

# **ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THOUGHT**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

We must determine the class essence of the religious concepts and show that their claim to a supra-class or all-Muslim character is a mere illusion.

### **A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE REFORMATION IN ISLAM**

#### **1. The social and Epistemological Roots of Muslim Reformism**

Every great historical change in the social order is accompanied by a change in the outlook and ideas of the people involved.

The Muslims have no need to reform their faith. What is needed essentially is a representation of the whole body of Islamic wisdom in contemporary language. Affirmation of the absolute independence of ideology from social existence is wrong.

In Islam, there is no category of officially ordained clergy. The functions, similar to those of the Christian clergy, are in this case discharged by the 'ulema'. The foundation of their secular power is in the right of interpreting the word of God and depriving all the other believers of the right of independent judgment. The liberation from the sway of ulema, many of whom canonize and protect the medieval law and order, therefore, must be achieved.

Christian reformation was a strictly anti-feudal movement. In Islam, the reformation began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when capitalism is widely criticized. Anti-capitalist and anti-colonial sentiments in the countries of the Muslim world could not but be reflected in the process of the reformation of Islam.

The "modernistic" approach to the translation of the Muslim teaching is mostly characteristic of the intelligentsia and the

bourgeoisie with a European education. Such an approach does not meet with extensive support from the Muslims. The most popular in the masses are the reformist ideas, expressed in the form of the "revivalism" of the ideals of early Islam (instead of determining the principles of the Prophet's teachings) is regarded by those who profess it as the absolute divine truth. Any changes in the Qur'an and Sunnah are considered as "*bida*" (innovation) by orthodox Muslims.

The reformers primarily reject the idea of theocracy, and denounce outdated canons and standards. They call for a revision of *fiqh* and recognition of the right of the *ijtihad* – the independent judgment of every Muslim, or the democratically elected legislative body: the parliament.

Islamic reformation is a lengthy process not of superficial adaptation, but of an actual alteration of religious system of values under the pressure of the new conditions of the times.

## **2. Sectarian Mass Movements**

Sectarian religious movements preceded the theoretically grounded reformation of Islam, expressive of a spontaneous discontent with the feudal order and of unconscious aspirations to radical social change. In a few cases the sects were the result of strife between separate groups of the exploiting class, but mostly they expressed the social protest of the mass of the people.

### **The Wahabiya.**

The Wahabiya doctrine connected the modern Islamic revivalist trends with ideas of preserving the purity of Islam dating to the juridical system of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal. The most prominent theologian of of this school was Ibn Taimiya (1263-1328), who called on the faithful in his writings and sermons to follow the letter of the Qur'a and Sunnah, who rejected the *Ijtihad* and *Ijma* (consonant opinion), and who only partly accepted the *Qiyas* (Judgment by analogy). He condemned the *bida*, primarily the worship of saints and pilgrimage to their tombs. For Wahabis the greatest offence is to depart from the principle of monotheism. Muslims are not to appeal

for aid or intercession to anyone save Allah. His followers were consistent fatalists and branded as heresy the slightest doubt cast on Qadar, the divine predetermination of actions and phenomena. The influence of Imam Hanbal's juridical system declined after the fourteenth century and was superseded by that of the *mazhab* of Imam Abu Hanifa.

**Mahdism.** The spread of Mahdist dogma was evidently related to the people's yearning for a saviour. As in other religions, in Islam the messianic idea is obviously an expression of the mass discontent with the social order and of the hope of deliverance from oppression and suffering, by a divine messenger. The Mahdi of Sudan rejected the Sunnah, Tafsir and the schools of Islamic jurisprudence, who tended ideologically to consolidate the feudal social system, even the remnants of slavery. *Majlis*, the new sunnah, and the Mahdi's proclamations were directed to justifying the organization of society on a basis of equality and justice. However, the Mahdist movement could not abolish the exploitation of man by man.

**Babism.** The first attempt at a bourgeois reformation of Islam is related to the Babite movement. The Bab averred that it was time for a new prophet, because the people's suffering proved that the laws of the Quran and the Shariah had become outdated and required amendment. The time had come, he held, for new spiritual leaders to replace the *ulama* and the *hakeems*, who clung to the letter not the spirit of the faith.

The *Bayan* was proclaimed the new revelation, repealing the outdated laws of the Qur'an and Shariah., and establishing new rules and laws suited to the times. Bahatism, the religious system into which Babism has gradually transformed itself, was entirely devoid of democratic content. It denounced attempts at limiting private property, which is proclaimed sacred and inviolable, called for the purification of and enlightenment of the human spirit not for change in the law and order of human society.

**The Ahmadiya..** A peculiar attempt at adapting Islam to the needs of capitalist development was made by the sect of the *Qadianiya* or *Ahmadiya*, so named after the sect's founder Mirza

Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908), born in Punjab village of Qadian. In 1869 he founded a religious society, Anjuman-e-Ahmadia, whose members proclaimed him the new prophet in 1891. On this account he was declared a non-Muslim and the sect founded by him was treated as a non-Muslim sect.

He was for inviolability of private property and for renunciation of class struggle and advocacy for class peace. He was for loyalty of and obedience to the British authorities. He told the people of India that British rule was the 'mercy and blessing' of Allah. He renounced the dogma of the finality of Muhammad's prophecy.

### **"ISLAMIC" PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS**

The awakening of the national consciousness of the Muslim peoples and the rise of their liberation movement gave prominence in the sphere of philosophical thought to the question of the nature of man, his place in the universe, and his relationship to the Divine Absolute.

Religion postulates the existence of a Supreme Being and thereby predicates man's highly limited freedom of choice and action. This submission is accentuated by the fact that it also postulated the finality of Muhammad's prophecy. Fatalism, according to Karl Marx "the pivot of Islam", is contained in the very word of "Islam" (literally submission to the will of God) and the basic formula of worship: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet". However, there is no fatalism in the Meccan suras. Not until after the *Hijra* to Madina did Muhammad proclaim himself Allah's messenger and required complete submission to Allah and His Prophet.

The fatalistic spirit of the Quranic script was recorded and used as the groundwork for the ethical system of Islam by medieval Muslim theologians. The idea of predestination is most fully expressed in the doctrine of al-Ghazali (1058-1111). In his treatise "Delivery from Delusion" he wrote: "I am firmly convinced that for all things there is the will of Allah, the most high and the great supreme one; I am convinced that I did not perform my actions, but that He moved my behaviour, and I did not govern my deeds, but that He governed them, using me as His obedient tool."

There was a built-in contradiction in that dogma, for it was incompatible with the principle of responsibility, which the individual bore for his deeds. Could the individual be responsible for actions that did not depend on him, since they had been predestined by God? (Of course, God is all powerful and man depends on His will, for good and evil exist by His will, but at the same time he is responsible for his actions because God does not interfere in the decisions he takes on his own. Man has been given complete freedom to choose his way but God responds to the requests of man in the endeavours he makes in His way.. The dogma of predestination, as advocated by Ghazali, is wrong - SHS)

Absolute fatalism was questioned by the *Kharjiaa's* and the *Mutazilas* who thought man had the freedom to interfere in the existing legal order and to alter it in accordance with his notion of good and evil. Thereby their systems gave theoretical backing for the idea of political opposition to the ruling power.

God is all-powerful, compassionate and merciful, and man depends upon His will, but is also responsible for his own actions.

## **1. Ontological Ideas**

Iqbal said" All reality was "essentially spiritual"; the world is the self-revelations of the ultimate reality God. God is the Ego that gave birth to a multiplicity of egos at different levels, each of them serving God's self-expression. By contending that substances had different levels, he ascribed to man a special place and elevated him to the status of co-participation in creation. According to Muhammad Sharif God was "ever active and ever creative".

Saiyed Ahmad Khan, the Indian reformer of Islam saw everything existing in the world as being tied together by a casual chain. At the extreme end of that chain he saw the cause of all causes, the original cause – God, who has created a perfect mechanism functioning according to definite laws. A perfect mechanism does not require any intercession by the creator, since it was governed by eternal and immutable laws of nature. In the sphere of morality, God is the creator of good and evil, but man himself chooses between them. It was wrong to assume, therefore, that reward and punishment is dependent on God's will; they

originate from the laws of verity and falsehood. In other words, the laws of nature and morality "have been defined by God, but He has assigned for himself the role only of the prime mover".

Saiyed Ahmad Khan negated the possibility of miracles. He maintained: simply not all the laws were yet known to people, and therefore some phenomena could look like miracles. Man must not pin his hopes on the supernatural or on the fulfillment of pleas and wishes contained in prayer. The laws of nature and morality were created by God and could not be altered by anyone, not even the creator himself. All that prayer could yield was comfort and consolation, nothing more. He set the Almighty apart from the real life of nature and society.

Abul Kalam Azad assumed that it was unnatural for man to doubt the existence of God, let alone to deny it. The human being, he said, was incapable of understanding the divine attributes. By declaring that divine justice is retribution for people's acts, Azad placed the responsibility for these acts on the individual who performed them, and thereby attributed a certain amount of freedom to the individual's will.

## **2. Epistemological Ideas**

The problem of the freedom of man's will depends on the answer to the question of whether the world is cognizable, because, to quote Engels, it means "nothing but the capacity to make decisions with knowledge of the subject". A negative part in the fight against freethinking was played by the closure of the "doors of *Ijtihad* – the right to independent judgment – in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The second source of the Islamic doctrine – the Sunnah (literally, the way, the direction, and figuratively, "custom come down from ancestors"). The sunnah is a collection of traditions from the deeds and sayings ascribed to the Prophet. The official recognition under the Omayyad dynasty of the Sunnah along with the Qur'an as the *asl*, the root of the Muslim religious doctrine, stimulated the composition, writing and collection of the *Ahadith*. Historians have proved that most of the *Ahadith* are not authentically traceable to Muhammad. But this does not detract from them as a source of

knowledge about the social and political development of the countries of the Caliphate in the early feudal period.

Several *mazhabs* (schools of thought) emerged in orthodox Islam, of which four are in existence – the Hanifites, Malkis, Shafais and Hanbalites. Thereafter, the “absolute” *Ijtihad* was proclaimed closed. The fundamental principles of the faith and the law were not be used as objects for independent judgment. There could be *Ijtihad fil-mazhab*, that is judgment within the frame of the legal principles adopted by a legal school. But after this *Ijtihad* was accepted by consensus – the *Ijma* – a new judgment on the question at hand was ruled out. Henceforth, Muslims were expected to follow the *taklid* (literally, drawing the noose round the animal’s neck in order to lead it in the required direction). For the devout, this principle meant rigid observance of decisions made in the past, notably in the first three or four centuries of Muslim history (i.e., in the period of the Arab monarchs – SHS)

The closing of the *Ijtihad* greatly affected the destiny of the Muslim peoples. It provided a religious basis for opposing innovation. Attempts to alter the ethical and social teaching of Islam and the political and economic structure of the Muslim feudal society on the basis of interpretations of religious principles and tenets differing from those given by theologians and legists differing from those in time gone by, were cut short as an intolerable heresy.

The demand to “open the doors of the *Ijtihad*” made by Muslim ideologues in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was not a merely individual protest against the existing legal order hallowed by religious tradition. It was an insistent demand of the times, a new direction of social and political thought in the Muslim countries impelled by a whole set of factors, not least of all the growth of capitalist relations and the struggle for national liberation.

Revival of the *Ijtihad* provided grounds of revising and reassessing not only the legal injunctions of Islam, but also the entire doctrine. It recognized man’s right to a definite freedom of will and action so essential for the development of initiative and active participation in the rearrangement of society. Like Protestantism, which rejected the mediation of the Church and advocated man’s personal communion with God, the Muslim reformation which

rejected blind observation of the *taklid* thereby rejected the mediation of Muslim jurists, the peculiar Islamic priesthood.

Muhammad Abduh, the great Egyptian scholar maintained in his treatise, "The Theology of Unity", that "there is nothing impossible for reason to tackle" and that, the "Supreme Being and its perfect attributes are rationally cognizable". He amplified in the same treatise, "The most that our reason can achieve is a knowledge of the accidents, but not the essence of things." Generally speaking, Abduh wrote, the human mind is not competent to know of God, of the life to come, nor yet to comprehend the requital which every sort of action will receive in that world. The mind, he said, was potentially unlimited, and for those who possess the perfect intellect (e.g. the prophets) there is no limit to cognition. The limit to cognitive ability arose from the intellectual limitations typical of the ordinary mind. The mind of the ordinary individual is unable to know of God, of His attributes, and of a whole range of aspects of life; it cannot get to the bottom of many of the ritualistic traditions and acts of the faith (such as prayer, pilgrimage, asceticism) and therefore requires aid and guidance from the Prophet. The intellectual ability of people is never the same. Some grasp with ease what others are unable to understand and therefore deny.

For Abduh prophets were God's chosen people who acted as middlemen between two worlds – the real and visible, and the invisible other world. They were the bearers of the Divine laws governing human behaviour. The prophets acted as authorities who directed people along the right road. Thus prophesy is something like a collective mind, the prophet is for the human race what the mind is for the individual. (The anomaly lies in the religious elite attributing to themselves the right to direct people along what they think to be the right road, instead of their following the directions given by the Qur'an and the prophets themselves. (SHS)

The basis for the finality of prophesy, Abduh said, was the perfection of the Islamic doctrine (the religious elite keep on trying wrongly to perfect the ideology - SHS), which gave the mature individual freedom of thought, intellectual independence of action and, thus, integrity of character. Abduh portrays his prophets without a Divine halo. For him they are people different from others merely by virtue of their more highly developed intellectual ability. Abdul

allows that these people, too, are liable to make incorrect judgments, though far less than other mortals.

Abduh, coming to grips with the traditionalists, for first believing and then requiring proof of their belief, advanced the very opposite principle: "first prove, then believe" A faith accepted without proof, he held, was to be decried. He denounced belief based on blind and thoughtless worship of authority. He called on the faithful to have conviction, knowledge and proofs of the verity of their religious faith.

Abduh's rationalism is directed against inert rational thinking and blind observance of the medieval interpretation of Islam, Abdul and other Muslim reformers, confine themselves exclusively to justifying and modernizing religion. They are sincerely interested in eliminating the obstacles to the development of science and technology essential for the revival of the Muslim peoples, and for economic and cultural progress. They want to use scientific achievements without heed of the world outlook implicit in science.

Jamal-ud-din al-Afghani was convinced that nothing but science and technology could eliminate economic and cultural backwardness. He told his fellow believers that Islam in no way negated science that it encouraged its development. Afghani objected to dividing science into European and Muslim. He was indignant that natural science was left out of the curriculum of Muslim education institutions. Afghani said that the misery in the Eastern countries was due to their ignoring "the noble and important role of the scientists". The sole difference between the scientist and the prophet, he said, was that the prophet's verity was the fruit of inspiration, whereas scientific verity was the fruit of reason. The prophet's injunctions changed with the times and conditions. Scientific verity, on the other hand, was universal. He even claimed that not all epochs needed prophets, while they continually needed scientific guidance, which could lead mankind out of the state of obscurantism to the road of prosperity and well being. He pointed out at the resemblance of all religions in their attitude towards rational cognition.

It was politically wiser, Afghani reckoned, to prevail on the Muslims that they, not religion (faith – SHS) were to blame for their own sorry plight, for "Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts" (X111:II). Afghani

emphasized the exclusiveness of Islam in relation to all other religions and the special role of Muslims, whom God had destined "to be better people and the rulers of mankind".

Ibn-e-Rushd (Averrous, 1126-1198), the great Arab philosopher and free thinker, advanced the theory of "dual truth". He isolated science from religion, ascribing to the latter the realm of "divine things" that exercised no influence on the laws of nature. He separated the spheres of science, philosophy and religion claiming that they were autonomous. He, however, maintained that philosophy and religion must ultimately arrive at one and the same truth, the former by means of sensory and logical cognition and the latter by means of intuition and revelation.

### **3. "Islamic" Ethics**

Recognition of human reason undermines absolute fatalism, which denies cognizance of the Supreme Being and His will, and consequently man's capacity for independent choice. The supernatural determination reposing on the dogma of predetermination as practiced by orthodox Muslims, is countered by a dualistic interpretation of the freedom of the will.

In Islam, the mystical philosophy of *Sufism* has frequently served as an expression of the protest of society against the dominant feudal system and religion. As distinct from the orthodox doctrine, the official religious hierarchy and the Caliphate, which rules out any direct communion of man, be he even a prophet, with God, *Sufism* regards the inner prayer as a means of contact with the Divinity.

Despite his critical attitude to mysticism, Muhammad Iqbal borrowed liberally from the Sufi thinkers, and made extensive use of their terms and conceptions. Sufi doctrine, *wahdat-al-wujud* (unity of the real), is expressive of the unity of God and nature, in a manner distinct from the traditional Muslim mysticism. Embarking on the Sufist path of suppression of one's will and recognition of one's non-entity, requiring renunciation of temporal life, was exploited by the ruling classes closely connected with the Sufi order to squash the spirit of protest against social oppression. It must be remembered

that Sufism originated as an ascetic mystical movement against orthodox Islam, the official religious hierarchy and the Caliphate.

Iqbal treated the Sufi doctrine, *wahdat-al-wujud* in a manner distinct from the traditional Muslim mysticism. Iqbal argued that this mysticism was mistaken in regarding the "unity of the real" as a unity of the real (*batin*) and the phenomenon (*zahir*), in which God was the reality, while nature, the world and the people active in it were God's transient emanation. Logically. This t his led the exponents of this viewpoint to ignore the secular problems and to picture man as a passive conductor of the Divine will. Communion – the subordination of the individual "I" to the cosmic ego – was for Iqbal not a renunciation of self but rather the individual's participation in the creative act of the Supreme Being. Iqbal continued this line of thinking and developed it in a comprehensive concept of "khudi", in which man was regarded as a creator, as a partner of God and Maker.

Individual "ego" strives to come closer to the divine "Ego". But Iqbal understood it as his self-affirmation. The ultimate aim of the ego, Iqbal wrote, is not to see something but to be something. Approaching God or Ideal, was regarded by Iqbal rather as a vital act, on which "depends to 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 re-made by continuous action". In Iqbal's view "In great action alone the self of man becomes united with God without losing its own identity and transcends the limits of space and time. Action is the highest form of contemplation. Being a mouthpiece of anti-colonial social forces of his society, Iqbal propagated creative activity and struggle. Thus Iqbal did not want to accept voluntarism, which liberated from responsibility, lead to pessimism and desired to step away from the participation in this life. He also rejected super naturalistic determinism of orthodox Muslim philosophy, which did not recognize free will. Iqbal made an attempt to solve the antimony.

Iqbal made an attempt to solve the antimony (conflict of authority) of freedom and necessity, God's will and man's free will. Development of the world and the acts of men are not aimless, they

are submitted to the teleological purpose. But this purpose is not understood statically, as a predetermined plan of development. "The notion of purpose cannot be understood except in reference to the future", he said. There is no rigid aim system. In every period of life, people mould and develop themselves according to the spirit of new ideals. Teleological purpose (purpose or design that is served) is understood by Iqbal in the sense that ..... "there is no far-off distant goal towards which we are moving, there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes and ideal scales of value as the process of life grows and expands.

In Iqbal's view God himself limits His power. This limitation "is born out of His own creative freedom whereby He has chosen finite egos to be participators of His life, power and freedom". By giving this freedom to man, God takes risk for "the freedom to choose good involves also to choose what is opposite of good". God takes this risk because He believes in man and man is to justify this faith.

The Qur'an says, "Whatever good visits thee, it is of God; whatever evil visits thee is of thyself" (4:81). The medieval Sufi Abdul Karim al-Jili and others said both the good and the evil of the universe came from God. In their opinion, evil was a necessary objective condition for the realization of good, for man can only be good by overcoming evil, and therefore he has no right to complain about the existence of the latter. Iqbal stressed the necessity and propriety of taking action against the established social order, which had degenerated into an evil.

For Iqbal the "perfect man" is a strong personality, who uses his will and energy not for his own desire for power, but for the sake of fulfillment of the Divine will. "Insan-e-Kamil" is supposed to be able to overcome the vices of the society and to act according to the moral forms ordered by God.

Mr. Abdul Qayyum, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology, University of Peshawar points out that since the interests of people vary greatly, there may be mutually contradictory assessments of value. But there is one criterion of a moral assessment which transcends all such differences; the universal

human value that satisfy the desire of all members of society to achieve their aims and ideals.

Qayyum does not consider social ideals to be predetermined by God. They are reached by man with the help of his reason and practical experience. The ideal, which will embody the real purpose of human life, is to be known by man himself by the use of his reason and experience. Human values are to be selected on the basis of the ends or ideals chosen by human beings themselves and not given by any authority other than man himself. Qayyum names economic values as the main criterion for determining the suitability of ideals to the tasks of the development of society. He says, "Indeed human life comprehends both material and spiritual aspects". The spiritual growth of man and his consciousness of spiritual values like truth, beauty and virtue are only possible when society reaches a definite level of material well-being. The criterion of good is the satisfaction of social rather than personal needs. The former are supposed to be universal and the same for all human beings no matter what class they belong to.

Religion (Faith – SHS) is assigned the most important place in the Muslim system of values. From this it follows that any society, which denies God and rejects religion (faith) lacks a spiritual foundation and is therefore immoral. Moral principles "can find their fullest manifestation only in the actions of an individual who loves this ideal to the fullest extent". Or, as I.H. Qureshi has put it, "For us Muslims no morality exists which does not find its ultimate sanction in Islam.

The modern interpretation of the principle of Islamic equality essentially rejects discrimination on religious grounds, yet this treatment of the subject does not suit the Pakistan reaction with its stake in the continued division into Muslims and people of other faiths, the denial of political rights to women, and so on.

The "revival" of Muslim society is conceived in terms of Islamic values, one of the most important of these being justice. "Islamic" justice is seen as something that combines the properties of natural justice and broadly conceived mercy.

## THE POLITICAL CONCEPTION OF ISLAM

### 1. Islam and Nationalism

**Religion and the State.** In the political sphere the reformists revised the orthodox interpretation of the connection between religion and the state. Traditionally Islam is regarded as a system regulating all aspects of people's lives. For Muslim theologians the unity of religion and politics was always an essential feature of their doctrine. Thus interpreted, the connection between politics and religion asserted theocracy as the ideal form of Islamic statehood. By statehood the traditional Islamic law meant absolute power of the caliph, the deputy of the Holy Prophet, and the ulema, the sole interpreters of the Sharia. The reformers spurned this interpretation because Islam does not allow the existence of a clerical order.

### Pan-Islamism

Pan-Islamism (conceived as the brotherhood of Muslims, as solidarity of co-religionists, and on this basis as political community) as a political movement came into being at the end of the nineteenth century and is associated with the name of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani.

Afghani considered it necessary to use religious slogans to solve purely political problems. He assumed that Islam was the one ideological platform on which the several peoples could be united to fight against colonial oppression., that it was the force that could give the downtrodden faith in themselves and in their chances of survival.

In the final analysis Afghani was the ideologue of the bourgeoisie because his interpretation of the Islamic faith, his attitude to the social organization of the society, were essentially bourgeois, his view that the Muslim faith had to be changed to suit the needs of the times, his interpretation of Islam as a call to action making man responsible for the situation in the society, his critique of dogma, and his attitude to rational knowledge, to science, all this was condemned by the orthodox Muslims precisely because it pursued the aim of changing the feudal pattern of society.

Afghani was violently opposed to all socialist ideas, but later in his life his pronouncements about socialism changed radically. No longer did he claim that socialism conflicted with Islam. On the contrary, the followers of the Prophet, he said, were the first great exponents of socialism etc. All the same, Afghani could not accept the truly scientific socialism. He maintained that without a religious bias, without the deterrent power of the faith, socialism could create nothing but chaos.

Pan-Islamism could play a certain positive part in the early stages of the national liberation movement. As bourgeois nationalism developed and grew stronger, Pan-Islamism became more and more of a brake, holding up the political liberation of separate nations. In effect, it became a tool for preserving the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Sultan's hegemony in the Muslim world. In 1924 the Turkish Caliphate was abolished, and many exponents of Pan-Islamism understood that their hopes of unitizing the Muslim peoples in one Islamic state were no longer realistic.

Pan-Islamism, which contrasts Islamic brotherhood to nationalism, and Muslim nationalism, which reduces the nation to a religious community, both ignore the linguistic, ethnic, territorial, cultural, historical, economic and other elements of national community, and subordinate them to unite on the basis of religion.

The secular concept of nation was formulated sometime later, at the turn of the twentieth century, by al-Kawakibi, who called on his compatriots to unite on a national rather than on religious basis, and defined the nation as a community of people brought together by community of race, language, motherland and law. He did not include religion. National unity was also placed above religious unity by Amin Rethani, writer, philosopher and a classic of neo-Arabic literature.

Orthodox Muslims and the ideologue of religious political parties maintain that religious community is essential for the making of a nation and the national character. The relationship between Islam and nationalism shows once again that religious postulates are not absolute, that they are the product of the human intellect and that

their interpretation, therefore, changes under the influence of many factors, including political ones.

## **2. "Islamic Democracy**

### **Legislation in Muslim Society**

Theology and law are two branches of the Sharia, the canonical law of Islam. The word itself means "the way to the source", implying the way to the truth to be followed in compliance with Allah's law given in the revelation.

Islamic tradition regards the Sharia as a body of Allah's commandments concerning man's behaviour, governing religious ritual, and defining the rules of social, political, family and personal life. It is portrayed as the "Divine law" reposing on the will of Allah. The injunctions of the "law" are eternal and not subject to criticism or revision. Man must strive to learn the "law", though in principle, due to limitations of his intellect, he will never be able to know the eternal law in full. Orthodox Muslims keep clinging to this point of view, saying that their religion "does not recognize legislation introduced by human agents".

The knowledge that it was essential to get rid of medieval laws, which obstructed social, economic, political and cultural change in countries of the Middle East, has necessarily given rise to fundamentally new views on the object and subject of legislation. The group of extreme modernists rejected the legal precepts of the Sharia as being wholly outdated. In this connection special attention was drawn to the difference between the Sharia and the *Fikh*. Sharia was considered absolute in time and space, uncreated, eternal and immutable Divine law inscribed in the Quran. *Fikh*, on the other hand, was said to be the product of the human mind, man's intellectual interpretation of the Sharia. Since man's potential is restricted as compared with that of the Almighty and Omniscient God, man's understanding of the Word of God is equally imperfect. The reformation of Muslim legislation was based on "opening the doors of *Ijtihad*".

Muslim reformists and modernists are trying to correct the "erroneous" interpretations of the Scriptures. They maintain that discrimination of women had been foreign to early Islam. But how to harmonize Islam's "democratism" with its recognition of polygamy? Justifying the existence of polygamy in the early period of Islam, the modernists say that it has become out-dated and unacceptable.. Under pressure of progressive public opinion many Muslim countries have passed laws banning polygamy or, in effect, making it impossible. The advocates of this institution maintain that that polygamy must not be abolished because the Prophet prescribed it. Especially difficult is it to draw women into public and economic activity.

### **The Caliph Concept**

In the Quranic text the term Caliph expresses one of the principle propositions of the Muslim faith concerning the supreme sovereignty of Allah and the human agent of His power on earth. In the Qur'an the successors of Divine power exercising it on earth were in substance all devout Muslims. Later, however, only the successor of the Prophet Muhammad, standing at the head of the community of the faithful, was named Caliph. Historians assume that this was the sense in which the first "righteous" Caliph Abu Bakr used the title caliph.

In theory the Caliph has no legislative powers because the law comes from God and is therefore constant. All he has are administrative powers, powers of government, supreme executive authority. In the early Islam (632-661) political, military and spiritual power was, in effect, concentrated in one person. At the time of the Umayyad and the early Abbasids the power of the Caliph was mainly secular, nor spiritual. Ever since the ninth century, as the political power of the caliph waned, the assent was laid more and more on the spiritual powers of the Caliph as the head of the Muslim community and defender of the faith. In 1924, the institution of Caliphate was abolished in Turkey and all subsequent attempts to revive it failed.

A more consistently reformist attitude to the Caliphate was taken by Ali abd al-Razik, a follower of Abduh. In a treatise published in 1925 ("Islam and the Principles of Power") he urged that the Caliphate as an institution should be abolished, for this followed from the theory and practice of the faith. He called attention to the absence in the Qur'an and Sunnah of direct references to the caliphate form of government. He said, Muhammad's mission was exclusively prophetic, and spiritual power should not, therefore be associated with power in the state. Al-Rizak called on his co-religionists "to destroy the old order" and build a new state with reference to the best experience of other peoples.

Promotion of the Caliphal ideal in present-day conditions may be traced to the desire of feudal and semi-feudal (capitalist) elements to revive Eastern despotism and restore the Muslim theologians former influence on political affairs.

As capitalism developed in Muslim countries and the local bourgeoisie grew stronger, and as the national liberation forces grew and their struggle against tyranny and colonial oppression became stronger, the feeling grew that authoritarian rule, even if enlightened, must be restricted.

Muslim reformers maintain that the parliamentary system was known in Islam long before Europe, for Islam has been practising social and other types of democracy for many centuries.

Progressive Muslim intelligentsia is searching for a political system different from the Western system of bourgeois democracy, human system respectful of the individual. In their search for this system they turn to religion, hoping it will provide absolute principles of lofty morality for the relationship of people in society.

Neither religion nor any other ideology can determine the nature of the state, for it depends on the nature of the social and economic conditions, the alignment of class forces, in the given society. There can be no single concept of an Islamic state.

However, the slogans of an "Islamic state" as the ideal political system still carry influence. Landowners insist on "Islamizing" the

state because they see this as a means of conserving feudal social and economic relations. By invoking the letter of Sharia, they try to prevent legislative legislation of the new relations of production and social relations. By seeking to convert the ulema into consultative councils and by forming ministries of religion, and the like, they want to preserve the status of Muslim clerical order and to exercise their influence on the country's political scene through that organ.

The bourgeoisie, too, does not turn its back on the slogan of an "Islamic state" because this ensures them satisfaction of their political power. The religious approach to society's political organization enables them to provide a "divine foundation" for the laws of the bourgeois state and they portray these as "an expression of God's deputized power", submission to which is not only a civil duty, but also and chiefly a religious obligation.

The ideal of an "Islamic state" is also widespread among the masses due to their religiousness and as a peculiar reaction to their disappointment in bourgeois democracy, which has proved impotent to secure the interests of the people and radically to improve the people's life.

## **ISLAM AND THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS**

Colonialism, the natural historical development of the Eastern countries, contributed to the destruction of the old Asian society, and helped "the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.

Their complete political and economic dependence on imperialism denied the African and Asian peoples the benefit of any choice. The evolution of the traditional social and economic structure impelled by imperialist penetration tended to draw the Eastern countries into the capitalist world system and to create conditions for bourgeois development.

The process of radical economic change was reflected in the social consciousness. The emergence and spread of new social and economic principles and institutions required sanctioning and backing by the dominant ideology – Islam in the case of the Muslim countries. As a result, the objective changes in the Muslim countries gave rise to reformist concepts, the tenor of which depended on the choice of the way to national revival. The choice is especially urgent after the winning of political independence, when an achievement of economic independence tends to become the main function of the national liberation movement.

### **1.The “Islamic” Social-Economic Doctrine**

The “Islamic” social-economic doctrine reposes on the so-called Muslim concept of property. In essence it amounts to the recognition of God as the supreme holder of property.

The Caliph – in substance the monarch – is the supreme commander. This idea reflects the real social relations that had obtained at the time when Islam came into being.

From the point of view of orthodox Islam, possession of “divine property” is a “grace” which the Most High dispenses to a chosen few, and this is in different dozes. Unequal property was preordained by Allah. To quote K.A. Hakim, “God did not wish to create an inert equality and does not wish man to create it through his powers”.

Historians assume that the *zakat* was introduced as a religious prescript some time in 624-632. It is mentioned in the *suras* of the Makkan period, that is, before *Hijra* to Madina. The notion of the sanctity of mercy and of disavowal of at least part of one’s worldly goods was evidently borrowed from Judaism, which prescribed *zakat*, a tax for the poor.

Originally *zakat* was conceived as an act of charity and one’s own acquittal, a virtue rather than dut. After the move to Medina, where the followers of the new faith experienced shortages and hardships, it gradually turned from charity into duty. *Zakat* was to have assisted the poor and needy. “The alms” says the Quran, “are

only for the poor and needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled" (IX:60).

Under Abu Bakr (632-634), the first Caliph, the Zakat became an officially exacted tax. The funds obtained there from were used for certain political and military actions of the community as a whole rather than to aid poor and needy individuals. This has left a fairly visible mark on Muslim history. In the opinion of Snouck Hurgronje *zakat* had in many ways ensured the spread of Muslim rule, because apart from being an "astute means of reducing the wrongs of society" it also "augmented the treasury of the state".

The second prescript concerns the laws of inheritance. There are cut-and-dried instructions on this score in the Qur'an. The Muslim laws of inheritance are designed to disperse property by sharing it out among a fairly large number of people. Thus ideologues of Islam view this as a positive factor preventing concentration of wealth and equalizing property.

The third prescripts the ban on *riba*, which stems from the specific condition in which Islam came into being. Islam, and especially the *suras* of the Qur'an, reflect discontent and protest against the stratification that befell the tribal society, the enrichment of some at the expense of others. The most indignant objections were against dishonest commerce and usury, which had a wasting effect on the Makka traders.

The Qur'an denounces the giving of loans on interest as a grave sin. In the Qur'an, *riba* refers to all unfair enlargement of capital. The term covers unjust profit from trade, not just interest on loans. The *zakat*, the Muslim laws of inheritance and the *riba* ban are portrayed by Muslim apologists as a guarantee against abuse of private property and its utilization to exploit others On these grounds the "Islamic" social and economic system is proclaimed universal, above time, and unconnected with any other social formations known in history.

## **2. The Concept of an "Islamic way"**

For countries that have only recently gained independence, the question of property is first of all a question of feudal ownership and foreign property, because their task of the day is to accomplish the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution.

According to a tradition the Prophet had said: "He who has more land than he needs must either till it himself or render it as a gift unto one of his brother Muslims". This indicated the state's right to enact agrarian reform. The *wakf*, the feudal aristocracy and religious orders that own most of the land, are for the *status quo*. The bourgeois class as a whole has a stake in agrarian reform, because rapid industrial growth is impossible without a highly developed agriculture supplying raw materials and without a large internal market, whose growth is inhibited by the exceedingly low living standard of the feudally oppressed peasant masses. It is the middle strata and the working people who are interested in the complete elimination of feudal landownership. The revolutionary - democratic forces, wherever they are in power, are gradually eliminating private ownership of the means of production. And this too is frequently portrayed as being promoted by religious reasons.

Unequal property and social inequality are not justified by God. Predetermination of inequality is contrary to the idea of divine justice. Sharia gives no privileges and is a law of classless society. However, "ethicalization" of human relations, not class struggle, would secure a society of social justice.

### **3. The Theories of "Islamic Socialism"**

Socialist ideas began reaching the countries of the Muslim East sometime in the late nineteenth century. The October Revolution exercised a tremendous influence on social consciousness of the oppressed peoples.

Lenin says: "The urge for a 'human', civilized life, the urge to organize in defense of human dignity, for one's rights as man and citizen, takes hold of everyone, unites all classes, vastly outgrows all party bounds and shakes up people who as yet are very far from being able to rise to party allegiance."

The main distinctive feature of "Islamic socialism" is that it denies class struggle. The concept of "Islamic socialism" is mostly a social utopia. But while we criticize utopias of this kind and expose them as reactionary, we should remember Lenin's injunction to "single out, defend and develop the revolutionary-democratic core of the revolutionary petty-bourgeois socialism". This core, in fact, makes it possible in certain cases to use the utopian ideas of "Islamic socialism" as the ideological platform of the revolutionary-democratic forces.

In some ways "Islamic socialism" is capable of serving as an ideology involving the people in the drive for socialist transformations. This is so if the elements reflecting the yearning of the oppressed section of believers for general human values contained in every religion are accentuated in the teaching and historical experience of Islam. This is tactically justified by the fact that deep-rooted religiousness, cultural backwardness and political immaturity make it difficult for the Muslim masses to understand the ideas of scientific socialism (and Islam – SHS). It should be borne in mind, however, that "Islamic socialism" can perform a progressive function only for a time, in the "transitional" period, when the orientation of future social development is only seen in outline but is not yet fully elaborated. To reword Lenin's phrase, we can say that the formula "socialism equals Islam" is for some "a form of transition from religion to socialism; for others, it is form of transition from socialism to religion" (Karl Marx, Fredrick Engels). As the class differentiation progresses and the class contradictions become more acute, and as the political consciousness of the mass of the mass of the people grows and Marxist ideas take a firmer grip among them, the progressive potential of "Islamic socialism" is bound to decline

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# ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THOUGHT

M.T. STEPANIANTS

(Summarized by Safdar Hasan Siddiqi)

## **A General description of the Reformation in Islam**

According to Marxist-Leninist postulate, every great historical change in the social order is accompanied by a change in the outlook and ideas of the people involved, also in their religious ideas.

Time has been introducing corrections in Islam throughout its history. But these have been hardly more than slight amendments to various Islamic principles and did not radically alter the religious ideology sanctifying the pillars of the medieval society. The orthodox Muslims regard attempts at introducing change as an encroachment on Gods omnipotence as an apostasy.

The Muslims have no need to reform their faith: “what is needed essentially is a representation of the whole body of Islamic wisdom in contemporary language.”

The development of capitalist relations in the Muslim countries, as compared to Europe, was delayed by three centuries. Hence, it was not before the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Islam underwent the process of the kind that took place in Christianity in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the same way as in Christianity, the socio-economic changes in the countries of the Muslim world determined the anti-feudal nature of the reformation in Islam.

Christian reformation was a struggle against the Church, as an institution sanctioning feudalism and medievalism. In Islam, there is no category of officially ordained clergy. The functions, similar to those of the Christian clergy are in this case discharged by the ulema. The foundation of their secular power is in the right of interpreting the word of God and depriving all the other believers of the right of independent judgment. The liberation from the sway of ulema, many of whom canonize and protect the medieval law and order, prompted the need for revising the doctrine of predetermination, sanctioning passive subordination to the prestige of the theologians and precluding any kind of freedom of thought and action.

Since the foundations of secular power for Christians and Muslim clergy are different, there is also a difference in the methods selected by the reformation for their elimination. Christian reformation was a strictly anti-feudal movement. In Islam, the reformation began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when capitalism is widely criticized. Anti-capitalist and anti-colonial sentiments in the countries of the Muslim world could not but be reflected in the process of the reformation in Islam.

Moreover, the transformation of the feudal religious ideology of Islam into bourgeois ideology coincided with the period of extensive spreading of socialist

ideas. Hence there is a marked tendency towards a theoretical substantiation of a third way of development.

The specific features of the transformation of Islam are manifested in the forms of "modernism" and "revivalism". The "modernistic" approach to the translation of the Muslim teaching is mostly characteristic of the intelligentsia and bourgeoisie with a European education closely connected with the Western way of life. Such an approach does not meet with extensive support from the Muslims. Another obvious trait is the anti-capitalist sentiments and the aspiration towards a social transformation on the basis of domestic national oppression. Therefore, the most popular in the masses are the reformist ideas, expressed in the form of the "revivalism of the ideals of early Islam". Islam is regarded by those who profess it as the absolute truth. Any changes in the Quran and Sunnah are considered "bida" (innovation) by orthodox Muslims.

In order to substantiate the permissibility of the reformation of Islam, the ideologists either had to reject the ban on innovations (as is being done by the reformists of the modernist type) or, on the contrary, maintain that the modification proposed by them aimed at "ridding" Islam of "bida". Whereas "orthodox revivalists" strive to preserve feudal standards and institutes, the "revivalists" movement of the religious reformers is essentially an ostensible return to the past.

The Muslim reformers are trying to substantiate the freedom of man's will within the frame of fatalism. The non-orthodox attitude ultimately proves to be an attempt to reconcile materialism, rationalism and irrationalism. They denounce outdated canons and standards. They call for a revision of the fiqh and recognition of the right of Ijtihad – the independent judgment of every Muslim, or the democratically elected legislative body, the parliament.

Islamic reformation is a lengthy process not of superficial adaptation, but of an actual alteration of religious system of values under the pressure of new conditions of the times. In the countries where capitalist production and social relations still prevail, religious reformation can be the ideology of a progressive anti-feudal and anti-colonial movement.

The returning to the purity and simplicity of the early Islam was a mere illusion.

The spread of Mahdist dogma was evidently related to the people's yearning for a savior. In Islam the messianic idea is obviously an expression of the mass discontent with the social order and of the hope of deliverance from oppression and suffering by a divine messenger. Belief in the Messiah may imply a negation of the Muslim community's right to learn the truth and to function independently.

The *Ahmadiyah*. A peculiar attempt at adapting Islam to the needs of capitalist development was made by the sect of the *Qadianis* or *Ahmadias*, so named after the sect's founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) born in the Punjab village of Qadian. The propaganda centre of the Ahmadias is in fact located in Woking, England.

## **“Islamic” Philosophical Concepts**

The awakening of the national consciousness of the Muslim peoples and the rise of their liberation movement gave prominence in the sphere of philosophical thought to the question of the nature of man, his place in the universe, and his relationship to the Divine Absolute.

Religion postulates the existence of a Supreme Being and thereby predicates man's highly limited freedom of choice and action. In Islam this submission is accentuated by the fact that apart from the postulate of Allah's omnipotence it also postulates the finality of Muhammad's prophesy. Fatalism, according to Karl Marx, "the pivot of Islam" is contained in the very word "Islam" (Literally submission to the will of God) and the basic formula of worship: There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet. But there are verses in the Quran that may be considered to renounce blind fatalism. Absolute fatalism was questioned by the Kadariyas and mutazilas, who thought man had the freedom to interfere in the existing legal order and to alter it in accordance with his notions of good and evil. Thereby their system gave theoretical backing for the idea of political opposition to the ruling class.

The middle road is that God is all-powerful, compassionate and merciful, and man depends on His will, but is also responsible for his own actions.

Iqbal maintains that everything in the world is impermanent and subject to change. All reality according to him was "essentially spiritual": the world is the self-revelation of the ultimate reality God. God is the ego that gave birth to a multiplicity of egos at different levels, each of them serving God's self-expression. He called for the awakening and substantiation of the creative activity of man's ego. He subscribed to man a special place and elevated him to a status of co-participant in creation.

Muhammad Sharif assumed that there were three types of being: the ultimate being or reality – God; the spiritual essences – the monads, and the world of sensations in time and space. God is the creator, cause and source of the other two forms of being. He is absolutely transcendental in the sense of standing outside time, space and sensual perception. The world of sensations was a world of temporary, transient phenomena. In substance the world was ideatic and moved by the spirit.

Saiyed Ahmad Khan saw the causes of all causes, the original cause – God. God is the creator of good and evil, but man himself chooses between them. It was wrong to assume, therefore, that reward and punishment depend on God's will: they originate from the laws of verity and falsehood. In other words, the laws of nature and morality "have been defined by God, but He is assigned the role of the prime mover. By virtue of his concept of God, Saiyed Ahmad Khan negated the possibility of miracles in the world. He maintained: simply, not all laws were yet known to the people, and therefore some phenomena could look like "miracles". Such "miracles" merely showed that many things were still unknown.

The laws of nature and morality were created by God and could not be altered by anyone, not even by the Creator himself. Everything came about in accordance with the established laws and not by any whim of God.

Inference of God's existence through "perception" is made by Abul Kalam Azad. He assumed that it was unnatural for man to doubt the existence of God, let alone to deny it. The human being, he said, was incapable of understanding the divine attributes, though human invariably strove to do so.

By declaring that divine justice is retribution for people's specific acts of the individual who performed them, and thereby attributed a certain amount of freedom to the individual's will.

Azad gives preference to the "Western" conception for concentrating attention on the need for social progress achievable through the efforts of each member of the human society. He felt, however, that the Western conception under-rated the spiritual principal in the individual. Due to the Western view of the human being as a "progressive animal", he amplified, nothing could prevent him from incorrectly using science to satisfy his interests based on passions he had in common with animals. Azad, in an attempt to reconcile idealism and materialism and to find a middle road, saw mankind's salvation, the sole correct solution, in synthesizing the Western and Eastern conceptions of man.

The problem of the freedom of man's will depends, on the answer to the question of whether the world is cognizable, because, to quote Engels, it means "nothing but the capacity to make decisions with knowledge of the subject".

A negative part in the fight against free thinking was played by the closure of the "doors of *Ijtihad*" – the right to independent judgment – in the 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The official recognition under the Omaayad dynasty of the Sunnah alongside the Quran as the *asl*, the root of the Muslim religious doctrine, stimulated the composition, writing and collection of the *Ahadith*. Historians have proved that most of the *Ahadith* are not authentically traceable to Prophet Muhammad.

In the eighth century the Muslim *faqis* (legalists) split into two schools, the *ashab al hadith* and the *ashab al-*raya** (people of logic) (the Syrian and Iraqi *faqih*s who allowed for the use of the rationalist method. Thus *Qiyas* (logical judgment and *Ijma* (agreed opinion of intellectuals on the question at hand) were recognized as two more *as/s* (roots of the doctrine) alongside the Quran and Sunnah.

The "closing of the *Ijtihad*" greatly affected the destiny of the Muslim peoples. It provided a religious basis for opposing innovation. The demand for opening the doors of *Ijtihad* by Muslim ideologues was an insistent demand of the times, a new direction of social and political thought in the Muslim countries impelled by a whole set of factors, not least of all feudalism and the growth of capitalist relations and the struggle for national liberation.

Revival of the *Ijtihad* provided grounds of revising and reassessing not only the legal injunctions of Islam, but the entire doctrine. It recognized man's

right to a definite freedom of will and action so essential for the development of initiative and active participation in the re-arrangement of society. Like Protestantism, which rejected the mediation of the Church and advocated man's personal communion with God, the Muslim reformation rejected blind observation of the *taqlid* and the mediation of the Muslim jurists, the peculiar Islamic priesthood.

Muhammad Abduh, the great Egyptian scholar, maintained in his treatise "The Theology of Unity" that "there is nothing impossible for reason to tackle" and that the "Supreme Being and its perfect attributes are rationally cognizable". He said that "the most that our reason can achieve is a knowledge of the accidents, but not the essence of things." He wrote, the human mind is not competent to know of God, of the life to come, nor yet to comprehend the requital which every sort of action will receive in that world. The mind, he said, was potentially unlimited and for those who possess the perfect intellect (e.g. the prophets) there is no limit to cognition. The limit to cognitive ability arose from the intellectual limitations typical of the ordinary mind. The mind of the ordinary individual is unable to know of God, of His attributes and of a whole range of aspects of life and therefore requires aid and guidance from the Prophet.

For Abduh, prophets were God's chosen people who acted as middlemen between two worlds – the real and the visible and the invisible other world. They were the bearers of Divine laws governing human behaviour. The prophets acted as authorities who directed people along the right road. Thus prophecy is something like collective mind, the prophet is for the human race what the mind is for the individual.

About the finality of prophecy Abduh maintained that the basis for this was the perfection of the Islamic doctrine, which gave the mature individual freedom of thought, intellectual independence of action and, thus, integrity of character. Abduh's interpretation of prophecy is not supernatural. He portrays his prophets without a Divine hallow. For him they are people different from others merely by virtue of their more highly developed intellectual ability. Abdul allows that these people, too, are liable to make incorrect judgments, though far less than the others.

Abduh denounced belief based on blind and thoughtless worship of authority. He called on the faithful to have convictions, knowledge and proofs of the verity of their faith. Abduh's rationalism is directed against inert traditional thinking and blind observance of the medieval interpretation of Islam. Abduh and other Muslim reformers confine themselves exclusively to justifying and modernizing religion. They are sincerely interested in eliminating the obstacles to the development of science and technology essential for the revival of the Muslim peoples, and for economic and social progress. What they want, however, is to use scientific achievements without heed of the world outlook implicit in the science.

Abduh came to grips with those who denied freedom of will, who held that recognizing man as free elevated him to the level of the divine will and thus

constituted the ultimate sin. The sinner, he said, was not he who relied on his own faculties, but he who trusted someone else other than God to help him. This argument delivered man from the grip of the theologians and jurists, who claimed a mandatory role.

The idea that science and Islam are compatible is put forward in one form or the other in the construction of all Muslim ideologues of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Jamal-ud-Din Afghani was convinced that nothing but science and technology could eliminate economic and cultural backwardness. To him Islam in no way negated science but encouraged its development. He said, "Industry cannot develop successfully without reliance physics, chemistry, mechanics, geometry and mathematics. Commerce is dependent on the state of industry and agriculture. Consequently the well-being and wealth of the nation depends on science."

Afghani objected to dividing science into Europeans and Muslim. He said the misery in the Eastern countries was due to their ignoring "the noble and important role of the scientists". He set a very high value on the public mission of the scientist. He described the scientist's work as missionary. He compared the scientist with a prophet, saying that the prophet's verity was the fruit of inspiration, whereas scientific verity was the fruit of reason. The prophet's injunctions changed with the times and conditions. Scientific verity, on the other hand, was universal. Afghani even claimed that that not all epochs needed prophets, while they "continually needed scientific guidance, which could lead mankind out of the state of obscurantism to the road of prosperity and well-being."

He saw that progressive changes in the Muslim world were inconceivable until a change of heart would be achieved among its religious leaders. The sharply negative reaction of the Orthodox to his more up-to-date interpretation of prophecy showed that for new ideas to be acceptable they must be clothed in the traditional religious form. While he formally proclaimed the perfection of the faith, he remained level-headed in his judgment of the role of Islam in history.

Afghani reckoned, to prevail on the Muslims that they, not religion, were to blame for their own sorry plight, for "Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts" (XIII:11).

Afghani appealed to the religious feelings of people rather than their intellect because he was convinced that "reason does not gratify the mob and the teachings of reason are understood only by a few of the select".

The Lebanese Sharl malik, who recognizes the need for proving the existence of God with the help of physics, mathematics and biology, warns that in so doing one must match reason with the heart. Egyptian philosopher Osman Amin refers to a harmonious blending of reason and the heart, of faith and knowledge.

Hadj says that mystical experience cannot be logically analyzed and transmitted to people other than as an article of faith, in the form of notions.

In their life and activity the overwhelming majority of people take guidance from their own convictions based on sensory and rational knowledge.SHS)

The Egyptian writer and philosopher Taufiq al-Hakim holds that the heart has the advantage over reason in that it satisfies without requiring proof. The heart feels and has no doubts since it does not reason.

The striving to rationalize religious dogmas has the objective effect of allowing room for science and for the development of scientific thinking.

In Islam, the mystical philosophy of Sufism has frequently served as an expression of protest of society against the dominant feudal system and religion. It originated as an ascetic mystical movement against orthodox Islam, the official religious hierarchy and the Caliphate. *Sufism* regards the inner prayer as a means of contact with the Divinity. The aspect of *Sufism* requiring renunciation of temporal life was exploited by the ruling classes closely connected with the Sufi orders to squash the spirit of protest against social oppression. Sufi doctrine *wahdat-al-wudjud* (unity of the real), expressive of the unity of God and nature., Iqbal argued, logically led the exponents of this viewpoint to ignore the secular problems and to picture man as a passive conductor of the Divine will Communion – the subordination of the individual "I" to the cosmic ego – was for Iqbal not a renunciation of self but rather the individual's participation in the creative act of the Supreme Being.

Muhammad Iqbal continued this line of thinking and developed it into a comprehensive concept of "Khudi" in which man was regarded as a creator, as a partner of God and Maker. The ultimate aim of the ego, Iqbal wrote, is "not to see something but to be something". Approaching God or ideal was regarded by him as a vital rather than an intellectual act on which "depends 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 re-made by continuous action.

In Iqbal's view "In great action alone the self of man becomes united with God without losing its own identity and transcends the limits of space and time. Action is the highest form of contemplation.

Being a mouthpiece of anticolonial social forces of his society Iqbal propogated creative activity and struggle. He rejected super naturalistic determinism of orthodox Muslim philosophy which did not recognize free will. According to him, there is no rigid aim system; in every period of life, people mould and develop themselves according to the spirit of new ideals. There is no far off goal towards which we are moving; there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes, and ideal scales of value as the process of life grows and expands.Iqbal followed the Sufi teaching on good and evil. The Quran says, "Whatever good visits thee, it is of God; whatever evil visits thee is of thyself (4:81)

For Iqbal the “perfect man” is a strong personality who uses his will and energy not for his own desire for power, but for the sake of fulfillment of the divine will. “Insan-e-Kamil” is supposed to be able to overcome the vices of the society and to act according to the moral forms ordered by God. Iqbal’s philosophy was inspired by belief in an indivisible bond between man and God, man and society.

The absolute truth is known to God only. Man’s knowledge is relative. Man must endeavour to attain a degree of precision in his knowledge of the Quran, within the limits of the limited *isma* bestowed upon him.

Not only is the individual allowed to make an independent choice between good and evil. This is made obligatory. Man must strive for the maximum closeness to the absolute truth, new interpretations of the Quran and Sunnah are countenanced to suit the times and local features.

In Rahbar’s view the phrase “Allah the All-knowing” means a God, a strict judge, watches people and knows all their good and evil deeds. According to him, the idea of Divine justice is the basic idea of the Quran precisely to repudiate the fatalism of the Islamic religious doctrine. Submission to Allah did not mean passiveness but action designed to assert Islam under pain of punishment on the Day of Judgment for lack of religious faith or zeal.

Man is given a chance, a very small one, to be sure of independently interpreting and reassessing operative values. Since the interests of the people vary greatly, there may be mutually contradictory assessments of value. But there is one criterion of moral assessment which transcends all such differences, the universal human values that satisfy the desire of all members of society to achieve their aims and ideals.

A. Qayyum does not consider social ideals to be pre-determined by God. They are reached by man with the help of his reason and practical experience. The ideal which will embody the real purpose of human life is to be known by man himself by the use of his reason and experience. Human values are to be selected on the basis of the ends or ideals chosen by human beings themselves and not given by any authority other than man himself.

Qayyum names economic values as the main criteria for determining the suitability of ideals to the tasks of the development of society. He says, “Indeed human life comprehends both material and spiritual aspects. But I think the material aspect is the basic aspect.” He says that the spiritual growth of man and his consciousness of spiritual values like truth, beauty and virtue are only possible when society reaches a definite level of material well-being. They have no meaning so long as millions of people lead pauper’s lives. The criterion of good is the satisfaction of social rather than personal needs.

According to Qayyum, the rich people, few in number, who have taken it upon themselves to help the less fortunate, were actually doing the poor more harm than good, for Philanthropy only offended the dignity of man and created unnatural relations between individuals; it divided society into proud benefactors

and humble recipients of charity. The notion that mercy by itself leads to social justice objectively obstructs the attainment of real justice.

Man and society as a whole cannot be ultimately just. God alone can be. Man is just only to the extent to which he possesses and develops his divine attributes. The moral relationships are conceived ultimately as man's relation to God.

### **The Political Conception of Islam**

Traditionally, Islam is regarded as a system regulating all aspects of people's lives in this and the after world. For Muslim theologians the unity of religion and politics was always an essential feature of their doctrine. The Divine Law, the Sharia, is the juridical system of social being, the foundation of the state, whereas the state is the defender of the faith.

Thus interpreted, the connection between politics and religion asserted theocracy as the ideal form of statehood. By statehood the traditional Islamic law meant absolute power of the Caliph, the deputy of the Holy Prophet, and the ulema, the sole interpreters of the Shariah. The reformers spurned this interpretation. They described it as inappropriate, because Islam does not allow for the existence of a clerical order.

Pan-Islamism conceived as the brotherhood of Muslims, is implicit in the Islamic religious doctrine. As a political movement, it came into being at the end of the nineteenth century and is associated with the name of Jamal-ad-din Afghani. Afghani considered it necessary to use religion to solve purely political problems. He assumed that Islam was the one ideological platform on which the several peoples could be united to fight against colonial oppression, that it was the force that could give the downtrodden faith in themselves and in their chances of revival. Afghani preferred religious solidarity to national solidarity. He thought that economic cooperation in the framework of the Organization would further the Muslim countries' economic independence from Europe, America and Russia. Afghani was condemned by the orthodox Muslims because he pursued the aim of changing the feudal pattern of society. In the final analysis Afghani was the ideologue of the bourgeoisie

The knowledge that it was essential to get rid of medieval laws which obstruct social, economic, political and cultural change in countries of the Muslim East, has necessarily given rise to fundamentally new views on the object and subject of legislation. The group of extreme modernists rejected the legal precepts of the Sharia as being wholly outdated.

Special attention was drawn to the difference between Shariah and *Fiqh*, and the former was considered absolute in time and space. *Fiqh*, on the other hand, was said to be the product of the human mind, man's intellectual interpretation of the Shariah, because man's understanding of the Word of God is imperfect. This reformation of the Muslim legislation was based on opening the doors of *Ijtihad*. A "new *Ijtihad*" and "new *Ijma*" are required when radical changes occur in the life of the Muslim community. The orthodox put these

within the competence of the ulema, the recognized experts of the Islamic doctrine, and will not tolerate the transfer of the right of Ijma to any elective body.

Muslim reformists and modernists maintain that discrimination of women had been foreign to the early Islam. According to the Quran women get the same rewards as men in the afterlife. Muslim law separates the property of husband and wife: the husband is denied the right to dispose of the movable and immovable property of his wife. Quran prescribes equal payment for the work of women and men. In Islam the woman is not considered lower by nature and that her rights and duties are the same as those of man.

Muhammad's mission was exclusively prophetic, and spiritual power should, not, therefore, be associated with power in the state. The "old order" should be destroyed and a "new order" built with reference to the best experience of other peoples. Promotion of the Caliphal ideal in present-day conditions may be traced to the desire of the feudal and semi-feudal elements to revive Eastern despotism and restore the theologians' former influence on political affairs. Democracy is named Islam's basic political principle. Islamic democracy is interpreted differently depending on the class interests, the conditions of the times and the specific features of the country.

The Muslim reformers maintain that the idea of rule by the people is implicit in a number of Muslim institutions. They also maintain that the parliamentary system was known in Islam long before Europe, for Islam had been practicing social and other types of democracy for many centuries.

Muslim intelligentsia is searching for a political system different from the Western system of bourgeois democracy, humane system respectful of the individual. Neither religion nor any other ideology can determine the nature of the state, for it depends on the nature of the social and economic conditions, the alignment of class forces, in the given society. There can be no single concept of an Islamic state.

The slogan of an "Islamic state" as the ideal political system still carries influence. Landowners insist on "Islamising" the state because they see this as a means of conserving feudal social and economic relations. By invoking the letter of the Sharia, they try to prevent legislative legislation of the new relations of production and social relations. By seeking to convert the ulema into consultative councils and by forming ministries of religion, and the like, they want to preserve the status of the Muslim clerical order and to exercise their influence on the country's political scene through that organ.

The bourgeoisie, too, does not turn its back on the slogan of an "Islamic state" because this ensures them sanctification of their political power. The religious approach to society's political organization enables them to provide a 'divine foundation' for the laws of the bourgeois state and they portray these as "an expression of God's deputed power", submission to which is not only a civil duty, but also and chiefly a religious obligation.

The ideal of an "Islamic state" is also widespread among the masses due to their religiousness and as a peculiar relation to their disappointment in bourgeois democracy, which has proved impotent to secure the interests of the people and radically to improve the people's life.

### **Islam and the Socio-Economic Problems**

There is no consensus in the developing countries about the future way of development, capitalist, socialist or some other way. The "Islamic socio-economic doctrine" reposes on the so-called Muslim concept of property. In essence, it amounts to the recognition of God as the supreme holder of property.

From the point of view of orthodox Islam, possession of "divine property" is a "grace" which the Most High dispenses to a chosen few, and this in different doses. Unequal property was predetermined by Allah, for the Quran says: "And Allah hath favoured some of you above others in the provision". Orthodox Muslims thus keep intact the social and economic system dating to the Middle Ages.

Advocates of agrarian reforms interpret the Islamic formula "God is the supreme proprietor" as religious sanction to nationalize or at least redistribute land. Referring to the tradition that the Prophet had said, "He who has more land than he needs must either till it himself or render it as a gift unto one of his brother Muslims", they vindicate the state's right to enact agrarian reforms. It is the middle strata and the working people who are interested in the complete elimination of feudal landownership.

The revolutionary democratic forces, wherever they are in power, are gradually eliminating private ownership of the basic means of production.

The urge for a 'human', civilized life, the urge to organize in defense of human dignity, for one's rights as man and citizen, takes hold of everyone, unites all classes, vastly outgrows all party bonds and shakes up people.

The utopian idea of "Islamic socialism" can form the ideological platform of the revolutionary-democratic forces. In some ways "Islamic socialism" is capable of serving as an ideology involving the people in the drive for socialist transformations. This is so if the elements reflecting the yearning of the oppressed section of believers for general human values contained in every religion are accentuated in the teachings and historical experience of Islam. The deep-rooted religiousness, cultural backwardness and political immaturity make it difficult for the Muslim masses to understand the ideas of scientific socialism. It should be borne in mind, however, that "Islamic socialism" can perform a progressive function only for a time, in the "transitional period", when the orientation of future social development is only seen in outline but is not yet fully elaborated. We can say that the formula "socialism equals Islam" is for some "a form of transition from religion to socialism; for others, it is form of transition from socialism to religion. As the class differentiation progresses and the class contradictions become more acute, and as the political consciousness of the

mass of the people grows and Marxist ideas take a firmer grip among them, the progressive potential of "Islamic socialism" is bound to decline.

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