretches his hand, he can hardly see it. Indeed the man from whom Allah withholds His light, can find no light at all". (Surah al-Nur 24:39 – 40).

Consider these verses well. They contain a truth, which has

become far more evident following the great scientific and industrial progress and the expansion of the dimensions of human life.

Purely material life is as good as a mirage. The efforts of a greedy and covetous man bear no fruit, for they are devoid of a direction and a meaning. There is darkness all around. The people are puzzled and submerged in vulgarity. The question still remains: What is the meaning of life and what is its goal?

According to the Qur'an the real cause of all this confusion and vulgarity is that human life has been bereft of the element of *eiman* and man is concentrating his efforts on material progress. He has entered an era of production for consumption. and consumption for production. Such people may succeed to the utmost degree in achieving their material ends but beyond that they fail in securing what is worthy of a human being.

The Qur'an says:
"Those who want the life of this world and its pomp, shall be fully recompensed according to their deeds during their lifetime. They shall not be defrauded here. But in the Hereafter they shall have nothing but the fire. All the good deeds they have performed, shall have no value and all their works shall be null and void". (Surah Hud, 11:15 – 16).

Philosophy of Islam — ISP, 1982

EIMAN

Eiman is an Arabic word which has been naturalized in many Muslim lands, where it is commonly understood. All those whose mother tongue is Persian, Turkish, Swahili or Urdu are more or less familiar with it. Though in English the words, like faith, belief and trust are also used in the same sense, neither of them is fully synonymous with ***eiman*** which is commonly used and generally understood. To make its sense clear, we cite here a few examples:

When we have full trust in the integrity of a person and unhesitatingly rely on him, we say that we have ***eiman*** in him. Similarly when we believe fully in the veracity of a statement, we say that we have ***eiman*** in it. If we have a firmly founded faith in an intellectual system or 'ideology' and feel such an ardent attachment and zeal therefor that we spontaneously make it the basis of our activities and life with perfect peace of mind, inclination and fervour and establish the programme of our activities and life on it, we say that we have ***eiman*** in that 'ideology'.

These examples show that ***eiman*** means firm faith and complete trust in a subject, an idea, a doctrine etc.

The antonyms of ***eiman*** are doubt, reluctance and indecision. The doubt may be in respect of a person, a point or a

doctrine. It may be fifty per cent either way. It is also possible that it may be accompanied by a shortlived optimism or pessimism. However, in any case, its natural result is distrust. Even when doubt is accompanied by optimism it is not possible to attach oneself to and believe in a person or an ideology, especially in cases where it is necessary, in pursuance of such an attachment, that one should make a practical stand in the face of real or potential dangers and should show perseverance.

Now let us look minutely at the life of man in order to find out what is the role of *eiman* in our modern life, let alone the olden times.

But from which point should we start our study? Should we do so from the exciting scenes of the heroic struggle of the under-privileged but faithful people who fight for acquiring their human rights or from a comparatively tranquil area, for example from the warm atmosphere of the life of a family or a school? In our view it would be better to study the question at several stages, so that we may reach the depth of the matter.

Role of eiman in the life of a child

Eiman is the foremost psychological factor in the life of a child even in this age of advanced technology and mastery over space. *Eiman* is the axis round which the life of a child mostly revolves. It is *eiman* in those associated with him, e.g. his parents, brothers, sisters, teachers etc., in the matter of things which he does in imitation of them or according to their instructions and *eiman* in his own efforts and discernment in the matter of things which he does on his own account. The children trust their parents, their brothers, their sisters and their teachers. They have faith in the correctness of what their elders teach them

and in what they do independently on their own account.

If as a test case this vital trust is taken away for a few days from the children of a family even in one of the technologically and industrially most advanced countries and is replaced by doubt and suspicion, you will see how those poor children are doomed. No amount of scientific or technical aid will be able to bring back their lost zeal and self-confidence unless and until that trust or ***eiman*** is restored.

The sound and balanced growth of a child and his future happiness largely depend upon the ***eiman*** of his parents, teachers and all those who are responsible for his upbringing. Only those who have ***eiman*** in their vital task can acquit themselves well in this respect. There is no doubt that a mother who fosters and brings up her child with a sense of devotion and responsibility, a father or a teacher who carries out his responsibility wholeheartedly, all have a role in ensuring the happy life of their ward.

A family atmosphere which lacks devotion, the mutual trust of the parents and the children, and their reciprocal respect for the rights of each other is one of the most important factors causing misery to the children. In such an insipid and dark family atmosphere the child does not feel peace of mind and confidence. Gradually he loses faith in everything including himself and is deprived of the most valuable factors of progress and evolution viz. ***eiman*** in himself and in the environments of his life.

In priciple the *eiman* of a child is largely a reflexion of the love and trust which his parents show to him and to each other. Similarly the *eiman* of a teacher has a profound and constructive effect on his pupils, especially

during the early years of their education.

Undoubtedly a part of your best memories must have been related to the days when you enjoyed the guidance of a sincere and dedicated teacher in your school.

Subdual by doubt

With the approach of adolescence the ***eiman*** of the childhood is subjected to incredibility and reluctance. Even during his childhood one is faced occasionally with the events which violently shake his confidence in a person or a thing. However, during this period another ***eiman*** fills the place of the first ***eiman*** (viz. ***eiman*** in the opposite direction of the first ***eiman***), without the child being faced with a prolonged doubt. But during this period he does not suffer from a feeling of uncertainty and usually develops confidence in the opposite direction. That is why a child often changes his views rapidly and in quick succession. For example, at one moment he is not on speaking terms with his play-mate, but the next moment he again becomes chummy with him. Often during a single spell of play this drama is staged several times.

Gradually this period passes away and adolescence commences. During that period a number of physical and mental developments take place.

One of these changes is this that one loses faith in the correctness of many ideas in which he believed previously during his childhood. One is subjected to incredibility and reluctance, the scope of which varies from individual to individual. Some persons lose faith in almost everything and become sceptical.

Constructive doubt

Adolescent incredulity is a very effective factor in the human development, provided it is accompanied by a sort of earnestness and faith in investigation and search. Only this sort of incredulity may be called constructive doubt. Although the function of doubt is to destroy all that we already believe and construction is connected with the search and investigation which we undertake after this destruction, but as we do not undertake investigation and research unless the unstable beliefs of childhood are destroyed we consider doubt also to be a participant in this construction and call it the "constructive doubt".

Role of eiman again

Adolescent incredulity usually impels man to inquire and investigate. It may be said that at this stage man wishes to discard what he was taught during the pre-adolescent period and in this field also, like many other fields, he wants to stand on his own legs. He wants to be independent and to show that he is no more a child. This doubt is, therefore, accompanied by a sort of ***eiman*** — ***eiman*** in himself; ***eiman*** in this that he should stand on his own legs and should see what he can understand himself. With the adolescent incredulity we find ourselves face to face with a new world — a boundless world of unknown things. At that time a desire to know is roused and we set out to inquire and investigate with abundant hope and usually with ***eiman*** in this that now we can acquire purer and more dependable information about these unknown things by relying on our own power of recognition, investigation and research.

If adolescent incredulity is not followed by a positive desire to discover and an earnestness in inquiry, it cannot be called constructive. In that case it will shake our confi-

dence in everything and will bring about only boring reluctance. Thus *eiman*, in rediscovery, has a positive role during the marvellous period of adolescence.

Scientific and industrial progress is normally the outcome of the extensive efforts of those who carry out incessant research and to make one discovery undertake hundreds of tests and trials. Sometimes to ascertain the validity or otherwise of a new scientific or industrial idea which comes to their mind they repeat the same test so many times. You might have observed some scientists from close quarters and might have noticed with what dedication and zeal they follow their job and what a glitter of *eiman* in their work and in scientific research sparkles from their face. It is possible that you yourself may also have experienced the enjoyment of this delight, exultation and *eiman*.

Constructive eiman

We are talking about the role of that *eiman* which is constructive and which effectively leads to action, and not of that which only keeps the hope alive during a period of distress without giving a definite direction to life.

While the latter kind of *eiman* also has some value in human life, its bad effects cannot be over looked. We leave the consideration of the pros and cons of this sort of *eiman* to some other occasion. Here suffice it to say that the Qur'an does not regard this *eiman* enough for the prosperity of mankind even in respect of faith in Allah. Tens of the verses of the Qur'an expressly say that human salvation depends on the *eiman* accompanied by such action as is proper and commensurate to the goal. The verses 82 and 277 of the Surah al-Baqarah may be cited in this connection.

The Surah Yunus, verse 22, the Surah al-Ankabut, verse 65 and the Surah Luqman verse 32 severely censure those who do not pay much attention to Allah in their ordinary life and indulge in all sorts of perversions; and only recollect Him in the moments of distress and misery. The Qur'an at several places describes the deeds as the touch-stone of *eiman*. Referring to those who make tall claims, but at critical moments evade making a sacrifice, it says: *"Do men imagine that they will be left at ease on saying – we believe – and will not be tested with affliction?"* (Surah al Ankabut, 29:2).

Unbridled liberty is not
compatible with belief in an ideology

Constructive and positive *eiman* naturally creates certain obligations and limitations. In human society every ideology has its own rules to which those who believe in it, have to adhere. Even the nihilists who do not accept any system have to observe certain norms and rules. The groups which form clubs to oppose the conventional way of life, do not allow a person conforming to the normal standards, to attend them, because they consider such a thing to militate against their system. If a system of 'no system' creates certain duties, how can it be expected that a constructive ideology should involve no moral and legal obligations. The liberal-minded section of our society should know that escape from responsibilities is neither in keeping with realism nor with true liberal-mindedness.

The *eiman* of childhood despite its purity and serenity is incomplete because it does not originate from consciousness accompanied by an analysis. It is mostly an involuntary response to the environment and is a sort of its echo. That is why it cannot stand its ground in the face of the doubts of adolescence, and as we said earlier, is shaken with the

onset of puberty.

The fact is that nothing more than such a simple and superficial *eiman* can be expected during the period of childhood. But during adolescence and the period following it we can have a conscious *eiman,* an *eiman* obtained as the result of calculation, study and deep analysis. The amount of success in obtaining conscious *eiman* varies from individual to individual. In the case of many people the doubt of adolescence is very simple and of limited effect. It little affects most of the questions in which they believed from their childhood.

The *eiman* of such people even in their mature age is more or less a follow-up of that which they had during their childhood. It only deepens with the passage of time. Anyhow, it cannot be called a conscious *eiman.* Such people are common even among the highly educated classes. Many an eminent scholar, though outstanding in his own field, has without any critical examination worthy of his learned position, followed the same doctrine or the same political or social policy as was provided to him by his environment. Islam does not approve of this attitude. The highest source of Islam, viz. the Qur'an repeatedly exhorts us to deliberation and logical analysis. It disapproves following a system or a doctrine blindly. It says: *"They say: We found our ancestors following a certain belief and we are guided by their footsteps. Even so we sent not a warner before you (O' Muhammad!) into any township but its luxurious ones said: We found our ancestors following a certain belief and we are following in their footsteps".* (Surah al-Zukhruf, 43:22 – 23).

Again it says: *"When it is said to them: Come to that which Allah has revealed and to the messenger, they*

say: Enough for us is that wherein we found our ancestors. What! Even though their fathers had no knowledge whatsoever and no guidance". (Surah al-Maidah, 5:104).

On the question of the adoption of a doctrine the Qur'an emphasizes that *eiman* should be based on knowledge and satisfactory study. If it is not based on knowledge, it has no value and search for truth should be continued.

After adducing certain logical arguments against idol-worship, the Qur'an says: *"Most of the unbelievers follow only conjecture in the matter of idol-worship. Surely conjecture by no means can take the place of truth. Surely, Allah is aware of what they do".* (Surah Yunus, — 10:36).

From Qur'anic point of view it is the duty of man that irrespective of the ideas imparted to him by his parents or acquired by him from his environment during his childhood, he should exercise his learning and knowing faculties, to look carefully at himself and the world surrounding him and should continue to contemplate cooly till he arrives at a definite conclusion which may form the basis of his belief and personal and social behaviour in life.

Outlook on the world

The adoption of such a goal and direction of life has a direct connection with one's outlook on the world and man's role in it. As this outlook is the only sanction and infra-structure of any ideology, one should be careful in selecting it and should refrain from being complacent or superficial in this respect.

DEEP AND DEFINITE KNOWLEDGE

The Qur'an emphasizes that one should pursue only that aim of which he has a definite and clear knowledge. *"Do not persue that (matter) of which you have no knowledge, for ears, eyes, and heart all are accountable".* (Surah Bani Israel, 17:36).

Such a knowledge is obtained through convincing and clear proof.
"Do you possess any authority (Sultan) for making this assertion, or do you say concerning Allah what you do not know". (Surah Yusuf, 10:68).
"These are their own wishful fancies. Say: Let us have your proof (Burhan) if what you say is true". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:111).

Guess and conjecture do not lead to such a knowledge. *"Most of them follow nothing except conjecture, and conjecture can certainly not take the place of truth. Surely, Allah is fully aware of what they do".* (Surah Yunus, 10:36).

From the point of view of the Qur'an conjecture has no value at all. In several verses it has been described as a senseless and blind action. (Vide Surah al-An'am, 6:148 and Surah Ale Imran, 3:154).

The Qur'an mentions a number of factors which tend to give rise to conjecture and put it in the place of correct and precise knowledge.

(1) Persuit of base desires
The base desires, lust, cupidity and self-interest obstruct correct judgement and the finding of truth.
"Who is more misguided than he who follows his caprice without guidance from Allah?" (Surah al-Qasas, 28:50).

(2) Customs of the forefathers
"In fact they say: We have found our fathers practising a religion, and we are only following their foot-steps. It has always been the same case. Whenever before you, We sent a warner to a town, its rich people invariably said: We have found our fathers practising a religion and we are only following in their foot-steps.". (Surah al-Zukhruf, 43:22 – 23).

(3) Blind submission to the great and the powerful
"They shall say: Our Lord! We obeyed our chiefs and elders, and they misled us from the right path". (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:67).

Inferiority complex so bewitches a man and overwhelms his thinking that he ceases to think for himself and blindly follows the thoughts, ways and habits of big powers or even the advanced countries. Such a man sees with the eyes of others, hears with the ears of others and thinks with the brain of others.

The Qur'an has mentioned some basic organs through which reliable knowledge is obtained. They are:
Ears for hearing
Eyes for seeing
Heart for understanding

"Allah brought you out of your mothers' wombs in such a state that you knew nothing. He gave you ears and hearts, so that you may be thankful". (Surah al-Nahl, 16:78).
There is another verse which says:
"Then He fashioned him and breathed His Spirit into him. He has given you ears, eyes and hearts; yet you show little gratitude". (Surah al-Sajdah 32:9).

One of the main sources of our knowledge is hearing, through which we come to know of the experience, investigations, and the ideas of others. We hear of many events from other individuals and other reliable sources.

Another main source of our knowledge is seeing and observation.
The third source is inner perception and comprehension. The knowledge which is obtained through seeing, hearing and inner observation still remains superficial and has little value till it is further studied, evaluated and analysed. This raw material must be processed in the region of heart so that it may become reliable, valuable and fit for being accepted and followed.

According to the Qur'an the maturity of man depends on the correct use of these faculties. If these faculties are not used properly, man sinks to the level of animals.

"They have hearts but do not understand with them, they have eyes but do not see with them and they have ears, but do not hear with them. They are like beasts or further astray. They are heedless". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:179).

Basic and expanded role of heart
The Qur'an has variously described the role of heart.

Thinking, pondering and comprehending are some of its functions. Thinking means arranging the known date for the purpose of analysis, composition, comparison and evaluation. As the result of this process, general rules and principles are obtained and then applied to particular cases.

Pondering means going into the hidden aspects of the apparent phenomena in order to find the way to the real truth. What we can discover by means of our senses is only a superficial reflection of what is the present appearance of the things. Our senses can neither discover the inner truth directly, nor can they find out the ultimate end of any event.

By means of our senses we can know only what is perceptible and observable, but they do not have enough power to have access to the inner truth. Only pondering, deep thinking and mental analysis can do that.

Hence scientific knowledge must not be based on credulousness, guess and conjecture, superficial judgement and short sightedness. It must be accompanied by correct mental analysis and deep thinking so that the result may be clear, convincing, reliable and fit to be followed.

Consideration

The Qur'an at several places urges us to consideration, which means to look at things carefully and inquisitively and observe them attentively along with deep thinking. Look at the following verses carefully:

"Say: Look at what is in the heavens and the earth". (Surah Yunus, 10:101).

"Say: Travel across the land and see how He originated the creation". (Surah al-Ankabut, 29:20).

"Consider what the fate of the miscreants was". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:86).

"Do they not consider how the camel was created, how the heaven was raised, how the mountains were set up, and how the earth was spread?" (Surah al-Ghashiah, 88:17 – 20).

We see that in all these cases consideration should be so careful, accurate and effective that it may provide an answer to the questions which may arise and solve the difficulties which may be faced. It should be to the accompaniment of deep thinking and careful study.

This consideration, reflection and contemplation is applicable to all the realities of the world and is not confined to any particular sphere. The Qur'an counsels to consideration in divergent fields. For example it says:

"Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are signs for men of understanding, who remember Allah, standing, sitting and reclining, and consider the creation of the heavens and the earth. (They say): Our Lord! You have not created all this in vain. Glory be to You! Save us from the torment of Fire". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:191 – 192).

There are hundreds of similar verses in the Qur'an which call man to the fruitful study and investigation of this vast world. In respect of history the Qur'an says:

"Relate these stories to them so that they may think over them". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:176).

There are other verses which consider the ups and downs in the history of the ancient nations and the causes of their progress and downfall to be a lesson.

"We will show them Our signs in all horizons and within themselves until they will clearly see that He (Allah) really is". (Surah Fussilat, 41:53).

Regarding the knowledge imparted through revelation, the Qur'an says:
"Do they not meditate on the Qur'an, or are there locks on their hearts?" (Surah Muhammad, 47:24).

Knowledge and science

In modern usage the word, 'knowledge' has been limited to experimental knowledge. In fact there are two words. One is 'knowledge', which covers all kinds of learning and information, and the other is science which exclusively means knoweldge based on experiment and induction. With the limitation of knowledge to scientific knowledge, a fallacy has arisen. It is said that:

(a) Any information not based on knowledge has little value, and hence it is not convincing.
(b) Knowledge means experimental knowledge, and hence any knowledge not obtained through experiment is worthless and not fit to be followed.

You may observe that in the first sentence the word knowledge has been used in its general and wider sense, and consequently this sentence gives a meaning about which there can be no doubt. It is true that any information not based on knowledge, has little value. But in the second sentence the word, 'knowledge' has been qualified and used in a limited sense. The result is that there are people who say that it is only experimental knowledge which is reliable and has value. They have gone so far that to believe their own existence they want to light upon human soul through a surgical operation, and to come across Allah during a space journey!

Another Fallacy

We have observed how the word, knowledge has been

limited to a narrow sense. This mistake has given rise to another fallacy.

It is said that only experimental knowledge being reliable, a truth can be proved only through observation and experiment, and therefore anything which cannot be subject to observation and mathematical calculation has no reality. From this it has been deduced that a reality is only that which may be established by means of an experiment, the non-material things which cannot be tested in a laboratory, obviously have no reality and are no more than an idea or a notion conceived by the mind. On this basis it has been further inferred that realism is a philosophy which regards only matter as a reality, whereas idealism is that approach to the world which believes in non-material things also. As the logic of nature requires us to give preference to realism over idealism, materialistic approach to the world is preferable to the divine approach. .....What a flight of clearly imaginative thinking! If we think over the above argument carefully, we can easily observe how unscientific it is. In fact it is no more than a fallacy. Should we take realism and idealism in the sense of realistic thinking and imaginative thinking respectively, there is no doubt that the former has a priority over the latter. But we must see what is the scope of reality and who can be called a realist?

Objective reality is that which actually exists. It may be material or non-material. It is not essential that a thing which exists must necessarily be material. Similarly it is also not essential that everything which is based on knowledge must be observable in a laboratory.

Hence divine realism is the belief in realities, whether material or non-material but not the belief in mere concep-

tual notions and imaginary ideas. Those who believe in divine approach to the world, maintain that they have reached the absolute truth through insight and knowledge. They have found it and not merely conceived it. This is an indisputable truth which unfortunately has been misrepresented and wrongly interpreted.

Islam has its own general outlook on the world which should be correctly understood, for without knowing it, it is not possible to understand the Islamic teachings in many other fields of doctrine and practice.

From the Islamic point of view the world is a collection of multifarious but inter-connected realities which have and continue to come into existence through the will of Allah, the One, the Omnipotent and the Omniscient. The world is constantly changing and moving. It is a motion, based on goodness and blessing, in the direction of gradual perfection i.e. every being achieving the degree of perfection for which it is suited. Out of His infinite mercy Allah has willed that in its evolutionary march everything be pre-planned and based on a series of the laws laid down by Allah. The Qur'an has termed these laws as the "Divine Practice".

From the point of view of Islam man is an outstanding phenomenon and a creative being who himself determines his future. For this purpose he has been endowed with two gifts: (1) Faculty of acquiring vast and everincreasing knowledge about himself and the universe, and (2) volition.

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The Islamic outlook on the world can be summarised thus:

- Realism
- Correct thinking
- Monotheism
- Future-making with conscious effort
- Gaining knowledge through reflection and experiment
- Receiving knowledge through revelation
- Acquiring utmost knowledge through the stable system of action and reaction including immediate, long-term and even permanent reactions.

Thus Islamic outlook consists of knowledge, freedom and responsibility. It is an outlook of hope, optimism and possession of a purpose.

To elucidate these points further, we propose to deal with them at some length.

Realism

As we have pointed out, according to the viewpoint of Islam, the universe is a collection of multifarious but interconnected realities which are constantly changing and moving. It has come into being by the will of Allah. Islam requires man to keep this fact in mind while getting himself acquainted with himself and the world. He should acknowledge everything as it really is with all its dimensions and relationships.

At the stage of acknowledgement there is no exception to the principle of realism. But should man be realistic at the stage of action? At the stage of action realism has two aspects which should be distinguished from each other.

Sometimes it is said that man should always be realistic

and practical. What is meant by practical is that one should submit to the present realities and should never try to resist them.

Islam does not approve of this sort of realism and considers it to be inconsistent with man's position, his mission and the creative power with which he has been endowed. Man of Islam has no right to submit so easily to his physical and social environment under the pretext that a sensible person should not fall foul of realities.

Another aspect of realism is that man should take into account the limitations of his intellectual and practical powers while making efforts to improve himself and his environment. He should find out the best way of mobilizing his potentialities and removing or overcoming the intervening difficulties. In doing so he should always be realistic and must not over-estimate his potentialities. This sort of realism at the stage of action is approved by Islam, and is in fact a part of the realism at the stage of acknowledgement. Islam has pointed out to man that he can change only a part of the realities of the world, but not all of them. The power of changing the realities varies with different persons and with the different periods of the life of the individuals and the society.

Correct Thinking

Islam lays much stress on the point that man should pay full attention to the basic role of correct thinking and knowledge in his life and that he should realize that his salvation depends on them. In this respect the Qur'an says: *"Give good tidings to our servants who hear advice (and reflect carefully on it) and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom Allah has guided. They are the people of understanding"*. (Sura al-Zumar, 39:17 – 18).

In many other verses the Qur'an has repeatedly addressed to — 'the men of understanding', 'the people who think', 'the people who understand' and 'the people who remember' and it wants the wise, the sensible and the thoughtful to think correctly and not to fall into the pitfalls situated on the path of intellect.

Islam requires man to put his ever-increasing intellectual and creative power into action, to bring about necessary changes in his natural and social environments and to create new useful things so that he may become more equipped to ensure a better and decent life for himself as well as for other human beings and should not submit straightaway to the existing realities. Hence, in the eyes of Islam, man is required to incline towards his goal rather than to the existing realities.

Man of Islam

The most interesting part of the Islamic Outlook on the world is concerned with man and the Qur'anic view about this eminent being. From the Qur'anic point of view man is not a natural being, i.e. like other natural things it does not have to follow a fixed and unalterable course and career.

Man -- the self-maker and the selector

The Qur'an considers man to be a being having the responsibility of self-making. In this respect he has a divine role. Partially he is a material being and partially a divine one. In the words of the Qur'an man has been made of clay, but divine spirit has been infused in him. In his various capabilities of being good and bad have been intermingled. He has been endowed with the power of exercising his will and choosing his way.

The Qur'an says:
"Indeed We have created man from the union of sperm and egg to test him. We gave him the faculties of hearing and seeing. We have shown him the right path. Now it is upto him to be thankful or thankless". (Surah al-Dahr, 76:2 – 3).
Man has more intellectual capacity than any other living being. From the point of view of gaining knowledge, he is far ahead of even angels. In the beginning of his genesis man learnt things which were unknown to them.

The Qur'an says:
"He taught Adam all the names, then He presented those to the angels and said: Tell Me the names of these, if what you say is true. They said: Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except that which you have given us. You alone are All-Knowing, Wise. Then He said: O Adam! Tell them their names, and when he told them their names, Allah said: Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth?" (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:31 – 32).

Man has the big advantage of having a vast field in which he can secure power by gaining knowledge. He has the practical ability of executing his desires. He is also able to choose his way and direction. Thus the Creator of the world has made him superior to most of His other creatures. *"Surely We have honoured the children of Adam. We carry them on the land and the sea. We have provided them with good things, and have definitely given them superiority above many of Our creatures".* (Surah al-Isra, 17:70).

Big trust
The 72nd verse of the Surah al-Ahzab describes those powers with which man has been endowed as a big and valuable trust, worthy of man alone. It is he alone who

could hold it. Otherwise in spite of all their grandeur, the heavens, the earth and the mountains had declined to take such a responsibility.

The Qur'an says:
"We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. But man assumed it".

Human personality

The personality of man depends on his holding this big divine trust, viz. the ability of choosing his way of conduct. His well-being depends on utilizing this power to the best advantage. The human society is human only so long as in it everybody is free to think for himself and choose the way of life he deems to be the best. If a man thinks as others want him to think and does as others want him to do, he is no longer a person. He is only a thing which lacks human will and independent personality. If his actions are to be planned by others, he can neither be a planner nor a chooser.

The biggest and the most painful degradation which man of this century has suffered as a result of the modern mechanized life is that he has been deprived of his humanity and turned into a mere cog of the elaborate and huge mechanical devices. In many cases the economic value of his job is far less than that of the machine beside him. More than anything else it was the material philosophy which paved the way for such a humiliating situation. But at last the trust which is held by him has bestirred the man of this century who is now trying to dislodge the yoke of the slavery of machines from his neck. In the present state of half sleep and half awakening he is on the lookout of an intellectual and social system which may help him regain his human dignity.

Human emancipation

From the Islamic point of view the only way for man to get out of his present predicament is to get rid of his egoism and should worship Allah. A man who thinks only of his material desires, whose efforts are concentrated on having better food, better clothing and better facilities to enjoy sex or who is day and night after securing pomp and pelf, can never be a free man. He can easily be enticed and then dominated by those who can put the means of enjoyment at his disposal. But if a man is God-loving who seeks the pleasure of Allah more than anything else, he can keep his passions under control and satisfy his desires with moderation, without becoming a slave of them. Such a man can surrender his desires, if necessary, to gain the pleasure of Allah, whose pleasure is more valuable than everything else. Allah will recompense him for his sacrifice in a better and purer way in the eternal world.

The Qur'an says:

"Alluring for people is the love of the joys that come from women, sons, hoarded heaps of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle and plantations. All this is the comfort of this worldly life, but with Allah is a far better abode. Say, shall I tell you something better than that? For those who practise piety, with their Lord are Gardens underneath which rivers flow. They shall abide in them forever, and shall have spouses purified and Allah's grace. Allah watches over His slaves. Those who say: Our Lord! We do believe. So forgive us our sins and save us from the punishment of the Fire. Who excercise patience, speak the truth, who are devoted in prayers, spend their property in the cause of Allah and pray for pardon in the watches of the night". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:14 – 17).

A religious man is naturally interested in all the good

things in this as well as in the next world. But for him the pleasure of Allah is above everything else. The Qur'an says: *"Allah has promised the believers, both men and women, Gardens underneath which rivers flow, and in which they shall abide. He has promised them nice dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. What is more, Allah shall be pleased with them. That is the supreme achievement".* (Surah al-Bar'at, 9:72).

In fact a self-renouncing and devout man loves Allah more than anything else. *"Yet there are some who take for themselves objects of worship beside Allah, whom they love as they should love Allah; but those who believe, love Allah more ardently".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:165).

The best sign of the love of Allah is this that for gaining His pleasure a man should be ever-ready to sacrifice his life, his wife and children, his hearth and home and his wealth and assets, for none of them could take the place of Allah in his heart.

Bond with eternity

Such a man never finds himself lonely, perplexed and without dignity. He feels to be attached with an everlasting bond to an eternity, a majesty and a perfection. He feels to be a being who can never be annihilated and even whose death is the beginning of a new era of life.

THE SOURCE OF CREATION

With a view to make a study in respect of the source of the creation and the first cause of the development of the universe, it is necessary to give careful consideration to the following points:

1. The world is a reality

The world is a reality which can be felt, observed and perceived. It is not something imaginary or the produce of the conception or notion of anybody. Irrespective of what we think about it and irrespective of the fact whether its phenomena are known to man or not and whether they are put to any use or not, it is an absolute and indisputable reality.

From the point of view of experimental knowledge also the existence of the universe is indisputable, for its phenomena are subject to scientific investigation and research. Had its reality been doubtful, all the scientific effort and research would have been useless and in vain.

2. The world is well-organized

Through observation, experiment and calculation man has found that the world is well-organized. There exist definite relations between its elements and its phenomena, and it is governed by firm laws. Normally the object of all scientific research is the discovery of these very laws and relations.

The existence of this systematic organization is so definite that no natural event is considered to be haphazard and having no relation with other phenomena. If it is found that the cause of a phenomenon is not known, various kinds of investigations are carried out for years till its cause is discovered. On the other hand if a law is discovered, its generality and firmness are regarded to be so sure that on its basis big industrial plants are set up and thousands of appliances and implements are manufactured.

Thus the world with all its dimensions has systematic interrelations at all levels, which are so precise and complex that they are evidently well-calculated.

The progress of science has disclosed that there are definite laws governing the natural phenomena.

"The sun and the moon move according to a reckoning. The plants and the trees submit to His command. He has raised the heaven and has set a standard (law) for that". (Surah al-Rahman, 55:5 – 7).

3. 'To become' and its cause

We find a continuous change and development in all the natural phenomena. This change is more evident and conspicuous among the living beings. A tree grows. It bears flowers which open gradually and then wither. The flowers mature slowly into fruits and grains.

The cells of human seed grow slowly and are transformed into an embryo. It develops continuously and ceaselessly till it is delivered. Then the new-born continues to grow to become old and finally aged.

'To become' may be expressed as flowing and gradual exis-

tence. At every stage a being is different from what it was from what it will be. But in any case a bond exists between these beings and on the whole it is one 'flowing being'.

But it is to be seen what causes this 'to become'. What is the source of this making, mixing and finding? Why does this development based on precise and systematic calculation occur?

4. Cause of systematic development and changes

The harmony and methodical composition found in millions of natural phenomena require a suitable factor. For its growth a plant requires the necessary quantity of the mixture of soil, rain water, solar energy and air components, so that it may bloom and blossom. Which is the power that arranges this working together, mutual attraction and mutual influencing? Why do the various elements in a precise quantity and under specific conditions come together to produce the required effect?

5. Not an accident

If you take a handful of printing types, put them in a bowl, mix them well and then throw them out on a clean surface, how much is the possibility that the letters will be set so precisely that they will cast a whole poem of a famous poet? Naturally the possibility is almost nil.

Or alternately put a type writer before a two-year old child and let him press the keys with his little fingers. After he has played with the keys for half an hour, see if he has typed an extract from a philosophical treatise of Avicena in Arabic. How far is this possible? Is this conception rational?

It is said that the possibility of the accidental combination

of the raw material and the conditions precedent to the coming into being of a living cell are equal to a figure divided by 10^{16}.

A scientist has said that the possibility of the accidental existence of the chain material necessary for the coming into being of a simple protoplasm particle is equal to a figure divided by 10^{48}.

Therefore it is evident that all these changes and the development of 'becoming', are governed by precise and well-calculated scientific laws and are the result of the combination of varied elements and specific conditions. Science has rendered a great service by discovering that there is nothing accidental and haphazard.

6. Is contradiction the cause of 'becoming'?

According to the theory of dialectical materialism, every material thing has within it a seed of its death or a seed of inner contradiction, which gradually leads to its destruction. Anyhow, from the heart of death a new life is born.

In other words, as soon as an idea, an incident or any thesis comes into existence, it excites an opposition to itself from within itself. This opposition is called antithesis. Later as the result of a struggle between the two, a synthesis of them, having a more developed form, comes into being.

Thus the basic cause of the development of everything lies within itself and not outside it. This cause is the contradictory nature of everything and every phenomenon, which produces every movement and all contradictions. In the vegetable and animal kingdoms all natural developments are produced basically by inner contradiction. The same

applies to all other developments of the world.

Thus everything comes out of matter and the factor causing its development lies within itself. Every thing is accompanied by contradiction and conflict, which always tend towards evolution.

Now let us see if matter can really have all this power? To what extent is this theory scientific and how far is it supported by the experiments so far carried out?

Is this principle actually universal? Does every change and every development really tend towards evolution or are there instances in which this principle is not applicable? Is contradiction always the main factor behind a movement, or do the forces of attraction and cohesion also work in many cases?

In the course of our forthcoming explanation we will give answer to these questions.

Modern science while discussing the various organic and inorganic systems composed of groups comprising of allied material elements, put them in ten ascending classes or levels and divides them into open and closed systems. It declares that:

Only the open systems, and those too under some specific circumstances, can maintain their quality of self-preservation, propagation and evolution. An open system is that group of things which has a link of conversion with other things. For example it assimilates food and energy and evaculates what is superfluous or harmful.

But the closed systems having little capacity of conversion

and propagation, can make nothing besides themselves. It is important to note that closed systems normally produce no automatic change, and even if they have any life and movement, the change which takes place in them, is accompanied by their decay and loss of their effective energy and efficiency.

Incidentally, only the systems comprising of living and purposive elements can have an evolutionary change tending towards an increase in their formative arrangement and efficiency, leading to their expansion.

No simple or compound matter and no closed system can ever make itself without outside help. Similarly no collection of various kinds of matter and no group of systems has the power of creating and managing any orderly, well-arranged motile and evolutionary arrangement or system. For this purpose every kind of matter individually and even collectively requires some outside contact and help.

As it is now evident that such an arrangement cannot emerge automatically from within matter, we must look for outside factor to explain its existence, and as we know that the existing arrangement is well-calculated and orderly, that factor must have consciousness and will to create it.

Contradiction or attraction and cohesion

It is true that in many cases of social changes, the dialectical series of thesis, antithesis and synthesis is clearly observable, and consequent to contradiction a new order emerges. In other words, in such cases the change and evolution of social system are due to contradiction. We will discuss this subject further when we deal with the philosophy of history. Anyhow, this relationship between society and contradiction is not applicable to all other

cases in the cosmos nor is it universal and permanent even in the case of society.

If we look carefully at the phenomena of the world and study them scientifically instead of indulging in poetic fancy, we will find that in so many cases there prevails quite a different tendency and a different law. For example, look at the following cases:

Physical and mechanical phenomena, such as heating and expansion of bodies, melting, evaporation, passage of electric current, communication of sound, bodily movement, reactionary change of forms etc., are all due to the action of certain types of energy and are not the result of the establishment of a dialectical chain.

In the case of chemical actions and reactions we often find that two or more elements combine owing to the action of energy, but none of them emerges from within another.

In certain other cases what takes place is splitting which is contrary to synthesis. Incidentally, some acting and reacting bodies tend to combine and have no contradiction. In the domain of life, of course, we come across three consecutive stages of birth, maturity and death, but here also we find a basic difference. Firstly, reproduction or birth (antithesis) from within a thesis is not possible without the intervention of another thesis (male). In other words, the creation of a single-phase inner chain is not possible. Secondly, the combination of the two theses takes place through attraction and affection and not as the result of contradiction and struggle. Thirdly, between a mother and a child or a thesis and an antithesis in this case, there exists a relationship of lifegiving and sacrifice instead of opposition and destruction.

When we go deep into the matter forming the cosmos we find a great deal of hustle and bustle of electrons and neucleus, but we see no trace of the three-phase movement of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. In contrast, we find various atoms or particles revolving round each other. Only when they are bombarded by other atoms from outside, they sometimes split and convert into new atoms.

Therefore, the rule of the struggle between a thesis and an antithesis and their subsequent synthesis is not universal and applicable to all cases. The dynamic face of the world is actually shaped by the mutual impact of the elements or molecules as well as by other factors mutually interconnected. Their impact brings about such operations as setting the things in motion, their combination, splitting, exchange and in exceptional circumstances even their disintegration.

Instead of the general law of birth, struggle and combination, what is more prevalent is coming together, combination and birth.

Our world is that of union, where things come together either to combine or to dissolve. It is not that of distinct entitles giving birth to contradictories.

Anyhow, the idea is not that we should believe in Allah simply because the dialectical law is neither universal, nor is it one hundred percent scientific, and that if no scientific objection could be raised against them, the dialectical principles could take the place of God. There is no such thing at all;

Firstly, because we know that Hegel, the founder and the inspirer of the dialectical philosophy in the recent

centuries was a man who himself believed in God and by means of his own theories came to the conclusion that the world had on absolute will and consciousness.

Secondly, even if the dialectical principles were presumed to be correct and open to no scientific objection that only could have meant that we have just discovered another law of the development and evolution of nature and society. The discovery of natural laws does not mean that we no longer need a law-giver and designer of nature. The force which, through the power of contradiction, has produced billions of galaxies and other marvellous natural phenomena from matter, is in itself a sign that there exists a cognizant guidance and wise consciousness, which has put in matter the power of creating such an orderly arrangement and has brought about such a well-calculated world.

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THE WORLD IS A DEPENDENT REALITY

Islam regards this world with all its greatness, vastness, and marvels and all the interconnections between its various phenomena as a homogeneous reality dependent upon another reality which is independent, sovereign and supreme. We call this independent reality Allah. Like all other imperceptible realities He is recognized by His perceptible signs. It is through these signs that we obtain valuable and fruitful knowledge of Him.

Signs of Allah

The Qur'an which is the basic source of knowing Islamic outlook on the world, repeatedly mentions the signs of Allah and requires men to think over them and through them know the source of existence, that is Allah. For some people the consideration of these signs is a natural and simple matter. It fully, convinces them of His existence. They see Him, not with their eyes but with their inner insight. But for some others it is not so simple because they are accustomed to a good deal of reasoning and analysis in the course of which they sometimes get tired of the intricacies of contrary arguments and fail to reach a definite conclusion, while others go on calmly till they arrive at a clear result.

For the help and guidance of both these classes we propose

to mention some forms of recognising Allah through His signs.

(1) Phenomenon and its producer

Suppose you are having a joy ride on a bicycle. Its wheels revolve speedily and enable you to move on. Have the wheels come in motion automatically? Of course, not. It is the motion of the cog-wheel available in the rear wheel of the bicycle which pushes it forward. But has the cog-wheel come into motion by itself. The reply is again in the negative. It is the pressure of the motion of the chain which has brought the cog-wheel into motion. This mechanism in its turn is moved by the pressure of your feet on the pedals. The muscles of your feet receive a signal from your brain. The signal is transmitted by your brain because you have a strong desire to have a ride. This desire may be due to boredom and overwork or your vivacity and craving for enjoyment. Both boredom and vivacity, like all other psychological states, must have some cause behind them which can be traced by some effort.

The doctrine of Causation

This and other examples common in life show that whenever man comes across a phenomenon, his mind looks for a cause, because he believes that everything has a cause. In fact the doctrine of causation is at the root of all kinds of ordinary inquiry as well as scientific research. The adherence of man to this doctrine has grown with the advancement of science and industry. A physicist, an anthropologist or a sociologist strives to discover the cause of every event only because he cannot believe that anything physical or social can happen automatically without the intervention of a cause. That is why, to ascertain the correct cause, he resorts to hundreds of tests and undertakes study and

analysis. If all his tests and his study lead to a negative result, he continues his studies on the basis of some fresh theory but does not give up his efforts till the end of his life unless he arrives at some positive results. If he dies some other scientist or scientists pursue his unfinished work in the hope of finding the relevant cause or causes, but never tend to believe or suppose that anything can come into being without a cause.

In this connection it may be borne in mind that we do not strive to find out the cause of a thing which already exists as a pure reality. We strive to find out the origin and the cause of a thing only when we notice that it is a phenomenon, viz. something which did not exist previously but exists now.

If we think over this point adequately we will see that our mind immediately on coming across a reality does not express an opinion whether it should or should not have a cause. It first looks at it to see whether it is a phenomenon, viz. whether it was non-existent previously. In case it is a phenomenon, only than our mind decides that there should be a cause which has brought it into existence. If it is not a phenomenon, it need not have a cause. Thus all that exists does not require a cause. Only a phenomenon requires it.

A world of phenomena

Our world is full of phenomena, that is of the things which were non-existent and are now existing and the things which do not exist, but are now coming into existence. Every phenomenon must have its producer or producers. If that producer is self-existing, eternal and not again a phenomenon, then the whole thing is finished and there is no need to raise any further questions. But if the

producer itself is a phenomenon, then it should naturally require another producer.

The search for a producer should continue till we reach a reality which is not a phenomenon itself. Such reality will be eternal and independent of any cause.

Our world being a world of phenomena is a clear sign of the existence of an omnipotent and omniscient being who has produced it. Thus a sensible and inquisitive man can, through this process, find a definite proof of the existence of Allah.

(2) Homogeneity of the existing things

If we look carefully at the things existing around us we will find them homogeneous and their inter-relations subject to such a definite order, that arrests man's attention at his very first contact with nature. The progress of physical sciences has enabled man to have a better knowledge of this mighty system, a system pervading from the tiniest ingredients to the infinitely big ones, from the atom and its inner aparts to the galaxies which are near or a far, the galaxies some of which are at a distance of 350 million light years(1) from us.

The most marvellous is the system pervading the living organisms from the unicellular to the most developed animals, especially man. During your school days you must have read a lot about these things in your science books. Now study these things once more, not for the purpose of replying to the question of the teacher and securing marks

(1) A light year is the unit for the measurement of space i.e. the distance which light covers in one year. Light travels at the speed of three hundred thousand kilometres per second.

and not even for the purpose of their application in the laboratories and the factories but with a view to get yourself acquainted, to the utmost possible extent, with the vast system dominating the world. When you have refreshed your memory, then think over this question carefully. Is this vast and elaborate system not a definite sign of the existence of an omnipotent being, its producer?

Many scientists who have played an important role in discovering the secrets of this system, have heard their inner voice saying to them that these huge mysterious products are the signs of a great creator, Allah, who is greater than everything and who is too great to be described.

(3) Mutual compatibility of two things not co-existent

In this world from time to time we come across pairs of things mutually compatible but not co-existent. For example, we see that the provision of the requirements of one thing has been made in the structure of another which came into existence earlier as if the second had been made keeping in view the demands of the first. An easily understandable example of this kind is the compatibility found between the parents and the child. Immediately after a woman, or for that matter any female of the mammalia, gets pregnant her milk glands quietly prepare themselves under the influence of particular hormones for feeding the newborn. At the time of its birth normally its food is already available. This food is completely in accord with the digestive system and the nutritional requirement of the baby and is kept stored in a suitable receptacle — the mother's breast — which was provided years before the birth of the baby with a nipple having tiny holes in order to facilitate the job of suckling.

It may be noted that we are not talking of the reciprocal

influence of two coexisting things. Here we are concerned only with those cases in which a provision for the requirements of a thing yet to come into existence was made in the structure of another which came into existence a long time earlier. No doubt this is a sort of foresight accompanied by pre-planning, and hence is a clear proof of the fact that all these marvels are the work of a powerful consciousness.

You cannot imagine, for example, that the bag you have in your hand might have come into existence purely in the wake of a series of unconscious actions and reactions without any conscious factor being involved. You show your hand-bag to a materialist thinker and tell him that although normally a hand-bag is made by a handicraftsman or a worker on machine, your particular bag, as an exceptional case, was made purely under the influence of natural factors and without the intervention of any conscious maker, and then see his reaction. If not in your presence at least in your absence he will certainly say that such and such person was talking nonsense.

This materialist thinker will not accept that there is even one per billion chance that a bag, the parts of which are cut to measurement and then sewn together, might have come into existence purely under the influence of unconscious natural factors. In other words he is certain that in the making of a bag there must be an active role of constructive consciousness. He totally rejects the theory that as an exceptional case a bag can be made by purely natural factors. In his opinion such an idea is unscientific and deserves nc consideration. If we look at the idea from the standards of experimental science, again we come to the same conclusion. Long-term experience has proved that man has more creative power than any other existing thing, and that he has more power only because of his

developed consciousness, knowledge and originality and not because of any other aspect of his life. Hence it may be concluded that there exists a basic relationship between consciousness and creativeness. Therefore the theory that this marvellous system of the universe is the creation of a powerful consciousness is more plausible and in accord with experimental science than the materialistic theory that matter is the origin of all these wonders.

(4) March toward unlimited perfection

A large number of researchers after years of sustained observation, experiment and study have come to the conclusion that the universe without believing in the existence of Allah is a meaningless proposition. They say that as they went deeper into the working of the universe, they realized better that the world is constantly moving forward in a definite direction. On the whole it may be said that it is marching towards perfection without stopping at any intermediate stages of evolution. It appears to have a goal or a destination, and this goal can be nothing but boundless perfection.

That is the only goal commensurate with the evolutionary movement. It may be said that limitless perfection is a powerful magnetic pole attracting everything toward it. Without it there would have been no movement.

This kind of cognition of Allah has a long and valuable history. Besides the works of the great philosophers and mystics, there exist interesting writings of many scientists, especially astronomists, physicists, biologists, psychologists and sociologists on this subject.

The most suitable source of knowing the views of eminent scholars in this regard are the general books of the history

of philosophy and the history of science. But as we like not to be influenced by the ideas of any particular persons, we avoid to quote their views.

We know a number of young men, both eastern and western, who have made a vast study of physical sciences and who, in the light of their studies, have realized that without the acknowledgement of an All-knowing and All-powerful Lord who created this universe and who is managing its affairs, the entire system of the world appears to be meaningless and absurd.

(5) Eloquent signs

Every phenomenon needs a producer. The chain of producers continues till we reach a producer independent and All-powerful.

The whole universe is moving and marching forward. This movement must have a goal.

These are clear signs of the existence of Allah. They tell us about Him, but not in words. That is why what they say may not be intelligible to many and may not give satisfaction to them. We advise such people to look directly for the eloquent signs which talk to us in our own language. These eloquent signs are the prophets. For those who are convinced of their prophethood after enough study, the prophets automatically become the natural and eloquent signs of the existence of Allah. As every prophet claims to have contact with Allah by means of revelation and says that he has been detailed by Him to guide the people, we should, in the first instance, look at what they say as a claim and that too a big and extraordinary claim which cannot be accepted easily on its face value.

There have been many who claimed to be prophets, but when later they faced hardship, they openly confessed to be false pretenders.

Hence when we find a person claiming to be a prophet we should carefully scrutinize his claim and should accept it only when it is fully proved. Anyhow, once we have acknowledged the claim of a person to be a prophet, we automatically have to acknowledge the existence of Allah.

The most natural way of scrutinizing such a claim is to study the life of the claimant and to see what sort of a man he is. How far was he reliable during the period prior to his claim? Is he an impostor who wants to impose himself upon the people or a self-seeker who has chosen this convenient way to acquire wealth and honour? Or is he a man of integrity whose character is above suspicion? It is also to be seen how sensible and sagacious he is. He should not be a simpleton who may be misled by others or a visionary who may be carried by his own fantasy into the belief that he is a prophet. He should be a man endowed not only with commonsense, but also with the wonderful power of leadership and a natural ability to perform great deeds.

Normally everybody knows closely one or more persons in whose integrity and purity he has full confidence. This confidence develops as the result of a close study of their life and character for a long time. There may be people who personally have not met such persons, but they are convinced of their uprightness and reliability after an all-round inquiry.

Special signs

The claim of the prophets to have contact with an immate-

rial and imperceptible source by means of revelation being of an extraordinary nature, some people who admit the integrity, uprightness, sincerity and sagacity of such claimants, still have doubts about their prophethood.

These people demand some special signs to prove the contact of a prophet with the immaterial source. They expect a prophet to do things which it is not possible for a human being to do and which cannot be explained away by natural and normal reasons. In other words they wish them to work a miracle. One or more miracles give them the complete satisfaction which cannot be achieved by any other means. Anyhow there are some people who regard the miracles as mere jugglery and are not satisfied with them by any means.

In view of all these aspects of the question we once more emphasize that the best way to identify a prophet is, for those who can do so, to study his personality, his antecedents, his aims and his accomplishments.

Such an all-round study is the best way to ascertain whether a claimant is really a prophet who is favoured with Divine revelation, a genius who has pretended to be a prophet, a mere juggler who has made such a claim for self-aggrandizement only, or an abnormal person suffering from delusions. In any case all that a prophet claims is that he is a human being like other human beings, he eats and drinks like them and leads a normal human life. But he has experienced a big change in himself – a sudden transition, or in the words of the prophets themselves, they have been endowed with a Divine gift. He knows well that this transition has come from Allah and that all the extraordinary excellence found in him and his teachings is due to this transition or Divine gift.

If you study carefully from the authentic sources the life-history of the Prophet of Islam, from his birth to his prophethood and from that time to his death, you will find a clear example of this transition, which in itself is an eloquent sign of the existence of Allah.

Every thing at every stage is His sign

Some people appear to be of the opinion that Allah should be looked for only at the beginning of the creation. The point on which they base this discussion of natural theology is: How this world began? From what did the primary matter of cosmos originate? How did the first living cell come into existence? How did the first man emerge? They concentrate their attention on these questions as if the man who is born to-day cannot lead to the belief in the existence of Allah, or that thousand upon thousand of living organisms appearing every moment are not a sign of His existence, and they have no alternative but to go to the origin of life or the genesis of cosmos to gain the knowledge of Allah.

The Qur'anic method of natural theology is just the opposite. The Qur'an regards all the ordinary cases of birth, death, growth of plants, movement of air and clouds, the shining of the sun and the rotation of stars, as living and manifest signs of the Existence, Power and Wisdom of Allah.

Every arrangement that exists within the smallest portion of protoplasm or a molecule of a body or the heart of an atom leads to the knowledge of Allah.

Therefore, whether the problem of the primary matter of cosmos or the genesis of life remains unsolved or a material way is found to solve it, in any case the proof of the exis-

tence of Allah and His sublime wisdom is visible every where in the world and in all the changes that take place in it.

There are people who think that only exceptional cases and the vagaries of nature can be cited as the proof of His existence. If thousands of patients are cured as the result of normal treatment, they make no mention of Allah. They remember Him only when a difficult case is cured through prayer and benediction. They appear to believe that medical treatment and the characteristics and effects of herbal and chemical compounds are no signs of Allah.

If there is a flood or an earthquake causing devastation, they talk of Allah, but they do not see any sign of Him in the normal rains, flow of the rivers, growth of the plants, movement of the galaxies and thousands of other normal phenomena to which they have become accustomed.

There are other people who so long as they did not know how it rained, what the source of thunder, lightning and earthquake was and what caused diseases, believed Allah to be the cause of all these things.

But now when science has made some advance, provided answer to a number of questions and explained many of the relationships, their rampart has been demolished and their way to the cognition of Allah has been closed. They now find themselves at the intersection of two roads: Either they should oppose the scientific progress and deny the modern discoveries and scientific laws or renounce their religious belief; or go to another rampart and again try to prove the existence of Allah by relying on those questions which are still to be solved.

This wrong way of thinking is totally contrary to the style of the Qur'an. In some cases it has even put modern science face to face with religion and has given the impression that religious beliefs can flourish only in the darkness of ignorance. On this basis it is presumed that with its further advancement, science will reduce religion even in its own domain.

In contrast, the Qur'an guides the people to Allah by encouraging them to learn, to think, to investigate and to ponder, and proclaims expressly that the material phenomena are governed by a well-planned system. The Qur'an says that everything has its own law and it is the duty of the people to study nature and find out the causes of various events. That is how it inculcates the belief in Allah in their hearts. The Qur'an states that submission to Allah is the outcome of knowledge and not of ignorance.

According to the Qur'anic way of thinking, people do not tend to believe in Allah because of their ignorance, so that science could hamper their belief. In contrast, science facilitates their journey towards Him. Religion encourages scientific investigation and scientific investigation in its turn leads to religious belief.

Is ever-changing world purposive?

We have said that the world of nature is constantly changing and transforming, from an atom to a galaxy, everything is in motion and in the state of 'becoming'. To be static and at rest is impossible.

Science has to some extent discovered the causes of this motion, but it has given no clear answer as to why this world is so constantly changing and 'becoming'.

In which direction is this world moving? What is its goal and for what purpose?

It must be understood that a man's point of view in regard to the general motion of the world, directly affects his outlook on the goal of his life and the direction of his efforts.

With regard to the answer to the above questions, there are three theories worth consideration:

(a) Aimlessness: On the basis of this theory the development of the world has no aim or purpose and cannot be interpreted sensibly. Everything is surrounded with a mystery and meaninglessness.

This approach is applied not only to be general motion of the world, but also to the birth of man and his actions and efforts. According to this theory, which is known as nihilism, man's life is meaningless.

In our times the idea that the world has no meaning and no value has become the basic doctrine of a number of philosophical and social schools.

The fact is that this situation is, more or less, the reaction of the conditions faced by humanity in the present day societies.
The man of machine age has become a captive of the big industrial wheels and is tired of the rules, regulations and discipline imposed on him by the respect of machine and mechanical production. He finds himself to be a captive in the hands of the exploiters, and is like a thing having no will and no personality. Any procedure prescribed for him is only a step towards taming and enticing him to serve the interests of others.

Man is fed up with all these restrictions, unnecessary rituals and hard and dry regulations. He is confused by the propaganda with which he is fed by the various kinds of publicity media, and finds himself caught in varied traps. That is why he rejects everything, and declares that all values have lost their worth and everything is futile and baseless. He wants to set aside every law and every principle imposed on him. Even the conventional rules of wearing dress, eating, choosing profession and residence and visiting people have become unbearable to him, and he wants to get rid of them.

Nihilism cannot be censured so far as it is a revolt against the senseless things imposed in the name of necessities and principles. But beyond that, the question is quite different.

Some people regard the whole world as having no value and consider the life to be meaningless. They see no charm in life.

They take an unfavourable view of everything. They sink into despondency and live in despair. The best remedy they can think of is to live a life of renunciation and sometimes even to commit suicide.

This way of thinking is the greatest calamity for humanity. It amounts to losing one's usefulness and sinking into degradation!

Anyhow, for some people even nihilism can serve a useful purpose. It can become a springboard for proceeding in the right direction and finding the correct aim of life. In fact if the rejection of the existing values leads to the discovery of the genuine ones and if the denial of the rules which have reduced man to nonentity is followed by

constructive efforts to find the correct way of life, the destructive rejection can pave the way for obtaining positive results.

In the case of Islam's unitarian outlook on the world also we come across two stages:

One being the rejection of all false deities and the breaking of all idols, and the other being the acknowledgement of Allah.

(b) Natural evolution from within matter: According to this theory, the motion of the universe is aimed at evolution; of course merely a natural evolution.

In other words, from the very beginning the world, by its very nature, has been moving forward materially.

This explanation of evolution is faced with many difficulties from various angles.

(1) From scientific point of view the cosmos is gradually getting old and losing the required energy. This position cannot change, unless we presume that the atoms of the dead and scattered matter will come to a new life through a big explosion. As the possibility of such an explosion is only hypothetical, it is not possible to study its results.

(2) During the discussion of open and closed systems, it was pointed out that for the purpose of the evolution of the entire world, the intervention of an outside factor is inevitable, and that such an intervention cannot be purely material if it is by a factor besides matter.

(c) Movement towards absolute perfection: According to

this theory the motion of the world is aimed at spiritual evolution and advancement towards Allah. Man starts his evolutionary journey from material field and ends it with Allah. The Qur'an says:

"We did not create the heavens, the earth and all that lies between them in sport. We created them with a purpose; though most of the people do not know that". (They are not aware of the importance of the world, its rationale and its system). (Surah al-Dukhan, 44:39 – 40).

"To Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth and to Him shall all things return". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:109).

"Allah's is the sovereignty of heavens and the earth and all that is between them. To Him shall all return". (Surah al-Maidah, 5:18).

"O man! You will surely be going to your Lord laboriously and meet Him". (Surah al-Inshiqaq, 84:6).

On this basis the world of nature is a world of motion, development and change. It has within itself an evolutionary trend. From simple things more complex and more perfect things come into being in a special manner and make the vast canvas of nature gradually more colourful. This process continues and the living things come into existence.

With further development man appears on the scene. He is a material being but possesses divine spirit, and with evolutionary movement can equip himself with divine attributes.

We will further throw light on this developmental and evolutionary process in the course of our forthcoming discussions.

Philosophy of Islam — ISP, 1982

MONOTHEISM OF THE QUR'AN

Monotheism means a belief in the Unity of Allah in every respect. He is One in person. He is the only Creator. It is He alone who manages the world. It is He alone who deserves worship and adoration. He is One in many other aspects.

Most of the verses of the Qur'an on this subject emphasize the Unity of Allah with regard to creation, command (management of the world) and worship. They first draw the attention of man to the fact that Allah alone is the Creator of the world. He alone has the sovereign authority over it. Then they draw the conclusion that He alone deserves worship.

It appears from the Qur'an that most of the heathen Arabs believed or were inclined to believe in the Unity of Allah with regard to creation and command. The holy Qur'an says: *"If you were to ask them, who created the heavens and the earth and has subdued the sun and the moon? They would definitely say: Allah. Then how is it that they go astray!?"* (Surah al-Ankabut, 29:61).

The Qur'an cites the homogeneous, well-knit and unique system of the world as a proof of the Unity of its creator. It wants us to think over the compactness and all-perva-

siveness of this system to be sure that it has been designed and is being managed by One Supreme Being. That is how we arrive at the unity with regard to creation and command. The Qur'an says: *"Your Lord is One. There is no god but He, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the ships which sail on the sea for the benefit of the people, the water that Allah sends down from heaven with which He revives the dead earth and replenishes it with all kinds of animals, in the movements of the winds and in the clouds held between the sky and the earth, there are signs (of Allah's Sovereignty) for the people who have sense".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:163 – 164).

Tens of other verses in different surahs of the Qur'an draw the attention of man in various ways to the eloquent signs of the Unity of the Creator implied in this system.

Refutation of polytheism

The Qur'an refutes the theory of the plurality of gods in the following manner.

"Allah has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any other god with Him. Otherwise each god certainly would have taken off his creation, and some of the gods would have gained superiority over the others. Glory be to Allah who is far above what they allege. He has the knowledge of the seen and the unseen alike. Therefore exalted be He above the deities they associate with Him". (Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:91 – 92).

Should the world have more than one creator their subsequent relation with it is bound to assume one of the following forms:

1. Each of them would have sovereign authority in one part of the world, for example in that part which he himself created. In this case the various parts of the world would have different systems totally independent of each other. But we see that the whole world has one compact and inter-related system.

2. One of the creators and the regional gods would hold a position superior to that of all others, and in this way maintain some sort of co-ordination and general harmony. In this case the one who exercises supreme authority will be the real sovereign of the whole world and all others will be his functionaries only.

3. Each of these gods would have authority over the world and be free to act independently and to issue commands as he pleases. In this case there will be complete chaos and confusion, and no law and order will be left, as the Qur'an says:

"Had there been gods besides Allah, both the heavens and the earth would have been ruined. So glory be to Allah, the Lord of the Throne, free of what they ascribe to Him". (Surah al-Anbiya, 21:22).

Thus the uniformity of the system which prevails over the entire world contradicts the theory of the plurality of gods with separate dominions, and its compactness denies the theory of several gods with one dominion.

The presumption that two or more gods may exercise authority over the whole world, but they always and everywhere co-operate with each other and issue uniform commands, is a fantastic idea. Their plurality entails automatically that they must differ at least on one occasion.

The causes and the agents

The Qur'an stresses the Unity of Allah with regard to creation and command. It holds that He alone has created everything and He alone exercises authority over the whole world. At the same time it does not deny the existence of the system of causation and its true role. The Qur'an says: *"Allah sends down water from the sky and therewith revives the dead earth to life. Surely in this there is a sign for those who pay attention"*. (Sura al-Nahl, 16:65). Here it mentions water as a means of giving life to the earth.

What is deduced from the Qur'an in respect of the causes and their role is that the Almighty Creator knows everything and can do whatever He likes. But He has created the world in a particular way and has laid down for it a particular system in which certain things perform the role of producing certain others. But their role is that of Allah's obedient functionaries, who accomplish the jobs alloted to them unhesitatingly and comply with His commands dutifully, without infringing them in the least.

The enormous magnetic power of the sun, though a gigantic force in its own vast field, is still subject to the command of the Creator. The magnetic power of the earth is also a mighty force. But it is also subservient to the command of Allah, who empowers a small bird to resist it and remain aloft in the space for hours.

Narrating the story of Prophet Ibrahim (P) the Qur'an says: *"The idol-worshppers cried: "Burn him and avenge your gods if you are men of actions". We said: Fire, "Be coolness and peace for Ibrahim". They planned to harm him, but We frustrated their plans"*. (Sura al-Anbiya, 21:68 –70).

So whenever Allah deems it fit, He may prevent fire

from burning.

If, with the advancement of technology, man can now neutralize a mine or an incendiary bomb, he has made, by giving an electronic signal, then why should not Allah be able to prevent the action of a thing which He has made?

The miracles

A sensible man having some knowledge can easily understand the nature of miracles if he takes into consideration the relation of material causes to Allah, His will and His command. The Islamic outlook on the world supports the occurrence of miracles. It finds no contradiction between it and the law of causation, which enunciates that no phenomenon appears without a cause, because from the Qur'anic point of view a miracle is a phenomenon which has a special cause, viz. the will of Allah.

Not only this that the occurrence of the miracles, has no contradiction with the universal law of causation in principle but for practical purposes also it is not inconsistent with the normal system of cause and effect. Man while evaluating the scientific and experimental laws does not sit waiting for the discovery of absolute and unexceptionable rules. All those who are conversant with the advanced experimental sciences know well that the law of relativism is applicable to most of the laws of these sciences. The discreet and well-informed scientists do not believe in their absolute and one hundred per cent reliability. Anyhow, they use these relative laws in their scientific studies and depend on them in arriving at scientific and technical results, unless the subsequent scientific progress proves the falsity of any one of them.

In our ordinary day-to-day life also we do not sit waiting

for the one hundred per cent reliability of anything.

All sensible persons of the world travel by cars, railway trains, ships and aeroplanes serviced by experienced technicians and driven by dutiful drivers, navigators and pilots, though all know that none of these means of transport can be relied upon one hundred per cent. The most well equipped means of transport serviced and guided by the most experienced and responsible personnel may occasionally meet an accident or go out of order and overturn. The reason is that man bases his calculations on normal conditions, and not on exceptional circumstances, especially such exceptional circumstances the chance of which is very meagre, say one per thousand or even lesser. The miraculous events take place in very exceptional circumstances by the command of Allah. Their ratio to the normal events is extremely meagre, even less than one per million. From this it is evident that belief in the occurrence of miracles by the will and command of Allah does not militate against the value and theoratical and practical reliability of the normal system of cause and effect.

Superstitions not to be confused with causes

One of the most valued teachings of Islam is that for the purpose of identifying the causes and knowing their total effect we should rely on clear knowledge and proof instead of baseless myths and superstitions. Belief in physical myths causes backwardness in science and industry and privation from the exploitation of nature. This happened in the case of medicine for centuries. Similarly the superstition regarding the occult influence of the heavenly bodies on human affairs and the use of the valuable astronomical appliances like astrolabe for divination obstructed human progress in many ways.

The superstitious belief in the effectiveness of the imaginary metaphysical factors is even more harmful, for it diverts man away from the principle of Unity of Allah and throws him into the trap of polytheism. That is why the Qur'an expressly warns against relying on superstitious metaphysical ideas (Surah al-Najm, verses 28 and 123). It tells us that we should always depend on definite knowledge (Surah al-Baqarah, verse 3) and clear proof (Surah Yunus, verse 68 and Surah al-An'am, verse 58).

Supplication

Allah has made supplication one of the effective causes having influence on human affairs. It means that one should be whole-heartedly attentive to Allah and seek His help by earnest prayer. It is true that He knows everything. He knows what one wishes. He knows the inner secrets of everyone. But as in the case of human relations with nature, efforts and exertion are essential and 'no gain without pain' is the maxim, similarly in the case of human relations with Allah a system of supplication has been laid down. The Qur'an says: *"When My slaves question you about Me, tell them that I am close to them. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls Me; therefore let them answer My call and put their trust in Me so that they may be on the right way"*. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:186).

In respect of supplication sometimes it is asked whether the will of Allah is subject to any change. Why does he want us to supplicate Him when His will is immutable?

The answer to this question, from the Islamic point of view is that Allah is Eternal and His will is also eternal and invariable. But the same eternal and immutable will has decided that a big part of the universe, that is the part of nature should always be in the state of 'to be' instead

of 'to have been'. In this part every moment new phenomena appear which are caused by preceding factors. Supplication is a sort of effort and work and as such has a role and effect prescribed by the same eternal will.

Thus Allah is Eternal. His knowledge and will are also eternal. Still new phenomena appear every moment. Your effort or your supplication play an effective role in producing some of them.

"All who dwell in the heavens and the earth implore Him. Every moment He brings about a new manifestation of His power". (Surah al-Rahman, 55:29).

If you are afflicted with a hardship, do not lose heart. Do not give up effort. Make devout supplication to Allah, for you cannot make a prediction that you will have no way out of your present predicament. The Qur'an says: *"Every moment He brings about a new manifestation of His Power".*

Then why should you despair. It is possible that a new situation may develop soon.

In the Qur'an there are several instances of the events which suddenly took a turn contrary to all expectations, such as seeking help by Prophet Musa (P) (Surah Taha, verse 25 and 26) and praying for birth of a child by Prophet Zakariya (Surah Maryam, verses 1 – 9). The study of such examples shows definitely that from the Qur'anic point of view supplication is as effective a cause as any other. As the Creator of the world has given a role to light, heat, electricity, magnetism etc., in the causation system and has made certain herbs and chemicals a cure for certain diseases, similarly He has given to the supplication fulfilling the requisite conditions, a role in the fulfil-

ment of human desires. The effect of supplication is not merely psychological, and suggestive. It is true that it awakens many dormant faculties of man and impels him to make such efforts as were not expected of him. But according to the Qur'an supplication is more effective than that. It is an independent cause and its effect is not limited to strengthening the will-power or any other such result.

UNITY IN REGARD TO WORSHIP

As we have said earlier, the Unity of worship is the first and foremost thing that is emphasized by the Qur'an in regard to monotheism. The Qur'an considers it to be the logical result of the Unity of Allah in respect of 'creation and command'. We know that it is Allah alone who has created this world and it is He alone who manages it. None else has any independent role in this respect. Others only perform the specific duties allotted to them by their Creator. All the sources of power in the world such as the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the wind, the thunderstorms, the lightning, the water, the earth, the jinn, the angels etc. are all subservient to Him and execute His commands. When we know all this, there is no meaning of worshipping any of these mere functionaries or prostrating before their statues and images. The Qur'an says: *"O Mankind, worship your Lord, who has created you and those who lived before you, so that you may become pious. It is your Lord who has made the earth a bed for you and the sky a canopy, and sends down water from the sky to produce fruits for your provisions. So do not set up anything equal to Allah knowingly".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:21 — 22).

"Some people regard the Jinn as Allah's partners, although He Himself created them, and in their ignorance impute to

him sons and daughters. Glory be to Him! He is far above what they allege. He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a child when He has no wife, and He Himself has created everything. Such is Allah, your Lord. There is no god but He, the creator of all things. Therefore worship Him. He takes care of all things". (Surah al-An'am, 6:101 – 103).

"Among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Adore not the sun nor the moon; but adore Allah who has created them". (Surah Fussilat, 41:37).

"Yet there are some people who take for themselves objects of worship besides Allah, loving them as Allah should be loved; but those who believe, love Allah more ardently". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:165).

If worship and submission is by way of seeking assistance it is Allah's exclusive right as it is He alone who can meet the needs of the creatures.

"Say: shall we call instead of Allah, that which can neither benefit nor harm us". (Surah al An'am, 6:71).

Furthermore, if the worship and submission of an imperfect being is due to its being attracted irresistably towards the glory and majesty of a perfect being even then it is Allah's exclusive right, because it is only He who deserves such love and devotion.

Unity in regard to submission and obedience

From the Qur'anic view-point obedience is of two kinds:

(1) Obedience accompanied by total submission and

unconditional surrender to what a man is told to do.

According to the Qur'anic conception of the Unity, this kind of submission which is in fact 'servitude' is due to Allah alone, and none else deserves it.

(2) Obedience to those who exercise rightful control on us, because either our own interests or public interests or human instinct make it obligatory for us to obey them. Such is the case of the obedience to the Prophet, the *Imam* and those who genuinely represent him during the period of his occultation. (For details see Dr Murtaza Mutahhery's Master and Mastership, Islamic Seminary Publications 1980). The same applies to the obedience of the parents etc.

This kind of obedience is conditional. It is obligatory provided those who hold the position of issuing injunctions do not transgress the limits of law and equity. One is required to evaluate from this angle every instruction he receives from them and should refrain from acting upon them if they are opposed to law and justice. He must not obey an instruction which is contrary to the Divine law, for no creation is to be obeyed in contravention of the command of the Creator. Of course in the case of the holy Prophet and the Imams, their infallibility is enough to vouchsafe this aspect, for they cannot be suspected to say anything contrary to the command of Allah.

Thus this kind of obedience is not absolute, and does not involve blind and unconditional submission.

Submission to the command of Allah

One of the results proceeding from the Unity with regard to submission and obedience is that the believers in the

Unity of Allah are required to make total submission before His commands and revelations in all religious matters. In order to safeguard the unity and solidarity of their ranks and to guard against sectarianism, they are not allowed to have any discretion in this regard. The Qur'an says: *"Let the people of the Gospel judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed in it. Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed, are wicked indeed. And to you We have revealed the Book with the truth, confirming whatever scripture was before it. So judge between them according to what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their whims, departing from the truth that has come to you. For everyone of you We prescribed a Divine law. Had Allah pleased, He could have made you one single ummah, but he did not do so in order to test you by the laws He gave you. So vie with one another in good deeds. All of you will return to Allah and then He will give you His judgement on the differences that existed between you". So judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not be led by their desires, but beware of them lest they should tempt you away from some part of that which Allah has revealed to you. If they reject your judgement, know that it is Allah's will to make them suffer for some of their sins. There is no doubt that many people are wicked. Is it the pagan law that they wish to be judged by? Who is better judge than Allah for a people who are firm in their faith?"* (Surah al-Maidah, 5:47 – 50).

These verses offer the followers of the previous messages a reasonable and logical way of avoiding internecine strifes. Every individual and group should deduce from the revelation the way of doing good and should hasten toward it. In this way instead of futile conflicts among the followers of the divine religions, there should be mutual

competition for virtuous deeds. The question as to what is right should be left to the religious texts known to have a divine origin. In case there is a difference of opinion with regard to their interpretation, the question may be left to the day when the truth will be unveiled by Allah and every controversy will be finally settled.

This appears to be the only way of achieving solidarity among the followers of revelation. Otherwise not only the followers of different prophets, but even those who believe in the same prophet and the same scripture but adhere to different denominations, various wings of the same sect or even different religious leaders, will always be at daggers drawn with each other and the light of the 'School of Revelation' will be dimmed.

That is why the Qur'an considers the belief in the Unity of Allah to be the basis of its entire system and regards the sectarian strife as deviation. It disavows all religious wrangling and regards it as contrary to the spirit of monotheism and a big hurdle in the way of unifying the social system on the basis of revelation. Only clear academic discussion free from selfish and biased quarrel is all that is allowed.

THE UNIQUE AND MATCHLESS GOD

Tawhid is a revolutionary concept and constitutes the essence of the teachings of Islam. It means that there is only One Supreme Lord of the universe. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent and the Sustainer of the world. The Qur'an says: *"Say: You may be sure that Allah is One. He is Needless (Independent). He begot none nor was He begotten. There is none like Him".* (Surah al-Tawhid, 111:1 — 4).

Intrinsic Unity

The prominent thinkers of the Muslim world hold that none being like Allah means His intrinsic Unity as propounded by the philosophers and the mystics.

The simplest way in which it can be described is this: When we say that Allah is without a like, this means that on principle there can be no partner of Him. It cannot even be supposed that there can be more than one God. Oneness is His absolutely essential and indispensable attribute.

Hence to be able to grasp the idea of His Unity, it is enough to have in mind the correct conception of Him. If we are conversant with the true meaning of this word, we will automatically come to the conclusion that Allah is One. He cannot be more than one because plurality is inconsistent with His Existence.

Suppose there is a line which extends infinitely on both the sides. Suppose there is another line at a distance of a metre which runs parallel to the first and also extends infinitely in both the directions. There is no problem in supposing the existence of two such lines. That is why it is said that two parallel lines are those which are equidistant from each other throughout their length and never meet even if extended infinitely.

Irrespective of the controversy whether this definition of the parallel lines is correct or incorrect and absolute or relative, it is clear that it is possible to suppose the existence of two such lines.

Now let us suppose that there is a body which grows infinitely bigger and bigger in all its dimensions, its length,

breadth and height. Now can we suppose the existence of another body beside the first, which also grows infinitely? No, we cannot, because the first body will fill all the space and no room will be left for the second one, whether finite or infinite, unless the second body penetrates into the first one. But is it possible for a body to penetrate into another body itself and not in the space between its molecules? Of course, not. Hence, it is not possible to suppose the simultaneous existence of two bodies infinite in all directions and in all their dimensions.

So far we have talked of infinite bodies. The supposition of the existence of one such body automatically negates the existence of another. But it does not negate the existence of something non-corporeal. For example, it does not negate the existence of an infinite soul which should have penetrated into an infinite body.

Now let us consider a being infinite in every respect of existence. Is it possible to suppose the existence of two or more such beings? No, it is not, because if it is presumed that two such beings exist, the existence of each of them will be limited at least by that of another. As such neither of them will be infinite.

Hence Allah has no like or equal. On principle there cannot be two or more gods.

So far we have been able to know that there is a Creator, who is the Source of Existence and who is without a like. But is this the final limit of human knowledge about Him? Can we not go a step further and have some more knowledge of this Source of Existence?

Some scholars tend to believe that man can have only one

'cognizance', that is he can know that there is a source of existence, but further cognizance or knowledge is not within his reach.

These scholars hold that any name or attribute which may be used to express the Source of Existence with a view to add to the knowledge about Him, is likely to be totally unconnected with Him and will add only to one's ignorance and misunderstanding.

According to this view the highest stage of knowledge which man can attain about the Creator is only that He exists and that He is above all that man can conceive or imagine. The cognizance of the Source of Existence proceeds only in one direction, viz. considering the source to be above all that human mind can conceive.

Evaluation of extremist view

The view to which these scholars tend is very attractive and of much value so far as it negates all unreasonable and mythical ideas about Allah. But if we evaluate it from the realistic point of view, we find it somewhat extremist. If human knowledge about Allah is so limited that no reference can be made to Him except by means of the word 'He', which is absolutely vague, then how have we learnt that He really is?

It appears that the great scholars who have tended to this view, have mistaken complete and all-round cognition for the relative one. A thing may have tens of characteristics which distinguish it from other things. By knowing anyone of these characteristics we can identify it and need not have a full knowledge of all its distinctive features. That is not the case with Allah alone, but the same principle applies to all that exists. For example, you have two children. You can recognize each of them easily.

But are you aware of all their physical and moral characteristics.

Hence if it is a question of an all-round cognition of Allah, we must admit that it is humanly impossible.

But if it is a question of the cognizance of certain of His attributes and such relative knowledge as may distinguish Him from all others, of course man should have such knowledge so that he may be aware of His existence. As a matter of fact without having such knowledge, it is futile to talk of Allah.

Hence our inability to have a complete and all-round cognition of a reality does not mean that we should express inability to have any sort of knowledge of it.

There is a middle stage, rather there are several intervening stages between an absolute and all-round cognizance and an absolute and all-round non-cognizance viz. "relative cognition from one or more directions".

A careful study of knowledge, its value and its limits shows that human information about this world is mostly relative. For this reason modern science is basically concerned with knowing the features of things and not their essence. The cognition of the Source of Existence also has similar limitations. When an intelligent and well-informed person thinks of Allah, he exclaims from the core of his heart; "I don't know what You are; You are what You are".

However the same person when he looks at His signs and at a part of His distinctive marks, he gets somewhat acquainted with Him. Though this knowledge is far lesser than absolute cognition but, while possessing it, one can

talk about 'Him' with certainty. (See: Ayatullah Baqir al-Sadr, He, His Messenger and His Message – ISP, 1980).

It may be said that anybody who believes in Allah, identifies Him at least with one of His attributes by means of which he recognizes Him. The cognizance of Allah is accompanied at least by some such attributes as the Creator, the Sustainer the Origin, the Self-Existent etc.

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NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

Many names and attributes of Allah have been mentioned in the Qur'an.

"He is Allah, besides whom there is no god. He has knowledge of everything, whether perceptible or imperceptible. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the Giver of peace, the Keeper of faith, the Supreme, the Mighty one, the All-powerful and the Majestic. Exalted be He above what they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth gives glory to Him. He is the Mighty, the Wise". (Surah al-Hashr, 59:22 – 24).

"His are the most beautiful names". The main feature of the names and the attributes of Allah has been mentioned in this verse. The highest degree of every virtue and every excellence belongs to Allah. For example, power and ability to do things is a good quality. Allah is the most powerful and the most efficient and can do anything. The Qur'an says: *"Surely Allah can do all things".* (Surah al-Ankabut, 29:20).

Knowledge is a virtue. Allah has the highest degree of

knowledge.. *"Allah is aware of all things"*. (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:115).

"He is the Knower of the invisible and the visible. . . ". (Surah al-R'ad, 13:9).

Sagacity is another virtue. The holy Qur'an says: *"Allah is Knower, Wise"*. (Surah al-Mumtahanah, 60:10).

Kindness to others is a good quality. Allah is *"the Beneficent, the Merciful"*. *"He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy"*. (Surah al-Hamd, 1:3; Surah Yusuf, 12:64).

Hence you are at liberty to call Him by any of these most beautiful names: *"Call Him Allah or Rahman (Beneficent). It is the same whichever you call. His are the most beautiful names"*. (Surah al-Isra, 17:110). *"Allah has the beautiful names. Invoke Him by them, and keep away from those who prevent them. They shall soon be repaid for what they do"*. (Surah al-A'raf, 7:180).

Allah is Independent

As Allah has the highest degree of every kind of virtue and perfection, He is naturally free from every fault, defect and deficiency. A number of the Qur'anic verses, extolling Allah, emphasize this aspect of His glory.

The Qur'an declares Allah to be free from every kind of deficiency and need. It regards this freedom as an important principle of the cognizance of Allah, by means of which a number of doctrinal and ideological deviations which have taken birth regarding Allah may be detected.

"Musa said to his people: If you and all those who are on the earth prove to be ungrateful, Allah does not at all

need your thanks. He is Laudable". (Surah Ibrahim, 14:8).

Man should remember that due to Allah not being in want of anything, He is not in need of our faith, worship and obedience. If He wants us to be faithful and obedient, that is for our own benefit and not for His. If the whole world becomes unbeliever, that cannot do Him the least harm.

Not being subject to any need, Allah is free from the limitations of time and space. He is above them. A being who occupies space, naturally needs it to exist, and one who is confined to time, can exist only under certain conditions at a particular time. A being not time-bound can always exist and is not dependent upon the special conditions of time.

Allah is All-knowing

The Creator of the world knows everything. So far as we are concerned there are two kinds of things in the universe viz. open and hidden, perceptible and imperceptible. However Allah is aware of both of them. On principle there is nothing unknown to Him. Nothing is hidden from Him. *"He is the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Supreme the Most High".* (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:9).

"Nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Allah". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:5). He is aware of the minutest details. He knows all that we do.. *"Surely Allah knows all that you do".* (Surah al-Nahl, 16:91).

Allah is All-powerful

He controls everything and can do anything. *"Surely Allah can do everything".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:20).

He is so powerful and dominating that whenever He

wants a thing to come into existence or wants something to be done, He simply says: *"Be!"* and immediately it will *'be'*. The Qur'an says: *"His command, when He decrees a thing, is to say to it: 'Be' and it is"*. (Surah Yasin, 36:82).

Will and Volition of Allah

Normally all beings endowed with intelligence and power can achieve all or at least a part of what they intend. They at least try to fulfil their desires. When we knowingly plan to achieve our object we say that "we are determined to accomplish such and such task". Hence, determination consists of an intentional and strong will which is effective in the achievement of our desire.

Out of all the multifarious things existing in this world, the animals or at least the advanced animals are more or less endowed with this quality that when they feel an urge, they try knowingly to fulfil what they want. Out of all the animals known to us man has the most developed will-power. That is why knowledge has a more creative role in his life than in the life of other animals. Anyhow, he apparently does not exercise his will while performing many acts. His circulatory, respiratory and digestive system and his big and small glands which produce the necessary chemicals, all work without the aid of his will.

There is no doubt that all these systems are connected with the nervous system, and modern physiology has been able to discover for each of them a centre of command in some part of the brain, still every act having some connection with brain cannot be called intentional and deliberate.

It has been reported that some persons consequent to certain exercises and long practice have been able to

control the circulation of their blood. Even if such reports be true, they can at best be described as exceptional cases.

Anyhow, the field of the activity of man's will is after all limited. For example, so far his will has not been able to influence the rotatory system of the heavenly bodies. We also see that every human being has some hereditary traits in the selection of which his conscious will has no part to play.

Hence, the influence of human will and volition is after all limited. That is why it often happens that man intends to do a thing, but he does not succeed, or certain factors beyond his control prevent the fulfilment of his many desires. But Allah who is All-knowing and Allpowerful, accomplishes all that He wants. *"Surely, Your Lord does what He pleases"*. (Surah Hud, 11:107). *"Only Allah can bring punishment on you, if He will, and you cannot frustrate His plan"*. (Ibid, 11:33).

His will rules over the whole world, but that is not the case with that of others. *"Allah will judge with fairness, and those whom they invoke besides Him can judge nothing"*. (Surah Mu'min, 40:20).

All others whosoever and whatsoever they may be, move within a limited framework decreed for them by Allah, who has destined everything. *"Allah has set a measure for everything"*. (Surah al-Talaq, 65:3 etc.)

This is the universal law which applies to man also. As such his power is limited, but still he can choose his way of life within the framework ordained for him. Allah wants him to use his discretion and determine his future, whether good or bad, himself. Anyhow, even within this framework

man, or for that matter any other being, should not consider himself to be in possession of absolute power. If Allah wants, He can make his efforts ineffectual. There are many cases in which He frustrated the efforts of some conceited individuals or groups against all their expectations to remind them and others that even within their own sphere of power they should never be oblivious of the Divine power which controls everything.

The Qur'an mentions several examples of such a situation. The Surah al-Qalam, 68:17 – 32 illustrate this point.

"We have tried them as We tried the owners of the garden when they vowed that they would pluck its fruit next morning. But they made no exception for the will of Allah. As a result a visitation from your Lord visited their garden while they were sleeping. And in the morning it was as if it had been plucked. They called out to one another in the morning saying: Rush to your garden if you want to pluck the fruit. So they set out, saying to each other in low tones: No poor shall enter the garden today without your permission. They set out early determined to stop the poor. When they saw the garden, they exclaimed: Surely we were wrong. Infact we have been ruined. The best among them said: Did I not tell you: Why do you not glorify Allah? Then they said: Glorified be our Lord. No doubt we have been wrong-doers. Then they began to blame one another. They said: Alas for us! Surely we were outrageous. We hope that our Lord will give us better garden in its place. To our Lord we humbly turn".

Allah is Beneficent and Forgiving

Allah is Beneficent and Merciful to all His creation. He has bestowed endless bounties on all. He has provided all of us with ample opportunities to pass our life. He is Forgiving.

If a sinner repents and wants to adopt the way of virtue, the door is not closed to him, provided he is earnest in doing that.

Throughout the world there are innumerable signs of the mercy of Allah. Like all other existing things man also enjoys the Divine blessings, but with one important difference. He has been blessed with the special favour of being the master of his destiny. He is endowed with the power of distinguishing between right and wrong and good and bad, and is able to choose consciously either of them. He can exercise this power only if it is admitted that some of his actions are desirable and rewarding and some others leading to pain and punishment.

The anxiety for not losing the reward of desirable acts and for escaping the punishment of undesirable ones is a Divine blessing in itself, for it impels man to be virtuous and upright. The Qur'an has repeatedly warned against the wrath of Allah.

Allah is Just

Allah does not do injustice to anyone. He wants us also to be just in our behaviour. He has created everything according to a plan. The whole world is homogeneous. He has organized recompense and retribution in the next world, according to a well-planned system of action and reaction. Everyone will reap there what he has sown here. There, the personality of man will be a reflection of his performance here. Whatever comfort or pain he receives in the Hereafter will be the exact outcome of his own deeds, and no injustice will be done to anyone. The everlasting future of everybody depends upon his own efforts to improve himself and his environment.

This is the gist of the information which the Qur'an, the divine Book, gives us about Allah. This information is based on revelation, but it can also be obtained through pondering over His signs, and His names and attributes. It not only as far as possible satisfies those who seek cognition, but also helps us to solve the biggest problem of giving a direction to our life.

A man inspired by such realistic and constructive knowledge of Allah leads a vigorous life full of zeal, hope and effort. He adheres to his own views and his own way of life, but co-operates with others and respects their ideas also. A man bound to Allah neither sells himself to others nor does he endeavour to subdue them to his own wish. He loves his own freedom as well as that of others. He himself is pure and likes others to be pure. He seeks truth wherever he finds it. He is always with truth and at war with falsehood.

ROLE OF DIVINE COSMOLOGY IN HUMAN LIFE

The material conception looks at the world and man from material, natural and perceptive angles only.

It does not acknowledge the existence of any creator, organizer and manager besides cosmos.

It also confines the needs of society and the dimensions of human existence to the limits of their natural requirements.

As it considers the life of man to be limited within the framework of this worldly life, it does not recognize that the affairs of this world are controlled by any conscious command, nor does it admit that there is any need or attraction transending material life or there is a world Hereafter.

Therefore, according to this conception, should there be an aim or programme of human life, that should be within the framwork of this worldly life only.

In contrast, the divine cosmology acknowledges the existence of a Wise, Omnipotent and Omniscient Being controlling all natural factors and relationships, and believes that the entire world comes under His conscious and watchful command. At the same time it also acknowledges

the validity of all natural laws governing the world.

Anyhow, it believes that the will of Allah is above all other factors and laws, and holds that old scientific laws and formulas are the creation and a part of the creative design of Allah, who is the source of favour, mercy, wisdom, compassion and justice.

Thus a man believing in Allah finds himself in a conscious and well-guided world based on justice, not in a dark and dingy world having no purpose.

As a result of his belief, he feels that Allah is always with him. What a natural support! What a source of power and push! What an inspiring and helpful proposition!.

The divine cosmology, side by side with recognising the natural needs and admitting the necessity of meeting them, takes into consideration the spiritual dimension of man also.

It attends to the sublimation of soul, purity of heart, love for truth and devotion to purity, refinement, love, impartiality, forbearance and humanism. These are the qualities the lack of which is being acutely felt today. The industrial societies realize that they need them and are fully conscious of their absence. Occasionally they try to satisfy their thirst for them in a superficial way by adopting some western form of new-gnosticism.

It should not be forgotten that the divine cosmology does not mean merely spirituality, gnosticism and attending to ethical requirements. It actually signifies paying all round attention to man both from material and spiritual angles. In short, pushing him towards his all round perfection.

Two stage extensive life

From the religious point of view man's life is extensive and everlasting. It is not limited to the few years of this worldly existence. Man has been told positively that he is an everlasting being and that he is not annihilated with death. On the other hand, he will resume life a new in another world, where everything will present itself in a more intensive, more earnest and more extensive form. As the imperishable pleasures and successes will be at their height in that world, so will be the intensity of the sufferings and afflictions also.

Man has further been told that if he is keen to look after his own interests, wants to avoid sufferings and wishes to be happy and successful, then he should keep it in mind that success and happiness as well as suffering and affliction in a purer and more extensive form will follow in the wake of this worldly life.

All his future depends on his deeds of today and will only be the reaction of the efforts made in this world.

A judicious man who thinks of the outcome of his works and makes calculated efforts to gain his object, must be fully aware of the results of what he does. He must revise his conduct if he realizes that a certain action of his is harmful to him or is not to his advantage.

Conclusion

The outlook of a religious man is not confined to himself. He has a wider horizon and his aim is to please Allah and to serve His creatures. He does not think only of his material needs, but takes into consideration his spiritual needs also. He seeks the happiness of both this world and the Hereafter alike and shares the ill fortune in both the

worlds. He does not concentrate his attention only on those efforts whose positive or negative effect is confined to the present life only.

Spiritual and practical effects of religious belief

A man having the support of a firm religious belief, finds in himself a special strength. To whatever he puts his hand, he performs it with greater earnestness and purity. To gain his object he does not resort to beggarliness or flattery nor does he lower his position. Even if he undergoes some trouble or loss while striving for his object, he does not lose his heart.

He loves other as he loves himself, and wishes the good of all. He feels a reciprocal affection for those who think like himself. He finds pleasure in working for the betterment of society and in rendering service to others.

He is deeply involved in furthering his divine aims and cannot bear the company of the selfish and the deceiving, nor can he divert his efforts to serve their interests. As a result he adds to his frankness, firmness and endurance.

A true religious man is indeed greatly concerned with the happiness and success of others, and for that purpose he does not hesitate to make a sacrifice, for he believes that he will find in another world a big and happy reaction of even his slightest good action. He acknowledges that all his efforts in this world are governed by a system of action and reaction.

Even if he loses his life for the sake of achieving his object, he does not consider himself to be a loser, for through his supreme sacrifice he achieves everything and becomes immortal. If he spends his money for the sake of improving

the lot of society, he loses nothing and gains much, for though he takes this step for the sake of his faith and for his own satisfaction, he shall get a return for that. In addition, he shall be benefited by the prosperity of society as a whole obtained as the result of the services rendered by him.

Any positive and regular effort made for the cause of Allah and for the good of His creatures, whether it is intellectual, organizational, literary, physical or pecuniary, is constructive and rewarding in both the worlds.

If we compare such a man with a selfish person whose approach is only material and who is concerned merely with his personal gains, we can easily imagine what the result of such a comparison will be, for we know what kind of persons human society requires for its all round development and evolution. It requires those who seek the pleasure of Allah, not the self-seekers.

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GUIDES OF HUMANITY

Every man is bound by the valuable bond of eternity and every one having a sound taste can realize its existence through his natural insight. Anyhow, in human society there are some outstanding men who have a more clear consciousness of it. Their speech and behaviour are a conspicuous example of man's bond with eternity and its creative role in human knowledge and practice. These men are the prophets.

The prophets are capable of receiving messages, viz. revelation, direct from the eternal world. These messages are so lucid and so enlightening that they illuminate their whole existence, and unravel to them the facts which are unknown to others. They see the truth so clearly as if they were the video receivers in human form. They learn the facts themselves and then transmit them to others by the order of Allah. That is what is called prophethood. The messages the prophets receive leave a deep and wonderful impression on their soul and personality. They virtually 'resurrect' them, stimulate their inner powers and bring about inside them a revolution, a constructive and fruitful revolution unprecedented as far as other people are concerned.

Distinctive features of prophets

These model men who establish contact with the Source of Existence through revelation, have certain distinctive features and specialities. We propose to throw some light on these features.

(1) Miracles

Every prophet who is sent by Allah is endowed by Him with an extra-ordinary power by means of which he works one or more miracles which bear witness to the truth of his mission. The Qur'an calls these miracles, performed by the prophets with the permission of Allah, *"Ayaat"* or the signs of their prophethood. In view of the fact that the miracles are inimitable by people other than the prophets, the scholastic theologians call them *mu'jizat.*

According to the Qur'an the people in every age asked their respective prophets to work a miracle for them, and in case such a demand came from those who were sincere and really interested in ascertaining the truth and could not become sure of the prophethood of the prophet concerned without such a miracle, the prophet acceded to their reasonable request. But if such a demand was made with a motive other than that of seeking truth; for example, if it came in the form of a bargain and the people said that they would accept the message of the prophet if he produced a hill of gold for them so that they might become rich, the prophets rejected such a demand.

(2) Infallibility

Infallibility means immunity from sins and errors. The prophets neither commit sins nor are they liable to fall into any error with regard to their action and mission. It is because of this immunity that maximum confidence can be reposed in them.

Now let us see what is the nature of this infallibility. Does it mean that whenever they are inclined to commit a sin or an error, an invisible Divine messenger comes to them and stops them from doing so?

Or is their nature such that they are not capable of committing a sin or an error, just as, for example, an angel does not commit adultery because he has no sexual urge, or a calculating machine does not make a mistake because it has no brain or is the infallibility of the prophets due to their insight and the degree of their faith?

As we have already said, in our opinion the infallibility of the prophets is of the third type. Man has the power of choosing. He chooses his action on the basis of the advantages and the disadvantages and the gain and the loss involved in it. It is impossible that he would choose anything which has no advantage for him or involves some serious disadvantage. A sensible man interested in his life will never throw himself down off a hill or take any deadly poison.

The individuals vary in regard to the strength of their faith and the degree of their consciousness of the consequences of sins. The stronger their faith and the greater their consciousness of the disadvantages involved in the sins, the keener they are to avoid the sins. We personally know a number of persons who are highly pious and it is second nature with them to keep away from sins. Should anyone attribute a sin to them, we would automatically jump to contradict the imputation, for we are absolutely sure that the charge is false.

The higher the degree of faith and the greater the tendency of being morally good, the less is the possibility of com-

mitting a sin. If the faith is absolutely perfect, this possibility is zero. A man who attains this degree of faith feels that to commit a sin is as bad as taking a deadly poison or throwing oneself down off a hill. This is the state that we call infallibility.

Thus infallibility is the result of the perfection of faith and moral excellence. For being infallible no outside force is required nor is it necessary that by nature one should have no tendency to commit a sin. It is not creditable for anyone not to be capable of committing sin or being forcibly prevented from doing that. Such a person is just like a prisoner who cannot steal because he is confined in a prison. Does he deserve any credit for his honesty and integrity?

As for the immunity from error, it is an outcome of the insight of the prophets. A man makes a mistake when he is unable to observe the truth direct and finds it out only through mental calculations. Such calculations may go wrong. But if he has the power of seeing the truth direct, there is no possibility of any mistake.

That is the case with the prophets. They have a direct contact with the reality. As the reality itself is well-defined, there can be no mistake in identifying it. Take an example. If we put 100 grains of wheat in a utensil and repeat the same action 100 times, we will have 10,000 grains in it. Neither more nor less. But at the time of counting we may go wrong. We may have a wrong impression that we have put the grains 99 times or 101 times. Consequently we may think that there are 9,900 or 10,100 grains in all. But this misunderstanding cannot change the reality. The number of grains will still be 10,000. Neither more nor less. One who knows the truth,

will be sure of that number, and will find it exactly the same on counting.

Difference between a prophet and a genius

From the above the main difference between a prophet and a genius may be deduced. A genius is a person endowed with extraordinary intellectual and calculating power. He perceives things by means of his senses, works on his data perceives thing by means of his calculating power, and thus arrives at new and interesting results. He may occasionally make mistakes in his calculations. But a prophet, besides being endowed with intellect and thinking and calculating powers, is also equipped with an additional power called revelation which acquaints him with reality direct. Only the prophets have this power, and that is why the case of a prophet is quite different from that of a genius. As the two belong to two different categories, there can be no comparison between them. If we compare the power of seeing of one person with that of another, that is right. But if we compare the power of seeing of one person with the power of hearing of another, that is wrong. The eminence of a genius lies in his intellectual and thinking powers, whereas the superiority of a prophet is largely the result of his contact with the Source of Existence and having an entirely different power known as revelation. Hence the cases of the two are quite different.

(3) Dynamic leadership

Though a prophet begins his spiritual march towards Allah with escape from the people which means introversion, he eventually returns to the people with a view to reform them.

In Arabic language there are two words for a prophet: *Nabi* and *Rasul*. Literally *Nabi* means one who brings news

and *Rasul* means one who is sent with a message. A prophet conveys Allah's message to the people and thereby awakens their dormant faculties. He calls them to Allah and urges them to seek His pleasure. In other words he calls them to reform, freedom, integrity, justice, love, peace struggle for the right cause and other virtues. He releases them from the bondage of their passion and that of other false gods. The essential task of a prophet is to guide the people, infuse them with a new spirit and organize them for the pleasure of Allah and for the good of humanity.

(4) Unrivalled earnestness and tremendous firmness in the struggle against polytheism, ignorance and corruption

As the prophets enjoy Divine support, they are never oblivious of the mission entrusted to them by Allah. That is why they are extraordinarily sincere in their mission. They have no objective other than the guidance of the people. They never ask the people to pay for their services.

In the Surah ash-Shura the Qur'an has reproduced a summary of the dialogue between a number of the prophets and their people. Each prophet gave a sort of message with particular reference to the problem or problems faced by his respective followers. Anyhow, one point common in the messages of all the prophets is that: *"I do not ask for any reward from you"*.

The message of the prophets was always accompanied by an unrivalled firmness. As they entertained no doubt about their mission, they propagated and defended their message with such firmness as was incomparable.

When Musa ibn Imran (Moses) along with his brother Harun (Aaron) called on Pharaoh and invited him to

believe in Allah, the entire equipment they had with them, consisted of the rough and tattered woolen clothes on their body and wooden sticks in their hands. Pharaoh was wonder-struck when they said firmly: "Your downfall is imminent if you reject our call, but if you accept it, we guarantee your honour".

The holy Prophet (peace be on him and his progeny) in the early days of Islam when there were very few Muslims, one day called the elders of Quraish and conveyed his message to them. He firmly declared that Islam was destined to become universal and that their well-being lay in embracing it. They were so surprised that they looked at one another and dispersed without saying a single word. It is because of this courage and extra-ordinary earnestness that the prophets never compromised on principles.

When Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet, conveyed to him the offer of Quraish that they were willing to select him to be their king, to give to him in marriage the most beautiful girls of theirs and to make him the richest man among them, provided he gave up his claim to be a prophet, he answered: "By Allah! even if they put the sun in one of my hands and the moon in the other, I will not give up my mission".

(5) General welfare

The prophets prompt individuals and society to move in the direction of self-making in order to ensure human welfare. They never do anything which may ruin an individual or the society.

(6) Normal personal life

Though the prophets have many extraordinary aspects

such as working miracles, infallibility, dynamic leadership, unrivalled constructive achievements and incessant struggle against ignorance, polytheism and tyranny, they are, nevertheless, human beings and have all the human characteristics. Like others they eat, they sleep, they walk, they have wives and children and eventually they die. They are subject to all human needs and requirements. They have to perform all those duties which through them are enjoined upon others. The rules as to what is lawful and what is not, equally apply to them. In certain cases they have more religious duties to perform. For instance in the case of the holy Prophet it was obligatory to keep vigil and offer prayers during the last hours of night. In any case the prophets do not absolve themselves from any obligatory act. Like others and even more than others they fear Allah. They perform more acts of worship than others. They offer prayers, observe fast, perform pilgrimage and take part in *jihad*. They pay *zakat* and work for the welfare of the other people. To earn their livelihood they work and do not like to be a burden on others. The only difference between the prophets and the other people is that the former receive revelation and have the qualifications necessary to receive and preach the message of Allah. Anyhow, these qualifications do not exclude them from the category of human beings. Their personal and private life is not totally different from that of others. Had it been different, it could not have become a model for others. Everybody interested in his well-being is expected to mould his life according to that of the prophets. According to the Qur'an if Allah were to send an angel as a prophet, he would have appeared in human form and would have talked and lived like human beings. (Vide Surah al-An'am, verse 9).

Role of revelation in human life

As we have said earlier revelation plays a basic role in the life of the prophets. All or most of the distinctive features of their life such as infallibility, sincere leadership, unrivalled firmness and efforts for the well-being of all, are based on it.

We have seen how revelation brings about an effective and fruitful revolution in the life of the prophets. Now let us see what is its role in our own life.

Revelation cannot automatically have a direct role in our life, unless we acknowledge the prophets and get aware of this extraordinary source of knowledge and belief. If we do not believe in the prophets, the only source of our knowledge will be our own experience and our own ideals. But after we have recognized the prophets and are fully convinced that they have access to a new source of knowledge and that the teachings they claim to have received through their direct contact with the Source of Existence, are not their personal ideas or the products of their personal experience, but are a clear message from the Creator, then the revelation automatically assumes a sensitive role in our life. Through the prophets we get access to a new source of knowledge about the beginning and the end of this world and the way of leading an upright life. A man cut-off from the prophets has access to only one source of knowledge, viz. his own thinking and experience. But the man attached to the prophets has two sources: his own thinking and experience as well as revelation.

Relationship between knowledge, reason and revelation

The mutual relationship between knowledge, reason and revelation may easily be inferred from what we have

said, for they all have the same goal, that is the discovery of the truth and its utilization in the life of man. But as regard their dependability, they are not in the same category. Revelation is one hundred per cent dependable and unambiguous. It is immune from every mistake. But the dependability of knowledge and reason is not one hundred per cent, for there is often a possibility of mistake. A comparative study of the facts learnt through knowledge and reason and those learnt through revelation shows that not the least inconsistency exists between them. Wherever inconsistency appears to exist either the case is not based on authentic revelation or the verdict of knowledge and reason is a mere approximation and notwithstanding the fact that it has the form of a scientific law and has enough practical value, its significance is only relative.

That is why the Qur'an, the pure Divine revelation, incessantly encourages thinking, pondering and learning. It wants all to exercise their mental faculties fully and to try to learn more and more. At the same time we find that unbiased practical science and realistic reasoning are not only not in conflict with the Qur'an and its system, but they advocate the necessity of man being devoted to Allah, the prophets and the system approved by them. They want man to work earnestly for improving himself and his environment, and to get benefited for this purpose by both the sources of knowledge which Allah has put at his disposal.

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Philosophy of Islam – ISP, 1982

ISLAM ADVOCATES JUSTICE

According to the Islamic outlook, the whole world is a reality based on equity and justice. The heavens and the earth have been set up on this very basis. Everything in the world is calculated and planned.

"He has raised the heaven and has set up a standard for everything". (Surah al-Rahman, 55:7).

Everything in the cosmos is moving forward towards its goal. There is nothing disorderly and haphazard. From the order found in a living cell and the heart of an atom to the accurate system of the body of a living being, to the precise balance found between the planets of the solar system as well as the galaxies and to the marvellous laws governing the entire world, which are being discovered and put to use by science, everything indicates that there exists a calculated system and organization.

On the basis of what Imam Ali (P) has said, justice means putting everything in its place. In contrast, injustice means putting a thing out of its due place.

Any deviation from the general rules and relations governing the world, will cause confusion and disorder, and will disturb the balance maintained by the firm natural laws.

Everything has to move in its own orbit and advance towards its evolution.

Balance and order are the inevitable laws governing nature. The natural phenomena are not free to choose what kind of mutual relationship they should have or whether they should or should not maintain a balance. Even the reaction produced by some sort of disturbance in nature is meant to restore equilibrium and to remove the hurdles in the way of evolution. This reaction also follows an inevitable course already prescribed. In fact even any disturbance in the natural order has its own special method and procedure when order in a wider sense is disturbed, nature itself produces some correctives from within or without.

The penetration of the germs or viruses of a disease into human body causes cramps and pain, but the reaction caused by white globules or outside medicines fights the germs and viruses and at last restores the health and general equilibrium of the body. This is an example of the compulsory law of the combat of evil.

Justice of will or willed justice

While excercising his will, man is particularly required to be just. As out of all factors governing man's actions that of his will and his power of choice plays the basic role, its comparison with the role of other factors and compulsory norms, has given rise to one of the biggest philosophical questions which, it is not wrong to say, relates to one of the oldest and the most sensitive human ideas. What is interesting is that one's views in this respect have a direct effect on his efforts, on his actions and on his performance with regard to improving the lot of himself and of society.

The question of predestination and free will rosed much controversy among the Muslims like other peoples, and gave rise to a great deal of philosophical and scholastic debate.

Some people in view of those verses which declare that honour and dishonour and guidance and misguidance are in the hand of Allah, have come to the conclusion that man has no volition, and is just a tool in the Hand of Allah having no will of his own at all. On this theory they have based another principle: They assert that their belief in the Oneness of Allah and His absolute authority, requires them to believe that all the phenomena of the world, including the deeds and conduct of man, come within the purview of Allah's will only and that there exists no will besides His will. The doing of anything by anyone else independently is inconsistent with the concentration of will in the person of Allah.

This view was encouraged by the opportunist governments of the time, for it stopped every criticism of their actions. The people could not raised their voice against their rulers even when they saw the abundance of wealth, pomp and show at the court and found themselves in utter poverty and misery, for they were made to believe that everything was in the Hand of Allah who gave honour and wealth to whomever He pleased and awarded misery and humiliation to whomever He willed. People had to bear with every injustice and inequity, because that was the will of Allah.

This position was similar to that which prevailed in the Sasanid empire where common people had to live with the privations of the class in which they were born, because it was not possible for them to shift from one class to another. Hence they had to bear with the misery of their class while the upper classes lived a life of luxury.

Similarly among the Hindus, the untouchables suffered extreme legal and social handicaps. They could not even imagine to get rid of their despicable condition.

In Islam there is no question of classes, social groups or racial and tribal grades. All people have been created alike and irrespective of their parentage stand in one row.

But by raising the question that the fate of the people and their social conditions are predestined and giving a special interpretation to it, the rulers of those days could silence the people and suppress their voice. That is why the Ash'arite doctrine which tended towards predestination virtually became the official one. The Mu'tazilites who believed in a sort of free will lost favour with the court and were subjected to pressure and threats.

Another group of Muslims in view of those verses of the Qur'an, which indicate that man is a free agent, came to believe that man has complete volition and he himself decides his fate. These people cited the advent of the Prophets and their promises and warnings as well as the questions of legal responsibility, the future life and the existence of Paradise and Hell as a proof of the authenticity of their doctrine.

They raised the question that in case the deeds of man were regarded as the works of Allah, then sins, atrocities and corruption would also have to be regarded as Divine acts, though we know that Allah is far above anything evil. To counter this argument the Ash'arites put forward their doctrine of *tanzih* meaning that Allah being free from all defects, no evil could be ascribed to Him.

Doctrine of Justice

This is the real Shi'ah doctrine based on the moderate views of Islam.

Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) has said:
"There is no predestination nor absolute human discretion. The truth lies between the two extremes".

To understand this view fully, careful attention should be paid to the following points:

(1) We believe in Unity of Allah in all its dimensions and acknowledge His absolute authority. Everything in the world is subject to His will. His dominion includes the entire heavens and the earth.

(2) His command in the form of established norms governs nature and man as well as all causes, factors and natural relationships in the world.

(3) The conduct of man is a phenomenon caused by many factors including man's will, which is also a norm established by Allah. In other words, it is the will of Allah that man should make his own decisions.

As man's free will is also an outcome of the command of Allah, therefore Allah alone is the Sovereign Lord of the whole universe including man.

(4) It is evident that man's free will does not amount to absolute freedom. It has many limitations; natural, environmental, hereditary, innate etc. Therefore man does not enjoy absolute discretion especially in view of the following:

(5) The existence of revelation and Divine message, the

religious laws and commandments and lastly the belief in the Hereafter and practical recompense, place limitations on him. The legal and doctrinal restrictions affect the free choice of man.

(6) It is man himself who by the misuse of his choice brings about evils and vices. If there exists any unrighteousness and corruption in society, that is the result of man's own actions and is not the creation of Allah's will, for He is far above any vice and evil.

It may be asked why Allah created such people who make mischief? Was it not better that He would have created only those who could do no wrong and would have been all good and virtuous?

The answer is that had He created such people, they would have had no will or power. Man is a free being. He sometimes does what is good and sometimes what is bad. Some individuals go to the right direction and some go astray. That is the characteristic of freedom. Hence the question should be put this way:

Was it better to create man as a being having no will and choice or to create him as a free being having the power to choose and decide, as he is?

The answer is obvious. A free and conscious being is better.

Now as you have chosen this answer, you will have to accept its consequences also, which are a world mixed of virtue and vice, justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, freedom and subjugation, conflict and clashes, and a man ready to play a free and conscious role in it.

(7) But here a question arises: the Qur'an says: *"Say: O' Allah Owner of Sovereignty! You bestow sovereignty to whomever You will and You withdraw sovereignty from whomever You will. You exalt whomever You will and You abase whomever You will. In Your Hand is all that is good"*. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:26).

Again the Qur'an says: *"You who guide aright and it is You who lead astray"*. There are many other similar verses mentioned in the Qur'an.

Now if people are free and masters of their own destiny, how is it that honour and dishonour is not in their own hands?

The answer is that all phenomena of the world follow certain norms and rules. These norms also have been framed and established by Allah.

Honour and dishonour, wealth and poverty, success and failure, guidance and misguidance, life and death, power and a lack of it and all other things are phenomena, and as such they cannot be haphazard and accidental. They are all governed by certain laws, rules and norms. No individual or nation is exalted without any reason. Economic progress does not come about without any cause. Defeat in a clash, or for that matter victory must have some reason. As we have said previously, these norms and rules should be discovered, and one should follow the right direction by properly using the knowledge of them.

No doubt it is Allah who exalts, but He exalts those who know how to better their position and strive for that. Allah enabled the Muslims to conquer Mecca and granted them victory. But that happened only in the eighth year

after hegira after a long struggle of years of blood-shed, during which the Muslims underwent so many tribulation, had to employ all their forces and take all sorts of appropriate measures. In other words they utilized all the natural laws and norms necessary to gain a victory till it was granted by Allah.

No doubt it is Allah who produces the ears of wheat. But still wheat grows only in the farm of an industrious cultivator, who takes all the steps necessary for its growth and protects it from the pests.

Justice and the Hereafter

Divine justice will particularly reveal itself in the Hereafter. Justice in retribution and in recompense, justice in the classification of the deeds, and the ranking and grading of men, the demonstration of their qualities and characters and all that is deduced from the Qur'an in respect of the Hercafter – all these things show that justice has a special connection with the Hereafter.

The deeds of man are the product of his own free-will, and he is held responsible for them and for his good or bad future. Through the preachings of the Prophets and his own intellectual faculty and intuition he is expected to know the value of his deeds and their positive or negative effects.

As such when a man performs a deed consciously and intentionally, makes efforts to give a right or wrong direction to his inner qualities or does anything to benefit or harm himself or society, full justice demands that: He should receive a precise and proportionate recompense for his deeds, he should be graded exactly according to his works so that he should not be wronged (Vide Surah,

al-Ahqaf, 46:19), he should be repaid in full for whatever efforts he has made (Vide Surah Ale Imran, 3:25) and a complete record of all his actions and deeds be maintained so that even what he has forgotten should not be missed.

The Qur'an says:
"Allah will tell them of what they did. He has kept an account of it, while they have forgotten it". (Surah al-Mujadilah, 58:6).

This record includes even the slightest thing performed in any form and under any circumstances.

The Qur'an, in the course of Luqman's exhortations to his son, says:
"My dear son! Even if your deeds be so small that it can be compared to mustard seed, which is hidden in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed Allah is Subtile, Aware". (Surah Luqman, 31:17).

There is such a proportion and harmony between a deed and its recompense that it may be said that the very deed will present itself in the Hereafter. *"On that Day everyone will find himself confronted with whatever good and evil he has done".* (Surah Ale Imran, 3:30).

Everyone himself is responsible for his own deeds, not anyone else, who has played no role in their performance. *"No one shall bear the burden of someone else".* (Surah al-Fatir, 35:18). *"Whoever does what is right, he does that to his own advantage and whoever does what is wrong, he does that to his own person".* (Surah Fussilat, 41:46).

In that Court of Justice family position, social influence, wealth or any party or group affliction will avail nothing.

"The day when wealth and sons will be of no use". (Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:88). *"The wrong-doers shall have no friend nor any intercessor who will be heard"*. (Surah al-Mu'min, 40:18). *"Believers spend (in charity) a part of what we have provided you with before that day comes when there will be no bargaining, no friendship and no intercession"*. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:254). *"When the Trumpet is on that day there will be no kinship"*. (Surah al-Mu'minun, 3:101).

In fact in the Hereafter only his faith, good deeds and spirituality will benefit man, who will be called to a very detailed account and will be judged rightly and justly on the basis of his own deed-sheet containing every detail of all that he did. The Judge will be Allah, who is Just, All-knowing, absolutely Independent and far above any partiality or opportunism. He is not at all prone to any threat or temptation. (Vide Surah al-Nur, 24:24 and Surah Yasin, 36:65).

The Hereafter

The Hereafter is a world where one will enjoy the fruits of his efforts in this world on a very wide scale and where his qualities and his conduct will become absolutely clear.

In that world pleasures and success and similarly miseries and afflictions are pure and absolute. In contrast, in this world everything is relative and mixed.

Man's complete and pure success in all the dimensions of his life presents itself in Paradise where all his desires, hopes and aspirations are fulfilled and he prospers physically, spiritually, materially and mentally. Similarly his failure in all fields reveals itself in Hell.

The following few verses throw ample light on the vastness of enjoyment in Paradise:

"Hasten and seek the forgiveness of your Lord and the Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth". (Surah al-Hadid, 57:21). *"As for those who will be happy (that day) they will be in Paradise, where they will abide so long as the heavens and the earth last unless your Lord pleases otherwise. This shall be an everlasting reward".* (Surah Hud, 11:108). *"There you shall have all you desire and there you shall have all for which you pray".* Surah Fussilat, 41:31). *"Therein they shall find everything which may satisfy the hearts and delight the eyes".* (Surah al-Zukhruf, 43:71).

These verses show that Paradise is vast beyond imagination. From the point of view of time, it is everlasting. Whatever one can desire is available there without any limitation or restriction. It is more than ideal.

Its blessings and pleasures are both material and physical as well as spiritual and mental. In the Surah al-Saffat, verse 41 and thereinafter, a mention has been made of fruits, gardens, couches and delicious cups. In the verse 49 of the same Surah, in the Surah al-Rahman, verses 64 – 71 and in the Surah al-Waqi'ah, verse 36 the existence of houries, beauty, vivacity, freshness, cheerfulness and friendly atmosphere in Paradise have been described. In some other verses its pleasant climate, rivers, green and blooming trees, magnificent and lovely palaces, perfumed and sweet air etc. have been mentioned. On the whole, Paradise contains pleasures and material achievements at such a high level that it is beyond imagination.

On the other hand there are some other verses which

emphasize spiritual and sentimental dimentions and describe high human tendencies: *"Such are the people who will be honoured in Paradise"*. (Surah al-Ma'arij, 70:35). *"They are guided to gentle speech"*. (Surah al-Hajj, 22:24). *"There they shall dwell forever. What a wonderful abode and dwelling place"*. (Surah al-Furqan, 25:76). *"We shall remove whatever rancour there may be in their hearts and make them as brethren reclining on couches facing one another"*. (Surah al-Hijr, 15:47). *"Allah will receive them while they will be beaming with joy"*. (Surah Dahr, 76:11).

Such verses show that in Paradise there exist joy and happiness, comfort and cheerfulness. Its dwellers are far away from any fear, restlessness, rancour and foul language and they never face any discomfort or anxiety.

It is evident that as in Paradise there is everlasting bliss, and every one can have all that he may desire, there can be no clash of interests and hence there can be no feeling of jealousy, no anticipation of danger and no desire to wreak vengeance.

In every case all needs are met and all desires are fulfilled. As a result a man who enjoys his life in all its dimensions, fully feels the truth of human life.

At the same time evolutionary progress and advancement towards perfection continue. Allah Himself says that He multiplies (things) for whomever He pleases. Especially those who have developed their thinking and their intellectual faculties in a fruitful manner, shall make further progress in their life of Paradise.

Above all what we have mentioned, the greatest achievement of a dweller of Paradise is the attainment of Allah's

pleasure, which is the supreme success for a sublime soul. *"What is more, Allah shall be pleased with them. That is the supreme triumph"*. (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:72).

A dweller of Paradise finds that Allah, the essence of every perfection and virtue and the absolute truth to whom the motion and evolution of the entire world ends, is well-pleased with him. He feels that he has obtained all that he could aspire for, and finds that there is no distance between himself and Him, who is the source of all that is good and beneficial, in whom all hopes are centered and to seek whose pleasure every effort should be made. He has a feeling that he has succeeded in attaining proximity to Allah.

The effect of believing in the Hereafter on making the life balanced

Consequent to what we have so far read about man, his future, the inevitable results of his deeds and efforts and his reappearance in the Hereafter in all dimensions of his existence, we come to the conclusion that a true belief in the Hereafter should make man more careful and vigilant about making himself and giving shape to his efforts. When one is sure that any sort of perversion in meeting his desires and the commitment of any excess by him, will be detrimental to his interests and will cause only harm to him, and knows that his appearance in the Hereafter with an imbalanced and defective personality will culminate in nothing but his ruin and his going to Hell, he will make every effort to develop his existence in all dimensions.

We have seen that Paradise is the manifestation of a perfect and all-inclusive human life. Islam aims at man's leading such an ideal life in this world also within its limitations.

It wants a healthy body as well as a healthy soul. It aims at the provision of food, clothing, shelter and other physical comforts as well as at the healthy spiritual development.

A man having belief in the Hereafter tries to improve this worldly life in every respect and pays attention to his education, research, health, work, industry and all round progress. At the same time he believes in justice, brotherhood, freedom, human rights, sincerity, law and order, clear thinking, reasonableness, philanthropy, good will and spirituality. The correct belief in the Hereafter makes a man balanced, versatile and industrious.

MAN AND EVOLUTION

Out of all the natural phenomena with which we are conversant, the living beings have a comparatively more complex and marvellous mechanism. It may be said that life is the apex of perfection on the scale of natural motion.

LIFE

No thinker belonging to any school of thought has any doubt about the fact that living beings have characteristics which are not found in the non-living beings.

The main characteristics of a living being are self-defence, adaptation to the the environment, growth and procreation. The living beings of higher categories move from one place to another and those of still higher category are gifted with feeling and consciousness. That is why the laws of organic chemistry are different from those of inorganic chemistry, or for that matter of geology.

So far as observation and scientific experiments show, a living being is born only by another living being and not by lifeless matter. Similarly no living being is born suddenly and automatically. At the same time it also cannot be doubted that a living being appeared only at a special stage of the evolution of nature, which was

naturally that of the beginning of life. Hence a question arises as to what is the origin of life?

In this respect various theories have been put forward. Some of them are as follows:

- At first, life came to the earth from some other planet in the form of living cells.
- The material necessary to form a living cell consequent to receiving the required energy under certain conditions, was accidentally transformed into a living being and from that life spread to the whole earth.
- The first living being appeared suddenly by the will of God. Now all the developed living beings are His progeny.
- Every species of the living beings appeared on the earth independently. Life to each one of them was granted by God.

There are some other theories also.

We do not want to, involve ourselves into the discussion as to which of these theories is correct, for a very extensive scientific investigation is necessary to come to a definite conclusion in this respect.

What we would like to point out is that the life of every living being, whether it is the result of any evolutionary process or not, is a sign of Allah. That is what has been emphasized by the Qur'an.

"There are significant signs in your own selves. Can you not see?" (Surah al-Zariyat, 51:21).

"Allah sends down water from the sky and it brings the dead earth to life. Indeed in this there is a sign for those who pay attention". (Surah al-Nahl 16:65).

Manufacture of living cell

If one day the scientists succeed in manufacturing a living cell, the doctrine of those who believe in Allah will not be affected, just as the flight of man to other planets, the making of artificial rain, the grafting of one man's limbs to another, the manufacture of an electronic brain and so many other small and big inventions do not mean a clash or a rivalry with Allah. Such things only mean fructifying the human creative power and exploitation of natural material and its hidden forces. The Qur'an itself urges to make use of ideas and skills and to utilize the gifts of nature.

As we have repeatedly said, scientific progress is a movement in the direction of divine guidance and is not in conflict with it.

Anyhow, it should not be forgotten that human creativity does not mean the invention of a totally new phenomenon or a norm. It only means the exploitation of the material and energy available in nature and the bringing about of the conditions necessary for the utilization of the laws and norms relating to them.

If really there is a possibility of the production of life by combining natural material under certain conditions still not known to man, then he may in future discover the law of the origination of life and the conditions and norms pertaining to it. If that happens, this discovery will not be different from the discovery and utilization of so many other laws already made in the fields other than that of life.

Obviously the discovery of a law and its utilization does not in any way lower the position of the law-maker.

At a lower level we see that the pair of a male and a female

pave the way for the birth of a child. But do they affect Allah as the creator? A farmer cultivates his land. But does he replace Allah as the real creator of the crop?

If it is discovered that life can be produced from matter under certain conditions, that will only mean that matter in its evolutionary motion can go to the extent where it receives life and then can go further to a higher stage.

It is interesting to note that the Qur'an, describing the birth of man, expressly says:
"One of His signs is that He created you of clay". (Surah al-Rum, 30:20).

In fact clay becomes man, the highest living being, after passing through so many developments.

The Qur'an also talks of the birth of man from *'black clay'* and *'plastic clay'*. (Surah al-Hijr, 15:28 and Surah al-Saffat, 37:11).
It also says: *"We made every living thing of water"*. (Surah al-Anbiya, 21:30).

When the Qur'an has such a wide horizon, there is no reason why a Muslim who follows it, should be narrow-minded.

Life, a Divine phenomenon
It may be pointed out that the Qur'an expressly ascribes life to Allah. *"It is He who created death and life"*. (Surah al-Mulk, 67:2). *"It is He who created you to die"*. (Surah al-Hajj, 22:66).

Do such verses mean that no one else can make a living being? In reply it may be said:

Firstly, the Qur'an ascribes to Allah all natural changes, from coming down of rain and taming rivers and mountains to the birth of a man.

On some other occasions it ascribes these very changes to natural factors also. These two groups of verses are not contradictory, but corroborate each other, because the scientific laws which govern natural changes are simply the norms prescribed by Allah. His will does not mean that He directly brings about all changes and natural events. In fact he has created a system of natural changes. That is His will.

Secondly, if in the case of life we find that the Qur'an has given special attention to it, that is only a sign of its importance and high value. Allah describes it as the infusion of divine spirit. While discussing man, we will explain what is meant by that.

Thirdly, every evolutionary movement is a manifestation of Allah's will and His creative design, especially if the change is such that a material organism reaches a stage where it may receive life, become a living being and may at last attain human life.

MAN AND EVOLUTION

The theory of evolution on the whole has a long history. Lamarck enunciated certain principles in this connection. But it was Charles Darwin, who carried out extensive studies of the living organisms and the way of their birth, and gathered enough scientific evidence to show that evolution has taken place actually. He held that:

(a) Every living being, wherever it may be, gradually adapts itself to its environment, and meets its natural

needs, such as obtaining food and defending itself in accordance with the conditions prevailing in that environment. This effort sometimes causes changes in its body, like the appearance of the web uniting the toes of the duck when it was forced by its environment to swim in order to look for its food in the lakes, or the lenghtening of the neck of the giraffe when it was forced to make use of the branches of lofty trees.

(b) Though these organic changes take place gradually over many generations, they later pass from parents to offspring.

(c) Among the living beings there is a severe struggle for the continuation of their life, for procuring food and for selecting a suitable mate. This struggle for existence, that is a clash with the factors of the environment of life and rivalry with other living beings, is a firm principle in the life of the animals and the plants and is one of the factors which lead to the change of their form.

(d) As the result of this struggle only those organisms survive which can adapt themselves better to their environment and can obtain the conditions necessary for their life in their natural abode. The weaker and the less suitable organisms gradually die out.

This way gradually the various species are transformed, and only the fittest ones among them survive. That is how the evolution of the species takes place.

The dissemination of the theory of the development of the living organisms, including man, on the basis of these principles, roused a great deal of controversy during the time of Darwin and afterwards, and views in support of

it and against it were openly expressed. At some times the tone of the debate in this connection was scientific but on other occasions it was rooted in religious or anti-religious prejudices, for it was said that what Darwin had asserted was in conflict with the Biblical account of the beginning of the world and the birth of man as given in the book of Genesis.

Anyhow, with new discoveries in archaeology and the expansion in the field of experiments, the theory of evolution has been considerably modified since the time of Darwin, especially in regard to the questions relating to anthropology.

Many new questions in regard to almost every principle mentioned by Darwin have arisen. For example, it is asked whether the appearance of a new organ or for that matter any other organic change, always results from the use of that organ and the attempt to adapt it to one's environment or it may be due to mutation or any other cause?

The acquired qualities are hereditable as a principle or genetic investigations have rejected this theory?

The organic changes, whatever may be their cause, are always aimed at survival and evolution or sometimes they may be due to the inconsistency with the environmental conditions and may culminate in death and extinction?

Natural selection is or is not like artificial selection which leads the existing generation to evolution? We find that the wild animals and plants are alike and of average type, whereas the artificial selection gives the animals and plants more variety and leads them to better evolution.
There are many other questions of this sort

Anyhow, in spite of all the objections raised to discredit it, the theory of evolution has been accepted by the scientists as an objective principle of natural sciences. At the same time it is also certain that prominent and unbiased naturalists do not consider this theory to be final and incontrovertible. The way to further scientific investigation is not closed. All that they say is that the scientific inquiry has not so far discovered any new principles which may take the place of the principle of evolution.

Now it may be said that if an unbiased investigator carefully examines the results of the observations in regard to the genesis of the living organisms, he will come to the following conclusions:

Principles which may be discovered

(1) The living organisms in accordance with their degree of evolution have a historical succession. In other words, the more developed species have usually appeared over history after the less developed ones.

(2) This historical succession is similar to that found in all other things of the world. The entire cosmos has evolved from a simple state and gradually galaxies and solar systems have been formed in the environment devoid of all traces of life. Conditions conducive to the appearance of life have developed gradually. Similarly development has taken place successively from the plants to the developed animals. On the whole, the more complex organism have followed the simple ones.

(3) There exists complete organic similarity between the first living organism and the most developed living organism known to us.

(4) The stages through which a human embryo passes during its embryonic development are fully akin to the stages through which living organisms have passed over history.

When we put all this evidence together, we can scientifically presume that the various species of the living organisms are the progeny of one another (transformism) and have not come into existence independently (fixism)

Scientific presumption, not incontrovertible principle

Anyhow, it would be fair to say that the conclusions at which we have arrived are no more than a scientific guess corroborated by some evidence. They cannot be regarded as decisive and final, for if an unbiased investigator looks carefully at the history of the origin of machinery, he will find that the development of various machines is not incongruous with the four conclusions mentioned above, though the origin of the machines was not on the basis of transformism in its modern sense, and the various kinds of machines have not been born of one another.

In fact the scientific study of the origin of machinery also leads to the following conclusions:

(1) The machines in accordance with their evolution have historical succession, for the more developed ones appeared after the less developed.
(2) This historical succession is akin to the origination of all other things of the cosmos.
(3) There is complete organic resemblance between the first machine and the most developed machine.
(4) The stages of the manufacture of the latest developed machine on the whole resemble those of the development of other machines, though in a compressed form.

In spite of all these four points, everybody knows that the origination of the more developed machines in the wake of the simple ones has not come about on the basis of transformism. In other words the more developed machines are not the progeny of the more simple ones.

The evolution of the machines is the result of man's initiative, his efficiency and the evolution of his thinking. It is the outcome of the experience he has gained. But the machines of superior kind are not born of those that existed before them.

It is true that in the case of machines basically it is not possible that a more developed one is born of a simpler one, but in the case of living beings such a possibility does exist. But this possibility can only support a scientific guess. It is no proof that such a thing has actually happened, for mere possibility of a thing is not a proof of its actual occurrence.

We come across some other cases of evolution, in which the historical succession of their stages is related to the evolution of the thinking of the maker, and is the result of the gradual increase in an already existing ability.

An example of such an evolution is the gradual attainment of knowledge from childhood to later years.

In contrast, the evolution of the power of learning a foreign language is connected with the development of the capability of him who learns it, and not with that of the person who teaches him.

Conclusion

An unbiased investigator, whether he supports the theory

of evolution or opposes it, has to admit that:

(1) As far as we know, all the existing things of the world, including the living organisms, have a historical succession in accordance with the degree of their evolution.

(2) We are aware of many cases in which a more developed organism is the progeny of a less developed one.

(3) There are indications on the basis of which it may be presumed that this is a general rule applicable to all existing things.

(4) But still this is no more than a mere scientific guess; and the way to further investigation on the basis of contrary evidence, as mentioned above, is still open.

(5) On the basis of the doctrine, that the world has an Almighty Creator, who has brought the universe into existence and who manages it, there is a complete possibility that certain developed species might have come into existence independently in the same way as we have described the case of the machines. Of course, in this case the creation of the developed species is not to be the outcome of any mental development of the Creator or His gaining any experience. It is to be only on the basis that evolutionary motion exists in the creative design of the world. In other words, it is the will of Allah that gradually more and more developed species should come into being, in the same way as there exists an evolutionary motion in the development of an embryo.

Emergence of man

According to their general line of thinking, the scientists hold that man has evolved from the primates, which existed before him. We leave the study and evaluation of this evidence and other indications to the anthropologists, and confine ourselves to making a few general remarks in regard to the origin of man.

(1) What we have said about the theory of evolution is also applicable to what has been or is being said on the basis of this theory about the ancestors of the first man, but as we have already pointed out, this theory is no more than a scientific guess. It is still subject to further investigation and should not be considered to be one hundred per cent final.

(2) Anyhow, it is important to note that the emergence of man on the basis of evolution from other primates is not in conflict with the teachings of the revealed religions, especially with the belief of an Almighty Creator of the world. We have repeatedly mentioned in Islamic Teachings (ISP, 1977) that Allah, as described by the Qur'an, is the Creator and Disposer of nature. Therefore the perfect system of nature is one of His signs and not an arrangement parallel to Him or negating Him. All the scientific discussions and efforts are aimed at only finding out this system of nature as it actually exists.

(3) The only point which has given rise to the conception that there is a contradiction between religion and the general principles of evolution is that the book of Genesis of Old Testament and certain verses of the Qur'an apparently indicate that all men existing on the earth are the progeny of Adam, who was created independently and not evolved from any previous living beings.

In this connection the following points are worth consideration:

(a) What, in this respect, is mentioned in the book of Genesis cannot be taken seriously from religious point of view, because the genuineness of many parts of Old Testament is historically doubtful.

(b) The Qur'anic verses connected with the birth of

Adam generally emphasize the point that his birth was an important event and that Divine spirit was infused in his material body made of clay. This kind of birth may only be described as mutation.

Thus a being made of clay came into existence who was destined to be the master of the earth and no other visible or invisible being could place a total restriction on his leaning towards Allah or towards his base desires.

(c) There is only one verse in the whole Qur'an which describes the birth of Adam as somewhat miraculous. This verse says: ***"Surely Isa is like Adam in the sight of Allah. He created him of clay, then said to him: 'Be!' and he was".*** (Surah Ale Imran, 3:59)

This verse has come in the wake of other verses relating to the Prophet Isa. The Qur'an invariably stresses that Isa was created by Allah and that he was not His son. The fact that he was born of Virgin Maryam and had no father is no proof of his being the son of Allah. His birth was a super-natural event, which took place by Allah's will, in the same way as another supernatural event, that is the birth of Adam, the living being having Divine spirit, occurred earlier.

It may be observed that this very verse shows that the birth of Adam and that of Isa are alike.

Can anybody claim that what the Qur'an has said concerning the birth of Isa repudiates the general procedure of the birth of men all over history? Does it deny that they are normally born of father and mother. Not at all.

In dozens of verses the Qur'an declares the system of reproduction and procreation to be a sign of the power and the wisdom of the Creator of the cosmos.

Hence from the Qur'anic point of view the miraculous birth of Adam, the first living being gifted with Divine spirit, should not be construed to mean that the Qur'an is opposed to the theory of the emergence of the existing things of the world or the birth of living organisms on the basis of evolution. All that it means is that the emergence of man in an extraordinary way was a special favour of Allah.

Exceptional Organisms

Irrespective of all that relates to the birth of Isa or Adam, a naturalist may be asked whether it is possible or not that in the course of the emergence of usual organisms, some exceptional ones also come into existence?

We all know that as a rule every hand and foot of a man has five fingers; but we also know that some children are born with six.

Similarly we know that every human child is born with one head, but you must have read in newspapers that there have been some exceptional cases in which children were born with two heads.

When you put up such exceptional cases to the naturalists, they do not deny their existence, but explain them away simply as freaks of nature.

The credulous people easily accept this explanation, but those who have a critical mind ask: If it is true that the evolutionary emergence of the world and man is the result of the domination of the laws of nature over all the particles of this world and if these laws hold good everywhere, what is that factor which disturbs them?

Does an outside factor disturb the working of nature and the system of its laws, or the laws of nature themselves disturb their own working? In the first case, we must acknowledge that there exists some superpower transcending nature. In the case of the second alternative, a question arises as to why the possibility of the occurrence of some exceptional events, sometimes called miracles, should be so vehemently denied and considered to be contrary to the system of nature?

The above discussion shows that there is not the least contradiction between the general principle of evolution in respect of the world and man, and the teachings of the revealed religions, and what the Qur'an says concerning the birth of Adam and man. Incidentally the principles of evolution are still subject to further scientific investigation, for they are faced with much criticism especially as they were enunciated by Darwin.

As we have now finished the discussion of the origin of man, we take up a more basic question. The most important question, which is being overlooked in our times is: What is the true nature of man, what is his value and what way he should go?

First we refer briefly to the position of man in the West and then we propose to study the man of the Qur'an, so that keeping in mind the views of the contemporary schools, we may know the approach of Islam in this respect.

Philosophy of Islam — ISP, 1982

MAN

The scholastic philosophy gave the place of man to a God conceived by the medieval Church, which was inspired by the ancient Greek views in respect of their gods and mixed this conception with some religious myths. The Greek gods had a hostile relation with man and were considered to be apprehensive of man's gaining access to the Holy Fire and acquiring knowledge and power. They regarded man as their rival on the earth, who should be checked by any means possible.

The lords of the species, which were believed to be controlling the forces of nature were afraid lest man should overcome these forces and should subdue nature.

The story of Adam's Paradise was depicted as an attempt by God to keep man ignorant. The Forbidden Tree of which man was not supposed to eat, was represented as the tree of knowledge which man should not approach so that he might not rise in rivalry with God.

Furthermore, Adam's disobedience was believed to be an eternal sin and a total depravity of human nature. At last for the salvation of man and his deliverance from his original sin, God Himself had to appear in the body of Jesus Christ through the Holy Ghost. Thus spirituality

became the speciality of the successors of Jesus and the churchmen.

From this point of view man is a despicable sinner. Only the ecclesiastical ministers deserve divine blessing. The key of the hidden treasures being in their hand, one must approach them for his salvation.

Knowledge became confined to the Christian doctrines and all intellectual faculties were devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the religious texts. Virtue lay in the attachment to the organization of the established church.

Man believed to be deprived of divine grace, because a captive in the hand of the custodians of the sanctuary of the son of God. As he had lost everything, man was compelled to surrender himself submissively. In this process what totally disappeared was his self-respect. This was the position of man in the West prior to Renaissance.

Appearance of New Humanism

Naturally this situation had a reaction. Renaissance began as a revolt against the existing conception of God and brought about the rebirth of man. Humanism took roots in a new form and tried to emancipate man from the bondage of the God which was imposed on him. But alas! The emancipated man was put into the cluches of new human gods and was placed under a new bondage, that is to say mechanism, expansion and diversification of consumption and a race of exploitation and making profit.

The way of thinking was freed from the shackles of medieval doctrines. Sciences flourished, but they all were harnessed to serve the cause of the enhancement of production and exploitation.

As all restraints were removed and stress was laid on complete freedom, man was given to libertinism and permissiveness and his life became meaningless (as is the case with Western Liberalism).

Again 'man' has been forgotten, and the question still remains: What is man? What should he be? What should he do to remain a man and attain human perfection?

Man from the Qur'anic point of view

The story of Adam as portrayed in the Qur'an shows that in the course of his material development and physiological changes,(1) man reached a stage where he obtained a new birth(2) with the infusion of the Divine spirit.(3) Then in the course of his normal development, he suddenly experienced a divine change as the result of which he was transformed into such a super being(4) that even the angels were asked to pay obeisance(5) and the world forces were made subservient to him.

The Forbidden Tree of Paradise is not that of knowledge which should not be approached, but it is a tree of lust which should be controlled. It is a means by which man tests his will-power and the power of self-control. Even man's disobedience is a symbol of the freedom granted to him by Allah.

(1) ***"We created you from clay, then from a living germ, then from a clot of blood and then from a lump of flesh"***. (Surah al-Hajj, 22:5)
(2) ***" . . . . . Then from it We produced a new being"***. (Surah al-Mo'minun, 23:14).
(3) ***"He completed him and breathed His spirit into him"***. (Surah al-Sajdah, 32:9).
(4) ***"Indeed We have honoured the children of Adam and have definitely given them superiority above many of Our creatures"***. (Surah al-Isra, 17:70).
(5) ***"When I have completed him and breathed My spirit into him, then fall prostrate before him"***. (Surah Sād, 38:72).

To have access to 'knowledge' is not forbidden to him: In fact, it is a gift with which he has been especially blessed. Allah taught him that which none else knew.(1) Knowledge is one of the factors by which man gained superiority over the angels.(2)

Even Adam's expulsion from Paradise was a forerunner of a sort of self-sufficiency, the blooming of his talents and the beginning of his creative struggle.(3) It was a stage preliminary to his self-making. Though 'fall' came in the wake of disobedience, but it did not culminate in condemnation and permanent contempt. As the result of seeking forgiveness and attaining self-consciousness, it became a matter of blessing.(4)

Man's relation with Allah is not that of hostility or rivalry, for Allah is Self-sufficient and All-powerful. Even if all men disobey him, He is going to lose nothing.(5) He is far away from jealousy and any kind of anxiety. Therefore man cannot place any restraint on Him through his disobedience. Man's disobedience is only a manifestation of his free will and power of choice granted to him by Allah.

(1) *"He taught man what he did not know"*. (Surah al-Alaq, 96:5)
(2) *"He taught Adam all the names, then He presented those (things) to the angels . . . . . .(Surah* al-Baqarah, 2:31).
(3) *"The earth will provide you dwelling and sustenance for an appointed time"*. (Surah al-A'raf, 7:24).
(4) *"Adam acted contrary to the counsel of his Lord and thus be erred. Thereafter his Lord forgave him. He accepted his repentance and rightly guided him"*. (Surah Taha, 20:121 – 122).
(5) *"If you all those who are on the earth prove to be ungrateful, Allah does not at all need your thanks. He is Laudable"*. (Surah Ibrahim, 14:8).

Allah appointed man as His vicegerent on the earth,(1) that is to say that He gave him authority and power. Not only that, whatever man could use and could control in the heavens, was also subdued to him.(2)

Allah is not apprehensive of man. He urges him to settle on the earth(3) and make use of all the forces hidden in its mountains and plains.(4)

Man's domination over land and sea and his control of them is one of the requirements of his dignity.(5)

According to the Qur'an man is neither a predestined being(6) nor has he been given a free reign to pass an aimless life.(7)

He has been endowed with many capabilities, dispositions and motives accompanied by a sort of inner direction(8)

(1) *"When your Lord said to the angels: I am appointing on earth a vicegerent"*. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30).
(2) *"Have you not seen that Allah has put at your service whatever there is in the heavens and the earth"*. (Surah Luqman, 31:20).
(3) *"He produced you from the earth and settled you there"*. (Surah Hud, 11:61).
(4) *"It is He who has made the earth subservient to you. So walk about in its regions and eat what Allah has produced"*. (Surah al-Mulk, 67:15).
(5) *"Indeed We have honoured the children of Adam. We carry them on the land and the sea"*. (Surah al-Isra, 17:70).
(6) *"Does man think that he will be left unchecked"*. (Surah al-Qiyamah, 75:36).
(7) *"Did you think We have created you in vain and that you would never be returned to Us?"* (Surah al-Mo'minun, 23:115).
(8) *"Indeed We have created man from the union of sperm and egg, to test him. We gave him the faculties of hearing and seeing"*. (Surah al-Dahr, 76:2).

and innate guidance(1) which if not corrupted, lead him to truth, knowledge,(2) and all stages of creative skills, including those of new discoveries based on previous experience, those of the invention of new tools and equipment for the expansion of his control of nature and those of increasing his efficiency in overcoming any hurdles which he may have to face.

Besides that, man is also the bearer of the 'Divine trust'(3) representing consciousness, will and power of choice, which are the symbol of his humanity and make him a responsible being. This Divine trust is that magnificent gift of Allah, which the heavens, the earth and the mountains were not competent enough to accept. Only man could bear the responsibility of having the power of conscious choice and free will.

RANGE OF MAN'S CHOICE AND WILL

In order to know the conditions, limits and the field of man's choice, to ascertain the effects of this power on him, and to find out what factors influence his way of thinking, we must take the following points into consideration:

(1) Innate nature of man and his disposition

Man has many motives and instincts which pull him towards themselves. Some of his instincts are derived from a material source, and some others from a Divine spirit.

(1) *"By the soul and its Creator who inspired it as to what is right and what is wrong for it"*. (Surah al-Shams, 91:7 – 8).

(2) *"Follow the dictates of (true) human nature as created by Allah. Allah's creation is not to be changed. This is surely the upright religion"*. (Surah al-Rum, 30:30).

(3) *"We offered the trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it. And man undertook to bear it. . . . . "*. (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:72).

You may call these instincts propensity, disposition, natural urge, tendency or inclination. Some most important of these instincts are as under:

- Inclination towards and need of food, clothing and shelter;
- The instinct of self-defence;
- Sexual urge;
- Aesthetic sense;
- The instinct of gaining position and respect;
- The instinct of seeking truth and liking it;
- Love of knowledge;
- Love of justice;
- Fellow-feeling;
- Love of perfection and a desire to seek it.

Such instincts and urges are interwoven with the innate nature of man,(1) and hence they are not transient and acquired. But still their existence does not mean that man is a captive of them. These instincts only bring about a sort of inclination and attraction. They work as a motive force, but they do not tie the hands of man. Man has the power to follow or not to follow them. It is within his power to satisfy his instinctive desires or to restrain them, to supervise and guide them or to change their direction.

These urges are actually controlled by man's will based on his way of thinking.

(1) ***"Follow the dictates of (true) human nature as created by Allah"***. (Surah al-Rum, 30:30).
"Surely man was created restless". (Surah al-Ma'arij, 70:19).
"Alluring for people is the love of the joys that come from women, sons, hoarded heaps of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle and plantations". (Surah Ale Imran 3:14).
"He is passionate in his love for wealth". (Surah al-Adiyat, 100:8).

(2) Modification of Propensities

The modification of propensities and instincts is essential, though it is very difficult and requires a great deal of effort, awareness and hard work.

It may be easily understood that each of the above-mentioned instincts is in itself a need of life.

Should there be no sexual urge, there shall exist no motive for procreation and formation of a family.

Should there be no inclination to food, man shall take no steps to meet his nutritional requirements and consequently he shall perish.

Should man have no desire to gain honour and social position, he shall succumb to disgrace and humiliation.

A desire to secure position and social respect can impell one to make fruitful efforts and to do social work etc. But if this very desire becomes too excessive, it may overcome all other motives and may turn into a lust for power and position. In that case man begins to worship the idol of power and becomes a tyrant. He may go to any extent and may adopt any means, including spending money, making flattery and taking any mean action. In some cases one may even bear hunger and any other hardships to gain one's selfish ends.

Even after gaining power in order to maintain and enhance it, such a person may commit any crime and resort to telling lies, and intimidating and slaughtering people.(1)

(1) ***"Look! Indeed man rebels, when he considers himself to be independent and self-sufficient"***. (Surah al-Alaq, 96:5 – 6).

In other words he may trample upon the high values of justice, realism and benevolence. (1)

We observe how one instinct can overpower a man if it is not properly checked and is allowed to exceed the proper bounds; but we must not forget that in this case the instinct becomes an idol which man creates for himself(2) by misusing his power of choice, and it is he himself who can break this idol and can promote his higher tendencies. He can check and reform those instincts which exceed the proper bounds, so that he may save himself from sinking into sin.

"As for him who repents, believes and does what is right, it is hoped that he will prosper". (Surah al-Qasas, 28:67). *"But he who fears the position of his Lord and curbs his base desires, shall surely dwell in Paradise"*. (Surah al-Nazi'at, 79:40-41). *"Those who are saved from their own greed shall surely be prosperous"*. (Surah al-Hashr, 59:9).

There are many other verses which strongly censure imbalance in tendencies and declare that the problem should be solved by making positive efforts to promote higher tendencies.

The Qur'an considers man to be always responsible to make efforts to reform himself and to guide all his

(1) *"Judge rightly between people and do not follow your own caprices, which will deviate you from the path of Allah"*. (Surah Sād, 38:26).

(2) *"If we give him a taste of affluence after adversity that had befallen, he says: My bad days are over, and becomes proud and insolent; except those who are steadfast and do good deeds"*. (Surah Hud, 11:10).

tendencies so that none of them may exceed its limits and shrivel the freshness of human nature.

(3) Role of natural and geographical environment

It is not possible that the natural and geographical environment of a man should have no effect on his spiritual and emotional life. Just as the features and muscles — power of all men cannot be the same, similarly the spirituality of a man who has grown up in the scorching heat of a desert amidst sand-dunes cannot be similar to that of another man who lives in a coastal region having humid climate and dense forests. There is no doubt that hot climate, salt water, or mountainous region cannot have the same effect on human tendencies as for instance, cold climate, sweet water or marshy land has. This is just as the physique of the people of all regions cannot be the same.

However these varied natural and physical conditions do not compel a man to go in a particular direction though they may provide him to some extent a conducive atmosphere to induce him to adopt a certain way of life. No region compels a man to maintain or lose his self-respect, to defend his freedom or succumb to subjugation, to be virtuous or wicked or to be laxy or industrious.

It is man himself, who in spite of all difficulties and unfavourable conditions, can find his way and use his will-power to strengthen his constructive spirituality.

(4) Role of historical, social and economic factors

The historical factors, social atmosphere, economic relations and social conditions also play a basic role in giving direction to man's tendencies, his motives, his outlook and his way of life. Some times they set up hurdles in the way of man's freedom and his power of choice.

But we should not forget that the present conditions were brought about gradually by some people and other people can fight the existing evil factors under the banner of freedom and knowledge, can add to their intellectual matureness, and by using what remains of their will and decision-making power can fight corruption. This subject will be discussed further while dealing with the historical outlook of Islam.

(5) Role of the rules and regulations in the field of choice

We have come to know that man has certain tendencies and instincts which must be guided and modified. As natural factors and environmental conditions affect his choice and his mode of life, he must take steps to improve his surroundings and change them for the better. The principles and rules on the basis of which this modification and improvement should take place, are one of the most important topics connected with the question of man's choice and his will.

How should he mould his life and in what direction should he turn himself? What should he choose and on what basis? Should he allow others to impose certain principles on him and then of his own accord choose those very principles and go the way to which he is led in an invisible manner, as normally is the case in modern democracy?

Or should he allow himself to be involved in an ideological conflict on the basis of the theory of material compulsion and historical dialectic as advanced by certain schools of thought, and by bringing about further contradiction in this process, invigorate the movement and development of history?

Or should a man, as a principle, free himself from all principles already enunciated, get rid of his own pre-conceived ideas, and then with complete freedom make his choice and create his own principles and rules, because there exists no principle other than that which one himself chooses? Or is there any other way out? If so, what is that?

From Islamic point of view, man has been created free from all such compulsions and no pre-concieved principle or view can be imposed on him to deprive him of his free will and power of choice.

Man should himself choose the rules and principles for moulding himself rightly and to serve his society in the light of his expanded knowledge. All the emphasis which the Qur'an lays on thinking, understanding and reasonableness and that too on the thinking free from whims, myths and the wrong notions prevalant in the environment or inherited from forefathers, is aimed at paving the way for finding the truth.

(6) Divine revelation

One of the most important sources of knowledge and the domains of thinking is Divine revelation.

The world is not dark and void. In addition to those inner faculties with which Allah has provided man in order to help him find the truth. He has sent Prophets to guide him aright. This guidance does not mean forced imposition of Allah's will, nor does it mean the suppression of the creative will of man. It only means a sort of exhortation and Divine help. It shows kindness and graciousness of Allah. This guidance is a light which adds to the insight of man and does not restrict his will.

Man should get benefited by this guidance with his eyes wide open, and for that purpose, he should use his knowledge and insight. He should first think and evaluate, and only then make his choice. If even after identifying the truth, he persists in his disbelief, he shall stand condemned.

In support of these points, there is enough evidence in the Qur'an. We have already quoted some verses.

(7) Man's own deeds make his destiny

Another question which gives direction to man's will and choice is his giving attention to the fact that his deeds make his destiny and that every action of his shall have a reaction sooner or later. Man's future actually depends on his own deeds.

The Qur'an says:

"Man gets only what he strives for". (Surah al-Najm, 53:39)

"Corruption has become rife on land and sea because of the misdeeds of the people". (Surah al-Rum, 30:41).

It is the resistance of the people which prevents corruption. *"If Allah had not repelled by the might of others, the earth would have been corrupted".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:251).

Paradise and Hell are the outcome and the reflection of the deeds of the people. *"This is Paradise which you have inherited by your righteous deeds".* (Surah al-Zukhruf, 43:72). *"In fact those who commit evil and are engrossed in their transgression, shall be consigned to the fire in which they shall abide".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:81).

In fact the deeds of the people are preserved accurately and carefully. *"These shall have a share of what they have earned. No doubt Allah is swift at reckoning".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:210).

As in this world everything is well-planned and well-managed and there is nothing futile and haphazard, all human deeds have a role and a constructive effect.

This view makes it very clear that a man has to be very careful while making his choice. He is not allowed to set his hand to anything haphazardly and carelessly.

It is also essential that he should choose only what is right. He must not take a decision light-heartedly. That is why he is anxious and apprehensive. Perhaps it is this fear of Allah that leads one to practical piety.(1)

(8) Aim of Man's efforts

Now let us see what should be the aim of man's efforts. We know that Islam proposes certain goals and principles and calls man to adopt them. This in itself is a blessing of Allah. But it is man himself who should choose his way thoughtfully.

Prosperity and salvation

According to the Qur'an one of the aims of the efforts of man is to achieve *falah* which means salvation and prosperity.

Fallah means the cultivator, who cleaves the land, prepares it for cultivation and arranges for all the conditions necessary for the growth and development of seed, which under the favourable conditions of soil and water shoots forth from land and with the help of natural forces increases in height and size.

(1) *"This is the punishment of which Allah warns His slaves. Therefore, my slaves! Have fear of Me"*. (Surah al-Zumar, 39:16).

Similarly if man arranges the conditions conducive to his human growth the perfection in every sphere and all dimensions of his nature, he will become free from the shackles of selfishness and base desires. He will be able to take full advantage of his talents and potentialities and his higher instincts will take a firm root. Such a man is said to have achieved *falah* and to have 'prospered'. The Qur'an declare that this prosperity depends on self-making(1) modification of natural urges,(2) good deeds,(3) constructive and positive efforts,(4) resistance against the evil, co-operation for the good, piety,(5) betterment of the environment, diffusion of virtues, prevention of corruption(6) and the like.

(9) Ideals and values

With one evolutionary jump man begins to hold an ideal for the sake of which he forgets himself, concentrating his attention on faith and the service of humanity. A stage comes when for the realization of his ideal he not only forsakes his pleasures and comforts, and his position and wealth, but even lays down his life.

(1) *"The prosperous is be who purified bimself"*. (Surah al-A'la, 87:14).

(2) *"Those who are saved from their own greed, shall surely be prosperous"*. (Surah al-Hashr, 59:9).

(3) *"Worship Allah, and do good so that you may prosper"*. (Surah al-Hajj, 22:77).

(4) *"Prosperous indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers, who keep themselves aloof from what is absurd . . . . . "*. (Surah Mo'minun, 23:1 – 11).

(5) *"Believers, have patience, help each other with patience, establish good relations with one another and have fear of Allah so that you may prosper"*. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:200).

(6) *" . . . . They call to virtue, exhort to what is good and restrain from evil. It is such people who shall prosper"*. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:104).

A scientist makes sincere efforts to make a discovery, not to serve a tyrant or to get fame or secure a reward, but to add to knowledge and to serve humanity.

A sincere social worker makes efforts for the treatment of the sick for helping the afflicted and the hungry and for defending the oppressed, not for the sake of any reward or publicity and not in a just formal or a professional way, but for the sake of humanity and service.

An ideological worker faces all sorts of hardships and dangers and makes sacrifices for the deliverance of a nation. What name will you give to such a man and how will you interpret his working for an ideal?

There is no harm if you call him an idealist, for what he strives for, does not already exist as a reality, neither in nature nor in society. He only perceives it as an ideal in his mind and makes it a part of his life. This ideal becomes a driving force which moves him to continue his efforts till what was a mere idea, is realized and becomes a historical fact.

Every ideological school must have an ideal, which though does not already exist as a reality, but sacrifice should be made to achieve it. This is a thing which no theory of material compulsion can explain. It cannot be judged by any scientific standard, nor can it be interpreted by any material or natural law.

These very ideals are the high values to which one should dedicate himself and for the sake of which one should make sacrifice. If you want to find a person who really possesses 'human' qualities, you should look for one who is dedicated to these ideals and values, which are beyond

the scope of physiological and biological laws.

(10) Seeking Allah and Truth

Islam maintains that these values in their highest form are concentrated in Allah, and the man of Islam is enamoured of this absolute perfection. He is fit to yearn for and move towards and source of all virtues and values. A man having a perfect faith actually moves towards this goal. This absolute perfection is a pure reality and the essence of existence, which has created values and power. This truth cannot be perceived by material thinking, which cannot go beyond matter and energy and cannot think of reality and value or the source of power and motion.

As far as man is concerned, it is he himself who begins his move towards perfection, though he is invited and attracted towards it by Allah, but not to the extent of compulsion and imposition, for in that case his move will have no value. He himself is responsible to make the journey with untiring efforts to reach his goal. How encouraging this promise is!

"Man, strive hard to get closer to your Lord, and so you will certainly receive the recompense (of your deeds)". (Surah al-Inshiqaq, 84:6).

MAN FROM THE VIEW-POINT OF EXISTENTIALISM

As existentialism is one of the most well-known contemporary schools of philosophy which has devoted much of its attention to man, we must study its doctrines in order to have a clear idea about the prevalent theories about man. For this purpose we propose first to reproduce some of the views of the thinkers and the commentators of this school and then to make our comments on them:

- Existence of man precedes his essence, and hence, firstly there exists no purpose, plan or destiny concerning him prior to the emergence of his personality or his existence; and secondly, as free agents we can choose and change our essence at will.

(Jean Paul Sartre)

- I emerge alone and faced by the commotions and anxieties go forward and backward. That is what gives shape to my existence. It is I who can overcome all hurdles and provide value to my existence. Nothing other than me can give satisfaction to me. I have severed my relations with the world. I fight my own basis, that is the non-existence, which I am myself. It is my duty to bestow reality on the meaning of the world and of myself. I alone take a decision.
(Principles of the Philosophy of Existentialism)

- As far as 'disappointment' is concerned, that means that we confine ourselves to depending on what is within our will or within the total possibilities, which make our action possible. We sever our relations with everything else and cherish no hope. When Rene Descartes said: "Subdue yourself, not the world", he actually meant that we should work without cherishing a hope.

(Sartre)

- The conception of man is synonimous with a mixture of anxiety and encouragement. When a man makes a commitment and determines that by his action he is not only deciding about himself and choosing what he shall be, but is also giving a law for all mankind, at that moment he cannot avoid feeling complete and deep responsibility.

(Sartre)

> Those who bear such a responsibility as that of a military commander who undertakes to launch an attack, know well the anxiety with which we are concerned.
>
> (Sartre)

In respect of 'bad intention' and 'self deception', which must be avoided, Sartre says:
As the human beings are free and independent beings and they themselves invent their moral standards, the only thing which they may be asked to do is to be loyal to their own standards and values.

The assertion that man is a free agent, necessarily means that human beings are not a plaything in the hands of gods or any power other than themselves. They have absolute freedom, and are 'released', 'independent', not interrelated and 'not interconnected'. In short, 'they are what they are'.

Quoting Dostoyevsky, who wrote: "If God did not exist, everything would have been permissible", Sartre says: This is the starting point of this school. Really if God does not exist, everything is permissible. Consequently man feels dejected, for he finds nothing to depend upon either within himself or outside himself.
Man is condemned to be free. I say "Condemned", because he has not created himself. Still he is free, and from the moment he is dropped into this world, he is responsible for all his actions.

In respect of the views of this school in regard to man, the following points may be deduced from what has been cited above:
(1) In contrast to other natural beings which have a definite and ready-made essence, man has no particular

essence. His essence is that which he makes himself.
(2) Man is a free agent and has power of choice.
(3) No will, principle or law restricts the range of man's freedom.
(4) It is man himself who is responsible for his own making. His destiny rests exclusively on his personal choice. He is also responsible for making his social environment and bringing about changes in his natural surroundings, and that too on the basis of the principles which he formulates himself.
(5) For this very reason he is always agitated and he feels uneasy because he can have no guidance or support from outside and the choice he makes is not easy.
(6) Man feels lonely and detatched from everything. As he has to depend on himself alone, he feels disappointed.
(7) The uneasiness and constructive 'disappointment' that induce him to 'action', are like everything else the outcome of his own 'action'.

As for the belief in God, it may be said that this philosophy does not necessarily amount to atheism.

Sartre says:
There are two types of the existentialists. On the one hand there are Christian existentialists, among whom I name Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both of whom confess to be Catholics. On the other hand, there are existentialists, who are atheists, like Martin Heidegger and myself. The only thing common between these two types of individuals is that they generally believe that existence of man precedes his essence.
At another place Sartre says:
In the philosophy of existentialism the conception of atheism does not involve the denial of the Creator. It only means that nothing would be upset even if the Creator did

not exist. Man should himself find out and know that no means of his deliverance exist anywhere.

He again says:
If the existentialist is greatly disturbed at the idea of the non-existence of God, that is because in that case the possibility of finding 'values' in perceptible Paradise disappears totally. Further, obviously no virtue can exist, for no conscience is so perfect and infinite that it should think of every virtue. It is not written anywhere that the virtue has a definite existence and is always judged rightly.

We observe that the existentialists who hold atheistic views do so because they imagine that man can have absolute freedom only if there is no outside 'will' behind him to determine his action.

Sometimes they expressly say: Should there be a God who destines everything or at least knows everything, all future events will necessarily take place as anticipated by Him. For this reason the denial of an Almighty Creator is a logical pre-condition of the absolute freedom of man.

We propose to analyse this point while making a comparative study of Islamic and existentialist view-points.

MAN FROM THE VIEW-POINT OF ISLAM

Taking into consideration what we have already said concerning man and the range of his will and choice, we can come to certain conclusions. Here we briefly refer to some of the principles only. While doing so, we will try to touch upon the basic views of the Existentialist School in order to make clear the questions under consideration:

(1) Essence of man (what he has
and what he himself should make)

Man has an inborn essence. He has a nature which is terristrial and celestial at the same time. He has various tendencies and instincts and various capabilities and desires. But he has to develop his individual essence through his personal efforts and will. His tendencies and talents provide a ground on which he has to build his essence and decide what he should be.

(2) Human freedom and Divine destiny

Man is a free agent, but this freedom has been given to him by Allah. In the words of some contemporary writers, man is destined to be free.

No school of thought asserts that it is man himself who has given freedom to him. All agree that freedom has been given to him and imposed on him from outside. If it is so, why should we not admit that it has been bestowed on him by Allah(1) and it is a Divine gift.

It may be said that such a belief leads to predetermination, which amounts to the negation of man's freedom and his free will.

We know that according to the religious outlook, if there exists any Divine compulsion in respect of man, that compulsion is in regard to his having volition and freedom, and if there is any predetermination by Allah, that means that man should exercise his choice with consciousness and freedom. Hence divine will necessarily implies the freedom of man and not his predestination.

(1) *"We offered Our Trust. . . . ."*. (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:72).

(3) Sphere of choice and role of guidance

We know that natural urges, Divine guidance and even environmental conditions affect man's choice and his freedom. But their role is not compelling. They only create a tendency and pave the way for taking action. It is always man's own free will which gives a definite shape to these tendencies and modifies them. It is upto him to identify the truth and take advantage of the guidance with insight. We have already said that Divine revelation is a guidance which is enlightening, instructive and helpful. It is a blessing of Allah which guides man to the right path.

(4) Man has a purpose

We have already stated that the universe has not been created without a purpose and in vain. Man and life also cannot be without a purpose. He has been created to make an evolutionary progress in all the dimensions of his existence and ultimately to make a journey towards Absolute Perfection (as we have stated earlier).

(5) Man is responsible

It is man who is responsible to make himself and his environment. But responsible to whom?

Some schools of thought give no answer to this question, for they maintain that beyond man there is no conscious authority to question him. But in Islam there exists a responsibility and that too towards the Almighty, the Wise and the All-knowing, who will call every one to account, and recompense him.

The holy Qur'an says:

"You will indeed be questioned about what you used to do". (Surah al-Nahl, 16:93).

"By Allah! You shall indeed be called to account for what you have been forging". (Surah al-Nahl, 16:56).
"Detain them for they are to be interrogated". (Surah al-Saffat, 37:24).
"Allah cannot be questioned as to what He does, but they will be questioned". (Surah al-Anbiya, 21:23).

Such a responsibility can produce a great effect, and may work as an incentive.

(6) Vigilance and anxiety
A man who has received training in Islamic ways, is vigilant. In other words he feels anxious and uneasy, because he is responsible for making the right choice. He is responsible for his salvation, for his well-being and for the well-being of his society. Simiarly he is accountable for his fall and his decadence. Every action of his is lasting and produces a result. Therefore this anxiety and vigilance are constructive, add to his responsibility and affect his choice.

(7) Man is not without a refuge
In Islam man's free will does not mean that he has no refuge and that he has to depend on himself alone totally. He is blessed with Divine protection and favour. If he makes effort and moves in the right direction, he receives Allah's help.(1) He is not alone; Allah is with him.(2) You may say that everything is in the hand of man. If he really establishes relation with Allah, the doors of clear

(1) *"As for those who strive for Our cause We will definitely guide them to Our paths"*. (Surah al-Ankabut, 29:69).

(2) *"We are closer to him than his jugular vein"*. (Surah Qaf, 50:16).

thinking, knowledge and power are opened to him.(1) He feels encouraged and a spirit of new zeal is infused in him.

(8) Self-dependence, fear and hope

Islam recognizes a particular sort of 'disappointment'. One must not depend on the deeds of others.(2) Family position, children and wealth can save none.(3) Everyone is self-made and has to depend on his own deeds.

Thus man is a mixture of fear and hope,(4) and yearing and apprehension. His fear is such that it saves him from making mistakes and falling into sin. It is not that kind of fear which may frustrate him and lead him to inertness.

His hope inspires him to good deeds and renders him neither haughty and selfish nor lazy and sluggish.

(1) *"Do not lose heart and do not grieve, for you shall have true dignity, provided you are believers"*. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:139).

(2) *"No one shall bear the burden of someone else"*. (Surah al-Fatir, 35:18).

(3) *"The Day when wealth and sons will be of no use; and only he who brings a sound heart to Allah (will be profited by it)"*. (Surah al-Shu'ra, 26:89).

(4) *"None but the disbelieving people despair or His mercy"*. (Surah Yusuf, 12:87).

"My slaves! You have nothing to fear or regret today". (Surah al-Zukhruf, 43:68).

"Who forsake their beds to pray to their Lord in fear and hopes". (Surah al-Sajdah, 32:16).

"They fear their Lord and dread the evil consequences of the Reckoning". (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:21).

VIEW POINT OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

According to this philosophical theory it is society, which has the main importance. Man is studied only as a part of society, the laws of whose development originate from the dialectical law which is supposed to govern nature. As such, in order to be able to know the views of this philosophical school concerning man, we have to study the basic principles of dialectical materialism in regard to nature and society. Here again we first reproduce some of the views of the exponents of this school. Thereafter we will describe the point of view of Islam in regard to them.

(1) Nature does not consist of things heaped together or events detached from each other. It is a collection of things and events which are interrelated. No natural phenomenon can be understood and studied in isolation from other natural events and their environment.

(2) Nature is not static and at rest. It is in a state of motion and continuous change. Every moment something emerges, changes and evolves, and something else is annihilated.

(3) The developmental movement of things is not a simple movement of growth. It is a development in which slight and hidden changes are suddenly and speedily transformed into open and basic qualitative changes, of inevitable and unavoidable character. The developmental movement is not a circular movement, nor is it a simple repetition of anything. It is a forward movement, and a shifting from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state. This movement is from below to above.

(4) All things and all natural events contain an inner contradiction. The previously existing thesis comes in

conflict with an antithesis produced by it. Their conflict produces a new synthesis, which in turn rises in conflict with another antithesis that emerges from within it. Thus the way for evolution is paved. According to this theory, all developments originate from this very inner contradiction.

Now let us see what this school says about man and society and how it interpretes history.

(5) Man is a material and natural being, whose brain and nervous system are more developed than those of all other animals, and because of this evolution he enjoys a better power of understanding and grasping.

It is society which has real importance. Individual man is a weak being whose efforts are confronted with failure. It is society which grants will to him. Man minus society is prone to make too many mistakes and is always in danger of utter destruction.

(6) As the material world exists independently of human perception and thinking, the material existence of man and the material life of society are more important than their intellectual life, which is only a secondary element derived from the material life. Even the perception and the thinking of the people are only a reflection of the material world.

(7) The means and methods of production constitute the life of society. At various stages of the development of society the methods of production and the appliances used in this connection differ. The people in the primitive social system have one method of production and in the slave-holding system another. Similarly in the feudal system the method and the appliances used are different.

And so on and so forth. As the methods of production change, the social system of the people, their intellectual life, their views and their political organizations also undergo a change.

(8) The main motive force of history is the change in the means and the methods of production, which brings about a contradiction with the old productive relationships. As the result of this conflict and contradiction the productive relationship are changed.

In every period of history the economic and social system which was forced by such a change, has constituted the political and intellectual history of that period. Consequently since the ownership of land displaced the primitive social system, history has been mainly a record of class war between the oppressors and the oppressed and the rules and the ruled. It is this contradiction and conflict which brought about the various stages of the evolution of society.

(9) According to the views of this school, history comprises five periods which successively displace each other. They are the periods of:

(1) Primitive socialism, (2) Slavery, (3) Feudalism, (4) Capitalism, and lastly (5) Socialism leading to Communism

(10) In respect of the role of the new ideas in bringing about a change in society, this school says:
The new social ideas and the new social theories appear only when a change in the material life of society creates new duties towards society. As the new ideas develop, they turn into a power which facilitates the discharge of

the new duties and enables society to make progress. As every change is caused by contradiction, the contradiction within society should be intensified so that the solution of the problems facing society may be found. It is contradiction only that introduces new ideas and new theories which help to solve the existing problems.

Islam's approach to these questions

As for the points raised in the first four paragraphs, we have discussed them in detail in the preceding chapters of this book. Anyhow, to maintain continuity, here again we refer to them briefly:

(1) There is no doubt that there exists a definite coherence and harmony in the universe, and all the elements and phenomena of nature are minutely interrelated. That is why it is not possible to have an accurate and full knowledge of any single natural phenomenon without having a knowledge of all the elements which form it and all the causes and factors which effect it, and similarly without having a knowledge of its relationships and its evolutionary tendency.

(2) All the natural phenomena are ceaselessly and uninterruptedly in a state of motion. No material element and no natural phenomenon is static and at rest. Change and evolution, growth and decay, life and death and transformation and transfiguration are the patterns by which matter is governed.

(3) On the whole this movement is evolutionary and progressive. It is purposive, well-calculated and well-organized. Generally speaking, the net result of this movement of the world and its phenomena is growth, development, resistance against anti-evolutionary factors

and utilization of positive factors for evolutionary progress and a change for the better.

(4) This motion and this transformation have certain characteristics and produce certain effects in accordance with the laws concerning matter and nature. These laws affect every material thing from within and without, and influence its relationship with other phenomena. This influence may be either in the form of contradiction and conflict or in the form of harmony and agreement, or simply in the form of preserving the existence and growth of the thing concerned.

The sum-total of these laws and relationships constitutes the Divine ways, the creative design and the judicious will of Allah. As we shall see, these Divine ways operate in nature and society ceaselessly and uninterruptedly.

Now we come to the main feature of our discussion relating to man and society. The Islamic point of view in this respect may be summarized as under:—

(5) Man is a part of nature, having material and natural characteristics. But he has reached such a stage of evolution that he has become fit for being gifted with Divine spirit and supernatural values. Consequently he has acquired the faculties of free-will, knowledge and responsibility. Because of these gifts, he is not subservient to the material phenomena nor bound by the genetic relationships. In contrast, he is capable of subduing nature and bringing about changes in material relationships and natural phenomena.

(6) Man, as we know, despite his being an integral part of society, is an independent being. He is not so subservient

to society that he should have no personal will, freedom and the right of choice. His conduct is not determined by society and history only, though he cannot be regarded as being apart from society.

(7) As the entire existence of man is not the direct result of the evolution of matter, his mental and intellectual life cannot be purely inspired by and derived from matter or from material and genetic relationships of society. Nevertheless, as he is embedded in matter and has emerged out of it, the natural, geographical and physical conditions and the material relationship of society are bound to affect him.

(8) The contradiction which exists within man is the outcome of the conflict between his material yearnings (human desires) and his celestial impulses (inspirations from beyond this world). As man is endowed with freedom and knowledge, he should make the best use of this contradiction, and should take steps to modify all his impulses and to guide them towards his own evolution, the betterment of his surroundings, the making of history and moving it forward.

While discussing dialectical materialism, we reproduced certain views having a direct bearing on the historical conception of this school. Hence it will be in the fitness of things to study also the Islamic conception of history and the factors which make and move it. We propose to discuss this question in a comprehensive manner.

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ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

To get acquainted with the Islamic conception of the historical changes and the factors making history, it is necessary to take the following few points into consideration:

The Qur'an pays attention to the usual course of history

We have already learnt that the changes in the natural phenomena are governed by definite laws and are brought about by certain causes and factors. In short, we can say that nature has definite ways, and that Islam lays ample stress on their existence.

According to Islamic view, in society also there exist specific laws, which constitute the patterns on the basis of which social changes take place. The rise and fall of nations, their strength and weakness, the coming to power of any particular groups, the soundness or unsoundness of a society, are all subject to the laws which govern a society and its relations with other societies. Thus the historical events are not accidental, having no basis. They are not subject to a whimsical fate. Everything in society as well as in nature, is subject to a law.

The social laws and patterns do not come into being automatically or as the result of any inner compulsion.

As a matter of fact, they are all a part of the creative design and 'divine ways'. Here are a few examples of the ways to which the Qur'an has referred. (Let us see what role the will of man plays in this field).

"We destroyed many generations before you when they did wrong", (for their social relations were based on an unjust system). (Surah Yunus, 10:13).

"If the people of these towns had believed and practised piety, We would have showered on them the blessings of the heaven and the earth". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:96).

In Surah al-Fatir, verse 43 and onward the Qur'an speaks of those who, because of their selfishness and arrogance oppose the mission of the prophets and the efforts of those who advocate truth. Such people employ all sorts of unlawful means to expand their power and to gain their selfish ends. Thereafter the Qur'an says:
"The evil designing recoils only on those who do it. Then can they expect anything other than the punishment meted out to the earlier people? You will not find a change in Allah's ways, nor will you find Allah's ways to change. Have they not travelled across the land and seen the fate of those who were before them, though they were far mightier in power than themselves?" (Surah, al-Fatir, 35:43 – 44).

In Surah Ale Imran, verse 137 it says: *"Different traditions existed in the past. So travel across the land and see the fate of those who rejected the Truth"*.
The next verse says: *"Do not waver nor grieve, for indeed you will have true dignity if you are true believers"*.

Continuing the Qur'an says: *"If you have received a blow,*

the unbelieving people had received the like thereof (earlier). These are only the vicissitudes which we cause to follow one another for mankind so that Allah may know those who believe and may choose those who make supreme sacrifice". (Surah Ale Imran 3:40).

These verses considered together indicate that what brings about a change in the history of a nation, are the qualities of perseverance, sacrifice for a good cause and abstinence from selfishness and undignified actions. This is one of the norms that have always prevailed among the people.

From Surah Bani Israel, verses 70 – 77, we can deduce the following principles:
The nations and the communities are distinguished from each other by their leaders and the guidance which they receive from them. Adherence to one's ideological goal is necessary. If a community, in order to continue its selfish and mischievous activities, falls out with its hard working, selfless and sincere leaders and expells them, it shall not have much respite. Thereafter the Qur'an says: *"Such has been Our way in the case of Our messengers whom We sent before you".*

The verse 16 of the same surah tells us that when a place was to undergo destruction, those of its inhabitants who lived at ease would start indulging in licentiousness and mischief-making. Then a command of Allah would be issued in respect of these corrupt and mean people given to hoarding money and seeking pleasure. The place would be destroyed and its people annihilated.

In Surah al-Fajr, verses 6 – 14, the Qur'an says:
"Did you not consider how your Lord dealt with the tribe of 'Aad, who had many-columned buildings at Erum, the

like of which was not erected in other lands; and (how We dealt) with the tribe of Thamud who cleft the rocks in the valley; and with Pharaoh, firm of might? All these were haughty in their lands and created much mischief there. Therefore your Lord let loose on them the scourge of punishment. Surely your Lord is ever watchful".

These are only a few instances out of so many in which the Qur'an has referred to the usual course of history.

Violent outburst of desires and emotions

We have already learnt that man has a terrestrial as well as a celestial nature. He has many kinds of inclinations and emotions, and is responsible for guiding and modifying his desires. We also, more or less, know that the passions for self-seeking, self-aggrandizement, licentiousness and lust of power sometimes outburst so violently that they may bring ruin to an individual and society. The Qur'an describes the individuals and factions not controlling their passions as extravagant, mischievous, wrong-doing wicked, haughty and even as diabolic and aggressive. All over history and in all sorts of economic conditions such people have worked for gaining their selfish ends, for expanding their power and authority and for exploiting and subjugating others. To achieve their vicious objects they do not desist from using force, fraudulent means, threats, temptations and persecution. They divide people and torpify them. They create such conditions under which they may impose on the masses such ideas and such a way of life, which may facilitate the continuity of their own oppressive authority.

Myths, misconceptions, idol-worship, dirty customs and old and new gods are introduced and revived to stop people from thinking rightly and moving in the right

direction, and thus the way for their exploitation is paved. So many wars have been kindled by the flames of the avarice, greed and self-interestedness of the tyrants. How much destruction, misery, bloodshed and supression have been caused by their lust of power and position!

The Qur'an considers the corruption and tyrannical and oppressive activities of such men to be the cause of the destructive changes of history.

From Surah al-Baqarah, verse 205 we can deduce that: Whenever a self-seeking man comes to power, he creates mischief, tries to ruin agriculture and commits genocide.

In Surah al-Maidah, verse 62 and subsequent verses, the Qur'an speaks of those, who because of their haughtiness and denial of truth are ever ready to commit sins and transgression, to kindle the flames of war and to spread corruption.

In Surah al-Qasas, verse 4 and onward it says: *"Pharaoh grew in power in the land and divided its people into casts. A group among them he suppressed, killing their sons and sparing their daughters. Surely he was one of the miscreants".*

In Surah al-Zukhruf, verse 54, Pharaoh has been described thus: *"He suppressed his people to the extent that they obeyed him. Surely they were wicked people".*

In Surah al-Nisa, verse 27 Allah says: *"Those who follow their lustful desires, want you to go tremendously astray".*

These are some examples of the verses, which show that there are men who, because of their blindly following their

desires and making no attempt to modify and guide them in the right direction, create a great deal of mischief and engender unfortunate events of history.

Question of contradiction

According to Islamic conception, contradiction plays an important role in bringing about changes in history, but it is not the sole factor which brings them about. Further, contradiction does not mean merely the contradiction between the productive relationships and the productive appliances.

Within man himself there exist two contradictory forces; devilish insinuation and the guidance of reason. In other words, within man his animal propensities and his higher instincts are in conflict. Side by side with man, that is his divine aspect, there exists Satan, which is the manifestation of all misguiding and insinuation factors. In society there is a ceaseless struggle between truth and falsehood. Since the dawn of history two sons of Adam, representing the two wings of men of history, have been fighting each other. One of them is fighting to satisfy his vain desires and to achieve his selfish ends. He, because of his jealousy and self-seeking, destroys the other. His selfishness culminates in the first killing and transgression, and establishes the tradition of the hostility of the selfish, lustful and transgressing individuals and factions termed extravagant, diabolic and mischievous by the Qur'an, towards the reformers and the advocates of righteousness and justice. This conflict, in different forms, has continued all over history.

The root of this conflict and struggle going on between the two sides of the oppressors and the oppressed, the exploiters and the exploited and the tyrants and the

tyrannized, exists within man himself. It is the outburst of his inner passions and emotions, which causes such a havoc. Of course social and environmental conditions are effective in flaring or checking this outburst.

Anyhow, the outcome of this contradiction and conflict, whether that be within an individual or between the various classes of society, is not always the destruction of one side. In many cases the outcome is the modification, guidance and even the harmonizing of the two opposing forces.

For example, if there is a conflict between reason and passion, its outcome will not be the extinction of the latter. Similarly if there is a conflict between material desires and higher human tendencies, its outcome should not be the extermination of natural and material desires to the extent that man should make no effort to obtain food, clothing and marriage-partner. The object of this conflict is self-moulding so that all these desires should be controlled and disciplined, and all instincts should be exercised with moderation and with no excess.

In society also the conflict often aims at guiding and training people in a peaceful manner by exhorting them to good and restraining them from evil with a view to improve the environment and reform the wicked and the culprits; though sometimes it aims at exterminating the oppressors also, as in the case of punishment for manslaughter and the case of the holy war. Hence the role of the constructive factors must not be overlooked.

Necessity of augmenting the positive force of contradiction and resistance against corruption

In every conflict the side which is stronger, achieves

greater success. Hence if the tyrants and the oppressors are stronger, oppression and corruption will prevail, the people will be subjected to persecution and will be deprived of their rights.

But once the side of righteousness and justice becomes stronger, social justice becomes dominant and the oppressor is removed from the scene. Naturally it requires persistent effort and hard work to strengthen the side of righteousness.

"If only there had been among the generations that have gone before you, men possessing good sense who could warn their people and stop them from spreading corruption on the earth". (Surah Hud, 11:116)

"If Allah had not repelled some men by the might of others, the earth would have been corrupted". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:250).

Tens of other verses which lay stress on the necessity of fighting against the miscreants, the aggressors, the tyrants and the self-seekers, and promise success to those who work steadfastly and resist the wrong-doers with perseverance, prove this point.

Therefore mere intensification of contradiction and augmentation of the causes of conflict cannot bring the required change closer. Only the awakening and correct guidance of the oppressed, the strengthening of the side seeking justice and promoting the positive inclinations and sentiments can help the truth triumph.

- Knowledge of the course of history,
- Identification of opportunities; and
- Taking advantage of these opportunities.

It is evident that everybody, whatever be the level of his social consciousness and capability of leadership, cannot make history. A sound knowledge of the course of history, insight into the structure of various societies, correct interpretation of the historical events, acquaintance with what happened to the people of the past and clear thinking about the customs, traditions, inclinations and genius of a society are necessary to be able to take a suitable, timely and fruitful action.

Besides knowledge, the ability to mould, guide and organize the thinking of the people and to overcome the forces of opposition is also necessary.

It is also essential to have a firm conviction, a definite aim and the power of resistance and perseverance. That is why we see that history has produced a very limited number of individuals and groups who could shoulder this social mission and with their creative and constructive ideas, boldness, broadmindedness and extraordinary power of leadership could make a breakthrough in order to change the mind of the people and bring about great changes in the history of a nation. No doubt human history is the history of the great and outstanding men who have played a decisive role.

GREAT ROLE OF THE PROPHETS IN MAKING HISTORY

A study of the prophets' movement shows that they have been the biggest source of intellectual and reformatory revolution in society. It is they who preached justice, humanity, philanthropy, brotherhood, equality, service to mankind, love, human freedom, peace, purity, piety and other social and human virtues.

Furthermore, it is they who more than anyone else

exposed the oppressors, the tyrants, the hypocrites and the self-seekers, and taught the people to resist them boldly and make a sacrifice for this purpose. The main feature of their programme was to fight against subjugation and humiliation and strive for liberty and emancipation. Reflect on the following verses: *"Indeed We raised in every nation a messenger, (proclaiming): Worship Allah and shun false gods"*. (Surah al-Nahl, 16:36).

"We indeed sent Our messengers with clear signs, and revealed with them the scriptures and the criteria for judging what is right and what is wrong, so that the people may establish justice. We sent down iron, in which there is vital power and wherein there are many uses for mankind, so that Allah may know who helps Him though unseen and helps His messengers. Surely Allah is Strong, Almighty". (Surah al-Hadid, 57:25).

Prophet Ibrahim (P)

Since the dawn of the recorded history Ibrahim has been acknowledged to be the champion of monotheism, iconoclasm and the exploding of myths. It is he who taught to sacrifice one's life, property and children for the sake of the cause which one holds dear; and it is he who fought against the elements of transgression and self-seeking represented by Nimrud. Consequently he was thrown into blazing fire because he continued his struggle against the idols and false gods. He set an example of resistance and self-sacrifice and resumed his struggle as soon as he crossed this ordeal uncurbed. He laid the foundation of the oldest centre of monotheism, namely the Ka'abah. He was the inspirer of all great Semitic religions believing in one God in a vast area of the world.

Prophet Musa (P)

The efforts of Musa for the emancipation of his people,

his vast struggle against subjugation and humiliation and his bold stand against those who possessed pelf and power and were the embodiment of oppression and lust of authority, crowned the history of popular struggle and human movements with success.

"Go both of you to Pharaoh. He has transgressed the bounds indeed". (Surah Taha, 20:43).

"So go to him and say: We are two messengers of your Lord. Therefore let the children of Israel go with us and do not torture them". (Surah Taha, 20:47).

"We sent Musa and his brother Harun with Our signs and a clear authority, to Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they scorned them for they were despotic people. They said: Are we to believe in two human beings like ourselves, whose people are servile to us?" (Surah al-Mo'minun, 23: — 47).

To counter the demands of Musa, Pharaoh and his aides resorted to calumination, intimidation and brain washing.

"But none believed in Musa except a few of his own people, who were afraid that Pharaoh and his chiefs might harass them, because Pharaoh was a tyrant in the land and he was guilty of transgression". (Surah Yunus, 10:83).

"When he conveyed them the truth from Ourselves, they said: Slay the sons of those who believe with him and spare their daughters. But the scheme of the disbelievers was a mere failure. Pharaoh said: Let me kill Musa. Let Musa call his Lord (if he can). I fear that he will alter your religion or he will create disorder in the land. Musa said: Indeed I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every

arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning". (Surah al-Mo'min, 40:25 – 27).

"Pharaoh proclaimed among his people saying: My people! Is the kingdom of Egypt not mine, and these rivers flowing under my feet not belong to me? Do you not perceive? I am surely better than this wretched man who cannot even speak clearly. (If what he says is true), than why have bracelets of gold not been put on him or angels not sent along with him?" (Surah al-Zukhruf, 43:51–53).
"Pharaoh said to Musa: If you acknowledge a Lord besides me, I will imprison you". (Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:28). But Musa was firm. He did not give up his struggle, and said to his companions: *"Pray to Allah for help and be patient. The earth belongs to Allah. He gives it to those of His slaves whom He pleases. Happy shall be the end of the pious".* (Surah al-A'raf, 7:128).

Musa encouraged his people and gave them good news saying: *"It may be that your Lord is going to destroy your enemy and make you succeed him in the land. Then He may see how you behave".* (Surah al-A'raf, 7:129).

As we know, at last Musa was successful in rescuing his people. The enemy despite all his power and grandure was annihilated. Thus a new chapter of history was opened, which set in motion a series of historical events.

Prophet Isa (P)
For some two thousand years Isa has been recognized in history as a saviour and messenger of peace and justice. He stood right in the midst of selfishness, war-mongering, amassing of wealth and rivalry and bloodshed. At that time the self-aggrandizement and fraudulent dealings were at their height. The unworthy churchmen, who were

supposed to be the religious leaders and the bearers of the Divine commandments were themselves involved in rivalry with each other and were commiting such heinous crimes as slaying of the prophets, deceitful forgery, usury and hypocrisy. In such circumstances Isa stood and fought against all the evils of his time. He reformed and reintroduced Mosaic religion which had been distorted and misinterpreted, and preached righteousness, purity, humanitarianism, love and service to mankind. He led his life with utmost simplicity and pursued his mission in right earnest even at the risk of his life.

In the course of history his teachings stirred a great wave of new ideas of moral conduct and fellow-feeling in a large sector of the world. His teachings were the source of many epoch-making movements and revolutions.

The history of Christianity and the Church is full of many good and ugly events and movements. Obviously all that was good was the outcome of following the teachings of Isa and all that was bad and ugly was the result of the misuse and misinterpretation of these teachings and of deviation from his mission.

At last there came the turn of the greatest and the most fruitful Divine movement, that is the message of Islam. We propose to dwell on it at the end of this discussion.

Revelation was the motive force
of the Prophetic Movements

There is no doubt that every prophet started his mission at the most opportune time, when injustice, wrong conceptions, undue discrimination, dissensions and neglect of duties were rampant and the situation demanded the beginning of a reformatory movement to dispel darkness

and to illuminate the atmosphere with the light of virtue and truth. But in all cases the actual campaign for changing the intellectual and social conditions started only at the behest of Divine revelation.

It is true that Musa from his youth was feeling extremely perturbed and upset by the humiliation and the bondage of his people. He was conscious that power and wealth were concentrated in the hands of one party and the other was suffering poverty, slavery, pain and torture. But still he had no plans to take any action or to carry out any reforms. Even when he killed a person from the enemy camp during an encounter with him, he escaped from the city in great bewilderment, as he felt that his life was in danger. But years later when he was raised to prophethood and Divine revelation asked him to take action, he returned to the same city, went straight to Pharaoh, the powerful and dangerous enemy of his and his folk and asked him to liberate the children of Israel and stop torturing them. Only then the things began to move.

Till the age of forty the Prophet of Islam lived among an ignorant people whose way of life was unmanly and very unfair. His pure and clear mind perceived the moral perversion of society and felt distressed. As for himself, he never reconciled to the the environment, and every now and then made efforts even to prevent aggression and patch up difference.(1)

But he took no steps to preach social reform or to launch a campaign for that purpose.

(1) His participation in the pact known as *Hilf al-Fuzul* and the story of setting the Black Stone in its place are two such cases.

The breakthrough was made only when he received his first revelation in a cave on the hill of Hira. That was the event that heralded the Islamic Movement.

Therefore it may be said that revelation is the main pillar and the foundation stone of the mission of the prophets. But what is revelation and what effects does it produce?

Revelation

Revelation is a sort of sublime knowledge of the realities of the world, their values and the higher goals of human life. This knowledge is unambiguous, direct and clear. It is a special Divine gift bestowed on a pure and holy man.

Revelation is not an ordinary kind of consciousness or perception obtained through senses, observation or experiment. Nor is it a kind of mental awareness based on previous mental date or previously acquired knowledge manifesting itself consequent to the creative efforts of a human mind. It is also different from intuition and mystic illumination. It is pure and decisive knowledge, a transcendental cognition and a Divine gift.

Some effects of revelation

(a) Inner Arousel: Revelation creates an arousel in the soul of the prophet and stirs up his entire existence. It awakens his dormant faculties and powers and directs them towards the performance of his mission. With his contact with the eternal source of revelation, he is infused with a new spirit and zeal.

(b) Clear insight: As the result of revelation a prophet's mind is endowed with clear insight and breadth of vision as if it had been connected with a gushing and pure fountain-head of knowledge. His mind is filled with pure and fruitful ideas.

The Qur'an describes revelation as light, insight, illustration, wisdom, cure, mercy, proof and a source of life and knowledge. Obviously this light and insight first of all should be enlightening the heart of the prophet himself on whom revelation descends.

As a prophet's ideas are inspired by Divine revelation, they are polluted neither by myths and misconceptions nor by his own self-interest or personal whims. As the Qur'an says, ***"he does not speak out of his own desires. (What he says) is only a revelation revealed to him"***. (Surah al-Najm, 53:3).

Because of his clear insight and purity of thought a prophet attains infallibility. His missionary ideas are immune from every kind of mistake or slip.

(c) Fruitful orientation of the thinking of people: Revelation guides people and shows them the right way. It brings their inner talents into full bloom, and develops their higher human sentiments and inclinations. It gives a useful turn to their way of thinking and, in the light of the new awakening, leads them to all that is good and pleasant.

After dealing with the misconceptions, false beliefs, wrong practices and other pitfalls that may develop in a society, and emphasizing the need of the prophets, Imam Ali (P) in the first sermon of his, given in the Nahj al-Balaghah, explains as under the purpose for which the prophets are raised:
"Allah sent His prophets to people. He sent His prophets one after another so that people might comply with the compact of their nature (might not allow the light of their innate disposition towards worshipping Allah and following what is right to be extinguished). He sent the prophets to remind people of His favours to them and to convey to them the truth so that they could have no excuse".

"He sent the prophets to people to stir up the hidden treasures of their soul and to apprise them of their abundant and useful potentialities".

(d) Lastly revelation is the bearer of the great message of the prophets in regard to bringing about a change in society. In fact, revelation has a social mission, viz. the reconstruction of society, establishment of a just system and reorganization of a nation.

The historically recognized Divine messages have played an immense role in this field. Now we study the universal message of Islam, which is the most important of all these messages.

ISLAMIC MOVEMENT — A MANIFESTATION OF THE RULES OF HISTORY

We propose to pursue this study in several stages:

Domination of injustice cannot last long

We already know that it is one of the most important laws of history that when injustice and corruption become rampant in an environment, a revolution is bound to follow. The collapse of the elements supporting undue discrimination and tyranny is inevitable.(1)

(1) ***"Then their Lord inspired them saying: Surely We shall destroy the wrong doers"***. (Surah Ibrahim, 14:13).
"Never did We destroy any town unless their inhabitants were evil-doers". (Surah al-Qasas, 28:59).
Many other verses of the Qur'an such as Surah al-Hajj, verse 45, Surah Yunus, verse 13, Surah Ale Imran, verse 117, Surah al-Kahf, verse 59, Surah Hud, verse 117, Surah al-An'am, verse 47, convey the same meaning.

Keeping in mind this firm rule of history, we find that in the sixth century of the Christian era, Arabia, the Iranian and the Roman empires and all other well-known countries of those days were ready for an explosion. At that time not only in Arabia there existed discriminaton, belief in myths, idolatry, tribal feuds, poverty, tyranny and many other inequities and vices, but even the big, powerful (though decaying) and so-called civilized countries of those days were the victims of so many misconceptions, false beliefs, mutual conflicts of the rulers, cruel laws, deep class differences, massacres, savage wars, undue prejudices, barbaric customs and onslaughts against knowledge. The atmosphere was suffocating. The masses were groaning under heavy financial burdens, whereas some privileged individuals and groups were living in luxury. There were thousands of other evils. The Qur'an has desbribed this condition as manifest error.(1)

Imam Ali (P) depicted the world situation prevailing at that time as under:
"Allah sent the Prophet of Islam at a time when there had been no prophet for long. People were in deep slumber. There was utter confusion everywhere. Wars were ranging. The leaves of the tree of life had turned yellow and there was no hope that it would ever bear fruit. Waters had gone dry. The light of true religion had been extinguished. Misery had extended its ugly face and had overtaken mankind. The result of this unfortunate situation could be nothing but chaos and trouble. Fear had overwhelmed the hearts of people and they could find no refuge except in blood-thirsty sword! (Nahj al-Balaghah).

This world situation foreboded a big event that could overthrow the cruel and outdated systems.

(1) Surah al-Jumu'ah, verse 2.

Awakening of people

Injustice could not be ended without the intervention of human factors and an ideological movement. It was necessary that people should have better knowledge, and there should be a school to enlighten their thoughts and to lay down a programme for them so that their dormant forces could be awakened.

"This is because your Lord was not to destroy any town arbitrarily while their people were unconscious (of the wrong they were doing)". (Surah al-An'am, 6:131).
"We never destroyed a town whose term of life was not already fixed". (Surah al-Hijr, 15:4).
"We have never destroyed a town unless it had its warners". (Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:208).

As we know, an intellectual and human awakening usually follows the coming of the prophets.

"If we had destroyed them with some punishment before his (holy Prophet's) coming they would have certainly said: Our Lord! Why did you not send to us a messenger, so that we might have followed your revelations before we were humiliated and disgraced?" (Surah Taha, 20:135).

For these reasons Allah raised Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, as a historical and world necessity.

Arabia provided a favourable atmosphere

If corruption, injustice and belief in myths demanded such a movement, naturally Arabia provided a most favourable atmosphere for the purpose, for it enjoyed less intellectual and cultural progress and less human qualities than its neighbouring lands and was submerged in a deeper bog.

The Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (P) says:
"Allah sent Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his progeny) to warn the people of the world against the customs and manners they had adopted. He appointed Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his progeny) the trustee of His celestial commandments. At that time you, the Arabs, professed the worst religion and lived in the worst land. You sletp amidst the hard stones and biting snakes. You drank of dark water. You did not get wholesome food. You shed the blood of each other. You severed your ties with your kin and fought against them. Idols were set up amidst you, and your sins had tied your hands and feet". (Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 26).

These were the circumstances when this degraded society and inhospitable land was selected to be the cradle of Islam.

Pioneers — Chosen companions

This divinely popular movement could succeed in overthrowing the corrupt system and making history only if the pioneers were trained on the basis of its ideology and then with general awakening the masses were given the revolutionary training and prepared to proceed on.

The holy Prophet immediately after having been raised to prophethood, began to preach Islam to the selected individuals and started fostering and bringing them up. In the beginning the preaching was secret and in private. People were selected individually. The teachings were basic: One should worship only one God and should renounced every kind of polytheism. Total submission to what was revealed was necessary. All men were the slaves of Allah, and were required to purify themselves, and be accustomed to good deeds and resistance to evil.

"I swear by the time (which is the time of the birth of true man)! Surely man is in a state of great loss. Except those who believe, do good deeds and exhort each other to truth and exhort each other to be steadfast". (Surah al-Asr, 103:1 – 3).

A few but chosen people accepted the principles of the new school whole-heartedly, and became firm in their faith.

With belief in one God, rejection of all false deities, character-building, piety, knowledge, breadth of vision and submission to truth, gradually in three years the stage was set for open preaching. At the end of this period persistent and powerful attacks were directed against the prevailing system. Idol-worship, the main cause of wrong thinking and the main weapon of the self-aggrandizing aristocracy was condemned. A new wave started. A good number of people from among the slaves, the underprivileged, the homeless and the oppressed along with a few from the aristocratic class joined the new movement. But simultaneously the resistance of the enemy, his threats, torture, seige, slandering and rumour-mongering also reached their height.

The Divine verses were revealed in the form of ardent maxims. They also contained the constructive criteria of the faith. The newborn men continued to proceed forward firmly and unflinchingly on their way to make future history.

Role of emigration

From Islamic point of view, emigration is one of the elements which make history. Reflect on the following verses: *"When the angels take away the lives of those who are wronging themselves, they ask them: In what circum-*

stances were you? They answer: We were oppressed in our land. The angels say: Was not the earth of Allah vast enough for you to emigrate? It is they whose abode is Hell. What a bad fate! But as for those men, women and children who are weak and have neither the strength nor the means to escape. It may be hoped that Allah will pardon them. Allah is Compassionate, Forgiving. He who emigrates in the way of Allah, will find many places of refuge in the land and abundant means of livelihood. He who leaves his home, emigrating for the sake of Allah and His Messenger and is then overtaken by death, shall surely be rewarded by Allah. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:97 – 100).

If the suffocating environment of a place is not willing to accept the truth, pressure is so high that all values have been suppressed and if there is no possibility of impressing the surroundings and reforming society, one should find out a more congenial place, where faith, independance and truth may flourish, and go there. According to Islam, it is migration in its widest sense, which helps solve the problems and opens up new avenues. Islam enjoins emigration from closed and blind surroundings to open lands ready to accept the truth, from rugged mountains to populated places. It enjoins migration to study the nature and history of men, and migration from self-centredness to Allah, from the straits of self-seeking and self. aggrandizement to the wider atmosphere of honour and humanity. When the Prophet of Islam found that his companions were under pressure, first he ordered a limited number of them to migrate to Ethiopia. At last by making contacts with the people of Medina and taking firm undertakings from them he secretly made the atmosphere of that city favourable to him and got ready to migrate to it.

All worldly goods and family relations were sacrificed for the cause of faith, for the promotion of goal and for the continuation of struggle. With the emigration, for the holy Prophet and his loyal companions a new epoch in the history of the Muslims began. We know how effective this big step of emigration to Medina was in the expansion of the Islamic Movement.

A basic condition of the progress of a social movement is the formation of a disciplined and model group or society acquainted with and loyal to its ideology. In Medina a nation was formed, though on a very limited scale, but perfectly conforming to the required standard. In this small society there was no distinction of race, tribe or class. No one was nobler than others. Every kind of discrimination and distinction was set aside. Each individual, whether *Muhajir* (emigrant) or *Ansari* (original resident of Medina) had to put the principles of brotherhood and equality into actual practice. One *Muhajir* and one *Ansari* were declared to be the brother of each other and were made to share the house, the property and life jointly.

The holy Prophet issued the Medina charter, which was actually the constitution on which the social system of this city state was based. The rights, the obligations and the mutual relationships were fixed precisely on the basis of unity, justice and equity. New members joined the movement which slowly continued to spread.

Guidance of the masses

Masses are generally kept ignorant and are politically and economically exploited by those in power. That has been their usual lot all over history. Either openly or surreptitiously they are enslaved to fight the wars of the powerful and serve the interests of the selfish.

Islam knows this position, and decries(1) the ignorance of majority, but it wants the masses to organize their scattered power and work for bringing about basic social changes to improve their lot.

The message of Islam is universal. It wants to bring every one into its fold, and turn all into the virtuous and pious people.

Muhammad say, *"Men, I am the Messenger sent to you all by Allah"*. (Surah al-A'raf 7:158).

There are hundreds of other verses which exhort all mankind to piety, good deeds, knowledge, worship, purity, service and spending wealth for a good cause. In contrast to other systems which exploit the masses, Islam wants to guide them to the right path and to improve their lot. Every ordinary Muslim can acquire distinction and can join the group of the eminent ones. Incidentally, many outstanding personalities of Islam rose from among the unknown and under-privileged masses. As they remoulded themselves on the lines prescribed by Islam and acquired human virtues, they could attain an eminent position in Islamic circles.

Medina saw a general awakening. The families living in all parts of it showed a great enthusiasm in joining the new movement. Gradually the way was paved for executing the collective duty of *Jihad*.

(1) *"But most of the people have no knowledge"*. (Surah al-Jathiyah 45:26 and many other verses). *"Most of them follow nothing except conjecture"*. (Surah Yunus, 10:36). *"But most of them have no sense"*. (Surah al-Ankabut, 29:63). *"Most of them dislike the truth"* (Surah al-Mo'minun, 23:70). *"But most of the people do not believe"*. (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:1).

Element of Jihad

Jihad and violent conflicts are one of the most important factors of bringing about a change in history. When for the sake of freedom a fight against injustice and oppression begins, it provides a new impetus to the evolutionary movement of society, and culminates in a success described by the Qur'an as a great achievement(1) a great reward(2) and deliverance.(3)

"Believers, shall I direct you to a profitable deal that will save you from painful doom? Have faith in Allah and His Messenger and fight for His cause with your wealth and lives. That is better for you, if you but knew it. He will forgive you your sins and will admit you to the gardens underneath which rivers flow. He will lodge you in pleasant dwellings the neat and in the gardens of Eden. That is the great achievement indeed. And He will bestow upon you another favour which you love so tremendously, (that is) help from Allah and a speedy victory. Give these good tidings to the believers". (Surah al-Saf, 61: 10 – 13).

As soon as the holy Prophet was sure of the preparedness of his companions and the availability of an offensive force, he undertook the task of a general march against the bases of idolatry and oppression. The battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq etc, speedily expanded the sphere of conflict and weakend the position of the enemy. They raised the morale of the Muslims and drew the attention of the neighbouring tribes. Thus the way was paved for

(1) Surah al-Tawbah, verse 113.

(2) Surah al-Nisa, verse 98.

(3) Surah al-Saf, verse 10.

the quick publicity of the new system and the destruction of the enemy.

Universality of the movement

By giving a warning to the neighbouring countries and the big empires, the holy Prophet proclaimed that Islam was a world movement. After achieving notable victories and concluding a short truce with the unbelieving Quraish, the holy Prophet got an opportunity to spread the message of Islam to the foreign lands. He wrote letters to the world leaders and asked them to accept Islam. These letters made it clear that the message of Islam was that of belief in one God and the rejection of all earthly gods. Though there was a varying reaction to these letters, they constituted a firm warning which opened a new chapter in the history of these countries, as was witnessed in the subsequent years.

It may be said here that a number of historic movements have been only of a local or a regional character. Their aims, principles and programmes were in conformity with a particular environment, and hence they were confined to particular peoples. Accordingly, the appeal of many of the former prophets was also limited and regional.

But if the programme of a movement is of world level and other conditions, such as favourable social conditions, a powerful leadership, a strong and large body of supporters, are available, it can surely permeate other regions and an international wave can come into existence.

LEADERSHIP

With the approach of the demise of the holy Prophet, the sensitive question of the leadership of the Muslim ummah came to a head. During the first 23 years of Islamic

Movement the most important cause of its progress was the holy Prophet's extraordinary power of leadership, organization and guidance. In historical analysis, this power appears to be most marvellous and one of the main factors, which contributed to the success of Islam. But after the demise of the Prophet?

The new system had borne fruits while the holy Prophet was still alive. The Qur'an had been revealed. The fundamentals of the Islamic social and intellectual system had been fixed. Nevertheless, the Islamic teachings required a supervisor and trustworthy interpreter. Otherwise they could be exposed to alteration and misuse.

The holy Prophet himself devised a solution of this problem. He selected Ali and introduced him as the ***Wali*** (master) of the Muslims. Ali had received the best training. He had been in the forefront of those pioneers who had made struggle for the success of the movement and made sacrifice for it. He more than others had imbibed and practised every word of the Islamic teachings.

But the story does not end here. Immediately after the demise of the holy Prophet the situation took a new turn.

Caliphate was captured through a meeting which was attended by a limited number of persons, who hastily appointed a caliph. Thus the question of leadership took a different course. Before long the trouble started and the all-round progress of the movement was adversely affected. In certain fields, especially that of social justice and ideology, the movement suffered a good deal. Anyhow, the new arrangement had many supporters.

Three principles of the effectiveness of historic movements

The effectiveness of any big historic movement largely depends on three primary elements: ideological system, leadership and the existence of a strong band of supporters and other potentialities. By the holy Prophet's demise a living world system had been set up and comparatively a strong band of trained Muslims was also formed. That is why, though there was a lack of proper leadership and gradually there was a deviation from the original principles, yet the weight of the system and the existence of its well-organized supporters were factors viable enough to push the movement forward. The speedy progress of Islam in the first century and the great scientific and academic movement of the later centureis, as well as the great role which Islam played in connection with the human culture and civilization, were all due to the effectiveness of the system and the efforts of the true and valient Muslims.

Human beings as the agents of Divine retribution

As we have already said the collapse of injustice and corruption is inevitable. In the past ages when for vanquishing the unjust people and those who denied the truth, the intervention of supernatural factors and celestial retribution were usual, but that happened only after a message and a clear warning had been delivered.(1)

In the present age man has intellectually matured and has attained a degree of comparative perfection. Now he can realize that social privations, undue discrimination and other calamities are also a sort of punishment. With the help of his common sense and intuition, he can feel the

(1) ***"We were not to inflict punishment unless We sent a messenger"***. (Surah Bani Israel, 17:15).

consequences of his evil deeds and can anticipate his future. He can now use his will and determination to fight against injustice and corruption and does not say like the Israelites: 'Go you two along with your Lord and fight; We are sitting here'. Therefore now a natural retribution is inflicted through human beings.(1) This position too is in conformity with the old Divine tradition of removing the hurdles in the way of evolution. That is the reason why the Islamic Movement during the lifetime of the holy Prophet was not accompanied by any celestial punishment,(2) and only *jihad* and human effort played a decisive role in overthrowing the corrupt system. Thus we find that the history of Islam is full of wars of emancipation.

Large masses of the people of the countries invaded by the Muslims welcomed the invaders because, firstly the atmosphere of their countries was suffocating and they were being coerced, and secondly because they were sure of the justice and the emancipating spirit of Islam. These people knew well that the Muslim compaign had brought them justice and freedom. That is why on some occasions the gates of the cities were opened voluntarily to the advancing Muslim army, and the Muslim soldiers found that the deserters from the enemy ranks had joined them, and were fighting shoulder to shoulder with them against the unjust and inhuman system prevailing in their own country.

Respect of the culture and human values of others

Muslim advance into other countries did not mean that

(1) ***"Figbt them! Allab will punisb tbem at your bands"***. (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:14).

(2) ***"Allab was not to punisb tbem, so long as you are witb tbem nor would He punisb tbem so long as tbey seek forgiveness"***. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:33).

everything was destroyed. It is true that the unjust social system was changed and the false gods and the belief in myths and religious fables had to give their place to the belief in One God and realistic thinking. But the fruits of culture and philosophical thinking and the useful and advanced social organizations were not disturbed. The movement of Islam aims at helping the evolution of history and not at stopping or reversing it. Islam has come for construction and improvement and not for destruction and debasement.

It is interesting to note that Islam played a great role in the preservation and renaissance of the ancient cultures of India, Greece, Iran and Mesopotamia. By encouraging the knowledge of and investigation into the thoughts of others and urging the Muslims to study the history and the historical movements of the past peoples, to travel across the lands, and to pick up all that was positive there, Islam brought about an unprecedented activity of translation, writing, compiling and investigation in the later part of the first century, which further flourished in the second century and onward, and became a landmark in the history of culture. All this was an outcome of Islamic training.

In fact the evolutionary tradition of history requires that the achievements of the past nations should be further developed. Though human history is full of ups and downs, deviations, pauses and retrogressions, generally the reaction of a reformatory and revolutionary movement has always been conducive to good results. There exist many such instances especially in Islamic history. On the whole it may be said that history has been moving forward.

Corruption of leadership

We must not forget that the bearers of the message of

Islam (rulers) were men, who somehow or other gained influence in Islamic circles. And as men, they had varied emotions and desires and could sometimes even be disposed to be oppressive and disloyal to the system.

It is the ideological system itself which guides and modifies the actions of the individuals and keeps them on the course of evolution.

But it is necessary that in order to retain its constructive power, the system should be run, administered and interpreted by the leaders who are reliable, aware of the fundamentals and fit to deliver the goods.

If the leadership itself is disposed to corruption and in spite of the teachings of the system, gets involved in hoarding wealth, class distinction, luxurious living and other vices, the system ceases to be effective for the lack of sincere supporters.

In such a case, gradually the main teachings of the system are given a distorted turn, for the rulers try to keep every thing under their control to serve their own interests, though they do not dare to oppose the system direct, because despite their being usurpers, they derive their position and power from the system itself. Besides, they have to take into account the public sentiments and the popular support to the system. Hence, they apparently pretend to be the champions of it and thrust a dagger into its body from behind the back only.

In the history of Islam this tragedy actually occurred. The corrupt Umayyad and Abbasid governments were not genuine products of Islam. They captured the leadership of Muslim society in opposition to all Islamic standards.

Then in order to build the high castle of their own power, they began to distort Islam with the help of their paid agents, whom they employed from among the historians, preachers, traditionalists and the exegetes.

In this process they convulsed the man-making entity of Islam.

In fact, the same has been the fate of all the big movements of history. It often happens that after settling themselves, the pioneers fall prey to selfishness and dissentions, and in order to gain power start fighting each other. Gradually the aims and objects of the movement are sacrificed for the sake of the individuals. The system is used to serve the leaders; the leaders render no service to the system.

Internal resistance

This situation demands action from within society. In the face of this tragedy Islam has a brilliant record of internal risings. The agitation against Uthman, the third caliph, the great internal purge during the time of Imam Ali (P), the bold resistance and eventual martyrdom of Imam Husayn (P), the academic movements of Imam Baqir (P) and Imam Sadiq (P) for the rebirth of the system, sanguinary risings of the Alids and the descendants of Imam Hasan (P) and the other events which took place in Iran, Egypt and other Muslim countries during the Umayyad and the Abbasid periods — all were the reaction of the ugly situation and the system forcibly imposed by the rulers. (The details of these internal movements require a separate book).

Anyway, to remedy such a situation Islam has prescribed the principles of vigilance, self-criticism, internal *jihad* and exhorting the people to do good and restraining them from evil.

Invaders influenced

The international wars and conflicts crystallize the epoch-making elements.(1)

The object of the Crusades was inhuman. They were launched against Islam by those who were suffering from mental rigidity, prejudice, wrong conceptions, class-distinctions, intellectual stagnation, educational backwardness and medieval fossilization. These wars were started with a view to oppose a new religion and a world system which believed in human values and had replaced discrimination and inequality by justice and equality and put the firm belief in one God in the place of complex heathenism. The result was tremendous bloodshed, large scale destruction and many ignoble incidents which continued for over a century.

Even in this situation Islam played its constructive role. The crusaders mixed with the Muslims and saw the manifestations of the great and rich culture of Islam with their own eyes. They witnessed from close quarters the advanced social system of the Muslims, their libraries, their educational centres, their social laws and social organizations, their civic facilities and their other social and intellectual achievements. As a result, the eyes and ears of the crusaders were opened. They came out of their blocked environment and the choking narrowness of their social and intellectual systems. Their biggest achievement out of all this bloodshed and fighting was their contact with the culture and the ideological principles of Islam. Europe awakened after a slumber of a thousand years. The penetration of the culture of Islam

(1) ***"As for the scum it goes waste and what is beneficial to men remains on the earth"***. (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:17).

into Spain and the French coasts opened the doors of a new culture and a new thinking to the Europeans.

More and more of Islamic works and learned books were translated into European languages. It may be rightly said that in the beginning the industrial and scientific progress and social changes in new Europe during the post-renaissance period, were inspired by Muslim cutlure.

Three-pronged efforts

In order to secure historical evolution, man has to fight on three fronts:

(a) He must make efforts to discover the laws of nature, to subdue the natural forces and to utilize them.
(b) He must fight against unjust social relationships and secure justice, freedom and human rights.
(c) He must control his passions and fight against selfishness, base desires and inner evils.

Islam has urged its followers to take action on all the three fronts. In this connection it has put forward its teachings and plans, made experiment with them and to a certain extent put them into practice.

Islam has also made experiment on the formation of a just and free society, and put forward the true outlines of human rights. What man has secured particularly after undergoing long-drawn wars and tremendous tribulations, had already been taught by Islam.

What is more important than anything else is that Islam has given instructions in 'major jihad', that is character building and self-control. In this respect it has given practical and detailed instructions and laid down a vast

programme. Islam has also produced model men, who can be an ideal example for others. It may be considered to be the greatest miracle of the history of Islam that it is full of such models.

The contemporary world is gaining speedy success on the first front. A great many scientific and industrial achievements have enabled man to control nature. As man uses his scientific achievements for his material success and for the satistaction of his desires, progress on this front is likely to continue without a pause.

As for the second front, it cannot be denied that some big social changes have taken place, and the struggle for bringing about other basic changes is continuing. On the whole history has witnessed some success on this front too. But the problem still remains unsolved. It may be said that what has been achieved, is only the beginning of a long journey. Anyhow, the big question is whether the struggle against the bases of power bent on expanding their authority with a view to exploiting people and plundering their natural and human resources, come to a successful end so easily? Will the world devils who have so many tricks in their bag and who are inventing ever new methods of devouring the nations, leave alone the oppressed and suppressed man?

Journey is long. Sacrifices, suitable measures and many other things are required.

Success on this front cannot be expected without a success on the third front. History is having thirst for real men, and today this thirst has become acute. There is a spiritual vaccum. It is felt that humanity has been forgotten. Human sentiments are being trampled upon. Forbearance, self-

sacrifice, humanism, spiritual freedom, purity, and renunciation of selfishness and narrow egoism are the world needs. The acquirement of these qualities is essential so that pure men may be able to utilize the achievements on the first front for the service of man, and not for the service of the devil and the satisfaction of their own lust, and so that on the second front they may find a free and human atmosphere in which earth may be possessed by the righteous men. The Qur'an says: *"My righteous servants will inherit the earth".*

Final triumph of truth

Islam announces as a good news that the last and the highest stage of the course of history is definitely happy. It declares that the historical climax and the final end of human efforts is all-round and comprehensive triumph of truth and justice.

But this stage will come only after:

(a) The world is full of oppression, tyranny and utmost contradiction and is fully ready for an explosion;

(b) The extensive and long-drawn regional and world wars result in large-scale bloodshed and destruction;

(c) The supporters of genuine and final world revolution of history, are ready for it.

This final revolution (as prophesied by Prophet of Islam) will take place under the leadership of the greatest, divine reformer and revolutionary, the promised Mahdi, and will culminate in the permanent purification and improvement of the environment, ceaseless development of personality and definite and all-round vigilance.

The result will be the emergence of a balanced and fully developed man endowed with all talents and values in one unit world society.

"We willed to show favour to those who were oppressed in the land and to make them leaders and heir and to give them power in the land and to show Pharaoh, Haman and their host what they feared from them". (Surah al-Qasas, 28:5 – 6).

FINAL VICTORY

Islam interprets history as a constant struggle between right and wrong. This struggle goes on at various levels of society between the forces of right, virtuousness, love of Allah, faith, justice, equality, sacrifice, correct thinking, purity and truth on the one hand, and those of falsehood, egoism, materialism, pragmatism, tyranny, selfishness, injustice, faithlessness, discrimination, corruption, infringement of others rights and wretchedness on the other.

The real source of the struggle between right and wrong exists within man himself. (vide Surah al-Shams 91:7) It is manifested sometimes in the form of the flames of selfishness, venality and licentiousness and sometimes in that of higher sentiments of God-seeking, righteousness and love of mankind.

The impact of these sentiments on society creates power waves which cause a strife sometimes culminating in corruption and wretchedness, and sometimes bringing about changes oriented towards happiness and prosperity of the society. There is no doubt that changes for the better are brought about by Divine help, but the role of human effort and struggle cannot also be denied.

A Prophet is raised. He awakens the hearts potentially ready to accept the truth. Faith of a group of converts matrures. They along with him fight against corruption and evil. They continue to make gradual progress and do not falter at any stage till at last the society undergoes a basic change.

Polytheism, myths, injustice and corruption collapse. Belief in Allah, truth and justice takes root. Before long again from within the same society selfishness, licentiousness and aristocratic tendencies shoot forth. Occasionally the same society, though still maintaining the traditional form, so deviates from the way introduced by the reformer that it begins to rot from within and once again returns to its pre-reform ways, of course, in a new garb of hypocrisy and new forms of injustice and corruption.

Sometimes external factors with the aid of their internal agents effectively work for spreading corruption and disruption. These agents for their selfish ends readily co-operate with the external enemy.

This state of injustice, corruption, myth and fraud stimulates the sagacious and the downtrodden to launch a new movement. Thus a process of struggle between right and wrong continues.

Islam believes that all pomp, show and power of the evil have been transient over history. It regards all kinds of intrigues, frauds, hypocrisy and falsehood as froth of water. They have no roots and are bound to disappear finally. (Surah al-Ra'ad, 13:17, Surah al-Isra, 17:81, Surah al-Anbiya, 21:18, Surah al-Shura, 42:24 and many other verses).

Truth always maintains its positive effect either in individual action or social movement even when it is threatened by falsehood and needs supporters to defend it.

Islam recognizes the need of human efforts, perseverance and faith in bringing about a social change, and regards weakness, lack of faith and licentiousness as the causes of the domination of falsehood.

Anyhow, it is this struggle which makes history. As for the future, it is bright. In the end right will be victorious and justice will prevail. Every form of wrong will be annihilated and oppression and tyranny will disappear finally.

ADVENT OF THE MAHDI

Complete and final supremacy of right, and universal victory of justice will materialize during the period of the appearance of Muhammad al Mahdi – the twelfth Imam. At that time an ideal Islamic society will be established under the aegis of an ideal government. (For details see: The Awaited Saviour, ISP 1979).

In the following pages we give a short perspective of the society and the system of that time drawn from hundreds of traditions describing the characteristics of that period. It must be remembered that this society will be a true Islamic society and its system will be in no way different from that prescribed by Islam.

We propose to divide this study under several headings:

At the threshold of appearance

The holy Prophet is reported to have said:

"He will rise at a time when chaos will be prevailing in the world. Various countries will be engaged in the night

attacks on each other. Neither the elders will be having mercy on the younger, nor will the strong be showing kindness to the weak".

Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) has said:
"The Mahdi will rise at a time of great anxiety, when people will be deeply plunged into crises, disturbances, disasters and diseases, and when wild massacres, violent dissensions and religious discord will be the order of the day. At that time people will be feeling distressed and dejected, and will be at daggers drawn with each other. They will be wishing themselves dead day and night. He will appear at a moment of utter want of hope".

"He will rise to establish justice at a time when the world will be full of injustice and tyranny".

There is no doubt that he will rise at a time when the whole world will be plunged into injustice and corruption, and to fight against these evils he will have to make awful struggle. He will require faithful and self-sacrificing supporters, possessing all the qualities of a true champion.

Revolutionary leader and his supporters
The holy Prophet is reported to have described the Imam of the Day in these words:
"He is an Imam who is pious, pure and delightful. He is an admirable leader, who is rightly guided and who enjoins justice. Allah acknowledges him and he acknowledges Allah".

Concerning the faith and perseverance of his companions, Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) said:
"Everyone of his companions will be so strong as if he had the strength of forty men. Their hearts will be as solid

as a piece of steel. If they pass over a hill of iron, they would pierce it. They will not lay down their arms till they have pleased Allah".

From another report we learn that at that time there will be some people who will be faithful., virtuous, sincere, religious, pious, conscientious, tolerant, firm, constant, temperate and God-loving. They will be thankful to Allah who made them heirs to power and wealth in the earth and established their chosen faith therein. They will be worshipping none but Allah, offering their prayers on time and paying *zakat* when due. They will be exhorting to good and restraining from evil".

About the true followers of the Mahdi, Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) is reported to have said:

"Fear has been removed from their hearts and put into that of their enemy. Everyone of them is more rushing than a spear-point and more daring than a lion".

Undergoing hardships for achieving success

It must be understood that success will not be gained easily. It will be achieved only after undergoing a lot of trouble and discomfort.

Mufazzal, one of the companions of Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) says: "Once we were talking about the Mahdi in the presence of the Imam. I said that I hoped that he would succeed easily. The Imam said: "No, it will not be so. Success will not be attained except through sweat and blood".

In other words success will be attained after making great efforts and undergoing heavy losses.

A companion of Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) says:
"I told the Imam that it was said that the Mahdi would have a smooth sailing and would not have to shed a single drop of blood". The Imam said: "No, it will not be so. If the things could run so smoothly, by Him in whose hands my life is, the Prophet of Islam would not have been wounded and his teeth would not have been broken in a battle. No, that's not possible. By Allah! there is no way out, but that you and we are submerged in our own sweat and blood".

This means that the leaders as well as their supporters have to make sacrifices before they are successful.

Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) is also reported to have said:
"I see the Mahdi and his companions as if they are threatened by danger from all sides: their supplies have exhausted; their clothes have worn out; their foreheads bear the mark of prostration; during the day they are as courageous as a lion and during the night they are busy in the adoration of Allah; and their hearts are like solid pieces of iron".

Anyhow, all these sacrifices and hardships will have a happy end.

Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) has said:
"It is true that the righteous always lead a hard life. But the end of their hardship is not far off".

Nevertheless the success of the Mahdi will be largely due to invisible Divine help. Many traditions bear witness to that.

As a result of these sacrifices and the Divine help real Islamic rule will be established. These are some of the

reports which throw light on the doctrinal and social system which will follow.

Explaining the Qur'anic verse, It is Allah who sent His Messenger with guidance and true religion that He might make it victorious over all religions, howsoever the unbelievers might be averse, Imam al Sadiq (P) said: "This verse will come true only during the time of the Mahdi, when the unbelievers will no longer exist".

At present Islam has been surrounded by some people with so many myths and doubts that it appears to be some different religion. This position will continue till the Mahdi rises.

Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) has said:
"As soon as the Mahdi rises, he will introduce a new system as the Prophet had done in the beginning of Islam".

Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) is also reported to have said:
"The Mahdi will do what the holy Prophet had done. He will smash the existing system in the same way as the holy Prophet had shattered the pre-Islamic pagan system, and replaced it by Islam".

The new system introduced by the Mahdi will be so queer to some of those who claim to be the champions of religion and to be having full knowledge of it, that they will pick up a row against him, but they will not be able to resist the divine world movement and will be annihilated.

At the end of a detailed talk, Imam Baqir (P) said:
"On an occasion when the Mahdi will be busy narrating Divine commands and speaking about the practice of the holy Prophet and the Imams, an attack on him will be

arranged from within the places of worship. The Imam will order his followers to arrest the insurgents and put them to death. This will be the last hostile action against the Mahdi".

When the evil-doers will have been crushed and the correct Islamic attitude popularised, the atmosphere will become conducive to intellectual growth and expansion of knowledge.

Imam Ali (P) is reported to have said:
"I see a large number of tents pitched, and people under them being taught the Qur'an in the same order in which it was revealed".

In the course of a talk about that period Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) said:
"Knowledge will become so common that even women will give decisions on the basis of the Qur'an and the ***Sunnah*** of the holy Prophet".

Knowledge in various fields will expand. The total of the discoveries of the past will bear no comparison to the discoveries made during that period. According to a report, Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) explained the position allegorically. He said: "If the total of possible human knowledge is supposed to be seventy two letters, two letters will have been known upto that time and the remaining seventy will be discovered gradually during that period".

In respect of the intellectual and moral development of the people, Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) has said:
"When our ***Qaim*** will rise and the people will come under his protection, their intellectual faculties will bloom and their human qualities will be perfected and will bear fruit".

During that period the under-privileged masses will be the masters of the power and wealth of the world. Many reports say that the following verse relates to that period: *"We willed to show favour to those who were persecuted in the land and make them rulers and heirs of the land, and give them power and wealth of the earth".* (Surah al-Qasas, 28:5).

Thus the power and authority of the tyrants and the self-seekers will come to an end and justice will be restored everywhere under a new system.

"He will fill the earth with justice after it had been filled with injustice and tyranny".
"The *Qaim* will enjoin justice. During his time injustice will be done away with. Roads will be safe. Rights will be restored".
Complete equality will be enforced.

Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) said:
"Immediately on his appearance the *Qaim* will distribute wealth equally, and will restore the rights of the masses".

When the right job will be entrusted to the right man and all-round justice will prevail, naturally the whole world will prosper in every respect.

"Blessings will pour forth from the heaven on the earth. The land will put out its best produce. Trees will bear copious fruit. The atmosphere on the earth will be verdant and fragrant".

It is also evident that in such an atmosphere minerals and natural resources should be exploited to the maximum extent. Reports say: "Allah will reveal for him the

treasures of the earth".

At last all the natural forces will be controlled by the people and they will have all the means to use them to their own advantage. Gradually there will be so much wealth that no one will be left poor or needy.

"Double salaries will be paid to the workers. Equality will be observed among all the people. There will be no one eligible to receive *zakat*. Money will be offered to the people, but they will decline to accept it, because they will not be requiring it. All underground and above-ground natural resources will be at the disposal of the Imam. Addressing the people he will say: "This is the wealth for which you were fighting, severing relations with your kith and kin and shedding the blood of each other". Then he will give them money in unprecedented quantities".

In such circumstances there will prevail complete peace and law and order.

"At that time complete peace will prevail all over the world. None will harm anyone. Fear and anxiety will not exist. Even the wild animals will be moving among the people, but will not be harming anyone. People will have love and sympathy for each other. They will equally distribute wealth among themselves. There will no longer exist any poor or needy. No group of people will seek to dominate another group. The elders will show kindness to the youngers and the youngers will respect the elders. All people will be conscientious in their actions and decisions".

Love, kindness, righteousness and brotherhood will prevail. There will be no question of deceiving or ill-treating anybody; complete sincerity and cordiality will exist.

"When the *Qaim* will rise, such genial sincerity and cordiality will come into being that one will take out whatever one requires from the pocket of another person and that person will not mind it at all".

Every kind of weakness, disease and disability will disappear.

"As regards those who will be living during the time of the *Qaim*, their sick will recover and their weak will gain strength".

"All the blind and the crippled will be cured and the sufferers will be relieved of their suffering".

"A world government characterised by justice and righteousness will be established. It will extend from the East to the West. All people will live under it in an atmosphere of peace, justice and prosperity".

"Cordial relations will exist among the believers all over the world. It will appear as if from one end of the world to the other they see each other, speak to each other and co-operate with each other".

These relations will be different from the present day relations and peace agreements, which are concluded only to safeguard the interests of the powers concerned and have no stability. All such agreements will be annulled with the appearance of the *Qaim* and will be replaced by an all-pervasive just system".

At that time there will be no question of hypocrisy, intrigue, mere show of courtesy or any under-hand method. Everybody will have to submit earnestly to the

rightful government. Any defaulters will be annihilated.

This government marked with the final and complete restoration of justice and all-round development will be the last stage of human history. The Divine Government will be established after the failure of all other systems to achieve the desired results. Though it will be of limited duration, it will be the last word in justice and righteousness. It will be the end of history. *

Note: All the narrations of this chapter are taken from ***Bihar al-Anwār*** by Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi II, vol. 52.

Philosophy of Islam — ISP, 1982

SELF MAKING

The Man of Islam is constructive. He builds himself and his environment. His success in building his environment depends on his success in self-making and vice versa. In other words his success in improving the environment of his life paves the way for his self-improvement.

In view of this strong reciprocal relationship between man and the environment of his life he must pay his utmost attention to an all-round improvement of himself on a wide scale and commensurate to a Muslim's broad outlook on the world and man.

In this respect Islam has extensive teachings which are related to all the aspects of human life and cover all human needs, whether material or spiritual, individual or social, cultural or economic and so on. The sum total of these teachings constitutes the programme of Islamic training. It includes important provisions regarding cleanliness, sound nutrition, hygiene, physical and mental health, etc.

CLEANLINESS

Islam has given so much importance to cleanliness that it has been considered to be an objective of the faith. The Qur'an recommending purity and cleanliness says:

"Allah does not intend to inconvenience you, but He intends to purify you and perfect His favour to you, so that you may give thanks". (Surah al-Maidah, 5:6).

"Truly Allah loves those who ask for forgiveness and strive to keep themselves clean". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:222).

The holy Prophet of Islam is reported to have said that cleanliness is a part of faith.

Islam has in more than one ways exhorted the people to the cleanliness of utensils, clothing, body, hair, teeth, drinking water, water used for ablution and bathing, dwelling places, streets, public places, food and every other thing in human use. A number of the sayings of the Prophet and the Imams ascribe to the devil everything which is loathsome or causes a disease (e.g. microbes), and describe all such things as a cause of poverty and misery. We reproduce below some such sayings from the book entitled Wasail al-Shiah:

The holy Prophet has said:

- "Everybody who chooses a dress, must keep it clean".
- "Had it not been inconvinient I would have enjoined upon the Muslims to brush their teeth before every prayer".
- "Keep the compound and the front part of your house well-swept and clean".
- "He who sweeps a masjid is rewarded by Allah as if he manumitted a slave".
- "The deed-sheet of the man who abstains from spitting and blowing his nose in the masjid, will be in his right hand on the Day of Judgement".

- "Either take proper care of the long hair of your head or clip them".
- "Do not grow long moustaches, for the devil finds a shelter in them".

Imam Ali (P) has said:

- "It was the practice of the Holy Prophet to rinse his mouth, throat and nose with water. It makes one's mouth and nose clean".
- "Remove cobwebs from your house, for they cause and poverty".
- "The removal of the hair of the arm-pits is a part of cleanliness. Doing so destroys bad odour of that part of the body".

Imam al Baqir (P) has said:

- "Cleaning of the house banishes misery".

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

- "Brushing the teeth is a tradition of the prophets".
- "To trim the finger-nails was a practice of the holy Prophet".
- Some one said to Imam al Sadiq (P) that his friends had told him that the moustaches and the finger-nails should be trimmed on Friday. The Imam said: "Trim them whenever they grow". The holy Prophet has forbidden cutting the nails with the teeth.
- "If possible, your bath-water should be so clean that you may even drink it".

Imam al Kazim (P) has said:

- "To take bath every second day makes a man healthy and strong".

Other traditions forbid urination and excretion on the banks of a river, in front of a masjid, on the streets and roads, where the travellers stay, in the graveyard, under the fruit trees, in a standing position, with face or back towards the qiblah (direction of Ka'bah), on hard ground, in the dens of animals, within public view, in front of a house or a thoroughfare etc. The topic of cleanliness and purity has been discussed at length in the book ISLAM — A Code of Social Life. ISP, 1980).

On the whole, there are many Islamic injuctions in connection with health, hygiene and nutrition and about the cleanliness of air and environment. We give below a few examples:

- Wash fruit before eating it.
- Do not eat food while it is too hot.
- Observe regularity in regard to food.
- Do not gulp water in one single draught. Drink it slowly.
- Do not puff in water or hot food.
- Take small morsels of food and chew them well.
- Wash your hands and mouth before and after every meal.
- Do not take food without having appetite and stop eating a little before the stomach is full.
- Keep food and water covered.
- Massage your body regularly.
- Use perfume and rub oil over your body and the hair of your head.
- Comb and dress the hair of your head.
- Wash your head and face after a hair-cut and wash your hands after clipping your finger nails.
- Do not take injurious food or drink.
- Take bath or perform ablution, as the case may be,

for offering prayers and observe all the rules concerning them.

- Offer prayers with clean body and pure clothes.
- Go to bed early and rise early.
- Keep your head out of the covering while sleeping.
- Have a walk in the morning.
- Choose an open environment and a vast compound for living.

Special religious instructions exist as to which things are legally clean and which are unclean. We reproduce below some of these instructions from the book entitled *'Articles of Islamic Acts'*.

Some unclean things are as follows:
The urine and the excrement of man and all the animals, the meat of which is legally inedible, and which have gushing blood (that is their blood gushes forth when they are slaughtered or a vein of theirs is opened). The semen, the dead body and the blood of man and every animal having gushing blood, irrespective of the fact whether its meat is or is not legally edible. (Only human corpse becomes clean after having been washed ceremonially).

The dog and the pig which live on land. Their hair and all the fluids secreted by them are also unclean.

Wine and all other intoxicants which flow automatically.

If a clean thing comes in contact with an unclean thing while one or both of them are wet and the dampness of either percolates to the other, the clean thing also becomes unclean. The unclean food cannot become clean by heating or boiling.

It is forbidden to eat or drink an unclean thing. It is also forbidden to feed it to someone else, even to a child.

It is forbidden to make unclean a sheet of paper on which the name of Allah or a verse of the Qur'an is written. If it gets unclean, it should be purified with water immediately.

It is forbidden to make unclean the floor, the ceiling, the roof and the walls of a masjid. If any part of a masjid is found to be unclean, the filth should be removed forthwith.

The dress of a person offering prayers must be:
(a) clean, (b) lawful, (c) not containing any part of a dead body in its texture, (d) not containing any part of an animal legally inedible, (e) not made of pure silk, and (f) not containing gold filaments. (The last two conditions apply to males only who must not adorn themselves with ornaments made of gold).

A man having a wound, festering boil or ulcer can offer his prayers with his body or dress stained with blood, till such time that the wound, boil or ulcer heals up, if it is troublesome for most of the people in such circumstances to wash the wound or to change the dress.

Cleaning agents
If body or clothes become unclean, they may be rendered clean in several ways. The best way is to clean them with water.

"Allah sends down water from the heaven upon you, that thereby He may purify you". (Surah al-Anfal, 8:11).

Here are some important points connected with cleaning agents:

One Kur of water is approximately equal to 384 litres.

One Kur or more of water does not get unclean by coming into contact with anything unclean unless its colour, smell or taste changes. Moreover, anything unclean may be rendered clean in this water.

A utensil or any other unclean object should be washed thrice with under-kur water to render it clean (in this manner that water should be poured on the unclean object from the container etc.) and it is sufficient to wash it once with kur water or running water. Of course, it is necessary that these washings should be performed after the original impurity has already been removed. But if a dog has licked a utensil or eaten or drunk out of it, it should, in the first instance be rubbed with clean clay and then washed with kur water, running water or under-kur water.

If it rains on an unclean object which does not contain any original impurity, it is rendered clean.

If as the result of walking on unclean ground the sole of the foot or the shoe gets unclean, it may be rendered clean by walking on clean and dry ground till the original impurity is removed and it is not necessary to wash it.

If the ground, a building, a door, a window or any other fixed object gets unclean, it becomes clean again after the original impurity is wiped and the unclean place, if moist, is dried by the direct rays of the sun.

If an unclean thing is transformed into a clean thing;

for example an unclean piece of wood is turned into ash after being burned or an alcoholic beverage is turned into vinegar automatically it becomes clean.

If the body of an animal is soiled with some original impurity like blood or with something which has become unclean, for example unclean water, it becomes clean again as soon as the substance is eliminated from it. The same is the case with the inner parts of human body such as the mouth and the apertures of the nose. They get clean with the removal of original impurity.

Ablution

It is obligatory to perform ablution *(wuzu)* before prayers. As such every Muslim has to wash and cleanse the outer parts of his body several times a day and to keep his face, hands, head and feet clean.

The following is the brief discription of *wuzu*. While performing *wuzu* it is obligatory to wash the face, the right hand and the left hand in succession and to wipe the front portion of the head, the right foot and the left foot with wet hand.

The face is to be washed from the usual line of hair above the forehead to the end of the chin. Breadthwise the portion of the face wahsed must at least be equal to what can be held between the middle finger and the thumb.

After the face, the right hand and then the left hand should be washed from the elbow to the finger tips. Then the front portion of the head should be wiped with the hand moist with *wuzu*-water. It is not essential that the moisture reaches the skin of the head. To pass a moist

hand on the hair growing in the front part of the head is enough. Then the hand moist with *wuzu*-water should be passed over the feet from the tops of the toes to the ankles.

Performing *wuzu* with the water acquired illegally or the water about which it is not definitely known whether its owner is or is not agreeable to its being used, is invalid and unlawful.

Bathing

Consequent to the state of major ceremonial impurity caused by sexual intercourse or the ejaculation of semen it is obligatory to take bath before offering prayers or performing any other act of devotion requiring ceremonial purity. In this case the whole body including the poritons covered by hair should be fully washed.

Before taking bath every kind of dirt and filth and anything which may prevent water reaching the skin should be removed. The bathing water should be clean and as far as possible clear. In fact a perfect ceremonial bath cleanses the whole body. The prescribed process of bathing is as under:

There are two kinds of bathing:
(1) *Tartibi* (Sequential) and (2) *Irtimasi* (by Immersion).

In the case of the first, a person should wash his head and neck with the intention of taking a ceremonial bath. Then he should wash the right half of his body and after that the left half. To ensure that all the three portions are washed fully, he should, with each portion, wash the other portions also partly.

In the case of bath by immersion, he should plunge his whole body into water. If his feet are rested on the ground, he should lift them up.

During her menstrual periods a woman is not allowed to offer prayers or to observe fast. In the case of prayers, she is not required even after her periods are over to complete what has lapsed. But in the case of fasting she has to make up for the omission.

After the menstrual period of a woman is over it is obligatory for her to take a ceremonial bath in order to offer prayers and to perform other acts of worship for which purification is a pre-requisite.

The rules which apply to a woman during her menstrual period also apply to her during a few days after delivery.

A person in the state of major ceremonial impurity and a woman with her periods on, are forbidden to do the following:

(1) To touch the text of the Qur'an or the name of Allah or of the prophets or *Imams* with any part of his/her body.

(2) To stay in a masjid or the sanctuary of the prophet or of the Imams or to enter them to put something there. Anyhow there is no objection to passing through a masjid other than the Masjid al-Haram at Mecca and the Masjid al-Nabi at Madina. Similarly one is allowed to enter a masjid other than the above two to take out something from there.

(3) To recite anyone of the Qur'anic surahs in which

obligatory *sajdah* occurs (surahs 32, 41, 53 and 94).

One must perform bathing if one touches a dead human body after its cooling and before it has been washed ceremonially. The same rule applies to the touching of any section of the body having a bone, which is separated from a living person.

With a view to maintain human dignity and in keeping with hygienic considerations, Islam gives certain instructions in regard to the dead human body.

It is the duty of every Muslim obligated to observe the religious precepts to wash, shroud and bury a Muslim after offering prescribed prayers for him. If some people discharge this duty, others are absolved of their responsibility.

A dead body should be washed thrice, first with the water mixed with berry *(Sidr)* tree-leaves, then with the water mixed with camphor and finally with pure water.

Tayammum

If pure and lawful water is not available, or washing with water is feared to be injurious, or the time is so short that the prayers are likely to be missed wholly or partly if *wuzu* or bath as the case may be, is performed, *tayammum* may be performed instead.

Tayammum should be performed on the clean earth. As far as possible earth should be used for this purpose. Failing that sand, lump of earth and stone may be used in the same order.

To perform *tayammum* one should have the intention

of performing it. Then he should strike both his hands on earth and then pass them on his forehead from the hair line to the brows and the upper part of the nose. Then he should pass his left palm on the entire back of his right hand and his right palm on the entire back of his left hand. For the purpose of *tayammum* substituting 'bathing' one should place his hands twice on earth. Once for passing on the forehead then for passing on the back of his right and left hands.

FOOD

Man requires food for the continuity of his life and the growth of his body. For this purpose many kinds of vegetables, fruits, other varieties of agricultural produce and meats have been put at his disposal.

"We have established you on the earth and there have provided you with a livelihood". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:10).

"He produced you from the earth and settled you there". (Surah Hud, 11:61).

"He it is who has made the earth subservient to you, so walk in the paths thereof and eat of His providence". (Surah al-Mulk, 67:15).

Many significant points are related to the question of food such as the right of the common people to make use of the Divine gifts, the role of human labour in making the raw material usable, various aspects of material needs of human life and how to ensure the supply of the essential commodities and their equitable distribution. Anyhow at present we are concerned only with the question as to what food is lawful and what is unlawful.

Islam does in no way forbid the partaking of tasty food and the drinking of healthy and pleasant beverages. In fact the holy Qur'an has encouraged the utilization of the Divine gifts.

"Muhammad say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and to use the good things of His providing? Say: These on the Day of Resurrection will be only for those who were faithful in the life of this world". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:32).

Hence it should not be construed that a pious and faithful person should abstain from sumptuous food and drink. All good things have been created for man, and hence should naturally be used by the faithful.

"O you messengers! Eat of the good things and do what is right". (Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:51).

At another place the Qur'an says: *"O you who believe! Eat of the good things with which We have provided you, and give thanks to Allah . . . . . ".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:172).

The Qur'an reproaches those persons who deprive themselves of good things without just cause and make unlawful for themselves the lawful foods and blessings:

"O you who believe! Do not forbid the good things which Allah has made lawful for you". (Surah al-Maidah, 5:87).

The general criterion for the foods and beverages being lawful is their being 'good' i.e. wholesome, delicious, clean and pure.

"They ask you what is lawful for them, Say: All good

things are lawful for you". (Surah al-Maidah, 5:4).

Of course certain things have been prohibited, but that has been done just to save the Muslims from their evil effects and not to deprive them of any good thing. Only foul things have been prohibited, foul in the sense that they are obnoxious, harmful and impure.

The Qur'an summarizing the teachings of the Prophet of Islam in this respect says: *"He declares the good things to be lawful and bad things to be unlawful".* (Surah al-A'raf, 7:157).

Islam prohibits the eating and drinking of the following:
All the foul things as mentioned above, such as the carrion, blood etc. and every food and beverage polluted by such things.

All dirty and obnoxious things such as clay, mud, polluted-water and putrid and rotten food.

Dog, pig and other predatory animals like lion, wolf, bear, jackal etc.

Invertebrate animals like snake, scorpion, wasp and worms.

Birds which possess hooked beak and talons and are treated to be predatory birds, like eagle etc.

The birds that usually soar in the air without flapping their wings and flap the same much lesser.

The fish that have no scales.

Some other animals such as elephant, rat, monkey, frog and tortoise.

All alcoholic beverages. As a general rule everything intoxicant or narcotic which is definitely injurious for human health comes under this category.

Experience and medical research have proved that alcoholic beverages and narcotic drugs are injurious to health and undermine physical and mental fitness. From moral and social point of view also they are the source of many evils. A drunken man losses the control of his senses and is liable to foolish action and undignified behaviour. Such a person may even commit crimes. These poisonous stuffs have ruined many a family. People get addicted to them just to seek momentary exhilaration and false satisfaction. These things not only do not resolve the worries of their life, but also make them further complicated. Instead of making life happy they cause infatuation and frustration.

Slaughtering of animals

The animals, the meat of which is allowed to be eaten, such as sheep, goat, cow, camel, deer, domestic fowl etc. have to be slaughtered in the prescribed manner. Otherwise if they die their natural death or are killed by beating, wounding or in any way other than the prescribed one their flesh is not lawful.

We here reproduce the legal method of slaughtering from Articles of Islamic Acts (ISP, 1982).

An act of slaughter to be legal must satisfy the following five conditions:

(1) The person who slaughters must be a Muslim.
(2) The animal while being slaughtered should be facing the Qiblah.

(3) He must utter the name of Allah when slaughtering.
(4) He must cut the throat of the animal with a sharp implement made of iron in a way that the jugular artery, jugular vein, oesophagus canal and trachea are cut.
(5) It must move after having been slaughtered.

In the case of a camel the only prescribed method of its slaughter is *Nahr*, which means thrusting a knife or any other sharp implement into the cavity between its neck and chest. Other conditions are the same in this case also. As for the fish the rule is as under:

If the fish having scales is caught alive and dies after having been taken out of water, it is lawful. But if it dies inside the water it is unlawful. The fish having no scales is unlawful, even if it is caught alive and dies out of water.

The meat of the lawful wild animals and birds killed with hunting weapons is legally edible provided the following five conditions are observed.

(1) The weapon must be incisive or sharp, and must not be of the nature of a net, a stick or a stone.
(2) The hunter must be a Muslim.
(3) He should normally utter the name of Allah at the time of using his weapon. Anyhow, if he forgets to utter it there is no harm.
(4) The weapon must be used with the intention of killing the game. If it is killed accidentally, its flesh is not lawful.
(5) When the hunter reaches the game, it should be already dead. If it is caught alive and there is sufficient time to slaughter it must be slaughtered in the prescribed manner stated above.

An eatable or drinkable stuff is lawful only if it is not ill-gotten, i.e. the stuff itself or the money by which it has been purchased must not have been acquired by unfair, dishonest or fraudulent means, such as theft, bribery, usuary, swindle, embezzlement etc. Anything ill-gotten, even if proper and lawful in itself, is not lawful and the person concerned is accountable for it, as its use involves encroachment on the rights of others. The Qur'an says: ***"Believers, do not devour each other's property among yourselves unlawfully, but rather trade with it by your mutual consent, and do not kill each other".*** (Surah al-Nisa, 4:29).

The question of lawful and unlawful property forms an important subject of the economics of Islam. But due to its being outside the scope of our present discourse, we skip over it.

Wastage of food

Even the food-stuff which comes by through fair means is not to be wasted or over-consumed. Its over-consumption is not only against the principles of economic justice, but is injurious to the health of the consumers themselves. It is very unfair that a few well-to-do persons may waste and over-consume food-stuffs while many others starve. The Qur'an says: ***"Eat and drink but be not prodigal".*** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:32).

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

To maintain his physical health and satisfactory growth of his body, man requires, among other things, sound nutrition, necessary health care, healthy climate and safety from pollution and other disease-generating factors.

In the same way the human soul also needs sound nutrition

and proper health care for its healthy development. Otherwise it degenerates and inclines towards corruption. Of course the food of the soul is different from that of the body. Similarly the spiritual diseases are also of a different character. Knowledge and faith are the food of the soul. They nourish, develop and invigorate it in the same way as good and healthy food nourishes the human body.

Similarly ignorance and dishonesty are the scourge of the soul and culminate in many moral ailments.

This is the main subject of the Islamic ethics which points out what habits and qualities are necessary for the soundness and safety of the soul and what habits and qualities deprave it. It also suggests both preventive and curative measures in respect of each spiritual disease.

Balanced growth

As we stated earlier man has two aspects: One physical and the other spiritual. His growth in both these directions should be balanced. If he pays his attention only to his soul and forgets his body, he will become weak and will feel run down. He will not only be deprived of physical fitness and material pleasures, but will also be left with no conveyance at his disposal for making the spiritual journey. With feeble body there is very little chance of his soaring very high spiritually.

In the same way a man whose entire life is devoted to eating, drinking and merry-making is left with no scope for the manifestation of his humanity. He cannot rise above the level of the quadrupeds.

There are certain ways and means of attaining development both materially and spiritually. One should identify

them and keeping them in view, should chalk out a programme of his life so that his development may not cease or become imbalanced. For his physical development man needs a variety of food factors and vitamins within a certain limit. Our excessive consumption of only one kind of food is as injurious to our health as the under-consumption of any food factor.

For the maintenance of health it is necessary to be active and diligent. Inactivity and sluggishness enfeeble the body. At the same time rest is also necessary. Incessant hardwork ruins one's health just as lethargy and prolonged idleness make him dull.

The same is true of spiritual development. Compassion and sympathy are the requisite qualities of man. One must be sensitive to the hardships of others and should always be ready to help them. But his sympathy must not be so excessive as to prevent one from punishing a traitor or giving a blow to the enemy.

To look at things from all angles is one of the most important features of Islam. It calls for all that helps in the all-round development of man and forbids all that hampers such development. That is why the Islamic morals have a constructive role and ensure complete spiritual health.

Moral criteria

Do the moral principles have any real basis and fixed criteria or are they only a cover to conceal the personal and class objectives of some groups and individuals?

Have the rich and powerful classes of society, with a view to exploit the masses, invented and raised such questions

as those of patience, contentment, regard for the rights of others, tolerance etc. so that they may utilize the under-privileged classes for their own ends, compel them to total submission and keep their mouths shut in the name of adherence to moral principles?

Have the under-privileged classes invented such moral conceptions as love, charity, justice, modesty etc. with the intention of gaining the favour of the ruling classes?

Or have the moral principles any real basis and firm infra-structure?

There is no doubt that some of the moral teachings have been and are still being put to misuse in various ways. Those who are bent on self-aggrandizement, especially if they have power and influence, do not hesitate to employ any possible means to achieve their ends. As scientific research, in spite of its firm basis, is used sometimes for the purpose of oppression, tyranny and torturing the working classes, in the same way moral concepts are also misused. How often freedom is taken away in the name of freedom and injustice is done in the name of justice and equality! Every good and beneficial thing can be put to misuse. Anyhow, there is no doubt that howsoever the name of justice is misused, it cannot become the same thing as injustice. They will always remain two different things. Similarly, howsoever it is misrepresented, true freedom cannot be equal to slavery.

So it is no wonder if the Islamic teachings have been exploited for personal or class ends or have been imposed on the under-privileged classes in a distorted form. That does not mean that they are spurious or worthless. On the other hand, this position demands a vigilance on the part

of society so that it is not defrauded and values are not misused by the exploiters to serve their own selfish ends.

In fact morals are deeply rooted in human nature. In spite of his animal propensities, man by nature wants to possess such qualities as are in keeping with his human dignity. All the exponents of the moral principles such as the prophets and the philosophers have set them forth only for safeguarding the interests of the entire mankind and not for the benefit of any particular class and to the detriment of another class.

Those who hold that the moral principles are only conventional, point to the difference of opinion in regard to them and ask, if these principles had any firm basis, how the views differ about them.

In this connection it may be said that the diversity of views about any point does not prove that it has no firm basis. We see that difference of opinion exists in regard to most of the questions. Views differ even about such questions as the freedom of will and the universal human rights. Divergent views exist about the nature of life and the nature of existence. In all these cases there has been a difference of opinion over the ages. But does that mean that in all these cases real infra-structure does not exist. Even in regard to physical phenomena and medical questions which are perceptional, observable and experimentable, wide differences have existed over thousands of years, although physical phenomena and medical questions are actually governed by decisive and unalterable principles.

Furthermore, the difference between morals and the rules of conduct should not be over-looked. Morals are

related to the discipline and promotion of a quality of feelings, emotions and tendencies, whereas the rules of conduct are the practical rules of behaviour which are subject to a number of other considerations and conventions, though of course, sometimes they conform to the moral criteria. For example, self-respect, perseverance, boldness, piety and the like are moral qualities. They were good qualities thousands of years ago and they are still so. On the other hand the conventional rules of eating and wearing dress are mostly local and relative. They are not directly linked to the spiritual and moral systems.

Thus neither the wrong exploitation of the moral teachings, nor the divergence of opinion in regard to them, can be advanced as an argument to prove that they have no firm basis. The same is true of the diversity of the traditions and rules of social life existing among various peoples.

Anyhow, though the moral principles are universal and stable, they are more or less flexible.

For example, truthfulness is an indisputable moral principle of Islam. But in case telling a truth endangers the life, property or position of anybody, that truth should be over-looked. Anyhow, the existence of exceptional cases when one finds oneself in a moral dilemma does not diminish the value of a principle. On the whole truthfulness is an excellent moral and spiritual quality. Normally one must not deviate from the rule of telling the truth unless there is a clash with some other moral principle. We all know that prayer is a devotional act obligatory on all. But still its form is reduced and simplified in the case of travel and illness. Fasting is another act of devotion

obligatory on all. But there are circumstances when it is no longer binding to keep fast.

If some such thing is meant by the relativity of morals, it may be said that Islamic moral teachings are also relative. Anyhow, that does not mean that on principle morals have no firm basis, and that they are merely conventional.

Morals have been defined as good thinking, good saying and good doing. Is this definition adequate?

Many acts are moral and desirable from the view-point of certain schools, but they are immoral and undesirable from that of others. For example, a moral school recommends submission in the face of force and regards it a moral duty. It says that if anybody slaps you on your right cheek, turn the left one to him. But there is another school which says that if anybody does you any harm, check him and give him tit for tat. Both the schools regard the action suggested by them as good. In spite of all the divergence of their views, every school calls the attitude or quality recommended by it as 'good saying' or 'good doing'. Hence if moral action is defined by 'good doing', that definition will not be self-explanatory.

Sometimes it is said that it is the moral qualities on which human perfection depend. But still the question remains what constitutes human perfection?

Does man gain perfection by acquiring wealth and material comforts? Does he gain perfection by attaining physical power, by acquiring knowledge, by obtaining social position, by securing personal pleasures or by doing social service? Or does he gain perfection by having all these

things together? Or does perfection mean something else?

That is why the most important point discussed by ethics is the determination of criteria and the true infra-structure of morals.

The real criteria of morals

From the Islamic point of view the true criteria of morals are two: (a) Regard for man's dignity; and (b) Seeking proximity to Allah.

(a) Man's Dignity

The holy Prophet is reported to have said that he was sent to perfect the dignity and honour of man.

According to another tradition, Imam al Sadiq (P) has said: "Allah, the Almighty endowed the holy Prophets with noble qualities. Anybody who is blessed with these qualities, should be thankful to Allah; and anybody who does not possess them should pray that he may be endowed with them".

The narrator of this tradition says that he asked the Imam what those qualities were. He said: "Piety, contentment; tolerance, gratitude, patience, munificence, bravery, self-respect, moral rectitude, truthfulness and honesty".

Self-respect means that while working for his well-being and the fulfilment of his desires, one should regard the acts which humiliate him and lower his position, as inconsistent with his human dignity and consider those acts which develop his spiritual personality and enhance his position, to be a matter of pride.

For example everyone knows that an envious and begrudg-

ing person only mortifies and humiliates himself. A begrudging person cannot bear the progress and prosperity of others. He repines at their achievements. His only reaction is to do his utmost to cause damage to others and upset their plans. He does not feel contented unless others are also deprived of their good fortune and become like him. Everyone knows that to have such feelings is sheer meanness. A person who cannot tolerate the success of others is a worthless fellow and has no personality.

The same is true of stinginess. A stingy person is so enamoured with his wealth that he is not willing to part with it and spend it even for his own welfare or the welfare of his family. He does not spend money for any charitable purpose. Obviously such a man is a captive of his wealth. He finds himself degraded in his own eyes.

Thus we find that the feelings of self-respect and self-consciousness are true human feelings. We feel elated when we perform any such act as charity, tolerance, chastity, perseverance etc. There are other acts such as lying, hypocrisy, flattery, jealousy and stinginess. When we commit any of them, we feel humiliated. This is our inner feeling and is not subject to any teaching or the customs and habits prevailing in our particular society. Islam has severely denounced such qualities, and strictly forbids their cultivation.

Certain qualities like tolerance and self-sacrifice are matters of honour and the signs of large-heartedness and greatness of soul. A man ready to make sacrifice, exercises such a control over himself and is characterized with such a personality that he foregoes his own interests for the sake of others and for securing a desired objective.

Humility in the sense of respecting others and recognizing their worth and not in the sense of self-effacement or submission to force, is also a noble quality and a matter of human dignity. This quality is possessed by those who are of exercising self-control, are not self-centered and realistically recognize the good points of others and respect them.

These qualities, which form the basis of lofty character, are a part of high Islamic morals. We have innumerable specimens of these qualities and it is possible that all ethical questions may be regarded more or less as being related to human dignity. That is why the great Prophet of Islam, summing up his ethical mission, has described it as perfection of noble characteristics of mankind.

(b) Proximity to Allah

Only those acts are desirable that bring man closer to Allah. In other words, man should promote and possess those excellent qualities which we mentioned while discussing the attributes of Allah, viz. He is Knowing, Powerful and Competent. All his works are well-calculated. He is Just, Compassionate and Forgiving. All enjoy His blessings. He likes the good and dislikes the bad. And so on and so forth. A man is close to Allah in proportion to his possessing these qualities. If they are ingrained in him and become his second nature, it may be said that he has acquired the Islamic morals.

The holy Prophet has said: "Mould yourselves according to the attributes of Allah".

So the two criteria of Islamic morals are: regard for human dignity and proximity to Allah.

The man of Islam, irrespective of the personal advantages and disadvantages which he finds to accrue from a certain act or habit, is always keen to know whether or not that particular act or quality is in keeping with his human dignity and whether or not it helps him in his march towards Allah. He regards as desirable only those acts and qualities that add to his human dignity and bring him closer to Allah. Similarly he regards as undesirable and abstains from those acts and qualities that are detrimental to his human dignity and weaken his relation to Allah. He knows that the observance of these two criteria automatically excites a man into enthusiasm to work consciously for the interests of himself and the humanity at large.

IMPROPER TRAITS OF CHARACTER

The man of Islam must purge himself of those traits of character which are detrimental to his perfection and dignity so that he may foster constructive and pure habits attain the maturity necessary to be a better man and gain proximity to Allah.

Now we propose to mention a few undesirable traits of character which degrade man are repugnant to his dignity and cause great harm to human society.

1. Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy means double-facedness. A person guilty of hypocrisy says what he does not mean and feigns what he is not. Hypocrisy in the field of faith poses a big threat to Islamic society. A person pretending to be a member of the Muslim nation while he is not actually so, is just like a spy who falsely gives himself out to be the supporter of a nation, whereas in fact he is its enemy and is bent upon betraying it.

In other fields also hypocrisy causes damage to many members of the society. For instance, if a person pretends to be a friend and well-wisher of another person, the other person, believing him to be his sincere friend, confides his secrets to him, consults him in his affairs and may even associate him in his business etc. But if that man is not sincere, he, instead of doing him any good, divulges his secrets and betrays him. The holy Prophet has said:

"A hypocrite is like a crooked palm trunk which cannot fit in anywhere while thatching a roof. Its owner has no choice but to burn it, for it has no other use".

Those who pretend to be the champions of the cause of the people and to be the protectors of faith and society, but always have their own axe to grind and do not hesitate to let down others, prove more dangerous if they attain position and influence, for people place confidence in them and entrust their affairs to them taking them to be their sincere well-wishers, but ultimately suffer a loss and come to grief.

The Qur'an has severely criticised the hypocrites. It has denounced them on 35 occasions. The tone of the Qur'an in respect of them is so violent that on some occasions it has included them in the category of the infidels (Surah al Tawbah, verses 69 and 74) and on some other occasions it has promised them the lowest class of Hell.

From the Qur'anic point of view the hypocrites are a threat to society, for they spread evil and hinder what is desirable. The Qur'an says: *"The hypocrites, whether men or women, are alike. They exhort to evil, restrain from what is good and keep their hands shut. They have forgotten Allah; so He too has forgotten them. No doubt*

the hypocrites are wicked". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:67).

They do their utmost to hinder the advancement of truth: *"When it is said to them: Come to be judged by what Allah has revealed and accept the arbitration by the Messenger, you see that the hypocrites turn away from you giving no heed to you".* (Surah al-Nisa, 4:61).

They do not even hesitate to exert economic pressure on the believers with the intention of weakening their morale and turning them away from the right path: *"They it is who say: Spend not on behalf of those who dwell with Allah's Messenger that they may disperse (and go away from you), when Allah's are the treasures of the heavens and the earth; but the hypocrites do not comprehend ".* (Surah al-Munafiqun, 63:7).

Still they are very much afraid lest their villainy should be exposed:
"The hypocrites fear lest a surah should be revealed concerning them, exposing what is in their hearts. Say: Scoff as much as you please. Allah is surely bringing to light what you dread". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:64).

They are always scared, and take every voice coming to them to be something said against them: *"The hypocrites deem every shout to be against them. They are the enemy, so beware of them".* (Surah al-Munafiqun, 63:4).

To hoodwink others and in an attempt to prove their own innocence they resort to swearing:

"When the hypocrites come to you, they say: We bear witness that you are indeed Allah's Messenger. Allah knows that you are His Messenger all right; but Allah

testifies that the hypocrites are liars". (Surah al-Munafiqun, 63:1).

However, as soon as they are caught, they deny their misdeeds and still pretend to be the well-wishers of the Muslims:

"How would it be if a misfortune befell them on account of what that have committed with their their own hands? Then they would come to you, swearing by Allah that they intended nothing but benevolence and conciliation". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:62).

When they are called to co-operate, they make glittering promises, but when the time of action comes, they simply go back on their word and betray:

"And some of them made a solemn promise to Allah saying: If He gives us of His bounty, we will give alms and will live like virtuous. But when He gave them of His bounty, they become niggardly of it and went back on their promise, ignoring their pledge". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:75 – 76).

Hypocrisy is a source of trouble for the hyprocrite as well as for others. These characteristics are a sign of his meanness, gloominess of his soul, his remoteness from Allah and his being devoid of personality. Multiple personality means lack of it. A hypocrite has no human dignity and he is far removed from Allah.

"Surely! the hypocrites seek to beguile Allah, but it is Allah who beguiles them. When they stand up to offer prayers, they stand up sluggishly. They offer it merly for the sake of ostentation. They remember Allah, but

little. Wavering between this and that, and belonging neither to these nor to those. You cannot find a way for the one whom Allah abandons to go astray". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:142 – 143).

As regards the hypocrites Imam Ali (P) says:
"O people! I urge you to piety and warn you against the hypocrites. They have gone astray, and misguide others. Their ways are wrong and misleading. Every moment they put a new colour upon themselves and change their appearance. They exploit you to their own benefit. Everywhere they attack you by surprise. Their hearts are diseased, though their outer appearance is glamourous. Their approach is surreptitious. They cause disease and talk of cure. They begrudge the fortune of others and create trouble for them. They smash hopes. It is because of them that many people have fallen. They pretend to be well-wishers of others and shed crocodile tears on their misfortune. They praise others in the hope of being praised by them. If they ask for anything, they insist on their demand. If they pick a quarrel with anyone, they calumniate him. They give wrong judgement, invent a falsehood to counter every truth and lay a trap in the way of every investigator. They have appointed an executioner for every living person. In order to secure their vicious ends, they have made a key to open every door and a lamp to give light in every dark night, so that they may upset the plans of others and may win popularity for their own good. When they speak they deceive. When they explain, they stupefy. They ensnare people to co-operate with them and then close the way of their escape".

2. Arrogance

False pride and arrogant behaviour result either from holding too high an opinion of oneself or from inferiority

complex. Imam al Sadiq (P) is reported to have said: "Arrogance means belittling others and not being just".

On another occasion he said that arrogance and deprecation of others are the result of one's own inferiority complex. Arrogance is a sign of the lack of common sense.

Imam al Sadiq (P) says:
"One's practical wisdom decreases exactly in proportion to the increase in his arrogance".

He who can realistically assess his own value and position is always just to others. He readily admits their good points and accepts the truth. He is never arrogant. One who shows superiority is actually suffering from inferiority complex. He knows that he has many short-comings, and he feels distressed on that account. But instead of making efforts to make up his deficiencies, he tries to conceal them and in order to relieve his complex he assumes airs and shows haughtiness. The fact is that all greatness belongs only to Allah. It is He alone who possesses infinite perfection. It is He who is All-powerful, All-knowing, Supreme and the Absolute Sovereign.

Hence it befits Him alone to describe Himself as great and show Himself as great, for He is really Great. But it is not becoming of the others who have been created and reared by Him, are controlled by Him and have nothing of their own, to consider themselves to be greater or to parade themselves as great. They can of course earn comparatively real greatness by acquiring knowledge, gaining spiritual excellence, cultivating excellent moral qualities and seeking proximity to Allah. But they should not assume airs despite being devoid of all virtues.

Imam al-Sadiq (P) has said:
"Arrogance is a characteristic of the wicked. Greatness is a garment which suits Allah alone. Allah simply debases him who tries to rival Him in greatness".

The proud are the scourge of the society. They are so egoistic that they believe that only what they think is correct. Practically they are concerned only with their own interests and respect only their own personality. As they think that all merits are reserved for them, they attach no importance to the rights and position of others. They expect everybody else to be submissive and obedient to them. They tolerate only those who bow before them and say yes to all what they wish. Such arrogant people gradually become despotic. Then they do not hesitate to commit any excess and regard themselves as the masters of the life, property and the honour of the other people. This position is diametrically opposite to the educational and social principles of Islam.

Islam believes in the equality of all men. They all being the creation of One Allah, have common rights. From the Islamic point of view encroachment on the rights of even the weakest member of the society is not to be tolerated. Nobody has a right to consider himself to be a superior being or a master of others.

A despotic and arrogant man not only does wrong to himself and abridges his own value and human dignity, but also estranges and alienates others from himself. He not only infringes the rights of others, but also wages a war against Allah and challenges His might and greatness.

"They (unbelievers) will be told, Enter the gates of Hell and stay in forever. What a terrible dwelling place the

arrogant shall have!" (Surah al-Zumar, 39:72).

"Musa said, "I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant tyrant who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning". (Surah Mo'min, 40:27).

"Thus Allah seals the heart of every arrogant tyrant". (Surah Mo'min, 40:35).

3. Slander

Slander means maliciously repeating a tale or a report heard about a person, often with the idea of creating misunderstanding and hostility between two old friends or two families. It is the height of meanness to kindle the fire of enmity and malice between two fellow-citizens and incite them to be at daggers drawn with each other.

The Qur'an urges us not to listen to such mischief-mongers going about with slander. It says: *"Yield not to any mean oath monger, backbiting slanderer".* (Surah al-Qalam, 68:10 – 11).

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"The biggest sorcery is tale-bearing which estranges friends from each other and brings about enmity among them. It causes bloodshed and ruins the families. As the result thereof secrets are divulged and people are exposed. A slanderer is the worst man on the earth".

Several other sins go along with slandering as pointed out by Imam Hasan al Mujtaba (P) who said:

"If a person comes to you and speaks ill of someone else, you should know that he is actually speaking ill of you. It is worth-while to regard such a person as your enemy

and not to trust him, for lying, back-biting, trickery, treachery, deceit, jealousy, hypocrisy, duplicity and creating dissesion go hand in hand with slander.

Imam Ali (P) has said:
"The worst of you are those who slander and create discord among friends. They find fault with the innocent".

A decent Muslim will never indulge in slander. He refrains even from listening to and believing in the tales of a slanderer.

The holy Prophet has said:
"A slanderer will not enter Paradise".

4. Lying

Lying may be regarded as the root of many evils such as calumny, duplicity, fraud, trickery, perjury, wrong judgement, hypocrisy etc.

The holy Prophet has said:
"There are three signs of a hypocrite:

(1) When he speaks, he tells a lie;
(2) When he makes a promise, he goes back on his word;
(3) When some property is placed in his possession for safe custody, he misappropriates it".

A lie misleads many individuals. Those who trust a liar and believe him, go astray. If the falsehood which he utters pertains to the domain of dogma, he impairs the thinking power of the people and undermines their essential beliefs.

A liar loses the confidence of the people. A liar cannot conceal his lie forever. One day the truth must come out. Then the liar is exposed and his image is ruined.

A liar betrays himself as well as others. He is always in conflict with his own conscience, for he says contrary to what is in his heart. He is in conflict with the realities of the world as well, because he tries to distort them.

Imam Ali (P) has said:
"A Muslim should abstain from having friendly and brotherly relations with a liar for (eventually he loses all credit in the eyes of the people, because) he continues to utter falsehood till people cease to believe him even if he says something true".

Imam al Sadiq (P) quotes Imam Ali (P) as having said:
"One who often tells lies ruins his prestige and reliability".
It is evident that a liar utters falsehood either because of fear or because of his covetousness. In either case it is a weakness repugnant to human dignity. Lying spoils spiritual purity and chastity of conscience, and is inconsistent with all the criteria of Islamic morals mentioned above.

In contrast, truthfulness and frankness are the signs of man's personality, his dignity and greatness. A man who is known for his truthfulness is trusted and held in respect by all. Not only his conscience remains satisfied, but he also enjoys social prestige. Both Allah and people are pleased with him. In fact truthfulness is a clear sign of faith. A liar cannot regard himself as a true Muslim.

The Prophet of Islam is reported to have said:
"None can have a true faith unless he has a true heart and none can have a true heart unless his tongue is truthful".

Imam Ali (P) said:
"Nobody tastes faith unless he abstains from lying whether seriously or jocularly".

5. **Backbiting and calumny**

Imam al Riza (P), is reported to have said: "It is not backbiting, if a person speaking of another in his absence levels a charge against him which is true and the people are aware of it. If however, the charge is true, but the people are not aware of it, then it is backbiting. If the charge is false, that is calumny".

Backbiting is a sin and a foul act, because it defames and humiliates a person, and also because to give publicity to the evil deeds and undesirable acts means to popularize them and to mitigate gradually their indecency in the eyes of the people.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"He who mentions an evil deed of a Muslim before others, whether he saw it being committed with his own eyes or heard about it from others, will be reckoned with those about whom Allah has said: ***Surely those who love to spread scandals against the believers, shall receive a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter***". (Surah al-Nur, 24:19).

If hidden sins and faults of the people are not unnecessarily exposed, not only the honour of the man concerned is saved, but also evil deeds do not spread out among the general public. Islam has so much denounced backbiting that the Qur'an has likened it to the eating of the flesh of one's own dead brother:

"You should not backbite each other. Does anyone of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You surely detest that". (Surah al-Hujurat, 49:12).

Islam insists on deep friendly and brotherly relations

among the people. It does not like that any ill-feeling should develop among them. It wants that nobody should play with the honour of anyone else. That is why it has so severely denounced backbiting.

As a first step to check backbiting it is necessary that we should not lend ear to what a backbiter says. By doing so not only we will discourage him, but will practically intercept his evil-speaking. A speaker is naturally disheartened if the listener shows distaste for what he says. On the other hand the credulous listeners induce the backbiters to tell their tales in a more pompous style and even to go a step further and fabricate false and malicious stories. That is why Islam looks upon the listener of backbiting as an accomplice of the backbiter.

Though as a general rule backbiting is inconsistent with the moral principles of Islam, sometimes social considerations demand that a misdeed should be reported. We here reproduce with some further explanation what Shaykh Bahai has said in this connection.

The Muslim scholars (ulema) regard the disclosure of the faults and sins of others as lawful in the following circumstances:

(a) Evidence

When in a criminal case an Islamic court calls someone as a witness, he should state before the court exactly what he knows about the crime. No doubt he has to disclose the sin and the fault of the accused against his wish, but justice demands that he should make a frank statement according to his conscience keeping in mind that Allah knows what he says.

(b) Restraining from evil

As we know it is the duty of a Muslim to prevent others from committing crimes and sins. The preventive action has several degrees, some of them being more severe than the others. Should there be a case that an offender wishes to commit a crime secretly and is not willing to give up his plans unless he is exposed, it is necessary to disclose his evil intentions to prevent him from proceeding with his harmful action.

(c) Complaint

If a wrong is done to anybody, he has a right to defend himself and make a complaint against the offender.

(d) Guidance and consultation

If a person wants to marry another person, associate him in his business, travel with him or enter into any other kind of contract, he will naturally make enquiries about the other party. In such cases all those who are consulted should tell the truth exactly as they know it. But they should be careful not to speak ill of anybody unnecessarily or maliciously and thus harm the interests of the parties concerned.

(e) Exposing the false evidence

Exposing the lie of a person who has given false evidence, fabricated a false report or expressed a wrong opinion or view.

(g) Grading

Grading of the scholars and the professionals for the information of general public, to enable everybody to find out a suitable physician, craftsman or scholar.

6. Jealousy

Usually in every society some individuals are found who by dint of their efforts or talents have acquired some such distinction as extraordinary knowledge, above average technical proficiency, commendable children, high lawful income, educational achievements and the like. The reaction of the people to such individuals varies: Some remain indifferent and for them the question has no importance. Some others feel happy that some one is well-off or has achieved a distinction.

Still some others start thinking why they themselves should not have similar achievements and, in the spirit of constructive rivalry, endeavour to make progress and secure what they do not possess. But they do not begrudge others.

Still there are some who cannot tolerate the well-being of others. They wish to have themselves everything good to the exclusion of others. The progress of others makes them uneasy, and they, instead of making any efforts to make progress themselves, express their uneasiness by speaking evil of others and trying to harm them. Such reaction is called jealousy, which is an offensive and objectionable quality, but unfortunately quite common among men and women, young and old. Even some of those who themselves hold high positions feel offended by the progress of others. So long as jealousy is not accompanied by any corresponding action, it causes inconvenience only to the jealous person himself who feels uneasy in his heart. But as soon as it is translated into action it takes the shape of evil-speaking, backbiting, culminating etc.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"A man who has three undesirable qualities is devoid of faith. They are greed, jealousy and timidness".

"The root of jealousy is the blindness of heart and contention with divine blessing. These are the two wings of infidelity".

"A jealous person always comes to grief and falls into a jeopardy from which there is no escape".

Imam Ali (P) has said:
"It is enough punishment for a person jealous of you that he is sad when you are happy".

"I have not seen any oppressor who may be resembling an oppressed person more than a jealous person. He is always sad, dejected and unhappy".

Imam al-Naqi (P) has said:
"A jealous person does more harm to himself than to others".

Jealousy is in fact a sign of a number of deficiencies and diseases viz:

(a) A jealous person is selfish and wants everything for himself to the exclusion of others.

(b) He is narrow-minded; otherwise he would not have reacted in this way to the progress made or the distinction achieved by another person.

(c) He is short-sighted. That is why he cannot think that others also have a right to secure some position.

(d) He is an aggressor, for he is ready to give a blow to the other party and endanger his position and peace of mind with a view to relieve, according to his thinking, his own complex.

Combating against jealousy

The effective way to combat against jealousy is that the jealous person himself should make positive efforts to achieve some success and gain some distinction. Naturally a man busy with himself has little time to begrudge others. In most cases gradually his broad-mindedness and extroversion are revived and he comes out of his shell. He begins to take others also into account, and feels that he is closely connected with other human beings. His sense of fellow-feeling and love of mankind is reawakened. He not only does not grieve at the prosperity of others, but also finds himself willing to make sacrifice for them.

We have seen that jealousy is a spiritual disease and a sign of narrow-mindedness. It causes inner discomfort to the jealous person and deprives others of their peace. It is a scourge which must be eradicated. But all that does not mean that we should take no action against those who commit any kind of aggression, deprive others of their lawful rights or occupy by underhand means a post for which they are not fit. To take action for the restoration of rights and curbing injustice and deceit is not jealousy. That is something else. Injustice, discrimination and aggression, in whatever form they may be, should be resisted and opposed in an effective manner. Indifference and silence in such cases is in itself a mortal sin.

Hence it is not jealousy to criticise a person who has acquired wealth by unfair means. It is also not jealousy to shake a person off a position which he does not deserve. We should not be indifferent to the seizure of power and honour by unlawful means, but should try to put an end to injustice and see that the deserving man gets his due.

HOW TO PURGE SOUL OF THESE POLLUTIONS

The principles of Islamic education aim at the purification of man and the purging of his soul from pollutions. Naturally it is not easy to eradicate an evil trait, especially if it has taken root and already become a habit. Anyhow, this mysterious being known as man abounds in capabilities. Even to change a habit is not an impossible thing for him. It is not only possible but practicable also. At the most it is necessary that for this purpose all the potentialities of man should be harnessed and all the environmental conditions made favourable.

First of all man should take the help of his own inner self. For a successful self-reform there are two things which are important: one is the correct attitude which may give a new turn to his desires, and the other is a strong will. A strong will and surging enthusiasm are necessary to make and implement a resolute decision to bring about changes. If a strong will is accompanied by correct attitude the process of reform is bound to begin as the Qur'an says: *"Allah never changes the condition of a people unless they change what is in their hearts"*. (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:11).

That is why Islam holds that self-consciousness and a strong will play an important role in self-reform.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"You are your own physician. You know your disease as well as its cure. Now it is to be seen how far you are prepared to rise to the occasion and take care of yourself". He also said: "Allah does not allow him to be consgined to Hell who always exercises self-control, whether he is in the state of enthusiasm, fear, passion, pleasure or anger.

A self-controlling man who can always think aright and can take a correct decision and does not succumb to agitated emotions, transitory passions or old habits can keep himself safe from all troubles and can save himself from the fire of Hell.

Islam does not say that you should only suggest to others to do good things, nor does it say that you should compel anyone. It tell us to do something to awaken the self-consiousness of man and to eradicate his ignorance and narrow-mindedness with a view to enable him to think aright and take an independent decision. Imam al Sadiq (P) has said: "The enemy (devil) will mount on the neck of a person who is neither blessed with self-preaching nor has a companion to guide him".

Hence freedom and honour of man depends on self-criticism and having an inner adviser.

The Qur'an swears by this inner faculty of self-criticism which is necessary for self-building. It says: *"I swear by the Day of Resurrection, and I swear by the self-reproaching soul"*. (Surah al-Qiyamah, 1 – 2).

Other verses of the Qur'an concerning self-building show that this Divine Book regards self-criticism as one of the cornerstones of self-making.

Islam wants the feelings and conditions of man to be under his control and in his service.

Imam al Sadiq (P) says:
"Turn your heart into a virtuous friend and a dutiful son and turn your knowledge into a father to be obeyed by heart. Regard pollution of your soul as your enemy

against whom you are fighting".

Piety

Such a man is pious. He is careful. He observes the restraints imposed on him by his love for Allah and truth. He enjoys complete freedom but is subservient to Allah. It is this subservience which protects him from the slavery of others. Before doing anything he first thinks whether his action will please Allah or will displease Him.

He can put up with the displeasure of anyone else, but the displeasure of Allah is unbearable for him. He abstains from everything that may displease Him. This abstinence and abiding by the due restraints constitute piety.

A pious person cannot be compelled to commit a sin by any threat nor can he be allured by money, power or lust. The role of piety is so important that the Qur'an has regarded it the only criterion of man's value:

"The noblest of you before Allah is the most pious of you". (Surah al-Hujurat, 49:13).

Nobility of man depends on his purity and self-control. He who is the more pious is the more noble.

There exist many verses and traditions on the subject of piety. We quote below the translation of a portion of the well-known sermon delivered by Imam Ali (P) on piety at the request of one of his companions named Hammam:

"The pious are the virtuous people. They speak truth. Their dress is moderate. They walk unpretentiously. They refrain from what Allah has forbidden them. They listen attentively to enlightening useful information.

They are as hopeful in distress as in prosperity. Allah has so manifested Himself in the depth of their hearts that they attach no importance to anything else.

A pious man is staunch in his faith. He is gentle and far-sighted. His faith is strong and accompanied by conviction. He yearns for knowledge. He is indpendent, but moderate. He is submissive while worshipping. He maintains his dignity even in poverty. He shows patience in hardship. He seeks lawful means of livelihood. He is full of enthusiasm for the right path. He keeps totally clear of avarice. He has no objectionable desires. He keeps his anger under his control. All expect him to be good to them; none fears that he will do him any harm. He does not speak evil. He talks softly. He does not do anything objectionable. All he does is desirable. He is calm and composed in disturbed conditions. If he is well-off, he is thankful. He does not commit a sin for the sake of a friend. He never offends others by calling names or defaming them. He does not do wrong to his neighbour. He suffers hardships, but others have nothing to fear of him. He strives for gaining salvation in the Hereafter, but does not harm anybody. If he keeps away from some one, that is because he is care-free. If he comes close to anyone, that is because of his love and kindness. He does not keep himself away from anyone because of vanity, nor does he befriend anyone to cheat him". (Nahj-al-Balaghah, Extract from sermon 191 — This master-piece work of Imam Ali entitled Peak of Eloquence is published by Islamic Seminary).

Strengthening of will-power

From the foregoing discussion we come to the conclusion that man in his evolutionary movement should first of all draw strength from his inner force, the blooming of

which mostly depends on two things: one of them being his will-power and the other his self-consciousness and broad-mindedness.

To strengthen his will, he should undertake necessary practice and should make use of suitable exercises. It is one of the important and valuable roles of every dogmatic school to turn men into responsible individuals by inculcating in them a firm habit of abiding by the principles and rules of correct life which lend support to their will-power so that they may not succumb to selfishness, passions and the tendency of lack of restraint. The Islamic injunctions of offering prayers fives times a day, taking care of the cleanliness of the body and the clothes, ensuring that the place where prayers are offered is not a misappropriated one, the observance of the direction of the *qiblah* and the special month-long programme of keeping fast, are all intended to give man a sense of responsibility and to provide a firm basis for the regularity of his life.

Relation between fast and strengthening of will-power:
We already know that it is obligatory on all adult and sane Muslims, men and women, provided they are not travelling, ill, too old or infirm, to keep fast during the month of Ramazan, that is to abstain from eating, drinking, coition, plunging head into water, swallowing thick airborne dust and all other acts invalidating fast.

This holding out against passions, enduring hunger and thirst and resisting sexual desire awaken and arouse the dormant and unblooming inner force, provide an exercise in self-control and enable man to resist and not to succumb easily to the base desires like the outburst of lust, anger and selfishness.

Man is always subject to being over-whelmed by a number of misleading desires such as acquiring wealth by unlawful means, indulgence in illicit sexual contacts, licentiousness, succumbing to temptations etc.

There are many desires, passions and temptations which often flare up and give a blow to the dignity and position of man. It is, however, possible that he may increase his power of resistance and self-control, show perseverance against every evil, not succumb to every temptation and not respond to every call. At the time of the outburst of an unlawful desire he should exercise self-restraint, use his common sense, look into the future and keep the final result in view so that he may not sacrifice himself to a transient passion.

To develop this resisting power gradually one must have an occasion to fight against his desires and personal pleasures. Fast provides such an opportunity. It renders the required help in the development of this resistance. The Qur'an describes the creative role of the fast in these words: ***"Believers, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those who have gone before you, so that you may practice piety (and remain firm against sins and slips)"***. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:183).

Return to the right path — Repentance

A sinner gets polluted with his sin. He is on the verge of fall. All the same, he can start fighting against his bad habit. It is he who has so far been committing a sinful act and it is he who should now take a decision to change himself.

Man has the potentiality of returning to the right path of purity. Allah has also kept the way of return open

to him. He never turns a sinner from His Door. This invitation of Allah, the Compassionate, is always open:

"Say: Slaves of Allah! You who have committed excess against your own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed Allah forgives all sins (that you have committed heedlessly and have now sincerely repented for them). Surely Allah is the Forgiving, the Merciful". (Surah al-Zumar, 39:53).

This call for repentance and the possibility of being forgiven are very encouraging, and inspire one to reform himself at the earliest and return to the right path. They are not meant to lethargize.

Some people are under the impression that the way to repentance being always open, one can continue to commit sins so long as he likes till he eventually avails of an opportunity to repent. Had it been so, the promise of granting pardon would have been tantamount to the inducement to be permanently plunged in sins. The fact is that the more one gets habituated to sin, the weaker his power of decision becomes. His soul gets gloomier, and as a result thereof his desire to return to the right path totally dies out.

Furthermore, how can one know that the opportunity to return will continue to exist? As the time of the death of any person is not known, who knows how long he will live and what will be his future circumstances?

True repentance means that a person should feel ashamed of what he has done and should be keen to reform himself.

He should take the earliest practical steps to treat himself

in the same way as a patient afflicted by poisoning or a bacterial disease should. If such a patient instead of undergoing a full course of treatment for poisoning or taking antibacterial injections immediately, puts off his treatment thinking that some sort of cure is after all existing, his disease may become chronic and eventually incurable.

The holy Prophet has said: "Every disease has a cure and the cure of the sins is repentance".

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"As soon as a believer commits a sin, Allah grants him a respite of seven hours. If he asks for pardon and repents within this period, his sin is not written against him. But if this period lapses and he does not repent, the sin is recorded against him".

The holy Prophet was asked as to who were the good people? He said: "Those who feel happy when they do something good. If they commit a sin, they ask for pardon and repent. If anyone renders them any service, they are thankful to him.If they are afflicted by a distress, they endure it with patience. If they are annoyed with anyone, they forgive him".

If a man feels repentant about a sin, it means that his faith is alive, and he still distinguishes between what is good and what is bad. If he feels happy at a good act and feels uneasy about a bad one, it is clear that he can still be reformed.

Imam al Sadiq (P) said:
"He who feels pleased by his good acts and regrets his lapses, is a believer".

This feeling is a incentive which brings man to the right path and protects him from throwing off all restraints.

Imam Ali (P) has said:
"Repentance of a sinful act compels one to give it up".

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
If a man commits sin and sincerely feels sorry for it, Allah forgives him before he asks pardon for it. If Allah bestows a favour on anyone and he feels that Allah has been kind to him, He forgives him before he expresses gratitude.

This sub-conscious feeling of regret is sometimes called 'shame' *(haya)* which is regarded by Islam as a great virtue.

Imam al Sajjad (P) has said:
There are four qualities which if possessed by man, make his faith perfect; and purge him of sins. These qualities are: Abiding by the commitments made to others, truthfulness, having a sense of shame with regard to acts which are sinful in the eyes of Allah and the people and being well-behaved and polite to one's family.

According to Islamic traditions, Allah said in the Psalms of Daud:

"O Daud! Listen to what I say, for I tell you the truth. I say: whosoever comes to me with a feeling of regret for the sins he has committed and possesses the quality of shame, I forgive him. And as regards those who persist in their sins, I forget them".

This shows that the burden of the sins of those who

abstain from making their sins public is lighter, because they feel somewhat ashamed of their evil-deeds and do not also encourage others to emulate their bad example.

Anyhow repentance must be real, and one must be determined to eschew sins in future.

Imam al Baqir (P) has said:
"He who repents for his sin is like a man who never committed the sin. But he who asks for pardon but does not avoid sinning, is like a man who ridicules himself".

On being asked to explain the verse: ***"O you who believe! repent before Allah sincere repenting"*** (Surah al Tahrim, 66:8).

Imam al Sadiq (P) said:
"Sincere repenting means that one should regret his sin and never commit it again".

CREATIVE ROLE OF SENTIMENTS

External factors sometimes stimulate a mental feeling such as fear, hope, love, hatred etc. This feeling is called 'sentiment'.

Sentiments play a very effective role in human life. They give it freshness, colour and variety, and save it from boring monotony. They provide a powerful incentive for a number of creative activities and sometimes they stimulate man's will to action in such a way that no other factor can withstand it. Sentimental efforts are marked with vehemence and ardent decisiveness, and encourage one to make sacrifice and bear hardships zealously as if he relishes them. Our life abounds with the interesting and attractive instances of these sentiments. A real mother

possessing kind feelings keeps awake with pleasure night after night to look after her new-born. A dutiful son takes pleasure in serving his parents and does not hesitate to exert himself in any way. A devoted wife and a loving husband are always keen to do their best to ensure the comfort and welfare of each other. If anything endangers their family life, they heroically struggle to avert the threat. A gallant Muslim sacrifices even his life for the defence of the land of Islam and is not afraid of anything. In all these cases the incentive is a powerful sentimental feeling which very often prevails over the calculating reasoning and compels man not to allow reason to touch his sacrificial acts.

Real sentiments and artificial sentiments

Man's sentiment is one hundred per cent natural in all those cases in which it is related to his personal desires. When a man feels sad following a bitter incident involving his personal loss or when he feels happy because of a success gained by him, his sentiments of sorrow and joy and love and hatred are fully natural.

But what about the cases in which his child, father, mother, wife, brother or sister meets with a loss or an injury? In such cases also man normally feels sad. But the intensity of his feeling and the reason behind it are not the same in the case of all individuals and societies.

In the case of some individuals this feeling of sadness emanates from a sort of real attachment which one finds between himself and his children, his parents, his spouse, his brothers and sisters or his friends. This attachment is so real and basic that one feels that the loss or injury sustained by one's child has been sustained by oneself. In this case again we come across a real and true sentiment.

In this state one goes above his ego. His personality expands and embraces his child, his father, his mother, his wife, his brother, his sister, his relatives and his friends. Hence this kind of sentimental feeling is in reality a sort of growth and expansion of the personality of a man. But in the case of certain individuals the position is different. Their relationship with their father, mother, child, wife, brother, sister, relatives and friends is based on self-interest. A person whose love is of this kind likes his father because he gives him money and meets his expenses. He likes his mother because she nurses him when he is out of health. He loves his child because he gives him company or he hopes that in time of need he will help him.

He likes his spouse because she (or he) meets his domestic, economic or social needs. In all these cases the love shown for others is not real. It has no comparison with the beautiful, ardent and pure love which the parents normally have for their children. A person who has only artificial love does not feel uneasy if his father, mother or spouse is grieved. He loves them only so long as they benefit him. If a day comes when they are no longer of use to him, he treats them worse than the strangers. Years pass and he does not even enquire about his parents or relatives and friends. This is nothing but the soulless and mechanical morality of materialism.

Artificial sentiments

The mechanical-material morality does not believe in love for others as a fundamental principle. It only looks at it as a means of making one's own personal life successful and organizing one's relations with others on the basis of drawing the maximum personal benefit. According to it we should, of course, behave toward others politely,

should observe the customs and manners liked by them, should shake their hands warmly, should abide by the conventional rules of personal behaviour, and should always be respectful and smiling; but why? Not because we actually love them and take pleasure in their friendship, but because we want to ensure a better social position for ourselves and because we want to utilize their friendship and co-operation for achieving our own ends. This kind of morality is a sort of exploitation. It may be compared to the welfare services provided to the worker in industrial complexes, which are made available not because of any real respect for his rights, his humanity and his family but in order to draw the maximum profitable work from him. Look at the manager of an industrial unit. He behaves towards the workers of his factory politely and mixes with them warmly. He gives them an increase in their pay, visits them when they are ill and helps them in different ways. But he does not do all that for the sake of Allah or for love of humanity. Nor does he do that because he believes in justice and equality. He simply wants to be popular with his workers in order to be able to extract work from them.

In such cases attention is paid to other people not because they are fellow human beings, but because they 'serve my purpose'. So it is just another instance of the shameful manifestation of selfishness and egoism. It is because of my 'ego' that I like to be regarded a very efficient manager and want an increase in my pay and rank. Or if I am managing a unit which I have set up myself, I want higher profits and that is why I give importance to good relations between me and the workers of my concern.

In these circumstances the reaction of the workers will also be of a similar nature. On meeting the manager they will

display for him artificial respect accompanied by more artificial love. But in the heart of their hearts they will not have the least regard for this so-called efficient manager. They show him artificial courtesy and for each act of courtesy they expect a fresh reward.

This kind of infra-structure of social relations is totally unacceptable, for in this case everything revolves round selfishness and self-interest. If a day comes when a self-centered man finds that his interests are not served by love for others, he does not hesitate to be indifferent or even cruel to them, if his purpose is served that way. In such circumstances oppression and harshness becomes the principle of his life.

In our own times there are nations which are known for high ethical values and just human relations in their own lands. But we find that whenever the interests of these very so-called moral nations demand the utilization of the natural resources of others or capturing foreign markets for their industrial products, they exert pressure on other countries, wage sanguinary wars, cause devastation, indulge in massacres and commit heinous crimes. This is so because the foundation of their sentiments and the real motive of their friendship and hostility are nothing but egoism and self-interest. We find that these very nations after fighting a barbaric war change their cloak, wear a sympathic face and start making amends for the losses caused by the war. They send aid and rehabilitation teams. But in fact all their aid and services are a complementary part of their war. Even their sending of food-stuffs for the starving people of another country is not due to pure humanitarian motives. It is just like fuelling the power-generating machine of a factory so that it may continue to operate and produce the maximum quality of goods for the

benefit of its owner.

Real sentiments

From Islamic point of view the artificial sentiments as explained above, cannot be called human and Islamic.

A man came to the holy Prophet and requested him to tell him a way of life which might entitle him to Paradise. The holy Prophet said: "Behave toward other people as you like them to behave towards you. Do not like for others what you do not like for yourself".

As such, according to the Islamic teachings, one should not consider himself to be at the head of all others and the axis of everything. He should give the same status to others as to himself. This is the teaching based on the Islamic philosophy of equality, according to which all men are equal.

The holy Prophet has said:
"The highest virtue is to be just in your judgement even if it goes against you. Regard your brother-in-faith as your equal, and remember Allah in all circumstances".

This is the quality which is the criterion of faith and a matter of honour to man and human society.

The holy Prophet has also said:
"Remember that Allah will not enhance but the honour of the man who observes justice in all cases arising between him and others. A true believer is he who observes equality between himself and the needy persons in the matter of his money, and makes himself a model for his behaviour towards others".

Just as one wants that others should respect him, should

tell him the truth, should help him, should be faithful to him, should observe his rights and should be polite to him, he also should behave towards them in the same way. He also should respect them, should be truthful to them, should help them, should be faithful to them, should observe their rights and should be polite to them, because, in fact, there is no difference between him and others.

Similarly as he does not like that others should abuse him, speak evil of him, accuse him, block his way to progress or be arrogant to him, he also should not behave towards them in a bad way. He should refrain from every act of transgression, and should realize that others also are human beings like him. Their joy and grief should be shared by him.

Imam al Baqir (P) was asked to explain the Qur'anic verse: *"You shall speak to men good words"*. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:83). He said: "Tell the people what you like most that they should tell you".

According to the Islamic teachings, ethical is all that brings man closer to Allah and procures His pleasure. Look into this tradition: The holy Prophet was asked whom Allah loves most? The Prophet said: "Him who is the most useful to other men".

Hence usefulness to men and service to society are the criterions of nearness to Allah.

Another saying of the Prophet may be regarded as a principle of the Islamic teachings on social relations:

"All human being are the family of Allah. Allah loves him most who does service to His family".

If we ponder over these Islamic expressions, we find that on principle social sentiments should extend from self to society. As all human beings have been created by One Allah and are his slaves, they all are equal. They should serve one another and every one of them should look upon others as he looks upon himself. In view of the fact that the basis of Islam is belief in the Unity of Allah, He should be the fountain head of all human activities, fears and hopes. Service to humanity is the way to seek His pleasure. The gist of the Islamic teachings is the worship of Allah and service to humanity. Islam wants to produce men who may regard service as the foundation of truth and purity.

No doubt one can render service to others and be polite to them from purely philanthropic motives also. But in this case if his services are not appreciated, he feels disheartened and his enthusiasm for them disappears. On the other hand if one renders service to others for the sake of Allah, his attention continues to be concentrated on seeking His pleasure and attention. That is why the man of Islam earnestly loves to do service to others. He is keen to do whatever he can whether others appreciate it or not. He often prefers to do his service secretly so that it may not be polluted with hypocrisy or ostentation and the person to whom service is rendered, may not feel insulted. The man of Islam renders sincere service because of his love for humanity and his ardent devotion to Allah. He makes sacrifice for society and devotes his time and other potentialities to the service of the under-privileged. He takes delight in his sacrifice because he makes it for the sake of Allah who knows his intention and his performance, both secret and open.

As such, the man of Islam is a lover of mankind. His love having a valuable basis, gives a pure and earnest tone to

his philanthropy and brings into existence a stable bond of superior quality between him and others.

Family sentiments

Besides the love of mankind, which is a general sentiment having a vast field, every man by nature has a special feeling for his parents, his children, his brothers and sisters and to a lesser degree for his other close relatives. This feeling which is a natural sentiment constitutes a stronger bond within a narrower realm. An interesting specimen of this sentiment is mother's love for her child.

Islam attaches great importance to this constructive force and has always tried to guide it in the right direction.

One of the companions of Imam al Sadiq (P) asked him what acts were more virtuous. The Imam said: "To offer prayers on time, to be good to one's parents and to fight in the path of Allah".

Another companion of his says: "One day I told the Imam that my son, Ismail behaved towards me very well". The Imam said: "I already liked him, but now I love him more".

Then the Imam added: "One day the foster-sister of the holy Prophet came to see him. The Prophet felt very happy. He spread a rug for her and asked her to sit on it. He continued to talk to her warmly till she rose and bade good-bye. A little later her brother came, but the Prophet did not show him the same respect and love.

The companions of the Prophet asked him how it was that he did not receive that man as warmly as his sister! The Prophet said that as his sister was more dutiful to her

parents, she deserved more respect and regard.

According to another tradition, Imam al Sadiq (P) was asked about the meaning of 'kindness' occurring in the Qur'anic verse: *"Show kindness to your parents".*

The Imam said: "Kindness means that you should talk with them with courtesy, and that you do not compel them to ask you for what they needed although they may be independent basically. In other words, as soon as you feel that they require a thing, provide them with it. Don't you know that Allah says: *"You cannot attain unto piety until you spend out of that which you love".* (Surah Ale Imran, 3:93).

The Imam said further:
Allah has said: *"Lower unto them the wings of submission through mercy".* (Surah Bani Israel, 17:25).

It means that you should never frown at them but should on the other hand look at them with kindness and sympathy. You should not raise your voice above theirs. Your hand should not be above their hand (while you are giving them something or taking something from them). While accompanying them you should not walk ahead of them.

We postpone the elaborate discussion of the reciprocal rights and obligations of the parents and the children to some other occasion. Anyhow, briefly it may be said that the responsibility of the children covers financial and legal matters as well as the mode of their behaviour towards their parents and the observance of love and respect for them. Especially if the parents are old and infirm, the children have greater responsibility. Even after

their death, the parents are not to be ignored and the tie with them is not to be severed.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"What prevents you from doing good to your parents, whether they are alive, or dead? Each one of you should offer prayers, give alms, perform pilgrimage and keep fast on behalf of his parents. Allah will reward them as well as you. He will also bestow an additional reward on you for being good to your parents".

Being good to kindred
The Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (P) has said:
"Maintain your relations with your kindred at least by greeting them. The Qur'an says: ***Be careful of your duty to Allah. That Allah towards whom and towards your kindred you are responsible. Surely Allah is ever a watcher over you".*** (Surah al-Nisa 4:1).

The Qur'an also says:
"(Such are) those who join that which Allah has commanded to be joined, and fear their Lord and dread an awful reckoning". (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:21).

Being good to relations produces valuable and constructive effects on one's own life.

Imam al Baqir (P) has said:
"Maintaining good relations with the relatives improves one's morality, makes him generous, purifies his soul, expands his means of livelihood and prolongs the span of his life".

It is evident that good relations with the relatives have two aspects: firstly, moral love and affection and secondly,

financial help and other kinds of support and assistance. Both these aspects go directly against selfishness and as such produce a constructive effect. These sacrifies are a campaign against personal selfishness which produce a constructive effect and ensure purity of soul.

When a man shows love to others, naturally they also love him and do service to him in process of time. This help and support enable him to obtain better facilities for securing prosperity and progress. Thus the expansion of the means of livelihood and the prolongation of life are ensured.

Furthermore, the prolongation of life in consequence of being good to the blood-relations may possibly be a sort of those spiritual effects with which Allah has invested all good deeds.

Even if we let alone these worldly effects, there can be no doubt about the reward in the Hereafter.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"Maintenance of good relations with the kindred and doing good to them facilitates rendering one's account in the next world and protects him from committing sins. Hence you should have good relations with your kindred and should do good to your brethren at least to the extent of greeting them warmly and returning their greetings".

In contrast, severing relations with the kindred is as bad as breaking a covenant of Allah and creating mischief in the world. It has very bad consequences. The Qur'an says: *"Those who break the covenant of Allah after ratifying it and sever that which Allah ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the earth. Those are them who are the losers"*. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:27).

Love for neighbours

Those who live in the neighbourhood of each other, have a bigger claim on each other. There is no doubt that in this case any natural or family bond does not exist. But the fact that they live close to each other, meet often and get acquainted with each other, creats a right. Besides, the neighbours have a number of such common interests as others do not have.

If the individuals living in a building create too much noise, throw rubbish outside their house, set up their roof gutter in such a way that water flows to the passage by which others pass or indulge in some undesirable social activities, it is the neighbours who suffer most as a result of their improper behaviour.

Thus neighbourhood brings a number of individuals and several families together and creats certain problems common to them. Therefore, these people who are bound together have some special rights and obligations in relation to one another, which they have to discharge to be able to lead a peaceful and responsible life.

The following is a part of the instructions imparted by the holy Prophet Muhammad (P) to his daughter, Fatimah-tuz-Zehra (P):

"Here who believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, must not hurt his neighbour; he who believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection must respect his guest; he who believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, must say a good thing or keep quiet".

We find that special attention has been paid in Islam to the observance of the rights of neighbours, and it has been declared to be a sign of faith. It is a fact that true faith cannot exist without the observance of the rights of the neighbours.

The holy Prophet has said:
"He who sleeps satiated while his neighbour is hungry does not have belief in me. Allah does not look favourably upon the people of the land where a person goes to bed hungry".

A man from among the *Ansar* (Medinian) came to the Prophet and said that he had purchased a house in a street, but his next door neighbour was not a good man at all and he was afraid of mischief on his part. The holy Prophet asked Ali, Salman, Abuzar and one more person (the reporter of this incident says that he does not remember his name but possibly he was Miqdad) to go to the Masjid and proclaim as loudly as possible that:

"He whose neighbour is afraid of his mischievousness is not a true believer".

They went there and made the announcement thrice. Thereafter the Prophet made a sign with his hand and said that the inmates of 40 houses in front, 40 houses in rear, 40 houses to the right and 40 houses to the left were to be regarded as neighbours.

In view of the foregoing these moral instrucitons of Islam should not be taken as marginal or mere petty formalities. They are basic instructions and so interwoven with faith that their violation shakes its very foundation.

To save oneself from the wickedness of a neighbour one should, as far as possible, use discreet and peaceful methods. If they prove ineffective, only then resort may be made to more violent means, for mischief has to be resisted in any case. Anyhow care should be taken that the mischief is not countered by further mischief.

Imam al Baqir (P) says:
"A man came to the Prophet and complained that his neighbour was causing him trouble. The Prophet advised him to be patient. He came again and complained once more. The Prophet again asked him to be patient. He came the third time and made the same complaint. The holy Prophet said:

"On Friday when large groups of people go for Jum'ah prayers, you put out the furniture of your house on the street and tell the people that you are vacating your house because such and such of your neighbours has been causing trouble to you".

The man did as he was told. A large number of people came to know of his grievance. The news reached the troublesome neighbour that the general opinion had been excited against him. He immediately came to the man and apologized. He requested him to put back his furniture into the house and assured him that he would cause no inconvenience to him in future.

Spiritual brotherhood
According to the logic of Islam, the brotherhood of faith is the most deep-rooted unity which creates relationship and responsibility.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"Every believer is a brother-in-faith of every other believer.

They are just like a body of which all parts feel uneasy, if one part of it feels pain. The souls of two believers spring from one soul. All are connected with Allah. The soul of a believer is more closely bound up with Allah than the light of the sun is with the sun.

He has also said:
"A believer is the brother of another believer. He is his eye and his guide. He never betrays him. He never cheats him; and never goes back on a word given to him".

We see that the spiritual tie between two believers should be strong enough to avert the danger of every kind of malice and treachery so that both of them may feel absolutely safe.

The religious tie revolves round the faith in Allah. If the rights of the religious brotherhood are not observed, the bond with Allah will also be severd. We observe in the following report, which is one of the hundreds on this subject, that the bond of friendship with Allah can be maintained only if the rights of the co-religionist Muslims are observed, otherwise it will be severed and nullified. This report mentions some of the mutual rights and obligations of the Muslims:

One of the companions of Imam al Sadiq (P) asked him: "What rights does a Muslim owe to another Muslim?" He said: "There are seven such rights and all of them are obligatory. A person who violates any of them, disobeys Allah and will be deprived of His favour".

"What are these?"
"I fear you may not observe them after knowing them".
"I will seek help from Allah".

"The easiest of them is that you should like for him what you like for yourself and dislike for him what you dislike for yourself".

"The second right is that you should avoid to displease another Muslim and should accede to his requests".

"The third right is that you should help him physically and financially".

"The fourth right is that you should guide him to the right path. You should be his eyes and the mirror through which he may see the truth".

"The fifth right is that you should not have your fill of food and drink, while he is hungry or thirsty. You should ensure that while you are clad he should also not be naked".

"The sixth right is that if you have a servant and he has not, you should send your servant to wash his clothes, to prepare his food and to make his bed".

"The seventh right is that you should believe him when he makes a statement on oath, should accept his invitation, should visit him when he is out of health and should attend his funeral. If you know that he has a need, do your best to fulfil it before he asks you to help him. If you do so, only then you will have established your religious tie with him and strengthened friendly and brotherly relations, between him and yourself".

COMPANIONSHIP

Islamic teachings have recommended the establishment of friendly and cordial relations with others. In this study we shall first mention a few specimens of the instructions of the Prophet and Imams of his family in this respect, and then we shall further elucidate companionship and shall mention its negative aspects.

The holy Prophet has said:
"As my Lord has commanded me to perform my religious duties, in the same way he has ordered me to be friendly with the people".

The holy Prophet has also said:
"Companionship is a matter of pride and honour. When it departs, humiliation and helplessness arrives in its wake".

Imam Ali (P) has said:
"A believer makes friends with others. He who does not mix with others warmly and has no friends, is no good".

Imam al Sadiq has quoted the holy Prophet as having said:
"Allah is the Companion. He likes companionship and encourages it".

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"A family lacking the spirit of companionship is bereft of divine blessing".

We learn from these traditions that in the programme of Islamic teachings companionship occupies a prominent place. It has an equal status along with religious duties in attracting the attention and grace of Allah.

There are people who are tempramentally rigid and

reserved. They neither get close to others, nor do welcome others to be close to them. The reason for this isolation may be one of the following:

(a) Sometimes it may be a sort of self-conceit and venity on account of which one does not take others into account or does not consider them to be his equals. Hence he does not mix with them or does not become free with them. This is the same egoism and arrogance which we discussed earlier.

(b) Some individuals suffer from a feeling of personal inferiority. They fear that they may not acquit themselves well in the society, may not be able to observe the rules of etiquette, or may do or say something which may bring shame to them. For these reasons they seldom contact others. In this case one should fight against this feeling of inferiority and should try to promote self-confidence. In most cases this tendency is harmful and deprives man of many opportunities.

(c) Sometimes this state is the result of disappointments and failures in life. They so shatter a person that he loses all hope and initiative. He does not feel interested in meeting others or becoming intimate with them; or he becomes so pessimistic about the environment of his life that he does not trust anyone. He does not find anybody sincere enough to be his friend. This feeling of despair, pessimism and lack of confidence is, of course, a dangerous disease, which produces an adverse effect on one's relations with all other people, and hence one should fight against this tendency assiduously.

(d) Some people do not like to make friends because they are preoccupied with some positive work, and feel

that friendship will interfere with their important job.

In this connection it may be said that in all matters the best policy is that of moderation. Every good act is desirable only to the extent that it does not interfere with other essential activities. Companionship is good, but for its sake other duties and responsibilities should not be sacrificed.

As a matter of principle we should see what is the idea behind friendship and companionship. Does companionship mean that one should regularly waste his time? It is of course not proper to spend one's valuable time in unnecessary visits and idle gossip but at the same time it is also wrong to be detached from the people and have no relations with them, for in this case one becomes isolated and feels lonely. A friendless person achieves little success in life. As too much friendship interferes with positive activities, similarly having no friends also has harmful consequences. Many a practical achievement in various fields is due to friendship.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"He who works on the basis of acquaintance and friendship, secures the desired results".

Therefore a Muslim must have friendly and cordial relations with other Muslims, paying due attention to moderation and to the fact that his relationship with others should be fruitful.

It is also worth remembering that Islamic friendship must be sincere and heart-felt. Islam requires sincerity and truthfulness in every field – truthfulness in speech, truthfulness in expressing sentiments and showing love. A faked

and superficial show of love and friendship is either a fraud or a form of hypocrisy, which have been severely denounced by Islam.

Choosing friends and companions

In this connection it may also be mentioned that though Islam urges to have cordial relations with others, yet to avoid corruption and the harmful effect of the company of the wicked and the mischievous individuals, strictly forbids every kind of contact and intimacy with them. Imam al Sajjad (P) gave the following advice to his son, Imam al Baqir (P): "My dear son! Avoid the company of five categories of people. You should neither talk with them nor accompany them or travel with them".

Imam al Baqir (P) said, "Please tell me who they are".

Imam al Sajjad (P) said:

- "Avoid the company of a liar. He is like a mirage and portrays a false picture of things.
- Avoid the company of corrupt people. They will sell you for a paltry price.
- Avoid the company of a miser. He will bring bad name to you before you need his money.
- Avoid the company of a fool. He would do you harm while intending to do good.
- Avoid the company of a person who has severed connections with his relatives. Such a person has been denounced at three places in the Qur'an".

Imam Ali (P) in the course of one of his sermons says: "A Muslim should avoid friendship with three kinds of persons: A shamelessly wicked person, a fool and a liar. A shamelessly wicked person paints his evil deeds as good and expects you also to follow his example. He serves you

no purpose, neither in this world nor in the next. To be close to him is a misfortune, and to be on calling terms with him is disgraceful".

"A fool can do you no good, nor can you expect him to save you from any calamity. In many cases he may try to benefit you, but he will do harm to you. His death is better than his life; his silence is better than his speech; and his being away is better than his being near".

"As for a liar, life with him can never be pleasant for you. He carries tales from you to others and from others to you. If he gives you a true report it is followed by a false one. His reputation is slurred. So much so that when he says something true nobody believes him. Due to the enmity which he entertains in his heart for the people he estranges them from one another and creates malice in their hearts. Be careful and do your duty to Allah".

Cheerfulness and politeness

Beside being friendly one should be polite and cheerful, so that other people may enjoy his company. His social behaviour should be a sign of his cordiality.

The holy Prophet has said:
"Cheerfulness removes malice from the heart".

He has also said:
"There are two traits of character which will, more than anything else, lead my *ummah* to Paradise – piety and politeness".

Once, while speaking to the Hashimites, the holy Prophet said an interesting thing:

"As you cannot win the hearts of all the people by means of your wealth, try to win them by cheerfulness and polite manners".

Imam al Baqir (P) has said:
"His faith is more perfect who has better manners and better habits".

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"Good manners melt the sins in the same way in which the sun melts the snow".

On being asked to define good manners, the Imam said: "Be courteous, talk in a pleasing manner and receive your brother-in-faith cheerfully".

"Bad manners ruin faith in the same way in which vinegar destroys honey".

Bad manners not only cause inconvenience to others, but a rude person tortures himself also.

"A man having bad manners tortures himself".

Abiding by rules of social behaviour
Besides the general principle that behaviour toward others should be based on cordiality and politeness, certain valuable rules concerning etiquette have been mentioned by the Prophet and the Imams. We give below a few examples thereof.

The holy Prophet has said:
"If anyone of you likes a brother Muslim, he should ask him about his and his father's name and the family to which he belongs. It is necessary that he should know

the particulars of his friend. Otherwise friendship is meaningless".

The holy Prophet has described one of the signs of the incompetence of a person in these words:

"That some one of you may meet a person and be inclined to know who he is and to which place he belongs, but may leave him before asking him about that".

Hence it is one of the principles of social behaviour that we should introduce ourselves to those whom we meet and find out the names and addresses of each other.

When two persons talk to each other, their talk should be polite and pleasant.

The holy Prophet has said:
"He who shows respect and kindness to his brother Muslim and sets his worries at ease while talking to him, shall be blessed by Allah".

Rules of conventional Islamic behaviour include hand-shaking, sitting respectfully and properly attending to the visitors.

The holy Prophet divided his attention equally among his companions. Sometimes he looked to this one and sometimes to that one. He never stretched his feet in the presence of others. If someone gave him his hand, he did not withdraw his own hand till the other person withdrew his. After the people came to know of his habit, they avoided to clasp his hand for a long time.

The same practice has been recommended to others. If

anybody shakes hands with you, do not withdraw your hand until he withdraws his. Similarly if anybody comes to see you, do not leave him till he himself takes leave. If anybody begins to say something to you, listen to him till he has finished.

Reception and farewell

The holy Prophet has said: "If a visitor comes to your place, it is his right that you should receive him warmly on his arrival and accompany him at least a few steps on his departure".

It is a part of good manners to accompany the guest at the time of his parting upto the outer door of the house and thus show him respect and love.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"Once the Commander of the Faithful was travelling along with a ***zimmi***, (an unbeliever under the protection of a Muslim government) who did not recognize him and did not know that at that time he was the caliph. The ***zimmi*** asked the Imam where he was going. He replied that he was going to Kufah. At the time of parting of their ways, the ***zimmi*** noticed that his Muslim companion was still going along with him. He said:

"Did you not say that you were going to Kufah?"
"Yes, I did".
"Are you not going the wrong way?"
"I know my way".
"Then why are you coming along with me?"

"It is a rule of good manners to accompany a companion for some distance at the time of parting. That is what our Prophet has said".

"Is it a fact that there is such an instruction in Islam?"
"Yes, there is".
"It must be because of such good manners that people readily follow Islam. Be a witness that I embrace your religion".

Then he turned along with the Imam to the way leading to Kufah, and as soon as he learnt that his companion was Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, he embraced Islam in his presence.

Humility

According to the Islamic teachings, humility is a rule of personal behaviour that helps in the establishment of healthy social relations on the basis of cordiality and understanding. We have already discussed humility and learnt that it does not mean a feeling of inferiority and helplessness.

One who humiliates himself and gives a blow to his dignity, acts against the teachings of Islam.

Real humility has been described in a report from Imam al Riza (P) as under:

"Humility has several grades. One of them is that man should know his exact worth and should honestly place himself where he should be. He should behave toward others as he likes others to behave toward him. He should not ill-treat even the one who misbehaves. He should suppress his anger and should be tolerant and forgiving. Allah loves the virtuous".

The holy Prophet is reported to have said:
"Alms-giving increases one's wealth. Therefore give alms so

that Allah may bless you. Humility enhances one's position. Be modest so that Allah may exalt you. Tolerance makes one honourable. Forgive so that Allah may bestow honour on you".

In the reports about the manners and behaviour of the Prophet and the Imams, we come across many instances of their humility. But their manners never humbled them. They only enhanced their popularity and personality.

We find that their dress was simple. Their food was simple. They used to sit with the poor. They were first to greet others. In the company of the Prophet there was no distinction of high and low. He and his companions sat in a circle. While walking, he did not get ahead of others. When sitting, he did not allow anyone to be standing beside him. He treated even his servants as his friends. He never allowed anyone to flatter him or to treat him as one higher than a servant of Allah. He took part in domestic work. He made his purchases himself. He had no ceremonious living and no pomp and show about him. Even the humblest could talk to him freely. He spoke softly. He was always polite and kept smiling.

Correspondence

It is a part of Islamic manners to make friendly correspondence and to keep in touch with the friends away from home by writing to them.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"To keep contact with the brethren-in-faith they should be visited when they are at home and correspondence should be made with them when they are away". Reply to a letter is obligatory like reply to salutation.

He has also said:
"When two persons meet each other, one who salutes earlier is nearer to Allah and His Prophet".

RESPECT FOR ELDERS AND KINDNESS TO YOUNGERS

"Respect your friends. Do not quarrel with each other. Do not hurt each other. Do not be jealous. Do not be miserly. Be earnestly devoted to Allah". (Imam al Baqir:P)

These rules of good behaviour assume a special form dependent on the comparative age of the other party. If you meet a person who is older in age then you are, you must show him due respect.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:
"Respect for an aged person is a part of the respect for Allah".

The holy Prophet has said:
"He who holds in respect a person who has lived long in Islam and has grown old will be saved by Allah from the suffering of the Day of Resurrection".

He has also said:
"When an elder of a community comes to you, pay him due respect".

If the other party is younger, love and regard should be shown to him. The same rule applies to brothers and sisters. The youngers should respect and obey the elders and should behave respectfully in their presence. The elders should show kindness to the youngers and should love and protect them.

The holy Prophet has said:
"Respect your elders and be kind to your youngers".

HOSPITALITY

One of the rules of the Islamic social behaviour is hospitality. In the Islamic sources we meet with abundant traditions encouraging this valuable quality. The recommendations made by the holy Prophet to his daughter, Fatimah tuz Zehra (P) included this one:

"Whoever believes in the Day of Resurrection, should treat his guest hospitably".

"The best of you is he who gives food to the people, greets them loudly and prays at night when others are sleeping".

We read in the account of the life of the holy Prophet and the Imams that they took much interest in receiving guests. They frequently had guests at their meals. Some of them, such as Imam Hasan al Mujtaba (P) maintained elaborate guest-houses where they received a large number of people every day.

By receiving guests and showing hospitality to them one enhances one's sociability, increases one's circle of friends, makes financial sacrifice and shares his wealth with others and honours them. All these things are desired by Islam. Of course separate instructions exist in regard to feeding the hungry and helping the needy. These deeds have been vehemently urged in Islam.

In addition to normal hospitality, there are certain special occasions on which guests are to be invited and entertained. Such a reception is called ***walimah'***. The holy Prophet has said: "A ***walimah*** is due only on five occasions: Wedding, birth of a child, circumcision, building of a new house and return from a pilgrimage to Mecca".

There is no doubt that when several forces join together, they become more effective. Many a big job cannot be accomplished by individual effort, especially during the present age when collective relations are developing and the jobs are tending to become more elaborate and complicated.

Small capital cannot compete with business giants. Divided forces are subjugated by big powers. Higher scientific research cannot be fruitful without co-operation and co-ordination. Social services and social activities on a large scale are not practicable with scattered human resources and limited capital.

Such actions as patronage of an orphan, providing food to a few needy persons, educating a few children in a modest school, or arranging some individual training or guidance might have been regarded in the past as an accomplishment, but in the modern age of competition such solitary and limited steps cannot be considered to be adequate.

In our age large scale teaching, training, scientific and co-operative organizations are required to produce any constructive effect on the society.

Hence, the far-sighted people should, besides making individual efforts, take positive collective steps and also feel a sense of responsibility. Such efforts should be made in the form of a group.

Pre-requisities for collective work

(1) One aim and one policy

The persons who want to work together must know clearly

what they aim at by doing that work. First of all they should know what they want, and then should pursue their objective with understanding, confidence and interest. If the aim is not predetermined everyone will go his own way so as to implement his own ideas. The result will be confusion and disintegration.

To have a definite aim is not necessary only for collective work, but is necessary for individual activities also. If a person selects a subject for his education, picks up a book for study, decides to make a journey, chooses a profession or calls on certain people, he should know why and what for he is doing that. Aimless activity means wastage of time and effort and confusion in life. That is the position in the case of individual activity. As far as collective work is concerned, it is far more necessary to have a definite aim, because in this case the time, enegy and capital of so many people will be involved, and as such, aimlessness will cause a bigger loss. Hence a definite and clear aim accepted by all those who co-operate for this purpose, is essential for any collective work.

Further, the whole group of organizers must have the same policy; in the sense that they must have pre-determined the ways and means of reaching their objective and mentioned the same in the articles of association.

Suppose a social organization aims at the intellectual guidance of the society, and all its organizers agree to this aim. Still it should be known how they intend to carry out the propose service. Will they carry it out through the establishment of schools and academies, by publishing books and pamphlets, by holding conferences and seminars etc. And in each case what will be the level of their activity and how will the work begin? On all these points the

organizers must take a unanimous decision.

(2) **Recognition of one's own limitations and those of others**

Usually people are not prepared to come out of their shell and take others into account. Everyone thinks that he understands everything and is fit to do every job. At the time of the division of responsibility, for example, election of the executive body, the chairman or the managing director, everybody thinks that he is quite fit to hold the particular post.

The holy Prophet said:
"May Allah bless him who knows his worth and his position and does not go beyond his limit".

One should be bold enough to admit that he has certain short-comings and cannot shoulder certain responsibilities. He should admit that someone else is better than he is, and, for example, has better managing capacity, can take firmer decisions, is more industrious or has a broader outlook. Should there be such a group of people of which everyone knows where he stands and recognizes the weak and strong points of himself and others, it is easier to put every piece in its right place and distribute responsibilities on the basis of competence. In such a case the net output resulting from the mutual co-operation of that group will be far bigger.

(3) **Just appraisal of one's own work and that of others**

A number of people may jointly achieve success in their work and may gradually build up their position. In this case it is necessary to recognize the factors effective in the success and appreciate them. It will not be proper if everyone claims that the progress is due to his initiative

and ignores the efforts made and the trouble taken by others. It is also wrong to blame and criticise others for every case of stagnation or failure. One should be just, realistic and impersonal. If it is proved that he himself is responsible for a failure, he should either improve himself and make amends for the past mistakes, or step aside and vacate the place for a more competent person. If however it is found that somebody else is responsible, his explanation should be called for and effort should be made to give him better training. This judgement should be impartial even if the closest relatives or friends are involved.

The Qur'an says:
"Believers, adhere to justice and bear witness before Allah, even though it be against yourselves, your parents or your relatives". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:135).

The constructive and effective role of the individuals should always be appreciated so that values bloom better, positive forces bear fruit and more progress is achieved.

Otherwise with the non-appreciation of efficient persons the promotion of pretenders and intriguers and the habit of taking undue credit for the work of others, the real workers will gradually be disheartened and lose interest, with the result that by and by the whole machinery will come to a stand-still and the association will disintegrate.

(4) Abstention from egoism and being self-opinionated
Egoism is a great curse for collective work. A person who pays no attention to the views of others and thinks that at the meetings he alone has the right to speak while others have to listen and endorse the decisions taken by him, will be left alone. In case he has much influence, he will

make others submit to him unwillingly. In such a case, it will become the work of an individual and will no longer be a collective work. Others will only be his tools and functionaries and not his associates and co-workers.

But if everybody recognizes the right of others and respects their opinion, all ideas and forces are put to use, everyone is encouraged to take an active interest, and the work becomes truly collective.

(5) Respect for majority opinion

Whenever the individuals are required to express their opinion on a question, it is a duty of everybody to weigh properly all its aspects and then form a firm opinion. Once he has done so, he should be able to defend and explain his view. If still the result of voting goes against him, he should unreservedly submit to the opinion of the majority and should earnestly co-operate in the implementation of the decision taken. It is wrong to have a negative attitude. No doubt it is difficult to take an action against one's own inclination and opinion, but collective interest has to be given preference over individual interest so that work may not suffer.

It is obvious that the principle of abiding by the opinion of majority is valid only in the case of the questions which are subject to voting and where the opinion of the majority is not repugnant to the basic principles ratified by all members at the beginning of their undertaking. Otherwise if the majority opinion violates the basic principles, it has no value.

Suppose some persons jointly set up an industrial company and in its prospectus they lay down that their organization will take no steps contrary to the Islamic injunctions.

In this case if they decide to do a thing which is definitely against Islamic law, their decision, even if it is unanimous, will be null and void. However, if the decision conforms to all the agreed principles, but does not suit one or a few individuals, then the opinion of the majority should prevail and their decision should be implemented, for it was accepted by all members from the beginning that the decision of the majority would be enforced. In such a case nobody has a right to non-co-operate after a decision has been taken and ratified.

Elections for various posts and offices should be free from partiality and nepotism. Fitness and suitability should be the only criteria. Once free and fair elections have taken place, it is the duty of every member to co-operate with those who have been elected and give them his whole-hearted support, even though the result of the election be against his personal wish.

Going minutely through the above mentioned principles we observe that the basic condition for the success of any collective work, in addition to faith in the objective and a feeling of responsibility, is self-control and fight against egoism. A self-respecting extrovert person gifted with will power can always participate in collective work. This participation will train him to be useful to himself and the society.

Once when the Muslims were back after a fierce fighting, Prophet Muhammad (P) asked them to prepare themselves for a major *jihad*. They cried in wonder: "Which other *jihad!*" The Prophet said: "*Jihad* against yourselves".

Major Jihad

The illuminant and constructive human life has no meaning other than strenuous effort and a struggle for gradual perfection, better life and the establishment of an ideal society.

Just to eat and sleep, to build and ruin, and to exert oneself day and night for the sake of one's stomach, while living under the shadow of a bayonet having no share in the light of knowledge and perfection, culture and advancement and the development of moral faculties cannot be called an honourable human life. According to the third revolutionary leader of the Shi'ah, Imam Husayn, "Life is nothing but faith and Jihad".

Jihad for the sake of faith and belief;
Jihad for freedom and independence;
Jihad for the restoration of lost rights;
Jihad for the assistance of the helpless and the oppressed;
Jihad for gradual perfection, culture, knowledge and virtue; and lastly
Jihad against one's own egoism, which is the most important and according to the holy Prophet of Islam, *"Jihad Akbar"*.

In principle the object for which the great Prophets have been raised and which constituted the mission of the holy Prophet of Islam has been the perfection of good morals, the nourishment of the human soul, intellect and will and the guidance of man towards "light", culture and advancement. In the eye of the holy Prophet of Islam the making and training of a man is of greater importance and more valuable than anything on which the sun shines. Similarly according to the holy Qur'an, greatness of man and his personality lies in his surpassing others in virtue and piety.

From the point of view of Islam the importance of fighting against one's own passions lies in the fact that good and orderly human life depends on such a fight. Should life be moving only round material values having no share of spirituality and high moral qualities it would push man, more and more towards bad luck, lack of restraint, violation of law, mental restlessness and distrust of one another and would plunge him down into the abyss of destruction. The qualities of savagery, barbarity and aggression would develop in him, and consequently scientific discoveries, inventions and industrial development instead of being utilized for the comfort and freedom of man and the reduction of the burden of his life would become tools for the advancement of the objects and interests of the greedy and the selfish and would be utilized for enslaving and deceiving the masses and destroying the helpless nations. This situation is already prevailing in the modern world, which has based its life on materialism devoid of moral qualities and human principles. We see that the mechanical civilization, technological advancement, discovery of atom, manufacture of satellites, conquest of space, man's landing on the moon and similar other human achievements not only have not diminished the barbarity, savagery and brutal disposition of man and have not cured any of the ailments of society, but have increased the restlessness, distress, illusionment, helplessness and perplexity of mankind. New scientific discoveries have made the demon of war and bloodshed dominate society to a larger extent as compared with the age of barbarity and cave life and have brought the world to the brink of an all-destructive war. The entire resources of the super powers are being devoted to the manufacture of improved and more sophisticated weapons.

In the past the darkness of night separated the two armies

and suspended fighting, but nowadays thanks to the tremendous development of industry and mechanical civilization, now the war makes no distinction between day, night month and year. The war operations are no longer restricted to the battle-field. Whereas (according to the statement of a recent conference of the unofficial organisations for Disarmament) 800 thousand persons lost their lives in 29 wars between 1820 - 1859, the number of those killed during the last forty years of the 19th century in 106 wars reached the figure of 4,600,000 and in the first 50 years of the present century (the century of atom and the conquest of space) the number of those killed in the 117 wars fought throughout the world exceeded 42.5 millions. As compared to two million tons of bombs used during the second world war, the American Imperialists dropped seven million tons in Viet Nam alone. They used about as much ammunition and ninety thousand tons of chemical devices. Moreover, the Russians have since intervened in Afghanistan and the atrocities being committed by them in that country are an addition to the list of the crimes of the super powers. Thousands of men, women and children have been killed and more than three million have become homeless. The deplorable conditions created by these powers in the Middle East, Africa, the Far East and Latin America are also well-known, and the well-informed and vigilant Muslims are not unaware of them.

America claims to be the champion of humanitarianism and the Soviet Union claims to support the proletariat. However, humanity has suffered most at the hands of America and the Soviet Union has done the greatest harm to the proletariat.(1) The present day society is faced with

(1) Instead the heads of the Muslim states would have made efforts to ensure the welfare of humanity and the dignity of Islam,

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a sort of giddiness and consternation. It is in a melancholy state, and is anxious to find a way out of the unbearable dilemma which has been created by mechanical life. Ever-increasing cases of suicide, disturbances and crimes smacking of insanity, growing incidence of lunacy and the appearance of the bands bearing the names of betels, hippies and scores of other names and shapes confirm the fact that mechanical life based on materialism and devoid of spirituality and moral values, cannot by itself make man happy and lead him to the goal of virtue, tranquillity and mental satisfaction. It is true that the huge power of modern industry and technology can make artificial satellites, conquer space and send man to the moon, but it cannot make and nourish man. In contrast, it strengthens sensual desires and animal propensities by leading society more and more towards materialism and glitter of life. This unbridled power, unless it is wedded to the spirituality of Islam, human attributes and moral qualities is definitely harmful to society. As you can observe, it adds to the worries and difficulties of man.

Dr Alexis Carrel says that, we can very well percieve that contrary to all the hopes and expectations which humanity had pinned on modern civilization, it has not yet brought up thinkers and brave men who could guide it through the dangerous path which it has embarked upon. The human being themselves have not yet developed in proportion to the grandeur of the institutions they have created. In particular the intellectual and moral

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they preferred to become the satellites of the super powers. Thus the human values are being trampled upon and the advancement of Islam has been retarted. However, the days of the quislings are now numbered. The Muslim ummah has since awakened and will not tolerate the hypocrites and the traitors any longer.

weakness and the ignorance of those persons in power threatens the future of our civilization. Had Galileo, Newton and Lavoisier dedicated their energies to the study of human body and soul, our world might have been quite different today. In fact, man deserves more importance than everything else, for with his decay the beauty of civilization and even the grandeur of the world of stars is ruined.

Besides possessing special importance for orderly and proper human life, fight against one's own base desires plays a great part in anticolonial movements also. It may be said that other sacred human struggles to a large extent depend on it, and so long as man does not gain victory in his fight against his own passions, he can hardly be successful in them.This is so because in his campaign against others (provided it is for a sacred and specific cause) he stands in perfect need of sacrifice, steadfastness, unity, confidence and other prerequisite qualities, and so long as he is not possessed of self-control it is very difficult for him, if not impossible, to acquire these other qualities. And supposing that he does acquire them they shall always be prone to give way and collapse in consequence of the smallest incident, if they are not based on a firm and solid infrastructure.

A man who cannot fight against his egoism, who cannot suppress his base desires and who cannot control his spirit of lasciviousness; in short, a man who cannot build himself, will not be able to overlook his personal gain for the sake of his ideology and faith. In other words, A Muslim:

- Should be indifferent to rank and position;
- Should abstain from selfishness, self-conceit and ostentation;
- Should refrain from underhand dealings with the enemy;

- Should not be treacherous to his companions;
- Should hold sincerity, to his colleagues and the pacts made with them to be sacred;
- Should refrain from attacking his friends and comrades with the arms which should be used against the enemy;
- Should not lose heart if unsuccessful;
- Should desist from feeling puffed up and exceeding his limits in the hour of victory;
- Should not be jealous of his co-workers if they gain popularity and out-pace him;
- Should not indulge in obstructionism and sowing discord;
- Should refrain from stabbing in the back;
- Should refrain from being slack in his struggle;
- Should refrain from relinquishing his position;
- Should not make a surrender;
- Should have no secret understanding with the enemy;
- Should be consistent;

  And so on.

These outstanding and noble human qualities can be acquired only by character building and fighting against one's base desires. He who is not equipped and armed with these qualities, is lacking the key of success. He may be known for his boldness and bravery, but when he actually enters a battle-field, he cannot achieve real success, even if he does not meet defeat and disgrace. As has been said:

"For joining a battle it is not enough to be a revolutionary, consuming zeal and firm determination are also required". (Sugar War in Cuba, p. 145).

We know that the first step taken by the revolutionaries, the mass leaders and the guides of humanity who rose for advocating the cause of the freedom and well-being of society, the establishment of security and justice and

the introduction of a perfect political and social system, has always been the formation of the units of individuals and imparting training to them. They awakened the conscience of the masses and brought into existence of class of the faith and principled persons and then utilized them as the basis and foundation of their movement and campaign.

In the beginning of his prophetic mission the great saviour of mankind, the Prophet of Islam, in order to nullify the faith in all false principles and dogmas specially directed his efforts towards persuading the masses to fight against their evil desires to develop good morals and to revive in their hearts the faith in Allah which is the fountain-head of all values, virtues and human qualities. We are aware of the great deeds performed and the achievements made by those who received their training in the school of the great Prophet of Islam and who developed genuine faith in Allah and the ideology of Islam. We know what glorious memories they have left behind in history. Rank and position, property and wealth, wives and children and ease and comfort could not dissuade them from remaining steadfast and making sacrifice for the cause they cherished. History has recorded the story of those who received their training in the revolutionary school of the Qur'an. It tells us how many of them left the warm basom of their newly-wed brides, to go to the battle-field where they willingly made supreme sacrifice for the cause of Islam.(1) The astonishing and instructive reaction of the great revolutionary of the history, Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (P) to the rudeness shown to him by an enemy on whose chest he was mounted,

(1) Such sacrifices were made by many Muslims during the early days of Islam. History is however, repeating itself and many youngmen have laid down their lives for the revival of Islam during the recent Islamic revolution in Iran.

makes every sensible man wonder and bow his head in reverence to him. It teaches the people a lesson in self-making, controlling one's passions and sincerity of action. As against the impudence of the defeated enemy, Imam Ali (P), instead of pressing his sword more vigorously on his throat and severing his head in order to quench his own anger, rose from his chest and so long as his anger did not subside, he took no action to cut off the head of the enemy, for he did not want to combine his own passion with a task which he was performing for the sake of his ideological object. He acted thus because the life-giving motto, ***La ilāha illal lah*** in which he believed and to make which universal he had resorted to ***Jihad***, negates the association of any outside factor with doctrinal aim and declares void every action in which anything besides Allah and the ideological consideration is introduced.

La ilāha illal lah is a unique motto. It stimulates the followers of Islam and negates everything other than One Reality. By adopting this motto and through a fight against their evil desires and the acquisition of high moral qualities in the school of the holy Prophet of Islam, the early Muslims were able to tear asunder the curtains of ignorance and darkness and acquire knowledge, independence, freedom, advancement and culture. With a comparatively lesser strength they gained victories over two great empires of their time (Persian and Roman Empires) and provided to their captivated and suppressed nations independence, freedom of learning and knowledge, civilization and excellence.

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This is the description of the man of Islam as could be given within the limited framework.

A man who is sensible, realistic, purposeful and knows nature and accepts it.

A man who believes in Allah, the Almighty, the Wise and the Merciful. He loves Him; seeks guidance from Him; and is always determined to go the way He likes.

A man who finds himself to be a being who is attached to truth and eternity. He looks at the next world, which is just a manifestation of the eternal reward of his own deeds and efforts, as his ultimate destination. That is why he considers himself to be accountable for all his individual and collective acts.

A man who values his own thought and experience as well as those of other experienced and learned men and is also acquainted with revelation *(wahy)* a higher source of knowledge. He determines his own way of life by taking cue from all these sources, between which he finds no contradiction.

A man who is aware of his creative role in nature and in the society, and who has learnt that the mission of 'self-making' is a great mission and a valuable trust which has been entrusted to him. If he wants to continue as a man he has to be watchful of this mission and trust.

A man who, while fully recognizing the effective role of the laws of society in making and moulding the individuals, knows also that man, unlike other beings, is gifted with a peerless inner upsurge and is capable of moulding himself as he wishes. In other words he is 'self-maker'.

A being whose self-making not only takes him to the best and the most valuable stages of perfection but also prepares him for reconstructing his environment. In other words his self-making and reconstruction of environment are complementary to each other.

A self-making being, who in accordance with true Islamic standards, builds his self-consciousness and by having a zealous will, a sound body, a powerful soul and good moral character, controls his egoism and his passions. To gain the pleasure of Allah he loves doing service to humanity and for that purpose he not only makes sacrifice himself but also seeks the co-operation of all those who have a common goal and common policy with him which have welded them together and turned them into an active and effective community.

The man of Islam, by making use of these standards and adopting Islamic way of life, prepares himself to re-construct his social surroundings and to transform them into an environment illuminated by the light of Islam, filled with justice and virtue in the realms of the house, the family and the society and accompanied by a correct appraisal of moral, spiritual, cultural, economic and administrative factors.

Now it is upto you, O dear son of Islam, to grasp the real features of the Islamic society and to build yourself accordingly.

FAMILY

Certain animals such as ants, bees, termites and several species of monkeys are social, that is they live in communities. The social life of some of these gregarious animals is characterized by some very significant and interesting systems.

Man is also a social and gragarious animal that has the most varied and the most interesting social life that we know.

Society and its kinds

Social life usually originates from a set of natural or acquired ties which join together a number of individuals and turn them into a coherent community. This coherent community is called a society.

There are many kinds of society and from different angles it can be divided into various classes.

Some of these classes are limited and small, like family, and some of them are big and vast, such as tribe, clan, community, nation etc.

Family

The simplest, the smallest and the oldest form of human society is family which is comprised by wife, husband and children. A number of bonds and ties join the members of a family to each other.

Tribe

When the children of a family are grown up, they normally marry and produce children. Thus gradually from one family several coherent and inter-connected families are formed. They trace their descent back to a common ancestor and form a bigger social unity called 'tribe'.

Clan(1)

In certain parts of the world we come across another kind of relationship between the individuals and the families. It originates from a mythical tie and these families, instead of tracing back their genealogy to a common human ancestor, attribute their descent to an animal, plant or something else of that sort and consider themselves attached to it in a mysterious way. This fictitious ancestor is called 'totem' and the people attached to the same totem are known as a clan.

Nation

In more advanced societies we come across a bigger social unity called nation. A nation consists of a large number of individuals, families and tribes united by a common race, country, language and culture.

Other social groupings

There are various other kinds of social ties from which social groupings have originated, such as those of sex, class, religion and ideology.

Dogmatic and ideological society

One of the most progressive social ties is that of doctrine

(1) In English this word is used as synonymous with 'tribe'. However, it has now been adopted as a scientific term and is applied to a household or family of this type.

and dogma. The people who believe in one religion or one ideology are united by it and form one community, that is a society having a common goal and a common policy. An ideological tie may be so powerful and effective that it may overshadow all other ties. We will further elucidate this point later.

Out of all the social ties which we have mentioned Islam gives basic importance to two, namely the ideological and dogmatic tie and the family tie. We propose to discuss first the family tie.

MARRIAGE

Nature has so arranged that man and woman are attracted towards each other. This natural attraction binds them together and leads them to live a common life and form a family. This natural tendency or the instinct of sex, like any other instinct, should be guided to the right direction so that it may be utilized in the service of humanity.

Though common life of husband and wife originates from sex instinct, yet gradually it develops into a sort of deep spiritual and sentimental and social and economic relationship. That is what we call conjugal union or matrimony.

In the wake of keen desire to establish conjugal relations between themselves, man and woman enter into a contract known as marriage or matrimonial contract.

This contract has great importance in human life, for it unites the existence of two persons in many ways. It lays the foundation of the life of a human infant, and deeply influences his body, life, thought and future actions. That is why a marriage contract is regarded as sacred by various nations and enough attention has been paid in different

legal systems to the questions connected with it.

Importance of marriage from Islamic point of view

Islam has also attached great importance to the question of marriage in its social system. In the holy Qur'an and the sayings of the holy Prophet and the Imams we find that marriage has been greatly encouraged. The holy Prophet has been reported to have said: "No institution of Islam is liked by Allah more than that of marriage".

Basic object of marriage

The basic object of marriage in Islam consists of:

(a) Securing comfortable atmosphere for husband and wife
(b) Producing a new generation and bringing up healthy, faithful and virtuous children.

With regard to the first object the Qur'an says:
"One of His signs is that He created for you spouses of your own species, so that you might find comfort with them, and He put mutual love and affection in your hearts. Surely in this there lessons for the thinking people". (Surah al-Rum, 30:21).

A Muslim husband and wife who follow the Qur'an should always be a source of comfort to each other. Their mutual relations should be far above mere sexual enjoyment and should reach the stage of cordial friendship accompanied by mutual benevolence and fellow-feeling. (See also: Ayatullah Ali Mishkini, Marriage in Islam, published by ISP).

On the basis of this verse the object of marriage should be the same as is that of the creation of mates, that is husbands and wives. From the Islamic point of view marriage is not merely an instrument for legalizing sexual

relations, but it is an agreement which unites the very existence of the husband and wife and gives a new colour and a new rhythm to their life. It brings them out of real solitariness, turns them into a couple instead of single individuals and makes them complementary to each other.

With regard to the second object the Qur'an says:
"He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has given you partners from among yourselves, and (similarly made) the cattle (also) males and females. That is how He multiplies you. Nothing can be compared to Him. He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing". (Surah al-Shura, 42:11).

The Islamic traditions regarding the choosing of wife stress one point viz. the proposed wife should be capable of producing children and should not be sterile. According to a well-known hadith of his, the holy Prophet said: "Marry each other and produce new off-spring so that your number may increase".

Selection of a spouse
One of the most critical questions connected with marriage and formation of a family is that of choosing the spouse. In this connection attention should be paid to the following points:

- Freedom in the selection of wife or husband.
- Equality between husband and wife, viz. each of them should be generally suitable to marry the other.
- The criteria which should be kept in view to determine such suitability.
- Persons between whom marriage is forbidden.
- Seeking the hand of the spouse in marriage.

Freedom in choosing husband or wife:
Freedom in choosing husband/wife is a principle to which

Islam has paid much attention, for satisfactory conjugal life depends on intellectual, spiritual and moral compatibility between the two spouses. This compatibility can exist only if both the parties are free in their choice and choose each other of their own free will after careful study and without any coercion. Otherwise their conjugal life cannot be expected to be smooth and satisfactory.

According to the Islamic canon law the first condition of the validity of a marriage contract is that it should be proposed by the woman and accepted by the man and both of them should act freely in the matter.

The Imams on various occasions, especially when they were consulted about the selection of a wife or a husband. emphatically stressed that the main condition of the validity of a marriage is the free consent of both the parties. No imposition is allowed in this respect.

A young man complained to Imam al Sadiq (P) that his parents were compelling him to marry a girl whom he did not like, whereas he was interested in another girl. He then asked the Imam what he was required to do in that case.

The Imam said:
"Marry the girl you like".

In this connection it may be remembered that the parents must not compel their children to marry against their will.

Consent of father to the marriage of a girl
The teachings of Islam recommend that the daughters should marry with the consent of their fathers. Many of the Muslim jurists consider this consent to be an essential condition of the marriage of the girls. In this connection

the following points may be noted:

(1) As a marriage establishes social contact between two families both the boys and the girls have been advised to consult their parents in regard to the selection of their future wives and husbands. Such consultation means showing respect to the parents and the recognition of the trouble taken by them in bringing up their children. It is also conducive to better understanding among the relatives of both the sides. Above all that, this is an appropriate way of benefiting from the personal experience and social knowledge of the parents, in regard to the selection of the life partner and appropriate conjugal behaviour.

(2) The parents have been urged that while guiding their children, they should take into consideration their real requirements and the new conditons in which they will have to live. They should understand that marriage in the first instance concerns their children and the future life of theirs and of their children and not with themselves (i.e. the parents).

Hence at the time of such consultations, they should in the first instance pay attention to the basic and noble qualities which the spouse of their child should possess and not to those of the second or third degree and should still lesser be influenced by fictitious considerations like the wealth or the social position of the family of the bride or the bridegroom.

(3) The jurists who consider the consent of father to be an essential condition of marriage, hold this view only in respect of the virgins. Evidently they give importance to this condition only because in their opinion the intervention of a loving and experienced father is of great value.

(4) Even in the case of the virgins they hold that the consent of father is essential only so long as he tries to safeguard the interests of his daughter and does not impose his own will on her even though it may be against her interests. If it is found that father is bent upon imposing his will against the interests of his daughter, it is the duty of the authorities concerned to take notice of the case and, by virtue of the powers vested in a just Muslim ruler, to take proper action to safeguard the interests of the girl.

Equality or general fitness for matrimonial alliance

The holy Prophet said: "Marry your equals; choose your partner in life from among them; and select best mothers for your off spring".

In the societies having a tribal system usually every tribe asserts that it has certain distinctions and on their basis it claims to be superior to others. These fictitious claims sometimes assume the form of racial discrimination, just as the whites believe in their superiority over the blacks or the red-skinned people and sometimes that of nationalism as found among certain nations of the modern world. In societies having class distinctions such claims are made by certain classes, such as the clergy, the military personnel, the businessmen, the politicians, the bureaucrats etc. One of the effects of such a claim is that the members of a family, a trade or a class are always restricted to marry only within their own circle, the other party must belong to one of the prominent and well-known families. Marriage between a white and a black is forbidden. A son or a daughter of a cleric or a military officer, a businessman or a bureaucrat cannot marry a daughter or a son of a worker or a farmer. This undesirable practice is still more or less prevalent among the so-called noble families. Such families are severely

opposed to the marriage of their children to those belonging to low-income and under-privileged families not having a so-called high profession.

Islam denounces such discrimination. The holy Prophet is reported to have said: "The believers are equal to each other".

Imam al Sajjad (P) chose a woman to be his wife and married her. He had an Ansar (a descendant of the Madinite companions of the Prophet) friend, who felt uneasy on account of the Imam having married a woman not belonging to any prominent family. But when on inquiry he found that she belonged to a respectable family of Bani Shayban, he was relieved of his worry. He came to the Imam and said:

"I felt unhappy and dejected on account of your having married this woman and said to myself: 'The Imam had married a woman who was not respectable'. The other people were also saying the same thing. At last I had to make investigations till I found that she belonged to the tribe of Bani Shayban".

The Imam (P) said to him in reply:
"I had been under the impression that you were more intelligent than I find you now. Don't you know that Islam has come to uplift the lower classes of society and to remove all inequalities. Now no Muslim is mean or low".

As such in Muslim society descent, nationality, family position and similar other factors are no bar to the marriage between two Muslims who are otherwise fit to marry each other in accordance with the standards mentioned below.

Criteria of selection of a spouse:

(1) Faith:

The first criterion of the selection of a husband or a wife is his or her faith — faith in Islam and the way of life to which it has called humanity. Islamic society is an ideological one. In every such society faith in its ideology is the main orbit of its life. It is the motivating force which pushes that society toward the goals which it has set before it. That is why while devising any social system or law it has to take into consideration all the factors which may strengthen or weaken faith in its ideology.

In our foregoing study we said that from the point of view of Islam the object of marriage is not merely sexual enjoyment, but is also the formation of a healthy family atmosphere so that:

- The husband and wife may live in mutual love, affection and understanding;
- They may create an appropriate environment for the birth and growth of the children who may prove more mature and active members of the ideological society of Islam.

It is evident that these two objectives can be achieved if both the husband and the wife believe in Islam and practice its teachings to the maximum extent.

Sometimes it is seen that some people tend to maintain in the name of broad-mindedness, liberality and tolerance, that disparity in religion should not be an obstacle in the way of marriage between a man and a woman. According to them why should there be an objection if a Muslim believer marries a woman who does not believe in Allah or in the Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam, or alternatively

a Muslim woman marries an atheist or one who does not believe in Islam and the Qur'an?

Such questions instead of being a sign of broad-mindedness and liberality usually show that the people who raise them have no idea of the significance of marriage which we mentioned above, nor are they aware of the real import of religion, especially Islam.

If religion means, as the word itself signifies, a particular way of life, and if marriage is meant to be a heart-warming spiritual tie which may create an atmosphere of cordiality and coherence for both husband and wife, then how can it be possible that two persons believing in two different religions and two different ideologies should be able to create such a tie and such an atmosphere?

Practical experience has shown that marriages of this kind gradually end either in the slackness of both the spouses, or at least one of them, in the practice of their religion, or in the coolness and incompatibility of their mutual relations. In either case there is a great threat to an ideological society as well as to the happiness of the husband and wife concerned. Besides, there is a far bigger threat to the faith and prosperity of their children.

Really it cannot be expected that the children born and brought up in a bi-religious family will be true believers in the path of Islam.

(2) Morality

Unity in faith of the husband and the wife is an essential condition of marriage, but is not the only condition. Attention should be paid to other questions also, especially to the moral aspects of the spouse.

One of the companions of the tenth Imam says:
I wrote a letter to Imam Abu Ja'far, asking him some questions about marriage.

In his reply the Imam wrote:
"The holy Prophet has said: As soon as a suitor, who is religious and with whose manners you are satisfied, comes to you asking for matrimonial alliance take action to accomplish marriage with him. If you will not do so, you will have deviated from the right path and may be faced with a great crisis".

Another companion of the Imam wrote to him on this very subject. In reply the Imam wrote back:

"If you are satisfied with the religiousness and uprightness of a suitor, do marry. Otherwise . . . . . ".

In two other narrations Imam al Sadiq (P) has stressed on the chastity and continence of the spouse.

(3) Financial competence
A Muslim man has to provide means of living to his wife and children. Hence it is essential that he should have enough means beforehand to discharge this responsibility.

Imam al Sadiq (P) is reported to have said:
"A suitable husband is he who is chaste and has financial competence".

(4) Compatibility
Compatibility and similarity in the ideas and wants of the husband and the wife is one of the most effective factors in making a marriage successful. With compatibility there is little chance that any serious differences will arise

between them. If on any occasion there should be a difference in their views they can sort out the problem easily. As such it can be hoped that their married life will be happy and satisfactory. Otherwise a marriage accompanied by permanent clash between the husband and the wife, can ruin not only their life, but also that of their children and close relatives.

Only those husbands and wives live a satisfactory and happy married life who:

- Realize the concept of human marriage;
- Are not only partners in life, but are also benevolent friends and faithful associates;
- Deem it necessary to co-operate with each other in every respect;
- Refrain from every kind of arrogance and haughtiness in their mutual dealings;
- Respect their reciprocal rights and try to please each other.

How to select a suitable spouse

There is no doubt that it is essential to make enough investigations about a prospective husband or wife to ensure that he or she is fit in every respect to conclude a strong ever-lasting contract.

A hasty action impelled by the impact of the emotions of youth or imposed by the pressure of the relatives is likely to cause inconvenience and trouble subsequently. Anyhow, useful and reasonable investigations should not be mixed up with the wanton custom of courtship. Such unrestrained intimacy, howsoever an enchanting name may be given to it, cannot be allowed, for mostly it does not aim at marriage and formation of a family.

In this respect a middle course, removed from the two opposite extremes, must be adopted and that is the course which has been recommended by Islam.

A man asked Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P):
"Is it permissible that one should see the woman he wants to marry and look at her hair and other charms?"
The Imam answered:
"Yes there is no objection provided there is no lustful intention".

Persons between whom marriage is forbidden
A person who cannot enter into marital relations with a person of the opposite sex in deference to the relationship already existing between them is called *mahram.*

Perhaps the idea behind this rule is that family relations at certain level, such as those between brother and sister, father and daughter or son and mother, should be kept absolutely apart from the field of sex.

Mahrams whose inter-marrying is not valid are genrally divided into three categories:

(1) Those having blood relationship are consanguineous *mahrams.*
(2) Those having relationship in virtue of nursing which is established on fulfilment of some special conditions and is in fact a sort of acquired blood relationship are foster *Mahrams.*
(3) Those having relationship in virtue of a marriage are *mahrams* on the ground of affinity.

Rules regarding the prohibition of marriage on the grounds of consanguinity and affinity exist with certain variations

either in the law codes or conventional customs of all nations. Only some communities for certain special reasons, such as maintaining the purity of their blood and preserving their family or racial characteristics, have recommended inter-marrying among close relatives, but nowadays such instances are extremely rare.

Consaguineous mahrams

Seven categories of persons are debarred from inter-marrying on the ground of blood-relationship. The details are as under:

A man cannot marry his:
Mother (includes grand-mother)
daughter (includes her descendants)
Sister
Sister's daughter and her descendants
Brother's daughter and her descendants
Paternal aunt (include aunts of father)
Maternal aunt and mother

A woman cannot marry her:
Father (includes grand-father)
Son (includes his descendants)
Brother
Brother's son and his descendants
Sister's son and his descendants
Paternal uncle include uncles of father
Maternal uncle and mother.

Foster-mahrams

Fosterage under specified conditions induces the same limits of relationship prohibitive of marriage as consanguinity.

Mahrams on account of affinity

Five categories of persons are debarred from inter-marrying on the ground of affinity or relationship created by marriage. The details are as under:

A man cannot marry his:
Mother-in-law
Daughter-in-law
Step-mother
Step-daughter
Wife's sister

A woman cannot marry her:
Father-in-law
Son-in-law
Step-father
Step-son
Sister's husband

A man is debarred from marrying his wife's sister only so long as the other sister continues to be his wife. If that relationship terminates as the result of death or divorce, there is no objection to his marrying a sister of his former wife. Hence in this case prohibition is not permanent. That is why wife's sister is not regarded as *mahram* for the purpose of looking at her or meeting her.

Contracting marriage

According to the Islamic canon law the parties concerned can, in the presence of all other essential conditions, contract marriage direct and exchange the formula prescribed for this purpose, provided they are adult, mature and of good judgement. For marriage it is not essential to appoint an attorney if the parties themselves can contract it properly.

After a complete agreement is arrived at in regard to conditions etc, a marriage contract is normally initiated by the woman. This shows that a Muslim woman is fully free in choosing her husband and it is upto her to contract marriage. Then the man (husband) accepts marriage with the conditions agreed upon. At first the woman proposing the contract of marriage, says to her future husband:

"I gave myself in permanent marriage to you with the dower fixed (according to the conditions agreed upon)". The same may be expressed in Arabic thus:

"Ankahtoka nafsi alas-sidaaqilma'loom"

or

"Zawwajtoka nafsi alas-sidaaqilma'loom"

Then the man announces his acceptance and says "I accepted" or *"Qabil tun nikaha"* or *"Qabil tut tazwija"*.

As already pointed out, a girl cannot be given in marriage against her will nor can she be compelled to say "Yes" by force, threat or holding out a bait. Similarly a boy also cannot be forced to marry any girl whom he does not like. As a rule any contract concluded through force or compulsion is void.

Financial independence of woman

We know that in the social system of Islam women like men are financially independent. They can earn money by lawful means. They have full control over their property and can dispose off the same as they like.

The Qur'an says:

". . . . . *The men shall have the benefit of what they earn and the women shall have the benefit of what they earn*. . . . . ". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:32).

As for what domestic work the women do in the house of their husbands, it depends entirely on their own will, desire and inclination. From religious and legal point of view there is no compulsion(1).

The Qur'an says in the Surah al-Nisa:
"Give the women their dowry as a free gift". (4:4).

In the marraige contract the husband undertakes to present a suitable gift to his wife. This gift is not to be regarded as a price of the woman's body nor has the characteristic of a recompense for her services in the household, or something to fall upon in future in the case of separation or death. It is just a gift and if she so desires, it may be presented to her forthwith. That is why in the verse quoted above it has been expressed by the word, *'nihlab'*, that is, free gift. In the Qur'an the word. *'Sadaaq'* has been used for dower. This expression implied that dower is a sign of man's sincerity in love and in his offer of marriage. The dower is in fact a means of showing man's respect to his future wife.

(1) It will not be out of place to mention here that in the European countries, such as England, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy, women secured economic independence in 1870 and thereafter. (Britain 1870, Germany 1900, Switzerland 1907 and Italy 1919). It is also worth noting that the real motive of the promulgation of these laws was not the protection of the rights of women as a free member of human society, but it was, in the first instance, to encourage the women to work in the industrial centres and factories and to be benefited from their activity. The laws assumed their present form only gradually. On the other hand, the recognition of the economic independence of women in Islamic law has had only humanitarian aspect and it never aimed at their economic exploitation. Will Durant has said that Europe has recognized the proprietory rights of women only to put them to service.

Lightness of dower

The leaders of Islam have emphatically recommended that the amount of dower should be kept light and the other marital conditions easy. The women who demand heavy dower and are not willing to enter into a marriage contract without stipulating strident financial conditions, have even been described as inauspicious and unlucky *(Man la yahzaruhul Faqih)* because the moral significance of dower as a symbol of man's interest and love is far high than its financial and material value.

Note: Immediately on the conclusion of marriage contract whatever has been fixed as dower becomes the property of the wife. If it is a piece of land, a garden or a sum of money, its benefits accrue exclusively to her. Only with the wife's consent it can remain in the custody of the husband and the benefits accruing from it can be utilized for conducting their common life.

Obligations of husband and wife

After describing the concept of marriage from Islamic point of view and the rituals prescribed in connection with it, let us now refer to the obligations which it imposes on the two parties. These obligations include financial and human responsibilities.

Financial responsibility

(Nafaqah) maintenance is a legal responsibility in the Islamic family system. Generally speaking it is of two kinds:

(1) Maintenance conditonal on the pecuniary condition of a person having a right to it: For example children have a right to maintenance against their father (or mother) or the aged parents who are unable to meet their expences

have a right against their children.

(2) Maintenance not conditional on the pecuniary condition of a person having a right to it, as wife is entitled to be maintained by her husband. Maintenance includes all necessary and conventional expenses. In the case of wife the husband is responsible to provide food, clothing, accommodation and all that is necessary for her comfort and running the household. Of course the financial competence of the husband is to be taken into consideration in the implementation of these responsibilities.

Maintenance of wife has the following distinctive features: The maintenance of the wife is teachnically a debt of first liability and its payment should be accorded top priority.

Her right to maintenance has an aspect of the right to demand, and it is not like maintenance of the first category mentioned above so that it may have only an aspect of a duty which if not performed for some time may lapse.

Maintenance of the wife is obligatory on the husband even if she is well-off, whereas in the case of the children and the parents it is conditional on their being poor and financially unable to meet their personal requirements.

In case a husband, in spite of his financial competence, does not provide the necessities of life to his wife, it is a duty of the governmental authorities to order him to do so and , if necessary, pass a decree of separation(1).

(1) If a person has a wife and he does not feed and cloth her, it is the duty of the head of the Muslim community to dissolve the marriage''. *(Man la yabzarubul Faqib).*

MAINTENANCE OF CHILDREN AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GUARDIANSHIP

With the birth of a child in a family new duties and responsibilities devolve on both the father and the mother. As the child is related to both, each one of them has to shoulder a responsibility commensurate with his and her natural, sentimental, and social conditions.

As the women have been naturally provided with a system of bearing and suckling the children, they, with the birth of every child, have to undergo for about three years the rigours of pregnancy, delivery and the upkeep of the new born. During pregnancy and nursing they have a special responsibility to look after the infant. It is evident that even after this period a child requires a constant care and correct physical and moral fostering. In most cases he cannot attain the required spiritual growth and physical and mental development except under the caressing care of the mother. It is mother's deep love and tender affection accompanied by her self-sacrifice which responds to the requirements of the child and nurtures his natural talents and faculties. Mother's lap is the first institution where a child receives his education. The first few years of the life of the children are the most impressionable age during which the foundation of their personality is laid under the care of the mother. All spiritual, scientific, literary and social achievements are mostly the fruits of the first seeds sown by the mothers in the impressionable minds of their children. If mother has to bear such a stupendous responsibility of the care and basic training of the child, will it be reasonable to expect her to undertake lucrative jobs and outdoor work also on equal footing with man and to struggle for meeting the economic needs of the family? Will such an expectation not be an injustice to her? Or will it be proper to take off the responsibility

of bringing up the children from her shoulders and ask her to earn her livelihood even during the lifetime of her husband?

Will it not be better that the means of living are provided to her in a respectable way and she is given an opportunity to devote her full time to the all-round care of her child.

Will not this equitable division of work between husband and wife in a way commensurate with their physical and spiritual potentialities, be a more respectable method of meeting the family requirements?

Anyway, it is to be remembered that the question of maintenance, in the context of the family system in Islam, does not mean that woman is a parasite or that food, clothing, accommodation and other means of life are provided to her in consideration of her services to her husband. It is just a question of equitable division of work and duties based on the principle of joint efforts. That is why in case the husband is not competent to earn enough means of living, family sentiments and the spirit of co-operation demand that the wife should not spare any lawful effort in co-operating with him in managing the affairs of their common life. A good deal of the instances of such co-operation are seen in Islamic society, especially among the low-income groups. Similarly it is not enough for the husband to provide merely the material means of life to his wife. In the absence of the spirit of sympathetic benevolence, joint effort and co-operation the marital life will be but dull and dry.

It may be mentioned here that the husband being in-charge of family affairs, bears a grave responsibility, which like other similar responsibilities requires a sort of self-

sacrifice(1). For example, in the case of the administration of a country the presidential position is not meant to meet the personal requirements of the president, but is designed to ensure the smooth administration of the national affairs. It is necessary to obey him mainly because he pays attention to his responsibilities as well as to the duties and responsibilities of his aides. Hence if he exceeds his limits and wants to misuse his position, he will have no right to expect others to have any regard for him. In the case of family affairs also the husband has been given certain rights, for example the right of the guardianship of the children till they attain puberty and that of giving consent to the marriage of his virgin daughter in addition to some other rights in connection with the management of domestic affairs. But he has been entrusted with all these responsibilities only to ensure the smooth running of the family affairs and to prevent the dissolution of family structure. Hence if the husband violates the limits in any matter, his powers will be reduced and he, will not have that influence which he should have if he plays his role properly.

Anyway, the principle that the necessities of life are to be provided by the husband, is an important factor in bringing comfort to woman and relieving her of earning her livelihood. It gives her an opportunity to play her part in arranging the domestic affairs more effectively and comprehensively. The principle should not be construed to justify man's unrestrained domination over his wife and children.

Moral and human responsibilities

Besides such normal commitments as the financial res-

(1) A reference to the verse, ***The men are in charge of the women.***

ponsibility of the husband and the joint efforts of the husband and wife to satisfy the sexual needs of each other in a lawful manner, there are certain other basic and important principles which deeply affect the marital life. In fact its success depends on their observation. They give a special charm and delightful character to the conjugal relations which otherwise have a material and dry form of give and take. In the Islamic teachings these principles have been summed up in the following two maxims:

(1) Mutual trust, the practical manifestation of it being the co-operation between the husband and the wife in making their common life easy and smooth.
(2) Abstinence from everything that may disturb their mutual confidence.

According to the Islamic tradition the best wife is she who is sincerely affectionate and, according to the Islamic expression, ***wadud***, that is one who co-operates with her husband through the thick and thin of life and is helpful to him in all material and spiritual affairs. She should in no case add to his worries.

DIVORCE OR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

As pointed out in the previous pages marital life ought to begin with earnestness and should continue happily under the shadow of love, tolerance and self-sacrifice. But practically speaking marriage contract and conjugal relations do not in all cases continue to exist till the end of life. In certain cases it becomes impossible for the two parties to live together in peace and harmony for various reasons such as the emergence of deep rooted differences and the like. In such circumstance there must be a suitable way of dissolving marriage legally, otherwise if the parties

are forced to continue to live together, their life is likely to become unbearable, and in many cases the consequences may be most regrettable and even tragic. Anyway, it is evident that as marriage in itself is a social need, in certain circumstances its dissolution is also a social necessity. The social compulsions have forced even the Christians to frame and enforce laws concerning divorce, though their present religious book forbids it except in the case of unchastity and though their Church has for long opposed it vehemently. "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery". (Matthew, V:32).

Recently the divorce act has been passed even in Italy, which is the seat of the Pope.

Divorce in Islamic law

Dissolution of permanent marriage resulting in the end of all responsibilities of the husband and the wife in regard to the rights and obligations connected with it, is called divorce.

From the Islamic point of view the disintegration of family bond is very undesirable on principle. It is the worst and the most detestable act in the eyes of Allah.

The holy Prophet has said:

- "The most detestable thing before Allah is divorce".
- "Allah likes most the house which is inhabited in the wake of marriage and dislikes most the house which is abandoned in the wake of separation".

In fact divorce may be regarded as an upleasant and bitter

pill which has to be taken in the case of need. Resort to it should not be made unnecessarily and for the sake of caprice. Islamic traditions have described unnecessary divorce as a cause of remoteness from the blessings of Allah. (Mustadrak al-Wasail, vol. 3, p. 2).

Islam has suggested certain precautionary measures to ward off divorce as far as possible. For example:

- Much stress has been laid on the careful selection of wife.
- Repeated recommendations have been made to treat her well and connive at her minor mistakes which are common in life.
- Self-control against sudden outbursts of rage and hasty actions.
- Formation of an internal family court to resolve the differences arising between husband and wife.

It is possible that the relations between the husband and the wife might sometimes become strained consequent to differences and scolding remarks. Islam suggests that in such cases a suitable way should be found at the earliest to resolve the differences and there should be no talk of separation so easily. All cases of strained relations are not such that we should be disappointed of the restoration of love and affection. In most cases it is possible to rectify the position.

Whenever it is not possible for the husband and wife to sort out their differences themselves, their case should be considered by a family court consisting of two arbiters, one selected from the family of the husband and the other from that of the wife. The arbiters should be sympathetic and experienced so that they may listen to the point of

view of both the parties, and try to reconcile them.

In this respect the Qur'an says:
"If you fear a breach between the two (husband and wife, appoint an arbiter from his people and another from hers. If they desire amendment, Allah will make them of one mind". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:35).

Obviously an arbiter should be a trust-worthy person, a good conversationalist and fit for making a just arbitration. The two arbiters are to be selected from among the members of the two families because as such they are expected to have a knowledge of the temprament of the husband and wife as well as of their domestic affairs; and also because they will normally be interested in settling their differences.

Effects of divorce
From the psychological, legal and social point of view, divorce produces varied effects, some of them being related to the husband and wife themselves and some of them to their families. If there are children, separation between their parents will effect their position also in many ways.

In view of these results, special conditions have been visualized for divorce so that it may be warded off as far as possible, for if it is taken easy, the future of children will certainly be threatened.

What should be the condition of a woman to be divorced
- Her periods must not be on.
- After the last sexual intercourse, she must have had her periods at least once.
- If the woman having been pregnant has been delivered

of a child, her rest period after delivery (ceremonial purification from child birth) must have come to an end.

Of course if a woman is pregnant or does not menstruate, the above conditions do not apply to her. In cases other than these two, the question of divorce should be postponed till these conditions materialize.

Conditions of the effectiveness of divorce

Divorce is valid and operative only if the following conditions are fulfilled:

- The husband who divorces must be of mature age and must be possessed of understanding. Divorce pronounced by a minor, a lunatic or an idiot is invalid.
- The husband must be exercising his own free will. Divorce under compulsion is not valid.
- Presence of two witnesses.

According to the Shiah school of thought and as expressly mentioned in the Qur'an (second verse of Surah al-Talaq), divorce must be pronounced in the presence of at least two trustworthy and righteous witnesses.

This condition automatically implies that two righteous persons should become aware of the decision of the spouses to dissolve marriage. In many cases their intervention and help may save the situation, and they may find a suitable way of reconciling the husband and wife. Further, their knowledge and presence may be helpful in settling financial and other questions and finding a most appropriate arrangement for looking after the children.

Kinds of divorce

After the enforcement of divorce it is possible to resume conjugal relations in some cases without contracting marriage a new. In some other cases a fresh marriage is required before the resumption of these relations. Hence divorce is of two kinds; revocable and irrevocable.

In the case of revocable divorce if the man regrets and wants to resume conjugal relations, the tie is automatically restored and there is no need of contracting marriage again, provided he revokes his act within the period of probation *(iddah)* which is normally three months.

In the case of irrevocable divorce it is not possible to resume conjugal relations in this way.

Kinds of irrevocable divorce

There are several kinds of irrevocable divorce.

(1) If the husband agrees to dissolve the marriage at the request of the wife, it is called *khul'a.*

(2) If the marriage is dissolved because both the husband and the wife have asked each other to terminate it, it is called ***mubarat,*** that is mutual release.

(3) The divorce pronounced by the husband on his own is regarded as irrevocable in the following circumstances:

(a) If the dissolution of marriage has been brought about before its consummation.

(b) If the divorcee is a girl whose periods have not commenced or an old woman who does not menstruate, because she has reached the age of menopause i.e. is no longer capable of bearing children.

(c) If the divorce has been pronounced for the third time.

In all these cases if the two parties decide to resume conjugal partnership, they should remarry, for the first marriage is no longer effective.

Notes:

(1) Remarriage with a woman, who has been divorced three times, by her former husband who divorced her is possible only on the condition that she is married to another man first and that such second marriage is terminated after consummation. (This condition precedent to reunion has been laid down to deter and discourage the people from taking the question of divorce too easy). (1)

(2) In the case of *khul'a* and *mubarat* reunion is possible only if the woman demands back what she had surrendered to the husband. Such demand must be made before the expiry of the period of probation.

In other cases if they are inclined to resume conjugal partnership, they should remarry in accordance with the conditions they agree to.

Iddah of divorce

In the case of separation between the husband and the wife an important question is to find out whether she is pregnant by her former husband. To ascertain this point the Islamic law has laid down that during a period of probation the woman should not marry another person. This period is called *iddah*.

(1) If divorces take place between the husband and wife time and again (till nine times) they cannot remarry under any circumstances. This restriction also ensures that as far as possible divorces on frivolous grounds may be avoided.

Period of Iddah

The period of *iddah* for a woman who is not pregnant is the period covered by three menstrual courses, which is normally about three months. The *iddah* of a pregnant woman is till she is delivered.

Rules regarding the period of iddah

During the period of *iddah* the woman cannot take a new husband, and nobody should make an offer of marriage to her. She is to be maintained by her former husband like a married woman.

In the case of revocable divorce if the husband or the wife dies during the period of probation, the survivor will inherit the deceased.

Right of guardianship of children

One of the important questions that crop up on the dissolution of marriage is that of the guardianship of the children which is called the right of *hizanah*.

The Islamic law gives the custody and care of the children in the early years of their life to the mother, even if the father is competent enough and willing to look after them. The limit for a boy is two years and for a girl seven years.

In case mother is not capable or fit to take care of the child, the responsibility of guardianship devolves on the father. In both the cases the father has to bear the expenses of the child. As the right of guardianship is recognized solely for the benefit of the infant, it should be in the custody of the person who can look after it the best. On this principle the Islamic law has given priority in the matter to the mother in the first years of the life of the child. If both the parents are unable to look after it,

some other suitable arrangements should be made to ensure its welfare so that if the father and the mother agree, the infant may be given in the custody of a third person under whose guardianship it can, in their view, make proper physical and spiritual progress.

FIXED-TIME MARRIAGE

Sexual problem of the youth

There is no doubt that the sexual instinct should normally be guided in the direction of permanent marriage and formation of a family. But as all young men at the threshold of puberty and at the time of the outburst of sexual desire are not in a position to contract permanent marriage, they are often involved in perversion and sexual deviation.

In all human societies, of course with some variations, there are many young men and women who, under the impact of sexual urge and being deprived of the blessing of a spouse, waste their energies and talents and instead of concentrating on positive and constructive affairs run into perversion with bitter and unpleasant consequences for themselves as well as for the society. Thus very often the best period of their youth turns into the most bitter period of their life.

Solution of sexual problem

The Islamic teachings which do not ignore any natural desires and the different physical and mental faculties of the individual and take into consideration all possible social needs have realistically suggested a via media to solve this problem. The solution proposed by Islam is in conformity with the realities of life and at the same time saves society from an oppressive turmoil which may throw

the family system into disarray. In view of the fact that sexual urge is one of the most irresistible desires of the individual, it is evident that, if a right and lawful way to satisfy it is not found, corruption and perversion are inevitable. The Islamic teachings have shown a practical way to resist passions, to keep away from the external forces, stimulating sex and to use the physical and mental faculties in a constructive way commensurate with human life. In view of the fact that everybody has not the power to resist passions and that such resistance sometimes produces undesirable effects, Islam has given a lot of instructions to facilitate marriage, such as those regarding lessening dower, keeping the marriage expenses to the minimum and avoiding unnecessary ceremonies. Thus it has removed many hurdles. Even the students and apprentices before they are self-supporting can contract marriage in a simple manner and need not wait till they are 30 or 35 years old when they complete their higher education or specialize in a particular branch of learning. At this age they usually lose the fervour of the youth and marry simply to get rid of suspense and unsettled life.

Further, with a view to solve the sex problem in the cases where man and woman or boy and girl find no way to permanent marriage, the law of Islam has suggested a sort of non-permanent marriage, called ***mut'ah***.

In this kind of marriage the aim is not to form a family. It is only to have legal sexual relations during a period mutually agreed. That is why the agreement in this respect should be very clear and definite.

Formula of fixed-time marriage

The formula is actually a text of the agreement concluded between the parties. It is usually pronounced in Arabic.

The woman says:
Zawwajtoka nafsi fil muddatil ma'loomati alas sidaaqil ma'loom

And the man says: *'Qabiltu'*. Or for example the woman says in English: "I gave myself in marriage to you for the period (as fixed) for the dower (as fixed)" and the man says: "I accepted".

It is to be remembered that the children begotten out of this non-permanent wedlock enjoy all the rights and privileges of the children of the permanent marriage and in this respect the family system of Islam presents no problem.

Contrary to the conception of those who hold that the legalization of non-permanent marriage may give currency to free and unlimited relations and thus promote immorality, this scheme is an effective factor in checking debauchery and the consequent disruption of the families. It may be seen in practice that consequent to the confining of legal marriage to the permanent union only and ignoring other individual and social needs, free sexual relations, with all their undesirable effects, exist with some variation in all societies. Those who criticise this sort of marriage, have practically put and are still putting it into practice in some other way. (For details a reference may be made to "The Shia' – Origin and Faith", ISP, 1982).

Now let us see what is the difference in the rules of the permanent and fixed-time marriages.

Rules of fixed-time marriage
Besides the specification of the period of marriage and the amount of dower, there are certain other rules in regard

to fixed-time marriage which may be noted:

(1) As the main aim of this kind of marriage is not the formation of a permanent family and shouldering the onerous responsibility of rearing up children, each of the parties can take steps to prevent the birth of a child, whereas in the case of permanent marriage that is possible only by the mutual agreement of the husband and wife.

(2) If a child is born out of fixed-time wedlock, the man is responsible to maintain him and provide enough means for his bringing up.
(3) In the case of fixed-time marriage the husband is not responsible to maintain his wife, unless there is an agreement in this respect.
(4) In this sort of marriage the husband and the wife do not inherit from each other.
(5) The rule regarding the prohibition of establishing sexual relations with others during the period of contract is the same as in the case of permanent marriage.
(6) After the expiry of the period of contract the husband and the wife are automatically separated and there is no need of divorce. *Iddah* will be imposed only if there has been consummation. It has been ordained with a view to ascertain the paternity of the child that may be born after the termination of marriage. The period of probation in this case is the period covered by two menstrual courses, that is about 2/3 of the *iddah* of the permanent marriage.
(7) In this sort of marriage, the man and the woman may stipulate a condition that their sexual relations will be of limited nature, and, for example, they will not have intercourse. The man is obligated to abide by the condition agreed upon. Hence such a marriage can be useful during the period of engagement and may be a sort of courtship

and trial without a feeling of sin before contracting a permanent marriage.

Anyhow, even in this sort of marriage the wife can stipulate at the time of contracting marriage that she will be entitled to any or all the benefits to which a wife is entitled in case of permanent marriage.

Basic differences between
permanent and fixed-time marriages

If we go through the rules of the fixed-time marriage we can observe that it differs from the permanent marriage in the following points:

In this marriage the responsibilities which normally go with the formation of a family do not exist. The husband is not required to provide the means of living of his fixed-time spouse or to bear the expenses of her daily life.

Each of the parties can take contraceptive measures. In the case of permanent marriage birth control can be resorted to only with the consent of both the parties.

There is no moral or legal difficulty in separation at the termination of this marriage, whereas in the case of divorce after contracting permanent marriage there is usually a feeling of anxiety about the future of the other party or of the children.

This kind of union being lawful, there should be no feeling of sin, no twinge of guilt and no conscience prick. That is not the case with illicit relations.

In the case of the possible birth of a child the responsibility to be borne by the husband is clear.

After separation the woman cannot remarry within the period of probation if consummation has taken place.

Fixed-time marriage prevents free sexual relationship and guards against immorality and unchastity.

If we go into these points, it will be clear that Islam has introduced a reasonable and ingenuous method of meeting the problem. This method is still a part of the Shia'h canon law.

Fixed-time marriage from the point of view of others

Those who have looked at this question from a realistic angle, admit that a sort of non-permanent marriage is a reasonable and scientific way of lessening the pressure of sexual urge and preventing it from flowing into a dangerous course. It also saves one from the mental distress caused by a feeling of committing a sin and digressing from the moral principles and legal provisions.

Fixed-time marriage has attracted the attention of a number of Western thinkers. The well-known British philosopher of the 20th century, Bertrand Russell, says: Can the young persons be told to be ascetic and monkish? Is there any assurance that in spite of having free and unlimited sexual relations these young persons will be chaste and faithful after they choose a spouse and marry? Can the increase of the illegitimate children and their impact on the general conditons of the society be overlooked?

How can this problem be solved? What solution does social experience suggest? Note what the same thinker adds: Judge Lindsey who served for long time at the Denver Court of Justice had an ample opportunity to

observe facts. He proposed that there should be an arrangement called companionate marriage. Unfortunately he had to lose his official job, because it was observed that he was interested in the well-being of the youth rather than creating a sense of sin in them. The Catholics and the Ku-klux-klan left no stone unturned to secure his dismissal. Lindsey noticed that the basic problem of marriage was lack of money. Money is required not only on account of possible children, but also because it is not proper that women should provide means of living. As such he concludes that young persons should resort to companionate marriage which is different from normal marriage in three ways:

Firstly, this marriage does not aim at producing progeny. Secondly, so long as the wife does not conceive and does not give birth to a child, divorce will be available with the consent of the parties.
Thirdly, in the case of divorce the wife will be entitled to alimony.

There can be no doubt about the effectiveness of the Lindsey proposal. Had the law accepted it, it would have had great impact on the improvement of morals.

POLYGAMY

Polygamy or plurality of wives is one of the controversial questions connected with the family system of Islam. In this connection a few points are worth consideration:

(a) Natural and social pre-requisites of polygamy
It is evident that the question of polygamy arises when:

- The number of women eligible for marriage is more than the number of marriageable men.
- There are women who are willingly prepared to

marry a man already having a wife and consider such a marriage to be in their interest.

Hence the question of polygamy does not arise firstly if the number of marriageable women is less than that of eligible men and secondly if the women are unwilling to marry a man having another wife. Now let us see in the case of the existence of the two conditions mentioned above, as to what can be the most reasonable and practical way of preserving the family system and safeguarding the interests of such women.

Here another question arises and that in itself is worthy taking into consideration. It is the question of the disparity between men and women in the age of fecundity which has two aspects;

(1) Marriage age or puberty mostly commences earlier in girls than in boys.
(2) The power of procreation of women cease at a certain age, after which they become pregnant in very rare cases, whereas there is no such fixed age for men.

(b) **Polygamy before Islam**

It should be remembered that the custom of polygamy existed before the advent of Islam among the Jews, the Arabs, the Persians and many other peoples of the world. All that Islam has done is that it has restricted it.

During the Middle Ages it was propagated in Europe that the practice of polygamy was first introduced by Islam. Will Durant has denied this charge. He in his book, History of Civilization (vol. I p. 61), says:

The clerics in the Middle Ages thought that polygamy was

an innovation of the Prophet of Islam. But that is not the case. As we have seen, it has been practised in most of the primitive societies.

Without paying attention to its natural or social causes the Europeans over many centuries tried to described polygamy as a big weakness of the Islamic teachings. At last some scholars exploded this myth and showed how topsy turvy is the picture painted of this custom and how unjust is its attribution to Islam.

The French historian Gustave Le Bon in his book, says:

In Europe no Eastern custom has been so much criticized as polygamy and Europe has also not gone so wrong about any usage as about it. The European writers have considered polygamy to be the foundation of Islam and have described it as the root cause of the spread of this religion as welll as of the declined of the Eastern people. If the readers of this book cast off their European prejudice for a while, they will admit that polygamy is a good custom as far as the social system of the East is concerned. It has enabled the people by whom it is practised to strengthen and invigorate their family relations. Thanks to this custom the woman enjoys more respect in the East than in the West. Before adducing our arguments to prove what we say, we have to mention that polygamy has not been first introduced by Islam, for this custom was prevalent among the pre-Islamic people of the East, including the Jews, the Persians, the Arabs etc. Even in the Western countries, though the climate of none of them is conducive to such a custom, monogamy is a thing which is found only in the legal books. I do not think that it can be denied that in actual practice monogamy does not exist in our society. I wonder how and why the legalized polygamy of the East is inferior to the

clandestine polygamy of the West.

(Tamaddun-i Islam wa Arab).

Polygamy and its conditions in Islam

Islam allows polygamy on three basic conditions:

(1) Preservation of the purity and cordiality of family life so that it may not become the cause of disruption of the family affairs.
(2) Number of wives not to exceed four.
(3) Equitable treatment of all the wives.

Now let us see what the Qur'an says in this respect: ***"Marry women of your liking, two, three or four, and if you fear that you shall not deal justly with so many then (marry) only one"***. (Surah al-Nisa, 4:3).

As we have mentioned earlier, prior to Islam there existed no limit as to the number of wives. It was Islam which restricted it and prevented the formation of *harems* found in the lives of the wealthy persons, rulers and sultans.

Furthermore, Islam has emphasized that taking advantage of this permission is conditional on the observance of complete equitability between the wives. This precondition requires the presence of a special spirit in the man. If he lacks it, he is not allowed to take more than one wife.

In the end, it is to be pointed out that the basic objective of conjugal life in Islam being the contentedness of the family members and mutual love and benevolence of the husband and wife, the best and the most satisfactory form of marriage is naturally monogamy. Hence the men should avail themselves of the permission of polygamy only in very exceptional circumstances and that too on the

condition that they find themselves competent enough to satisfy all the material and moral needs of their wives and treat them equitably.

FAMILY MANNERS

The holy Prophet has said:
"The best men among you are those who are the best husbands of their wives". *(Man la yahzuruhul Faqih).*

The best of your women are those:

- Who are loving and kindly;
- Who look after their chastity;
- Who are not arrogant or disobedient to their husband:
- Who are faithful to their husbands in their absence. (Wasail al Shia'h vol. 14, p. 14).

Imam Ali (P) has said:

- "Be kind to your wife and treat her well. Kindness will change her for the better, will keep her satisfied and will preserve her health and beauty".
- "Do not stop your wife from spending and being generous in the house. Do not be stingy in this respect".
- "By your chastity protect your wife from casting an evil eye on others stealthily and entertaining an idea of sin".
- "Your behaviour to her should be such that she may not think of unlawful means to satisfy her lawful desires".
- "Do not behave with her in such a way that she may notice when you are despondent and sexually exhausted". (al-Kafi, vol. 5, p. 51).

Some reciprocal responsibilities of parents and children

The parents and the children have reciprocal rights and

responsibilities so that if either of them fails to recognize those responsibilities or to discharge them he is unjust or technically speaking *Aaq* vis-a-vis the other.

The Prophet and his family have pointed out that just as a disobedient and irreverent child is guilty of a crime, similarly negligent and careless parents are also atrocious and wicked.

In the capacity of being the first guardians of their children the parents should be careful of their own conduct and behaviour so that they may not set a bad example to them. They must be very cautious, for their behaviour is bound to have a direct effect on the formation of the habits and character of their children.

To the best of their ability and social consciousness they must do their utmost to promote and nurture the talents of their children and should not hesitate to make any sacrifice for teaching and educating them, because that is one of the most effective ways of bringing them up.

They should bring up their children as dignified and self-respecting persons and not as cowards who may acquiesce to every insult.

The parents should ensure that their children become physically and spiritually strong. The children should be provided a sound atmosphere where they attain a healthy physical growth and receive correct moral training.

The Qur'an, laying stress on the rights of the parents, says: *"Your Lord has ordained that you worship none save Him and that you show kindness to parents"*. (Surah Bani Israel, 17:23).

Again it says: *"We have enjoined on man kindness to parents"*. (Surah al-Ankabut, 29:8).

In connection with the behaviour towards children it has been recommended that a promise made to them should be scrupulously fulfilled.

The holy Prophet has said:

- "If anyone of you makes a promise to his child he must fulfil it".
- "Treat your children equally in the matter of presenting gifts to them".

Philosophy of Islam – ISP, 1982

GUIDELINES OF ISLAMIC ECONOMY

Before explaining the guidelines of Islamic economy it appears to be necessary to keep in view two points regarding economics and its general importance.

(1) Economics

Whatever be his circumstances, man always needs food, clothing, accommodation and other necessities of life, and commensurate to his intellectual and social growth, he tries to secure them in the largest possible quantity and the best possible quality in the easiest possible way.

As far as we know, the question of securing the means of living has always and everywhere been considered and is still considered to be an important and essential problem of human life. In all periods of human life it has been one of the main problems which have attracted the attention of the individuals as well as the nations.

One of the prominent features of the present age also is the attention to the economic questions. On the one hand everyday new efforts are being made to find and preserve the natural resources and to explore new sources of wealth to be utilized in increasing and improving production to the maximum possible extent; and on the other action is being taken not only to meet the economic requirements

in the easiest and the quickest possible manner but also to create even new requirements. The methods of distribution and consumption are being continuously revised.

Hence such topics as ownership, capital, enterprise labour and other related questions are the problems which are studied and discussed from various angles in a scientific way.

(2) Importance of Economic problems

Contrary to what is claimed, economy is neither the source of all social affairs, nor the basic of all moral and doctrinal questions. Anyhow, it cannot be denied that it has great impact on the culture, customs, usages and the events of the daily life of the individuals as well as the nations. The impact is so multilateral and subtle and sometimes so complicated that it is not easy to identify it. It is only through a scientific study of the economic and social factors that it is possible to determine it.

Islamic Economy†

From a study of the Islamic teachings in the economic field we come to the conclusion that this divine system has paid profound attention to the effective role of economic questions in human life and has taken precautionary measures against the harmful effects of economic injustice.

Before entering on the detailed discussion of Islamic economy, we would like to draw your attention to a few points deduced from the Islamic texts:

(1) Man should always maintain his freedom and should

† For details see *"Iqtisaduna"* (Arabic) and "Islam and schools of Economics" (ISP, 1980) by Ayatullah Baqir al-Sadr.

see that his human dignity is not hurt.
Imam Ali (P) says:
"Do not be a slave of others because Allah has created you free".

(2) The divine teachings always revolve round the principles of justice, virtue and benevolence to the kindred. They are at war against all that is nasty, undesirable and unjust.

The Qur'an says:
"Surely Allah enjoins justice, kindness and giving to kindred, and He forbids indecency, wickedness and oppression. He exhorts you so that you may take heed". (Surah al-Nahl, 16:90).

Hence the general spirit which governs all Islamic teachings consists of support to justice and fair-play, doing good to others, care of the kindred and fight against injustice and corruption. This is the basic criterion for judging the true teachings of Islam in all fields.

(3) The earth and all that is in it belongs to all the people and not to any particular group or class.

The Qur'an says:
"He has laid the earth for His creatures. On it there are fruit and blossom-bearing palm trees, chaff-covered grain and fragrant herbs". (Surah al-Rahman, 55:10 – 12).

(4) Allah has entrusted the task of reclaiming the land to human beings:

"He brought you forth from the earth and has made you husband it". (Surah Hud, 11:61).

(5) Allah does not like that the economic benefits may be monopolized by a particular class or that wealth may circulate only among the affluent:

"So that wealth may not become exclusive for the rich among you". (Surah al-Hashr, 59:7).

(6) To live on the labour of others and to be a burden on them debars one from the favour of Allah:

The holy Prophet has said:
"Accursed are those who put their burden on the people".

(7) Wealth should be acquired by lawful and not by unlawful means:

The Qur'an says:
"Do not usurp one another's property by unjust means".
(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:188).

The profit of an individual or a group should not involve the loss to others:

The holy Prophet has said:
"In Islam there is nothing causing damage to the people or allowing anyone to cause damage to others".

These are some of the general principles which should always be kept in mind while identifying practical systems of Islam including its economic system.

OWNERSHIP

'This book belongs to Ahmad'.
What do you understand from this sentence?

Do you not understand from it that there is a relation between this book and Ahmad on the basis of which he has a right to use it, to keep it for his use, to sell it, to lend it to others and to receive it back from a borrower. This relationship between the book and Ahmad which entitles him to dispose it of and carry it from one place to another is called the bond of ownership.

Kinds of Ownership

There are three kinds of ownership:

(1) Absolute ownership
(2) Public ownership
(3) Private ownership

Absolute ownership

Absolute ownership is that bond which entitles the owner to do whatever he likes with his property without any restriction or restraint.

From the Islamic point of view this kind of ownership belongs to Allah only. He alone can do whatever He likes with all the existing things of this world. He can bring and can take away. He can give life and can take it. He can make ill and can cure. He can give and can take. He can punish and can forgive. And so on and so forth. No external restriction exists in His case, for everything rightly belongs to Him.

The Qur'an says:

"Whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah". (Surah al-Najm, 53:31).

It may be noted that all the dispensations of Allah have the nature of mercy, bestowal, conferring and granting perfection and not that of using, exploitation or taking

advantage. He disposes of what really belongs to Him, for it is He who has brought everything into existence. This world and everything in it belongs to Him and is sustained by Him. Nothing is self-existing. Hence everything is owned by Him.

The ownership of everyone else, whosoever and whatsoever he may be is only relative, that is of that kind which entitles the owner to deal with his property within the framework fixed for him, without any right of going beyond its limit.

When a man works, exerts himself and earns money, he is recognized to be its owner. But he is not the absolute owner of it. He is only the relative owner of it. He cannot dispose of the money earned by him absolutely according to his will. He cannot throw his money into the sea and that it is his money and hence he can do with it whatever he likes. His right of ownership is limited. For example, he cannot squander and waste it, for that is not a financial proposition.

Public ownership

According to the economic laws of Islam, all natural resources on the land, in the sea and in the space belong to the general public. They cannot be personal property of anyone. The Islamic traditions have described a large number of natural resources as public property.

According to one tradition, a question was put to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (P) in this respect.

In reply he said:

"Water-courses, hills, forests, fallow lands left by their owners, are all public property. Furthermore, there are

certain other kinds of wealth which, though not included in natural resources, are from the Islamic point of view, a part of public property, for example, the estate of those deceased persons who leave no heir, goes to public treasury".

Private ownership

If you go to the bank of a river and catch a fish by hand, or with a hook or net, it becomes your personal property. Before you caught it anybody could go to the river and catch fish inlcuding this particular one. But now as you have caught it, none else has a right to take it. Only you can utilize it. If anybody else utilizes it, he can do so only with your permission. Thus you personally are the owner of it.

Islam respects personal property to a certain extent. The basis of personal property in Islam in the respect of the rights of the individual and his aspiration for free enterprise. Islam wants to give incentive to everyone to work and exert himself to the best of his ability, and to hope for the return of his labour. But while Islam wants that everyone should get the produce of his labour, it does not allow anyone to dominate others and deprive them of the fruits of their labour.

Wealth

From economic point of view wealth is not abundant, easily obtainable or unlimited in quantity. It can be used personally and is transferable to others. Wealth in society is like blood in human body. As blood should be in circulation in the body so that all organs in proportion to their need and position may use it to their advantage, similarly wealth also should remain in circulation among all the strata of society so that its members may maintain their

life and be vigorous and energetic. If blood is blocked in one organ so that it does not flow to other parts of the body in sufficient quantity thrombosis will cause serious trouble. It may upset the entire system or may even lead to death. Similarly if wealth is blocked in a particular class of society, many social ailments are likely to develop. As blood keeps all the organs alive and enables the whole body to function in a co-ordinated manner, the same is the case with wealth in society. Without economic equilibrium members of the society cannot make co-ordinated efforts, which are necessary to save the society from decay and ruin.

Islam has given consideration to wealth from different angles. It has been mentioned in more than 70 verses of the holy Qur'an.

In the Surah al-Nisa, verse 5, wealth has been referred to as a means of support for man. The Qur'an says: *"Do not give away to the idiots your property which Allah has made for you a means of your sustenance".*

In the Surah al-Baqarah, verse 180, the Surah Saad, verse 32 and the Surah al-Adiyaat, verse 8 it has been described as *Khayr*, that is good and beneficial.

Has wealth been censured in the Qur'an?
Though in the Qur'an we find certain verses in which a reference has been made to wealth in a way that gives the impression that this Divine Book regards it as base and despicable, yet if we go a little deeper we can discover that what has been really censured is the excessive reliance on it or attaching too much importance to it and not its real worth. What is opposed in these verses is the love of wealth for the sake of wealth and its use for pomp and show:

"Nay, but you show no kindness to the orphan, nor do you urge the feeding of the needy. On the other hand you devour the inheritance of the orphans greedily along with your own share and love wealth ardently". (Surah al-Fajr, 89:17 – 20).

"Wealth and children are an ornament of this worldly life. But the good deeds of lasting value are better in the sight of your Lord and hold for you a greater hope". (Surah al-Kahf, 18:46).

From Islamic point of view money can be used as a means of the welfare of life and satisfaction of human wants. It should be used for improving the general conditions of the people and guiding them to the path of Allah. But it is not to be used as a means of the display of splendour and vanity, nor is it to be hoarded. To make the amassing of wealth a goal of life causes only misery and not happiness.

The Qur'an says:
"Alas for every slanderer and back-biter who amasses wealth and hoards it! Does he thinks that his wealth will make him immortal? Certainly not. He will surely be thrown into the Consuming Furnace". (Surah al-Humazah, 104:1 – 4).

To amass wealth is a matter of vanity
"Obey not any mean swearer, defamer, going about with slander, hinderer of good, out-stepping the limits, sinful, ignoable, besides all that, notoriously mischieveous because he possesses wealth and sons. When our verses are recited to him, he says that they are but stories of those of your. We shall brand him on the snout (bring him to disgrace)". (Surah al Qalam, 68:10 – 15).

Power and riches should be used as a means of securing the high and noble objectives of life. That is the only proper use of them. Otherwise if they are used to compete with other people in the field of life, they become degrading, and at the most can give only a transient pleasure of this world.

The Qur'an says:
"Know that the life of this world is only a sport and pastime, pageantry and a cause of boasting among you and a vying in the multiplication of wealth and children". (Surah al Hadid, 57:20).

Such attachment to power and pelf makes one oblivious of Allah and those ever-lasting values on which humanity of man depends. It makes him engrossed in the trivial matters of daily life — a state not worthy of a purposeful and honest man.

"Believers, let not your wealth and children divert you from the rememberance of Allah. Those who do so shall surely be the losers". (Surah al Munafiqun, 63:9).

That is why the Qur'an has described money and wealth as *Fitnah* or an object of testing and trial. The 28th verse of the Surah al Anfal and the 15th verse of the Surah al Taghabun introduce it as a means of testing man as to what he does with it and testing others as to how they react to the person who possesses it. If they hold him in respect simply because he is rich, then they have lost two-thirds of their faith.

The holy Prophet has said:
"If a man shows humble behaviour toward a rich person because of his riches, two thirds of his faith is gone".

Property rights

In the various economic systems of the olden days property rights were almost unlimited. On the basis of them an owner could utilize and dispose of his property as he liked and did not consider himself subject to any appreciable restriction.

In the capitalistic and semi-capitalistic systems of modern times the basic question for which people work is that of unrestricted freedom to increase private income and to spend it in accordance with personal propensities. As to the question how this income is secured and how it is spent, it is regarded an uncalled for intervention in the personal freedom. Only in the cases where the interests of the capitalists clash, restrictions are imposed and regulations are formulated, but not with a view to safeguard the interests of the masses but with a view to regulate the division of wealth among the capitalists. In these systems the field of economic enterprise is open to only one class, viz. the capitalists. Only those persons belonging to other classes of society who render befitting services to the interests of the capitalists may be allowed to take advantage of this field to some extent. As for the masses the field of economic progress is more or less shut to them and they perforce have to follow the way planned for them invisibly by the capitalists under their overall policy.

In the present socialist systems the right of property has mostly been taken away from the individuals and transferred to the state. In these systems the economic injustice prevailing under the capitalistic system has been considerably reduced, but at the same time a part of the natural human incentive has also disappeared.

Right of property in Islam

In the Islamic system the right of property has a special form by the help of which most of the evil effects of private property under the capitalistic and semi-capitalistic systems can be avoided and at the same time the personal incentive to economic effort can to a great extent be maintained.

According to Islamic concept three basic conditions of the right of property have been visualized.

(1) Property should not have been acquired by unlawful means, that is the means repugnant to any definite rule of Islam.
(2) This acquisition and its continuity should not involve any damage to others.
(3) This acquisition should not invalidate any valid claim nor should establish an invalid one.

On this basis a person who purchases stolen property will not be regarded its owner, though he may not be aware of the fact of the matter, because it has not come to him through lawful means.

Similarly anything obtained by a person through cheating, forgery or coercion will not become his property and he will have no right to transfer it to anyone else.

No individual or group will be regarded as the rightful owner of the money obtained as a result of the transfer of national sources of wealth to others.

NATURAL SOURCES OF WEALTH

Identification of natural resources of wealth and the rules concerning them is one of the most important parts of the

Islamic teachings. Some of these sources exist outside the earth which is the abode of the human beings; such as the sun, which is the source of heat and light for the earth, its dwellers and many other planets, and also the moon by the light and other effects of which, such as ebb and tide of the seas, we are benefited. Similarly air, clouds and the stars produce ample effect on human life.

It is evident that resources of this kind are for the benefit of all creatures of Allah and nobody has a right to monopolize them. Allah has described them as His bounty to all man.

Another part of the natural resources to which man has direct access exists on the surface of the earth, the important portion of it being water in the form of oceans, seas and rivers. Still another part is the dry portion of the earth, which comprises 27% of its surface. Then there are all the minerals and other treasures hidden in the depth of the oceans, seas, rivers and mountains, which have an effective role in the life of the human beings.

These are the main sources of wealth existing in the earth. As we have already mentioned the real and true ownership of all these natural resources as well as of man himself pertains to Allah. It must be remembered that the permission of being benefited by these sources has been given to us in human interest, and hence they should not be monopolized by any particular person, persons, class or society to the deprivation of other human beings.

Earth

The earth is one of the most valuable sources of wealth. Concerning the earth there are certain interesting points which are worth knowing.

Ownership of land

In Islam there are three kinds of land from the stand-point of ownership:

(1) Lands owned by society
(2) Lands owned by state
(3) Lands owned by private individuals

Lands owned by society

This kind of lands are not salable. Even the state has no right to sell them. Lands developed and tilled by human hands and those which come under Muslim control consequent to *jihad* are considered to be the property of the Muslim society and none can purchase or sell even one metre thereof. The Muslim government may grant their lease to persons or associations in consideration of rent, called *kharaj* to be deposited in the public treasury.

The lands of Mesopotamia (situated between the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates) in Iraq come under this category. On being asked by Halabi about them, Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) said: "These are the property of all Muslims, the Muslims of the present day, those who join the Muslim ummah later, and those who are not born yet".

Abu Bardah asked Imam al Sadiq (P) about the sale and purchase of *kharaj* bearing lands. The Imam replied: "Who can sell them? They belong to all the Muslims".

During the regime of the Caliph Umar a man purchased a plot of land on the bank of the Euphrates for laying a garden. After the transaction was finalized, he intimated Umar of it. Umar asked him from whom he had purchased it. He told him that he had purchased it from its owners.

When the Muslims (the Muhajirs and the Ansar,) assembled, Umar turned to that man and said:

"These are the owners of that piece of land. Have you purchased it from these people?
The man replied in the negative. Thereupon Umar said: "Then hand over the plot to those from whom you have purchased it and take back your money".

The following points may be noted in respect of these lands: They are forever the property of the Muslim society and can never become personal property of anyone. Hence they cannot be sold, purchased or mortgaged.

The Muslim government, being the custodian of the general interests of the Muslim ummah, is responsible to see that these lands, the national assets as they are, should be put to the best use in accordance with the circumstances prevailing at a particular time, and the income accruing from them should be spent for the welfare of the ummah as a whole.

Lands owned by the state
All undeveloped fallow lands and all uncultivated forests and pastures are the property of the state. The Islamic state must discharge its duty in respect of them keeping in view the interests of the present as well as the future generations. Whenever deemed in the national interest that the land may be given in grant to an individual, society or association, it may be leased. In every case it should be put to the best use.

Lands owned by private individuals
If a person living in a non-Muslim territory decides to embrace Islam and join the Muslim society his right to

the movable and immovable property held by him will be respected. If he was the owner of any land, he will continue to be so.

If the Muslim government in any case deems it in the national interest to assign any plot of land to an individual or a partnership, it can do so. In that case the individual will become the owner of that plot independently or as the member of a partnership.

As you might have observed, in the economic system of Islam the field of personal ownership of land is very limited in principle, and it may be said that, as a rule, this great and all-pervasive source of wealth should not be personal property.

The utilization of the sources of wealth is one of the questions to which heed has been given in the Islamic economy. From Islamic point of view anything which can be used as raw material for producing the stuff required by the members of society, should not be left unattended. Everybody within his means is required to try to reclaim land, bring it under cultivation or put it to some other use, for, according to the Qur'an, Allah has brought forth man on the earth to husband it.

In Islamic jurisprudence the waste land which has not been developed and put to any use yet, is called 'dead land' and to reclaim it is called 'giving life to the dead land'. According to the Islamic point of view he who takes action to reclaim such land, has a special claim to it.

The holy Prophet has said:
"He who brought a dead (barren) piece of land to life (brought it under cultivation) is the owner of that land".

"Those who reclaim a piece of land and bring it under cultivation, have a better claim to it, and hence it is theirs".

A companion of the Prophet, whose name was Asmar says: "I was with the Prophet along with certain other persons. The Prophet said: "He who takes action first to reclaim a piece of waste land will be the owner of that land".

After this announcement the people became so enthusiastic that they regularly went to the desert to select a suitable piece of land with a view to reclaim it.

It is evident that with the right of occupying the reclaimable land, the enthusiastic people are encouraged to bring more and more land under cultivation with the result that the level of production naturally goes up.

To reclaim land through cultivation or construction of a building, house, factory, etc. naturally takes a long time and cannot be completed in a day. For example, you decide to turn a hectare of land into a garden or a farm. First you go and select a suitable piece of land and then start making necessary arrangements to secure all that is necessary to carry out the intended job. Obviously all this will require time. Suppose in the meantime some one else selects the same tract of land for his use and starts working on it, then where will you stand? To avert such a situation the economic rules of Islam allow a man who intends to reclaim a tract of land to mark it by stones or fencing. By doing so he will establish a prior claim to it, and nobody else will be able to occupy it while he is making due preparations to reclaim it. Anyhow, marking will have no legal value if resort to it is made with a view to either merely grabbing the land, or depriving others, or to earn

money by selling it subsequently.

Keeping arable land uncultivated

If anybody leaves his arable land untilled and does not take action to cultivate it, he loses his claim to it. His land may be handed overe to someone else who may undertake to put it to use.

Imam Musa al Kazim (P) is reported to have said:
"Land belongs to Allah, who has given it to His bondmen to earn their livelihood. Hence, if anyone leaves a tract of land unattended and unused for three consecutive years without a valid reason, it goes out of his hands and may be handed over to someone else".

From the above it is clear that:
Firstly he who reclaims a tract of barren land has a right of ownership to it.

Secondly, without developing it and putting it to use, nobody can claim the ownership of barren land.

Thirdly, only superficial occupation and marking are not enough to claim ownership of land. There should be some work of productive and economic nature.

Fourthly, one who reclaims barren land, has a right to it only so long as he puts it to economic use.

Hence the action of those who occupy barren land in different ways simply to earn money by selling it to those who require it for agricultural or construction purposes, is unlawful and contrary to the economic teachings of Islam. They should be stopped from doing that.

Not only the lands which have been simply marked but even those which were reclaimed once but later left neglected and unused may be occupied and put to use by others without requiring permission of the original occupier.

Imam al Sadiq (P) is reported to have said:
"He who develops fallow land and cleans its water channels, has only to pay its *zakat* (tax under the Islamic law). If this land was previously under the occupation of someone else who neglected it and left it unused, he will not have a right to take possession of it again, for all land belongs to Allah and to him who puts it to use".

The Shahid-e-Thani, one of the greatest Shi'ah jurists of the 10th century (Hijri era) says in his book, *Masalik:*

"The waste land reclaimed by a person but left neglected for long, returns to its original position and can be lawfully reclaimed by any other person. The ownership of the first person was due to his reclamation and ceased to exist when he left the land neglected".

Water
Water is one of the first needs of every living being. It is also one of the most valuable natural resources from the agricultural and industrial point of view.

Under the Islamic economic system there are two kinds of water:
(1) The water which is naturally accessible and can be freely availed of.
(2) The water which is not naturally accessible, such as that of wells, underground channels, constructed canals etc.

Natrually accessible water

It is public property. Everyone can avail himself of it. One automatically becomes the owner of any amount of water taken by him for his consumption.

Shaykh Tusi, a great Shi'ah jurist of the 5th century (Hijri era) says in his book, al-Mabsut:

Water of sea, of the rivers, such as the Tigris and Euphrates and of the natural springs that issue forth at waste lands, is public property, and according to the unanimous verdict of all jurists can be used lawfully by anyone in any quantity, for ibn Abbas has reproted that the holy Prophet said: "All people share three things: water, pasture and fuel".

Water not naturally accessible

There is water which is not directly accessible. For example to be able to make use of underground water it is necessary to dig a well or a subterranean channel. Similarly to utilize the water of big rivers for irrigation it is necessary to dig canals and channels. According to Islamic economy this kind of water is also regarded as public property and is not subject to sale and purchase. The only difference is that in consideration of the effort and exertion made by the person who dug the well or the canal, he has a prior right to use its water to the full satisfaction of his personal, agricultural or industrial needs. Others have no right to obstruct him. But once his need is satisfied, he cannot stop others from using water or demand money from them for being allowed to use it.

In this respect Shaykh Tusi says in *al-Mabsut:*

"When we say that such and such person is the owner of that particular well, his ownership only means that he has a prior right to the use of its water for the purposes of

drinking, watering the cattle and irrigation. Hence if he has water in excess of his need, it is obligatory on him to make it available free of cost to those who require it".

This rule is based on a tradition which has been quoted from Imam al Sadiq (P). He is reported to have said:

"The holy Prophet prohibited the sale of the water which a person has at his disposal because he has a right to its use for the purpose of drinking and watering of cattle, or because he has built a dam on a river to irrigate his land. If he does not require it, he must not stop others from using it. Hence do not sell such water, but make it available free of cost to your neighbour or brother".

Minerals

One of the other natural resources of great value are minerals.

A great amount of the minerals is found in the earth and on the land. Some amount of them is found in water and in the space also. Many kinds of salts and chemicals which can be extracted from water and the use of solar energy obtained through space have converted water and space into valuable sources of wealth.

According to the rules of Islamic economy, minerals, whatever be their form, cannot become personal property. They will always be the property of society. A reference to the books of the Islamic law shows that as far as those minerals are concerned the extraction of which does not involve large scale drilling, excavation etc. all the jurists and other Muslim scholars are almost unanimous on this point. As for those minerals the extraction and exploitation of which requires large scale excavation etc., though

some difference of opinion exists, many of the prominent jurists subscribe to the view that they are also property of society. Muhaqqiq Thani says that this is the view of the majority of Shi'ah jurists (1).

ECONOMIC ROLE OF HUMAN LABOUR

From the foregoing study we come to the conclusion that the Almighty has put abundant natural resources at the disposal of man and has provided him with all that is necessary for life. There is no doubt that these resources have been provided to him so that he may make the best use of them in his life and not merely for watching them from a distance, or for disregarding them, resorting to monastic life and abandoning the world. Islam denounces renunciation. It is reported that the holy Prophet has said: "There is no monasticism in Islam".

Labour is the key of utilizing natural resources

Man can be benefited by the natural resources only if he works, exerts himself and makes efforts. Suppose a thirsty man is passing by a spring of sweet water. This spring has been created for his use so that he may quench his thirst. But his thirst can be quenched only if he at least stretches out his hand, takes a handful of water and drinks it. Suppose a hungry man passes by a wild chestnut tree. Its nuts, natural food, are available to satiate his hunger. But at least he has to stretch out his hand, pick the nuts and put them in his mouth. Hence work and only work is the key of utilizing the natural resources, which have been described by the Qur'an as the treasures of Allah's mercy.

When that thirsty person stretched out his hand to the spring and took a handful of water or that hungry person

(1) Please refer to the book entitled "Jame al-Maqasid".

plucked a few chestnuts, it is in the fitness of things that we acknowledge that that handful of water or those chestnuts belong to him, and that none has a right to snatch them from his hand and use them. This right and this bond between man and work is the bond of ownership.

From the study of the economic teachings of Islam we deduce that ownership is the fruit of labour only. When man applies his labour to natural resources, they become his property. His work may be elaborate and complicated or may be very easy and simple such as lifting a thing from its source, taking a handful of water from a river, a canal or a spring, plucking a number of fruits from a wild tree, picking a thorny plant from the forest or catching a bird. In the Islamic jurisprudence such acts are called 'acquiring'. If a person acquires a thing from such natural sources, as cannot be appropriated exclusively by anyone, technically called *'Mubahāt'*, it is his.

In certain cases it is not so easy to reach a natural source. One has to plan and exert himself to get what he requires. Suppose there is a thirsty person and he wants to get water, but there is no water above ground. Then he will have to dig a well, arrange a bucket and a rope, and then draw water. Or alternatively he will have to make a pump and install it, or dig several wells and connect them by means of an arterial channel, till the water reaches the surface of the earth.

To encourage man to undertake such jobs it is necessary that his right to what he produces is acknowledged and he is assured that the more he will exert himself, the more prosperous his life will be. Of course, while giving him such a right, it is essential to take all aspects of human life

into consideration. His encouragement should not pave the way for his indulging in the oppression and exploitation of others and consequently result in their discouragement and disheartening.

That is why Islam, while recognizing man's ownership of the products of his labour, has also placed certain restrictions on personal property.

No gain without work

From an overall study of the economic teachings of Islam it may be deduced that the gain which anyone may make in life depends on his work. Nobody has a right to live on the labour of others without performing any useful work himself. The holy Prophet has been reported to have said: "Accursed is he who puts his burden on others". (Wasail al-Shi'ah, vol. 12, p. 18).

It is reported that a supporter of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (P) requested him for financial aid. He was expecting that the Imam would grant him a sum from ***Bayt al-Mall,*** the exchequer.

But the Imam said:

"This money is neither mine nor yours. It is the output of the fights of the Muslims and the present of their swords. If you took part in the fighting you are entitled to a share. Otherwise nothing out of the produce of their labour will be given to others". (Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. II p. 226).

In order to safeguard the interests of those who work and exert themselves, the economic system of Islam is against any gains without work. It does not want to give the idle and cunning self-seekers an opportunity to live on the

labour of others and deprive the diligent and industrious workers and their families of the bread earned by them by the sweat of their brow. Unemployment and idleness both are harmful to the individual and to the society.

Imam Musa al-Kazim (P) is reported to have said:
"Allah hates the idle, sleepy man".

From the Islamic point of view a man who works hard to earn his livelihood is as good as a fighter in the way of Allah. Fighting in the way of Allah aims at strenghtening the basis of human virtues and spreading social justice, whereas unemployment and idleness deal a hard blow to both of them.

Production, distribution, services etc.
From the economic point of view of Islam useful work is not confined to such productive activities as agriculture, animal husbandry and industry. Distribution, services and every useful work which meets any human need, is recognized as an economic work, and it is the right of the person who performs it to be benefited by it and to manage the affairs of his life with profit from it.

Production
A farmer tills the land, scatters seeds in it, irrigates it, weeds it and sprays insecticides on it. At the time of harvest he gathers the produce and prepares it for consumption. But all the consumers cannot come to the farmer to purchase their requirements.

Distribution
Here the requirement of social life paves the way for another essential and useful work. It is necessary that someone else should come, take the commodities of this

farmer and other producers and make them available to the consumers. He may carry his wares to the doors of the consumers as a pedlar or may open a shop in the area where the consumers live. In either case it is his job to collect the required commodities from the centres of their production and to sell them to the consumers.

The distribution, that is carrying the goods to the consumer, is in itself a positive, useful and essential work. It is necessary that he who undertakes it must get some profit. It is for this reason that the price of the commodities purchased from a shop or a pedlar is always somewhat higher than the price of the same commodities if purchased direct from a producer.

In healthy economy this difference of price remains within the limit of the value of the additional work undertaken by the distributor in carrying the commodities to the consumer. He is not allowed to make large profit by the goods by purchasing them from the producer at a nominal price and selling them to the consumer at exorbitant rates. The work which is performed by the distributor is called trade and commerce.

Services

There are certain requirements of human life which are neither met by production nor by distribution. When your child falls ill, you take him to the physician. The physician must perform some work to cure him. This work is useful and essential. But is it production or distribution? It is neither. Then what is it? It is a service to you and to your child, a very valuable and effective service. In consideration for his services the physician must get such remuneration as may provide him with the means of living.

In social life there are many occupations which can be considered neither to be a part of production nor that of distribution, but the wheels of life do not revolve without them. In modern terminology they are called services. Under the Islamic economy every kind of useful and essential work, whatever be its nature, production, distribution or services, is acknowledged to be of value, and hence it should fetch a suitable profit.

False work or a device for exploitation

According to the economic principles of Islam only useful and value-generating activity is considered to be true work, that is the work that facilitates basic human life and makes it more pleasant. A thorough study of some Islamic traditions makes it clear that under Islamic economy there is no place for the activities which have no effective role in production, distribution or services. Nobody has a right to contemplate any profit on account of such superfluous and fruitless work.

Imam al Sadiq (P) is reported to have said:
"I don't like to hire a water-mill and let the same for a higher rent, without at least offering a security for it or adding anything to it or equipping it better". (Wasail al Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 259).

Imam al Baqir (P) was asked: "Is it lawful if a craftsman takes an order, but without doing anything himself transfers it to someone else and in this process makes some profit?"

The Imam replied: "He should not do so".

In another version of the report it has been added:
"He should not do so, unless he has carried out the order partly". (Wasail al Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 264 – 265).

A coppersmith referred his case to Imam al Sadiq (P). He said: "I sometimes take an order and then transfer the job to the apprentices working under me on the conditon that they will get only 2/3 of the wages settled".

The Imam said: "This is improper, unless you join them in carrying out the job". (Wasail al Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 266).

One of the very effective factors in the increase of the prices is the existence of several middlemen through whose hands the commodity passes from producer to consumer, each of them demanding income for himself without performing any useful and essential work. From the above traditions it may be deduced that so long as these middlemen carry out a useful role at least from the distribution point of view, they are entitled to get profit in proportion to their work, but those middlemen who simply slow down the process of distribution deserve no profit. They should be stopped from carrying out their false work which is only a device for exploiting the producer and the consumer.

The brother of Imam al Kazim (P) asked him:
"Can a man, who has bought some foodstuff, sell it to another person before actually taking possession of the same?"

The Imam replied: "If he sells at profit, he can't; but if he sells it at the cost price, there is no objection".

Usury

One of the false works of the worst kind is usury which should be regarded as one of the most cruel sorts of exploitation. Islam is severely against this dirty form of exploitation, in whatever garb it may appear, and

rigorously denounces the usurers. Before we undertake the discussion of usury, it will be well to explain the real role of money in human society.

It is said that money has come into existence to facilitate the exchange of commodities.

In small and primitive societies exchange was made by means of barter. If anybody produced a commodity in a quantity bigger than he required, and needed some other commodities produced or possessed by others, he would exchange his commodity with what others had at a ratio to be fixed mutually by the parties concerned. For example a farmer would exchange his food grains with other necessities of life, such as clothes and other household requirements. In spite of being simple, the barter system presented serious problems in bigger societies because for such a transaction it was necessary to find a person or a market:

- Requiring the commodity offered;
- Ready to exchange it;
- Offering another required commodity of equal value.

For this reason the system of business underwent many changes. Many kinds of markets at various levels were set up and at last money was introduced as a medium of exchange.

Deviation of money from its course

This solution resolved many difficulties, but in its turn created new problems. One of these problems was that money which was designed as a medium of exchange and had to play the role of a measure of the value of production and distribution, gradually lost its original funciton and

itself become an object of transaction.

This situation arose in this manner that some people concentrated some amount of money with them and without accomplishing any work and taking any risk lent it as loan to those who needed it. They demanded from the borrower some additional money or services in lieu of making the loan to him.

In doing so their only objective was to maintain their power and to increase their capital. They did not care whether by receiving that money the borrower made any gain or suffered a loss, and whether he had spent it for the purpose of production or to meet his personal needs. The practice of lending money with the condition that the borrower will return it along with something in addition thereto is called usury.

Today the investment of their hoarded money in usury by the big capitalists has created a queer scene in the economic world. Now the capitalists control both production and consumption as well as the prices. This situation has led to the creation of two opposite classes of the rich and the poor, the well-fed and the starving, the powerful and the powerless in society. This totally undesirable state of affairs may be described as imperceptible slavery.

Islam severely forbids usury and is not in favour of the use of money as an independent factor to earn profit, for such a practice causes economic rift. Islam is also opposed to the stagnation of money. It does not want that it should be withheld from circulation and hoarded by anybody. Money should be used for increasing economic activity, enhencing production and creating new jobs for the members of society so that it may play its correct and

effective role. Under Islamic economy if the stagnant money reaches a certain level and is not utilized for one year, a tax of 2½ per cent, called *zakat* is levied on it.

Precedents of usury in history

In Egypt: As recorded in history, usury existed in ancient Egypt. The only condition was that the total of interest should not exceed the principal, viz. the original sum lent.

In Greece and Rome: In these two lands usury was practised. If the borrower failed to repay the loan with interest, he was captured and enslaved.

In China: In ancient China the practice of usury and the resultant malice and hatred between the exploiting class and the exploited had assumed such proportions that there is still a proverb in Chinese which says that "the major thieves are the money-changers".

In Arabia: Before the advent of Islam usury was rampant in this land. In Madina there were Jewish tribes engaged in trade. Though there are injunctions in the Old Testament which forbid usury, they advanced money as loan on interest to the people who in their turn lent it at a higher rate of interest to others.

Usury in the Qur'an

The basic objective of Islam being the emancipation of people from every kind of material and doctrinal slavery, in the economic field also it has paid due attention to all the factors which restrict the freedom of action and lead to material and intellectual bondage. It has formulated rules to save the situation. One of these rules is the prohibition of usury, which was enforced by the Qur'an in several stages.

In the first stage the practice of usury was declared undesirable, and attention was drawn to meeting the social needs of the needy without thinking of making any profit. *"What you give by way of usury, so that it may increase in the wealth of others does not increase in the sight of Allah. But what zakat you give in desiring Allah's pleasure, will be repaid to you manifold".* (Surah al-Rum, 30:39).

In the second stage the Jewish usurers were denounced, as they indulged in the practice of usury in spite of the fact that their own religious injunctions prohibited it. They were told that they were destined to painful chastisement: *"Because of their practising usury, though they were forbidden it and their devouring the property of people wrongfully. We have prepared a painful punishment for the disbelievers among them".* (Surah al-Nisa, 4:161).

In the third stage exorbitant and compound interest was forbidden. *"Believers, do not devour usury doubled and redoubled".* (Surah Ale Imran, 3:130).

At last in the fourth stage usury was abolished altogether and its practice was declared tantamount to an act of hostility against Allah and His Messenger. The Muslims were asked to return what they had taken by way of interest and this was declared to be one of the conditions of faith. *"Believers, have fear of Allah and forego what is still due to you from urury, if you are (true) believers. But if you do not do, be warned of war against you by Allah and His Messenger".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:278).

Why has usury been so strictly prohibited?

As to the reasons of the prohibition of usury and that too with such severity, a number of traditions have come down to us from the leaders of Islam who have pointed out how

harmful it is to the moral and economic life of the individual and society. We quote one tradition as an example.

One of his companions sent certain questions to Imam al-Riza (P) and requested him to reply to them in writing. One of the questions was about usury. In this respect the Imam wrote as under:

"Usury is unlawful, for Allah, the Almighty has forbidden it because it brings ruin and leads to the wastage of the property of the people. When a person borrows one dirham, but pays back two, he pays one in lieu of that what he had taken, but his second dirham has been wasted. Thus one of the two parties has suffered loss. That is why Allah has forbidden usury. It is just as Allah has decreed that the property of a person of weak intellect will not be made over to him until he has developed sufficient judgement and discretion, because it is feared that his property will go waste.

For the same reason the charging of interest in the case of sale on credit is also forbidden. That also does away with fellow-feeling and causes loss of property. Everybody becomes interested in making easy profit and gives up the practice of advancing interest-free loans, though it is an act of virtue to help the needy and to lend them money without charging interest. In any case, usury leads to corruption, injustice, violation of the rights of others and the wastage of property". (Wasail al Shi'ah, vol. 12, pp. 425 – 426).

In this tradition attention has been given to two basic reasons of the prohibition of usury:

(1) Wastage of a part of the property of the man who

pays interest and its transfer to the pocket of the usurer for nothing. Usury is a sort of plundering the people and stealing the produce of their labour. It is grave injustice. It paves the way for economic crises. It makes the rich, richer and the poor, poorer. Hence it must be stopped.

(2) Kindling the fire of avarice, strengthening the spirit of profiteering and weakening that of fellow-feeling and philanthropy.

A scientific study of the effects of usury also points out the same economic and moral evils which have been reflected in this tradition. By studying the relation of the big and small usurers with life and the people everyone can feel this painful reality both in the economic and moral fields.

Banking

Usually when the subject of the prohibition of usury is discussed, a question is raised as to whether with its abolition the whole system of banking will not come to a stand-still, while it is known that banking is an essential part of our modern life.

The reply to this question demands that we should discuss the problem in detail.

Banking activity can be divided into two distinct parts, one not normally linked to interest, and the other normally linked to it.

The first part includes such functions as those connected with drafts, pay orders and cheques, current account, saving account not bearing interest, money exchange etc.

The second part includes the advancing of commercial, agricultural, industrial, occupational, house building, business opening loans etc.

The first kind of activities are very effective in facilitating the life and commercial dealings and have no inherent harmful effects, neither for the individual nor for the society.

Suppose a father wants to send money for the monthly expenses of the education of his son, studying in an education centre somewhere else, or a merchant of one city wants to make payment for the goods purchased by him in another city.

They either will have to undertake a journey themselves to make the payment at the other end and thus undergo heavy expenses and much inconvenience, or they will have to look for an honest and trust worthy passanger going to the place concerned. Alternatively they may search for a merchant in their town having a business link at the other place and send a draft through him. Evidently each of last two cases involves much inconvenience and worry.

Will it not be better to have a vast and reliable institution which may carry out this function conveniently and satisfactority at a minimum cost? Such an institution is the bank.

A man engaged in his business dealings the whole day wants to go home in the evening with relaxed mind and wants to spend his rest hours with his wife and children peacefully. He may have a hundred or a thousand or more dollars with him in his store. If he carries the cash with him, he is afraid of robbery and if he leaves it at his

store, there is a possibility of theft. He is worried about the safety of this money and cannot sleep with his mind at rest.

In these circumstances it is better if a well-equipped institution takes his money daily for safe custody and, whenever he wants, pays him back against a cheque or pays to anyone else in whose favour he draws a cheque. This is a very useful function of a bank.

An economical and discreet man, and for that matter a woman or a child, saves something from his daily income for the rainy day. However small this amount may be, it is difficult for him to keep it with himself for, on the one hand, any moment he may have a temptation to spend it, and on the other, there is a possibility of its being lost or stolen. If he hands over his savings to someone else for safe custody, that peson may misappropriate it or may not be in a position to return it when demanded. It will be a great boon to the people if an institution undertakes to keep their savings and to return the same whenever required by them. This is another useful function of the banks.

In the case of big transactions involving large amounts it is difficult to count the money, especially the small currency notes. Their counting takes a long time and whatever care is taken there is always a possibility of a mistake. In such cases if the payment is made by means of a cheque much time is saved and the possibility of a mistake is also averted.

These and similar other advantages of the banking system cannot be denied, and it will be foolish to overlook them.

The banks with their vast organization and reliable position render a very useful service in meeting such requirements of life, and this is enough vindication of the necessity of their existence.

The prohibition of usury, howsoever vast its sphere is supposed to be, does not in anyway hamper such banking activities. In Islamic society both the state and the individuals can set up institutions to carry out such functions and can charge their commission on percentage basis for the service rendered by them, without being involved is usury.

There is no reason why the banks instead of carrying out current account transactions free, giving interest on saving accounts, and meeting their expenses by charging interest from the borrowers should not charge adequate commission on current and saving accounts in the same way as they do in the case of drafts and letters of credit. Thus they will be able not only to meet their expenses but also to earn profit without being involved in usury.

Thus the total prohibition of usury in Islam does not in any way hamper the banking activities of the first kind, nor does it deprive the Muslim society from such useful and beneficial facilities of life.

As for the second kind of activities, in most parts of the world today they do not aim merely at economic welfare. Their main aim is usury accompanied by acquiring power and establishing grand formations. The economic welfare and the progress of knowledge and industry even if taken care of are only secondary considerations.

The banks are always on the lookout for the most suitable

projects to invest their capital with a view to earn the maximum interest. If in certain cases they are found to lend money for strengthening the economy of an institution or a nation, they do so only to serve their own interest and not that of the institution or the nation concerned. These capitalists are wise enough to be anxious to preserve the source of their profit-making for ever. They are the discreet leeches. When they stick on a body, they do not suck so much blood out of it that it should fall totally exhausted. They leave some spark of life for it so that it may continue to struggle between life and death and keep on serving their interests.

The financial and commercial laws of Islam have no doubt forbidden this side of banking.

It is possible that with this prohibition, the big capitalists may not be found willing to invest their capital in bank loans and may not agree to lend their money without any interest. In this case the following questions will arise:

(1) Big industrial, agricultural, transport and trade projects require huge capital investment. A part of the capital is normally supplied by the banks. If interest bearing loans are forbidden, the expansion of these activities and consequently the progress of science, industry and economy will be undermined.

(2) It often happens that a worker, a professional, a farmer or a craftsman falls into straitened circumstances and the solution of his problem depends on a small loan. Even an interest-bearing loan is a great boon for him. With the prohibition of interest such a solution will not be possible and many a family will have to face unbearable difficulties.

(3) The loans for house-building and starting business even if accompanied by interest are a means of the welfare of the under-privileged classes. These classes should not be deprived of the only means at their disposal by prohibiting usury.

Solution of the problem

In the foregoing question each of these two has been put in the other's place.

It is true that the accomplishment of vast and extensive industrial and agricultural projects and the scientific and technological progress in the fields of industry and agriculture require huge sums of money. But it is not necessary that big capital should always belong to a particular person or a limited number of persons, and the way of procuring vast capital is not confined to the usual practice of the capitalist countries of taking full-interest or low interest loans from the banks. Vast funds can be created out of the capital belonging to small capitalists, by forming joint stock companies and co-operative societies and invested in the development projects. There is no need of seeking any aid from the big capitalists and usurers. The profit of such companies, if any, will be distributed among a larger number of individuals, thus ensuring social justice and preventing the concentration of wealth in the hands of a limited number of self-indulgent and voluptuous capitalists in the society.

Thus the prohibition of usury does not stop the creation of big capital. It only stops the emergence of big capitalists, and that is what is wanted by Islam and has been advocated by most of the progressive social thinkers of the past few centureis.

Furthermore, the efficient and sound governments can

make investment on a large scale in big industrial, irrigational and agricultural projects in a far better way than the private capitalists. As a good government represents the nation, naturally the investment made by it will be utilized in the best interest of the nation.

The nationalization of the big industries by the capitalist countries and their action to build dams, roads, railways and shipping lines in the public sector, shows that big investment is not the monopoly of the big capitalists, the usurers.

It may possibly be said that the governments are not good traders and good employers and it is therefore, better to leave the management of economic affairs, and even of other development sectors like education, health and reconstruction and development in the hands of private sector subject to free competition. The governments should abstain from involving themselves direct in such activities. Their duty is only to undertake special projects and to provide correct guidelines in the best interest of the nation. In that even the duty of the government will be to set up special banks in the public sector to provide interest-free loans to the individuals and the private institutions and thus control the economy of the country. Such a position will automatically give the government a good opportunity to give preference to the interests of the nation over the special interests of the borrowers and to see that the national capital does not fall into the hands of the private profiteers and hoarders. The government can impose heavy taxes on the profits earned by the receivers of these loans and spend the income to the national benefit. This way it can again check the emergence of the petty-minded luxurious and licentious capitalists and guard against deep class rift in the society.

As for the second and the third questions, there are two possible ways of dealing with them:

(1) Setting up of 'societies' for advancing interest-free loans by individuals or by groups of persons.

Allah has promised abundant reward for advancing interest-free loans and has regarded this act superior to giving alms and grants in aid. If this work is organized on proper lines and proper publicity is given to it, such 'societies' are bound to become popular. Even now some such societies exist.

These societies may charge a fixed percentage in the name of service charges to meet their current expenses but there being no question of interest on the actual money advanced. Their annual statement of account should not show any profit.

(2) Establishment of interest-free banks

If the above method does not prove adequate, it is again the duty of the government to set up banks out of the public budget to advance occupational, industrial, agricultural, house-building and business opening loans. To cover the current expenses these banks may collect service charges, but should not be allowed to charge any interest on the actual loan.(1)

Conclusion

The prohibition of usury does not hamper any social or economic benefits of the banks.

(1) For details a reference may be made to ***Al-Bank al-la Rabawi fil Islam*** (Interest free bank in Islam) by Ayatullah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr.

True interest-free banking based on service charges is not lawful but is also a national duty obligatory on the Muslim community as a whole.

With the prohibition of usury what has been forbidden is the interest-bearing banking and the emergence of a self-indulgent and voluptuous class. This in itself is a big distinction of the financial and commercial laws of Islam.

TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP

It is a right of the owner of a thing to be able to transfer it to others. In certain cases this transfer instead of being voluntary is forced.

A voluntary transfer takes place by means of a transaction and a forced transfer through inheritance etc.

Transactions

There are many kinds of transactions depending on their purpose, and in various economic systems they take different forms. Every transaction has its own rules. In this book we mention some of the most common forms of transactions, such as:

(1) Sale: It means the transfer of a determinate commodity in exchange for another commodity or money, such as the sale of a house. In financial and other similar transactions money is exchanged for another money.

(2) Gift: It means the transfer of a property or a sum of money to someone else as a present, either totally without compensation or accompanied by the acceptance of a present or gift made by the other party.

(3) Loan: It means the transfer of a property or a sum of

money on the condition that its equivalent will be returned after the expiry of a fixed period.

(4) Mortgage: It means putting a thing in pawn, that is handing over property by a debtor to his creditors as a security for the debt with the promise that it shall be returned on payment of debt. If the creditor fails to pay the debt, the creditor can sell the property to satisfy his debt out of the sale proceeds in accordance with the relevant rules and hand over the surplus money, if any, to the owner of the mortgaged property.

(5) Letting: It means a transfer of the right of enjoying the use and advantages of property (and not its ownership) for a fixed period in consideration of a fixed rent, such as the letting of a house, a store, a car, an aeroplane etc.

(6) Borrowing: It means giving by a person of a thing to another person intending that the latter should enjoy its use gratis and return it. For example you lend your bicycle or car to a friend for going to a certain place and returning it to you after coming back from there.

There are two ways of effecting this kind of transaction. Either it may be stipulated that if the bicycle or the car in question is damaged, the borrower will be responsible, or no such condition is made.

In the first case the borrower will be responsible to make amends for any loss or damage. In the second case he will not be held liable if the bicycle or the car is destroyed or damaged without his fault.

(7) Guarantee: It means taking responsibility for the payment of debt incurred by another person. In this

case if the debtor does not discharge his obligation, the guarantor is liable to make the payment. This is one of the most ancient forms of insurance. Most of the latest forms of insurance are also a kind of guarantee developed according to modern needs.

Those forms of insurance that do not fall under the category of guarantee, may be regarded as new and independent kinds of transaction. They will be governed by the general Islamic laws regarding transactions and contracts.

General rules of transaction

In all transactions the following rules must be observed:

(1) The two parties to the transaction must be adult.

(2) Besides being adult, they must be mature, viz. within the usual limits they must be able to understand the nature of the transaction. A transaction effected by a lunatic or an idiot, not having sufficient judgement and understanding has no legal value.

(3) A transaction must be effected voluntarily. If effected under duress, it will have no legal value.

(4) A person effecting a contract must not have been placed under inhibition and restrained from alienation and disposition of property. The competent authorities may pass an interdiction or prohibitory order restraining all alienations by an insolvent.

(5) The two parties should have an adequate knowledge of the subject-matter of transaction in regard to its quantity and main characteristics such as its colour, shape, design, location, method of use etc. There should be no

ambiguity which may cause any dispute subsequently.

If the parties concerned decide to effect a transaction without being meticulous about the details of the subject of transaction, the deal should be based on a compromise either with or without some recompense.

(6) The transaction which is being entered into should not be a help to sin, injustice or corruption. As a rule it must not involve a violation of any sound law.
(7) Every transaction should be clear and free from every kind of fraud and deceit. A purchaser should have no fear that defective goods will be passed to him or that he will be over-charged. Such suspicion and lack of confidence is the source of much bitterness in individual and social life.

Imam Ali (P) is reported to have said:
"Allah loves an honest professional". (Wasail al-Shi'ah, vol: 12, p. 96).

In the course of a lengthy tradition the holy Prophet is reported to have said: "He who cheats the people in the transactions is not a Muslim". (Wasail al-Shi'ah vol. 12, p. 210).

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (P) is reported to have said:
"The holy Prophet forbade the adulteration of milk for sale by the admixture of water". (Wasail , vol. 12, p. 208).

Hisham ibn Hakam is reported to have said:
"I was selling sabiri cloth (a kind of fine cloth, the quality of which is difficult to ascertain in shade) in shade. Imam Musa al Kazim (P) passed by that way mounted on a horse. He turned to me and said: "Hisham to sell a thing in shade is a kind of fraud, which is forbidden". (Wasail

al-Shi'ah, vol. 12, p. 208).

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (P) has said:
"It is prohibited to cheat a person who has not been meticulous about a transaction and has relied on you". (Wasail al-Shi'ah, vol. 12, p. 363).

Different kinds of sale
There are four kinds of sale dependant on whether the subject of sale and its price are delivered at the time of bargain or subsequently.

(1) Cash: Both the goods and the price are existent and are exchanged at the time of transaction.
(2) Credit: The goods are existent and are delivered to the purchaser immediately, but he pays the price subsequently.
(3) Forward sale/purchase: The goods are not existent, but the price is paid in cash.
(4) Speculation: Neither the goods are existent, nor their price is paid in cash. This kind of speculative transaction is void in Islam and has no legal effect. This kind of sale which now-a-days is considered to be normal in many cases, puts an extra burden on the consumer without the original producer gaining anything from the increase, in prices which go up unnecessarily with the intervention of additional middle-men.

Speculative sale and as a rule any sale before taking possession of the goods is one of the main causes of the deviation of trade from its normal course. As we have already said the true role of a merchant is to undertake distribution of goods and to earn a reasonable profit in consideration for his labour. But in the case of speculative transaction there is no actual give and take and hence the

question of distribution does not arise. The dealing is only verbal or at the most merely on paper. Its official recognition means that a buyer, without investing anything, purchases the goods in the air and subsequently sells them at a profit. The next buyer also does the same, and again secures further profit without carrying out the least work of distribution. The only effect of such a transaction is the unnecessary increase in the number of the middlemen and their commission, leading to the false increase in the price. The producer and the real distributor not only are not benefited by this increase, but have to bear an extra burden as consumers.

A careful study of the Islamic traditions will show that in Islam special heed has been given to this economic deviation. We have already quoted a saying of Imam al-Kazim (P) in regard to the sale of the goods before taking possession of them.

Necessity of knowing the laws of trade

Anybody who wants to start any kind of business should first make himself conversant with the religious laws of trade so that he may not be involved in unlawful activities and may not harm the society.

Imam Ali (P) has been reported to have said on many occasions:

"First law, then trade".

Some of the recommendations made by Islam in this behalf are the following:

There should be no dispartity in the price of a commodity quoted to different customers.

The seller should not be severe and rude to the customers

while bargaining.
He should not hesitate as far as possible to take back a sold item if a customer so desires.

There is a tradition which says:
"On the Day of Judgement Allah will forgive the mistakes of a person who takes back the goods sold to a Muslim".

He should abstain from swearing even if the subject of oath is true. He should point out if the goods are defective. He should not praise his goods too much. Similarly the buyer also should not disparage them.

He must strictly abstain from under-selling and regard it as a deadly sin. He should always keep in mind what the holy Qur'an says in this respect:

"Alas for the defrauders who when others measure for them, demand it full. But when they measure to others or weigh for them, they defraud them! Do they not think that they will be raised to life again on a faitful day: The day when all mankind will stand before the Lord of the universe?" (Surah al-Mutaffifin, 83:1 – 6).

It may be pointed out that under-weighing should not be regarded as confined to trading only. It has a far wider significance. At every stage of social life one should behave towards others as he expects them to behave towards him. It is not only those who handle a weighing balance that under-weigh.

Revocation of contract
The parties to a contract of sale have a right to revoke if for a number of causes. It can be revoked:

(1) In the case of animals within, three days, a period during which all the characteristics of the animal should become clear.
(2) Before the parties disperse and leave the place where contract was made.
(3) If it is discovered that either party has been wronged to an appreciable extent.
(4) If the purchaser of an article subsequently discovers a defect in it.
(5) If the purchaser unduly delays the payment of the price.
(6) If the seller fails to give delivery of the article sold.
(7) In pursuance of an option stipulated in the contract for one part or for both the parties.

Inheritance

Inheritance is the best known instance of the forced transfer of property from one person to other individuals.

On the whole inheritance has a natural basis. What is the natural incentive to make economic effort? Normally the foremost motive of everybody is to meet his own economic needs and those of his family.

There is no doubt that, this is not the only motive of all economic activity, but it cannot be denied that this is the most natural and the most common motive.

As we pointed out in the course of out discussion of the family one of the strongest family bonds is the economic tie and the mutual responsibility of members of a family to meet the needs of each other.

As it seldom happens that at the time of his death a man may not have even a suit of clothing, or a bedding

consisting of at least a mat or a rough blanket, the question automatically arises with his death as to what should be done with his belongings, howsoever insignificant they may be.

The most natural answer to this question is that they should be put to the same use to which they were being put during his life time that is, to meet the economic needs of his family and near relatives.

If a person dies leaving no relative and no successor by contract, his property, whatever it may be, will go to the society in which he lived, and hence is given to the *Bayt al-Mall.*

It may be mentioned that in Islam the official recognition of this natural transfer of the property of a deceased person to his relatives does not in any way imply that the hoarding of wealth for the heirs should become an economic goal of man.

There are many verses of the Qur'an and a large number of traditions which emphasize that the produce of the labour of man is meant to satisfy the needs of himself and his family and the society and not to be hoarded to serve as valuable treasure for himself and his wife, children and kinsfolk. We propose to quote a few verses and traditions as an example while studying the question of hoarding wealth.

Division of inheritance

All that is left by a man has to go to his near relatives, but how?

There are different methods of this division under various economic systems. Islam also has its own method, which is summarized hereunder:

According to the Islamic law of inheritance the relatives are divided into the following categories:

(1) Husband and wife.
(2) Parents, children and grand-children.
(3) Grand-father, grand-mother, sister and brother, children of sister and children of brother.
(4) Paternal uncle, paternal aunt, maternal uncle, maternal aunt and their children.
(5) Those with whom the deceased entered into a reciprocal contract that they would pay any fine or compensation to which he might become liable.

Each of the husband and the wife inherits from the other in all circumstances. But in the case of others a sequence is observed. Besides the husband and wife the property of a deceased goes first to his father, mother, children and grand children. If he did not have father, mother, child and grand child, then the turn of the next category, viz. grand-father, grand-mother, sister and brother or their children comes. If there is none of this category also, then the inheritance will go to the next category, viz. uncle, aunt and their children; and so on.

The share of each heir has been fixed by Islam according to a regular scheme. To know the details a reference may be made to Articles of Islamic Acts (Islamic Seminary Publication) or to some other book on the subject of inheritance.

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

Observation and social experiments under various social and economic systems show that from the point of view of physical and mental capabilities human beings widely differ from each other. What we are talking about is the innate and natural disparity and not that caused by social

and economic injustice and privations which can be rectified by the removal of its causes. Such differences are caused by such factors as the lack or abundance of nutrition, the knowledge of its correct methods or the educational and training facilities, and do not constitute a natural disparity.

These differences should not be accepted as compulsion of destiny and every effort should be made to establish a just social and economic order.

However it appears that even after doing away with these artificial differences, there will still be variations in the physical and mental capabilities of the human beings, and their ways of thinking and doing will always differ even under the most equitable social and economic system.

As the result of this innate intellectual and practical disparity the proceeds of the economic effort of human beings cannot naturally be equal. Two fishermen go to the sea to catch fish. Both of them try from morning till evening. One of them does not catch more than fifteen fish, whereas the other on account of being more skilful catches within the same period of time and with the same amount of effort as many as sixty, viz. four times what the first man caught. In one year there is bound to be an appreciable difference in the economic positions of these two men. Hence, even if we admit that only proceeds of labour can be the foundation of personal property, we cannot avoid the emergence of differences in the economic level of human beings.

The above was the case of the difference in the level of the two healthy and fit persons. But we know that more or less in every society weak and disabled persons are also

found. Their economic position will certainly be far worse than even of the low-income group and they will in all probability be living below subsistence level. Hence even under an economic system based on the natural principle of 'property is the outcome of labour' we should come across 'incomeless', 'low-income' and 'high-income' groups.

Should we content ourselves by saying that it is a natural necessity and that we cannot fight against nature? Hence, should we leave the three groups to their fate? Should we let the high-income group remain plunged into luxuries; the low-income group committed to hard work; and the incomeless group doomed to begarry and humiliation? Or should we think of some remedy?

This remedy has taken different forms under various economic systems. Anyhow, the main objective is the same, that is, to achieve more equitable distribution of wealth, and for that purpose to take something from the high-income groups and to give it to the low-income groups or to spend it to meet their requirements.

A prominent part of the economic teachings of Islam is devoted to the steps which this divine system has taken to achieve equitable distribution of wealth. Some of the actions which the Muslims should take for this purpose have been described by the holy Qur'an as *infaq* (spending).

Spending

Islam has not left the high-income people to themselves but has emphatically called on them to spend what they have in the way of Allah and for the welfare of the people.

The holy Qur'an says:

"You shall never attain righteousness until you spend (in

charity) what you cherish, and whatever you spend, Allah is fully aware of it". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:92).

Describing the characteristics of the believers, the Surah al-Shura, 42:38, says: *"Those who obey their Lord and who keep up prayers and whose affairs are a matter of counsel and who spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them".*

These and many other verses of the Qur'an exhort the rich to abandon love of money and spend it for the amelioration of the lot of the people.

The Surah al-Baqarah, 2:177, warns the rich that they will not be regarded as the virtuous till they spend money in charity: *"It is not righteousness that you turn your face to the East and the West, but the righteous is he who believes in Allah, the resurrection, the angels, the Book and the prophets; and gives his wealth for love of Allah to the kindred, the orphans, the destitudes, the way-farers the needy for the redemption of the captives".*

Having heard all these exhortations of the Qur'an, some devout Muslims asked the holy Prophet what portion of their wealth they were required to spend. In reply the following verse was revealed:

"They ask you what they ought to spend (in charity), say: That which you can spare". (Surah Baqarah, 2:219).

The Surah al-Hashr, 59:9, goes a step further and lauds those pious Muslim who in spite of being needy themselves, gave preference to the needs of their brother and sister Muslims over their own: *"Those who had their homes in the city and had accepted the faith before their*

arrival, love those who migrated to them for refuge, and do not feel jealous for what has been given to them. They give preference to them over themselves even though poverty become their own lot. Those who are saved from their own greed, shall surely be prosperous".

Generally speaking the Qur'an wants that out of his property and extra lawful earnings a Muslim should use a part to meet the moderate needs of himself and his family and should spend the rest in the way of Allah and for the welfare of the people. Otherwise he will either be guilty of extravagance or will commit a bigger sin of hoarding both of which have been severely denounced by Islam.

There are many verses in the Qur'an which denounce every kind of extravagance. We quote just one verse, as an example: *"It is He who produces all kinds of gardens (trallised and untrallised,) the date-palm, the various kinds of food crops, the olives and pomagranates, like each other and unlike each other. Eat of their fruit when they yield fruit and pay the due of them on the harvest day, and do not be prodigal. Surely Allah does not like the prodigal".* (Surah al-An'am, 6:141).

In this verse it has been laid down expressly that the entire produce of a field or a garden is not meant for the personal consumption of its owner. Others also have a rightful claim on it.

In the following verses prodigality has been censured thus: *"Give to the near of kin his due and also to the needy and the way-farer. Don't squander your wealth wastefully. The squanderers are indeed Satan's brothers and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord".* (Surah al-Isra, 17:26 – 27).

Prohibition of the hoarding of wealth

The holy Qur'an severly censures the hoarders of wealth and says: *"Those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in Allah's way unto them give tidings of a painful punishment. On the day when it will (all) be heated in the fire of Hell; then their foreheads and their sides and their backs will be branded therewith and it will be said to them. This is what you hoarded up for yourselves. Now taste what you used to hoard".* (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:34 – 35).

These verses were revealed along with the verses regarding *jihad*, and it appears that they refer to those who in spite of their financial competence evaded contribution to the war expenses. From these verses we may deduce a general rule that so long as society is in need of money nobody should think of amassing it for himself or his dependants.

To keep money stagnant has been especially denounced in Islamic traditions. This denunciation underlines another aspect of Islam's fight against hoarding.

Imam al Sadiq (P) is reported to have said to one of his companions:

"A man on his death leaves nothing behind heavier and more laden with responsibility than cash".

His companion asked, "Then what should he do with it?"

The Imam replied, "He should invest it in a garden, a farm or a house".

Spending categories

In the verse on 'spending' a number of categories have been mentioned, which may collectively be put under the heading of 'the needs and the needy'.

Among these categories we find the following headings:

(1) In the way of Allah: *"Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah"*. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:262).

(2) Parents and near of kin: *"They ask you (O Prophet) what they shall spend. Say: What you spend (in charity) must go to your parents and near of kin"*. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:215).

(3) The orphans, the needy and the way-farers: *"To the orphans, the needy and the way-farers"*. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:215).

This category includes all those who are unable to secure means of living because they have lost the head of the family, are unable to work, do not find a job, are away from their homes due to journeying or immigration and have no means of livelihood.

(4) Expenses of *Jihad*: A good number of verses are about spending on *Jihad* which includes the purchase of arms and equipment as well as providing the means of living to the fighters and their families.

On the necessity of such spending and its vital role in the security of human life the Qur'an says:
"Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and do not cast by your own hands to ruin, and do good. Surely Allah loves those who do good". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:195).

An overall study of the verses and the traditions on the question of spending shows that in the economic field Islam requires that: Everybody should contribute within his limits to the expenses of the useful social activities.

There should be no one left in the Islamic society having

no means of living. The rich should not think that their entire income belongs to them. They should realize that on a part of it there is a claim of other Muslims also.

The Qur'an says:
"In their wealth there is a due share for those who ask for help and those who are under privileged". (Surah al-Zariyat, 51:19).

A society in which there are two classes of haves and havenots is not an Islamic society.

The holy Prophet has said:
"He who sleeps satiated while his neighbour is hungry, is not a Muslim".

All this munificence should be to gain the pleasure of Allah and to serve humanity, so that the spender may attain spiritual progress and his brotherly relations with others may be strengthened.

Zakat
Zakat' in its present sense is a stage of public spending in accordance with the special rules mentioned in the Islamic law. This sector of spending in fact ensures continuous flow of the resources from the rich to the poor and the very poor. It also meets the social needs.

The minimum limits on which *zakat* is due in various cases indicate who is considered to be rich under the economic system of Islam.

In the days when paper currency had not yet been introduced, precious metals like gold and silver were used for coins of higher value and cheaper metals like copper for small currency.

Those whose income did not exceed small currency had to pay nothing on account of *zakat*. But those whose income was so much that they kept with them 20 gold coins each weighing about 4.61 grams or 200 silver coins each weighing about 2.42 grams for more than 11 months without using them, were required to give 1/40 of their hoard for being consumed for the cause of Allah and for the welfare of the people.

A farmer who gathered in from his field or garden at least 864 kilograms of wheat, barley, dates or raisins, had to give 1/10 of the produce if his field or garden was watered by rain, flood or overflow of a river, and 1/20 if he irrigated it himself.

A cattle-breeder who fed his animals on pasture, had to give one sheep out of forty provided he possessed them for more than 11 months.

If he had thirty cows (includes bulls) for more than 11 months and did not use them as beasts of burden or draught he had to give one yearling calf which had entered the second year of its life. If he had twentysix camels for more than 11 months he was to give one yearling camel. If he had five camels not used as beasts of burden or draught for the same period, he was to give one sheep.

In certain tradition it has been expressly pointed out that *zakat* is paid to the poor to make the distribution of wealth more equitable.

ECONOMIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF ISLAMIC RULERS

One of the most interesting sectors of the economic teachings of Islam is that which relates to the financial and economic responsibilities of the Muslim government. There

exist every detailed instructions in this connection but in this book we can deal only with a portion of them. On the whole the economic responsibilities of the government can be divided into two parts:

(1) Responsibility to meet the needs of the needy.
(2) Responsibility to provide guidance in the various sectors of production and distribution.

Public Treasury

Under the Islamic system a part of the income should go to the public treasury. It includes the following items:

(1) *Kharaj*, that is, a part of the revenue of the government lands granted to private sector for cultivation.
(2) *Jizyah*, that is, poll-tax levied on the non-Muslims living in a Muslim country.
(3) *Khums*, that is, 20 per cent of the spoils captured during a war by the Muslim lands or against truth, justice and freedom. In a wider sense Khums is 20 per cent of the net income of every individual after the deduction of his personal, family and occupational expenses. It is also 20 per cent of the income derived from pearl-fishing, extraction of minerals etc.
(4) The property of those who die and leave behind no heir.

There are also other sources mentioned in the Islamic law, income wherefrom is to be deposited in the public treasury.

It is the duty of the Muslim government to collect income from all these sources and keep it in the public treasury to satisfy such needs as:
(1) Establishment and maintenance of educational and health institutions and centres for the spread of Islam.

(2) Defence of the land of Islam and the fight for freedom of other areas.
(3) Payment of the salaries, allowances and pensions of the government officials.
(4) Subsidy to the poor, who are not entitled to receive charity such as the descendants of the holy Prophet.
(5) Grant of relief to all the paupers.

If the public treasury has surplus funds after meeting all these and similar requirements, they should be spent on the general welfare of the Muslim Ummah, in accordance with the teachings of Islam and every individual should be given his due share.

The policy of the payment of subsistence allowance to the individuals was enforced from the very first century of Hijri era, and that is why we again and again come across reports in history by various persons that money was placed at their disposal to give it to the needy, and they made a search for them but were unable to find any.

The commitment of the Muslim government to provide means to all the needy people ensures that they should not be dependent even on the financial support of other Muslims.

Furthermore, in certain cases the Muslim governments are responsible to watch that the individuals discharge their financial responsibilities. In case they fail, it is the duty of the government to collect money from them and spend under its proper heads. That is why one of the official formations of the Muslim governments is an organisation for the collection of *kharaj*, *zakat* and the like.

In this connection the Islamic traditions have laid down

very valuable rules to make the government action agreeable so that the spirit of this joint and several economic responsibility and its being may not be damaged.

The duty of a Muslim government in the economic field is not confined only to the above mentioned activities. As we have already said guidance in the sectors of production and distribution also forms an important part of its duties. An overall study of the relevant traditions indicates that it is the duty of a Muslim government to keep a watch on the economic activities and to intervene wherever it finds that the methods of production or distribution are deviating from the Islamic standards.

While appointing Malik bin al Harith al Ashtar as governor of Egypt, Imam Ali (P) wrote to him a detailed letter on the policy and duties of government. Complete text of this important and thought-provoking letter is available in our book Rationality of Islam and may be read by anybody who wants. We reproduce below some excerpts from it:

"Great care is to be exercised in revenue administration, to ensure the prosperity of those who pay the revenue to the state for, on their prosperity depends the prosperity of others, particularly the prosperity of the masses. Indeed, the state exists on its revenue. You should regard the proper upkeep of the land in cultivation as of greater importance than the collection of revenue, for revenue cannot be derived except by making the land productive. He who demands revenue without helping the cultivator to improve his land, inflicts unmerited hardship on the cultivator and ruins the state. The rule of such a person does not last long.

You are advised to treat well businessmen and artisans

and direct others to do likewise. Some of them live in towns and some move from place to place with their ware and tools and earn their living by manual labour. They are the real source of profit to the state and provider of consumer goods.

While the general public are not inclined to bear the strain, those engaged in these professions take the trouble to collect commodities from far and near, from land and from across the sea, and from mountains and forests and naturally derived benefits.

It is this class of peace-loving people from whom no disturbance need be feared. They love peace and order. Indeed they are incapable of creating discord. Protect them whether they are transacting business at your place or in other towns. But bear in mind that a good many of them are intensely greedy and are immured to bad dealings. They hoard grain and try to sell it at a high price and this is most harmful to the public. It is a blot on the name of the ruler not to fight this evil. Prevent them from hoarding; for the Prophet of Allah had prohibited it. See to it that trade is carried on with the utmost ease, that the scales are evenly held and that prices are so fixed that neither the seller nor the buyer is put to a loss".

A study of the duties of an Islamic government in the economic field shows that a Muslim administration should always be a custodian of public interests, especially those of the poor, and not a protector of the unlawful profits of the rich. We reproduce another part of the letter to Malik bin al Harith al Ashtar:

"Maintain justice in administration and impose it on your own self and seek the consent of the people, for, the

discontent of the masses sterilizes the contentment of the privileged few and the discontent of the few, loses itself in the contentment of the many. Remember! the privileged few will not rally round you in moments of difficulty. They will try to side-track justice. They will ask for more than what they deserve and will show no gratitude for favours done to them. They will feel restive in the face of trials and will offer no regret for their shortcomings. It is the common man who fights the enemy. So live in close contact with the masses and be mindful of their welfare".

An important social and economic principle

In Islamic traditions we meet with an important principle which has great economic significance.

From the Islamic point of view only those rulers can be called just who maintain their standard of living on a level with the low-income group.

This principle is worth noting. The level of the life of a Muslim ruler should be equal to that of the poorest people living in his dominion, so that there may exist a real tie between him and the poor. Otherwise the poor are not likely to accept his leadership and rule from their heart and to give him their whole-hearted support. The feeling of a distance between themselves and him will incite them to rise against him.

A tradition containing this important principle has come down from Imam Ali (P):

Once he went in Basrah to the house of a companion of his, named Ala, to inquire about his health. Ala had a big house. When the ruler of Islam saw the house, he said:

"What is the use of such a big house in this world. Were you not more in need of such a house in the Hereafter? Well, even now if you want to carry it there, convert it into a centre of hospitality, benevolence to the kindred and the defence of truth. Thus you can get salvation in the Hereafter by means of this house"

Ala said: "O Commander of the Faithful! I have to make a complaint to you against my brother, Asim".
"What has he done?"
"He has renounced the world and has assumed a woolen garb".
"Call him here".

When Asim came, the Imam said to him:
"You are an enemy of yourself. The Devil has hoodwinked you. Why don't you have mercy on your wife and children? Do you think that Allah who has made all good things lawful for you, doesn't like you to use them? You are too insignificant to be treated that way by Allah". (i.e. He should be bashful before you and should apparently say that these blessings are lawful for you but should not actually wish that you should utilize them).

Asim said: "O Commander of the Faithful. You yourself use very coarse cloth and extremely simple food".

The Imam replied: My case is quite different from yours. Allah has enjoined on the just rulers to keep their life within the limits of that of the poor, so that the masses may have no misunderstanding". (i.e. they may consider themselves strangers to the ruler and deviate from the right path). (Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 2).

On the basis of this important principle so expressly stated

in this tradition, those who want to serve the Muslim ummah in the capacity of its rulers, should first clarify the position of themselves and their family with regard to their standard of living. If they are willing to lead the life of the poorest people living in their country, then and only then they should come forward, otherwise not.

In this way the ruler and his family will know that they can improve their economic position only if they pursue a social and economic programme of amaliorating the condition of the poor. In other words, in Islamic society the rulers, from economic point of view, have a common destiny with the poor and not with the rich. Such rulers not only will not support the capitalists in their efforts of making unjust and excessive profits, but will also prove a great force to keep the cupidity of the rich under check, and will be an assurance for the implementation of social jutice of Islam.

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JUST SOCIAL SYSTEM

We have made you (the true Muslims) a balanced nation, so that you could be an example for mankind . (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:142).

What the Qur'an expressly desires is that the Islamic society should be a model for all those who want to lead a healthy and happy life. It should be a living testimony for the exalted principle that the way to live a healthy life and secure justice and fair-play is not closed to human beings. It is they themselves who should find it and follow it with consciousness, faith and persistence.

Society

Man is a being which has for long been social and has been living a collective life. A group of persons living together is called society. Society may be defined as a group of individuals whose life is correlated with each other because they have common desires or common interests for the realization of which they work together.

The formation of such a group is sometimes accidental and sometimes intentional. In the former case it is technically called Accidental Society and in the latter Intentional Society.

Accidental society

Suppose you go out to see the museum or to have a walk in the public garden of your town. You find that there are many other people also who have come there for the same purpose. You and they practically form a group having a common object.

However, it is evident that the individuals forming such a group had no prior intention to form it. Everyone of them left his house without having had any intention to do so. Such a group is called Accidental Society.

Intentional society

If you want to set up a social, financial, political or educational institution and you do not have the intellectual, physical and financial potentialities necessary to undertake such a project, you try to find some other persons who may co-operate with you in the undertaking. Thus a group or a small society comes into existence, whose members join each other and work together with prior intention to do so. Such a group is called Intentional Society.

Characteristics of Accidental Society

In this type of society there is co-existence, but there is no co-operation except that of a very superficial nature and that too partial and of short duration.

In this sort of get-together the members of the group do not choose each other. That is why they do not consider it necessary to have any previous acquaintance with one another to be a member of that group. For example, a passenger of a bus, a train, an aeroplane or a ship normally does not feel any necessity at the time of purchasing his ticket to make inquiries about the moral character of other passengers, their views and their motives

of journey. Normally such inquiries are not even possible. He and other passengers are interested only in using a particular means of transport for going from one place to another, and no deep and extensive aquaintance is required to achieve this end.

Characteristics of Intentional Society

This tie is lasting within the limits of the objective of the society and continues to exist until the group is dissolved for one reason or the other.

As this type of society comes into existence with the intention of co-operation for the realization of a particular object, therefore, in this case co-existence is coupled with co-operation and mutual and reciprocal responsibility.

In this type of get-together members of the group select each other, and as the way of thinking and doing of each one of them affects the destiny of the others, they contemplate certain rules and criteria for the membership of their group.

The co-existence and co-operation between the members of the group and their mutual relations are based on the principles and rules accepted by each member consciously and after careful study.

Members of the group work whole-heartedly for its growth and development.

A definite example of an intentional society is a family, which in its Islamic form is a model for every other such society. It has all the characteristics of an ideal intentional society, such as:

The husband and wife choose each other intentionally and willingly;

- With a view to lead a common life,
- With common responsibility,
- With reciprocal rights and obligations based on a definite social system accompanied by whole-hearted co-operation to secure a better and more developed life for themselves and their children.

Individual and society

Man is a gregarious and social being. There can be no doubt that the conditions of his life depend on the conditions of the society in which he lives. But how and to what extent?

> Is this dependence such that it does not in any way curtail the independence of an individual to mould his life according to his own choice?
> Or is it such that it makes him absolutely subservient to his social environment?
> Or is it neither this nor that but has some intermediate position?

These are three different views regarding the relation of an individual with his social environment. We propose to explain them further.

It is the individual who is important

According to this view, the main factor in moulding the life of every person is he himself and not the society, for the society is nothing but a collection of individuals, who have learnt by experience that their desires will be better fulfilled if they co-operate with one another, and consequent to this experience they have been attracted to collective life. Hence their incentive to lead a collective life is actually their interest in the fulfilment of their personal desires.

All the social systems have been devised by the individuals to safeguard their own interests. Hence everywhere the hand of the individual is uppermost and it is his desire and action which play the basic role.

The corruption of society also originates from the corruption of the individuals. If every individual reforms himself, the whole society will automatically be reformed.

It is the society which is important

According to this view the truth is diametrically opposite to what is maintained by those who say that it is the individual who is important. The exponents of this view hold that it is the society and the social man which are the material reality in this world and not an individual independent of others, for what we find on the face of the earth is only a collection of men mutually correlated and that is what is society. As in the world of nature every natural being is subservient to a general and universal system of nature and is not absolutely independent, similarly in the society an individual is only a part of it; such a part that follows the whole unhesitatingly and is governed by its over-all system. Even the ideas of an individual, his way of thinking, his desires, his aspirations and his will are only a reflection of his natural and social environment and the economic conditions of his society and class.

Those who hold that it is the society which is important, maintain that an individual is just like a cell in a living body. A cell cannot be independent of the whole body and its complex system, nor can it develop fully irrespective of the fact whether the whole body is in a healthy and sound state or not. Similarly an individual cannot be independent of the social system in which he lives. He will have to go the way towards which the powerful social and

economic forces dominating the society will push him.

Some contemporary social schools have gone to such an extent in their reliance on the importance of society as explained above, that it appears as if man is a being totally dependent on society or his class and has perforce to follow the way shown to him by social and class environment without having the least possibility of exercising his own will and choice.

As the result of this view, the principle, that everybody should reform himself so that the whole society is reformed, gives place to another principle, which says that it is the social system which should be changed and reformed so that the individuals are automatically reformed.

It is the mixture of the individual and the society which is important

According to this view it is the mixture of the individual and the society which is important. The individual is a being who is neither fully independent of nor fully dependent on society. He has an intermediate position.

There is no doubt that the overall educational, economic and political system of the society leaves its impression on the individual, his ideas and his personality. It evokes certain desires in him and suppresses certain others. It moulds his life and guides his will. Nevertheless its impact is not so strong as to make the individual totally subservient to his social environment. It is similar to the impact of the natural environment on him. Unlike other existing things man is not also totally subservient to his natural environment. In many cases he rules over nature, and using his self-consciousness and harnessing his latent inner forces tries to change his natural environment or to bring it under his control. He stands in the same relation to his

social and class environment also. He does not completely submit to it. He tries to understand the sociological laws and with the help of his knowledge and his hidden powers tries to control and change his social environment to his own advantage. He is not always reconciled with the existing social system.

Hence, though the social changes have their own laws and trends and most of them are due to the factors working inside society as a whole, an appreciable amount of them takes place as a result of the ceaseless efforts of self-conscious and enthusiastic individuals also.

Thus neither the individual is exclusively important, nor the society and the social system. What is important is a mixture of the two.

An overall study of the Islamic teachings shows that they are based on this third view, viz. that of the real importance of a mixture of individual and society.

We find that the Islamic teachings stress, on the one hand, the responsibility of an individual in regard to self-making and environment-making, and on the other emphasize the inevitable effect of the social atmosphere in giving shape to the ideas, intentions, morals and actions of man to such an extent that it may be said that all men are largely inter-dependent in shaping their destiny.

That is why the Qur'an wants everybody to find and tread the path of righteousness and not to put up the corruption of environment as an excuse for his own deviation.

"When the angels take away the souls of those who are wronging themselves, they ask them: In what circum-

stances were you? They will say: We were oppressed in our land. (The angels) will say: Was not Allah's earth vast enough for you to migrate? It is they whose abode is Hell. What a bad fate!" (Surah al-Nisa, 4:97).

Imam Ali (P) says very emphatically: "You people must not be deterred and discouraged by the paucity of those who are going on the right path".

At the same time man has been reminded that he should not be contented with his being on the right way himself and must not neglect his duty of improving his social environment. The fall of society leads to the ruin of the good and the bad alike.

Imam al Baqir (P) says:
" . . . . . Then the wrath of Allah reaches its height. His retribution overtakes all. The virtuous are ruined along with the wicked, and the young in the house of their elders".

That is why a Muslim, while holding his individual responsibility, is a collectivist also. Whatever he seeks from Allah, he seeks for 'us' and not for 'me'. Look at the supplication we make to Allah in our daily prayers:

"You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help. Guide us to the straight path".

Also look at the ritual blessing at the end of the prayers: *"Peace be on us and on the virtuous bondmen of Allah".*

The stress laid by Islam on 'exhortation to good' and 'restraining from evil' being the reciprocal responsibility of all the members of the society, whatever be their

position, the drawing of attention to the deep effects of the purity and the pollution of the social environment and the emphasis on other factors touching faith and morality such as the economic conditions, are some other signs which clearly show that the doctrines and injunctions of Islam are based on the principle of the importance of a mixture of the individual and the society.

From what has been stated above briefly, we come to the following conclusions:

- Islamic society is an intentional and not an accidental society. It has come into existence by the will of the people on the basis of the choice of a definite goal of life.

- It is a society all the systems and laws of which pay full heed both to the individual and to the relative role of his will and conscious choice as well as to the social system and the educational, political and economic conditions of the environment and their inevitable role in moulding and building the individual character.

In our opinion to pay attention to these two points is essential for the correct understanding of the social, economic, moral and devotional teachings of Islam, and their difference from what is preached by other schools of thought.

SOCIAL SYSTEM

In every society, especially an intentional society, there always exists a sort of method or system which determines:

- The general ways and customs of society;
- The way of its administration;

- Mutual relations of its members, and
- The relations of every member with the whole society;
- The rights and obligations arising out of these relations.

For an example take the case of a trading or an industrial concern. From the very beginning it is necessary that its aim, the method and the means of the realization of this aim, the way of the administration of the company, the functionaries responsible for the working of each section of it, the rights and powers of every share-holder, every office-bearer and the general body and all such other questions should be decided in advance, and that the company from its very establishment should work accordingly.

Is it possible that a company is established or run without deciding all these details? Obviously not. The same applies to a society also. From a small professional union to the world society every organization requires a system and fixed rules and regulations for its working.

The sum-total of the rules, the system and the basis according to which a society works, is called the social system.

JUST SOCIAL SYSTEM

We know that only a healthy and balanced body can continue to grow properly. Any kind of defect in the limbs or a system of the body will cause disturbance and weakness. If the temperature of the body goes above what is normal, the result will be high fever and a general crisis. If its temperature goes below normal, weakness and some other kind of imbalance will ensue. The excessive increase or decrease in the degree of blood pressure, in the number of white and red globules, in the quantity of the vitamins

necessary for the body – all these cause a sort of imbalance and some disease or other. One must combat strenuously these diseases (and imbalances) in order to bring about all round equilibrium, or otherwise be ready to decay and die. As we have seen, this kind of balance is necessary in human and spiritual matters also. Too much or too little satisfaction of the desires of man is injurious to his humanity.

Society

The strong mutual attachment of a group of individuals brings about the existence of a sort of social entity called society. Anyhow, its members retain their individual character and the independence of their will.

Like the physiological and human existence of an individual, the entity of society is also governed by certain laws, which of course, exclusively pertain to it. The survival of society depends on the existence of a social equilibrium in accordance with these laws.

If there exists all round justice in society, conditions will be favourable for its growth and development, and generally speaking, the evolutionary movement of society will be in conformity with the evolutionary course of the entire world. On the other hand, any kind of injustice will be a cause of disturbance, retrogression and decay of society.

It is one of the principal aims of Islam to establish justice and to bring about complete equilibrium in Islamic society.

The Qur'an says:

"Indeed We sent Our Messengers with clear evidence and

We revealed with them the Scriptures and the standard to show what was right and what was wrong, so that people might conduct themselves with fairness". (Surah al-Hadid, 57:25).

In order to know the factors which cause equilibrium in society, the following factors should be taken into consideration:

Equality of men

We know that for the establishment of equilibrium it is necessary that every thing should be in its place. As all men are basically equal, Islam does not admit that any individual has any special position. All men have been born of one ancestor and have a common nature. The difference in rights on the basis of race, class, tribal attachments etc., which existed among certain nations, is totally denied by Islam. Islam declared its view on this subject at a time when social groupings, discrimination in position, difference in rights were considered to be natural and rational in the biggest civilized and eminent countries of the day. Islam does not believe that any particular group or class has been born for subjection and any other group for mastership. No group has been born dirty nor any other group for executive and administrative jobs. No groups has come into existence to have the status of the beasts while others enjoy human dignity, as was the religious, legal and social position under the out-dated systems of yore.

Islam officially proclaimed that:

- "All men are equal like the teeth of a comb"
- "You are descendants of Adam and Adam was made of clay".

"This nation of yours is one nation and I am your Lord. Therefore worship Me". (Surah al-Anbiya 21:92).

In fact all men are slaves of Allah and brothers of each other. They all form one group and belong to one class.

Legal Justice

With that conception of divine cosmology which Islam has in regard to man, it is naturally necessary that among individuals there should exist a sort of unity, harmony and equality in the matter of basic legal rights. When it is not recognized that any particular position in society is reserved for any particular individual or group, none can claim that any high position or a superior job is his exclusive prerogative, nor can any one consider others to be destined to obey him and to do only menial work. Naturally for no particular group there exist any special rights or fixed privileges, nor for others lesser rights and privileges.

On the basis of this conception, justice does not mean the subjection and privation of the vast majority and the enjoyment of all the comforts of life by a particular class of individuals having the right of exploiting others for their own benefit. None has any special position and all are capable of developing their talents and showing their ability.

In this context justice means the provision of equal opportunities to all individuals to promote and show their talents, and to go forward upto the limit of their capacity.

Elimination of undue discrimination under Islamic conception

If we look at man from a purely material angle, it is quite likely that we should arrive at a conclusion untenable

intellectually and ideologically. For example, if we consider man only as a living being having various faculties of growth and reproduction and having certain physiological and biological characteristics culminating in a developed nervous system and brain, we will notice that there is a vast difference between various individuals from the point of view of their physical activity, colour of skin, power of muscles, shape of limbs, height, weight and the ability to do various physical jobs. If we define man as a tool-making being, we will find that all men are not alike in tool-making ability and manual skills. Similarly if we judge man and his human value by his power of production, we shall see that in this respect also there is a vast difference from individual to individual. On this basis, it may look to be a part of human nature that there should be a difference in the position and the legal rights of different individuals. This kind of philosophy leads us to the ancient system of grouping and paints discrimination in natural and rational colours.

But according to the divine view of Islam, humanity of man neither lies in his veins, skin or bones nor in the growth of his muscles, his working power or his tool-making. It lies in the fact that man is a self-conscious being having independence of will and power of choice. On this basis all men are human beings possessing human values. Even from material point of view, what is important is that all men are made of clay, which is their common feature. Their nature is the same. According to this view the question of any human and natural discrimination does not arise.

Economic Justice

As we have already learnt, basically ownership is concentrated in Allah. All the natural resources which can be

exploited by man are as a principle Allah's property. All men have been created by Him and they live on His gifts. According to this conception of cosmos, natural wealth is not the private property of anybody in society. No particular group or class can claim its ownership and deprive others of its use or to reduce them to the status of serfs. All natural resources belong to Allah. They are for the benefit of all. Justice means that, in the words of the Qur'an, 'Wherever a man finds his means of living' or in the words of Imam Ali (P), 'Whoever has a spark of life, he should have a right to acquire his sustenance'.

Social justice in financial matters means that all, yes all, should be able to get all the necessities of life.

Freedom of thinking and acquirement of knowledge

We know that man is a being ready for evolution and moving forward. Hence the social position of an individual in society is represented by the opportunity that opens for him the way to evolution and development, and even protects and guides him on this way, so that he may attain his natural and human rights.

For example, man has the power of thinking and choosing. Therefore a just society is that which provides him the opportunity of excercising his free will, gives him freedom of thought and does not impose on him the will and desire of any particular class. Suppression of the freedom of thought in any way hampers evolution and deprives man of his innate and God-given right.

A just society gives man the right of making free and conscious choice. Man is not expected to make his choice with his eyes and ears closed nor under duress and pressure against the dictates of his conscience. The suppression of

the right of choice is a deviation from the normal human course. It causes disequilibrium in society.

Anyhow, in regard to these questions it is a social necessity that guidance and constructive opportunities are provided to man to enable him to think rightly and make his choice rightly. But in providing this guidance there is a lurking danger which must carefully be avoided.

Guidance must be earnest and selfless. It should be provided for the service of man, to make his hidden capacities bloom, and not with a view to exploit him and mar his humanity.

Man has also the capability to learn and attain knowledge. Attainment of knowledge is his birth-right. A just society is that which provides an opportunity to everyone to gain literacy, to make higher studies and to acquire proficiency in skills and arts.

Profit is the result of work and all-round activity

It is the right of every individual to profit by the natural resources. But that is possible only as the result of his exerting himself and doing work. Therefore, it is necessary that an opportunity of working and making some sort of useful effort should be provided to every individual, and everyone should be guided and trained to make full use of his intellectual, mental and practical creativeness, so that he may be engaged in constructive activity and may profit by the natural gifts as the result of his own efforts.

Privation is the result of encroachment

It should not be forgotten that man is a social being, and an individual has to live with others in society. It is not the right of any one individual, but it is the right of all indivi-

duals that all possibilities of growth and development should be provided to them. Hence, the education of one must not be at the cost of keeping others uneducated, and the employment of some must not be at the cost of the unemployment of others. Similarly the enjoyment of the comforts of life by some should not be the cause of the privation of others.

It may be noted that according to the view held by Islam it is not because some individuals have secured their rights that others are deprived of theirs. It is, in fact, because of the transgression and excess of some individuals that others are deprived of their rights.

Imam Ali (P) has said:
"I have never seen any 'hoarded money', without there being 'neglected rights' besides it".

He has also said:
"No one remains hungry, except for the reason that some rich man has availed himself of too much".

There can be no privation if everybody is satisfied with what is his due.

Law of justice and a just mechanism to enforce it
In a just society it is necessary that there should exist laws to determine the rights of the individuals and there should be a machinery to enforce and defend these laws. But here again there is a possibility of a slip which should be avoided.

In this connection there arise some important questions: What should be the nature of the laws and who should give them? What should be the aim of these laws and whose

interests they should safeguard?

Evidently the laws should not overlook the principles we have mentioned earlier. They should serve the real interest of all individuals and should create a favourable atmosphere for the prosperity and the material and spiritual development of all. The laws should be in conformity with the innate human nature and should aim at moulding a balanced man. Islam presents such laws.

The next question is, which machinery should ensure the enforcement of these laws and should defend the rights of the people?

Scarcely there exists a society which does not talk of the rights and the law, and scarcely there is an executive machinery which does not regard itself as the protector of the rights and the interests of society. But the actual position is not so simple.

A thorough social analysis should be able to show whether those who are responsible for enforcing law, actually do so everywhere or they enforce their own desires, and instead of protecting the truth, safeguard their own interests.

Competence should be the
criterion of securing social positions

In the field of administration also, justice means that everything should be in its own place. As such, fitness and competence should be the only criterion of securing social positions.

Naturally competence is judged on the basis of the rules and the standards which every system lays down for itself.

We will later on discuss the Islamic standards in this respect. Anyhow, every type of self-seeking, lust of power, defrauding and subjugation is contrary to the idea of social justice.

A just society also requires a conscientious, honest, unbiassed, far-sighted and resolute judiciary, which may effectively protect the rights of people and prevent every kind of transgression and corruption.

Sense of responsibility

A sense of responsibility is one of the most important factors which guarantee the maintenance and enforcement of justice. For this purpose everybody should be aware of his rights and obligations, and watch that all do their duty. Constructive criticism and exhorting people to do good and restraining them from evil at every stage but within proper limits, are necessary for this purpose.

Islamic brotherhood

In Islamic society there exist a spiritual bond and a tie of mutual love and affection which unite all its members. Islam has laid great emphasis on Islamic brotherhood, which is one of the most important factors of the establishment and maintenance of its just social system. This spiritual infrastructure and sentimental bond of faith plays a basic role in safeguarding the rights of individuals and in taking care of their collective social interests.

Character building and fighting against corruption

Lastly the emphasis which Islam lays on character building, continuous effort to eliminate spiritual vices and the promotion of moral qualities of individuals, is an important factor of the establishment and preservation of a just social system. As we have already seen, it is the corruption of

those who run a system that causes tremendous damage to even those systems, which from the beginning are based on safeguarding the rights and interests of people. The original aims are often forgotten because of the selfishness, self-aggrandizement, mutual rivalry and lust of power of the pioneer groups. Even what was to be eliminated as the result of the previous efforts, reappears in a new form and seizes the existing situation. The prevention of such a damage is not possible without continuous self-criticism, revival of faith and spiritual consciousness, character building and remoulding the individuals. In fact only pure, conscious and active people can bring a healthy system into existence and it is only they who can maintain it.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUST SOCIAL SYSTEM

Everybody by nature wants his life to be as successful and fruitful as possible. Everybody is keen to lead the most successful life and tries his best to achieve this end. In this all-round struggle there is a possibility that two or more persons may try to grab at a particular advantage. They may come to a clash, unless there are some rules to regulate their conduct and to define their limits.

To avoid possible clashes and ensuing strifes, the only remedy is to lay down definite rules and to prescribe clear limits so that everybody may be bound to abide by them. What determines these limits is called Law.

LAW

Law is a body of definite rules and regulations which have the force and authority recognized socially, and which determine the rights, obligations, limits and responsibilities of everyone living in a particular territory. All, whether high or low, have to abide by these rules and regulations and to accept the consequences of violating them.

Sources of Law

Who fixes these rights, obligations and limits?

In this respect all the laws of the world are not alike. Each one of them has been set forth by a particular source. From the point of view of its sources the law can be divided into four categories:

(1) Individualistic despotic law,
(2) Class despotic law,
(3) National law; and
(4) Ideological universal law.

(1) Individualistic despotic law: This kind of law normally originates from the will and desire of a powerful individual who according to his own views and whims formulates rules and regulations and, taking advantage of his position, enforces them. It is natural that such a law should normally aim at meeting the aspirations of that powerful individual and his close aides, and not at safeguarding the interests of the masses. In some exceptional circumstances, if that powerful man or any of his aides is endowed with a spirit of service or if their own interests demand so, they may consider the interests of the people also. It is also possible that in some cases their private interests may conform to those of the common people.

(2) Class despotic law: Sometimes the law originates not from the will of an individual or a group, but from that of a class, controlling the society, such as the land-lords, the capitalists or the workers.

This kind of law also usually tends to meet the aspirations of the class in power, except in the cases where its interests conform to those of others.

(3) National law: The law which originates from the will

of a nation or at least the majority of it and not from that of an individual or a class, is called the National Law. The following points may be noted in regard to it.

(a) The national law of an advanced society generally seeks to meet the maximum interests of that society or its majority. It is immaterial whether it is in keeping with the general interests of humanity or not.

Historical experience shows that the societies and the nations enjoying the so-called national government have practically become the natural pivots of the world and have harnessed everything in it for their own welfare and comfort. It is very seldom that at the time of framing a law or implementing it they may take the interests and the desires of the human society as a whole into consideration.

(b) The national law having its origin in the desire of the majority, naturally represents its views. Here the question arises:
Does the opinion of the majority always comform to the real interests of the nation?

Practical experience shows that if the law is based merely on the opinion of the majority, in many cases it causes irreparable damage to the majority itself and often drags the nation to social and moral decay.

Living examples of such decay can be found among many existing societies enjoying the so-called national government, especially among those which are industrially advanced. In these societies the governments usually try to follow the opinions of those segments by the votes of which they may come to power or may continue to be in power, howsoever harmful or vulgar these opinions may be.

(c) The claim of all or most of the societies which boast of having a national government and a national law is more or less hollow and misleading. A deeper analysis will show that it is only a class or individual despotism which is being displayed under the facade of national government and national law.

(4) Ideological and universal law: It originates from an ideology which is keen to look after the interests of all the people of the world and not those of any particular nation, class, group or individual. It attaches foremost importance to the clear and definite principles whose worth has been proved and which have been acknowledged as true by the people of the territories where it is enforced. It is not subservient to the will of any majority.

LAW AND ITS SOURCES IN ISLAM

The law of Islam is ideological and universal. Its underlying principles are clear and definite and have been learnt through reason and revelation.

Islam considers only those rules and laws to be binding which have been formulated:

- Direct by Allah, or
- By the Prophet of Allah, or
- By a vicegerent of Prophet, or
- By those who have come to power in accordance with the Islamic standards.

"Believers, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority among you. If you have a dispute about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Day of Resurrection. That is good and its outcome will be better". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:59).

A law which comes from Allah, His Prophet or an infallible Imam can easily be accepted and trusted by all those who believe in its coming from those sources, for they know fully well that the law-giver has complete knowledge of all the aspects of the questions involved, has no self-interest and gives heed to the interests of all. Anyhow the rules and regulations framed by the authorities-in-charge of social affairs are enforceable only if:

- They are not repugnant to the laws and standards mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah,
- Full consideration, as far as practicable, has been given to all the aspects of the questions involved, and
- They have been framed with total impartiality without showing any bias towards the interests of any particular individual, group or class.

Only such rules and regulations can have the sanction of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet and the Imams, and can enjoy the whole-hearted support of the people.

Right course towards this magnificent end

A very magnificent end of the course of human life has been planned by the Creator. The human history following the will of Allah is proceeding towards this end. That is what is called by others as 'Compulsion of history'.

As we pointed out earlier, persistent human effort still plays no small part in reaching this bright and promising end. Generally speaking, the normal course of history consists of the events of conscientious human effort in the direction of righteousness, justice, Godlinesss and purity of heart and soul, accompanied by the defence of human rights and the observance of the rules of mutual human behaviour.

Whenever a deviation is found it is our duty to check it

and divert human action to its normal course.

As the result of his effort, man, on the one hand, receives some immediate return. His deficiencies are somewhat reduced and the manifestation of justice and righteousness in his individual and social life is increased. And on the other hand he gets closer to his ideal end.

The pre-requisites of this effort are as under:

- Correct knowledge of Islam and the right course consistent with the needs of the time;
- Faith, self-making and preparedness for collective effort;
- Making individual efforts a part of persistent collective struggle under a proper leader.

Correct knowledge of Islam,
keeping in mind the needs of the time

What should be done to get such a knowledge? The reply to this question is evident. One should refer direct to the Qur'an and to the holy Prophet, who is also the political and intellectual leader of the ummah.

However if a person is unable to have direct access to these sources, what should he do? The reply to this question is also evident. He should approach those who have enough knowledge of the Qur'an and the ***Sunnah*** of the Prophet, related to his position of being the intellectual and political leader of the Muslims.

This was the course which was being followed during the life time of the holy Prophet also. So long as the number of the Muslims was small and all of them lived in his company, they had direct access to their leader. They could gain enough knowledge of the Qur'an also direct.

But as Islam expanded, many people embraced it in far flung areas. Some of them could not get an opportunity even to see the face of the leader of Islam even once. Those, whose mother tongue was not Arabic or whose dialect was totally different from that of the Qur'an, were to a great extent unable to understand it also. At this stage of the movement it was found necessary to depute some Muslims to acquaint the newly-converted with the intellectual contents of Islam and the Qur'an.

It was necessary to do so because otherwise, it was feared, the movement could be distorted with the infiltration of the reactionary ideas into it. It was at this stage that the Qur'an gave the following instruction:
"It is not proper that all the belivers should go out (to war). Why should not a party from among every section of them go out so that they (who are left behind) gain a sound knowledge of religion and admonish their men when they return to them, so that they may take heed". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:122).

After the demise of the holy Prophet nobody could have direct access to the first leader of Islam. From the Shi'ah point of view now the responsibility devolved on the leaders designated by the Prophet, that is, Ali (P) and the Imams succeeding him. From the point of view of our other Muslim brethren, the responsibility rests with those who have enough knowledge of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet.

In our time, that is, during the period of the occultation of the designated Imam, (For details see: The Awaited Saviour, ISP 1979), the Shi'ah also do not have direct access to the leader appointed by Allah and His Prophet. They also, therefore, in order to obtain correct knowledge

of Islam should approach those who adequately understand the Qur'an, and are aware of the ***Sunnah*** of the Prophet and the Imams, and can express an opinion derived from these sources regarding the questions of the day.

Ijtihad

Ijtihad means to exert oneself to deduce precise rules of Islamic law from their sources in accordance with the special rules of research. The ability to make ***ijtihad*** or deduce laws is not the monopoly of any particular class, nor is it subject to any appointment or announcement. The way is open to everybody to acquire the necessary qualification and specialize in this field. Any one who does that, will automatically get the power to exercise ***ijtihad*** and will have the right to act according to his own findings and deductions and even to announce the results of his findings for the information of others.

Formulation of law concerning the ruling system

Let us see under what conditions a juristic opinion or verdict can be regarded as authentic and enforceable.

In the case of a social or a governmental question, the individual or the council responsible for deducing and formulating a law, must be officially selected for this purpose, so that its decision may have the backing of the executive and may be enforced in a legal form on the level of society.

Formulation of law on individual matters

If the verdict is meant for the personal action of the individuals, then selection of the religious authority which may issue it, may be left free. In other words people may be allowed to accept and act upon the opinion of any religious authority whom they may deem fit for the purpose.

Why should we adopt the doctrine of Taqlid?

Taqlid means to accept the juristic opinion and verdict of a *mujtahid* (a jurist capable of arriving at an independent judgement) and to act upon it.

We know that on principle Islam advocates freedom of thought and is opposed to the submission to any unauthorised opinion, custom, convention or order of any social authority.

The basis of this opposition is two fold:

(a) We cannot always be sure that an opinion, custom or convention is sound and is not a sort of fraud or myth?

(b) There is a possibility that an opinion or instruction may be aiming at self-aggrandizement or at protecting personal or class interests, in which case to accept it will be tantamount to submission to exploitation and subjugation. We know that Islam is as much against acknowledging myths, as it is against submitting to injustice.

Anyhow, it is permissible to accept the view of someone else provided:

(a) The person initiating the view has specialized in the subject concerned and has enough knowledge to be competent to express an opinion.

(b) His purity, and veracity are above suspicion.

There also must be valid reasons to believe that the opinion in question is sound and proper in the prevailing circumstances and is not based on selfishness or superficial thinking.

If these two conditions are fulfilled it is logical that we should accept such an opinion. If a man is unable to form his own opinion, he has no option but to follow that of

someone else, who is reliable and a specialist in his field.

Qualifications of a competent religious authority
(whose opinion may be accepted without knowing the authority on which it is based).

From the traditions concerning *taqlid* the above-mentioned two principles can easily be deduced. According to a well-known report Imam Hasan al Askari (P) clearly brought out this point, while explaining the verse which denounces the Jewish laymen for following their vicious rabbis blindly. The verse is as under:

"There are illiterate men among them who know nothing of the Scripture except vague fancies. They only guess". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:78).

The Imam said: "If the laymen of our ummah also find that their jurists *(faqihs)* are biased, are openly indulging in misdeeds, are competing with each other in securing pelf and position, are trying to eliminate their opponents and supporting their own incompetent and mean adherents; and they still follow such jurists, they will be no better than the illiterate Jews, who followed their corrupt rabbis. But the case of those jurists, who do not go astray, do not sell themselves, are particular about protecting their religion, suppress their wild passions and obey the commandments of Allah is different. They should be followed by the common people. Of course, the number of such jurists is small. All jurists cannot be such".

First of all this report talks of *faqihs*. This term implies specialisation in understanding religious questions and under-taking learned research. Hence a competent religious authority must be a first rate *faqih* and *mujtahid*.

Secondly, the qualities of consciousness, piety, religiousness, obedience to Allah and suppression of wild passions mentioned in the report, are the infrastructure of all human and moral virtues and mean keeping away from all sins and deviations.

Thus we can deduce the qualifications of a competent religious authority from this report.

Now let us discuss certain other points which are worth consideration in this connection.

(1) It is now clear that those who are not themselves specialists in cannon law should consult a ***mujtahid*** and follow his opinion. But in those cases in which the ***mujtahids*** differ and do not have a unanimous view, what should the ***muqallids*** (followers of a ***mujtahid***) do? Normally when we face an important problem in life, for example if the specialists differ about the treatment of an acute disease, we accept the view of the best specialist. By analogy the view of the ***mujtahid*** 'most noted for his religious learning' should be accepted in cases of difference of opinion between the ***mujtahids*** also.

(2) There is one more important question worth consideration. As with the expansion in human knowledge, an increase in its ramifications and more and more specialisation, the field of skill in cannon law and the deduction of rules of religion has expanded, it is now difficult for any one individual to cope with the task. Will it not be better if this task is entrusted to a council and is carried out on the basis of co-operation or division of work?

(3) There are two basic aspects of skill in cannon law. If the practical ability of a scholar covers both of them, his deductions will certainly be closer to truth and worth being implemented. These aspects are:

(a) A thorough knowledge of the sources of law, religious tests and the principles of jurisprudence.
(b) Acquaintance with the existing world situation, modern trends and social conditions.

In short a jurist should have the full knowledge of the sources of law and should also know how and where a particular rule is to be applied.

(4) As *ijtihad* is a continuous process and a living method of understanding religious law and goes on along with the emergence of new needs, new problems and new relations, it is necessary that in Muslim society broad-minded and efficient *mujtahids* should always be busy with the work of *ijtihad* and inquiry. By implication, the people should receive instructions regarding their religious duties from a living authority, except in those cases where the living authority allows them to continue to follow a past *mujtahid*. It is far more important to follow a living authority if the question involved concerns the ruling system. Obviously the leaders who are actually at the helm of affairs of a society should be alive and existing.

Formulation of new provisions

We have seen that the *mujtahids* have a right to deduce and discover rules of law in accordance with the principles of jurisprudence. They interpret and explain them. If they have the necessary qualifications of a competent religious authority, their juristic verdict deserves to be accepted and followed by others also.

Another point in connection with Islamic laws is that the government authorities have a right to issue rules, regulations, orders and instructions, on the basis of firm Islamic laws in the social and administrative fields. These rules and

regulations are not of a permanent nature. They are subject to the requirements of the time. Anyhow, the issuance and promulgation of these rules and regulations, once an Islamic government is established, is the prerogative of those who are at the helm of the affairs of that government.

Evidently such matters cannot be left to individual discretion, for that will lead to chaos and disappearance of central authority.

SOURCES OF CANNON LAW

For the purpose of juristic deduction a Muslim jurist uses various sources of law. The most well-known of them are the Qur'an, the ***Sunnah*** consensus of opinion and reason. We propose to explain them below:

Islam being a Divine religion, revelation is the basis of its legal system. Hence every rule must have Divine sanction.

The rules of law and other items of knowledge were revealed by Allah to the holy Prophet, who conveyed them verbatum to the people. The collection of these revelations was named the Qur'an. Besides that, with the help of the Divine knowledge that he had, the Prophet put forth Islamic teachings or explained and expanded what was contained in the Qur'an. But despite that he was very particular not to say anything which did not have Divine sanction (*"He speaks not of his desire"* – Surah al-Najm, 53:3). Of course, special Divine vigilance always guided him to the right path.

Furthermore, Allah has expressly enjoined the obedience to His Prophet. Therefore, the injunctions issued by the Prophet are as obligatory as the commandments of Allah.

The Divinely designated and installed Imams, though they did not bring any new religion, were described by the holy Prophet as the interpreters of the Divine law and Islamic rules of conduct. They received the knowledge, which they had, either from the Prophet, or it was bestowed on them as a special favour by Allah. Hence what they have said is surely authoritative.

In view of their purity and infallibility and the existence of other definite evidence, not only the actions of the Prophet and the Imams themselves are authoritative, but the actions of others also become authoritative if approved and endorsed by them and can be cited in support of a Divine rule.

Hence the sayings and deeds of the Prophet and the Imams constitute a valuable source of knowing the teachings of Islam. This source, which is called *Sunnah* or *Sirah*, is authoritative next to the Qur'an.

Authoritativeness of the Qur'an

The Qur'an will always be existing in its original form. With the precautions taken by the holy Prophet and the watchfulness and co-operation of the Muslims it has remained unaltered. Hence whatever it contains was no doubt revealed by Allah to the Prophet of Islam. Its being a legitimate source of law is unquestionable.

But to draw inferences from the Qur'anic verses requires a special study of them. Everyone cannot have access to all the contents of the Qur'an. To interpret the verses and to reconcile them keeping in mind all the explanations given in the *Sunnah* is a matter of specialisation. Anyhow, it should not be forgotten that the Qur'an is a Book of clear guidance and all those who know its language can be

benefited by it directly. Others can have access to it through its translations. All can be guided by its Light. Only juristic deduction with all its dimensions and limits, anyway, requires a specialisation in understanding the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

Utilization of the Sunnah

In the case of the *Sunnah* the problem is twofold. First we have to sift the traditions to see which of them can be accepted as genuine. Next we have to look into their true import.

There is no doubt that all over history many reports have been fabricated and imputed to the holy Prophet or an Imam. There are many other traditions the text of which has been altered in one way or the other owing to carelessness or lack of remembrance on the part of the transmitter of the tradition.

Hence it is necessary to ascertain the genuineness of each report, which in itself requires special skill and acquaintance with the personality of the transmitters and with the chains of authority.

If a report is found genuine, then there is the question of its true significance and meaning. For this purpose all relevant reports, which are sometimes conflicting, are to be collected, and their historical background and special language are to be studied.

As such the understanding of the *Sunnah* also requires specialisation in various fields.

Consensus of opinion

Sometimes consensus of opinion *(Ijma')* is considered

another source of law besides the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, in the sense that if the jurists agree to an opinion, we should act upon it even if we do not find anything in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* to support it.

The Shi'ah jurists maintain that if some authority is found on a rule of law in the Qur'an or the *Sunnah*, the question of the consensus of opinion does not arise. A text should always be given preference over a consensus. But if no authority is found and still the jurists have expressed an opinion, we regard it as authoritative, presuming that the jurists must have had some authority in support of their opinion, though we could not find it. In this way the validity of a rule of law even in such cases is actually based on some authority in the *Sunnah* not known to us.

Reason

Reason plays a basic role in *ijtihad*. Its role in ascertaining the rules of Islamic law has such an importance that it is said that reason and Islamic law are inseparable. There is a maxim which says:

"Whatever judgement is pronounced by reason the same is pronounced by Islamic law and whatever judgement is pronounced by Islamic law the same is pronounced by reason"

While dealing with the question of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* we have seen that the deduction of the rules of religious law from these sources requires specialization, and has to be carried out in accordance with certain rules and standards. At all stages of juristic deduction thought and reason are to be applied to it. In one way or the other reason has to be used while restricting the application of a law, giving preference to one report over another or extending the application of a law to other cases on the

basis of the generality of its effective cause.

This is the case with regard to those questions concerning which the Qur'anic verses or traditions have come down to us. But there are matters which have not been dealt with expressly by the Qur'an and the ***Sunnah***. We know that Islam is an all-pervasive and ever-lasting religion. Then what should we do with regard to these matters? In such cases the Islamic cannon law has certain principles and general rules by the application of which and keeping in mind the contents of the Qur'an and the ***Sunnah***, the problem of the new questions can be resolved. This is one of the most difficult stages of juristic deduction.

These principles and rules have either been derived direct from the religious tests and can be utilized only under the guidance of reason, or are basically the axioms which are applied to juristic deduction of Islamic laws.

Role of reason in determining
the principles of religion

We already know that Islam wants the people to think for themselves and accept what is right. It does not want them to shut their eyes and ears, nor does it want to impose on them pre-arranged decisions.

Therefore the use of reason and thinking power is one of the preliminary principles of Islamic cosmology.

We must ascertain the truth and arrive at the fundamental doctrines of Islam with the help of reason, thinking, inference and logic.

We know that as far as the fundamentals of religion are concerned, it is not permissible to follow anyone blindly.

Our belief in them should be based on our own reasoning and faith. Of course, there is no harm if we use the material supplied by revelation in moving forward our ideas. For example, we can be benefited by what the Qur'an has said about Allah in forming our belief about Him. Similarly we can ascertain the truth of revelation by pondering over its sublimity, its excellence, and the perfection of its teachings. By doing so we can arrive at the conclusion that it is really from Allah.

Role of reason in finding out the inimitability of the Qur'an

It is a fact that the inimitablity of the Qur'an is implicit in the Qur'an itself and we can discover it by giving our thought to it. The striking style of the Qur'an, its expressions and its flow on the one hand and its firmness, its comprehensiveness and its valuable teachings on the other, bear witness to the fact that it is a Divine phenomenon and not the product of human effort. Especially when we take into consideration the fact that the Prophet for the first forty years of his life had no concern with any formal or informal education, and then suddenly on being raised to Prophethood he set forth verses which were not only matchless in their style and composition but their content was also very sublime and wonderful, we can have no doubt that the Qur'an has been revealed by Allah.

The study of the Qur'an and the circumstances in which it was revealed makes it clear that it is the word of Allah.

Philosophy of the rules of law

All those acts which Islam has ordered us to do, have certain advantages and all those acts from which it has restrained us, have certain disadvantages. No Islamic injunctions are without any valid reason behind them.

For example, the eatable and drinkable things, legal relations, etc. have some inherent advantages or disadvantages, whether there exists any law concerning them or not. The Divine commandments are based on those very inherent advantages and disadvantages.

For instance the alcoholic drinks and narcotic substances are harmful irrespective of what the Islamic law says about them. Similarly usury is a big trap used for economic exploitation. Adoration of Allah is purifying and invigorating. If intoxicants and usury are forbidden, that is because they are harmful. If prayers have been enjoined, that is because of its beneficial effect on human beings.

Thus all rules of Islamic law are based on advantages and disadvantages, which are to a certain extent comprehensible with the help of knowledge and experience, and that is why it is not forbidden to inquire about the advantage or philosophy of any rule.

We find quite a number of traditions which give the reasons and philosophy of many religious injunctions. Such traditions have been collected by several authors in their books under the heading of the Philosophy of Islamic Law known as ***"Ilalush Shara'eh"***.

Even in the Qur'an we find again and again that Allah, while enunciating a rule hints at its advantage and effect. For example, prayers have been described as preventing from indecent acts and fasting as impelling to piety.

Now the question is whether we can extend a rule to other similar cases, if we definitely know its effective cause, that is, the advantages or disadvantages on which it is based. We can do so only if the cause, is expressly stated in the

Qur'an or the *Sunnah*. Otherwise if we know only partly the considerations on which a rule of law is based, or only conjecture about them, we have no right to interpret a text according to our own whim, or make our personal opinion the basis of Divine law. We are not allowed to use defective analogy in juristic reasoning or to invent an extendible cause of any rule of Islamic law.

Development of Islamic law does not mean the use of personal opinion in juristic deduction, nor does the big role of reason and thought in the deduction of religious injunctions justify the introduction of personal fancy in the sphere of religious law.

Connection between Ijtihad and finality of Islam

We have ample evidence in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* to show that Islam is the last revealed religion. While discussing the characteristics of the 'Age of Appearance', we observed that it would be the period of the final victory of the right and justice and complete supremacy of the social system of Islam.

Now we propose to study some of those aspects of Islam which bear out its finality.

(1) In contrast with the books of other religions the Qur'an, which is replete with knowledge and the rules of law, has remained unaltered. The depth and dimensions of this intellectual and spiritual store of Divine guidance are unparalleled.

Concerning the Qur'an the holy Prophet has said:

"Outwardly it is beautiful and inwardly it is deep. Every verse of it has an inner kernel and that kernel has another kernel. Its splendour will never never fade out".

Imam al Sadiq (P) was asked: "Why does the Qur'an appear to be so new and fresh though it is read and taught so much". The Imam said: "It has not been revealed for any particular time or any particular people. So it is fresh at all times and looks glorious to every people".

(2) We possess the rich sources of the *Sunnah* and *Sirah* to which we have referred earlier. They contain the history and the life account of the Prophet of Islam and the Imams. There exists no such record of the life of any prophet of the past. Especially on the life of the holy Prophet there are hundreds of books in which even the minutest details of his personal and family life have been recorded. The fact that some of these books were compiled not long after the period of the holy Prophet adds to their reliability. The existence of such a record of the life of its leader is necessary for a living and everlasting movement.

(3) The doctrine of *Ijtihad* which we have described in detail, meets all the requirements presented by new problems, and keeps the way of the intellectual and social development of Islam and its teachings open. It guards the purity and original character of the religion and at the same time keeps it fresh and moving.

(4) The introduction of reason in the sphere of religious teachings helps the progress of thought in the discovery of hitherto unknown aspects of religion.

At the same time the existence of general, legal and intellectual rules and relevant principles facilitates the work of juristic research.

All these aspects preserve Islam's position as an everlasting, all-pervasive and universal religion.

GUARANTEE OF THE ENFORCEMENT OF LAW

As already said, what we mean by law are the regulations formulated and supported by a general authority. Hence there exists a sort of guarantee of their enforcement.

The factors which guarantee its enforcement naturally vary in the case of different kinds of law. From our description of law and its sources it is easy to understand the nature of this variation.

In this connection what appears to be necessary is to throw a little more light on the factors which guarantee the enforcement of law under the social system of Islam. These factors are as under:

- Mature thinking of the masses,
- Human and ideological sentiments,
- Faith in Allah and His recompense and retribution in this world as well as in the next,
- Deep and whole-hearted respect of law because it has a direct or indirect connection with Allah,
- Exhortation to good and restraining from evil; and
- Government.

Mature thinking

Islam has made special efforts to raise the level of the outlook of Muslims on life and their power to find out what is good for them and what is bad. That is why it is observed in the case of many legal verdicts that they are accompanied by some sort of logical arguments. For example look at these Qur'anic verses:

Regarding drinking and gambling

"They ask you about drinking and gambling. Say: There is great sin in both, though they have some benefits for men; but the sin of them is greater than their usefulness". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:219).

"Believers, strong drink and games of chance idols and divining arrows are nothing but abominations devised Satan. Therefore avoid them so that you may prosper. Satan seeks only to stir up enmity and hatred among you by means of strong drink and games of chance and to divert you from the remembrance of Allah and from your worship. Hence will you abstain from them". (Surah al-Maidah, 5:90 – 91).

Regarding justification for the defence of one's self and one's faith: *"Permission to take up arms is hereby granted to those who are attacked; they have suffered injustice. Allah has all the power to give victory to those who were unjustly expelled from their homes only because they said: Allah is our Lord".* (Surah al-Hajj, 22:39 – 40).

We repeatedly meet with such logical reasoning in the verses of the Qur'an and sayings of the holy Prophet and the holy Imams on various questions.

A great Shi'ah scholar of the fourth century (Hijri era), Shaykh Saduq, has collected a good number of such traditions in the form of a book, named *Ilal al-Sharai'* (Philosophy of Islamic Law).

This kind of reasoning in the Qur'an and the Sunnah shows that though Islam wants every Muslim to follow every commandment of Allah and His Prophet unhesitatingly on the basis of his faith in the Divine revelation and without waiting for knowing the philosophy behind each rule, it has not overlooked the principle that the knowledge of the rationale of a decree moves one appreciably to implement it.

Human and Ideological sentiments

A part of the laws and social provisions is directly related to one's behaviour towards his relatives, neighbours, collegues and co-religionists. One is by nature inclined to show love and tenderness to them. A social system, the rules of which in respect of one's behaviour towards others are in keeping with this natural tendency, can, by promoting and strengthening these natural sentiments, create an inner force to implement its provisions not only in this field, but in all other fields of social behaviour also, for all social rules are directly or indirectly related to human feeling of observing the rights of others.

As we pointed out earlier, due emphasis has been laid on the promotion and the strengthening of pure and natural human sentiments in the social system of Islam. A number of devotional acts, such as spending, fasting, pilgrimage etc. have the quality of strengthening human sentiments of communal and ideological collaboration.

Faith in Allah and His recompense in this as well as in the next world

All the known legal systems have the provisions of reward and punishment for those who abide by law or violate it. The hope for reward and fear of punishment are effective forces to ensure the observance of law. But the guarantee of recompense and retribution by Allah is far more effective, for every believer knows well that his salvation depends on the performance of good deeds and the observance of the laws enunciated by Allah, His Prophet, his vicegerents and the just and virtuous rulers who manage the affairs of the people in accordance with the Divine injunctions. He also knows that nothing can be concealed from Allah and that there is no way to escape from His sway.

(Luqman said): *"My dear son! Even if your deed be so small that it can be compared to a mustard-seed, which is hidden in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed Allah is Subtile, Aware of everything"*. (Surah Luqman, 31:16).

"Their book (deed-sheet) shall be placed before them, and you shall see the offenders dismayed at what is inscribed in it. They shall say: Alas for us! What kind of a book is this that leaves nothing small or great, but has counted it. They shall find all that they did confronting them. And your Lord wrongs none". (Surah al-Kahf, 18:49).

True faith in the Divine recompense and retribution on the Day of Judgement is a powerful incentive to abide by one's duties and is the most effective factor in the enfocement of law.

Whole-hearted respect of law

Another effective factor in the implementation of law is that the people should be looking at the rules laid down for the organization of their life with respect, and attaching a sort of sanctity to them. Whenever they default intentionally or unintentionally, they should be feeling prick of conscience, so that they could repent and return to the right path of following the law.

The sanctity attached to religion in an ideological society is one of the most significant examples of the whole-hearted respect of law. Historical and social experience has shown that this respect has always played a wonderful role in giving currency to the best deeds in ideological societies. It is such a powerful factor that its equivalent cannot be found in other societies.

Exhortation to good and restraining from evil

Mature thinking and the realization that the enforcement of law is in the interest of all, creates an atmosphere conducive to the general support of what is right. Indignation against law-breaking and the whole-hearted respect of law to the extent of holding it sacred, automatically creates a feeling among the members of a society which impels them to support law actively, and take action to exhort to good and restrain from evil.

In the social system of Islam much emphasis has been laid on this active support, and attention of all has been drawn to its important role.

The best way to show what importance the Divine system of Islam has given to the general support of law, and what is right, is to quote some relevant Qur'anic verses and traditions.

"Let there be among you a group that calls to virtue, exhorts to what is good and restrains from evil. It is such people who shall prosper". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:104).

"You are the best nation that has been raised for mankind. You enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency, and you believe in Allah. Had the people of the Scripture believed, it would have been better for them. Some of them are the believers; but most of them are wicked". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:110).

"They are not all alike. Among the people of the Scripture there is a staunch group, who all night long recite the revelation of Allah, falling prostrate before Him. They believe in Allah and the Last Day, enjoin right conduct, and forbid indecency. They vie with one another in good

deeds. It is they who are the good. Whatever good they do, they will not be denied its reward. Allah is well aware of the pious". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:113 – 115).

"The hypocrites, whether men or women are alike. They enjoin the wrong and forbid the right. . . . . The believers, whether men or women, are protecting friends of each other. They enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. They are particular about their prayers, pay the zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. They are whom Allah will show mercy. Surely Allah is Mighty, Wise". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:67 – 71).

"Those who repent, who worship, who are thankful, who strive, who bow and fall prostrate (before Allah), who enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong, and who observe the limits of Allah. Give glad tidings to the believers". (Surah al-Taubah, 9:112).

The holy Prophet has said:
"My nation will always be in a happy position, so long as it exhorts to good and restrains from evil. But as soon as it abandons these two qualities, misfortune will overtake it. One group will come out to exploit another group. They will receive no help either from those on the earth or those in the heaven".

Allah has condemned the Israelite rabbis, because they saw the misdeeds of the evil-doers and mischief-makers but did nothing to stop them, as they expected their favour and were afraid of their power, though Allah has told the people not to fear anyone, but to fear Him alone. Allah says: *"The believers, men and women help one another, exhort to good and restrain from evil".* (Surah Ale Imran, 3:111).

Allah has made exhortation to good and restraining from evil as the foremost duty, because He knows that if this duty is carried out, all other duties, whether hard or easy, will also be carried out.

Exhortation to good means:

- Invitation to Islam;
- Stopping injustice;
- Resistance to aggressors and evil-doers;
- Correct distribution of public funds, collection of money from whom it is due, and spending it where it should be spent. (Imam Ali – al-Wasail al-Shia'h, vol. 11).

Restraining from evil means:

. . . . "Oppose them (evil-doers) in your heart and express your opposition verbally also. Stand out against them and do not be afraid of the evil-speaking of anybody, if you are right. If they accept the truth, there is no action to be taken against them. Action will be taken only against those who violate the rights of others and exceed their own limits. It is they who will be meted out a painful chastisement. If they persist in their evil deeds, rise against them and show your indignation. But by doing this do not try to gain power or wealth for yourself. Continue your fight till they repent and submit to the commandment of Alllah". (Imam al Baqir – al-Kafi, vol. 5).

"A society, in which the weak cannot secure their rights against the powerful, will never prosper". (Imam al Sadiq – al-Kafi, vol. 3).

"Exhortation to good and restraining from evil is the way of the Prophets and the practice of the virtuous. It is a great duty. Other duties are performed by the light

of it. As a result of it, the roads become safe, means of earning take their lawful course, discrimination and aggression are done away with, the land becomes populous, the rights are restored, and the affairs of the society are put straight". (Imam al Baqir – al-Kafi, vol. 5).

These are some examples of the Qur'anic verses, and the traditions, in this respect. They clearly show the importance in the social system of the popular support of right and justice, and the vigilance of all in regard to the just implementation of law.

A social system, howsoever good and just it may be, can bring happiness only if the people are not too indifferent and complacent. Otherwise their fate will be the same as mentioned in the following tradition, which has come down from Imam al Baqir (P). "Then the wrath of Allah reaches its height, and His retribution overtakes all. The virtuous are ruined along with the wicked, and the young in the houses of their elders".

GOVERNMENT

In many cases it is the duty of every individual to support what is right and to see that law is enforced in an equitable manner. But there are cases in which this duty requires more energy, more specialized knowledge and more powerful machinery than an individual can possess. The vital duty of 'exhorting to good and restraining from evil' demands that in such cases all people should co-operate to set up a powerful social organization having enough authority to undertake the required task. In an ideological society the organization charged with this responsibility is called "Government".

Under the social system of Islam a government comes to power in one of the following three ways:

(1) By appointment by Allah, which automatically means its recognition by the people.
(2) By appointment by the Prophet, which also means recognition by the people.
(3) By appointment, or in other words election by the Muslims.

(1) Appointment by Allah

In the then newly-founded society of Medina the holy Prophet was in charge of the government. He was assigned this post by Allah. The Muslims were told by the holy Qur'an to obey him in their social affairs.

"Say: Obey Allah and the Messenger". (Ale Imran, 3:32).

"Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not quarrel among yourselves lest you lose your courage and strength". (Surah al-Anfal, 8:46).

This government began with the proclamation regarding the formation of the Muslim ummah and the issue of certain charters, following the arrival of the holy Prophet in Medina. The pledging of their allegiance to the holy Prophet by the representatives of Medina shortly before his migration *(Hijrah)*, and by the various groups of the *Muhajirs* and the *Ansar* on other occasions, was a national and popular recognition of his Divine appointment.

During this period the governors, the judges, the army commanders, the treasury officers and other important functionaries were appointed by the Prophet himself, and had to discharge their duties within the framework of Islamic law. Their powers were also normally determined by the Prophet. In ideological societies the founder of the

movement, which culminates in the formation of a society naturally holds the reins of the government himself, for, being the founder of the ideology, he knows its dimensions and implications better than anybody else. Moreover, his competence and efficiency having already been proved, naturally he is the fittest person to assume the leadership of the new society.

(2) Appointment by a Prophet

In many cases a Prophet appoints somebody to manage the affairs of the society. Such appointments have two forms:

(a) In his lifetime he appoints, in the territory under his control, governors, judges and commanders. As his appointees, these people exercise the power given to them by the Prophet. They are in reality his deputies. They derive their authority to rule from the order of the Prophet. They are just like the officials appointed to various posts by the central authority of any country.

(b) The second form of an appointment by a Prophet is that of his own successor. According to the Shi'ah belief, the holy Prophet appointed Imam Ali (P) to succeed him as the head of the Muslim ummah. The Shi'ah in this respect rely on a number of traditions which have been reported by the authentic Sunni sources also. The tradition of *al-Ghadir* is one of them.

Tradition of al-Ghadir

In the 10th year of the *Hijri* era, while returning from his last pilgrimage, the holy Prophet assembled his companions at a place called *Ghadir al-Khum* and spoke to them. From his talk on various occasions during this journey, people were apprehending that the end of his life was imminent. Naturally at this stage they expected him

to make clear as to who would succeed him as the head of the newly-founded Islamic society. As expected, he took up this question in his speech and said:

"Have I not more authority over the Muslims than they have over themselves?"
All the Muslims exclaimed with one voice:
"Yes, you have; you are the Prophet of Allah".
The holy Prophet then said:
"Ali is the master of him whose master I am. May Allah be the friend of him, who is the friend of Ali, and the enemy of him who is the enemy of Ali. May He love him, who loves Ali, and hate him who hates Ali. May He support him who supports Ali and let down him who lets down Ali". (Kanz al-Ummal, vol. 6 p. 403).

This tradition has been handed down by 110 companions of the Prophet and is recorded in authentic books.

Besides this tradition, there are other sayings of the Prophet in which he referred to the leadership (Imamate) and succession (Caliphate) of other Imams. For example, he is reported to have said that the number of his successors would be twelve. (al-Sahih by Muslim, vol. 1 p. 119 and al-Sahih by Bukhari, vol. 4 p. 164). According to another tradition he once pointed to Husayn ibn Ali (P) and said:

"He is an Imam, son of an Imam, brother of an Imam and father of nine Imams". (al-Minhaj by Ibn Taymiyyah, vol. 4 p. 210).

The traditions are largely accepted by all or most of the non-Shi'ah Muslims also but they interpret them differently. For example, concerning the tradition of *al-Ghadir* they say that in his speech the Prophet did not appoint Ali to

be his successor, but only introduced him as a fit person to succeed him, subject to his selection by the people.

It is evident that on the basis of this interpretation also the net result is the same, for the founder of an ideology being the best judge of the level of the faith, knowledge and competence of his associates, and because of his love for and interest in the expansion and consolidation of the principles propounded by him, will naturally introduce only that person for the leadership of the society who is most fit for that position and most loyal to the cause dear to him.

As such, it is the duty of the people also to accept the person so introduced, and pledge their allegiance to him, if they are really loyal to the ideology and give it preference over their personal inclinations and desires. In fact at the time of the Prophet's demise the majority of the newly-founded Muslim society consisted of neophytes who did not have deep knowledge of Islam. Their pagan nature had not undergone a total change, and they were not yet fully accustomed to new intellectual and social values. Hence, it was too early for the ummah to be in a position to use its discretion in the selection of its leader. The same is still the case even in many ideological societies of the 20th century.

Anyhow, a ruler appointed by the Prophet is both a leader and a ruler of the society like the Prophet himself. The society being ideological, naturally its head is expected to take measures to safeguard its ideological borders as well as to guide the people to mould their lives according to its principles.

According to a tradition what Imam al Sadiq (P) has said

in this connection comes to this:
A leader is a religious guide also. It is his duty to work for the progress and prosperity of the Muslims. Leadership is the basis as well as the principle of Islam.

Salat, Saum, Zakat, Hajj and *Jihad* are performed under the aegis of the appointed leader *(Imam).* Under him the public treasury expands and the injunctions of Islam, and its penal laws, are enforced. The frontiers become safe. (Usul al-Kafi, vol. 1 p. 198 – 205).

(3) Election by the people
This form of government is accepted by all Muslim sects, with the difference that the Shi'ah regard it as justified only during the occultation of the Imam of the Age. Otherwise the Shi'ah give preference to those who were appointed or designated by the Prophet and the Imams. But according to the Sunnis immediatlely on the death of the holy Prophet, this form became the only right form of the government.

From the Shi'ah point of view, since the major occultation of Mahdi, the Imam of the Age in 329 A.H. no particular person has been appointed to be the Head and Leader of the Muslim ummah. That is why in the traditions related to leadership during this period only the general qualities and characteristics required to be possessed by a leader have been mentioned. This shows that it is upto the people themselves to choose a person as their leader, having those qualities and characteristics.

Main qualifications of a ruler
during the period of occultation
(1) Faith in Allah, His revelations and the teachings of His Prophet.

The Qur'an says:
"Allah will never let the disbelievers triumph over the believers". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:141).

(2) Integrity, adherence to the laws of Islam, and earnestness about their enforcement. When Allah told the Prophet Ibrahim (P) that he had been appointed the Imam and Leader, the latter asked whether anyone of his family would also attain that position. In reply Allah said:

"My covenant does not include the wrong-doers". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:124).

The Prophet Daud (P) was told by Allah: *"O Daud! We have made you our representative on the earth. Therefore judge rightly between people".* (Surah Sād, 38:26).

(3) Adequate knowledge of Islam, appropriate to his prominent position.

"Is he who guides the people to the truth more worthy to be followed or he who does not guide unless he himself is guided?" (Surah Yunus, 10:35).

(4) Enough competence for holding such a position and freedom from every defect not in keeping with Islamic leadership.

(5) His standard of living being equal to that of the low-income people.

In this connection there is enough material in the sermons of Imam Ali (P) and in the epistles he sent to his officials. In a number of epistles it has been emphasized that an administrative officer should be free from love of money,

ignorance, inefficiency, outrage, timidness, bribery, and violation of Islamic injunctions and traditions and should not be guilty of shedding blood.

The commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (P) says:
"You should remember that it is most inappropriate that a person, under whose charge the honour, the life, the property and the laws of the Muslims are placed should be:

- A lover of money and consequently should attempt to mis-appropriate the property of other people;
- An ignorant person and consequently should mislead them;
- An unreliable person with whom others do not like to have relations;
- Discriminative in his treatment and favouring the influential people only;
- Accepting bribe and deviating from the course of justice and law, disregarding the laws and divine traditions and thus injuring the interests of the ummah". (Nahj al-Balaghah).

In his charter to Malik al Ashtar Imam Ali (P) said:
"You must strictly refrain from shedding the blood of the innocent. There is nothing more provocative, more catastrophic and more destructive than indulging in that". (Nahj al-Balaghah).

Once Imam Ali (P) received a report that a certain commander of a town in Persia was corrupt and fond of wine and women. He immediately wrote a letter to him, in the course of which he said:
"A man of your character is not fit to be entrusted with the defence of the borders or to be allowed to issue any order. Such a man is not fit to be promoted and no confidence can be reposed in him". (Nahj al-Balaghah).

By this very letter the Imam recalled the officer concerned and asked him to relinquish his post.

These qualifications of those who are appointed to a high office, are the natural corollary of an Islamic government.

As we have already stated:

- The Muslim ummah is an ideological society;
- Islamic law is the basis of the administration of this society;
- It is the joint responsibility of all the people to see that this law is implemented.
- In many cases it is inevitable to set up a vast organization for this purpose.
- As this organization, including its head, is set up with a view to realize the aspirations of Islam and to establish the system and the laws of this religion, it is necessary that its leaders and functionaries should be aware of these aspirations and should have faith in them. They should be honest, competent and efficient. Should they not have these qualifications, the basic aims and objects of the organization can hardly be realized.

ROLE OF SHURA AND BAY'AT

In this study we propose to deal with two questions namely consultation *(Shura)* and role of allegiance *(Bay'at)* briefly:

(1) Role of consultation

In Islam consultation has an important role in connection with social questions.

(a) Administrative affairs

In the Qur'an the holy Prophet was commanded:

"Hold consultation with them in regard to the conduct of affairs". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:159).

Describing the characteristics of the believers the Qur'an says: *"Whose affairs are a matter of counsel".* (Surah al-Shura, 42:38).

In the life account of the holy Prophet we find many instances of his consultation with his companions. For example, on the occasion of the Battle of Badr when he received the report that the caravan of Quraysh had escaped and was beyond the reach of the Muslims, and that the well-equipped enemy had moved from Mecca with the intention to fight, he consulted his companions as to the action to be taken. It was with their consent that he decided to join the battle. He made consultations on the occasions of the Battle of Ohad and the Battle of the Ditch also. When Imam Husayn Ibn Ali (P), while on his way from Mecca to Kufah, received the report of the martyrdom of Muslim Ibn Aqeel he consulted his companions whether he should continue his journey.

From such evidence we learn that the management of government affairs and social questions should not be despotic and dictatorial.

(b) Election of the ruler

Certain Muslim sects are of the opinion that the election of a ruler (or head of the state) is dependent on the voting of men of integrity, knowledge, virtue, and sound judgement. (al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah by Mawardi pp. 5 – 6).

There is a difference of opinion as to the number of the voters necessary to form an electoral council. Some people (like Ahmad Ibn Hanbal) are of the view that a

meeting of all men of opinion among the Muslim ummah is necessary. Others think that a meeting of a lesser number is also enough. According to a certain sect, the competent persons only nominate someone as a candidate for the caliphate, but the real factor in determining his election is the vote of the people. This sect regards the pledge of allegiance as a vote and considers the vote of the majority to be enough. (al-Shakhsiyyah al-Dawliyyah by Muhammad Kamil Yaqut p. 463).

Our comments in this connection are briefly as follows:
In those cases in which there is no special evidence that the holy Prophet designated a particular person to be the head of the state, it is the general duty of the Muslim society to elect an eligible candidate to enforce the Islamic injunctions in the best possible manner. As a head of the state or ruler he must have certain qualifications. It is the duty of those who influence public opinion to introduce such persons to the masses and prevent the nomination of every Tom, Dick and Harry.

Secondly, none of the electoral councils held since the demise of the holy Prophet aimed at the introduction of a nominee. They were always held for the purpose of election and appointment. Thirdly the pledge of allegiance by all other people did not amount to election. That was only a proclamation of their loyalty to the ruler elected or appointed by the council.

(2) Role of the pledge of allegiance
The pledge of allegiance is a sort of covenant of loyalty and obedience which is concluded with a new ruler, or in certain cases it is a renewal of a covenant already existing. In the latter case it amounts to a vote of confidence in the government in power facing some extraordinary situation.

Usually the pledge of allegiance is accompanied by giving hand to the ruler in token of an undertaking to give him full support in all battles of life.

On several occasions on which the Muslims took the pledge of allegiance to the Prophet, the undertaking they gave was quite definite. At Aqabah the representatives of the people of Medina undertook to support him against his enemies in any battle anywhere.

A special undertaking was included in the text of the pledge taken at Hudaybiyah, known as Bay'at al-Rizwan. (Surah al-Fath, 48:18). The same was the case with the pledge taken by the immigrant women. (Surah al-Mumtahina, 60:12).

Anyhow, though a pledge of allegiance concerns the government affairs, it has nothing to do with the appointment of a ruler. It only means the acknowledgement of his power and influence by the person taking the pledge, who declares his loyalty to the ruler concerned.

We know that Islam has emphatically enjoined adherence to all covenants in more than 30 verses of the Qur'an. To live upto one's commitments is necessary for the maintenance of one's good relations with others. All agreements, whether they are at the limited level of the individuals, or are concluded between the ummah and the rulers or between the Muslim society and other societies should be respected. Anyhow a pledge of allegiance should not be construed to mean that loyalty is obligatory in all conditions. There are two pre-requisites of the validity of a pledge: Firstly it should have been taken under proper conditions; and secondly the ruler must be abiding by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and must not personally have

done anything to make him unfit for holding his office.

Loss of eligibility to rule

If a leader of congregational prayers loses his integrity, he is no longer fit to lead prayers. If the guardian of a minor becomes mentally unsound, he will be removed from guardianship by the authorities concerned. We have already said that a ruler must have certain qualifications. If he loses these qualifications, for example, he becomes lax in his faith in Islam, infringes Divine laws, misappropriates funds out of public treasury, or governs tyrannically, in all these cases he is no longer fit to be the head of a Muslim State.

However, the deposition of a ruler being a very grave matter affecting the interests of the whole nation, it must be thoroughly discussed at the meeting of a general assembly and the final decision in this respect should be taken by competent persons only. Everybody cannot express his individual opinion on such a vital question. Some authorities are of the opinion that the question of the deposition of a ruler should be decided only by the Islamic Legislative Assembly after due deliberations. (al-Shakhsiyyah al-Dawliyyah by Muhammad Kamil Yaqut).

According to the Shi'ah doctrine, this question cannot arise during the government of the Imams designated to Imam by the holy Prophet. According to the Shi'ah view all Imams are infallible and immune from every sin and slip. Their position is above that of ordinary integrity and purity. Anyhow, this question can arise even for the Shi'ah during the occultation of the designated Imam. In any case, the purity and fitness of the ruler is a vital question in the social system of Islam, and it is a big social duty of the Muslims to keep a constant watch over the activities of the rulers.

CALIPHATE AND IMAMATE

Caliphate: Caliphate is another term signifying the supreme social and religious leadership. It also implies the question of the succession to the holy Prophet. A caliph is a person who, as a successor to the Prophet, assumes the leadership of the Muslims in regard to their secular and religious affairs.

The rulers who came to power after the demise of the holy Prophet invariably called themselves the caliphs, or successors to the Prophet, irrespective of the fact whether they were good or bad. The designation of Caliph continued till the downfall of the Ottoman Government in 1922.

The question of Caliphate has two aspects:

(1) Historical aspect in the sense that every Umayyad, Abbasid and Ottoman ruler, and even the Umayyads of Andalus, the Fatimid rulers of Egypt, and the rulers of several other dynasties, called themselves caliph of the Prophet and ruled under this designation. This is a historical fact and there can be no controversy about it.

(2) Legal aspect in the sense whether anyone of them was really fit to hold this position in accordance with the true standards of Islam, which were valid not only in those days but which are valid for all times. To deal with this aspect of the question, we have to go through a detailed discussion of the various questions related to the government:

Does the accession to the position of Caliphate depend on designation by the holy Prophet as is maintained by the Shi'ah in respect of the succession of the twelve Imams on the basis of authentic evidence?

Or is the question of succession to be decided by a council? If so, by which council and consisting of how

many people? Does the opinion of the people decide the question of accession to Caliphate, or is their duty only to pledge their allegiance and to declare their loyalty?

For a person to accede to Caliphate is it enough to have been designated by the preceding caliph or is it necessary that this designation be ratified by a council or by a general election?

What are the conditions of the accession to Caliphate? Can a caliph be deposed? If so, by which authority? These are the questions which the Muslim scholars have discussed exhaustively in their detailed or short books.

Imamate: With the advent of the Prophet of Islam and the express declaration by the Qur'an that he was the last Prophet, the age of Prophethood came to an end. Now no new religion can be revealed. Islam is the last Divine religion. But still there are certain needs of the Muslim society which should be met, such as:

(1) All the functions of a ruler and a government, including the settlement of legal disputes and maintenance of law and order.
(2) Propagation of Islam and the expansion of the sphere of its social and governmental influence.
(3) Exposition of the Qur'an and the religious law.
(4) Constructive education of the people, in the sense that the Imam being a model of all virtues and being free from all sins and faults sets a practical example and a standard of virtuous life. People can, without any hesitation, acknowledge him to be their leader and attain salvation under his guidance.

According to the Sunnis the first two duties are within the

jurisdiction of the caliph. During the period of the companions of the Prophet, the third was also to some extent included among his functions, in the sense that his exposition of the Qur'an and the law was authentic. But in this respect he was not distinguished from other companions, because this function did not exclusively pertain to him.

As for the fourth function, especially at its full-fledged level, they do not consider it to be a necessary qualification of a caliph.

In contrast, the Shi'ah believe that all these functions are combined in the person of an Imam designated by the holy Prophet. Anyhow, the governmental functions, dispensing justice, and taking action to expand Islam through propagation and *jihad*, are possible only when the reins of government are actually in the hands of an Imam, otherwise when he does not have 'a free hand', that is, he is not in power, he cannot practically perform these functions, though he possesses all the necessary qualifications and capabilities to do so.

As for the other two functions, they imply complete knowledge of Islam and moral leadership of the highest calibre. This is a position which can neither be assigned nor withdrawn, by anybody. It is not subject to voting or the issuance of an order. An Imam has full knowledge of the Divine commandments and Islamic standards. He possesses all the virtues, and is the mirror of Islam. His knowledge and worth are an undeniable fact and a Divine gift. They are not conferred on him by any human being. To enable you to comprehend the Shi'ah logic in this respect let us quote a portion of the lengthy sermon of Imam al-Riza (P) from Usul al-Kafi, volume one.

- "Imamate is religious leadership. It entails the management of the affairs of the Muslim society and improving and exalting the position of the Muslims.
- An Imam protects the Divine bounds; defends the Divine religion and invites the people to Allah by means of logic, argument and good advice.
- An Imam is a trustee of the people appointed by Allah.
- He is His sign and His vicegerent on the earth.
- He is immune against all sins and free from all defects.
- He is peerless in his time. None can attain his position.
- No scholar can equal him.
- All virtues are manifested in him.
- He has many kinds of knowledge which cannot be polluted by ignorance.
- He is an indefatigable guardian of the ummah.
- He is the source of purity, piety, knowledge and devotion.
- He is truly fit to be a leader. He knows the intricacies of politics.
- He is infallible; enjoys Divine support and is free from every fault and slip.
- Allah has given him such a position that he is His sign to the people and a model of virtue and excellence".

In short just as the Prophet of Islam was elevated to the rank of Prophethood on account of his superior qualities, his successor also should at least be the second to Prophet.

In view of these basic criteria of the ruler and leader of the ummah, and in pursuance of what the holy Prophet said about the chiefship of Imam Ali (P), a number of prominent Muslims and well-known companions of the Prophet seriously supported the selection of Ali (P) as the ruler immediately after the demise of the holy Prophet. They believed that he alone could lead, on correct lines

and to its logical end, the movement started by the Prophet and advance to a fruitful stage for the deliverance of humanity from all anti-God and anti-man propensities.

This group of the supporters and followers of Ali (P) and the believers in the necessity of his rulership came to be known as *Shi'ah*.

The word, *Shi'ah* means a group of friends and followers. It is better if we quote the words of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (P) in regard to the origin and interpretation of this word.

In one of his letters Imam Ali (P) says:
"This letter is from the servant of Allah – Ali, Amir al-Mo'minin to his Shi'ahs; and this name – Shi'ah – is the name which Allah adores, and has put it down in the Qur'an; Surely one of his (Noah's) Shi'ahs was Ibrahim (P)*. And you are (in fact) the Shi'ah of the Prophet Muhammad (P)".

The Qur'an says:
"One of them belonged to his Shi'ah (supporters) and the other an enemy". (Surah al-Qasas, 28:15).

Here Shi'ah means a group of supporters.

There are certain sayings of the holy Prophet in which he referred to the Shi'ah of Ali (P).

Once he pointed to Ali (P) and said: "By Him in whose hands my life is, this man and his Shi'ah will be successful on the Day of Resurrection". (al-Durr al-Manthur – commentary on the verse 7 of Surah al-Bayyinah – by Suyuti).

*Here the word Shi'ah has been used in the sense of a follower and the verse means that one of those who followed Noah (P) was Ibrahim (P).(Vide Surah al-Saffat, 37:83).

On other occasions also he used similar expressions. Such instances have been mentioned in Sawaiq al-Muhriqah by Ibn Hajar Shafi'i and in Nihayah by Ibn Athir.

Thus the Muslims from the Prophet's time were conversant with the idea that Ali (P) would be an Imam and would have followers who would be a model of true Muslims.

After the demise of the holy Prophet while the Hashimites and some of his other companions(1) were busy in arranging his funeral, a group of the Muhajirs and the Ansar assembled at *Saqifah* to decide the question of Caliphate.

This group at last announced that Abu Bakr had been elected the ruler of the Muslim ummah. The Hashimites and some other companions refused to pledge their allegiance and openly criticised the decision. They held that Ali (P) was superior in every respect, and the holy Prophet had already hinted at his Imamate. Imam Ali (P) himself said:

"By Allah! We are the most deserving of Caliphate, because we belong to the House of the Prophet. Among us there are people who understand the Qur'an, have enough knowledge of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and are conversant with the problems of the society. They defend the rights of the people against all violations and distribute wealth equitably. Such persons deserve to hold the reins of the government". (al-Imamah wal-Siyasah by Ibn Qutayba).

Some other companions of the Prophet, like Salman and Abuzar made similar statements in public and before the caliph himself. (Ibn Abil Hadid Mo'tazali vol. 2 p. 17 and Tarikh Ya'qubi vol. 2 p. 148).

(1) Such as Abuzar, Salman, Miqdad, Zubayr, Ammar, Bara' bin Aziḅ, Abi bin Ka'b, Fazl bin Abbas, Khalid bin Sa'id (Tarikh Ya'qubi vol. 2 p. 103).

But as the newly-founded Islamic society was threatened by the danger of external enemies and internal hypocrites, Imam Ali (P) avoided to take action against the government and did not like to disrupt Muslim unity in those critical circumstances. He declined to accept the proposal of Abu Sufyan to declare himself to be the caliph and start a struggle and join fighting.

Anyhow, the question of the fitness of Ali (P) for Caliphate could not be shelved. A number of the companions of the Prophet stuck to this position. Gradually his supporters or the Shi'ah became a distinct body. Some scholars have collected, from various sources (e.g. Isabah, Usud al-Ghaba, Isti'ab) 300 names of the companions who were Shi'ah.(1)

The second caliph came to power on the basis of his nomination by the first. This added to the worry of the Hashimites and the close associates of Imam Ali (P). They apprehended that in future also, in contravention of the instructions of the Prophet, the caliphs would be appointed on the basis of their nomination by their predecessors.

The six-member committee appointed by the second caliph, though it included Imam Ali (P), was formed in a way that he was left out, and Uthman was appointed to be the third caliph.

The foundation of the Umayyad power was laid in Syria during the time of the second caliph. Now as Uthman belonged to this family, the power of the Umayyads was further increased and consolidated. The administration of several other areas of the Muslim territory was handed over to the relatives of the caliph. Gradually justice and

(1) See: The Shi'ah – Origin and Faith (ISP, 1982).

equality of Islam gave place to discrimination and partiality, and an oligarchical government was set up.

These events added to the resentment of the people and strengthened the Shi'ah movement. Abuzar, the well-known companion of the Prophet was expelled from Medina because he criticised the rulers for their hoarding of money and mishandling of public property. He was continuously persecuted, till he died. Another companion, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, who raised his voice against the expulsion of Abuzar earned the displeasure of the caliph. He was also harassed till his death.

At last the resentment of the people reached its boiling point. Some people revolted. Uthman was killed. Under the pressure of public opinion Imam Ali (P) became caliph. But it was too late.

The Umayyads, who were old enemies of Islam, were now appearing in the garb of the defenders of the faith and by means of their unlimited wealth and power had entrenched themselves in Syria and several other points of the Muslim territory.

A new class of aristocrats having huge income had sprung up. Naturally Imam Ali (P), who was dedicated to upholding justice and equality and doing away with paganism and corruption, could not put up with this situation.

He dismissed Mu'awiyah and restrained the aristocrats from playing with public treasury. But the resistance of the deviators and self-seekers increased, and by and by three groups rose to fight against Imam Ali (P).

(1) The haughty aristocrats who instigated the Battle of

the Camel. They were defeated, but this conflict cost the Muslims dearly.

(2) The Umayyads under the command of Mu'awiyah, the supporters of aristocratic and racist government and the revivers of despotic imperialism who caused the Siffin affair. When they were about to be defeated, they resorted to a ruse to stop fighting. Mu'awiyah was able to continue his unlawful government.

(3) The foolish pietists who during the Battle of Siffin were instigated against Imam Ali (P). They caused the Battle of Nahrawan. During this struggle the way of Imam Ali (P) became distinct from that of others and all the good Muslims who liked him rallied round him.

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali (P), the field was open to the old enemies of Islam to do what they liked. The Umayyads were now masters of the whole Muslim world. They trampled on the Islamic principles and standards to the utmost possible extent. Their tyrannies and massacres, their open violation of the Islamic laws, their hostility to the Shi'ah and the members of the Holy Family, who were the champions of Islamic justice, and above all the tragedy perpetrated by them at Karbala, and the massacre at Medina a year later, made the position of the Shi'ah extremely difficult. But these events also galvanised the Shi'ah and turned them into a compact body, having as their distinctive feature two important doctrines in the Islamic and social fields. These doctrines of Imamate and justice were derived from the Book of Allah and the sayings of the Prophet and the Shi'ah regarded their observance as a pre-requisite of being a perfect Muslim.

DOCTRINES OF JUSTICE AND IMAMATE

According to the Shi'ah belief, one of the principles of the Islamic cosmology is that of human freedom and responsibility and Divine justice with regard to the prescription of duties and the recompense and retribution on the basis of the deeds performed out of free will. The Shi'ah also believe in the setting up of a just system of the distribution of wealth, equal opportunities of employment and respect for the rights of all individuals.

The Shi'ah deduced the principle of justice from the fundamentals of Islam and wanted it to be observed both by the rulers and the ruled. But the rulers gradually propagated the philosophy of predestination. They wanted the people to believe that all their misfortunes were the outcome of a preordained fate, to which they had no alternative but to submit patiently. These rulers insisted that the people should exercise no free will, should make no efforts to change the existing situation and should not feel any responsibility towards the social events.

Further, the rulers maintained that their own actions should be interpreted on the basis of a sort of *ijtihad*. In other words it should be conceded that they had a right to have their own private opinions and could not be blamed even if they were wrong.

The Shi'ah strongly opposed this attitude. They declared that according to the teachings of Islam man was a responsible being who could exercise his will, that society was a product of human determination, and that changes in history could be brought about by the efforts of resolute and purposive men.

At the same time they put forth definite criteria of *ijtihad*

so that every selfish and irresponsible opinion might not be termed as such.

Doctrine of Imamate

With regard to the Imamate and headship of the ummah the Shi'ah believe that::

Firstly, the head and the ruler of the Muslims should be a person, whose individual and social life may be the best model of the Islamic way of life. Not only his Muslim followers should be able to accept him as an object of imitation, but even the non-Muslims may find in him and his leadership the best example of Muslim conduct.

Secondly, if it is known that Allah or His Prophet has designated a person to be the leader of the Muslims, he will automatically be given preference over all others. Our being obedient to Allah and His Prophet necessitates that we must not accept any Imam in the presence of one designated by them. There can be no doubt that to know the worth and capability of an individual there is no source more reliable than Allah and His Prophet.

Evil consequences of the infringement of this doctrine

(a) The violation of this doctrine culminated in the total collapse of the Islamic system of government. Gradually it took on the colour of hereditary despotism. In the name of Islam, paganism, egotism and feudalism of the Roman and Sasanid emperors were revived in a new form. Injustice and chaos prevailed and all-round human development, freedom of thought, equitable distribution of wealth and the selection of competent persons for the administration of public affairs came to an end.

Lady Fatimah-tuz-Zehra (P), daughter of the holy Prophet in her last public address delivered before the *Muhajirs* and *Ansar* women, said:
"I wonder what characteristic of Ali displeased the people that they ceased to support him. By Allah! They did not like his sharp sword, his steady steps, and his strictness in the implementation of the Divine commandments. But by Allah! they themselves are the losers. People never suffered injustice under Ali. He always took them to the spring of justice and knowledge, and slaked their thirst".

Then she made the following forecast:
"What they have done is like a pregnant she-camel. Wait till it delivers. Then you will draw from it a bowl of blood and deadly poison instead of milk. That is how the doers undergo a terrible loss and the coming generations reap the unlucky fruit of what their predecessors sowed. Rest assured that commotion and turmoil will overtake you. I warn you that you will be confronted with sword, coercion, chaos and despotic tyranny. Your property will be carried off as booty and your people will be threshed like ripe corn".(1)

(b) Muslims lost competent authority on Islamic knowledge

Those, who were the interpreters of revelation and the exponents of Islamic knowledge, were cast aside, while what the companions of the Prophet had learnt from him was limited. For a long time the caliphs did not pay attention to the recording of hadith. They even discouraged that.

(1) Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid Mo'tazali. V.4 p. 87

With the expansion of the sphere of Islamic influence the needs and the problems of the society increased. In these circumstances there was the need of a reliable source fully aware of the spirit of the Qur'an to impart knowledge like the Prophet himself on a scale commensurate with the expansion of the Muslim world. Especially the need of a source above all suspicion of selfishness and serving the cause of any evil power was strongly felt.

Though such a source actually existed, unfortunately the Muslim society could not be benefited by it. On the other hand, the evil rulers, with a view to advance their own selfish ends, employed some prominent scholars and heavily bribed them out of public treasury to fabricate traditions in their interests and against those of their rivals. This false propaganda was rampant during the time of the Umayyads.

Anyhow, the Shi'ah never forgot the doctrine of Imamate, nor did they accept the validity of the evil governments. They continued to be guided by the traditions of the Imams, for they knew that the Prophet had said:

"I am leaving two precious things with you: the Book of Allah (Qur'an) and my Progeny *(Ahl al-Payt)*. They will not be separated from each other". And that is no wonder, because an ideological school and its leader are not separable. Without a suitable leader there can be no certainty of its continuance.

Back to the main discussion

What we have said so far makes it clear that the Shi'ah do not believe in anything additional to the fundamentals of Islam and its teachings. In actual fact they are the upholders of true Islamic principles and advocates of a

right and just government. It is significant that in their most serious clashes with the rulers of the time, these very objectives were always conspicuous. Let us mention a few instances:

Ibn Ziyad said:

"Ibn Aqeel, you are a bad man. The people of this city were living calmly. There was no disunity. You came here and provoked discord. You are instigating one group against another".

Muslim Ibn Aqeel said:

"No, that's not true. The people here believe that your father killed many pious and freedom-loving persons out of them, and caused the blood to flow. He revived the traditions of Khusrow and Caesar. I have come to invite the people to justice and to the commandments of Allah".

Ibn Ziyad said:

"Do you think you have a claim on this government?"

Muslim said:

"It's not a question of thinking. We're sure".(1)

During the Imamate of Imam Husayn (P), Mu'awiyah received certain reports about him. He wrote a letter to him, warning him against creating trouble. In reply Imam Husayn (P) wrote a detailed letter to Mu'awiyah, enumerating many of his (Mu'awiyah's) crimes, including the killing of those who opposed his tyranny, and the innovations he had introduced in the religion. In the end Imam Husayn (P) wrote:

"You ordered your assignee (Ibn Sumayyah) to kill those who adhered to the religion of Ali, and he carried out your orders. You know well that the religion of Ali is the same as that of the Prophet. It is because of your using the name of this very religion that you are occupying your

(1) Tarikh Tabari vol. 7, p. 267.

present position. You say that I should not create trouble. But I do not find any trouble bigger than your government. In these circumstances I think the best thing I can do is to fight against you". (al-Imamah wal-Siyasah vol. 1 p. 190)

Zayd ibn Arqam was shocked at the criminal treatment which was being meted out to the Prophet's family by the Umayyads. Once addressing the close associates of ibn Ziyad, he said:
"You people are no better than slaves. You killed the son of Fatimah and made Ibn Marjanah your ruler. He kills the pious, and he has enslaved you. You submit to humiliation. What an unlucky lot you are !" (Tabari)

In the course of all these encounters there was a talk of injustice, humiliation, slavery, manslaughter, trampling of the rights, and also of religious injunctions, rightful government and the supremacy *(walayat)* of the Holy Family. All this talk is purely Islamic.

It wants to defend only which is right and just, for that is which Islam connotes. In a wider sense it wants but to defend men and his humanity.

All these events took place before the insurrection of the Iranians against the Umayyads and their rallying round the Holy family. Hence the notion that Shia'ism is an Iranian invention is only fantastic. It is either a selfish distortion of history or a biased exaggeration of the Iranian role in the big changes in the history of Islam.

Historical investigation shows that the Iranians opposed the Umayyad government because of its injustice, tyranny and undue discrimination against the non-Arab Muslims

The inception of the Safawid government in Iran and its

wars with the Ottomans in the early 10th century also have nothing to do with the beginning and development of Shia'ism. The events and the movements of the early Islamic years and the philosophical and scholastic studies of the Shi'ah preceded the Safawids by centuries. Hence how can it be imagined that they had any hand in the development of Shia'ism?

ARBITRATION

From time to time differences arise on various questions between the people living together. Historical and personal experience shows that no society has ever existed between the individuals or the social organizations of which there have never been any differences. Such differences have always existed in all societies from the primitive and semi-barbaric to the most advanced and civilized.

Usually the differences and clash of interests arise between two individuals, two organizations, two classes or two nations, in one of the two ways.

In many cases the difference is due to wrong thinking, wrong behaviour and unjust conduct of one or both the parties. In more or less every society there are individuals or groups which are not spiritually and morally mature enough to be fair in all cases and not to violate the rights of others. Such people, if their personal interest demands, do not show any consideration for the rights of others. Their human sentiments are not strong enough to control their selfishness and greed. They neither possess noble moral character nor are they interested in seeking the pleasure of Allah. They do not fear the consequences of their misconduct in this world or in the next.

There is no doubt that lack or weakness of faith is the most

common and the most effective cause of the differences. Anyhow, this cause is not peculiar to individuals. The same thing is true of classes and nations.

We often find in social life that two faithful and pious persons differ on a certain point. Here the difference is not due to their unjust behaviour but is due to the difference in determining what is right.

In such cases both the parties according to their light believe that they are right, and each thinks that the other party is either involved in selfishness or is mistaken. Anyway, a pious man defends himself and what he believes to be his right with zeal and enthusiasm, but is never prepared to do a thing which he regards unjust and wrong.

It is a social duty to settle the differences

Any differences which may arise between individuals or social organizations should be settled as early as possible, for their continuance, whether they are due to any wilful transgression or mere misunderstanding, always adds to the conflict between the parties concerned and culminates in ugly events or at least perpetuates some sort of hostility and malice between them. Anyway, to make effort to settle the differences is a social duty.

The Qur'an urges the Muslims to try to adjust any disputes which may arise between them.

"Have fear of Allah and resolve your differences". (Surah al-Anfal, 8:1).

In tradition also much importance has been given to this question. The holy Prophet is reported to have said: "To settle the differences is more meritorious than prayers and fasting".

Various ways of settling differences

People usually adopt one of the following methods to settle their disputes:

(1) Personal force: Use of personal force is one of the oldest methods of settling a dispute. When a person is unable to settle a quarrel amicably, he at once jumps to fight either individually or with the help of his friends and supporters. This is called the law of the jungle, according to which the stronger is always right.

(2) Shouting, abusing and vilification: Some times the two parties involved in a quarrel do not have the power or courage to stand up to each other and to fight a battle. They instead of fighting in the field resort to another kind of battle, viz. the verbal battle. Either face to face or behind the back they shout at each other, abuse each other and vilify each other, till one party is reduced to submission.

Normally the more evil-tongued and foul-mouthed comes out victorious in these verbal battles.

Evidently this solution is of the same category as the first. It is even worse, because it shows the cowardice and faint-heartedness of the parties concerned. Socially also it is more harmful.

The Qur'an totally disapproves vilification, except in cases where a wrong is done to someone, and he does not find anyone to do justice to him. In this case the only reaction which he can show is to raise an outcry and expose the aggressor. ***"Allah does not like shouting of evil words unless a man has been wronged. Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knowing".*** (Surah al-Nisa, 4:147).

(3) Passage of time: Where the disputing parties are not

in a position even to make an outcry, they leave the matter to the factor of time in the hope that with the passage of the time fairness of their position will be established and their right will be restored. This is mostly the solution of the weak, though it is sometimes adopted by the discreet and cunning among the strong also. Anyhow, it is a solution which seldom leads to the desired result. More often than not it causes the right and the claimant both to be buried in the debris of history. Sometimes the passage of time merely means to give greater opportunity to the termites of dispute to eat up whatever social link exists between the disputants and turn them into absolute enemies of each other.

(4) Arbitration: When with the social development of human life man reached a stage where he could understand social affairs better and could be benefited by his past experience to make a better future, ground was prepared for submitting the dispute to an arbiter for his judgement instead of using physical force, vilification or leaving the matter to the passage of time.

Did arbitration in the beginning have the form of intervention by the head of the family or the chief of the tribe, then took the form of settlement of disputes by the priest etc. and lastly developed into the present form?

Did the weak first use this solution to protect themselves against the dishonest contrivances of the strong?
Or did the strong feel that they could achieve their objects more easily with the help of a judge hand-picked by them?
Or was it the mental growth which persuaded society to devise such a means of settling disputes as might be accept able to all?
Or is it an invention of the intellectuals to solve a problem faced by society?

Or is it a remedy suggested to society or its social leaders by their love for justice and defence of the oppressed? Or has it some other origin?

To study the origin and development of arbitration the reader may refer to the books and articles written specially on this subject.

For the present it is enough to say that there can be two real motives of referring a dispute to an arbiter: (1) Natural instinct of man to defend himself and his rights, an instinct which is shared by other living beings also; (2) Love of the virtue of justice and a desire of mitigating social hardships.

Administration of Justice in Islam

In the social system of Islam utmost importance has been given to arbitration, to an arbiter and to their role in the security of society.

Islam considers it to be a part of faith to refer a dispute to a competent arbiter. A person who has a legal dispute should try to settle it by negotiation, and if a result is not obtained this way, he should refer it to an arbiter, competent in accordance with Islamic standards. Whatever judgement is given by the arbiter, should be accepted unconditionally.

In this respect the Qur'an says:

"By your Lord! (the fact is) that they will not be true believers until they make you judge what is in dispute between them and then do not find in themselves any dislike of what you decide, and submit (to your judgement) without reservation". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:65).

In an Islamic society the judicial and executive systems

should be at the service of those whose rights have been violated.
"Allah does not favour a society with virtuousness and purity in which there is no arrangement for defending the rights of the weak against the strong". (Mustadrak, vol. 2).

Who is fit to hold the position of an arbiter?
Soundness of arbitration mostly depends on the fitness of the arbiter. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali wrote to Malik al Ashtar as under:

"Select as your chief judge from the people, one who is by far the best among them – one who is not obsessed with domestic worries, one who cannot be intimidated, one who does not err too often, one who does not turn back from the right path once he finds it, one who is not self-centered or avaricious, one who will not decide before knowing the full facts, one who will weigh with care every attendant doubt and pronounce a clear verdict after taking everything into full consideration, one who will not grow restive over the arguments of advocates and who will examine with patience every new disclosure of fact and who will be strictly impartial in his decision, one whom flattery cannot mislead, one who does not exult over his position. But such people are scarce".

Heavy responsibilities of a judge
A judge must realize that in reality he is a refuge for the people against every injustice and excess. If he does not feel that he is competent to hold this position, he must not accept it. Otherwise he will be a source of trouble to himself as well as to others.

Addressing Justice Shurayh, Imam Ali (P) said:
"Shurayh! you are occupying a seat which should be

occupied by a Prophet or his nominee. Otherwise it is a seat of a wretched man". (Wasail al-Shi'ah, vol. 18 p. 7).

Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al Sadiq (P) is reported to have said:
"Avoid being a judge, for judgeship is a position which should be held only by a person who knows how to administer justice and whose judgements are impartial. Such a person can only be either a prophet or his nominee". (Wasail al-Shi'ah, vol. 18, p. 7).

Adherence to the Divine law

A judge must pronounce his judgement in accordance with the Divine law which covers all aspects of justice. Anyone who pronounces judgement in accordance with any other law not conforming with the Divine law and based on personal or class interests, is a deviator and a sinner.

"Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are wicked indeed". (Surah al-Maidah, 5:47).

Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) is reported to have said:
"There are two kinds of judgement: Divine and pagan. He who deviates from the Divine judgement, automatically pronounces the pagan one. Anyone who pronounces a judgement contrary to what Allah has commanded, is an unbeliever, though his judgement be in a case involving two dirhams only". (Wasail al-Shi'ah vol. 18 p. 18).

Behaviour towards litigants

Behaviour of a judge towards the litigants should in every respect be the same, even in the way he addresses them and looks at them.

"It is your duty to give the same treatment to both the

parties of a case even in the matter of looking at them. You should not look at one party longer than at the other". (Nahj al-Balaghah)

Independence and Immunity of Judiciary

In the social system of Islam whenever a heavy duty or duties are placed on the shoulders of anyone, he is allowed to have certain privileges also.

The same general rule applies to the judges also. As a judge has to undertake heavy duties, his position is quite strong. In Islamic society the independence of a judge is truly respected. Even the head of Muslim society should show full respect to the independence of judiciary. Those who have to forego their unlawful gains consequent to the just judgement of a judge should not be allowed to think that they could shake the confidence of the head of society in a judge or could damage the prestige of the judiciary.

"Protect the position of a judge so that others, specially those who are closer to you, may not be tempted to disturb him. Let him be satisfied that nobody can hatch an intrigue against him. Be very careful in this respect, for this religion was previously in the hands of the wicked who used it for self-aggrandizement". (Nahj al-Balaghah).

The judge also has a reciprocal duty. He is strictly forbidden to accept any gift from the litigants.

"Rufa'ah! Avoid every temptation; supress base desires; do not be dejected and be careful not to accept any bribe". (Epistle of Imam Ali (P) addressed to Rufa'ah, his Judge in Ahwaz).

Administration of justice based on such a strong

foundation can provide best solution to the disputes of the members of a nation and can be a source of strength for their social ties.

RELATIONS OF THE MUSLIMS WITH OTHERS

We know that the Muslim ummah has come into existence on the basis of a particular system of doctrines and actions, and its continuance depends on the preservation of its ideology and the stability of its social set up.

Evidently the individuals and nations not subscribing to Islamic ideology, being beyond its doctrinal pale, cannot be considered to be members of the Muslim ummah. They are aliens, but the degree of their alienation will be judged by these two considerations:

(1) How far they share the ideology of Islam?

(2) To what extent they are hostile to the Muslims?

As regards (1) above:

(a) Islam believes that the whole world and all its phenomena depend on an absolute truth which transcends matter, viz. Allah. The whole world, including man has been created and is being maintained by Him.

(b) From the Islamic point of view man, in order to know the true nature of the world and to become aware of his own relation with Allah, should turn to revelation, which is a great source of knowledge. As such, belief in the Prophets and their invisible contact with Allah is a part of Islamic Cosmology.

(c) Next to the belief in Allah and revelation there is a question of doing good deeds, which include all individual and collective efforts for human welfare and development.

Islam has a close relation with all other systems which are

also based on these three principles. But it has no relations with the materialistic and polytheistic ideologies and systems.

On this basis, Islam will have especially close relations with a system which believes in the Unity of Allah in its true Islamic sense. If a system also believes in true Divine revelation, in the Prophets and the Divine Scriptures, Islam's relation with it will naturally be deeper. The Qur'an has repeatedly referred to this natural affinity between various Divine systems. It considers their origin and their basic principles to be common and coherent. Of course, this does not mean the endorsement of the present beliefs of the followers of these religions or of the contents of their existing religious books. This is only a recognition of the Divine origin of these religions. The Qur'an draws the attention of the followers of these religions to their deviations and wants to reform them.

(2) The hostility which others show to Islam has several degrees:

(a) Sometimes they oppose the Muslims formally. They either actually launch an attack against the land of the Muslims, their life and property or their religion, or at least have an intention to do so. In this case they will be regarded as invaders and aggressors.

It is but logical that the life, property and the land of an invading enemy is not to be respected, and so long as he is at war, friendly contact or co-operation with him is not allowed. This is the case in which the question of *jihad*, defence and their relevant rules arises.

(b) A nation which has no intention to attack and betray the Muslim ummah or a Muslim country and is not intri-

guing against them, will not be considered to be an aggressor. If it enters into a peace treaty with the Muslims or a pact of non-aggression and reciprocal respect of the borders and the rights of each other, such agreement will be respected, whether it is concluded direct between the Muslims and a non-Muslim country or both of them join a common world covenant resulting in an undertaking of mutual respect and preservation of the borders of others. In this case the non-Muslim country or nation will be in peaceful treaty relations with the Muslims and the agreement concluded with it will be respected so long as it does not visibly or invisibly violate it by hatching an intrigue or launching an aggression. If it is found to be intriguing against the Muslims it will, of course, be regarded as an enemy.

In history we find that wherever the interest of the Muslim ummah demanded, the holy Prophet concluded a treaty of peace and non-aggression even with the polytheists. We see that in the sixth year of the Hijri era he signed a treaty with the polytheists of Mecca. He respected it and scrupulously implemented every clause of it, till the enemy himself practically abrogated it. It was only then that the Prophet decided to take action against the enemy for being guilty of violating the treaty. Thus the way was prepared for the conquest of Mecca, which was conquered in 8 A.H. We find that during the Medanese period of his life the holy Prophet concluded a number of treaties and pacts.

(c) The third class consists of those non-Muslims who live under the protection of the Muslim government. They are called ***zimmi*** and their life, property and even religious rites are respected, provided they abide by their covenant and pay the capitation tax. They can live peacefully along with the Muslims and enjoy all human rights.

With this brief explanation of the relations of the Muslims with the non-Muslims we can understand all the basic teachings of Islam having a bearing on the foreign policy of Muslim society.

In this connection one of the most important questions is that of *jihad*. The importance which Islam attaches to it has unfortunately given a weapon in the hands of the opponents of this Divine system to project the valuable teachings of Islam in a distorted form and to launch an attack against the Qur'an and Islam by declaring in their writings and speeches that Islam is a religion of sword.

In our opinion the best way to enable you to understand the correctness or otherwise of this assertion is to acquaint you further with the salient features of *jihad* in Islam.

JIHAD

Jihad literally means utmost effort to achieve an objective. In Islamic terminology it means to endeavour and make sacrifice for the cause of Allah, that is, for the deliverance of the people from injustice and subjugation, restoration of belief in Allah's unity and establishment of a just social system.

Defence is a special form of *jihad* which aims at preventing an attack by an aggressor. In the religious texts of Islam it has been described as resistence to the aggressive designs of an enemy against a Muslim land and thwarting his attempt to gain the control of the natural resources of a Muslim country. Hence defence is a form of *jihad* for the cause of righteousness and justice.

Aims of Islamic Jihad

Islam with its vast revolutionary programme aims at

establishing unity of human society on the basis of justice and mutual love. It wants to restore human freedom and humanize the world. Hence it fights against every kind of polytheism, injustice and subjugation. The Muslim ummah considers itself responsible not only to lead individually and collectively a life based on justice and Unity of Allah, but also, as far as possible, does its utmost to propagate righteousness, to awaken the ignorant, to fight for the cause of the oppressed and the under-privileged, to put an end to corruption and to restore freedom.

It is a basic duty of the Muslims to work for the removal of all obstacles in the way of human growth and development, and not to show indifferences to them. The Muslims not only should defend the existing sphere of their religious influence but also should try to expand it.

It is also a duty of the Muslims to resist enemy aggression in every possible way, to forestall injustice and corruption and to co-operate with others in this respect.

We conclude, therefore, that the following are the aims of *jihad:*

(1) Expansion of the belief in Allah and adherence to His commandments.

"Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:190).

"Fight for the casue of Allah with due determination". (Surah al-Hajj, 22:78).

(2) Helping the weak and the deprived.

"What stops you from fighting for the cause of Allah and of the helpless men, women and children?" (Surah al-Nisa, 4:75).

(3) Putting an end to persecution.
"Fight them until there is no persecution". (Surah al-Anfal, 8:39).

Aggression is bad, whosoever may be the aggressor
A fighter in the way of Allah must always be careful that in his zeal and ardour he may not exceed the limits of justice. The Muslims must in no case violate the basic human rights.
"Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not commit aggression, for Allah does not like the aggressors". (Surah al-Baqarah 2:190).
"(Attack them) in the sacred month (if they attack you) in the sacred month, and sacred things are (also) subject to retaliation. If any one attacks you, attack him as he attacked you. Have fear of Allah and remember Allah, and do not with your own hands cast yourselves into destruction. Do good, for Allah likes those who do good". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:194).

A Divine system cannot have a double standard. When it regards aggression as evil and fiendish for others, it cannot consider it to be sacred and divine for its own followers.

Jihad against Egoism
Addressing a party which had returned from a battle with the enemy the Prophet of Islam said:

"I congratulate you that you have carried out the minor *jihad* successfully. Now you have to carry out the major *jihad".* They asked: "O Prophet of Allah! Which *jihad* is the major one? He replied: *"Jihad* against egoism". (Wasail al-Shi'ah vol. 6, p. 122).

Imam Ali (P) is reported to have said:
"The best *jihad* is his who fights against his own wild passions". (Wasail al-Shi'ah vol. 6, p. 124).

Islam is a world system

Islam has not come for any particular people. It is a world system. From the point of view of a Muslim, every place is the domain of Allah and everything has been created by Him. Islam is not peculiar to any nation, nor is it confined to any race. It has not come for the guidance of any particular society. Islam wants the whole world to be benefited by its life-giving teachings. The Qur'an described itself as guidance for all and the Prophet of Islam as a blessing for the whole world.

All human beings, irrespective of the race and the country of their origin, can become the members of the great Muslim society by accepting the fundamental principles of Islam, and thus become the brethren of other Muslims.

In order to form a society free from all doctrinal errors and every kind of misconduct, it is the duty of all, especially the believers, to guide the people to the right path.

Hence the scope of the Islamic responsibilities is not confined to any particular territory. It is universal and no conventional frontiers should be a barrier to the spread of the ideas of freedom and Muslim unity.

This persistent effort is not meant to impose Islamic doctrine on others. As the Qur'an has declared, there is no compulsion in the matter of religion and the right and wrong paths are quite distinct.

"There is no compulsion in religion. True guidance has

become distinct from error". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:256).

This vast effort should be exclusive aim at relieving thought of the burden of myths, unfastening the shackles of injustice and delivering man from every kind of exploitation, subjection and ignorance.

Look into this Qur'anic verse:
"What stops you from fighting for the cause of Allah and of the helpless men, women and children? Who say: Our Lord! Deliver us from this town of the oppressors, and appoint for us from you a protector and send us someone that will help us". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:75).

Before having recourse to fight truth should be explained

Usually there are at least some persons among the enemy troops who have been dragged to fight against truth either forcibly or because of their ignorance of the facts. As one of the aims of *jihad* is to deliver the people from every kind of subjection, exploitation and ignorance, it is a duty of the commander of the Muslim forces that before the start of fight he should do whatever he can to enlighten all enemy soldiers and to show them the right path so that they may not be unnecessarily killed out of ignorance.

Imam Ali (P) is reported to have said:
"When the holy Prophet sent me to Yemen, he said: O Ali! Don't fight against anyone until you have invited him to Islam and to accept the truth. By Allah! If you succeed in guiding even one person to the right path, that is a great achievement. You will be in fact his saviour". (al-Kafi, vol. 5, p. 34).

Special facilities provided by Islam for this purpose

If anyone from among the enemy soldiers wants to come to the Muslims to have discussions with them with a view to have a more clear idea about Islam, or wants to study the individual and collective way of life of the Muslims from a close quarter in order to know the truth about them, he may be provided due facilities. For this purpose even if a simple Muslim solidier gives an assurance of security, his pledge will be respected by all Muslims, even the Muslim Government.

The holy Prophet has said:
"All Muslims have a common responsibility. A pledge given by one of them is the pledge of all".

If a single soldier gives protection to anyone, that is to be regarded as the protection given by the whole Muslim ummah.

PEACE IN ISLAM

"Peace is better; but men are prone to avarice". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:128).

Generally speaking, all men by nature prefer peace. That is why all social systems, including those, which base their philosophy on contradiction and conflict, try to promise undisturbed peace to the world in the long run.

The Qur'an strongly denounces every war which is not necessary for the defence of the cause of Allah and rescuing the people from the clutches of the devils.

"Believers, enter all of you into peace and do not follow,

in the footsteps of Satan. No doubt he is an open enemy of you". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:208).

Islam not only wants the internal relations of the Muslims to be peaceful, but it also gives similar instructions in regard to their relations with the non-Muslims.

"If they incline to peace, incline you also to it and put your trust in Allah. No doubt He is All-hearing, All-knowing". (Surah al-Anfal, 8:61).

But care should be taken that the leaning of the enemy toward peace may not be a military or political ruse and a mere hoax.

"But if they intend to deceive you, Allah is sufficient for you. It is He who has supported you with His help and with the believers". (Surah al-Anfal, 8:62).

Full preparedness to face the enemy

Though Islam gives so much importance to peace, it wants the Muslims to be alert and prepared. It wants them to be so strong that none of their open or secret enemies may dare to think of any aggression against them.

"Make ready for them whatever force and well-bred horses you can in order to strike terror into the enemies of Allah and your own enemies". (Surah al-Anfal, 8:60).

It may be remembered that the word, 'force' in this verse includes every kind of industrial force also. As industrial development is a constant process, it is the religious duty of the Muslims to acquire modern industries and latest technology. They should equip themselves with the modern weapons not for the purpose of attacking others,

but to ward off any aggression against them because of their weakness.

Horse racing and archery

To prepare the Muslim masses to participate in the *jihad* for gaining independence or defending their existence, an effective programme of horse-racing and archery was introduced. Muslims were encouraged to take part in these competitions. To create interest among the youth, suitable prizes were awarded to the winner. The idea was to make the Muslims fit for fighting.

It is obvious that horse-racing and archery were chosen for this purpose keeping in view the conditions of that time. The general spirit of this Islamic instruciton is that every Muslim should in accordance with the tactics of his own time, take part in a general programme of training with a view to prepare himself for *jihad*. On the whole, every Muslim is expected to be strong and fit to defend himself, his ideology, and his country, so that no aggressor may ride roughshod over him.

It is an eternal divine practice that a nation which is not prepared to make sacrfices for the defence of the right and justice and does not safeguard its own rights and its own existence, is dragged to humiliation and ruination.

"He who abandons *jihad* and shows disinclination to it, is humiliated by Allah. He is surrounded by disasters. His heart becomes gloomy. He goes away far from truth. As he has not done justice to *jihad*, he is involved in worries and troubles and is deprived of justice". (Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 10).

Immortal

The Qur'an regards *jihad* as the life-giving stimulant for the individual and the human society.

"Believers, respond to Allah and the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life, and know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart, and that it is He to whom you shall be mustered". (Surah al-Anfal, 8:24).

A fighter who lays down his life for the cause of Allah, is immortal, and every Muslim is required to have faith in the immortality of the martyrs who make supreme sacrifice in the way of Allah. (For details see, The Martyr, ISP 1979).

"Do not consider those who have been killed in the way of of Allah to be dead. They are indeed alive and receive their sustenance from their Lord. Well-pleased with the favour which Allah has granted them by His grace and rejoicing for the sake of those who have not yet joined them but are left behind, that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. They rejoice because of Allah's favour and grace and that Allah does not deny the believers their reward". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:169 – 171).

Faith in Allah and His Prophet and the realization of the fact that righteousness demands self-sacrifice, impels a believer to fight for the cause of Allah. In spite of his intense love for his parents, his children, his hearth and home and his job and occupation, when he hears a call to go out in the way of Allah, he is filled with a zeal far above these attachments and is attracted towards the battle-field. A man trained by Islam knows that his personal interests and attachments are natural and proper provided they do not exceed their limits, do not kill his manly

spirit and do not make him weak and coward. Otherwise his fate will be the same as has been of all the weak and the coward in history.

"Believers, do not regard your fathers and brothers as your friends if they give preference to infidelity over faith. They are the wrong-doers who befriend them. Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives your property that you have acquired, the trade, the dullness of which you fear and the dwellings which you love, are dearer to you than Allah, His Messenger and the struggle for His cause, then wait till Allah brings His command to pass. Allah does not guide the wicked people". (Surah al-Taubah, 9:23 – 24).

Fighters who do not lag behind in their effort

"The believers who stay behind, apart from those who suffer from a disability, are not equal to those who struggle for the cause of Allah with their property and lives. Allah has given those who struggle with their property and lives a rank higher than those who stay behind. To both Allah has promised, a good reward, but He will show His preference to the fighters by giving them a far richer reward: (By the bestowal of) His own ranks, forgiveness and mercy. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful". (Surah al-Nisa 4:95 – 96).

Invincible and indefatigable fighters

"Allah likes those who fight for His cause lined up as if they were a solid structure". (Surah al-Saff, 61:4).

"As for those who say that our Lord is Allah and then they remain firm in their faith, the angels will descend on them (saying): Let nothing alarm or grieve you, but be happy in the Paradise you were promised.We are your

protecting friends in the worldly life and the Hereafter. There in Pradise you shall have whatever you may ask for. As a matter of hospitality from Allah, the Forgiving, the Merciful". (Surah Fussilat, 41:30 – 32).

"Believers, when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, do not turn your backs to them. And if anyone on that day turns his back to them, unless he does so for tactical or to join another detachment, he shall incur Allah's wrath and Hell shall be his abode. What a bad fate!" (Surah al-Anfal, 8:15 – 16).

The society which Islam wants to build is a society which is living, moving, powerful and bearer of a world mission. The characteristics of this society, which we have briefly stated in this book, should inspire you to study more detailed books on this subject, which are available in various languages.

In the end we would like to point out that the building of a true Islamic social system depends on three things.
(1) Clear understanding of all the aspects of a society to be built on the basis of Islam.
(2) Understanding of the practical ways of bringing about such a society.
(3) Conscious and determined effort accompanied by every kind of sacrifice.

With lack of knowledge and lack of effort we cannot expect that we will ever be able to enjoy a just system of Allah's liking. From Islamic point of view, there is an immutable social principle:
"As you will be, so your rulers will be".

So let us all pray:

- "O Lord, we would serve You under the graceful government which would bring dignity to Islam and to the Muslims, disgracing infidelity and the infidels. O Lord, in such a government, make us among those who invite people to Your obedience, leading them to Your path, and give us, thereby, the graces of this world and the world Hereafter"

- "O Lord, bestow Your peace and blessings upon Muhammad and his progeny. Give brightness to my eyes in the awareness of my religion; give confidence to my heart in the sincerity of my deeds and help me to thank You till the end of my life".

- "O Lord, I seek refuge in You from my evil-self; for it induces me to bad deeds unless You have mercy on me. I seek refuge in You from the evils of the accursed Satan who increases my sins.
  O Lord, make me one of your armymen, for Your army will always be triumphant; make me one of your partymen for your party will always be prosperous; and make me one of Your loved ones for Your loved ones will always have no fear and no grief".

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