

## **Social Relations In Islam**

*In what way does Islam shape the social relationships? How does it limit them and why?*

*This present book compares Islam with the western civilization and with various schools of thought.*

*There are a lot of differences but the most striking are the fact that Islam bases its teachings on the search of truth while the other bases their teachings on the opinion of the majority; and the fact that Islam does not believe in geographical and racial frontiers which separate human beings into small communities and nations.*

*The writer believes the frontier is belief, a fact which makes possible a universal community.*

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# **IN THE NAME OF ALLAH**

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## Translator's Preface

The great scholar and philosopher Sayed Muhammad Hossein Tabataba'i was born in 1902 at Tabriz in a family whose members had been men of learning for many generations. He spent his youthful years at Najaf in Iraq where he studied various branches of philosophy and jurisprudence under well-known scholars of the time and returned to his native town at the age of 33. After 11 years he decided to make the holy city of Qum his residence where he died in 1981 after a long period of illness at the age of eighty.

He won fame as a philosopher, particularly in Islamic branches of knowledge, not only in Iran but also in many countries of the world including America and France where some of his works have been translated into English and French. He is considered by many American and European scholars as one of the most distinguished philosophers of the modern world.

His most famous contribution is the volumes of "Tafsir al-Mizan" which is considered as the finest interpretation of the Qur'an ever written during the last fourteen centuries. He has written many books and theses on jurisprudence and philosophy as well as discourses, articles and interviews on religious topics.

He did not only serve mankind but also his other valuable contribution was starting a school of thought KTI, which combined knowledge and ethics, where he trained many pupils who became great asset to the society in their particular fields.

He was a staunch upholder of education in both theory and practice, based on a deep conviction and belief in religion.

In this book the writer emphasizes the social aspect of Islam and shows to what extent it permeates the life of each individual. He compares Islam with western civilization and with various schools of thought, and finds them inadequate, since Islam bases its teachings on the search for truth, while all the others follow the verdict of the majority. He considers the goal of Islam to be human happiness, while other schools have exploitation as their objective. He is surprised at the indifference of westerners towards Islamic principles and their influence on human society, and thinks this attitude to be due to prejudice or some ulterior motive.

According to him the superiority of Islam is in its goal, its belief in monotheism as the basis of society and law and all social acts, and in the faith in resurrection, which is the guarantee for the execution of all laws entrusted to Islamic government as well as to society. In Islam both material and spiritual things have their due importance. He does not believe in geographical or racial frontiers which separate human beings into small communities or nations. He thinks this frontier to consist of belief, a fact which makes a universal community possible.

In this book the letter (S) stands after Muhammad's name as an abbreviation for the customary phrase 'Greetings on him and his household' as a sign of reverence towards the Prophet.

In conclusion I wish to express my thanks to Mr Khurshid Ali, editor of the Bethat Foundation for his co-operation in reading the original script and for his valuable suggestions.

**A.P.**

## 1. Man And Society

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

“O you, who believe, be patient, steadfast and united and fear God, so that you may win salvation.” Aali ‘Imran, 3: 199

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Human beings are gregarious by nature, so that sociability is inherent in them. This is a fact acceptable without much debate.

Both history and recent archeological discoveries prove that man has always lived a social life. The evidence refers to the eras in which man has lived. Moreover the Qur'an repeatedly mentions this fact in numerous verses and in the most convincing manner.

The Qur'an says in the following verses:

“So their Lord accepted their prayer: That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other; they, therefore, who fled and were turned out of their homes and persecuted in My way and who fought and were slain, I will most certainly cover their evil deeds, and I will most certainly make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow; a reward from Allah, and with Allah is yet better reward.” Aali ‘Imran, 3:195

“ O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.” Al Hujarat, 49:13

“Will they distribute the mercy of your Lord? We distribute among them their livelihood in the life of this world, and We j have exalted some of them above others in degrees, that some of them may take others in subjection; and the mercy of your Lord is better than what they amass.” Az-Zukhruf, 43:32

“Have you not considered (the work of) your Lord, how He extends the shade? And if He had pleased He would certainly have made it stationary; then We have made the sun an indication of it” Al Furqan, 25:45

## 2. Man And His Social Growth

When human society came into existence, it did not assume a perfect form to make growth and improvement also of all spiritual matters and of everything connected with man.

Human society, like other human intellectual and spiritual matters constantly moves towards perfection in step with his material and mental attainments.

In fact the peculiarity of man, i.e. his gregarious nature should not be considered an exception to his other peculiarities, so as to allow us to claim that it assumed a perfect form the moment it was created. Rather it should be said that this quality, like all other human qualities which are related to the will power and science, has gradually attained perfection.

Reflection about the condition of humanity makes us realize that the earliest form of human society has been the family which resulted from marriage. The basic factors in bringing about family living are the fact that a male cannot by himself ensure reproduction and upbringing of children, and that marriage ensures a lasting relationship based on the natural sexual necessity and compatibility of males and females.

This in turn leads to employment, that is, a human being engages another as a medium to meet his needs, and dominates him and imposes his will upon him.

This same employment gradually takes the form of the exercise of authority, thus creating the master of the house, head of the family, chief of a clan, and leader of a nation.

Naturally, at first a person who was stronger and braver had priority, and later those who were braver and excelled in wealth and numbers of children secured this advantage and so on until headship was won by one who was better versed with the art of governing and politics<sup>1</sup>.

Gregariousness has never been separated from man, except that at the beginning he did not pay full attention to it, and he lived and grew by following his other characteristics, such as employment, defense etc.

The Qur'an says:

And people are naught but a single nation, so they disagree; and had not a word already gone forth from your Lord, the matter would have certainly been decided between them in respect of that concerning which they disagree. (Yunus, 10:19)

First person, who made men fully aware of society, and turned independent attention to the maintenance of society, were the Prophets.

The Qur'an says:

(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed; and none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves; so Allah has guided by His will those who believe to the truth about which they differed and Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path. (Al-Baqarah 2:213)

In the earliest times, men lived simply and were free from differences. Later on differences appeared, leading to disputes. God appointed Prophets

and sent them holy books in order to remove differences and bring men back to the social unity which would be safeguarded by the Prophets' laws.

The Qur'an says:

He has made plain to you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nuh and that which We have revealed to you and that which We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Musa and Isa that keep to obedience and be not divided therein; hard to the unbelievers is that which you call them to; Allah chooses for Himself whom He pleases, and guides to Himself him who turns (to Him), frequently. (Ash-Shura 42:13)

Removing differences between people and the establishment of unanimity of conviction has taken the form of an invitation to religiousness and the absence of deviation in religion. Therefore religion has been the guarantor of the appropriateness of human society.

According to the Qur'an (42:13): The invitation to unity and gregariousness was for the first time issued by Noah, who was the oldest Prophet who was given a book and divine laws. Later on Abraham, and then Moses, and after him Christ was entrusted with this task. In Noah's canon there were few injunctions, while the most extensive of these four canons were those of Moses and Christ. This is what the Qur'an says, and what the Bible apparently states.

It is said that in Moses' canon there have been no less than six hundred decrees.

Chapter 42: 13 has described them all and mastered them and has extended its decrees over all of them, then you will certainly observe something wonderful. Remember that Islam has poured all its injunctions in the mould of society, and has given them all a social spirit to the last possible limit. Then you can compare the result of your Islamic studies with the other religions to which the Holy Qur'an has paid attention, namely those of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Christ, to realize clearly the comparative importance of them, and the position that Islam occupies.

We conclude that the invitation to gregariousness in an independent and explicit manner had begun only by Prophets and in a religious framework. The Qur'an affirms this point, and as we shall see, it is confirmed by history.

### Note

1. This was the cause of the appearance of Idolatry.

### 3. Islam's Special Attention To Society

Islam is undoubtedly the only religion that explicitly lays down the foundation of its invitation on society, and has by no means neglected its emphasis on social matters in any of its aspects.

If you, exalted reader, wish to win more insight into this matter, you could glance at extensive human deeds which thought cannot enumerate. You may also look at the various branches of its kinds and forms, and then realize that this divine canon

But the position of religions which have been disregarded by Islam, such as idolatry, dualism, Sabeanism and Manichaeism is more obvious.

History offers no more explanation about former civilized and uncivilized nations than this point, that they have inherited and followed this matter from the oldest human times, namely, that their society has been created through necessity, and individuals gathered together under one society, i.e. a despotic rule and kingly dominion. Various national and international gatherings lived a sovereign flag.

Past nations followed this way with the aid of the factors of heritage and environment, without paying particular attention to society or even subjecting it to discussion and practice.

Even great nations such as the Roman and Persian Empires which held great sway over the world at the rise of religious light and its widespread, did not heed this matter. These two governments took the form of the rule of Caesars in Rome, and Kings in Iran, and had gathered their nations under their royal flags, and society too, was subordinate to governments in its growth, its pause, or its stagnation.

It should not be omitted that a series of social discussions have remained from the predecessors, as seen in the writings of past scholars like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. But these writings were never put into practice, and in other words, they were a set of mental images and fanciful pictures which never reached the world of reality. This claim is borne out by historical evidence.

On the basis of the point already mentioned we see that the first call which reached human ears to the effect that the question of society was an independent matter which should be removed from the corners of negligence, imitation and dependence, was a call begun by the founder of Islam in the world.

The leader of Islam by means of the holy verses revealed to him, invited people as a group to move towards a happy and clean life.

The Qur'an proclaimed its invitation in two ways:

1. A call on the principle of social life and unity. Citing from the Holy Qur'an:

And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner until he attains his maturity, and give full measure and weight with justice-- We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability; and when you speak, then be just though it be (against) a relative, and fulfill Allah's covenant; this He has enjoined you with that you may be mindful. (Al An'aam, 6: 152)

And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear arguments had come to them, and these it is that shall have a grievous chastisement. (Aal-'Imraan, 3: 105)

Surely they who divided their religion into parts and became sects, you have no concern with them; their affair is only with Allah, then He will inform them of what they did. (Al An'aam, 6:159)

and several others.

2. Instructions for making an Islamic community on the basis of unity and mutual adherence to safeguard spiritual and material interests of that community and its defense. Citing from the Holy Qur'an:

The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy may be had on you. (Al Hujaraat, 49:10)

And obey Allah and His Messenger and do not quarrel for then you will be weak in hearts and your power will depart, and be patient; surely Allah is with the patient. (Al Anfaal, 8:46)

O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allah nor the sacred month, nor (interfere with) the offerings, nor the sacrificial animals with garlands, nor those going to the sacred house seeking the grace and pleasure of their Lord; and when you are free from the obligations of the pilgrimage, then hunt, and let not hatred of a people-- because they hindered you from the Sacred Masjid-- incite you to exceed the limits, and help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in requiting (evil). (Al-Maida, 5:2)

And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful.(Aali 'Imraan, 3: 104)

and several others.

#### **4. Islam's Respect for the Individual and Society**

The celestial organization first creates a number of elementary parts, each of which possesses certain qualities and then combines and mixes them in spite of all their differences, so that in addition to their individual and separate uses, new advantages are produced.

For example, a human being has various organs, limbs, and powers, each of which possesses different material and spiritual uses. They may be combined to produce a stronger and greater power like a weight which is composed of small parts, and has more power to move at a certain direction.

They may also refuse to combine, and preserve their separation and differences, like the ear and eye, hearing and sight, will power and motion, each of which has separate functions and may act separately, but the point is that as they are all united in composition, they are ruled over by a fresh unit called man, and this same domination over all the powers creates advantages which none of the parts possessed by themselves. These advantages are manifold, both material and spiritual.

One of the most important advantages is that in their unity lies a wonderful variety of uses and benefits. For when human substance, namely the embryo, completed its development and growth, it can detach a part of itself, and produce another perfect being who can perform all the mental and material functions which the original part was able to do. We, therefore, conclude that all human beings are human in spite of their variety. Man is one, and he is one kind. The actions of individuals are numerous, but they are similar in kind.

All these actions join together, producing a link and alliance. Water may be divided and poured into various vessels. In this way the number increases, but all are of one kind, and their property remains the same. If all the water gathers in one place, their power is greatly augmented.

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In educating human beings and guiding them towards true happiness, Islam has paid close attention to this truth, that man is a single unique being for whom laws have been enacted. Islam has never established laws for a single individual.

“And for every nation there is a doom,” (Al-'Aaraaf, 7:34)

“Every community is called to account” (Al-Jaathiya, 45:28)

And if Allah had pleased, they would not have set up others (with Him) and We have not appointed you a keeper over them, and you are not placed in charge of them.

(Al-An'aam, 6:107)

And if they had kept up the Taurat and the Injeel and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet there is a party of them keeping to the moderate course, and (as for) most of them, evil is that which they do (Al-Maaida, 5:66)

Indeed there was a sign for you in the two hosts (which) met together in encounter; one party fighting in the way of Allah and the other unbelieving, whom they saw twice as many as themselves with the sight of the eye and

Allah strengthens with His aid whom He pleases; most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have sight. (Aal-'Imraan, 3:13)

And every nation had a messenger; so when their messenger came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. (Yunus, 10:47)

The people of Nuh and the parties after them rejected (prophets) before them, and every nation purposed against their messenger to destroy him, and they disputed by means of the falsehood that they might thereby render null the truth, therefore I destroyed them; how was then My retribution! (Ghafer, 40: 5)

This true relation that exists between an individual and society, produces a different "individual in society". Of course to the extent that individuals assist the existence of such a society with all their powers and qualities, similar powers and qualities are produced in that society.

You see therefore that the Qur'an believes in death, in the Holy Book, in intelligence, understanding, action, devotion, and sin for "people".

Say: Allah has spoken the truth, therefore follow the religion of Ibrahim, the upright one; and he was not one of the polytheists. (Aal-'Imraan, 3:95)

And He it is Who has created man from the water, then He has made for him blood relationship and marriage relationship, and your Lord is powerful.(Al-Furqaan, 25:54)

O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.

(Al-'Hujaraat, 49:13)

We realize thus, that as the Qur'an has paid attention to the accounts of individuals, it has given greater attention to the history of nations.

This special attention of the Qur'an took place at a time when history contained nothing but the accounts of kings and famous men, and historians had no interest in the history of nations and communities. There were however a few historians like Masoudi and Ibn-e-khaldoun, after the descent of the Qur'an, who devoted themselves to some extent to this topic, until recent changes appeared in the context of history, and it was transformed from being a biography of individuals, to a description of nations.

It is claimed that the first person who adopted the descriptive method was the French historian, Auguste Comte, who died in 1858 A.D.

Briefly, as it was stated, the requisite for the true relation between the individual and society is that a number of strong social forces and qualities should be created to super-impose individual powers whenever opposition and contradiction appears in society.

Moreover, our senses and experiences confirm our statement concerning those forces and qualities which produce action and reaction, that is those forces which influence other forces and qualities which are in their turn affected.

It must be said that the wills of individuals in matters relating to social riots or rebellions, and for that matter in any other happenings, cannot oppose or resist the endeavor and will of society. A part has no alternative

but to obey the whole, and to follow the way of the whole. The power of society is measured by the amount of the intelligence and ideas that it absorbs from its members.

This is also true in the case of general panic, caused by defeat, insecurity, earthquake, famine and cholera, or even in ordinary national customs and traditions and such like, whose influence is less than defeat and similar other matters. Society absorbs the power of thought and understanding from individuals, but it compels them to obey society.

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Islam has endeavored to raise the dignity of society to such an extent that no such parallel can be found for it in any other religions or in the laws of civilized nations. The evidence for this endeavor is that which we have already explained. For the training of individual morals and instincts, which are the roots of the creation of society, in spite of the power ethics and instincts engendered in society which dominate individual morals, has little chance of success.

For this reason Islam has based on a social foundation all the most significant of its injunctions and divine decrees, such as pilgrimage, prayer, Jihad (struggle in the interest of Islam), almsgiving and in brief, all religious requirements.

Islam has adopted true happiness, proximity to God and winning esteem at God's threshold as the goals of the Islamic society, and even of every other society which cannot naturally do without a common objective and goal. In society this goal is a strict internal watch (a sort of secret police) from which no human mind and nature remains hidden.

This goal is the surety for the preservation of the above decrees.

Of course, to the above internal force must be added the forces of the Islamic government which protect public mores and religious limits, as well as the general ordinances of the "call for charity", "directing to the good" and "forbidding wrong".

Thus it will be seen that society does not only possess an apparent protector, but also a secret internal guard, and even if some social deviations are overlooked by the leaders of society and those responsible for the execution of public ordinances, nothing remains hidden from the watchful eye of the conscience.

That is why we claimed that the way followed by Islam and its efforts in social matters are superior to all the other ways and methods, for Islam has chosen the internal watch or secret police as the most effective way, unrivalled in other laws.

## 5. Is The Islamic Social Law Practicable And Constant?

You, noble reader, may say to yourself that the former remarks are true, and if the view of Islam in creating a worthy and proper society is the most progressive and has the most solid foundation which is far superior in those respects to the communities created by the progressive and civilized nations of today:

1. Why is it, then, not practicable?
2. Why was it not put into practice except for a short duration?
3. How could Islam which could not maintain its own community, transform the governments of Caesars and Shahs?

The Islamic government was turned into an empire, committing deeds much more heinous and tragic than the former empires. But western civilization is more progressive and their laws are firmer and more reliable.

One would say that the western nations have based their social modes and laws on the will of the nation, the needs of nature, and the wishes of the majority, for usually it is impossible to secure the consensus of all on one matter. Even in the natural order of things, the same causes of and factors in bringing about phenomena are likely to be valid in the majority of cases, but not in all.

Moreover, when various factors are opposed to one another, and each factor intends to affect another in an opposite manner, the one which possesses a majority can do so, not the minority, and not all are influenced.

Now that this is the way of natural causes, how apt would it be to base the body of society from the viewpoint of aims, methods and prevalent social laws on the foundation of the majority's will. This is the basic logic of civilization.

The theory of religion in the present world is no more than a fancy and a dream, which does not go beyond the stage of theory. Religion is considered by them as a mental invention with no goal.

Modern civilization has found its way in every country, and has acted as the guardian of power, happiness, moral refinement of individuals, purity and removal of all moral villainies. The villainies which have been destroyed by civilization are those which society never approves of such as falsehood, treason, oppression, unfairness, meanness mingled with crime and so on.

The above remarks are in short some of the points which agitate the minds of some of us Orientals who engage in discussions, particularly students and scholars who are interested in social and intellectual arguments and are inclined to study such matters. But we apologize for saying that such an argument is improper, and that its profounders have misunderstood a view which is closer to the truth.

To clarify this matter, we give an answer to each of the above points.

1. It has been said that the social mode of Islam is not practicable in the world, while the present ways of civilization under the existing conditions are practicable.

The meaning of this statement is that the present conditions of the world are unsuitable for the injunctions which Islam offers. This is obvious but it

leads us now here. For, all the goals which prevail in the world have been without a precedent, and have appeared later, and the occasion of their appearance has been when all the conditions have been opposed and unfavorable to them, and have wholly rejected them and driven them away.

Former ways which have been prevalent have risen to stand against new ways and disputed and struggled against them. Very possibly new aims have been defeated at the beginning of their movements, and reappeared again and again, until they were victorious and found a place and domination for themselves.

Some of these aim to have been overthrown and destroyed, since conditions have not yet been favorable to them.

History supports this claim in all the religious and worldly goals, and even in democratic and communistic aims<sup>1</sup>.

The Qur'an says:

“Ways have come before you and gone. Wander about the earth and see the end of those who denied the truth and considered it falsehood. Chapter 3:137

“There have been traditions before you and gone. Look around the world and see the end of those who uttered lies.” Chapter 3: 136.

This saying of the Qur'an refers to these same historical examples, and says: A way which accompanies the denial of God's verses cannot have a good end.

We conclude, therefore, that if a course is not compatible with existing human conditions, there is no reason to believe that the course is wrong and corrupt. But this in itself is a natural principle which is established in the world in order to supplement and complete new happenings which occur, following the various actions and reactions and opposition of various natural factors.

Islam is no exception to this law from a natural and social point of view, but it is exactly like other schools in the fact that it sometimes develops and sometimes retreats, and like them it is dependent on factors and conditions.

Today that Islam has penetrated the hearts and minds of over four hundred million people, it is not weaker than the time of the call of Noah, Abraham and Muhammad<sup>2</sup>.

Each of these divine men began their call when the world knew nothing but corruption and ruin. Gradually their mission effectively took root and appealed to the human heart. They revived and joined together and their firm ties have not been loosened up to now.

Muhammad rose at a time when he had only one man and one woman (Ali-bin-Abi-Taleb and Khadija) to support him, but other people joined him one after another. Those were truly hard and unpleasant days, until God aided them and turned them into a community in which piety and goodness ruled over all the individuals in it.

There was a short pause in this state of social goodness, but after the death of the Prophet, riots raised their heads and there occurred events which diverted the movement from its original course.

Nevertheless, this small sample, in spite of its short life, did not take long to spread over east and west within less than half a century, and so

transformed history that we notice its great vestiges up to the present day. These vestiges are eternal.

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The social and spiritual discussions which are carried on concerning precise speculative history cannot but confess this truth that the factor and origin of all the changes in the contemporary world have been the rise of the Islamic way<sup>3</sup>.

But unfortunately European debaters, on account of their religious prejudices or for political reasons, have failed to discuss the influence of the rise of Islam on human society in a satisfactory manner. If a well-informed debater wishes to express a fair opinion, how can he allow himself to call the movement of the new civilization a Christian movement, and consider Christ as its leader and banner-bearer?

Whereas Christ himself affirms that he is concerned only with the spirit and not interested in physical matters, or government and politics<sup>4</sup>.

It is Islam which calls for gregariousness and alliance and is concerned with all human social matters without exception.

Can such negligence by learned Europeans have any motive but extinguishing the light of Islam, and putting out the fire which it has kindled in the hearts? All these are done unfairly and they intend to present Islam as a racial objective, which has no consequence but racial differences. But it is God's will to make His light perfect.

In short, Islam has proved its competence for giving people a happy life, and will guide them to this goal. A faith which had such an advantage cannot be called a hypothesis which is incompatible with human life. Such an aim can never despair of the guardianship of the people's worldly affairs, for its final goal is true happiness.

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Profound inquiry into the conditions of beings leads us to conclude that mankind will eventually attain the final goal which he has always sought. Then Islam will rise with all its reality, and undertake the total tutelage of human society.

According to this view, God has given this promise in the Holy Qur'an:

“God promised those who believed and performed good deeds to let them act as successors on Earth.”(An-Noor, 24: 55),

O you who believe! whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people, He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allah's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer; this is Allah's Face, He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing.(Al-Maaida, 5: 54)

And certainly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that (as for) the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it.(Al-Anbiyaa, 21: 105)

and several other verses.

Another aspect which has been neglected<sup>5</sup> is that in principle the social mark of Islam is to follow the right in thought and action, while that of modern civilized society is to follow the vote and will of the majority.

These two standards cause a difference between the two aims of the existing societies in general, that is, the society created by Islam, and the society created by civilization. The goal of the former is true happiness for each individual, that is, a man should observe moderation against the exigencies of his own powers.

He should provide for his physical needs but to the extent of not being diverted from the way of knowing God and devotion to him, and care of the body should only be the prologue to knowing God.

"This way will make man happy in every sense of the word, for all his powers will have attained happiness.

This is the greatest comfort, even though we cannot understand this objective as we should, on account of the disorder in the Islamic education of our society. For Islam has envisaged such an objective for the final happiness of man. Therefore we see that this religion has based its laws on the observance of reason, a reason which is created to follow right and truth. Islam has strictly forbidden all things which corrupt the common sense.

Islam has placed on the Islamic society the guarantee for carrying out all deeds, morals and Islamic education, in addition to the duties the Islamic government has concerning the execution of political decrees and Islamic bounds.

Such a way is not compatible with the wishes of all people, but Islam intends to get rid of this defect which we notice in the carnal desires of the lustful etc.

Islam envisages control of sensual desires, debauchery and brutality.

Islam must endeavor hard to propagate education, so that it brings about a change in people's minds in order to control their own natures and lustful desires. This is not confined to religious training. Man requires such an effort, a proper exercise and constant supervision in all his advancements.

This is the purpose of Islam, but the aim of the modern civilization is the exploitation of matter. It is clear that such an aim and philosophy is accompanied by a sentimental life which is subordinate to desire, whether this desire accords or not with what is distinguished by intellect and reason.

Such a life follows the intellect, only where there is no opposition to its aim, that is exploitation of matter.

This is the secret of the fact that the enactment and execution of laws must be in accordance with the wishes of the majority. The civilized world can only guarantee the execution of those laws which are related to deeds, but has no authority concerning ethics and true and deep-rooted education. The people are free in their beliefs and in following any morals and ways of education, and to accept or reject them, so long as they do not disturb the course of the law, in which case they are checked.

A requisite for such a system is that the society must become accustomed to the wicked deeds of just and anger which are compatible with its wishes, and as a result it approves of many things which are berated by religion. This system plays with perfect obstinacy with moral virtues and exalted religious teachings under the pretext of liberty and lawful freedom.

Another requisite for the above statement is that the way of thinking should be altered, that is, it should move away from the channel of reason

and enter the channel of sentiment and emotion. Thus, what is considered dissoluteness and immorality according to reason, may seem to be virtue according to desires and sentiments, and may wrongly be called manliness, affability and cheerfulness.

The living testimony of this matter is the conditions which are prevalent in Europe now, the relationship between young people, men and married women, girls, women and dogs, men and their children and near relatives, as well as the conditions which exist in night parties, dances and other things which had better not be specified for the sake of modesty.

To such people the things which are ordinary and habitual may seem strange and comic, or vice versa. All those are due to a difference in the way of thinking and understanding, which as we said is the result of adopting a different way for obtaining perfection.

As you see in these sentimental objectives, no use can be made of reasoning except to that extent that it paves the way for exploitation and pleasure, for, the only goal which nothing can oppose is this, and nothing can hinder it unless it is of its own kind, that is, pleasure.

You observe even that the prevalent laws permit suicide and similar other deeds. In short, human passion has the right to every kind of fancy and whim except that which causes inconvenience to social whims<sup>6</sup>.

If you reflect on this difference properly you will see why the way of western society seem more agreeable to the human palate than the mode of a religious community. What must be pointed out is that it is not only the mode of western civilization which agrees with people's taste so as to conclude that we should prefer only the western civilization to religion. But all the modes from the oldest human times until now which have been customary with the people of the world, have had a similar course, whether they belong to the periods of living in tents, or being mingled with civilization; i.e. when a religion is presented to them for the first time, they prefer older modes to the religion which calls them to the right path, for men are quite subservient and humble before material idolatry.

If you ponder over this matter as it deserves, you will realize that modern civilization is derived from primitive idolatry, except that it has assumed a social form from an individual one, and a complete form from a simple one. Our statement that the Islamic mode is based on the principle of following the truth and not according to temper is most obvious in the Qur'an.

“He is the one who sent His Prophet with guidance and religion of right.”  
(At-Tawba, 9: 33)

And Allah judges with the truth; and those whom they call upon besides Him cannot judge aught; surely Allah is the Hearing, the Seeing.(Al-Ghaafir,40: 20)

Except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience.(Al-‘Asr,103:3)

Certainly We have brought you the truth, but most of you are averse to the truth.

(Az-Zukhruf 43:78)

The Qur'an says: Agreement with the whims and wishes of the majority leads to corruption and ruin, and they must not be followed.

“The majority disapprove of right, and if God followed their wishes, of course heavens and earth, and everything in them would be ruined.” (Al-Mu’minoos 23: 70-71)

The Qur'an affirms that events will follow one another, and corruption will become more intense every day.

“Thus the word of your God became binding for those who were corrupt, for, they did not believe.” (Yunus 10: 33)

The Qur'an has many verses about truth matter, refer to chapter Yunus (10), where the word truth has been repeated more than twenty times.

They seem to conclude therefore, that it is true that Islam is not a practicable creed at present, but the question arises; “Why is it not so?”

The answer was given in the previous lengthy discussion that the secret is that the goal of Islam is true happiness on the basis of knowledge and reason, while the aim of civilized society is material exploitation. Those explanations have shown which of the two objectives is in the real interest of human society.

2) It is said that following the majority is the natural need of the world, and that there is no doubt that nature obeys the majority in its manifestations. This does not mean that natural factors and effects are always effective, but that their influence is witnessed often and in most cases when they meet no obstacle. Nevertheless this fact does not cause the necessity of the following truth to be annulled or to be contrary to it. As this principle itself is an evidence of truth, how can it annul itself?

To explain this matter, you should pay attention to the following points:

(a) External matters which are the roots and bases of human theoretical and practical beliefs are in their creation and variety of changes subject to the system of cause and effect.

This system is something constant and permanent, which allows no exception. All learned and clear-sighted scholars are unanimous on this point, and the Qur'an too, testifies its truth<sup>7</sup>.

Therefore external events are constant and permanent, and admit no violation. Even the events which occur often, and of which we are aware to some extent through conjecture, are constant and permanent in their majority<sup>8</sup> (namely, that a vestiges appear with frequency).

For example, it is a self-evident fact that fire causes a rise in ambient temperature. This physical property of fire can always be deduced as true. (So it is clear now that all external affairs are subject to the system of cause and effect, and as this system is a permanent one, external events too are thus constant and permanent.

(b) Man by nature follows something which he considers somehow or other to be real and external. (Man does not only obey what does not exist. He may err about the point of existence and non-existence, but he will eventually follow what he considers as permanent).

Man is by nature a follower of truth, and even those who deny the existence of decisive knowledge (who say that man can never gain a final knowledge on any subject) will humbly admit something you tell them about which they have no doubt.

We conclude therefore that man follows truth.

(c) As you saw, truth is an external matter which man believes humbly and follows in practice. But man's mind and understanding are the means that guide him to the exterior, like a mirror in which something is reflected.

Now it has become clear to you that being true is a quality and something which exists externally in a permanent or frequent manner, and not a property of knowledge and understanding. In other words it is a quality of what is known, not knowledge. Being true means a permanent or frequent event in nature, where the destination of frequency is permanence.

Therefore, a permanent event is truth, and a frequent event is in the same way truth related to

the outside. But the views and beliefs of the majority are not always true. (For as we said: truth is an objective reality and is subjectively affected by one's knowledge and understanding).

If the views and ideas of the majority correspond with reality, then they are true, and if not then they are false. Therefore it is not right that man should be humble before it, and if he realizes it, he will not feel humble.

If you are certain about a matter, but everyone contradicts you, even though you may yield to them you have not become humble, but not have yielded because of fear or shyness or another factor, and not because the words of your opponents are true in themselves and acceptable.

The best expression which shows that the views of the majority are not always true or necessary to be obeyed, is the following verse from the Qur'an:

“The Prophet has brought the truth, but most people have a version to it.”  
(Al-Mu'minoon, 23:70)

If the view of the majority is based on truth, then it is impossible for the people to dislike truth or oppose it.

It is clear then that following the majority on the basis of the needs of nature is wrong, for the law of majority is external, to which knowledge belongs, not knowledge and thought themselves. Man must in his movements and resolutions follow the majority opinion, that is, he should base his behavior on the well-being of the majority (and see what deeds and conduct are mostly to his interest). The Qur'an has followed this way in its legislation and in the interest of legislation.

The Qur'an says:

“...Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favor on you, so that you may be grateful..”(al-Maida, 5:6)

The Qur'an says:

“...Fasting is ordained for you as it was for your predecessors, so that you may be virtuous.”(Al-Baqara, 2:183)

You notice then, that the injunction is based on the majority rule of results and benefits.

We conclude therefore, that following the view of the majority is not the natural need of the world.

3) It is said:

“Present civilization has guaranteed social happiness for progressive countries, and has purified individuals, and removed the vices of which society disapproves.”

This statement is not free from error and confusion.

By social happiness they seem to mean that society should dominate others from the view point of population and power and rise high in profiting from material resources.

Dear readers, we have repeatedly stated that Islam does not consider this belief to be happiness, and a discussion based on reason confirms the view of the Qur'an.

Human happiness is a combination of material and spiritual happiness. Such happiness does not only offer man material blessings, it adorns him with moral virtues and true divine teachings. The happiness of body and spirit guarantees man's happiness in the world and the next.

According to Islam, becoming engrossed in material pleasures and neglecting spiritual happiness are nothing but misfortune. Truthfulness, purity, honesty, cheerfulness and similar other qualities which are observed among individuals in progressive nations have surprised some people, but in this matter, they have mistaken the truth. The reason is that many of the oriental thinkers, who discuss this, are unable to think socially. Their thought is individualistic.

What each of us sees before him is that he himself is a human being who is independent of everything else, and is not connected to them in such a way as to destroy his independence. But this way of thinking is quite wrong.

Each of us in life has no thought but securing his own profit and warding off his loss.

Consequently he has no occupation but his own affairs, and that is what is meant by individualistic thinking.

The result of such a thought is to compare others with oneself, and as one considers oneself separate and independent, he also thinks of others as independent. If such a judgment is correct, it is correct only by an individualistic standard. But he who has a social way of thinking realizes that what he sees before him is that it is only a part which by no means is independent and separate from society.

He considers his own interests as a part of social interests. He thinks of social benefit as his own benefit, and social evils, as his own. In short, he considers every condition and peculiarity of the society as his own, too. Such a man has a different way of thinking.

In his relationship to others, such a man contacts none except those who are outside his own group, and pays no attention to those within it<sup>9</sup>.

An example clarifies this point: Man is a combination of many members and powers which have come together to produce a real unity.

We call this gathering “humanity”. This whole causes the nature and actions of all the parts to be dominated and absorbed by its independence.

The eye sees, the ear hear, the hand obeys, the leg walks, but they all perform their function for man's sake, since he functions through them and enjoys having them. Each part endeavors to get in touch with the outside, an outside that man wants to contact in goodness or badness. The eye, ear,

hand and foot want to do good or evil to those whom a man wants to serve or to hurt.

But how do these members who are under the banner of humanity deal with one another? It rarely happens for one member to hurt another, or cause a loss to each other. This is how the parts of man act when he follows a single course.

The members of human society who think socially have the same way too. If the members consider society as having a single personality, their individual honesty and corruption, their virtue and wickedness, their goodness and evil are the same qualities that their society possesses.

(Social thinking leads the thinker not to separate individual qualities from social ones. The interest of the individual is the same as society's and his corruption is the corruption of society).

The Qur'an has done the same in making judgment about nations, i.e. nations and people like the Jews, Arabs and former people who were forced by religious or national prejudiced to have social thinking. You can see that the Qur'an blames a later group for the sins of a preceding one, and reproaches those present for the deeds of their predecessors. All this is because one, who has a social way of thinking, must be judged in this manner.

There is a point that should not be omitted that it is only fair that since the society and individual are to be judged, the right of the honest individuals who live in a corrupt society, should not be trampled on; for, even though they live in that society and mingle with corrupt individuals, their hearts are not affected by the corrupt ideas and deep internal diseases which have spread within such a society.

Such men are like superfluous parts in the structure of a corrupt society. The Qur'an too, in its verses of general reproach has made an exception of men of goodness and virtue.

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We conclude from the above points that if anyone wishes to judge the worthiness or unworthiness of individuals in a civilized society, and wishes to say that progressive nations are different from others, he should not base his judgment on their internal associations, contacts and private lives. It should base it on their social personality. Social personality in its encounter and friction with weak nations, and in its contact with other social personalities of the world in life is quite manifest.

What should be valid in judging the merit and demerit, and happiness and unhappiness of society, and should be considered, is that the thinkers of oriental topics must necessarily follow this course. And after studying the matter in this way, they are free to be amazed or surprised.

In fact if someone studies with proper deliberation, the history of the social life of civilized nations since the modern European movement, and pays deep attention to their treatment of weak nations and races, he will soon realize whether societies are exhibiting kindness and benevolence to mankind, and are willing to sacrifice their life and wealth in serving mankind and liberty and assisting the oppressed whose right they have violated.

But such a study shows that they have no such intention, other than the enslavement of weak and helpless people.

They carry out their purpose whenever and by all the means they can, one day by force, another day by swallowing and appropriating another land, another time by mandate and protectorate, next time on the pretext of the preservation of common interests, once in the name of guarding independence, then, under the excuse of keeping peace and getting rid of what threatens peace, and sometimes with the cry of defending the rights of the deprived and helpless classes.

In short, they bring down calamity on other nations each day under new names. The peaceable nature of man cannot agree to consider such societies with such peculiarities to be honest or happy, apart from the verdict of religious judgment and decree of Revelation and Prophethood concerning the meaning of happiness.

How can human nature equip individuals in an equal manner, and then act contrary to himself and annul his verdict? How can he give certain individuals a solid deed to appropriate others, so as to make their blood, honor and property legitimate for himself? How can they pave the way to play with the existence and life-centre of these nations to the extent of getting possession of the mind and will of subordinate people in a manner unprecedented in cruelty, even compared to the men of early centuries?

In all our claims we rely on the history of the life of these nations<sup>10</sup>. and the injuries received by the present generation at their hands.

It must be said that the meaning of happiness and goodness, merit and prosperity in the vocabulary of progressive nations is selfishness and unreasonableness<sup>11</sup>.

## Notes

1. One of the most obvious of testimonies of this statement is the fact that democracy, which is accepted today as the only course in the world, assumed a communistic form in Russia after the Second World War, Eastern Europe and China joined this course. Democracy thus suffered a great loss in almost half of human societies.

Four years ago communist countries declared that Stalin, the late leader of Russia, had in his thirty years of rule, diverted the axis of government which had been communistic in Lenin's time to a sole despotic rule. Until today the way has been that after much profane opposition, a number of people have eventually turned to the communist school, while others who had formerly been converted to it, have become apostates and turned away from it. The said school is continually shrinking and extending, and in a state of flux.

You dear readers see how badly democracy has suffered defeat, and assumed a communist form, which in turn resulted in despotism, and how political systems constantly rise and fall. The above example shows how a school or goal must continually fight against unfavorable conditions. History is full of such examples in this respect.

2. True religion has existed in all Islamic periods, and Noah and Abraham and other prophets have all been Muslims, as testified by the Qur'an.

3. This humble writer has had no opportunity to refer to the documents, but the reader is recommended to study the 'History of The Islamic and Arab civilization' by Gustav Le Bon, and the 'History of The Islamic Civilization' by Georgi Zeidan and similar books written by the orientalist on Islam.

4. Philatus asked Christ "What is your aim in religious propagation?" He answered that he did not regard the matter of government and politics important, but he considered spiritual life more significant than the physical one. This dialogue has been reported in Vol. 3, "Al-Mizan" by the famous American historian Hendrick Willem Von Lon. p.348.

5. Referring to the argument that the social method of Islam, contrary to modern civilization, is impracticable.

6. As we said, according to such schools nothing can check carnal desires except something of its own kind, and this is true here, too.

7. Refer to vol.1 of "Al-Mizan (and its translation) the section on miracle.

8. The remarks in brackets are the translator's.

9. Meaning that a social thinker has no regard for his own group, but only considers society important.

10. Turn the leaves of the newspapers of the past ten years, and see how France, the banner-bearer of modern civilization, the progressive liberal France treated the Muslim Algerian Nation.

11. The dear reader must remember that in this discussion our criticism is leveled all the social views of European nations and modern tendencies, but the matter of positive aspects and scientific progress are irrelevant to our argument.

## 6. How The Islamic Society Came Into Existence, And How It Continues Its Existence

There is no doubt that every society is created as a result of a single objective of its various members. This single objective is a unique spirit which spreads in every direction and is somehow limited with them.

This objective in non-religious communities is the worldly life of man, of course a life which is common between all the members, and not the private life of each individual, that is, the exploitation of material benefits in a collective manner.

From the viewpoint of effects, the differences between collective and individual enjoyments and exploitation is this, that if man could live alone, he would be absolutely independent in each of his life's enjoyments, since he would have no rivals or opponents except in case where some organs of his impose limitations on other organs. For example, man is not able to use up all the air that exists, since his lungs have not the capacity for all that air, even if he had the appetite for it. In the same way man cannot eat all the foodstuffs that exist since his stomach has not the capacity for them.

But if we suppose that he has no other partner in benefitting from matter, then there is no reason why he should limit the field of his activities. The condition of such a man would be contrary to a man placed within a social environment, for, if this man were independent in his deeds and behavior, the result would be for individuals to hinder and check one another'. Such a state will ruin life and destroy mankind<sup>1</sup>.

The only factor that causes law to be established in and rule over society is having a single goal, but self-growing societies cannot understand their own state through deliberation and thought.

In societies, customs and traditions are created by the innumerable disputes and conflicts of members. The result of these conflicts and struggles is to compel everyone to observe certain ways, so that order may be kept to some extent, and as these regulations and matters do not have firm foundations, they are subject to violation and annulment, and thus change and disappear soon.

But civilized societies base their social conditions on a firm and permanent foundation, and by means of limits and their way between the wills and actions of the individuals in the society, and then all the power is concentrated in one place, which guarantees the execution of the articles of law

Hence several points become clear:

(a) Law is in fact something that limits the wills and actions of people, thereby removing molestation and disputes from among them.

(b) The members of a society governed by law are quite free beyond law. This requires man's equipment with understanding and will and ratification these two powers (that is, after the people's will and actions are rectified, a man who is equipped with understanding and resolution, will be free). So you see that existing laws are not opposed to divine teachings and ethics. And these two important matters, namely divine teachings and ethics take the form that law gives them.

Divine teachings and ethics must on account of their dependence arrive at a compromise and agreement with law, and as a result sooner or later must take the form of a number of superficial customs and traditions which lack spiritual worth.

We observe for the same reason that politics plays with religion; one day it issues decrees against religion, and tramples on it, and the next day it turns to religion and insists on elevating its words in an exaggerating manner. Sometimes, too, it frees itself from the burden of religion, and leaves it to itself.

(c) This method of legislation is not without defect, for, although the guarantee for the execution of law belongs to the power which is concentrated in one or a few individuals, yet this guarantee in itself has no guarantee; that is, if this source of power and sovereignty turned away from righteousness so as to transform the government of people over people, and changed the course of law, who is there who could vanquish this transgressing tyrant, and bring him back to the course of equity and justice?

This statement, in addition to much historical evidence, has numerous proofs in the present time, which is the era of education and civilization.

You may add to the above defect another defect, that is, the violation of law may be related to the executive power or go beyond its domain.

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Let us return to the beginning of the discussion: civil society is made to have unity by one objective, and that is the exploitation of the advantages of worldly life which they believe to be happiness.

But Islam considers the orbit of human life wider than a worldly material one. It believes it to be the next life which is the reality of life. Islam believes that worldly life has no use except to absorb divine teachings which end in monotheism. Islam believes that these teachings will not be preserved except by moral virtues and by the purification of the self from every debasing vice.

And finally Islam says: This morality will not attain perfection except through a proper social life based on devotion to God; a life which is humble before the divinity of God; a life which treats people on the basis of social justice. It is on these profound principles and permanent foundations that Islam has set an objective for human society. The objective on the basis of which human society is created and through which it gains unity is the religion of monotheism.

Islam has drawn up all of its laws on the basis of monotheism, and in forging the law it has not limited itself to the adjustment of people's will and action, but completed it with acts of devotion and proper teachings and ethics.

Islam has placed the overall responsibility of execution of the laws on the Islamic government in the first place, and on society in the second place. This guarantee consists of suitable education in theory and practice, guidance in promoting good and forbidding wrong. The most important thing in this religion is that its parts are so inter-related that a perfect unity is generated between them, in the sense that the spirit of monotheism spreads over the high morality which is promoted by this religion, and the moral

spirit reigns over the deeds to which the members of the community are bound.

Islam is based on monotheism. This means Islam goes beyond mere ethics seeking adherence

to the Will and Purpose of one God. In other words, a higher order of ethics aligned to monotheism constitute the basis of Islam.

If our reader says: The defect which was attributed to civil laws, meaning that they are such that there is the possibility of their being rejected by the executive power, or that people's violation of the laws may be hidden from the eye of the executive, the same criticism is quite true of Islam, Our reader may claim as the clearest evidence of this that religion is weakened, and its domination over the community is destroyed, when it cannot impose its precepts on the people.

We offer this answer to our reader: the truth of general law whether divine or human is nothing but a set of mental forms registered in people's minds. But when man wills, they become practicable and perceptible. It is clear that if man's will becomes rebellious and refuses to carry out those laws, no action will appear to correspond with the law.

The point is that there should exist something by means of which the execution of law should be possible, so that the law can stand on its own leg. The defect of civil law is that it gives importance to the majority's will only to suspend actions and has no other purpose. Civic laws have given no attention to what may protect this will.

A society can attain its goals, including mainly the maintenance of law and prevention of corruption as long as its members sustain their will to live responsibly and with dignity. In case of social evils and disintegration of a society's moral fabric, it cannot uphold the rule of law

In occurrences where the executive finds no way to become aware of them, such as secret crimes, or when it cannot extend its domination over them, such as the events which are beyond its influence, in these cases there is no possibility or hope of carrying out the law.

Most of the ramifications which occurred after the First and Second World Wars are the best examples of our claims.

Corruption and violation of the law and social dispersion occur only when society pays no attention to what preserves people's will by means of its power because high morals are the guarding will.

For, as psychology has shown, 'will' gets no other help other than a suitable morality for its stability, permanence and continuation of its life.

If the way and laws which reign over a society do not have a firm foundation of high morals, they will be like wild and rootless plants which do not last. The appearance of communism is a good warning. This school was produced by democracy. It was a result of the extravagance and excessive revelry of one class as against the deprivation of another class.

Society had found, too, completely opposite points, very remote from each other, one of which was hard-heartedness, cruelty and unfairness, and the other was concentration of anger, rancor and enmity.

Moreover the World Wars which followed one another and still threaten mankind with a third war, produced much ruin and destruction and even

annihilated some species of plants. Is the cause of war any other factor than pride, selfishness, and greed?

We conclude from these two historical testimonies that when laws have no high moral basis, they will have no guarantee of execution and duration.

Now that the reader has understood the course of law in a civilized society, he should also pay attention to the basis of Islamic legislation. Islam bases its laws and current rules on ethics and insists always on bringing up people with chaste morals, for, current laws in practice are guaranteed by good morals.

Ethics accompany man both openly and secretly, in public and private, and performs its function much better than the police or any other force responsible keeping order.

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We admit that public education in those countries intends to educate people on the basis of fine qualities, and tries hard to encourage people to follow this way, but these efforts are of no avail to them.

The reason is first that the only source of wicked qualities, is nothing but extravagance and excess in material voluptuousness or unlimited deprivation in material things. Some people resort to wickedness through affluence and repose and others because of misfortune and helplessness.

Laws have left people perfectly free in this matter, exploitations and pleasures have no legal limitation. This freedom has given one group total affluence, and deprived another in every respect.

Thus would invitation and encouragement to moral excellence have any meaning but an invitation to two contrary matters? Are legal freedom and invitation to morality anything but a demand for two wholly opposite things?<sup>2</sup>

Moreover as you know, they are socially-minded, but their society keeps on suppressing small communities, and tramples on their rights, and exploits whatever they possess. It tries to enslave them, and extend its oppression on them as much as it can. Thus an invitation to virtuousness is a contrary action, and such an action will be quite sterile.

Secondly, if virtue is to be constant and permanent, it requires a guarantee to protect and maintain it. What performs this function is monotheism.

Monotheism<sup>3</sup> means that man should believe that this universe has only one God, who has many good names; that God has created man to give him perfection and happiness. God loves goodness and virtue, and dislikes evil and wickedness.

He will gather all creatures one day for a decisive and final judgment and will reward all completely. The reward of the good will be goodness, and the punishment of the wicked will be badness.

It is clear that if there was no belief in resurrection, the main factor which would not exist, and nothing would check the natural pleasures of the self; for the nature of every human being inclines to his own desires, not to what others benefit from<sup>4</sup>.

And if he wishes for something for others, he himself will benefit from it, too<sup>5</sup>.

In this way, when a man succeeds in violating other people's rights, and there is nothing to check him and no one to punish him, or blame him, what can prevent him from committing sin and oppression? Even when that sin is great and imaginary obstacles are suggested to mislead debaters, this point is true. For example, patriotism, humanitarianism a good reputation, etc. are a number of sentiments and inner desires.

These sentiments are preserved by education, but an unalterable and powerful factor is lacking in such a case. Therefore these sentiments are only accidental and ordinary states, the disappearance of which nothing prevents. Why should it be necessary for a man to sacrifice himself for another, so that after his own death the latter may enjoy life?

While in his opinion death is absolute annihilation and effacement, he might say: "My good name remains but a good name is on other people's tongue, and what benefit does a man get after he has sacrificed himself and his existence has come to an end?" In short, a thoughtful and clear-sighted person cannot doubt that a man does not deprive himself of something for which he receives a reward or benefit.

In the above context, it is indicative of pride and error for anyone to assume that his reputation, honour and applause will not only outlast him in this world, but enable him to comfortably enjoy the same in the next world.

You have seen a drunken man who commits such acts in his excited condition that he would not commit in his sober state. In drunkenness he shows surprising indulgence, and is ready to give away his honour, wealth and anything else which is precious to him. This man is drunk and not sober, but he considers his act chivalry and manliness, while they are nothing but stupidity and madness.

We conclude, then that these checks that man has created for himself are not fundamental, and cannot prevent deviations and blunders. A man has no refuge as a barrier against blunders except that monotheism of which we spoke. Therefore, you see that Islam has based good morals which are a part of the prevalent way of Islam on monotheism, one concern of which is Resurrection.

The requisite of this matter is that a man is obliged to do good and avoid evil, whether anyone else is aware of it anywhere and at any time or not, whether he is praised for it or not, whether he is forced or not. It makes no difference for him.

He believes that God is with him, God knows, God keeps whatever he does, God is above everyone and sees their deeds<sup>6</sup>. He believes there is a day ahead when he will witness all his former deeds, whether good or bad, and will receive his due reward.

Such a belief which is based on reality and truth is the only way of the execution of law and preservation of order and justice in society; otherwise no agent can guarantee the execution of law and social life.

### Notes

1. This topic may be studied at length in the discussion of prophethood in volume 2 of Al-Mizan, and in the book on "Revolution or secret understanding".

2. Meaning that freedom of action and good morality are two opposite matter, and if law asked people to have both, that is, if it left them free in their lusts, and at the same time told

them to be virtuous, it would mean that freedom exists and does not exist, and morality exists and does not exist at the same time.

3. Although monotheism means belief in the oneness of God, yet all the points mentioned are the inseparable parts of true monotheism. Monotheism is not possible without Resurrection.

4. A belief in Resurrection allows a man to know that what he does is unto himself. Goodness and badness are related to him and as he is interested in himself and his own joys, he does good and attains favor.

But if he has no such belief, when goodness is harmful to his world, he will not commit it, for in his opinion someone else benefits from it, not himself. Man is by nature interested in his own profit, not that of others. So we see that the natural requisite of belief in Resurrection is good quality, and that of unbelief is lust and selfishness.

5. A man loves himself more than another. He understands his own pleasure, not someone else's. And when he performs a deed which benefits others, he is in fact giving himself enjoyment by his good deed, and so he, too, gains a benefit.

6. Fortunately now with the establishment of the Islamic Republic and influence of spiritualism in the army, the morals of soldiers has been so transformed, that they are ready to venture their lives like those in the early era of Islam, and annihilate the terrible enemy, for, they know that if an Islamic soldier is killed in war, he will win success, and if he kills the enemy he will attain his goal.

## 6. How The Islamic Society Came Into Existence, And How It Continues Its Existence

There is no doubt that every society is created as a result of a single objective of its various members. This single objective is a unique spirit which spreads in every direction and is somehow limited with them.

This objective in non-religious communities is the worldly life of man, of course a life which is common between all the members, and not the private life of each individual, that is, the exploitation of material benefits in a collective manner.

From the viewpoint of effects, the differences between collective and individual enjoyments and exploitation is this, that if man could live alone, he would be absolutely independent in each of his life's enjoyments, since he would have no rivals or opponents except in case where some organs of his impose limitations on other organs. For example, man is not able to use up all the air that exists, since his lungs have not the capacity for all that air, even if he had the appetite for it. In the same way man cannot eat all the foodstuffs that exist since his stomach has not the capacity for them.

But if we suppose that he has no other partner in benefitting from matter, then there is no reason why he should limit the field of his activities. The condition of such a man would be contrary to a man placed within a social environment, for, if this man were independent in his deeds and behavior, the result would be for individuals to hinder and check one another'. Such a state will ruin life and destroy mankind<sup>1</sup>.

The only factor that causes law to be established in and rule over society is having a single goal, but self-growing societies cannot understand their own state through deliberation and thought.

In societies, customs and traditions are created by the innumerable disputes and conflicts of members. The result of these conflicts and struggles is to compel everyone to observe certain ways, so that order may be kept to some extent, and as these regulations and matters do not have firm foundations, they are subject to violation and annulment, and thus change and disappear soon.

But civilized societies base their social conditions on a firm and permanent foundation, and by means of limits and their way between the wills and actions of the individuals in the society, and then all the power is concentrated in one place, which guarantees the execution of the articles of law

Hence several points become clear:

(a) Law is in fact something that limits the wills and actions of people, thereby removing molestation and disputes from among them.

(b) The members of a society governed by law are quite free beyond law. This requires man's equipment with understanding and will and ratification these two powers (that is, after the people's will and actions are rectified, a man who is equipped with understanding and resolution, will be free). So you see that existing laws are not opposed to divine teachings and ethics. And these two important matters, namely divine teachings and ethics take the form that law gives them.

Divine teachings and ethics must on account of their dependence arrive at a compromise and agreement with law, and as a result sooner or later must take the form of a number of superficial customs and traditions which lack spiritual worth.

We observe for the same reason that politics plays with religion; one day it issues decrees against religion, and tramples on it, and the next day it turns to religion and insists on elevating its words in an exaggerating manner. Sometimes, too, it frees itself from the burden of religion, and leaves it to itself.

(c) This method of legislation is not without defect, for, although the guarantee for the execution of law belongs to the power which is concentrated in one or a few individuals, yet this guarantee in itself has no guarantee; that is, if this source of power and sovereignty turned away from righteousness so as to transform the government of people over people, and changed the course of law, who is there who could vanquish this transgressing tyrant, and bring him back to the course of equity and justice?

This statement, in addition to much historical evidence, has numerous proofs in the present time, which is the era of education and civilization.

You may add to the above defect another defect, that is, the violation of law may be related to the executive power or go beyond its domain.

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Let us return to the beginning of the discussion: civil society is made to have unity by one objective, and that is the exploitation of the advantages of worldly life which they believe to be happiness.

But Islam considers the orbit of human life wider than a worldly material one. It believes it to be the next life which is the reality of life. Islam believes that worldly life has no use except to absorb divine teachings which end in monotheism. Islam believes that these teachings will not be preserved except by moral virtues and by the purification of the self from every debasing vice.

And finally Islam says: This morality will not attain perfection except through a proper social life based on devotion to God; a life which is humble before the divinity of God; a life which treats people on the basis of social justice. It is on these profound principles and permanent foundations that Islam has set an objective for human society. The objective on the basis of which human society is created and through which it gains unity is the religion of monotheism.

Islam has drawn up all of its laws on the basis of monotheism, and in forging the law it has not limited itself to the adjustment of people's will and action, but completed it with acts of devotion and proper teachings and ethics.

Islam has placed the overall responsibility of execution of the laws on the Islamic government in the first place, and on society in the second place. This guarantee consists of suitable education in theory and practice, guidance in promoting good and forbidding wrong. The most important thing in this religion is that its parts are so inter-related that a perfect unity is generated between them, in the sense that the spirit of monotheism spreads over the high morality which is promoted by this religion, and the moral

spirit reigns over the deeds to which the members of the community are bound.

Islam is based on monotheism. This means Islam goes beyond mere ethics seeking adherence

to the Will and Purpose of one God. In other words, a higher order of ethics aligned to monotheism constitute the basis of Islam.

If our reader says: The defect which was attributed to civil laws, meaning that they are such that there is the possibility of their being rejected by the executive power, or that people's violation of the laws may be hidden from the eye of the executive, the same criticism is quite true of Islam, Our reader may claim as the clearest evidence of this that religion is weakened, and its domination over the community is destroyed, when it cannot impose its precepts on the people.

We offer this answer to our reader: the truth of general law whether divine or human is nothing but a set of mental forms registered in people's minds. But when man wills, they become practicable and perceptible. It is clear that if man's will becomes rebellious and refuses to carry out those laws, no action will appear to correspond with the law.

The point is that there should exist something by means of which the execution of law should be possible, so that the law can stand on its own leg. The defect of civil law is that it gives importance to the majority's will only to suspend actions and has no other purpose. Civic laws have given no attention to what may protect this will.

A society can attain its goals, including mainly the maintenance of law and prevention of corruption as long as its members sustain their will to live responsibly and with dignity. In case of social evils and disintegration of a society's moral fabric, it cannot uphold the rule of law

In occurrences where the executive finds no way to become aware of them, such as secret crimes, or when it cannot extend its domination over them, such as the events which are beyond its influence, in these cases there is no possibility or hope of carrying out the law.

Most of the ramifications which occurred after the First and Second World Wars are the best examples of our claims.

Corruption and violation of the law and social dispersion occur only when society pays no attention to what preserves people's will by means of its power because high morals are the guarding will.

For, as psychology has shown, 'will' gets no other help other than a suitable morality for its stability, permanence and continuation of its life.

If the way and laws which reign over a society do not have a firm foundation of high morals, they will be like wild and rootless plants which do not last. The appearance of communism is a good warning. This school was produced by democracy. It was a result of the extravagance and excessive revelry of one class as against the deprivation of another class.

Society had found, too, completely opposite points, very remote from each other, one of which was hard-heartedness, cruelty and unfairness, and the other was concentration of anger, rancor and enmity.

Moreover the World Wars which followed one another and still threaten mankind with a third war, produced much ruin and destruction and even

annihilated some species of plants. Is the cause of war any other factor than pride, selfishness, and greed?

We conclude from these two historical testimonies that when laws have no high moral basis, they will have no guarantee of execution and duration.

Now that the reader has understood the course of law in a civilized society, he should also pay attention to the basis of Islamic legislation. Islam bases its laws and current rules on ethics and insists always on bringing up people with chaste morals, for, current laws in practice are guaranteed by good morals.

Ethics accompany man both openly and secretly, in public and private, and performs its function much better than the police or any other force responsible keeping order.

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We admit that public education in those countries intends to educate people on the basis of fine qualities, and tries hard to encourage people to follow this way, but these efforts are of no avail to them.

The reason is first that the only source of wicked qualities, is nothing but extravagance and excess in material voluptuousness or unlimited deprivation in material things. Some people resort to wickedness through affluence and repose and others because of misfortune and helplessness.

Laws have left people perfectly free in this matter, exploitations and pleasures have no legal limitation. This freedom has given one group total affluence, and deprived another in every respect.

Thus would invitation and encouragement to moral excellence have any meaning but an invitation to two contrary matters? Are legal freedom and invitation to morality anything but a demand for two wholly opposite things?<sup>2</sup>

Moreover as you know, they are socially-minded, but their society keeps on suppressing small communities, and tramples on their rights, and exploits whatever they possess. It tries to enslave them, and extend its oppression on them as much as it can. Thus an invitation to virtuousness is a contrary action, and such an action will be quite sterile.

Secondly, if virtue is to be constant and permanent, it requires a guarantee to protect and maintain it. What performs this function is monotheism.

Monotheism<sup>3</sup> means that man should believe that this universe has only one God, who has many good names; that God has created man to give him perfection and happiness. God loves goodness and virtue, and dislikes evil and wickedness.

He will gather all creatures one day for a decisive and final judgment and will reward all completely. The reward of the good will be goodness, and the punishment of the wicked will be badness.

It is clear that if there was no belief in resurrection, the main factor which would not exist, and nothing would check the natural pleasures of the self; for the nature of every human being inclines to his own desires, not to what others benefit from<sup>4</sup>.

And if he wishes for something for others, he himself will benefit from it, too<sup>5</sup>.

In this way, when a man succeeds in violating other people's rights, and there is nothing to check him and no one to punish him, or blame him, what can prevent him from committing sin and oppression? Even when that sin is great and imaginary obstacles are suggested to mislead debaters, this point is true. For example, patriotism, humanitarianism a good reputation, etc. are a number of sentiments and inner desires.

These sentiments are preserved by education, but an unalterable and powerful factor is lacking in such a case. Therefore these sentiments are only accidental and ordinary states, the disappearance of which nothing prevents. Why should it be necessary for a man to sacrifice himself for another, so that after his own death the latter may enjoy life?

While in his opinion death is absolute annihilation and effacement, he might say: "My good name remains but a good name is on other people's tongue, and what benefit does a man get after he has sacrificed himself and his existence has come to an end?" In short, a thoughtful and clear-sighted person cannot doubt that a man does not deprive himself of something for which he receives a reward or benefit.

In the above context, it is indicative of pride and error for anyone to assume that his reputation, honour and applause will not only outlast him in this world, but enable him to comfortably enjoy the same in the next world.

You have seen a drunken man who commits such acts in his excited condition that he would not commit in his sober state. In drunkenness he shows surprising indulgence, and is ready to give away his honour, wealth and anything else which is precious to him. This man is drunk and not sober, but he considers his act chivalry and manliness, while they are nothing but stupidity and madness.

We conclude, then that these checks that man has created for himself are not fundamental, and cannot prevent deviations and blunders. A man has no refuge as a barrier against blunders except that monotheism of which we spoke. Therefore, you see that Islam has based good morals which are a part of the prevalent way of Islam on monotheism, one concern of which is Resurrection.

The requisite of this matter is that a man is obliged to do good and avoid evil, whether anyone else is aware of it anywhere and at any time or not, whether he is praised for it or not, whether he is forced or not. It makes no difference for him.

He believes that God is with him, God knows, God keeps whatever he does, God is above everyone and sees their deeds<sup>6</sup>. He believes there is a day ahead when he will witness all his former deeds, whether good or bad, and will receive his due reward.

Such a belief which is based on reality and truth is the only way of the execution of law and preservation of order and justice in society; otherwise no agent can guarantee the execution of law and social life.

### Notes

1. This topic may be studied at length in the discussion of prophethood in volume 2 of Al-Mizan, and in the book on "Revolution or secret understanding".

2. Meaning that freedom of action and good morality are two opposite matter, and if law asked people to have both, that is, if it left them free in their lusts, and at the same time told

them to be virtuous, it would mean that freedom exists and does not exist, and morality exists and does not exist at the same time.

3. Although monotheism means belief in the oneness of God, yet all the points mentioned are the inseparable parts of true monotheism. Monotheism is not possible without Resurrection.

4. A belief in Resurrection allows a man to know that what he does is unto himself. Goodness and badness are related to him and as he is interested in himself and his own joys, he does good and attains favor.

But if he has no such belief, when goodness is harmful to his world, he will not commit it, for in his opinion someone else benefits from it, not himself. Man is by nature interested in his own profit, not that of others. So we see that the natural requisite of belief in Resurrection is good quality, and that of unbelief is lust and selfishness.

5. A man loves himself more than another. He understands his own pleasure, not someone else's. And when he performs a deed which benefits others, he is in fact giving himself enjoyment by his good deed, and so he, too, gains a benefit.

6. Fortunately now with the establishment of the Islamic Republic and influence of spiritualism in the army, the morals of soldiers has been so transformed, that they are ready to venture their lives like those in the early era of Islam, and annihilate the terrible enemy, for, they know that if an Islamic soldier is killed in war, he will win success, and if he kills the enemy he will attain his goal.

## **8. Why Should One Expect Compensation From God While One Turns Away From Others?**

Someone may suppose that if the next world's reward is set as a general motive of man's social life this will cause the other motives of worldly life which depend on the natural structure of man, to be destroyed. And if these motives are destroyed, it will disrupt social order and will downgrade it to the level of monastic life, or living in caves.

How can a person pay attention only to one of the many goals of nature, and ignore the rest and at the same time maintain them? Is this anything but contradiction?

But this supposition is the consequence of ignorance about divine wisdom and of the mysteries revealed by the teachings of the Qur'an. Islam has based its divine law on creation:

Then set your face upright for religion in the right state-- the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know.(Ar-Room, 30:30)

True factors of creation have combined to bring man into existence. These means direct people in a perfect manner to the goal of life prepared for him. So it is incumbent on man to arrange his life within the compass of submitting to pain and having a choice on the principle of following the way that these factors desire him to do wholly with these factors, so that there is no contrariness with them and his life, and the course of events do not lead to misfortune and destruction.

If a person's mind is misled by such a wrong supposition, he should realize that this statement is the Islamic religion itself. But what is important is that there is one cause above all causes, which has created these causes and arranges everything both big and small.

This single cause is the Most Holy God, who is the perfect and total cause above every cause. As this is the case, therefore it is incumbent upon man to surrender before God and be humble. When we say that Islam is the only Muslim religion, this is what is meant.

If you ponder over the above point, it will become clear that the preservation of the word "monotheism" and surrender to God, and turning only to Him in life, are not only opposed to material causes, but are in agreement with all of them. A monotheist without being a pagan or a negligent person gives every rightful person his right, and gives material causes their place, and considers them in accordance with God's command.

Thus a Muslim has a number of worldly motives as well as the other worldly goals, that is both material and spiritual objectives. But he makes no undue effort towards worldly goals. So we see that Islam invites people to worship the unique God, and turn away from others and turn to Him, show devotion to Him, ignore every cause and goal but Him, and at the same time commands him to follow the laws of life and way of nature.

It is clear, then, that members of the Islamic society are truly happy in this and the next world, and their final goal which is God and turning to Him who is Almighty and Dominant, is not contrary to other objectives of life, and so both goals are in harmony if worldly goals are legitimate.

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A number of sociologists who have discussed this matter, have supposed that the reality of religion and its principal goal is the establishment of social justice, and acts of devotion such as praying, fasting etc. are subsidiary acts. Thus, if someone stands for social justice, he is religious, even if he has no belief and performs no acts of devotion.

But the previous explanations show that this supposition is wrong. A prudent debater who studies 'The Book and Traditions ' and especially the character of the Prophet, has no need for additional evidence or reasons to know the falsity of the above supposition<sup>1</sup>.

Moreover such a statement omits monotheism and high morals from religious principles, and consequently it transforms the religious goal which is monotheism, into a civic goal which is the enjoyment of material life. The wise reader knows that these two goals are distinctly different and lack harmony in principle in details and in results.

### Note

1. The whole of the Qur'an, traditions and the Prophet's character show that the fundamental goal is monotheism, and attention to the origin of the brilliant Divine teaching, and prayer, fasting and other acts of worship are of the first importance. The reader may consider these three as basic proofs.

## 9. The Meaning of Liberty In Islam

The word 'Liberty' with the same meaning that it has today, found common use several centuries ago. The reason for coining it was probably the European renaissance which began two or three centuries ago, but the meaning of word has occupied men's minds since ancient eras, and has assumed the form of a heartfelt ideas.

The natural principle of creation from which this meaning is derived is that man is in essence equipped with will-power. This power enables man to act. Will is a state of mind whose loss causes the loss of comprehension and intelligence, and in consequence destroys his human qualities.

But as man is a social being, his nature leads him to social life and says to him: 'An individual must drop his bucket among other buckets, and let his will and action mingle with the will and action of others'. This way of action enables a man to be modest and humble before the law, which sets limits for the will and action of the people and adjusts all wills and actions. Therefore, the same nature that allows a man absolute freedom of will and action, imposes limitation on that will and action, and restricts the preliminary liberty.

As the reader knows, since present civic base their decrees on material welfare<sup>1</sup> the result is to let nations be free in religious teachings, to be bound by them or not, and immoral matters to choose anything they wish outside the law. In all these spheres the people have liberty and freedom, and that is the meaning of liberty in the eye of civilization.

But Islam, as it was explained, bases its law on the foundation of monotheism first, and on high morals in the second place, and then is concerned with the big and small individual and social deeds of all kinds. So, there is no matter to which man is unrelated or to whom it is unconnected, except where Islamic ordinance have stepped in or where their footsteps are not manifest.<sup>2</sup> Thus liberty in its former sense has no place in the will and action of people.

Why should man be free in all of them from the bound of worship, serving others that is not God.

This is only one word, but if one ponders deeply over the Islamic methods and traditions and the practical ways which are recommended and established between individuals and classes of society, and compares the Islamic ways with those of the domineering tendencies and unfairness of civilized societies, including the relations between individuals and their classes, and those between every strong nation and a weak one, he will understand the wide meaning of the statement that freedom of belief means freedom from the limitation of worshipping anything that is not God.

From the view point of injunctions too, Islam has extended itself completely on the subject of well-earned livelihood and moderate benefits of life allowed by God, without going to extremes.

“Say who forbade God's adornment and clean livelihood which were granted to his servants “ ( al-A'araaf, 7: 32)

“He created for you all thereis on earth.” (Al Baqara, 2:29)

“And He tamed for you all there is on the earth and heavens.” (Al-Jathiya,45: 13)

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It is amazing that some interpreters and debaters of this topic have tried hard to prove that freedom of belief exists in Islam, and relying on the verse “There is no aversion in religion” and similar ones, they have argued this point.

The reader can refer to volume <sup>2</sup> of Al-Mizan for a more elaborate analysis of the above verse and its meaning. What we may say here is what we made clear that monotheism is the basis of all Islamic laws, in which case, how could Islam establish the law of freedom of belief? Is this not an explicit contradiction? If anyone says: 'Belief is free in Islam' it is like saying: 'In civil law, people are free of the rule of law.'<sup>3</sup>

In other words, belief means the appearance of a confirmed understanding in a man's mind.

Belief is not an optional matter, to be allowed or forbidden, or to leave people free or enslaved. What can be forbidden or allowed is the obligation to the deeds which arise from belief, such as inviting to the belief of the convincing people to one belief, and combating the deeds of those opposed to belief. These acts may be forbidden or allowed.

It is clear that if such acts are contrary to the articles of the law which is established in a society, or opposed to the basis of a law, they will certainly be checked by the law.

Islam in all its legislations has relied on nothing but the religion of monotheism. This religion is one which has accepted three indisputable principles, namely, monotheism, prophethood and resurrection. These three fundamental beliefs are those in which people with Holy Books, such as the Jew, Christians and Magi agree.

We conclude<sup>4</sup> therefore that in Islam there exists another liberty, which is freedom of expression in discussion which will be explained later.

### Notes

1. The civic laws of the Satanic regime of Pahlavi is meant here.
2. What is apparently meant is that a verdict is given explicitly there, or a general verdict is issued to include all these cases. The word, 'footstep' apparently means these general verdicts
3. Monotheism is the basis of Islamic law. So, freedom from monotheism is freedom from law, something which no one can believe.
4. It became clear that Islam bases all its laws and order, from the viewpoint of belief, on the three principles, and so it cannot grant freedom in them, otherwise the foundation of law would be shaken.

## 10. What Is The Way Of Change And Evolution In Islamic Society?

Someone may say: It is true that the Islamic way is a way comprising all the essentials of a happy life, and that an Islamic community is so fortunate as to be envied, but as this is a comprehensive system in which there is no freedom of belief, it will make the society stagnant, and hinders all change and evolution, and as it is said, the defect of a perfect society would be to remain stagnant.

For, the course of evolution requires that a series of contrary powers center in one thing and dispute one another, so that as a result of diminution and fracture a new thing is created which would be free from the defects of its creating agents which have disappeared as a result of that dispute.

Therefore if we suppose that Islam removes its defects and contraries and has in particular got rid of opposite beliefs completely, the requisite for such a statement is that the society created by Islam will be hindered from the course of evolution. This is what is claimed by dialectic materialism.

Our answer is: These gentlemen have deviated from the subject in a surprising manner. It must be explained that human beliefs and learning are of two kinds: One kind is subject to change and evolution, and those are industrial and technical sciences which are employed in raising the level of the bases of material life and harnessing nature in the interest of humanity, such as natural and mathematical sciences and so on. These sciences and techniques, as well as others which belong to the same group can change, and the more they change and defects go the way of perfection, the more will social life advance in this respect.

Another kind of learning which is not subject to change, even though in one sense it is subject to perfection, is divine teachings, which even though they may undergo evolution and exaltation, yet they have a decisively permanent and unalterable form with respect to origin, resurrection, happiness and adversity. These teachings affect society only in a general way<sup>1</sup>.

So if these views and teachings remain constant, it does not hinder society from its evolutionary course. We observe that we have a number of constant general laws which are no barrier to social progress. For example, one of the general rules necessary for every human being is to work for the preservation of his life. Another example is that an action must be for a benefit received; and another is that it is necessary for a man to live in society.

Or we may say that universe really exists, and it is not a fancy and imagination; or man has organs, means and powers; or other constant views and learning the constancy and stagnancy of which do not affect the constancy and stagnancy of society. Constant religious teachings are of the same kind. For example we say: The universe has one God; God has sent a divine law for people which comprises all the ways of happiness, and this is established through Prophethood; God will one day gather all creatures to call them to account for their deeds.

This is the only word on which Islam has based its society and has provided a protection for it wholly and in every sense. It is clear that if

negation and affirmation appear in this word and if negative and positive views clash resulting in the appearance of a third theory, the consequence will only be the decadence of society<sup>2</sup>.

The conclusion is that human society in its course of progress needs only something, and that is to undergo change and gain perfection every day in its use of natural advantages. This change and evolution is secured through constant scientific investigation and permanent application of practice on science, matters which have never been checked by Islam.

Another point is that the manner of managing society and the methods prevalent in communities are always seen to change. For example despotism changes into democracy and democracy turns into communism.

It must be remembered that these changes become necessary only for this reason that all these systems are defective and none of them is adequate for the social perfection desired by man, and cannot provide that perfection.

The direction of these changes is not that it must go from defect towards perfection. If there is a difference between these systems, it is the difference between right and wrong<sup>3</sup>, not between perfect and imperfect.

Thus if the social system is established, and people lived under the banner of proper education, learnt beneficial acts, and committed good deeds, and moved on towards happiness in comfort and enjoyment, and climbed the steps of theory and practice towards perfection, and found happiness every day and developed it, what need would there be for changing social traditions and way of life? What would such people want in addition to what they already have?

A clear-sighted person should not affirm that change is necessary in every way for man, even in cases when no change is required.

If a reader says: None of these you mentioned need a change, there are things like belief and general morality which must necessarily change, for all these must undergo a change with changed conditions and different environments. It cannot be denied that modernism has ideas different from those of ancient times. In the same way, his thoughts differ with differences of the regions in which he lives, such as living in the polar or temperate regions. Moreover various living conditions influence his thoughts and views. Someone is a master, another is a servant; one is a tent-dweller, another is a citizen; one is rich, another is poor; one has money, the other has not, all these differences affect a man's thoughts. Therefore, whatever thoughts and views they may be, they change with different actors and periodic changes. There is no doubt about this point.

In answer to the above statement we say that all these matters are based on the relativity of sciences and human views<sup>4</sup>.

The requisite for this theory is that right and wrong, good and bad should be a series or additional relative matters, and not true and realistic ones.

According to this theory general theoretical knowledge which is connected to this origin and resurrection, as well as general practical views such as the view that society is useful for man, or justice is good<sup>5</sup>, or all general precepts which change with changed conditions and times. Generally speaking this theory is not correct with such a degree of generality, as we have discussed it at length elsewhere<sup>6</sup>.

In short, this theory does not comprise general theoretical matters of one type of general views. To show the doubtfulness of the generality of this theory it is sufficient to say that if it possessed generality and was an absolutely permanent general theory, it would mean that we have an absolutely non-relative proposition that is the same theory that is general and constant.

Even if it is not a general proposition, but an incidental one, it would again mean that we should have an absolute proposition, that is, we should state in an absolute way that this theory is not general. In either case the generality of this theory will be null and void. In other words, if this view were true that every view and belief must change one day, this view itself, too, must change. If the above view is changed, it would mean that there is no necessity for every view, and belief to change one day, but only a part of it is unchangeable.

### Notes

1. For example, the universe is created for a wise purpose; every action whether good or bad has a reward or punishment; happiness means following the laws of the universe, and adversity is opposition to them, all of which are general laws.
2. This was discussed in the previous chapters, especially in chapter 5.
3. For, all the three schools cannot be right.
4. This theory says: Man has no real knowledge of anything, but his knowledge is relative and there is nothing that he can claim decisively. No absolute right and wrong, or good and evil exists. To prove the invalidity of this theory needs a more elaborate discussion, and the reader can refer to the vol. 1 of Al-Mizan, or the Principles of the Philosophy and Method of Realism.
5. Vol 1 of Al-Mizan, and Vol. 1 Principles of the Philosophy and Method of Realism.
6. Of course this statement is true as a general theory, but not in application to this case.

## 11. Can Religion Guarantee The Happiness Of The Present Life

Someone may say: "It is true that Islam had opposed all the human concerns which had existed at the time of the Qur'an's descent, and for that reason was able to lead the society of that day to true happiness and all the ideals of life. But the passage of time has changed the ways of life, and the cultural, scientific and industrial life of modern civilisation has no similarity with the simple life of fourteen centuries ago which was satisfied with elementary natural means.

Man has attained such a degree of progress and evolution as a result of his long and hard efforts, that if it is compared with the conditions of several centuries ago, it seems like comparing two totally opposite types.

How can the laws made for arranging the life of that time, be adequate for managing the extensive and complex life of today? How can one of these two modes of life carry the burden of the other one on its shoulder?

The answer to this is: If the two eras appear to be different, it doesn't mean that they are different in the general aspects of life, but rather that the difference belongs to particular cases. In other words, in life a man needs food, clothes, a home to live in, means and equipment of transportation, a society to live in, sexual relations, commercial, technical and practical relations and such like as necessities of living.

These are unalterable general needs which man requires as a human being and as long as he has this nature and structure and this human life. Early men were not different from modern ones in this respect at all.

The difference is only the means by which his needs are met, as well as the needs of which he gradually becomes aware and learns how to secure the means of meeting them. To explain this point, early men fed in a simple manner on fruits, herbs and preyed meats he could find, but today they prepare thousands of different dishes and beverages, by their ingenuity and creative minds, each having various properties used by them, and various colours and touch, and many other peculiarities which cannot be enumerated.

In spite of all the differences between the two ways of living with respect to food, there is no difference between them in this, that all are food stuffs by which man satisfies his hunger and appetite. The same is true of clothing, dwelling etc.

You see that as these general beliefs have existed since the very first day of man's life in connection with the necessity of food, clothes, dwelling and other needs of life and have undergone no change in various periods, and if the first belief corresponds perfectly with the last progressive phase of belief, in the same way the general laws devised in Islam in accordance with nature's call and for the sake of securing happiness, are not annulled only because of the substitution of one means of living for another.

If the latest means are in harmony with the essence of nature, with no deviation from it, Islam agrees with them, but if they are contrary to the fundamental laws of creation, it disagrees whether they belong to the modern or ancient times.

Here are a number of incidental issues which belong to the events which take place at different times and change speedily, such as the decrees concerning wealth, rules for defense, facilitation of the means of communication, close contacts, regulations for managing a city etc., all of which are entrusted to one who is given the authority in an Islamic community or responsible for governmental affairs.

This Islamic authority or governor acts over big domain in the same way that a master of a house decides in managing his home and carries it out. The Islamic social authority has the right of decision in all the internal and external affairs of a Muslim community.

A Muslim authority has the right of taking any decision about war or peace, any financial and non-financial matters, and his decision must be in the interest of the society and after consultation with Muslims. God says:

“Consult them in the affairs, and when you decide, rely on God.”  
(Aal’Imraan, 3:158)

These are about matters related to the people. These decrees and incidental decisions which must take place at all times and in all places will change with the change of means and interests, both of which are constantly changing, and sometimes they arise and sometimes disappear. These changeable decrees are different from general Divine decrees which include the Book and Traditions for which there is no annulment. Of course much may be said about this matter, but at the moment this will be sufficient.

## 12. From The Viewpoint Of Islam Who Should Act As Society's Guardian, And What Should Be His Way?

The rein of the Islamic society was held by the Prophet, and he Qur'an had made it incumbent upon people to explicitly obey the Prophet:

“Therefore be careful of (your duty to) Allah as much as you can, and hear and obey and spend, it is better for your souls; and whoever is saved from the greediness of his soul, these it is that are the successful.” (At-Tghaboon,64: 12)

“The Prophet has a greater claim on the faithful than they have on themselves, and his wives are (as) their mothers; and the possessors of relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of Allah to inheritance, one with respect to another, than (other) believers, and (than) those who have fled (their homes), except that you do some good to your friends; this is written in the Book.” (Al-Ahzaab, 33: 6)

“Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your faults, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (Aal-‘Imraan, 3: 31)

And other verses.

Each verse of the Qur'an explains a part of the general guardianship of the Prophet in the Islamic society. What can fulfill the purpose of these who discuss this matter is:

Firstly, to study the character and way of the Prophet with great care and inquiry.

Secondly, to make a careful survey of all the verses passed on ethics, as well as the laws devised in connection with worship, transactions, politics and other relations and associations.

The reason that a scholar wrests from Divine revelation is clear and adequate enough, but it cannot be discovered in one or two sentences<sup>1</sup>.

Another point to be remembered by the debater is that all the verses related to worship, Holy war, and the bounds of retaliation and such like, are addressed to all believers, and not only to the Prophet:

Those who believe fight in the way of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the way of the Shaitan. Fight therefore against the friends of the Shaitan; surely the strategy of the Shaitan is weak. (An-Nisaa', 4:76)

O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard in His way that you may be successful. (Al-Maaida, 5:35)

(As for) the fornicatress and the fornicator, flog each of them, (giving) a hundred stripes, and let not pity for them detain you in the matter of obedience to Allah, if you believe in Allah and the last day, and let a party of believers witness their chastisement.

(An-Noor, 24:2)

And (as for) the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands as a punishment for what they have earned, an exemplary punishment from Allah; and Allah is Mighty, Wise. (Al-Maaida, 5:38)

O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil). (Al-Baqara, 2:183)

And spend in the way of Allah and cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands, and do good (to others); surely Allah loves the doers of good. (Al-Baqara, 2:195)

But how can you disbelieve while it is you to whom the communications of Allah are recited, and among you is His Messenger? And whoever holds fast to Allah, he indeed is guided to the right path.(Aal-‘Imraan, 3:101)

And strive hard in (the way of) Allah, (such) a striving a is due to Him; He has chosen you and has not laid upon you an hardship in religion; the faith of your father Ibrahim; He named you Muslims before and in this, that the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be bearers of witness to the people; therefore keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast by Allah; He is your Guardian; how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper! (Al-Hajj, 22:78)

And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may guard yourselves. (Al-Baqara, 2:179)

So when they have reached their prescribed time, then retain them with kindness or separate them with kindness, and call to witness two men of justice from among you, and give upright testimony for Allah. With that is admonished he who believes in Allah and the latter day; and whoever is careful of (his duty to) Allah, He will make for him an outlet. (At-Talaaq, 65:2)

And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited, and remember the favor of Allah on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favor you became brethren; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it, thus does Allah make clear to you His communications that you may follow the right way. (Aal-‘Imraan,, 3:103)

And Muhammad is no more than a messenger; the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least and Allah will reward the grateful. (Aal-‘Imraan, 3:144)

He has made plain to you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nuh and that which We have revealed to you and that which We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Musa and Isa that keep to obedience and be not divided therein; hard to the unbelievers is that which you call them to; Allah chooses for Himself whom He pleases, and guides to Himself him who turns (to Him), frequently. (Ash-Shura, 42:13)

And other verses.

All these verses show that religion is a social manifestation which God has revealed to people, and he does not wish His creatures to be infidels, and wants them all to maintain religion.

The conclusion is that all affairs of the community formed of individuals are related to them who have created that community.

In this respect no Individual has superiority over another, and social matters are not confined to a few individuals in the society to make others exempt. The Prophet himself in this respect was no different from other people who were in an inferior position. God says:

“... I will not suffer the work of any of you that worketh to be lost, be he male or female, the one of you being from the other.... “. (Aal-‘Imraan, 3: 194)

The general acceptance of this verse shows that as the members of the Islamic society influence one another and God does not spoil this influence. Again God says:

“The earth is God's, and he can bequeath it to whichever of His servants He wishes and a good end is for the virtuous.”(Al-A'araaf, 7:128)

It must not be omitted that the Prophet has one great distinction, and that is invitation, guidance and education:

“He reads to them His verses and purifies them ; and teaches them the book and wisdom.”

(Al-Jumu'a, 62:2)

Therefore, the Prophet has been appointed by God in order to attend to all the affairs of his followers and undertake the guardianship of their affairs of this and the next world and as long as he lives to act as their leader and absolute Imam.

What should not be ignored is this, that this regime is different from monarchy in which God's property was considered absolutely lawful for the holder of the crown and throne and God's creatures as his servants to do what he liked with them, and issued any verdict he wished concerning them.

Moreover, the Islamic regime is not a democratic way or the social ways which are based on exploitation and material gratifications, for, unlike them Islam has ways which prevent it from having any similarity with them, as illustrated below:

(a) One of the great differences between these schools and Islam, is that, as the former societies are based on material gratification, they possess a spirit of recruitment and exploitation.

This spirit is that spirit of human pride which subjugates everything to human will and action, and even subjugates men to another man's will and action. It allows a man to attain a desired goal by any way he wishes, and dominates whatever he wants in his own interest. This way is exactly the kingly despotism which existed in the past, and has now assumed the form of a civilised society. This state is before our eyes, and we can see the oppressions and injustices of strong nations to weak ones, as recorded in the pages of history

Formerly the way was for a man called Pharaoh, Caesar or Kasra to do what he desired to the weak and helpless people of the time. And if sometimes he offered an apology and accounted for his actions, he claimed that such deeds were the privilege of the sovereign and in the interest of the country, and for strengthening the foundation of the government. A ruler believed this to be the right of his genius and lordship, and he used the sword as an argument for his actions. This was the old system.

And the new system is no different. If you study the political relations existing between powerful nations and weak subordinates today, you will see that history and historical events have repeated themselves and are constantly being repeated. The only difference is that the personal form of

the past has taken the social form of the present, but the spirit is the same and the atmosphere is the same.

The way of Islam is quite free of such indulgence of desires. and our reason is the Prophet's methods in conquests and agreements.

(b) Another difference between the ways of the Islamic government and other forms of governments, as recorded by history, is that in such societies some kind of class differences have always existed ending in corruption. These class differences whether from the viewpoint of wealth or rank or position resulting in corruption, have always been an inseparable part of such governments, but the society created by Islam is a society consisting of similar parts in which no member has priority over another, and there is no feeling of superiority, haughtiness and lordliness.

The only difference based on human nature is virtue, and virtue is a matter related to God, not to people:

Surely those who lower their voices before Allah's Messenger are they whose hearts Allah has proved for guarding (against evil); they shall have forgiveness and a great reward.

(Al - Hujraat, 49: 3)

“....Therefore hasten lo good deeds.” (Al-Baqara, 2: 148)

Thus with respect to the course of law and the removal of class differences in social matters, all people, whether the winner or loser of a suit, the ruler and the ruled, the head or the subordinate, the freeman and the slave, man and woman, rich and poor, big and small, are in the same position in Islam. The best evidence of that is the character of the Prophet<sup>2</sup>.

(c) The executive power in Islam does not consist of a privileged class of society, but all members of an Islamic society wield to it. Each individual has a duty of directing others to goodness and charity, and forbid badness.

In short there exist many differences between the school of Islam and other schools, which are not concealed from the eyes of a true scholar.

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All the points mentioned above, existed in the lifetime of the Prophet (S), for the leadership and guardianship of society belonged to the Prophet to himself, and his method of governing had no similarity with those of other governments, for the reasons mentioned above. But after the Prophet (S), the Muslims as a community believe that the nomination of a Caliph as a ruler is the concern as a whole of Muslims.

The Shi'ite sect, however, believe that the Caliph is chosen explicitly by God and the Prophet (S) and as explained in the theological books, the number of Imams after the Prophet (S) has been twelve.

In any case, after the Prophet (S) and in the absence of an Imam, such as the present time, the government of Islam is undoubtedly a concern of the Muslims. What can be deduced from the Qur'an concerning this matter is that the Muslims are duty bound to choose the ruler for their society according to the same method employed by the Prophet (S).

His method was the tradition of the mission of the Imam, not the ways of kingship or empires. His way was to propagate God's injunctions among people without any alteration. And in the case of what are not injunctions,

such as the events which occurred at different times or places, he managed them in consultation with the council of Muslims.

The proof of all this is the numerous verses which we have already quoted on the subject of the Prophet's leadership and guardianship. These verses to which may be added verse 21 of chapter 33 complete our discussion.

“The way of God 1s Prophet is a good example for you” (Al-Ahzab, 33:21)

### **Notes**

1. It means that not only one or two, rather all the evidences must be examined.
2. Greetings be on the Prophet (S) who possessed this character.

### **13. The Frontier of the Islamic Realm is “Belief” Not Natural Or Conventional Limits**

Islam has discarded the concept of dividing mankind into nations, and does not allow materialism to be the basis of the creation of a society.

National ramification has two main agents:

- (a) Desert and tribal life in which tribes, races and families branch off.
- (b) Differences of zones and lands in which they live.

The geographical factors play an important part in imparting a 'second nature' to people, such as attributable to climate, precipitation and aridity etc. These factors tend to split mankind into groups and tribes, and cause differences of colour and language.

These two factors have caused each group to seize a piece of land. These lands differed in size as a result of the efforts and labours of the group concerned. If they had superiority they would seize bigger lands, and if not, smaller. Each group called that land 'fatherland' and defended it with all its might.

Although this was a matter resulting from the natural needs of men, yet national ramification is contrary to human nature which is living together in a single community. It is clear that nature wishes to collect all the dispersed powers and join them, thus creating a new united power to attain their goal in a more complete and suitable way.

This process is observed in the original substance which takes the form of an element, and gradually appears as plant, animal and man. This is the work of nature. But ramifications which are created on the basis and in the name of 'fatherland', direct a nation to be united in their own particular community, and be separated from other national societies.

Thus a unit is created that is different physically and spiritually from other national units. The result is that humanity withdraws from unity and association, and suffers from the same deviation which it wished to avoid. This will result in a dangerous situation, and that is, one of those national units may deal with other social units in the same way, as a man deals with other things which exist in nature, that is, as he recruits and exploits them, a national unit may recruit and exploit other nations.

The wide experiences since the beginning of time prove this statement: The Qur'an, too, affirms this view in the verses which we have already quoted.

Islam base society on 'belief' not 'race' or 'nation', or 'fatherland' and such things. Even in marriage and kinship the same methods of belief holds true from the viewpoint of sexual enjoyment and inheritance.

The orbit of marriage and kinship are monotheism, not home and country. The best evidence of this is that in discussing the religious injunctions of this faith, we observe that in no case has religion been neglected.

The Islamic society at the height of its greatness and raising the banner of victory is duty bound to raise religion and allow no deviation in religious matters. Again when the Islamic society is vanquished, it must make every effort to revive religion and its teachings and so on.

Even when a Muslim lives where there are limitations, he should do his best in carrying out religious injunctions even if it is only by mute signs in obligatory deviations.

Thus, it is clear that the Islamic community is created in a way to be able to live under all conditions; whether it is dominant or subordinate, victorious or defeated, advanced or retarded, manifest or hidden, powerful or weak, it can preserve religion. The warning verses of the Qur'an affirm this point very clearly.

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