

# **THE RECONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN ISLAM**

**By**

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## **Preface**

The Quran is a book which emphasizes 'deed' rather than 'idea'. The day is not far off when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies. Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it.

## **Knowledge and Religious Experience**

Religion, in its more advanced form moves from individual to society; in its more advanced form, it is opposed to limitations of man; it held out the prospects of; it is opposed to the limitations of man; it enlarges his claims and holds out the prospect of nothing less than a direct vision of reality.

The essence of religion is faith; faith is more than mere feeling. Quran regards 'hearing' and 'sight' as the most valuable Divine gifts and declares them to be accountable to God for their activity in this world.

The spirit of the Quran was essentially anti-classical, and the result of this perception was a kind of intellectual revolt, the full signification of which has not been realized even to the present day. In the domain of knowledge – scientific or religious - complete independence of thought from concrete experience is not possible.

Thought and intuition are organically related and thought must necessarily stimulate finitude and inconclusiveness because of its alliance with serial time. The idea that thought is essentially finite, and, for this reason, unable to capture the infinite, is based on a mistaken notion of the movement of thought in knowledge. In its

essential nature, then, thought is not static; it is a dynamic and unfolds its internal infinitude in time like the seed which, from the very beginning, carries within itself the organic unity of the tree as a present fact. It is in fact the presence of the total Infinite in the movement of knowledge that makes finite thinking possible. It is in its progressive participation of the apparently alien that thought demolishes the walls of its finitude, which keeps alive within it the flame of aspiration and sustains it in its endless pursuit. It is a mistake to regard thought as inconclusive.

The extension of man's power over Nature has given him a new faith and a fresh sense of superiority over the forces that constitute his environment.

Surely, it is high time to look to the essentials of Islam. In these lectures I propose to undertake a philosophical discussion of some of the basic ideas of Islam, in the hope that this may, at least be helpful towards a proper understanding of the meaning of Islam as a message to humanity. I propose, in this preliminary lecture, to consider the character of knowledge and religious experience.

The main purpose of the Quran is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold revelations with God and the universe.

The great point in Christianity is the search for an independent content for spiritual life which, according to the insight of its founder, could be elevated, not by the forces of a world external to the soul of man, but by the revelation of a new world within his soul. Islam fully agrees with this insight and supplements it by the further insight that the illumination of the new world thus revealed is not something foreign to the world of matter but permeates it through and through. Islam, recognizing the contact of the ideal with the real, says 'yes' to the world of matter and points the way to master it with a view to discover a basis for the realistic regulation of life.

The essential requisite for man is 'complete subjugation of man to God'. His duty is to reflect on the signs of God, and thus discover the means of realizing his conquest of nature as an actual fact.

When attracted by the forces around him, man has the power to shape and direct them; when thwarted by them, he has the capacity to build a much vaster world in the depths of his own inner being, wherein he discovers sources of infinite joy and inspiration. Hard his lot and frail his being, yet no form of reality is so powerful,

so inspiring, and so beautiful as the spirit of man! Thus in his innermost being man, as conceived by the Quran, is a creative activity, an ascending spirit who, in his onward march, rises from one state of being to another.

It is the lot of man to share in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and to shape his own destiny as well as that of the universe, now by adjusting himself to its forces, now by putting whole of his energy to mould its forces to his own ends and purposes. And in this process of progressive change God becomes a co-worker with him, provided man takes the initiative: '*verily God will not change the conditions of men, till they change what is in themselves.*' (13:14). If he does not take the initiative, if he does not evolve the inner richness of his being, if he ceases to feel the inward push of advancing life, then the spirit within him hardens into stone and he is reduced to the level of dead matter. But his life and the onward march of his spirit depend on the establishment of connections with the reality that confronts him. It is knowledge that establishes these connections, and knowledge is sense-perception elaborated by understanding. Thus the character of man's knowledge is conceptual, and it is with the weapon of this conceptual knowledge that man approaches the observable aspect of Reality.

The immediate purpose of the Quran in this reflective observation of nature is to awaken in man the consciousness of that which nature is regarded as symbol. But the point to note is the general empirical attitude of the Quran which engendered in its followers a feeling of reverence for the actual and ultimately made them the founders of modern science. According to the Quran, the universe has a serious end. The intellectual effort to overcome the obstruction offered by the universe, besides enriching and amplifying our life, sharpens our intellect, and thus prepares us for a more masterful insertion into subtler aspects of human experience. The Quran opens our eyes to the great fact of change, through the appreciation and control of which alone it is possible to build a durable civilization.

In the interests of securing a complete vision of Reality, therefore, sense perception must be supplemented by the perception of what the Quran describes as "Qalb" i.e., heart. The heart is a kind

of inner intuition or insight. It is, according to the Quran, something which 'sees' and reports, if properly interpreted, are never false.

In all knowledge there is an element of passion, and the object of knowledge gains or loses in objectivity with the rise and fall in the intensity of passion.

Religious experience, is essentially a state of feeling with a cognitive aspect, the content of which cannot be communicated to others, except in the form of a judgment

### **The Revelations of Religious Experience.**

There is no doubt that the theories of science constitute trustworthy knowledge, because they are verifiable and enable us to predict and control the events of Nature. But we must not forget that what is called science is not a single systematic view of Reality.

There is nothing static in my inner life; all is a constant mobility, an unceasing flux of states, a perpetual flow in which there is no halt or resting place

It is only in the moments of profound mediation, when the efficient-self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner center of experience.

The universe, according to the Quran, is liable to increase. It is a growing universe and not an already completed product which left the hand of its Maker ages ago, and is now lying stretched in space as a dead mass of matter to which time does nothing, and consequently is nothing. Nature, then, must be understood as a living, ever-growing organism whose growth has no final external limits. Its only limit is internal, i.e., the immanent self which animates and sustains the whole. The knowledge of Nature is the knowledge of God's behaviour.

Time is an essential element in Reality. But real time is not serial time to which the distinction of past, present and future is essential; it is pure duration, i.e., change without succession.

The only kind of life known to us is desire, pursuit, failure, or attainment – a continuous change from one situation to another. Life is change, and change is essentially imperfection. It is change in the sense of a movement from an imperfect to a relatively perfect state, or *vice versa*.

The facts of experience justify the inference that the ultimate nature of Reality is spiritual, and must be conceived as an ego. But the aspiration religion soars higher than that of philosophy. Philosophy is an intellectual view of things. It sees Reality from a distance as it were. Religion seeks closer contact with reality. The one is theory, the other is living experience, association, intimacy. In order to achieve this intimacy thought must rise higher than itself, and find its fulfillment in an attitude of mind which religion describes as prayer – one of the last words on the lips of the Prophet of Islam.

### **The Conception of God and the Meaning of Prayer**

The judgment based upon religious experience fully satisfies the intellectual test. In order to emphasize the individuality of the Ultimate Ego the Quran gives Him the proper name of Allah, and further defines Him as follows:

Say: Allah is One;  
All things depend on Him;  
He begetteth not, and He is not begotten;  
And there is none like unto Him.

The teaching of modern physics is that velocity of light cannot be exceeded. Thus, in the world of change, light is the nearest approach to the Absolute. The other important elements in the Quranic conception of God, from the purely intellectual point of view, are Creativeness, Knowledge, Omnipotence and Eternity.

The life of the self consists in its movement from appreciation to efficiency, from intuition to intellect, and atomic time is born out of this movement.

You are immediately aware of the idea as complex whole, but the intellectual working out of its numerous bearings is a matter of time. Intuitively all the possibilities of the idea are present in your mind. If a specific possibility, as such, is not intellectually known to you at a certain moment of time, it is not because your knowledge is defective, but because there is yet no possibility to become known. The idea reveals the possibility of its application with advancing experience, and sometimes it takes more than a generation of thinkers before these possibilities are exhausted.

The truth is that the whole theological controversy relating to the predestination of is due to pure speculation with no eye on on the spontaneity of life, which is a fact of actual life.

The Quran always fixes its gaze on the concrete which the theory of relativity has only recently taught modern philosophy to see. The Quran has a clear and definite conception of Nature as a cosmos of mutually related forces. We cannot understand the full import of the great cosmic forces which work havoc, and at the same time sustain and amplify life. The teaching of the Quran, which believes in the possibility of improvement in the behaviour of man and his control over natural forces, is neither optimism nor pessimism.

The Quran declares the earth to be the 'dwelling place' of man and a 'source of profit' to him for the possession of which he should be grateful to God.

Goodness is not a matter of compulsion, it is the self's free surrender to the moral ideal and arises out of a willing cooperation of free egos. Freedom is thus a condition of goodness. The freedom to choose good involves also the freedom to choose what is the opposite of good. That God has taken the risk shows His immense faith in man; it is for man now to justify this faith.

It is the nature of the self to maintain itself as a self. For this purpose it seeks knowledge, self-multiplication and power, or, in the words of the Quran, 'the kingdom that never faileth'

The life of a finite ego in an obstructing environment depends on the perpetual expansion of knowledge based on actual experience. Error which may be described as a kind of intellectual evil is an indispensable factor in the building up of experience.

To live is to possess a definite outline, a concrete individuality, manifested in the countless varieties of living forms that the Ultimate Ego reveals the infinite wealth of His being.

True manhood, according to the Quran, consists in 'patience under ills and hardships'.

Faith in the eventual triumph of goodness emerges as a religious doctrine. Religious ambition soars higher than the ambition of philosophy. Religion is not satisfied with mere conception; it seeks a more intimate knowledge of and association with the object of its

pursuit. The agency through which this association is achieved is the act of worship or prayer ending in spiritual illumination.

The great American psychologist Professor William James says: 'Most men, either continually or occasionally, carry a reference to the impulse to pray in their breasts. The humblest outcast on this earth can feel himself to be real and valid by means of this higher cognition. It is probable that men differ a good deal in the degree in which they are haunted by this sense of an ideal spectator. It is a much more essential part of the consciousness of some men than others. But I am sure that even those who say they are altogether without it deceive themselves, and really have it in some degree.'

Psychologically speaking, prayer is instinctive in its origin. The act of prayer as aiming at knowledge resembles reflection. Like reflection it too is a process of assimilation, but the assimilative process in the case of prayer draws itself closely together and thereby acquires a powerful unknown to pure thought. In thought the mind observes and follows the working of Reality; in the act of prayer it gives up its career as a seeker of slow-footed universality and rises higher than thought to capture Reality itself with a view to become a conscious participant in its life. Prayer as a means of spiritual illumination is a normal vital act by which the little island of our personality suddenly discovers its situation in a larger whole of life.

In fact, prayer must be regarded as a necessary complement to the intellectual activity of the observer of Nature. The scientific observation of Nature keeps us in close contact with the behaviour of Reality, and thus sharpens our inner perception for a deeper vision of it. The truth is that all search for knowledge is essentially a form of prayer. Prayer in Islam is the ego's escape from mechanism to freedom.

Vision without power does bring moral elevation but cannot give a lasting culture. Power without vision tends to become destructive and inhuman. Both must combine for the spiritual expansion of humanity.

It is a psychological truth that association multiplies the normal man's power of perception, deepened his emotion, and dynamizes his will to a degree unknown to him in the privacy of his individuality. With Islam, this socialization of spiritual illumination through

associative prayer is a special point of interest. The Islamic institution of worship gradually enlarges the sphere of human association. The Islamic form of association in prayer is indicative of the aspiration to realize the essential unity of mankind as a fact in life by demolishing all barriers which stand between man and man. (This aspiration cannot be achieved without such action.)

### **The Human Ego – His Freedom and Immortality**

The Quran in its simple, forceful manner emphasizes the individuality and uniqueness of man, and has a definite view of his destiny as a unity of life. It is in consequence of this view which makes it impossible for one individual to bear the burden of another, and entitles him only to what is due to his personal efforts, that the Quran is led to reject the idea of redemption.

Three things are perfectly clear from the Quran: (i) That man is the chosen of God; (ii) That man with all his faults, is meant to be the representative of God on earth; (iii) That man is the trustee of a free personality which he accepts at his peril. Yet surprisingly the unity of human consciousness which constitutes the center of human personality never really becomes a point of interest in the history of Muslim thought. The Quran declares the unity of inner experience, History and Nature as the three sources of knowledge

The task before the modern Muslim is immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past. His inexhaustible but divided energy could have devoted itself entirely to Islam as a system of human belief and conduct, the world of Islam, intellectually speaking, would have been on a much more solid ground today. The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge, even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us.

My pleasures, pains and desires are exclusively mine, forming a part and parcel of my private ego alone. My feelings, hates and loves, judgments and resolutions, are exclusive mine. In order to recognize the others I must have known them in the past. My recognition of a place or person means reference to my past experience of another ego.

The soul is an organ of the body which exploits it for physiological purposes, or the body is an instrument of the soul, are equally true propositions on the theory in interaction. Whether an emotion will grow farther, or that a stimulus will continue to work, depends on my attending to it. It is the mind's consent which eventually decides the fate of an emotion or a stimulus.

It is not the origin of a thing that matters, it is the capacity, the significance and the final reach of the emergent that matters. The emergent is an unforeseeable and novel fact on its own plane of being, and cannot be explained mechanically. The Ultimate Ego that make the emergent emerge. Is immanent in nature and is described in the Quran as 'The First and the Last, the visible and the invisible.'

The human act of deliberation is understood to be a conflict of motives which are conceived, not as the ego's own present and inherited tendencies of action or inaction, but as so many external forces fighting one another, gladiator-like, on the arena of the mind. Yet the final choice is regarded as a fact determined by the strongest force, and not by the resultant of contending motives, like the purely physical act.

The 'unceasing reward' of man consists in his gradual growth in self-possession, in uniqueness, and intensity of his activity as an ego. Life offers a scope for ego-activity. It is the deed that prepares the ego for dissolution, or disciplines him for a future career. Personal immortality is not ours as of right; it is to be achieved by personal effort.

The world of today needs people who could create an attitude of hope, and to kindle the fire of enthusiasm for life.

Life is one and continuous. Man marches always onward to receive ever fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality, which 'every moment appears in a new glory'. And the recipient of Divine illumination is not merely a passive recipient. Every act of a free ego creates a new situation, and thus offers further opportunities of creative unfolding.

## **The Spirit of Muslim Culture**

Muhammad ascended the highest Heaven and returned. The Prophet's return is creative. He returns to insert himself into sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to

create a fresh world of ideals. The desire to see his religious experiences transformed into a living world-force is supreme in the prophet. Another way of judging the value of a prophet's religious experience would be to examine the type of manhood that he has created and the cultural effect that has sprung out of the spirit of his message.

Man is primarily governed by passion and instinct. Inductive reason, which alone makes man master of his environment, is an achievement; and once born it must be reinforced by inhibiting the growth of other modes of knowledge.

The Prophet of Islam seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. In so far as the source of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the ancient world; in so far as the spirit of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the modern world. In him life discovers other sources of knowledge suitable to its new direction. The birth of Islam is the birth of inductive intellect. This involves the keep perception that that life cannot for ever be kept in leading strings; that in order to achieve full self-consciousness man must be finally thrown back on his own resources. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kinship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran, and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and History as the sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality. The idea, however, does not mean that mystic experience, which qualitatively does not differ from the experience of the prophet, has now ceased to exist as a vital fact. Indeed the Quran regards both '*Anfus*' (self) and '*Afaq*' (world) as sources of knowledge. God reveals His signs in inner as well as outer experience, and it is the duty of man to judge the knowledge-yielding capacity of all aspects of experience. The idea of finality, therefore, should not be taken to suggest that that the ultimate fate of life is complete displacement of emotion by reason. Such a thing is neither possible nor desirable.

Inner experience is only one source of human knowledge. According to the Quran there are two other sources of knowledge – Nature and History; and it is in tapping these sources of knowledge that the spirit of Islam is seen at its best.

What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of enquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the method of

experiment, observation and measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs.

Knowledge must begin with the concrete. It is the intellectual capture of and power over the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect of man to pass beyond the concrete

Christianity, long before Islam, brought the message of equality to mankind.; but Christian Rome did not rise to the full apprehension of the idea of humanity as a single organism.

History, as a continuous movement in time, is a genuinely creative movement and not a movement whose path is already determined.

### **The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam**

All human life is spiritual in its origin. Such a perception makes it possible for man to emancipate himself from the earth.

It is only natural that Islam should have flashed across the consciousness of a simple people untouched by any of the ancient cultures, and occupying the geographical position where three continents meet together. The new culture finds the foundation of world-unity in the principle of 'Tauhid'. Islam as a polity is only a practical means of making this principle a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind. It demands loyalty to God, not to thrones. And since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to God virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature.

Our modern Ulema do not see that the ultimate fate of a people does not depend so much on organization as on the worth and power of individual men. In an over-organized society the individual is altogether crushed out of existence. He gains the whole wealth of social thought around him and loses his own soul.

The verdict of history is that worn-out ideas have never risen to power among who have worn them out. The only effective power, therefore, that counteracts the forces of decay in the people is the rearing of self-concentrated individuals. Such individuals alone reveal the depth of life. They disclose new standards in the light of which we begin to see that our environment is not wholly inviolable and requires revision. The tendency to over-organization by a false

reverence of the past, as manifested in the legalists of Islam in the thirteenth century and later, was contrary to the inner impulse of Islam.

The ultimate Reality, according to the Quran, is spiritual, and its life consists in its temporal activity. The spirit finds its opportunities in the natural, the material, the secular. All that is secular is therefore sacred in the roots of its being. The greatest service that modern thought has rendered to Islam, and as a matter of fact to all religions, consists in its criticism of what we call material or natural – a criticism which discloses that the merely material has no substance until we discover it rooted in the spiritual. There is no such thing as a profane world. All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of spirit. All is holy ground. As the Prophet so beautifully puts it: The whole of this earth is a mosque'. The State according to Islam is only an effort to realize the spiritual in a human organization.

A true and living unity is truly manifested in a multiplicity of free independent units whose racial rivalries are adjusted and harmonized by the unifying bond of a common spiritual aspiration. It seems to me that God is slowly bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations, which recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members.

If the aim of religion is the spiritualization of the heart, then it can best penetrate the inner man only if its spiritualizing ideas are clothed in his mother tongue.

The question that is likely to confront Muslim countries in the near future, is whether the Law of Islam is capable of evolution – a question which will require great intellectual effort, and is sure to be answered in the affirmative; provided the world of Islam approaches it in the spirit of Omar – the first critical and independent mind in Islam who, at the last moments of the Prophet, had the moral courage to utter these remarkable words: 'The Book of God is sufficient for us'.

A deeper study of the enormous legal literature of Islam is sure to rid the modern critic of the superficial opinion that the Law of Islam is stationary and incapable of development. Unfortunately, the

conservative Muslim public of this country is not yet ready for a critical discussion if 'Fiqh', which, if undertaken, is likely to displease most people, and raise sectarian controversies; yet I offer to offer a few remarks.

1. We should bear in mind that from the earliest times, practicably up to the rise of the Abbasids, there was no written law of Islam apart from the Quran.

2. From about the middle of the first century up to the beginning of the fourth not less than nineteen schools of law and legal opinion appeared in Islam. With the expansion of conquest and the consequent widening of the outlook of Islam these early legists had to take a wider view of things, and to study local conditions of life and habits of new peoples that came within the fold of Islam. Thus the various schools of legal opinion gradually passed from the deductive to the inductive attitude in their efforts at interpretation.

3. When we study the four accepted sources of Islamic Law and the controversies they invoked, the supposed rigidity of our reorganized schools evaporate, and the possibility of a further evaluation becomes perfectly clear. Let us discuss these sources.

(a) The Quran. The primary source of the Law of Islam is the Quran. The Quran, however, is not a legal code. Its main purpose is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his relation with God and the universe. No doubt the Quran does lay down a few general principles and rules of a legal nature, especially relating to the family – the ultimate basis of social life. But why are these rules made part of a revelation, the ultimate aim of which is man's higher life? Because the Quran considers it necessary to unite religion and State much in the same way as Plato does in his *Republic*.

The important point to note in this connection is the dynamic outlook of the Quran. It is obvious that with such an outlook the Holy Book of Islam cannot be inimical to the idea of evolution. We should not forget that life is not change, pure and simple. It has within it elements of conservatism also. While enjoying his creative activity, and always focusing his energies on the discovery of new vistas of life, man has a feeling of uneasiness in the presence of his own enfoldment. In his forward movement he cannot help looking back to his past. No people can afford to reject their past entirely; for it is their past that has made their personal identity. Islam is non-

territorial in its character, and its aim is to furnish a model for the final combination of humanity by drawing its adherents from a variety of mutually repellent races, and then transforming this atomic aggregate into a people possessing a self-consciousness of their own. This was not an easy task to accomplish.

Since things have changed and the world of Islam is today confronted and affected by new forces set free by the extraordinary development of human thought in all its direction, see no reason why this attitude (of the Ulema) should be maintained any longer. That teaching of the Quran that life is a process of progressive creation necessitates that each generation, guided but unhampered by the work of their predecessors, should be permitted to solve its own problems.

Marriage, according to Muslim Law, is a civil contract. The wife at the time of marriage is at liberty to get the husband's power of divorce delegated to her on stated conditions, and thus secure equality of divorce with her husband. The Quran says: 'And for women are rights over men similar to those for men over women.'

(b) The hadis. The second great source of Islamic Law is the traditions of the Holy Prophet. A European writer, after examining the Muslim methods of determining the genuineness of a tradition, and pointing out the theoretical possibilities of error, arrives at the following conclusion: ' It may be said that for the most part the collections of Sunnah considered by the Muslims as canonical are genuine records of the rise and early growth of Islam'.

For our present purpose, however, we must distinguish tradition of purely legal import from those which are of a non-legal character. Shah Wali Ullah has a very illuminating discussion on this point. The prophetic method of teaching, according to him, is that, generally speaking, law revealed by a prophet takes special notice of the habits, ways and peculiarities of the people to whom he is specifically sent. His method is to train one particular people, and to use them as a nucleus for the building up of a universal Sharia'at. In doing so he accentuates the principles underlying the social life of all mankind, and applies them to concrete cases in the light of the specific habit of the people immediately before him. The Shari'at values (*Ahkam*) resulting from this application (e.g., rules relating to penalties for crimes) are in a sense specific to that people; and, since

their observation is not an end in itself, they cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations. It was perhaps in view of this that Abu Hanifa, who had a keen insight into the universal character of Islam, made practically no use of these traditions. If modern Liberalism considers it safer not to make any indiscriminate use of them as a source of law, it will be only following one of the greatest exponents of Muslim Law in Sunni Islam. It is, however, impossible to deny the fact that the traditionalists, by insisting on the value of the concrete case as against the tendency of abstract thinking in law, have done the greatest service to the Law of Islam.

© The Ijma. It is extremely satisfactory to note that the pressure of new world forces and the political experience of European nations are impressing on the mind of modern Islam the value and possibilities of the idea of Ijma. The growth of republican spirit, and the gradual formation of legislative assemblies in Muslim lands constitutes a great step in advance. The transfer of power if Ijtihad from individual representatives of schools (of thought) to a Muslim legislative assembly which, in view of the growth of opposing sects, is the only possible form Ijma can take in modern times, will secure contributions to legal discussions from laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into affairs. In this way alone we can stir into activity the dormant spirit of life in our legal system, and give it an evolutionary outlook.

Later generations are not bound by the decisions of the Companions of the Prophet, individually or unanimously. The Sunnah of the Companions is binding in matters which cannot be cleared up by Qiyas, but it is not so in matters which can be established by Qiyas.

(d) The Qiyas. The fourth basis of *fiqh* is Qiyas, i.e., the use of analogical reasoning in legislation. The intricate behaviour of life cannot be subjected to hard and fast rules logically deducible from certain general notions. Thus the school of Abu Hanifa tended to ignore the creative freedom and arbitrariness of life, and hoped to build a logically perfect legal system on the lines of pure reason.

Humanity needs three things today – a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual and basic principle of a universal import directing the human society on a spiritual basis. Experience shows that truth revealed through pure

reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. This is the reason why pure thought has so little influenced men while religion has always elevated individuals, and transformed whole societies. Europe today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement. The Muslim, on the other hand, is in possession of these ultimate ideas on the basis of a revelation, which, speaking from the inmost depths of life, internalizes its own apparent externality. With him the spiritual basis of life is a matter of conviction for which even the least enlightened man among us can easily lay down his life; and in view of the basic idea of Islam that there can be no further revelation binding on man, we ought to be spiritually one of the most emancipated peoples on earth. Let the Muslims of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam.

### **Is Religion Possible**

The individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law, but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness. As in the words of a Muslim Sufi –'no understanding of the Holy Book is possible until it is actually revealed to the believer just as it was revealed to the Prophet.' Religion in this sense is known by the unfortunate name of Mysticism, which is supposed to be a life-denying, fact-avoiding attitude of mind directly opposed to the empirical outlook of our times. Higher religion is only a search for a larger life, is essentially experience and recognized the necessity of experience as its foundation long before science learnt to do so. It is a genuine attempt to clarify human consciousness, and is, as such, as critical of its level of experience as Naturalism is of its own level.

Religion, which is essentially a mode of actual living, is the only serious way of handling Reality. In so far as the ultimate nature of Reality is concerned nothing is at stake in the venture of science; in the religious venture the whole career of the ego, as an assimilative personal center of life and experience, is at stake. A wrong concept misleads the understanding; a wrong deed degrades the whole man, and may eventually demolish the structure of human ego. The mere

concept affects life only partially; the deed is dynamically related to reality and issues from a generally constant attitude of the whole man towards reality.

The modern man's secret despair hides itself behind the screen of scientific terminology. Wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man has ceased to live soulfully, i.e., from within. In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others. He finds himself unable to control his ruthless egoism and his infinite gold-hunger which is gradually killing all higher striving in him and bring him nothing but life-weariness. Disappointed of a purely religious method of spiritual renewal which alone brings us into touch with the everlasting fountain of life and power by expanding our thought and emotion, the Modern Muslim fondly hopes to unlock fresh sources of energy by narrowing down his thought and emotion. Both nationalism and atheistic socialism, at least in the present state of human adjustments, must draw upon the psychological forces of hate, suspicion and resentment which tend to impoverish the soul of man and close up his hidden sources of spiritual energy. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and wither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values.

Judging from the various types of activity that emanated from the movement initiated by the Prophet of Islam, his spiritual tension and the kind of behaviour which issued from it, cannot be regarded as a response to a mere fantasy inside the brain. It is impossible to understand it except as a response to an objective situation generative of new enthusiasm, new organizations, new starting-points. His way is not to classify facts and discover causes; he thinks

in terms of life and movement with a view to create new patters of behaviour for mankind.

Christianity has already fulfilled its biological mission, and it is impossible for the modern man to understand its original significance.

Modern psychology has not yet touched even the outer fringe of religious life, and is still far from the richness and variety of what is called religious experience.

God is infinite. No body can encompass Him; and this is the extreme limit of spiritual experience.

The truth is that the religious and scientific processes, though involving different methods, are identical in their final aim. Both aim at reaching the most real. In fact, religion is far more anxious to reach the ultimate real than science. And, to both, the way to pure objectivity lies through what may be called the purification of experience.

The final experience is the revelation of a new life-process – original, essential, spontaneous. The eternal secret of the ego is that the moment he reaches this final revelation he recognizes it as the ultimate root of his being without the slightest hesitation. The only danger to which the ego is exposed in this Divine quest is the possible relaxation of his activity caused by his enjoyment of and absorption in the experiences that precede the final experience.

The ultimate aim of the ego is not to see something, but to *be* something. The final act is not an intellectual act, but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego, and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and remade by continuous action. It is a moment of supreme bliss and also a moment of the greatest trial for the ego.

See thyself with thy own light;

See thyself with the light of an ego other than thee;

See thyself with the light of God;

That man alone is real who dares -

Dares to see God face to face!

Tighten the knot of thy ego;

And hold fast to thy tiny being!

Re-chisel thine ancient frame;

And build up a new being

Such being id the real being;  
Or else thy ego is a mere ring of smoke!

Javid Nama  
11<sup>th</sup> October 2007