

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ

وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

**Allāh exalts those of you who
believe and those who are given
knowledge to high ranks**

Holy Qur'ān (58 : 11)

MESSAGE OF THAQALAYN

A Quarterly Journal of Islamic Studies

Vol. 3, No.4, Winter 1998/1418

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Published by:
Ahl al- Bayt ('a) World Assembly

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No. 8, Shahid Nawwāb Bldg., 4th Floor, Suite 408.

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Subscription Rates		
	Per Copy	One Year
Iran	2,000 Rials	8,000 Rials
India & Pakistan	30 Rs.	120 Rs.
Other Countries	US\$6	US\$24

Aims and Objectives

1. To provide a forum for scholars to make analytical studies of Islamic topics and themes.
2. To advance the cause of better understanding of the Qur'ān and the *Ahlal-Bayt*'s ('a) contribution to Islam.
3. To publish English translations of Arabic and Persian works of Muslim scholars.
4. To endeavor to find Islamic answers to questions relating to the social, political, and moral problems of today.

* * * * *

Scholars and writers from all over the world are invited to contribute to this journal.

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References and notes should be listed at the end of the article and should contain complete bibliographical information.

Books and other items sent to the journal for review are welcomed.

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SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC CHARACTERS

CONSONANTS :

ء	'	ز	z	ق	q
ب	b	س	s	ك	k
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	l
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م	m
ج	j	ض	ḍ	ن	n
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	ه	h
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	و	w
د	d	ع	‘	ي	y
ذ	dh	غ	gh		
ر	r	ف	f		

VOWELS :

Long :	ا ā	Short :	ـَ a	Doubled :	يـِـ يـِـ iyy (final from i)
	آ Ā		ـُ u		وـِـ وـِـ uww (final from ū)
	و ū		ـِ i	Diphthongs :	وـِـ au or aw
	ي ī				يـِـ ay or ai

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The *Tafsīr* of Mujāhid: The Earliest of Qur'ānic Commentaries

by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Shahīdī Sāliḥī

Preface:

The *tafsīr* (exegesis) of Abū al-Ḥajjāj Mujāhid, son of Jabr (or Jubayr), a Makki and Makhzūmi (21-104 or 105/642-722 or 723), is the work of a leading commentator of an Iranian origin and belonging to the Tābi'ūn, the generation following that of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. He had studied the sciences of the Qur'ān and the arts of Qur'ānic hermeneutics (*tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*) under Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) and Ibn 'Abbās. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī (d. 852/1448) in the *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*¹ and Yāqūt Ḥamawī (d. 626/) in the *Mu'jam al-Udabā'*² mention, besides Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ('a) and Ibn 'Abbās, other names among his teachers, such as Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh Anṣārī, Umm Salamah, Umm Hānī bint Abū Ṭālib, and others. The leading Shi'ī exegete, 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm Qummi, in his exegesis records his traditions from Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a).³

The historians and biographers are unanimous that he was not an

Arab, but they differ concerning the Arab tribe to which he was attached as a mawlā. Some consider him to be the mawlā of Qays ibn Sā'ib ibn 'Uwaymar Makhzūmī, and some that 'Abd Allāh ibn Sā'ib ibn Abi Sā'ib, whereas some others consider him to have been a client of Sā'ib ibn Abi Sā'ib, father of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sā'ib.⁴

He is described as a man of a short stature, with white hair and a white beard that he was loathe to dye.⁵ In his exegesis, one finds many traces of Persian and illuminationist ideas as well as a rationalist tendency whose examples will be cited later. For years is said to have been a disciple of Ibn 'Abbās and one of his intimate associates until he became one of the leading and famed exegetes of the next generation. Abū Nu'aym Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038) in *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'* and Ibn 'Asākir in *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, as well as others, write that Mujāhid presented his exegesis to Ibn 'Abbās thirty times and that he would question his master concerning the exegesis of each and every verse and the circumstances and context of its revelation.⁶ He was a diligent scholar with a humble and contemplative mien and fine morals. Dhahabī, while commending him in the *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, calls him a man of great erudition (*aw'iyat al-'ilm*). He narrates from A'mash that he stated, "When ever I saw Mujāhid, he appeared to be lost in thoughts, like a man who had lost something and was in quest of it. When he spoke, pearls rained from his mouth."⁷ He was very fond of travelling and had visited several Muslim towns, where he held learned discussions and meetings with scholars in most towns. He was very much fond of collecting the accounts and legends of the ancients, and Dhahabī (d. 748/1347) writes in his *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* that he went to Babel to investigate concerning the story of Hārūt and Mārūt. He also made a journey to Ḥaḍramūt, in Yemen.⁸ He is described as a man of courage and a true warrior and *mujāhid*.

His Scholarly Station:

As mentioned, he acquired the science and teachings of the Qur'ān from Imam Amīr al-Mu'minin 'Alī ('a), and 'Alī ('a) had

been proclaimed by the Prophet (ﷺ) as the 'gateway' to the city of Divine knowledge. After the martyrdom of Imam 'Alī in the year 40/660, he joined Ibn 'Abbās, who later came to be known with the appellation *ḥibr al-ummah* (i.e. the rabbi or learned man of the Muslim community). However, he made use of every opportunity to learn and was devoid of pride. He would even consult the scholars of the Ahl al-Kitāb (the People of the Book, i.e., Jews and Christians) and profit from their learning, and for this, he has been criticized by some. Abū Bakr 'Ayyāsh says: "I asked A'mash as to why some people avoided the exegesis of Mujāhid. He replied that it has been narrated that he would consult the Ahl al-Kitāb."⁹ Displaying a remarkable genius, he attained a high station as a scholar and authority and his fame spread throughout the Muslim territories. He was greatly respected by scholars of his time and was a leading figure among the Tābi'ūn. He was intensely keen to understand the meanings and interpretation of Qur'ānic verses and he would say, "Should I know that anyone could expound for me the meaning of the verse,

والمحصنات من النساء الا ما ملكت ايمانكم كتاب الله عليكم و اُجل لكم ما وراء ذلكم
ان تبتغوا ... ان الله كان عليما حكيما

(You are also forbidden to take in marriage) married women, except captives whom you own as slaves. Such is the decree of Allah. All women other than these are lawful to you, provided you seek them with your wealth in wedlock and not in license. Give them their dowry for the enjoyment you have had of them as a duty; but it shall be no offence for you to make any other agreement among yourselves after you have fulfilled your duty. God is All-knowing, All-wise,' (4:24)

I would go a long way to see him! (*la-ḍarabtu ilayhi akbād al-ibil*)"¹⁰

His endeavour to discover the subtleties of the Arabic language and to find scientific methods of exegesis and explanation of linguistic

complications of Qur'ānic words and usage, led him to associate with scholars of Arabic language and literature, which gave him a profound mastery over variant readings of the Qur'ān. Some of these variant readings are ascribed to him, and Dhahabī, in *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, calls him an imam and shaykh of the *qārīs* and exegetes of the Qur'ān.¹¹ Sufyān Thawrī would say, "If you find the interpretation by Mujaḥid, that is enough for you."¹² A group of the *qārīs*, including A'mash, 'Abd Allāh ibn Kathīr and Ibn Muḥayṣin and others, studied Qur'ānic readings (*qirā'āt*) under him. In the same way that he did not spare any effort in seeking knowledge, everyone could approach him to question him concerning scholarly issues, or concerning exposition of some verse, or about the Arab lore and legends. Not being content with learning from scholars and books in different cities and towns, where he also taught and lectured, he would make arduous journeys to distant places to visit historical sites. Ibn 'Asākir writes that he traveled to Syrian towns¹³ and visited Constantinople. He associated with a number of leading Syrian scholars such as Khālīd ibn Ma'dān and 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Zakariyyā' Khuzā'i.¹⁴ He lived for some time in Egypt, but the longest part of his life was spent in Makkah and in Iraq. He established teaching sessions of Qur'ānic sciences in the mosque of Kufah, one of Shi'i centres, and at Karbalā', the first of Shi'i shrines, which was converted by the Shi'is into a great centre of Islamic learning after the Prophet's Mosque. A large number of Sunni and Shi'i exegetes and scholars of Qur'ānic sciences and *qirā'ah* were trained under him.

Mujaḥid's Pupils:

Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī in *Tahdhīb* and al-Dhahabī in *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* have mentioned names of more than thirty of his disciples.¹⁵ Many of the traditionists and scholars of Qur'ānic sciences as well as *qārīs* who taught in Iraq after him were his pupils. They would hold teaching sessions in Kufah and Karbalā' and other

centres of Islamic learning in Makkah and in the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah and they would say "Mujāhid Narrated to us from Ibn 'Abbās that . . ."

Mujāhid in the View of Historians and Scholars:

Ibn Sa'd described him in his *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* in these words, "A trustworthy (thigh) scholar, a great *faqīh*, and a prolific traditionist, he was a *mawlā* of Sā'ib."¹⁶ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Dhahabī has praised him much in his works and in his *al-Ibar* refers to him as the "insignia of the Ṭabī'ūn."¹⁷ The author of the *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz* describes him as a *qārī*, exegete, and *ḥāfiẓ* the Qur'ān.¹⁸ In the *Mizān al-I'tidāl* he is considered as an eminent Islamic authority and trustworthy scholar about whose leading position there is a general consensus among the scholars of the ummah.¹⁹ Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1175), in *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, has given an elaborate biographical account of him and describes him in these words, "Sufyān Thawrī would say, 'One should learn the exegesis of the Noble Qur'ān from four persons: Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah and Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzāḥim.' Qatādah would say, 'Mujāhid is the most learned of the Ṭabī'ūn in the exegesis of the Qur'ān. Yaḥyā ibn Ma'in, Abū Zur'ah, and Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nasā'i were all agreed that Mujāhid was reliable authority from among the Ṭabī'ūn and a disciple of Ibn 'Abbās. He lived in Makkah for some time and later settled down for a period in Kufah.'²⁰ Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī in *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, citing Ṭabarī and others, writes, "Mujāhid was a pious jurist (*faqīh*), a perfect devotee, and a scholar of Qur'ānic readings, and the most reliable and erudite of the Ṭabī'ūn in exegesis of the Noble Qur'ān. None was ever seen to engage in the exegesis of the Qur'ān for the sake of God's good pleasure, to the extent of these three: 'Aṭā', Ṭāwūs, and Mujāhid."²¹ Ibn 'Imād Ḥanbalī writes in *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, "He was a leading scholar of the era of the Ṭabī'ūn in exegesis of the Qur'ān." Then he adds the remark of A'mash that, 'Every time that I happened to see Mujāhid, he would

appear to be immersed in sorrow. Asked as to why he was sad, he replied, "One day Ibn 'Abbās took me by the hand and said to me, 'Mujāhid, you should know that one day the Messenger of God took my hand and he said to me, "O 'Abd Allāh, live in the world like a stranger and a traveller."²² Dhahabi in *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* describes him in these words, "He was an *imam* and shaykh of the *qārīs* and the exegetes. 'Ikrimah, Ṭāwūs and 'Aṭā', who were his peers in Qur'ānic sciences and exegesis, were disciples of Mujāhid." He cites Khuṣayf and Qatādah as having declared, "Mujāhid was the most learned of the survivors among the Ṭābi'ūn in exegesis of the Qur'ān, and when he spoke pearls seemed to rain from his mouth." Mujāhid himself stated, "Whenever I recited Qur'ān in the reading of Ibn Mas'ūd, I felt no need to question Ibn 'Abbās concerning the exegesis of many of the verses."²³

He has a biographical account in most biographical works, and most of them, including the *Khulāṣat al-Tadhhib*, p. 369, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, i, 485, *A'lām*, vol. 5 p. 378, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allafin*, vol. 8, p. 177, *Ṣafwat al-Ṣafwah*, vol. 2, p. 177 and others describe him in similar terms. To sum up, he was the most learned of the Ṭābi'ūn in the field of Qur'ānic sciences and the leading exegete of the Muslim world after Ibn 'Abbās. He had an exclusive station in the Qur'ānic sciences, *qirā'ah* and other disciplines relating to this heavenly scripture. He acquired a wide fame and Sunni and Shi'i scholars assert that he held the highest station in Qur'ānic sciences and exegesis, and all of them refer to him as an '*imām*.'

Mujāhid's Attachment to the Ahl al-Bayt:

Mujāhid was attached to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and he has narrated many traditions concerning the virtues of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ('a). He says, whenever in any place the phrase 'O believers' occurs in the Qur'ān Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ('a) is to be considered the foremost of them and the most meritorious, as he has surpassed them all in embracing Islam.²⁴ In his exegesis of the verse 2: 274,

الَّذِينَ يَنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Those who spend their wealth, night and day, secretly and in public, their wage awaits them with their Lord, and no fear shall be upon them neither they shall sorrow,

he remarks, “This verse has been revealed concerning ‘Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib. ‘Ali had four *dirhams* and he gave away one of them secretly in charity, one openly, one at night, and another by day.²⁵ Commenting on the verse 58:12,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَيْكُمْ صَدَقَةً ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ

O believers, when you converse confidentially with the Messenger of Allah, before you conspire offer a freewill offering. That is better for you and purer,

he narrates from Amir al-Mu'minin ‘Ali (‘a) that he said, “In the Book of God there is a verse on which no one ever acted before or after me and that is the verse concerning *najwah* (to talk in whispers, or to hold confidential conversation). I had one *dinār* which I changed for ten *dirhams* and thereafter whenever I had confidential conversation with the Messenger of Allah I would spend one *dirham*. Later this verse was abrogated by the verse, “Are you afraid to advance freewill offering before your conspiring? . . . And God is aware of the things you do.” (58:13)²⁶

Concerning verse 66:4,

إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ

If you two repent—for surely your hearts had sinned—(God will pardon you); but if you support one another against him, (you should know that) God is his Protector, and Gabriel,

and the righteous among the believers, and, after that, the angels are his supporters.

Mujāhid interprets the phrase 'righteous among the believers' as referring to Amir al-Mu'minin 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a).²⁷

In the exegesis of verses 91:1-4, Mujāhid, narrating from Ibn 'Abbās, interprets them as follows: "*By the sun and his morning brightness, that is, the Apostle, and the moon when she follows him, that is, Amir al-Mu'minin 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a), and by the day when it displays him, that is, the Imams Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ('a), and by the night when it enshrouds him, that refers to the Umayyads.*"²⁸

The Rational Approach in Mujāhid's Exegesis:

Mujāhid may be considered to be the founder of a new school in Qur'ānic hermeneutics characterized by a widespread resort to reason in expounding the verses of the Glorious Qur'ān. In many cases it is observed that his interpretation diverges from that of his master, Ibn 'Abbās. He shows his originality by putting much reliance on reason in understanding the meanings of God's words. As indicated by historical accounts this created a commotion in his era. His son, 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Mujāhid, says, "One day a man came to my father and said, 'Is it you who interprets the Qur'ān according to his personal judgement (*ra'y*)?' My father wept, and he said to him, 'I have learnt the exegesis of the Qur'ān from more than ten Companions of the Messenger of God (ṣ), may God be pleased with them.'"²⁹

Use of Subjective Opinion in Mujāhid's Exegesis:

As mentioned, Mujāhid employed reason and subjective judgement for interpreting Qur'ānic verses in many cases. Here we will cite some of them.

1. Verse 2:65:

ولقد علمتم الذين اعتدوا منكم فى السبت فقلنا لهم كونوا قردة خاسئين

And well you know that there were those among you who violated the Sabbath, and We said to them, 'Be you apes, castaway!'

Commenting on this verse, Mujāhid interprets it as implying that they were not changed physically into apes. What is meant here is a metaphor similar to the verse.

كمثل الحمار يحمل اسفارا

Their parable is that of an ass carrying books.

According to another narration from Mujāhid, it was their hearts that were transformed and disfigured, not that they were changed into apes.³⁰ They retained their human form while their hearts and souls became deformed, like those of apes.

2. Verse 74:4: وثيابك فطهر

And thy robes purify,

Mujāhid interprets it to mean, 'make your conduct righteous.'³¹ Here Mujāhid interprets the verse in accordance with his subjective judgement.

3. Verses 75:22-23: وجوه يومئذ ناضرة، الى ربها ناظرة

Upon that day, faces shall be radiant gazing upon their Lord,

Mujāhid comments, "They will be justified to be radiant while they gaze upon their Lord, the Glorious and the Almighty, Who sees and Whom nothing can see."³² This kind of exegesis based on subjective understanding, and his widespread use of reason, have led some scholars to make him the target of unseemly accusations. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dhahabi, in *Al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirūn*, writes,

“This kind of exegesis from Mujāhid’s pen became a strong basis for the principles of the Mu’tazilah.³³ Goldziher, the well-known orientalist, remarks concerning Mujāhid’s use of reason, “Mujāhid used a rational approach in exegesis of the Qur’ān, and it appears that he was inclined to an exegesis based on subjective judgement, relying much upon it in understanding the intent of God. In his exegesis of verse 2:65, Mujāhid believes that the disfigurement (*maskh*) was not physical, but related to the hearts and souls of the transgressors. They retained their human form while their souls became like those of apes. That which is meant by the verse of the scripture is an abstract metaphor, as in another place, in the verse “*their metaphor is that of an ass carrying books.*” He adds, “Among those who have ventured to advance such opinions after him were Mu’tazilite scholars, who, without having misgivings about the occurrence of this physical metamorphosis, gave rational interpretations it, as resulting from environmental conditions and the like.”³⁴

Mujāhid’s Opposition to the Umayyads:

Mujāhid’s disciples and associates all agree that he was always sad and lost in thoughts, like someone who is in quest of something he has lost.³⁵ This characteristic of his has led to various speculations. It is possible that Mujāhid was deeply affected by the tragic event of Karbalā’. For during the time of the uprising of Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (‘a) he was a student of Ibn ‘Abbās at Makkah and had watched the developments from a close distance. He was forty years old at the time of the event which occurred in the year 61/680, and he deeply regretted for not having participated in that uprising. Although we do not have any historical evidence for this conjecture, but the events of his life and historical records indicate that Mujāhid was a staunch opponent of Umayyad rule and historians have mentioned his struggles against them. For many years, he remained a victim of the rancour of the Umayyads, suffering persecution and imprisonment. Ṭabari, Ibn Khaldūn and others have mentioned his opposition to

Umayyad rulers, and its details are found on historical works. During the period of his stay in Kufah, he joined ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Ash‘ath in his uprising against the Umayyads during the years 80-83/699-702, and after ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was killed and his supporters dispersed, Mujāhid fled Kufah with a group of Shi‘is and took refuge in Makkah. At that time, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was governor of Makkah and he did not persecute them. Later, when Khālīd ‘Abd Allāh al-Qasri, became the governor of Makkah, Ḥajjāj wrote to Walid ibn ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 86-96/705-714) informing him about ‘several hypocrites and heretics’ who had taken refuge in Makkah. He asked the permission of the Umayyad caliph to put him in charge of their fate. Walid wrote to Khālīd to arrest them and to dispatch them to Iraq, to be handed over to Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafi. Khālīd arrested Mujāhid, Sa‘id ibn Jubayr, and all the Iraqi Shi‘is and had them dispatched to Iraq. Sa‘id ibn Jubayr was killed by Ḥajjāj in the year 94/712 or 95/713 and he threw Mujāhid into the prison along with a number of Shi‘is. Mujāhid remained in jail until the death of Ḥajjāj in 96/714.³⁶ Then Mujāhid returned to Makkah where he resumed the teaching of Qur’ānic sciences. He was a unique scholar of his time until he ultimately died, in a state of prostration, in the Masjid al-Ḥarām, may God be pleased with him.

Mujāhid’s Approach to Qur’ānic Exegesis:

Mujāhid has a unique style in his exegesis and interpretation of Qur’ānic verses. He is also the founder of a new school in Qur’ānic hermeneutics. His approach to Qur’ānic exegesis rests more or less on four principles.

1. The principle that one part of the Qur’ān is explanatory of another part. For instance, while interpreting verse 29:13,

وَلْيَحْمِلُنَّ أَثْقَالَهُمْ وَاتَّقَالُوا مَعِ أَثْقَالِهِمْ وَلَيُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

They shall certainly carry their loads, and other loads along with their loads, and upon the day of resurrection, they shall

surely be questioned concerning what they were forging,

he interprets this verse with reference to another verse, that is, 16:25,

لِيَحْمِلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ يُضِلُّونَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ

That they may bear their loads complete on the day of resurrection and some of the loads of those that they led astray without any knowledge,³⁷

2. Interpretation based on traditions. While taking recourse in the statements of Amīr al-Mu'minin 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the Ahl al-Bayt, as well as his master Ibn 'Abbās, he expounds the verses in a way compatible with reason.

3. Reason: As we said, Mujāhid is first among the Ṭābi'un to have founded a new school in Qur'ānic exegesis, which is totally different from the commentaries compiled during the first century. His reliance on personal judgement and his great confidence in reason in the effort to understand the meaning of God's words is evident throughout his exegetical remarks. His effort is to revive the role of thought and its application to rational principles in interpretation of verses. That such a phenomenon appeared in the third decade of the first century is not strange, as it is a continuation of the approach of Amīr Al-Mu'minin 'Alī ('a) who was the founder of contemplative thought, *ijtihād* and reasoning. After the martyrdom of the Imam in the year 40/660, it continued to flourish with the efforts of his descendents, reaching its apex during the era of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad al-Bāqir (56-114/675-732) and his son Abū 'Abd Allah Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (80-148/699-765). Mujāhid would say, "The best form of worship is good judgement."³⁸ The writings of every age reflect the intellectual tendencies and scientific temperament of that era. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ṭāhir al-Sūrati has carried out extensive research on the exegesis of Mujāhid. In his introduction to Mujāhid's exegesis, he writes, "In his exegetical works, Mujāhid uses his judgement to select

out of the traditions and narrations that he has heard. He does not narrate whatever he has heard, but is the most outstanding of the Tābi‘ūn in exercising his own judgements.”³⁹ The writings of Mujāhid and his method are totally original. His method is not traceable in any of the commentaries of the first century. His style sets his exegesis apart from other works. In his exegesis, he has an intensely keen tendency to advance his personal opinion and exercise his personal judgement, making reason the basis of his work. His *ijtihād* and erudition keep him from narrating everything that he has heard from his teachers. Hence in most cases, the text of his remarks and their content are different from those of his teacher Ibn ‘Abbās.⁴⁰ Should we style Mujāhid’s exegesis as rationalist it would not be an exaggeration. Sūrati says in this regard, “Mujāhid’s exegesis is traditional in respect of narration and rationalist in thought.”⁴¹

While interpreting some of the verses, Mujāhid at times mentions more than one interpretation for a verse. For instance, while commenting on the verse 13:41,

أَنَا نَاتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا

*Have they not seen how We come to the land,
diminishing it at its extremities?*

he remarks, “it means, the death of its people, its ruination in respect of population and produce, and ruin of land and death of its scholars.”⁴²

4. Literary comments: Mujāhid displays a wonderful originality in employing literary skills in exegesis. One of his fundamental principles is literary study of the contents of the Holy Qur’ān. He has founded a new approach also in respect of the literary studies, philology, and rhetoric and has left us a legacy of unique discussions. There is no trace in them of the repetitions that are found in plenty in other commentaries. He lays much importance on philological and literary discussions, and holds that it is not lawful for someone not learned in the idiom of the Arabs to resort to Qur’ānic exegesis.⁴³ He

shows an unparalleled good taste and elegance in literary explanation of verses and difficult and obscure words of the Arabic language, which shows his profound erudition in literature and philology. These kind of literary remarks are not found in any of the other commentaries. His greatest originality relates to the literary aspect of the Qur'ān, to such an extent that the reader is much impressed by his good taste and elegance. The originality of his approach in exegesis of the Qur'ān shows his literary prowess and profound insight in philology and knowledge of the Arabic language, its idiom and styles. 'Abd al-Rahmān Sūrati says in this regard, "The greater part of Mujāhid's exegesis consists of explanation of unfamiliar words, uncommon expressions and resolution of obscure points. Explanations of intricate words and difficult or unfamiliar phrases in most of his hermeneutic works become evident to us, as if he were an erudite philologist with a mastery of the Arabic language, its dialects and styles of discourse, use of idiom and words. It would be right to say that Mujāhid was one of the masters of Arabic philology, and his exegesis is the first dictionary of unfamiliar and difficult Qur'ānic terms in the manner of lexicographical works, which were not compiled in his era in an alphabetical order."⁴⁴

Concerning the exegesis of verse 24:36,

فِي بُيُوتٍ اِذْنُ اللّٰهِ اَنْ تُرْفَعَ

In houses that God has permitted to be raised,

there are two opinions. The first of them interprets it as implying the reverence paid to houses of worship. The second is the opinion of Mujāhid that it means the building of the houses of worship. Ṭabari prefers Mujāhid's opinion and cites verse 2:127 as a precedent:

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ

And when Abraham, (and Ishmael with him), raised up the foundations of the house,

he writes, in most of the cases *al-raf' al-buyūt* means building of houses.⁴⁵

In exegesis of the verse 22:29, he explains the phrase *al-bayt al-‘atīq* with the remark that it (i.e. the Ka‘bah) has been kept free (a‘taqa) by God from being claimed by any of the tyrants:⁴⁶

In exegesis of the verse 22:30, *وَمَنْ يُعْظَمْ حُرُمَاتِ اللَّهِ*

Whosoever venerates the sanctities of God,

he interprets it as meaning the sanctity of Makkah, of *hajj*, *‘umrah* and the sins which God has forbidden in relation to them.⁴⁷ In exegesis of verse 2:195,

وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

Do not cast yourself into destruction with your own hands,

he remarks that it means abstention from expending one’s wealth in the way of God (*tark al-nafaqah fi sabīl Allāh*) for the fear of poverty.⁴⁸

This exegesis is based on the four aforementioned principles. The exegete pays particular attention to explanation of difficult words and unfamiliar phrases of the Qur’ān. At times he turns his attention to the conditions in which particular verses were revealed and the related episodes, and only rarely does he attend to the issue of abrogation and abrogating verse, variant readings, and legalist understanding of the verses. While interpreting, he pays attention to the styles of discourse, idioms and conduct of the Arabs. ‘Abd al-Rahmān Sūrati says concerning Mujāhid’s approach, “Mujāhid’s exegesis is the mirror of his own understanding and personal opinion of the Qur’ānic meanings in light of his knowledge of the Arabic language and idiom. He is an exegete who is a *mujtahid* that takes into consideration the demands of his era and who has left us a legacy to be emulated, which is *ijtihād* in understanding the Qur’ān, that we may succeed at times and err at other times, and all that for bringing about a movement in hermeneutics which would illuminate the earth with its light.”⁴⁹

It should be mentioned that in the commentaries of Ṭabari and

Suyūṭī's *Durr al-Manthūr* there are many Jewish and Christian stories and legends narrated from Mujaḥid, and we have already mentioned that he used to consult Christian and Jewish scholars. Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844), in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, writes with his *isnād*, quoting A'mash, that when asked as to why some scholars avoided Mujaḥid's exegesis, he said it was reported that he would consult the Ahl al-Kitāb.⁵⁰

Mujaḥid's exegesis has been narrated from one century to another and from generation to the another. Among its chains of transmission is that of Sam'ānī (d. 562/1166), from his teacher Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān Balkhī, who narrated it with his connected *isnād* from Mujaḥid.⁵¹

Manuscripts of Mujaḥid's Exegesis:

1. There is a manuscript dated 544[/1149-50] bearing no. 1075 in the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah. Fu'ād Sayyid has mentioned it in his list of manuscripts.⁵² Its first volume is from the beginning of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* up to verse 43 of *Sūrat al-Nisā'*; the second from verse 44 of *Sūrat al-Nisā'* to *Sūrat al-Anfāl*; the third from *Sūrat al-Tawbah* up to verse 24 of *Sūrat Banī Isrā'īl*; the fourth from verse 25 of *Sūrat Banī Isrā'īl* to verse 25 of *Sūrat al-Furqān*; the fifth from verse 27 of *Sūrat al-Furqān* up to the end of *Sūrat al-Yā Sin*; the sixth from *Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt* up to the end of *Sūrat al-Najm*; the seventh from *Sūrat al-Qamar* up to the end of *Sūrat 'Ammā Yatasā'alūn*; the eighth from *Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt* up to the end of *Sūrat al-Nās*.⁵³ This version is narrated by Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd 'Amdānī and its *isnād* leads up to Mujaḥid through Ibrāhīm, from Ādam, from Warqā', from Abū Najih. This is the most famous chain of transmission of Mujaḥid's exegesis. The beginning and end of each of the volumes of the manuscript of Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah bears a note recording its narration through Shaykh Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥasan ibn Khayrūn, from his uncle Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ibn Khayrūn,

from Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Shādhān, from Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥasan. The beginning of the sessions of narration pertaining to the first volume began on Rajab 1, 538 and concluded on Tuesday Rabi‘ al-Awwal 18, 544. This version is an abridgement of Mujāhid’s exegesis, which has been condensed by its collector from a manuscript in his possession. He has made an effort in this rescension to refrain from narrating the legends of the Ahl al-Kitāb and the reader rarely comes across anything pertaining to what is called the *Isrā’iliyyāt*. A facsimile of this manuscript was made by the society for Islamic research in Pakistan. It has been edited with an introduction by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ṭāhir al-Sūrati, in two volumes, under the patronage of the Emir of Qaṭar, Shaykh Khalīfah ibn Ḥamd Āl Thānī. It was reprinted by al-Manshūrāt al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut. It may be mentioned that in the footnotes the editor has mentioned the variations in the text of the exegesis as well as additional material found in Ṭabari’s commentary and has accomplished an arduous and useful job.

There were two manuscripts of Mujāhid’s exegesis in possession of the famous exegete, Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Barghānī Ḥā’iri (d. 1271/1854).⁵⁴ The first of them belonged to the 8th/14th century, and he cites from it in his exegesis *Baḥr al-‘Irfān*.⁵⁵ The second, dated 490 H. is a precious and unique manuscript which he had acquired after 1266/1849; it contains exegetical comments on many of the verses pertaining to the *wilāyah* of Amīr al-Mu’minīn (‘a) and the infallible Imams of his family and their virtues. He included all of them in his another exegesis named *Kanz al-‘Irfān*. The second is more complete than the first one, and each of them is more comprehensive than the manuscript of Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah and they are accessible at the present in the manuscript collection of this author (a descendant of ‘Allāmah Barghānī) at the holy city of Karbalā’. I would like to call the attention of the authorities of Islamic studies departments in universities to this matter so that doctoral students are given assignments to devote their doctoral theses to

collection of Mujāhid's exegetical traditions from Sunni works, especially Ṭabari's commentary, Suyūṭi's *Durr al-Manthūr*, the exegesis of Sufyān al-Thawri, Abū Nu'aym's *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'* and other works, in which they are scattered, so that a complete and comprehensive commentary of Mujāhid is put at the disposal of lovers of Qur'ānic exegesis, Qur'ānic studies, and sciences.

Mujāhid's Creed:

At the end of this discussion dealing with Mujāhid's exegetical approach and his life, it would be in order to examine the question concerning his creed, as to whether he was a Sunni or a Shi'i, because different opinions have been advanced on the topic by Shi'i and Sunni scholars.

As this author has been led to believe that Mujāhid was a Shi'i through the study of his exegesis, his biographical accounts, as well as on other grounds, it seemed proper to raise this question here and to mention my reasons in this regard, hoping that circles related to religious and Qur'ānic studies would find useful the views of scholars of religion and history on this subject.

The oldest sources that expressly mention Mujāhid's Shi'ism consist of the exegesis of Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim Furāt al-Kūfi, a Shi'i exegete who lived in the era of the Lesser Occultation (260-329/873-940),⁵⁶ and the *Tafsīr al-Qummi*, the work of Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummi, the famed Imāmi exegete who lived during the end of the 3rd/9th and beginning of the 4th/10th century.⁵⁷

They refer to Mujāhid as a trustworthy Shi'i exegete and narrator. In their books, they have narrated from him traditions that also indicate his Shi'i character. The third old source which refers to Mujāhid as a Shi'i exegete is Shaykh Abū al-Rashīd 'Abd al-Jalīl Qazwīnī in his work *Kitāb al-Naqd*, written about 560/1164.⁵⁸ He is one of later scholars who have noted Mujāhid's Shi'i character. The leading Shi'i exegete, Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Barghānī has included the entire exegesis of Mujāhid in his Qur'ānic commentary,

Kanz al-'Irfān,⁵⁹ and a part of it in his other exegesis *Bahr al-'Irfān*.

⁶⁰ Among contemporaries, Āyatullāh Khū'i, in his *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, has mentioned Mujāhid, without mentioning his father's name or kunyah and without making any other remark, as one of Shi'i narrators.⁶¹

It is a matter of amazement how this famed Shi'i exegete whose traditions are narrated in reliable Imamiyyah works, such as the four principal collections of ḥadīth, the *kutub al-arba'ah*, has been overlooked by Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī in his *Majālis al-Mu'minin*. Also, this matter has gone unnoticed by Sayyid Ḥasan Ṣadr Kāzimi, the author of *Ta'sis al-Shi'ah li 'Ulūm al-Islām*. Similarly, our teacher Āqā Buzurg Ṭehrānī, in the fourth volume of the *Dhari'ah*, which is devoted to Shi'i commentaries, has not mentioned Mujāhid's exegesis. Following them the author of the *A'yān al-Shi'ah* too fails to give a biographical account of Mujāhid in his work. Moreover, his name has been mentioned rarely in Shi'i sources.

There are many reasons for regarding Mujāhid to have been a Shi'i, to mention all of which is outside the scope of this article. Accordingly, here we will mention two main points.

1. After the demise of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), in the year 11/632, Abū Bakr gave orders prohibiting the writing of ḥadīth. This prohibition continued until the era of the caliphate of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. After 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz came into power in the year 99/717 this prohibition was withdrawn.

Dhahabi, narrating from Ḥākim with *isnād* reaching 'Ā'ishah, reports that she said: "My father had written five hundred traditions of the Apostle of Allah which were kept with me. Then one day he told me to bring them and asking for fire he set fire to all of them."⁶² After the first caliph, 'Umar and the succeeding caliphs maintained the ban on ḥadīth. It were only the Shi'is who did not follow these orders and continued to write ḥadīth following their Imam Amir al-Mu'minin 'Alī and the other Infallible Imams ('a).⁶³ Mujāhid was among the Shi'is who did not comply with the orders of the caliphs

and engaged in the writing of ḥadīth and teaching of *tafsīr*. Ibn Abī Malikah used to say, "I saw Mujāhid questioning Ibn 'Abbās concerning the exegesis of the Qur'ān and he had with him his sheets and Ibn 'Abbās would say to him, 'Write,' until he wrote down the complete *tafsīr* from him."⁶⁴ Mujāhid also would tell his pupil's, "Do not write every one of my legal opinions. Write only ḥadīth from me." Abū Yaḥyā Kunāsi would say, "I would go up to Mujāhid's quarters along with him and he would take out his books and I would copy them."⁶⁵

2. There are indications of belief in *wilāyah* in Mujāhid's exegesis and instances of it were cited earlier.

Notes:

1. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr), vol. 10, p. 39.
2. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Udabā'* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'mūn), vol. 17, p. 78.
3. 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī* (Najaf, 1387 H.), ii, 357.
4. Muḥammad Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah), ii, 305-306.
5. Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1377/1957), v, 466-467.
6. Abū Nu'aym Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr), iii, 279-280; Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Ta'rīkh Dimashq* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1409/1989), xxiv, 88.
7. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī), i, 92.
8. Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* (Beirut Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1401/1981),
9. Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Ta'rīkh Dimashq* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr),
10. Al-Ṭabari, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabari*, under the verse 4:24,

11. Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, iv, 449.
12. Al-Ṭabari, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabari*, i, 91.
13. Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, xxiv, 87.
14. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ṭāhir Sūrati, *Tafsīr Mujāhid* (Beirut: al-Manshūrāt al-'Ilmiyyah), Introduction, i, 43.
15. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, x, 39; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, iv, 450.
16. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, v, 466-467.
17. Al-Dhahabī, *al-'Ibar* (Kuwait, 1984), i, 125.
18. Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabi), i, 92.
19. Al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-'Itidāl* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr), iii, 439-440.
20. Ibn Manūr, *Mukhtaṣar Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, xxiv, 87-90.
21. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, x, 38-40.
22. Ibn 'Imād Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1409/1988), i, 125.
23. Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, iv, 449-457.
24. Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī* (Tehran: 1410/1990), p. 49.
25. *Ibid*, p. 72.
26. *Ibid*, p. 470; 'Alī Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, ii, 357.
27. Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī*, p. 490.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 562.
29. Dr. Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1396/1976), i, 107.
30. Abū al-Ḥajjāj Mujāhid, *Tafsīr Mujāhid*, i, 77-78.
31. Abū Nu'aym Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr), iii, 281.
32. Mujāhid, *Tafsīr Mujāhid*, ii, 708.
33. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, *Al-Tafsīr wal-Mufasssīrūn*, i, 106.
34. Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, tr. Dr. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Najjār, 129-130.
35. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, v, 466-467.

36. Ibn Khaldūn, *al-'Ibar wa al-Dīwān al-Mubtadā' wa al-Khabar* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lami, 1391/1971), iii, 65.
37. Mujāhid, *op. cit.*, ii, 496
38. Ibn Qutaybah, *Ta'wīl Mukhtalaḡ al-Ḥadīth* (Beirut: Maktabat al-'Ilmiyyah), p. 69.
39. Mujāhid, *Tafsīr Mujāhid*, i, 34.
40. *Ibid.*, i, 25, 260.
41. *Ibid.*, i, 24.
42. *Ibid.*, i, 330.
43. Sayyid Maḡmūd Ālūsī, *Rūḡ al-Ma'ānī* (Beirut: Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-'Arabi), i, 5.
44. Mujāhid, *Tafsīr Mujāhid*, i, 27.
45. *Ibid.*, i, 28.
46. *Ibid.*, ii, 423.
47. *Ibid.*, ii, 424.
48. *Ibid.*, i, 99.
49. *Ibid.*, i, 37-38
50. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, v, 467.
51. 'Abd al-Karīm Sam'ānī, *Al-Taḡbīr fī Mu'jam al-Kabīr* (Baghdad: Dīwān Awqāf, 1395/ 1975), i, 556.
52. Fu'ād Sayyid, *Fihrist al-Makhṡūtāt al-Muṣawwarah* (Cairo, 1954), i, 30-31.
53. *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-e Tashayyu'* (Tehran, 1373 H. Sh.), iv, 473.
54. Shaykh Muḡammad Ṣāliḡ Barghānī Ḥā'irī, *Baḡr al-'Irfān*, ii, folio 369, ms. in author's personal library, Qazwin.
55. The journal *Bayyināt*, 2nd year, no. 8, pp. 182-184.
56. Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī*, p. 49 ff.
57. 'Alī ibn Ibrāḡīm Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, ii, 357.
58. 'Abd al-Jalīl Qazwīnī, *Kitāb al-Naqq* (Tehran: Anjuman-e Āthār-e Millī, 1358 Sh.), p. 212.
59. The Journal *Bayyināt*, 2nd year, no. 8, pp. 182-184.
60. Muḡammad Ṣāliḡ Barghānī Ḥā'irī, *op. cit.*, ii, folio. 369.

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61. Āyatullāh Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'i, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* (Beirut, 1409/1989), xiv, 187-188.
 62. Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*, i, 5.
 63. The Journal *Ḥawzeh*, no. 66, pp. 162-163.
 64. Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā Jalālī, *Tadwīn al-Sunnat al-Sharīfah*, (Qum, 1413), p. 247.
 65. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

Fiqh and Time

A Historical Glance

By Muḥammad Mahdī Mīhrīzī

Encountering a problem leads to theorizing; and further research on, and contemplation of, theory, gives rise to the formation of hypotheses. Hypotheses, in the course of their development, change into systems of thought and science. This pattern, as a rule, is observable in all scholarly and scientific disciplines. *Fiqh* in the Islamic sciences is a clear example of this rule. *Aḥādīth* and *āyāt*, due to their disparity and scatteredness, ultimately resulted in the development of *fiqh*. Likewise, in the course of time, the discipline of *uṣūl* was born out of *fiqh*. Consequent to its origin, *fiqh* itself has undergone changes and developments resulting from the widening of the scope of human relations. These developments have also deeply influenced the methodology and logic of *fiqh*, viz. the science of *uṣūl*.

The discipline of *uṣūl*, along with its growth and systemization, both owe their origin to these very problems and developments. It was engagement with these very same problems which led the Ahl al-Sunnat to resort to such things as *qiyās*

(analogy), *istiḥsān*, *maṣāliḥ* (approbation) *mursalah* (expedients) and *ijmā'* (consensus). The recourse of the Shi'ah to *uṣūl 'amaliyyah* (derived principles of theology) and their growth over time was due to similar reasons.

What is meant by the above is that it was the lack of religious texts "the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnat*" that led to attention being paid to other sources (regardless of whether these secondary sources be considered as mere expounders of the primary ones or whether they be considered independent sources in line with the primary ones).

Looking from the outside at the course of development of *fiqh* and *uṣūl* leads to the above truth; which is itself the result of these changes.

In the last few centuries these problems have increased, and taking sudden spurts and leaps, they have become evermore apparent. This is especially the case with the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, when Muslims first faced and encountered modern Western civilization and when they first manifested the tendency to first inclinations to take those countries as role models.

The problems which arose at this period of time were diverse: some had their origin in the history and the methodology of theology and *ijtihād* of *fiqh*; some had arisen from the deficiencies and uncertainties of modern civilization; and some were the result of the sudden expansion of the realm of human life.

Contact with the developments in the West caused these problems to make their appearance all at once. These problems are divided into two groups, which will be briefly reviewed here.

A) Internal Problems

These problems stem from a special type of tendency and understanding in the Islamic *sharī'at*. Forty years ago, Dr. Ṣubhi

Maḥmaṣānī defined the causes of stagnancy and sluggishness among the Sunnis in the following manner:

1- Closing the door of *ijtihād*: Towards the middle of the seventh century, after the fall of Baghdad, intellectual advancement stagnated and decline began.

2. Recourse to the Texts: *Sunnat* (tradition), which is the second source of *tashrī'* (legislation) was not immune to distortion. Although religious leaders set about the task of verification and correction of *aḥādīth*, the lay Muslims and even some of the *fuqahā'* resorted to false ahadith and this brought about their decline and stagnancy.

3. Recourse to form and secondary details: The texts have determined the general rules but the details are the result of the *mujtahids'* *ijtihād*, and it is these very details which pervade all the *fiqh* books. But these details have sometimes run counter to the general rules and caused their abandonment. For example, it is intention which is the rule in Islamic contracts, and not the wording, but the *fuqahā'* have discussed the wording of the transactions in such detail that the main principle, intention, has virtually disappeared.

4. Sectarianism: This happened after the Prophet's (ﷺ) time when Muslims were divided into Shi'ites and Sunnites, and each of these into smaller sects. Although this partisanship symbolizes the open-mindedness of the Islamic *sharī'at*, and has had some virtues, it has nonetheless been followed by such drawbacks as enmity and prejudice.

5. Ignorance of the Rationale of *Tashrī'*. The *ʿulamā'* of *uṣūl* all agree that decrees are based on reasons, the modification of which would modify them, too. It is these very reasons which form the spirit of *sharī'at*, which is incompatible with stagnancy. Muslims, however, seem to have forgotten this fact, and remain fixed on existing decrees.

6. Association of day-to-day worldly matters with religion: Some of the Prophet's (ﷺ) instructions, which referred to the material and mundane aspects of life, were thought to partake of an eternal and a sacred nature.¹

The martyr, Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr, one of the enlightened *fuqahā'* of the Shi'ites, has raised another problem, which is briefly referred to here.

Ijtihād pursued one single goal among the Shi'ites: the adoption of *shari'at* within the realm of the individual life of a Muslim. This conception, which resulted from the detachment of the Shi'ites from politics, involved numerous drawbacks, which are as follows:

1. *Fiqh* concentrated more on individual rather than on social matters.

2. The *faqih* had an individualistic outlook towards *shari'at*, and thus the laws of "*ḍiyah*" and "*qiṣāṣ*" were thought to be in contradiction with the rule of "*lā ḍarar*."

3. The *faqih* was always seeking to solve the individual's problem. For example, "*ribā*" (usury) was regarded not as a social problem, but as a problem for the individual Muslim, and thus all solutions were offered on behalf of the latter.

4. This individualistic outlook also affected their understanding of the texts. Thus, never did the *faqih* recognize the Prophet or the Imāms as rulers or governors. So, all that they said or did, was interpreted as manifestations of purely religious decrees.

5. The texts were not regarded as being based on the principle of derivation of the rule from reality or, in other words, being adapted to reality. Therefore, the *faqih* would be constrained by various decrees concerning a particular matter, and thus would permit *tajziyah*.² He presents examples for all of the above-mentioned instances.

B) External shortcomings and ambiguities

The obscurities which were imposed upon *fiqh* from outside are many, but they could be studied in relation to three general areas: one is the area of religious punishments, that is, *ḥudūd* (pl. of *ḥadd*) and punishments which are incongruous with modern civil society; another is in relation to the contemporary economic system, which, on the one hand, depends on interest money, which is forbidden in Islam, and, on the other hand, has brought about transactions that did not exist in the past, and concerning which there are no existent religious decrees; other obscurities concern the area of personal law, especially concerning women and children's rights, such as women's inheritance, divorce, polygamy. etc.³

Some have formulated the above problems in other ways, for example in the following manner:

1. The problem of absence of law

2. The emergence of obstacles to the enforcement of some written and predetermined laws.

3. Changes in the conventional referents and concepts.⁴

Such problems have led some to conclude that *fiqh* is now unenforcable. And it was due to these very same difficulties that some Islamic countries turned to foreign legal systems. In 1840, the Ottoman rulers translated French criminal law and substituted it for Islamic punitive law. In Egypt, Ismā'il Pāshā also put the French civil law into force.⁵

In Islamic countries, only personal law has been practiced in accordance with Islamic *fiqh*, and that too has faced serious challenge in connection with some laws.

- 2) To remove these problems, reform movements, in the form of individual, collective, governmental and independent efforts have been made. These efforts are as follows:

A) Composition of legal texts based on Islamic *fiqh*.

Composition of compilations based on religious sources to

be used by governments is one such reform and constructive movement. In this regard, the following compilations may be mentioned.

1. *Majallah al-Aḡkām al-'Adliyyah* (The Magazine of Judicial Laws): the Ottoman state called upon some of the *fuqahā'* to devise the civil code in Islamic *fiqh* based on the sources of the Ḥanafī sect. Since this compilation was issued in the form of sequential chapters, it was called *Majallah* (magazine). This compilation, which is available in 16 volumes containing 1851 laws, was enforced in 1293. This was the first instance of law compilation based on Islamic *fiqh*.⁶

2. *Murshid al-Hairān li Ma'rifah al-Aḡwāl al-Insān* (A Guide to the Uninformed about the Knowledge of Man).

Muḡammad Qadri Pāshā devised a similar *majallah* in Arabic, dealing with *waqf* (endowment) and transaction rules, containing 1045 laws.

3. *Al-Tashrī' al-Jinā'ī al-Islamī*⁷ (Islamic Criminal Laws): In this work 'Abd al-Qādir 'Audah made a similar effort, dealing with such topics as crime, ḡudūd and punishments, published in two volumes. In this compilation, an attempt has been made to approximate the schools of *fiqh* to statute law. This compilation includes 689 laws.⁸

It is also good here to mention the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution and its ratified laws, which have been written according to the Shi'ite Islamic *fiqh* and the Islamic *sharī'at*, and which owe their being to the great movement of the Muslims and the Shi'ite '*ulamā'* and *fuqahā'* of Iran, led by Imām Khumaynī.

B). The Composition of Encyclopedias.

Composition of juridical encyclopedias was the second reform movement carried out with the intention of presenting a rich Islamic *fiqh* in an easily accessible manner and according to new methods. The movement was first sponsored by the Faculty of

Shari'at in Syria in 1956. However, the first phase of it, which was the compilation of the technical terms of *fiqh*, under the direction of Dr. Muḥammad Zakī, was never completed.

With the union between Egypt and Syria in 1958, a joint committee of Egyptian and Syrian '*ulamā*' was formed under the supervision of the Secretary of Arabic (the Pilgrimage Ministry), the result of which is the Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir Encyclopedia, published in 24 sections, which, however, has not finished with the letter A yet.

As relations between Egypt and Syria became strained, and with the consequent disintegration of the committee, the work was left unfinished.

For a second time the Association of Islamic Professors of Egypt, presided over by Muḥammad Abū Zuhrah, started another encyclopedia, which was again left unfinished.

The fourth movement was started by the Ministry of Pilgrimage in Kuwait, seven sections of which have been published so far.⁹

It is also fitting to applaud here the initiative made by the great leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran in ordering the composition of the *fiqh* encyclopedia of the Ahl al-Bayt (the Imams) (peace be upon them) and pray for God's grace and for success for those involved in it.

Also, the first issue of the magazine of *Musū'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Muyassarah* has recently been made available, much to the gratification of men of learning.¹⁰

C) *Fiqh* conferences

Fiqh conferences should also be mentioned alongside the reform movements.

1. The Mecca *Fiqh* Conference: This conference, which was initiated at Mouṣṭafā Zarqā's suggestion in A.H.L. 1384, has held nine formal yearly meetings so far. Dealing with, criticizing

and reviewing new *fiqh* subject-matter, following specialized research, is one of the main aims of this conference.¹¹

2. Assembly of Islamic Discussions: This assembly was founded at *Al-Azhar* in 1961. It consists of four committees: The Qur'ān and the traditions, jurisprudential discussions, revival of heritage, and social customs. The assembly holds yearly conferences and discusses problems faced by Muslim. The first conference was held in 1964.¹²

3. Kuwait *fiqh* Conferences: On the subject of the monetary system in Islam, two conferences were held in the years of 1979 and 1983. Another conference on *zakāt* was also held in 1984.¹³ In the Islamic Republic of Iran, some *fiqh* seminars have been held, of which the following may be mentioned here..

1. Seminar on the Study of Islamic Economy, held in the holy city of Mashhad. The first session of this seminar was held in 1989, and the second in 1990.¹⁴

2. Seminar on Islamic Viewpoints in Medicine, 1989, in Mashad.¹⁵

3. Seminar on Problems of Adaptation of Medical Practice with the Holy Precepts of Islam, 1995, in Tehran.¹⁶

D) Embarking on Comparative *Fiqh*.

Comparative *fiqh* among different Muslim sects has a long-standing history but comparison and reconciliation between Islamic *fiqh* and statute law is a new approach, and must be counted among the reformatory movements. Comparative *fiqh* is also very useful in introducing Islamic *fiqh* and its strengths to the parliaments of the world. The following works may be mentioned in this field.

‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Sanhūrī’s works, such as *Maṣādir al-Ḥaqq fī al-Fiqh al-Islāmī* (God’s Decrees In Islamic *Fiqh*), 6 Vols., *Al-Wasīf* (The Intermediary), 15 Vols., *Āthār al-Ḥarb fī al-Fiqh al-Islāmī* (Works of War In Islamic *Fiqh*), by Wahbah al-Zuhayli, 2

Vols, *Huqūq al-Insān* (The Rights of Man), by Muḥammad Sa'id al-Daqqāq and 'Abd al-'Azīm Wazīr, 4 Vols., *Aḥkām al-Sujūn Bayn al-Sharī'at wa al-Qānūn* (The Laws of Prison Between The Sharī'at And The Law), by Aḥmad al-Wā'ilī, *Al-Difā' al-Shar'ī fī al-fiqh al-Islāmī* (Lawful Defense In Islamic *Fiqh*), by Muḥammad Sa'id 'Abd al-Tawwāb, etc.¹⁷

3) Up to here, part of the problems of Islamic *fiqh* in modern times and part of the reforms concerning them were enumerated. In general, the reforms paid attention to the form or, at best, led to minor internal changes with in *fiqh*. Of course, there is the urgent need for achieving basic and fundamental changes alongside these reforms. Remaining far from the extremes of inadequacy and excess will contribute much to the width and depth of *fiqh*. Different theories have been put forward about the ways of removing basic problems, but the research on it is scant, and, thus, these theories haven't changed into hypotheses able to form a system of thought.

A review of these theories will prove useful for extensive and serious research. It has been attempted, in this essay, to present these views in chronological order. The purpose, of course, is to give a brief account, and thus detailed explanations have been avoided.

1. Division of the laws into variable and invariable

This is the oldest attitude towards the adaptation of the Islamic *shar'iat* to the changing human world. With this division in the area of the laws of *fiqh* and religion, the problem of unadaptability is removed because changes in life take place in the realm of changing human needs, which are subject to variable laws; whereas, there is no change in the invariable areas of life to necessitate a change in the laws.

The most long-standing statement made in this connection is to be found in the writings of Ibn Qayyim (681-751) which have been quoted from his *Ighāthah Al-Lahfān*. He says:

“Laws fall within two groups; some laws are not variable under any circumstances, and *ijtihād*, too, cannot make alterations in them, such as *wājibāt* (the religious imperatives) and *muḥarrammāt* (the forbidden things) and religious limitations. A second group of laws are variable according to time and place, such as flogging, which is variable in quality and quantity depending on its advantages.¹⁸

‘Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā’i (1281-1361) is one of the prominent *fuqahā’* who have referred to this theory.

“In brief we learned that Islam divides its laws into two distinct groups: the variable laws and the invariable laws. The invariable laws are those in the establishment of which the reality of the natural man, that is, human nature, has been taken into account. And since the essential constitution of all humans is the same, and they all share the same human characteristics, their needs are thus of the same nature, and so need invariable laws.

Just as man needs a set of stable and invariable laws which have been established according to the invariable requirements of human nature, he also needs a set of variable laws, and a human community will never survive without such laws.

There is a principle concerning these kinds of laws in Islam which will be referred to as the Ruler’s Authority in this essay, and it is this principle which meets the changing and variable needs of people in any time and place.”¹⁹

‘Allāmah has also referred to this point in the article “Authority and Leadership”.

“From the above statements some points can be understood. First, as it was stated that Islamic laws are of two kinds, that is, two kinds of laws are enforced in Islamic society. The first type

encompasses heavenly laws and the laws of *sharī'at*, which are unchanging and invariable material. These are a set of laws which, through heavenly revelation, and as an irrevocable religion, have been sent down to the noble Prophet, and which have always been presented as obligatory. The second type of laws are those which stem from the office of Authority, and which are established and enforced according to their expediency. Of course, these types of laws are subject to the requirements and conditions of the time, and so will definitely change along with social advances and changes in what is right and what is evil. And, as it shall be explained bellow, the very principle of Authority itself is a heavenly decree, belonging to the realm of *sharī'at*, which is invariable and irrevocable.”²⁰

Determining the variable and invariable realms is one of the subjects which have been considered in this theory, which is briefly referred to below.

As we observed in ‘Allāmah’s statement, he recognizes the realm of the variable as the ruler’s jurisdiction. Some have determined the realm of the variable as follows:

1. Scientific and technological advances, as a result of which means and tools change,
2. Unprecedented events,
3. Government’s authority,
4. Secondary topics,
5. Necessity to distinguish between the important and the most important.”²¹

The late Muḥammad Jawād Mughniah categorises beliefs, prayers and the topics of inheritance, marriage and divorce in the realm of the invariable, and transactions, in the realm of the variable.”²²

Dr. Yūsuf Qarḍāwī believes in “firmness in goals and flexibility in the means and devices, firmness in religious and ethical values and flexibility in worldly and scientific affairs,

firmness in definite original sources and flexibility in theological origins such as *ijmā'* (consensus) and analogy.²³

Dr. 'Abd al- Mun'im al-Namr considers some transactions as the area of difference in precepts.²⁴

Some others have said, "the invariable area of firmness includes belief, prayers and ethics, and the variable area of change includes transactions, order, governing and lawful commands in an unlimited area."²⁵

Professor Muḥammad Taqī Ja'fari has enumerated some firm and changeable laws during mankind's life in the articles published in *Kayhan-e Farhanqi*.²⁶ He has also enumerated 200 instances of invariable laws during life. These instances can be of great help and guidance in the framework of this theory.²⁷ It means that he has not concerned himself with determination of firmness and change in *shari'at*, but has shown the constants and variables in human life. Therefore, it can be helpful for the followers of this theory.

The theory, in spite of its long history and the fact that it has been subject of some research, and has been one of the three main topics of the Eighth Islamic Unity Conference (August 1995), has not yet been well established and serious questions concerning it remain. Some of these questions are as follows:

A. How are constants and variables in human life recognized?

B. What are the positive criteria for variance or invariance in Islamic (*shari'at*) laws?²⁸

2. Theory of Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

'Abduh made a distinction between human relations (their laws and customs) and the code of worship. He said "Qur'an and *ḥadith* (narration) have laid exclusive and accurate laws on worship, but there are only some general rules in the case of human

relations and transactions and their adaptation to the situation has been left to the people of every period.”

He employed two criteria for adapting *shari‘at* to the situations of the world today. “First the principle of counseling that Mālikis of Sunnī religion believe in, i.e., deviation from the conclusions of analogy for the sake of people’s interests. In this case any law of Qur’ān or *sunnat* (tradition) harmful to the Muslims, will be set aside for the sake of their interests. ‘Abduh, who himself was a Mālikī Muslim, had learnt Ḥanafī jurisprudence at *Al-Azhar*. He interpreted counseling in a broader way, i.e., in recognition of the best course of action, in addition to the Qur’ān and narration, he employed general ethical principles as the basis for his work. He says that “Allāh has revealed these principles through the prophets, but man should adapt them to particular problems of social life, and as the people’s interests always change, therefore the devices by which these principles are employed should also change.”

The second principle is “combination.” By this ‘Abduh means combining and adapting laws of all the four Sunni schools to solve social problems. The Sunnī jurists prior to ‘Abduh also believed that the judge can follow any one of the four schools of *fiqh* to interpret religious laws. ‘Abduh generalized this principle, saying that depending on the circumstances, any one of the four schools may be followed, and even legal views belonging to lawyers that do not belong to any of the four schools can be combined with these and systematically compared and reconciled to provide a synthesis or selection of the best legal opinions.²⁹

3. Ṣubḥī Maḥmaṣānī’s Theory

Dr. Ṣubḥī has a detailed discussion on transition of laws in his book *Philosophy of Legislation in Islam*. In the summary of the above discussion, he says:

“The differing views of Islamic legal scholars on the necessity for change in laws in accordance with temporal and local circumstances have already been pointed out. Now we will mention the following five cases in order to minimize the dispute in this regard:

- I. The range of disagreement is very small.
- II. The minor and not the major rules are subject to change.
- III. An authorized jurist allows an action against fixed principles only when necessary.
- IV. Many of the legal texts attributed to *sunnat* have in fact nothing to do with it.
- V. Some narrations concern the worldly life of people and it is not absolutely necessary to obey them.³⁰

Then he enumerates three rules for modification of the laws:

1. Religious stratagems: By this the author means that some stratagems are often used to bring about changes in a particular law in order to adapt it to other situations. These stratagems are divided into two types: permissible and disputable. He exemplifies the permissible devices in the following case: Long term rents were customary in Bokhara. Ḥanafī jurists did not permit long term rents in the case of trees. To escape the law, trees were rented as “*Bay’ Wafā’*” (sell on promise). He gives a number of examples for the disputed devices as well.

2. Employing custom and precedent in legislation: Four important instances on the influence of custom and precedent on legislation have been mentioned.

3. The authority of government to legislate laws is one of the ways in which laws are modified. The author discusses this extensively.³¹

4. Muṣṭafā Shiblī’s Theory:

Dr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Shibli, explicating the reality of Islamic jurisprudence and its ability to remove all doubts in his *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī bayn al-Mithāliyyah wa al-Wāqi'iyah*, explains those elements that make Islamic jurisprudence flexible and enable it to keep abreast of the times. These factors are listed below:

1. Detailed presentation of laws concerning worship and general presentation of laws covering other subjects.

2. Causal interpretation in religious laws, which indicates that jurists can also employ it.

3. The existence of texts with definite or ambiguous denotations, which, in the case of the latter type there is room for *ijtihād* and interpretation.

4. Detailed exposition of rules concerning unlawful acts, and brevity in those related to permissible and lawful affairs.

5. Making a distinction between two aspects of the tradition of the Prophet; the aspect which deals with divine matters and that which deals with mundane aspects of life. The latter is not obligatory during periods following that of the Prophet.

6. Correct usage of subordinate principles such as *Ijmā'* (consensus) or assembly, *qiyās* (analogy), *istiḥsān*, *sadd dharā'i'*, and *maṣāliḥ mursalah*.³²

5. Shahid Muṭahhari's theory (1299-1358 H. S.)

Among Shi'i scholars, Shahid Muṭahhari has paid the greatest attention to these issues. He has spoken about such problems in his books, for example in *The Last Prophet*,³³ *The Right of Women in Islam*³⁴ and *Islam and Temporal Conditions*.³⁵ He began this discussion in 1966 at *Ittifāq* mosque in Tehran. He then wrote *The Rights of Women in Islam* in 1974 and later in *The Last Prophet* explained it completely. In this book he says: "Undoubtedly an immortal law should partake of a kind of flexibility in order to be comprehensive and to be able to address all the various problems and issues an ever-changing life can

present. It should not remain fixed and inflexible. Now we have to see in what manner, relying only on the principle "The *ḥalāl* (permissible) of Muḥammad is permissible and his *ḥarām* (forbiddance) is forbidden till the resurrection," Islam is able to provide solutions to the various problems which arise in life. It must obviously possess some secret method in its legal procedures to be able to overcome such an awesome difficulty. The secret is Islam's rational spirit and its dependence on the innate nature of man, society and the world."³⁶

He then discusses seven features that demonstrate the flexibility and the everlasting nature of Islam. Here we shall briefly enumerate them.

1. Acceptance and introduction of reason within the realm of religion.
2. Comprehensiveness and moderation.
3. Lack of involvement in the outer forms and features of life.
4. Variable and invariable laws.
5. The cause and effect relation of Islamic laws with actual good and evil.
6. Controlling rules.
7. The powers of Islamic government.³⁷

6. Shahīd Ṣadr's theory (1400 A.H.)

Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr is one of the great Shi'ah personalities of the contemporary era, who, because of his genius and the vast scope of his thought has encountered and dealt with this problem. Although he has not dealt with it in any systematic manner, one can deduce a theory from his writings on such subjects as Islamic economy, *Our Economy*, *Interest Free Banking in Islam*, *Judicial Explication of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*. And this is so in spite of the fact that ambiguities and contradictions are encountered in some his works. Below, we

have listed some of his views which may be taken as the basis of his theory concerning the subject under discussion.

1. The empty legal zone (*Manṭaqah al-Farāq*): He has said in this context: "The changing nature of mankind's circumstances and needs brings about the existence of an empty legal zone. Of course the Creator has not left it empty, but the governor has the duty to draw up appropriate laws for it."³⁸

2. (The zone of different legal options (*Niṭāq al-Badā'il al-Muta'addidah*): He believes that in cases where different theological opinions exist, the legislature, elected by the people, can select one of these opinions (*ijtihāds*).³⁹

3. Division of narrations into those dealing with propagation and those dealing with governance. The narrations related to governance are attributed to their governmental personality and leadership of the prophet or his successors. These laws are not necessarily to be followed in all periods.⁴⁰

4. Division of religious laws into variable and invariable.⁴¹

5. Powers of the governor and the *waliyy*.⁴²

7. Rene David's theory

In the chapter entitled "Adaptation of Islamic laws with the modern world," Rene David accepts the principle of adaptation itself and proposes an interesting solution:

"The fact is that though Islamic laws are invariable, they have many sources; therefore it is necessary to appreciate its flexibility as well as its invariability. There is no contradiction between these two aspects. It is easily forgotten that though not considered sacred in the West, law was, for a long time, regarded as belonging to the category of things that should not be tampered with. However, when they felt the necessity, everywhere they found ways to adopt needed solutions without harming the sanctity of the law. This is the case with the Islamic laws too. Islamic laws are invariable, but it has granted such a role for customs, practices,

agreements, treaties and bureaucracies in such a way that is quite possible to find ways to establish a new society without harming the principle of the law itself. If the method of organization is correct, then in only exceptional cases may old Islamic rules and laws present problems.”⁴³ He has then proposes the following solutions:

- A- Turning to custom and precedence for assistance.
- B- Use of agreements.
- C- Legal devices and assumptions.
- D- Governor’s interference.⁴⁴

8- Dr. Yūsuf Qarḡāwī’s theory.

Dr. Yūsuf Qarḡāwī is one of the Sunni scholars who has been seriously engaged with adoption of Islamic jurisprudence problems with the situations in his books. He has dealt with this subject in the books. *Al-Ijtihād fi al-Sharī‘ah al-Islāmiyyah*, *Al-khaṣā‘iṣ al-‘Āmmah li al-Islām* and *‘Awāmil al-Si‘ah wa al-Murūnah fi shari‘at al-Islāmiyyah*. In the first book he regards two types of *ijtihād* necessary for jurisprudence in the contemporary era:

Negative or justifying *Ijtihād* .

This means that the jurist thinks deeply in judicial legacy and issues all the best for the world today. This issue or selection must be in accordance with these criteria and suitable for contemporary man. It should be nearer to the *Shari‘at*’s ease and relaxation and should fulfill its goals in the best way. The area of preference and selection are judicial rulings, views of the *ṣaḡābah* (companions of the prophet), followers and others.

The factors influencing this selection are:

- Political, social and universal changes.
- Science and culture of the time.
- Necessities of time.

The second type is "Innovative and creative *Ijtihād*." In this *ijtihād* the jurist issues a law in the field of new problems or the old ones upon which the earlier scholars have not issued any law.⁴⁵

He emphasizes two new fields: economical and medical problems.⁴⁶

He has also said that *ijtihād* may be comprehensive between innovation and preference.⁴⁷ In the book *Al-Khaṣā'is Al-ʿĀmmah lil Islām* after showing invariance and flexibility in the Qur'ān, tradition and views of the companions, he says: The jurist on one hand is bound to the firm texts of Qur'ān and tradition, and on the other hands he finds himself in front of two open areas.

1- The free legal area which is called "forgiveness area" by the past jurists. The *sharī'ah* is quiet in this area.

2- The area of probable or similar texts. The legislator has purposely spoken in a way that more than one understanding or conclusion can be derived from it, in this area.⁴⁸ This theory is accomplished in the third book *'Awāmil al-Si'ah wa al-Murūnah*. He says:

I am eager to declare the Islamic amplitude and its flexibility on transitions and changes of time and place, emphasizing its appropriateness for adoption in any time and place. He has enumerated the factors of flexibility as:⁴⁹

1- The area of forgiveness or open area. This is a broad field in Islamic *sharī'at* which is filled with compassion, *istiḥsān* (approbation), *istiṣlāh* (consideration of the public interest), and customs.

2- Diligence of texts on general laws. The major texts revealed general laws and sources and have not mentioned any details or explanations.

3- Fitness of the texts for different understanding. The texts dealing with the details are fit for a variety of understandings and interpretations.

4- Consideration of necessities and exceptional conditions, such as the rule: *Al-Mashaqqah Tajlibu al-Taysir* (hardship calls for ease), *Al-Darūrāt Tubih al Maḥḍūrāt* (necessities make the unlawful permissible) and so on.”

5- Change in religious decree with the changes in time and place. Considering the aims of *shari'at*, the jurist deal with *Ijtihād* in the field of variable laws, so it naturally leads to difference in religious decrees.⁵⁰

He has brought many and live examples for each case.

9. Imam Khumayni's theory

The great jurist, Imam Khumayni, has offered guidelines during his ten year experience in practicing Islamic jurisprudence, which can be called the theory of adoption of jurisprudence to changes in life. It seems that three subjects have been introduced as the fundamentals of this theory during the last ten years of his honorable life.

1- The impact of time and place on *ijtihad*.

He reminded this matter to the members of Guardian council in 1988 and also in a letter to the clergymen in December 1988. “They must think of the interests of the Islamic system (government) before facing difficulties as one of the most important problems in the present disturbed world is the role of time and place in *ijtihad* and the type of decision making (used)”.⁵¹

“I believe in traditional jurisprudence and *Jawāhiri ijtihad* and do not permit its violation. *Ijtihad* in that way is correct but this does not mean that Islamic jurisprudence has nothing to give. Time and place are two decisive elements in *ijtihad*. A problem with a certain law in the past may find a different law now given the relation of governor with politics, society and economy of a government”⁵².

2- Powers of the state. During the Islamic Revolution, responding to the questions of the Guardian council, Islamic

parliament, heads of the three powers, general messages, and also in lectures before the revolution in Najaf, Imam Khumayni has issued many statements in this context, through which many difficulties of jurisprudence and life can be solved.

Here, we bring in brief some instances:

- His command for the formation of the Expediency Council.⁵³

- Explication of the powers of governor in reply to Āyatullah Khāmene'ī.⁵⁴

- Transfer of the execution of secondary laws to the Islamic parliament.⁵⁵

- Power of governor in settling a divorce where the husband refuses to act.⁵⁶

- and...

3- Avoiding a dry legalism in the understanding of narrations.

Answering a letter of one of the scholars he wrote:

"I feel it necessary to regret your understanding of narrations and divine laws. According to your letter *zakāt* (Tithes) can only be used for the poor and other mentioned affairs. Now the field of its utility has increased a hundred times and there is no way to use it! And "*Rihān*" (betting) in "*Sabq wa Rimāyah*" (racing and shooting) is allocated to bows & arrows and horse races and other things that were used in ancient wars, and it is the same case today! *Anfāl* (the spoils) is lawful for the shi'ah so, today they can destroy the forests with huge machines and demolish the environment which is vital for life endangering the lives of millions of people without there being any right for people to stop them. Houses and mosques should not be destroyed during the layout of streets for the convenience of people or to solve the problems of traffic and so on. In general as per your understandings of narrations, modern civilization should completely

be destroyed and as the people who used to stay in cottages or in the desert should return back to the same for ever.⁵⁷

The sayings of the Imam on the impact of time and place on *Ijtihād* were followed by different and sometimes contradictory interpretations. Such understandings were the result of the problem being new and not totally explained by the Imam. Here we point briefly to some interpretations made:

1- Time and place have roles in change of the subjects of the laws.⁵⁸

2- Time and place are effective in change of subdivisions of laws.⁵⁹

3- Time and place affect the jurist's understanding of laws, such as the law of well water.⁶⁰

4- Effect of time and place in *ijtihād* is in recognizing new subjects.⁶¹

5- Effect of time and place in change of Muslims' interests.⁶²

6- Effect of time and place in existence of cause and purpose of resolution and also its absence.⁶³

7- Effect of time and place in change of public and logical needs and interests.⁶⁴

8- Effect of time and place in the executive course of law.⁶⁵

Apart from these, effect of time and place is spoken by others in the changes in custom and criteria of laws.

9- Effect of time and place in transformations of ethical values, such as the problem of slavery.⁶⁶

10- Effect of time and place in change of economic structure.⁶⁷

Of course, there has been unfortunately little effort on the other two factors in the Imam Khumayni's theory. The scope of authority of government has not clearly been judicially analyzed being a very delicate element. The problem of constancy in the understanding of narrations has been even less dealt with but it is

even more critical because the effect of time and place in *ijtihād* cannot be explained unless the criteria of correct and incorrect understanding are clear. For instance the narration about chess are interpreted by some in the same way as Imam.

Imam Khumayni holds that the purpose of prohibition in these narrations is to show one of the instances of gambling; on the basis of this when chess is not regarded as a gambling tool, playing chess without placing a bet is no longer forbidden. But some others relate the prohibition in these narrations to chess itself. In this case chess is forever forbidden, although it may be a means of exercise. What is the criteria for correctness of any one of these two? How far can we proceed if generalization is allowed? Can we deal with music in the same way? What about the instruments used for punishments? Sometimes a jurist has one and sometimes another type of understanding. Which is nearer to the reality? Should every case be considered individually so that arriving at a general rule is not possible?

All these are obscure points and have a role in efficacy of time and place. However none of the three elements of Imam Khumayni's theory has found a clear analysis or interpretation.

In addition to these, other theories also have been introduced. They have been neglected here because they are not complete or they overlap or cross with other theories.⁶⁸

Notes:

1. Subḥī Maḥmaṣānī, *Al-Thiqāfah al-Islāmiyyah wa al-Ḥayāh al-Mu'āṣirah*, 2nd edition, Mu'assasah Franklin, Cairo, 1962, pp. 161-180.

2. Ḥasan al-Amin, *Dā'irah al-Ma'ārif al-Shi'iyyah* (The Shi'ite Encyclopedia), Vol. III, Beirut, 1392/1972, pp. 32-33.

3. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Shibli, *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī bayn al-Mathālīyyah wa al-Wāqī'īyyah*, Dār al-Jāmi'iyyah, Beirut, 1982, pp. 219-242; Muṣṭafā Aḥmad al-Zarqā', *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī fī Thaūbiḥ al-Jadīd*, Vol. I, Maṭābi' Alif bā', Dimashq, 1967-1968, pp. 48-53.

4. Aḥmad Wā'izī, *Zaminehā-ye Thābit wa Mutighayyir dar Fiqh-e Islam*, the 8th International Conference of Unity, Murdād 1374, p. 4.

5. *Tārikh al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, 4th edition, Mannā' al-Quṭān, Maktabah Wahbah, Cairo, 1989, pp. 272-274.

6. This compilation has some explanations and attachments such as: *Sharh al-Majallah*, Muḥammad Khālīd al-Atāsī, 6 volumes, Pakistan; *Tahrir al-Majallah*, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Āl-i Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', 2 volumes, Maktabah al-Murtaḍawīyyah, Najaf.

7. There is a translation of this book into Persian: *Huqūq-e Jahan wa Islam*, tr. 'Alī Akbar Ghafūrī, Āstān Quds Raḍawī, 1373. The late Sayyid Ismā'il 'Ṣadr has written an attachment to it which is published by Bunyād Bi'that.

8. *Tārikh al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, Op. Cit., pp. 403-405.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 406-421.

10. To know more about this 'Mawsū'ah' see: *Ayeneh-ye Pazhūhish*, No. 34, pp. 21-25.

11. See: *Al-Mu'āmilāt al-Māliyyah al-Mu'aṣirah fī al-Fiqh*, pp. 437-457; 'Umar Sulaymān al-Ashqar, *Tārikh al-Fiqh al-Islāmī* (The History of Islamic Jurisprudence), Dār al-Nafā'is, Jordan, pp. 212-215; *Al-Wa'y al-Islāmī* magazine, No. 284, 1408, pp. 88-107; *Tārikh al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, Op. Cit., pp. 405-407.

12. *Tārikh al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, Op. Cit.; *Tārikh al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, Op. Cit.

13. *Al-Mu'āmilāt al-Māliyyah al-Mu'aṣirah*, Op. Cit., pp. 403-420.

14. *Majmū'ah al-Abḥāth wa al-Maqālāt al-'Arabīyyah wa al-Injilīziyyah* (Compilation of treatises and Articles in Arabic and English), Muḥammad Wāizzāde, 2 volumes, Āstān Quds Raḍawī, 1411 & 1415.

15. Sayyid Ḥusayn Fattā ḥī, *Majmū'ah-ye Maqālāt-e Seminar-e Dīd gāhhā-ye Islām dar Pezeshkī* (Compilation of Articles represented in The Seminar of Islamic Views on Medicine), Mashhad, 1371.

16. *Keyhān* newspaper, No. 15503, Aban 30th, 1374.

17. See: *Naqd wa Naẓar* magazine, No. 1, First Year, the article: "Ketābshināsī Tuwṣīfī Fiqh Muqāran" (A Descriptive Bibliography of Simultaneous Jurisprudence), pp. 267-278.

18. *Al-Khaṣā'is al-'Ammah lil-Islām*, p. 205, taken from: *Ighāthah al-Lahfān*, Vol. I, 4th Edition, Maktabah wa h bah, Cairo, 1409/1989, pp. 349-369.

19. *Barrasīhā-ye Islāmī*, Vol. II, pp. 39-42. This 'Allāmah's saying is published also in: *Farazhaiy az Islam*, Jahān ārā publication, pp. 75-79; *Dar Sāyeh-ye Islām wa Qur'ān*, Ahl-e Bayt ('a) Publication, pp. 119-125.

20. *Barrasīhā-ye Islāmī*, Vol. I, Daftar-e Tablighāt-e Islāmī, pp. 180-181.

21. 'Alī Raḥmānī Sabzevārī, *Guftārī dar Zamīnehāy-e Thābit wa Mutaghayyir wa Inṭibāq Thābit bar Mutaghayyir*, The Eighth Unity Conference.

22. *Al-Islām bi-Naẓrah 'Aṣriyyah*, 4th Edition, Dār al-Tayyār al-Jadid/Dār al-Jawād, Beirut, 1411 H., pp. 94-96.

23. *Al-Khaṣā'is al-'Ammah lil-Islām*, p. 200 and pp. 203-204.

24. *Al-Ijtihād*, p. 126.

25. Muḥammad Muḥammad al-Madani, *Al-Ijtihād wa al-Tajdid*, Republic of Tunisia, pp. 52-54.

26. *Keyhān-e Farhangī*, No. 92, pp. 16-20; No. 94, pp. 18-21 No. 95, pp. 42-46; No. 96, pp. 34-38; No. 97, pp. 20-22.

27. *Tafsīr wa Naqd wa Taḥlīl-e Mathnawī* (The interpretation and criticism and analysis of Mathnawī), Vol. XIII, pp. 19-58.

28. See also: *Baṣā'ir* magazine, No. 13, pp. 8-14 and No. 13-14, pp. 15-18; the article "*Zamīnehā-ye Thābit wa Mutaghayyir*" by Dr. Mahdī Ṣanī'i, *Ḥauzeh wa Dānishgāh* magazine, No. 5, pp. 53-62; A conversation with Āyatullāh Mu'min in articles of Eighth International Conference of Islamic Unity.

29. Ḥamid Enāyat, *Seyrī dar Andisheh-ye Siyāsī 'Arab* (Glimpses of Political Thought of Arabs), Amir Kabir, Tehran, 1370, pp. 140-141.

30. Ṣubḥī Maḥmaṣānī, *Falsafah-ye Qānūnguzāry Dar Islām* (The Philosophy of Legislation In Islam), tr. Ismā'il Gulistānī, 2nd Edition, Amir Kabir, Tehran, 1358, pp. 204-205.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-234.

32. *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī bayn al-Mathālīyyah wa al-Wāqī'īyyah*, Op. Cit., pp. 126-130, 131-134, 135-137, 137-142, 142-155, 163-218.

33. Murtaḍā Muṭahhari, *Khatm-e Nabuwwat* (The End of Prophethood), Ṣadrā, Qum, 1354, pp. 71-90.
34. Murtaḍā Muṭahhari, *Niẓām-e Huqūq-e Zan dar Islām* (The Rights of Women in Islam), 14th Edition, Ṣadrā, Qum, 1369, pp. 101-137.
35. Murtaḍā Muṭahhari, *Islām wa Muqtaḍiyyāt-e Zamān* (Islam and Demands of the Age), 2 volumes, Ṣadrā, Qum.
36. *Khatm-e Nabuwwat*, Op. Cit., pp. 71-72.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-87.
38. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, *Iqtiṣādunā* (Our Economics), p. 721; *Al-Islām Yaqūd al-Ḥayāh*, Dār al-Ta'aruf lil-Maṭbū'āt, Beirut/Lebanon, 1410/1990, p. 19.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-52; *Iqtiṣādunā*, Op. Cit., pp. 401-414, 726-728.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
42. See footnotes No. 38 and 40.
43. *Niẓāmhā-ye Buzurg-e Huqūqī Mu'aṣir* (Large Modern Systems of Law), pp. 455-456. This book is compiled in 1356/1978 and is published in Persian in 1364.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 457-459.
45. Yūsuf al-Qarḍāwī, *Al-Ijtihād fī al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyyah*, 2nd edition, Dār al-Qalam, Kuwait, 1410/1989, pp. 114-129.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-108.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
48. Yūsuf al-Qarḍāwī, *Al-Khaṣā'is al-'Ammah lil-Islām*, Op. Cit., pp. 223-228. 199-222.
49. *'Awāmil al-Si'ah wa al-Murūnah*, p. 11.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-111.
51. *Ṣaḥīfah-ye Nūr*, Vol. XXI, p. 61.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
53. *Ibid.*, Vol. XX, p. 176.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-173.
55. *Majmū'ah-ye Naẓariyyāt-e Shaurāy-e Nigahbān* (Compilation of Guardianship Council's Speculations), Vol. II, by Dr. Ḥusayn Mihrpūr, *Keyhān* Publications, 1371, p. 73.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 301.

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57. Şahifah-ye Nūr, Vol. XXI, p. 34.
58. *Huwzeh* magazine, No. 37-38. pp. 7-11; *Naqd wa Nazar* magazine, No. 1, p. 46.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
62. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Burhāniyān, *Zamān wa Makān dar Ijtihād* (Time and Place in Independent Reasoning), a thesis for M.A., Madrasah-ye ‘Āli Shahid Muṭahhari (Martyr Muṭahhari Superior School), pp. 118-132.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 112-117.
64. *Risālat* newspaper, Āyatullāh Ādhari Qummi.
66. *Naqd wa Nazar* magazine, No. 1, p. 51.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

The Analysis and Development of the Concept of Human Rights

by Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Alī Taskhīrī

In order to avoid any ambiguity in the discussion of this topic, all of the relevant terms should first be defined, and the meanings of most of these terms is deepened by defining them in legal terminology, especially since we intend them to accord with universal standards.

The Relation between Philosophical and Social Questions

It would be indeed odd for one to examine the concepts of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which are expressed through many technical terms, without an explanation of their intended meanings.

What is a right? Who are the humans about whom we are speaking?

What is the innate dignity of the human being?

What is meant by the human family, brotherhood, equality, friendly relations, the human spirit, etc.?

The ambiguity in much of the *Universal Declaration* becomes apparent if one dismisses questions of belief, or passes over philosophical questions, that is, the clarification of its position on being, life and humanity.

Due to the influence of capitalism, social thought is often removed from philosophical reflection with the claim that there is no relation between them, while it is our belief that the logical links between them are of the utmost importance.

Since every ideology is rooted in reality, man cannot know which is proper unless he first knows what *is*, and what are the requirements of reality.

This point stands out when we consider that man, for example, believes in the divinity of the Creator, the Glorious and Exalted, and that the Almighty has sent His apostle with guidance and the true religion, which is Islam and which organizes all aspects of life. After reflecting upon this, such a man has only two alternatives. Either he will embrace the Islamic ideology so that all his behavior will be transformed by it, or he will deny his past ideas and disavow that in which he had previously been certain.

Of course, if man takes a materialistic attitude toward the world, he will find various ideologies to place before him in place of God, each drawing him to its own way:

«Allah sets forth an example: There is a slave in who are (several) partners differing with one another, and there is another slave wholly owned by one man. Are the two alike in condition?» (39:29)

Surely such a person will not be able to justify the ideology he has placed before himself.

Shahid Muṭahhari, may he rest in peace, says, "Ideology fundamentally shapes ideas about the world.... Ideology is a kind of practical wisdom while ideas are a kind of theoretical wisdom, and every sort of practical wisdom is based on a particular kind of theoretical wisdom."¹

Prof. Shahid Ṣadr, may he rest in peace, says, "The question of social life is connected to the realities of life, which does not crystalize in its proper form unless it is based on central beliefs

which can explain life, its realities and its limits. Since the capitalistic system has lost such beliefs, it resorts to cheating and deception or to haste and insensitivity, while the problem of the realities of life is treated with indifference and social questions are taught separately.”²

When we turn to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, we find that this question is completely forgotten, while the terms mentioned above are frequently repeated. God willing, this topic will be taken up in an appropriate place.

First, we should find out what is a right, and what is a human being. Then we will be able to take steps toward a logical understanding of what is discussed in articles on human rights.

*Rights*³

When we look at the root meaning of the word for right, *ḥaqq*, we find that it means that which is fixed and unchangeable. So, Allah, the Exalted, is *al-Ḥaqq*, and change is unimaginable in Him, the Glorious and Supreme. A report which corresponds to reality is true, *ḥaqq*, when reported, and it does not make sense to imagine any change in the truth of this, despite the claims of the relativists. The meaning of *real* is not that which accords with some subjective consideration or convention. In this manner, the term *ḥaqq* is coined in abstraction from subjective considerations, and is used in social relations in relation to individual behavior as meaning *right*. Hence, rights are based on two elements: first, their derivation from objective reality; and second, the agreement between divine law and social customs needed to sustain communal life.

It might be claimed that the first element alone is a sufficient basis for rights, but considering the social nature of rights, the second element is also necessary. Rights are objective natural necessities around which subjective social considerations take shape.

However, we should not view the human being as a mere material object created by nature and its social environment, as

does Durkheim when he holds that it is only social relations that make a structure human, or Freud, when he holds that man is the creation of his own complex ideas, or Marx, when he holds that man is a product of social-economic conditions. All such opinions are informed by a materialistic bias.

It is impossible to speak of the rights of man when man is seen as little more than a material thing. Can there be rights for a stone or a piece of wood? Man must be seen as a creature different from others, who has certain abilities and innate motives that push him to the very limits of his essence so that he evolves according to a preordained plan. It is only with consideration of these facts that rights may be derived from reality. First, we must accept a view of human nature and only then and on that basis may we develop views about human rights, justice, dignity, equality, spirituality, etc. If the Islamic conception of the primordial nature of man is rejected, there will be no further point to discussions of spiritual evolution, ethical guidance, and rights. Alienation occurs when an aspect of the nature of man is neglected or forgotten. Rights spring from man's primordial nature, when the elements of this nature are ignored, one abandons one's humanity, as it is stated in the Qur'an:

«And do not be like those who forgot Allah! So He made them forget their own selves; these are the transgressors.» (59:19)

«...they are like cattle, no, even more astray...» (7:179)

If man is treated in a manner contrary to his essence, that treatment will be inhumane. For example, we see that when Pharaoh weakened his people and deprived them of their rights, their humanity is brought under question:

«Thus did he [Pharaoh] persuade his people to make light [of Moses] and they obeyed him; verily they were a transgressing people.» (43:54)

Pharaoh took away the natural values of his people, and so their rights were violated. With the violation of their rights, the people become a transgressing people, a people who exceeded the bounds of their own humanity.

It is thus that we come to understand man, and it is not possible to discuss human rights or issue declarations of rights unless on the basis of this understanding of human nature.

Rights Cannot Be Known through Materialistic Thought

In the light of what we have come to know through the previous discussion, human rights may be said to be the natural conditions innately needed by man in order to continue his innate course of evolution toward perfection. On this basis human rights go beyond what is allowed by others who have discussed rights, so that it must include such things as the right to worship, to be religious, the right to observe the demands of one's own nature as a creature of God, the right to attach oneself to the true religion, etc. Rights are the basis for the important religious discussion of the need for prophets. Surely, religion has done a favor to man, and surely Allah is the source of the favor and mercy. For the raising of the prophets was both necessary and a favor.

Criteria for Recognizing Human Rights

Criteria have been discussed pertaining to customs, reason, law, religion, corruption, pleasure and pain, emotions and the interpretation of justice, each of which is taken to be the source of rights or an element of the source of rights, or of their appearance, or necessary conditions for their appearance. Before determining the proper criteria of rights, two conditions should be mentioned. First, what has been mentioned is the nature of man and rights. Second, the criteria for rights must be universal and impartial with respect to skin color and social status, or else the connection with human development and what is essential in human nature will be broken off. What criteria can indicate the natural and constant needs of man, are essential to man, and will allow for his development? The only factor we can find is the human conscience, in the general sense which includes both conscious awareness and moral conscience. Even if we limit ourselves to

moral conscience, which is something everyone feels, we will be able to discover the principles of human rights without any doubt, although there may remain differences about how they are to be implemented and applied. There are cases about which the moral conscience of man is certain. Conscience is able to uncover detailed features of rights. On the other hand, if the conscience is ignored, we will be left with the idea of man as nothing more than his body and will have no standards by which to discover the essence of humanity. A body without conscience has no humanity. It is like a piece of wood for which there can be no question of rights.

Let us then turn to the question of what is conscience. Perhaps we cannot provide a sound proof or demonstration to convince those who would deny its existence, but it is through the conscience that we discover the basic grounds of all knowledge. Also, it is through conscience that we recognize the good and evil accepted by all and are able to erect the social structures founded on such recognition. Perhaps those who have written the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* have employed the innate elements of conscience, but unconsciously isolated the issue of rights from that of conscience. It is conscience which emphasises that some things are good and some bad, some actions just and others unjust. Conscience affirms the right to life, the right of freedom, the right of human dignity and equality with regard to skin color. These are recognized by conscience as general human rights. Likewise, conscience is able to recognize more specific rights of mothers, rights of women, of men and of nations. There are two ways to come to understand the ramifications of rights. First, one may study and observe all human behavior in detail, so that the conscience may make judgments where appropriate. It may be practically impossible to carry out such a study in the detail necessary to understand the common features of humanity, and the needs which arise in specific types of circumstances. Second, one may seek the guidance of religion. Religion provides direction for the human intellect so that it may discover the secrets of the beautiful system of being and the Absolute Perfect Being

Who created this existence and guides it. This Absolute Being, innately rich and aware, living and subtle, has raised the prophets in accord with His mercy to bring a pure religion for humanity, to make evident the detailed features of social rights as an optimum way to realize the development and perfection of mankind. But if someone rejects religious belief, or seeks to let the inner essence of man suffice as a guide, the shortcomings that ensue will prevent him from a logical understanding of human rights and morality.

The Course of Human Rights through History

It is generally accepted that religion and man's moral conscience have had a profound impact on the course of human rights through history—even at the level of myth and fable.

Professor Ja'fari has pointed out that it is obvious that the aims of human relations create a practical respect for statements of human rights in the minds of progressive thinkers, and this is why we see some such expressions appear in the form of moral or legal considerations, and others as cultural factors common among different nations and races.⁴

George Sābāyin says that in general, the Greeks of the fifth century B.C. believed that natural rights are constant and eternal, whereas man and his conditions are changeable, so, if we could discover this constant and unchangeable law, and make it cohere with human life, man's activities would become logical and reasonable and his evil and corruption would be diminished. In the light of this, perfection would consist in adherence to the natural eternal law. The aim of this theory may be summarized as a search for the eternal among the changing, and for unity amid multiplicity.⁵

If we review the theories of philosophers and historians throughout history, we will encounter numerous expressions that manifest these features. In the same manner, Cicero emphasizes the fact that rights or laws are not based on the imagination, but on an eternal natural justice inherent in the human conscience.

Historians and students of law have tended to ignore the influence of Islam over a prolonged period which continued up to

the eighteenth century, when French jurists issued the declaration of human rights of 28 August, 1789, which affected the French constitution of 3 September 1791. After that they neglected the guiding light of Islam that provides the best detailed laws for man in the exalted teachings of the Qur'ān and the noble narrations of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The light of Islam was the basic foundation for all approaches to the law among Muslim peoples. The recent Islamic declaration is merely a nicely written form of that fundamental law. The historical and legal foundations for a proper understanding of human rights are to be found in verses of the Qur'ān such as these:

«And indeed We have honored the children of Adam» (17:70)

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

«He who murders a person it is as if he had murdered all mankind, and he who saves [a human life], it is as if he had saved all mankind» (5:32).

In addition to such verses, the narrations attributed to the noble Prophet (ﷺ) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have also had a deep influence on Islamic thought. However, if we want to study the recent course of legal thought, we must admit that the French declaration has had a tremendous impact, although it also makes use of the English declaration of rights, and the American Declaration of Independence of the thirteen colonies from Britain which had been composed thirteen years earlier.

Two Declarations: U. N. and Islamic Conference

Basing itself on the Qur'ān and narrations from the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) and his household (‘a), the Islamic Conference ratified an Islamic Declaration of Human Rights in December 1989 in Tehran, and then finalized it at a meeting in Cairo, although numerous other meetings were held before and after to discuss its

contents and to refer various questions to the appropriate scholars of Islam.

One of the most important differences between the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the declaration formulated by the Islamic Conference is that the former fails to link its view of rights with any conception of reality while the Cairo Declaration is firmly grounded in the Qur'anic view of nature and man's place in it.

The U.N.'s declaration discusses the following principles in its introduction:

- 1) The necessity for recognizing the inherent desires of man for freedom, justice and peace.
- 2) The occurrence of 'barbarous acts' which result from 'disregard and contempt for human rights'.
- 3) The advent of a new world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and freedom from fear and want is presented as the highest aspiration of common people.
- 4) The necessity for protecting human rights in order that man not be obliged to rise up against injustice.
- 5) The necessity for promoting the development of friendly relations among nations.
- 6) The determination of nations to promote social progress.
- 7) The need to achieve a common understanding among peoples.

With regard to the first point, we must inquire about what is meant by innate desires. Are they the same as innate dispositions? In a world corrupted by materialistic tendencies, how can we distinguish desires which spring from the primordial nature of man and those which have been corrupted by materialism? What are the characteristics of barbarous acts which distinguish them from humane acts? Is it possible to arrive at any realistic standard by means of which such questions can be answered without faith in the idea of human perfection? Has any survey been conducted in order to determine what the actual aspirations and ideals of mankind are, and whether they are really limited to freedom of speech, freedom of belief and freedom from fear and want? Is it

proper to characterize the desire for freedom of speech as innate, without any consideration of whether the opinions to be freely expressed are true or false, or insulting or offensive to what others hold as sacred? In this situation it would seem as though there has been some confusion about what are truly innate features of man and what are characteristics of the dominant ideology among those who composed the Universal Declaration. Certainly we should not think that such commonly held aspirations are basic needs!

Is it not true that human beings aspire to know about the Absolute Being of God? Have they not sought to order their entire lives in conformity with the commands of the Almighty? Is it not right for such ordinary aspirations of mankind to be realized on the basis of a comprehensive moral system? These important questions are not even considered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

An uncompromising protection of boundless individual freedoms in all areas of belief, economic, politics, etc., poses a grave danger to a major part of the moral system a great portion of humanity believes to be a necessary condition for the attainment of ultimate happiness. Similar points may be made with regard to virtually all the articles in the Universal Declaration. In view of these reservations, such phrases as, "if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion" and "to promote the development of friendly relations among nations", begin to sound ominous. Implicit in these phrases is the idea that rebellion against those who do not share the ideology of the Universal Declaration is justified and that nations can justifiably end friendly relations with those who do not subscribe to this ideology.

This declaration was propounded after World War II when several Western nations dominated the political affairs of the entire world. The U.S. had sustained the least loss and damage from the war, while Europe had become weak and tired. At the same time, communists were propagandizing the philosophy of historical materialism on which the Russian revolution was based, and they had begun to gain influence over the minds of the oppressed and deprived. At that time the atmosphere was also filled with

enthusiasm for the idea that war and conflict could be forever eliminated. These factors were exploited by the administration of the U.S. government to claim authority as a great civilized country in search of a better future for all mankind! In this way, the U.S. regime was able to promote its capitalistic philosophy based on boundless individual freedom.

A Comparative Study

Through the propagation of communism and capitalism, the deprived people of the world came to expect that they would achieve some new guarantee of rights. The general assembly of the U.N. was seen as indicating the equality between all nations, e.g., the U.S. and Burma, whereas in fact, the real power in the U.N. has always resided with those who hold the right to veto proposals in the security council. So the Universal Declaration can be misunderstood by the unwise as reflecting the universal opinion of all nations, while in fact it reflects the ideologies of the big powers. Nevertheless, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is generally considered a great leap forward toward an official international recognition of human rights.

In contrast, the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam clearly draws its moral guidelines from an appreciation of reality, including the divine, the human, and the relation between them. So, while the U.N. declaration traces the roots of human rights to supposedly universal human desires, the Islamic declaration traces the roots of human rights to the essential nature of man vis a vis the divine reality.

Several principles can be inferred from the Islamic declaration which are especially noteworthy.

* **First Principle** The declaration is a statement of faith in Almighty God and His exalted attributes (Creator, Compassionate, Merciful, Generous, etc.), and faith in the responsibility given by God to man to serve as God's viceregent on earth. Without God's blessings man would not be able to enjoy any rights at all.

Second Principle The declaration affirms the fact that Islam is the true religion for all mankind. The *tawhīd* taught by Islam grants freedom to man from idols and idolatry in all forms, including the idolatries of bigotry, racism and discrimination, for all human beings were created from a single soul. Individual and social rights follow from these teachings, including the right of cooperation and compassion, the right to freedom, and rights to various equalities.

Third Principle The unity of God is affirmed as the sole object of worship that relieves man from false and debasing obligations and grants him freedom and dignity.

Fourth Principle Laws in Islam have been ordained to protect religion, life, reason, decency, property and children, comprehensively and with consideration of their own particular characteristics. It is the ability to reconcile the need for generality with attention to particular differences which marks the wisdom of Islamic law and serves as the basis of all human rights.

Fiveth Principle The Islamic community has been established in order to create a sound, flourishing and well balanced civilization for mankind, in which this world is tied to the next and religious insight and knowledge may be acquired and developed.

Sixth Principle The declaration recognizes and has faith in the human contribution to the protection of human rights.

Seventh Principle Mankind has a continuing need for the support of faith.

Eighth Principle Basic rights are a part of Islam wherein their promotion is a religious duty, and any neglect in this regard is a dishonor. Everyone is obliged by Islam to observe human rights, and the community as a whole is also responsible to honor human rights as a mark of the solidarity of the Islamic community.

These principles are the theoretical foundation of the individual and social responsibilities to implement the Islamic Declaration of

Human Rights. All of these principles are sound and valid bases of human rights.

Deficiencies of the Cairo Declaration

In order to promote the Cairo Declaration, we believe that further review is necessary with attention to the following points.

1. It is necessary to refer to the first basic attributes of God, which are knowledge, power and life, for attention to these is very important for understanding human rights. Islam attempts to confer these divine attributes on the Muslims, and specific human rights are thereby derived.

2. The third principle, which mentions divine unity, should be placed before the second, which discusses Islam as a universal religion, and after the first, which discusses the divine attributes. This ordering would seem to be more logical.

3. The fourth principle should be integrated with the third, and it should be shown how the specific human rights are related to divine attributes. Islam is a program for the perfection of man, that is, for drawing him nearer to God by conferring upon him attributes which are perfectly characterized by divinity. Hence, the program of Islam and the rights it upholds for humanity are best understood in terms of the divine attributes.

4. The introductory section of the Cairo Declaration should be supplemented by a discussion of Islamic law and ethics and their objectives.

5. It is fit to propose this declaration as truly universal, for given the Islamic understanding of the essence of man, his innate needs, and its realism about the human condition, there should be no doubt or hesitation about the fact that Islamic Rights are capable of meeting the needs of all human beings anywhere in the world.

Notes:

¹ Shahid Muṭahhari, *Revelation and Prophecy*.

² *Falsafatunā*, 18-19.

³ The term used for right in Arabic and Persian is *ḥaqq*, a word with many meanings. In addition to right, it can mean truth and reality, and as such it is a divine name. The plural, *ḥuqūq*, can mean rights, wages or law.

⁴ ‘Allāmah Ja‘fārī, *Al-Ḥuqūq al-Insāniyyah al-‘Ālamiyyah*, p. 16.

⁵ George Sābāyīn, *History of Political Philosophy* (in Arabic), Vol. 1, p. 77.

The Uniqueness of the Islamic Revolution – a Study in Political Contrasts

by Dr. Yaqub Zaki

How often when translating from Arabic one finds oneself wishing there were an exact English equivalent for each word in the Arabic text. So we are fortunate that 'revolution' renders precisely the semantic context of *inqilāb* ('overturning'); a revolution is the turning on its axis of a wheel so that what was lowermost becomes uppermost. This distinguishes immediately a revolution from a *coup d'état*, which leaves the power structure of the country unchanged. Perhaps the very violence of the metaphor explains why revolutions happen so rarely. Some years ago I attended a seminar on revolution in Oxford. During the seminar a German professor of political science from Cologne said that there may have been no more than five revolutions in history: the American Revolution, the French, the Russian, the Chinese and the Islamic Revolution. He was uncertain whether to add the National Socialist Revolution in Germany.

To the German professor's five I proposed the addition of: the Augustan Revolution in Rome, the Muḥammadi Revolution in Mecca, the Meiji Revolution in Japan and the revolution which

overthrew the Manchu dynasty in China in 1911. To these four could be added another two possibles: the Mexican Revolution and Mussolini's march on Rome. Nine definite and three possible revolutions total twelve, still leaving revolution the most infrequent of all political phenomena. I do not affirm this because I happen to be a Muslim; even from the secular perspective of the average historian the contention is indisputable, if only because it resulted in the single largest unreversed military conquest in history.

One objection that could have been advanced against Professor Erich Weeder's thesis is that he had used a success criterion in his definition of what constitutes revolution. Were we to admit abortive revolutions we should have to include Husayn's attempted overthrow of Yazid, but I think that abortive revolutions, which can have, as in this case, tremendous historical repercussions because if linked to religion they become manifestations of millennialism, have to be excluded on linguistic grounds: revolution, *sensu strictu*, must result in the overturning (*inqilāb*) of society, the socio-political order till then dominant.

The Islamic Revolution, Prof. Weeder said, was particularly interesting, although I hasten to add he was a Shah supporter. He did not elaborate, but if I may presume to interpret his unspoken thoughts, it could only be because it was an instance of conservative revolution inasmuch as its aim was to conserve Islam, the existence of which in Iran was in jeopardy. Conservative revolution is the rarest form of revolution. Ḥāmid Algar made the percipient observation that whereas the Russian and Chinese revolutions were negations of history the Islamic Revolution was an affirmation of history.

The most powerful force within history is history itself, as can be seen from what is happening in post-Communist Europe, where, with the ending of the artificial interlude caused by Communism, countries are relapsing into pre-1914 patterns of alliances. Imam Khumaynī has been perceived even by some

Western observers, such as Carlsen, as an instrument of destiny. Likewise the revolution can be seen as history's revenge on a man who tried to defy history. This, parenthetically, points to something that should be more obvious than it is: that uneducated people are not fit to be head of state in a Muslim country. The Shah brought nemesis on himself by trying to run counter to history; Nāṣir tampered with the historical identity of Egypt, changing the flag and even the name of the country (had he read the Qur'ān he would have known it was Misr even in the 7th century).

I said before that there may have been no more than twelve revolutions in the whole course of history, but if we were to grant the Wahhabi conquest of the Arabian Peninsula the status of revolution – and personally I would dispute it because the Wahhābi wars of conquest from 1802 to 1925 had essentially the character of tribal raids (*ghawazi*) – then this would make it an unlucky 13th; and its ahistorical, or anti-historical, nature is visible in its program of iconoclasm, comparable to the destruction of churches, mosques and temples by Communist revolutionaries.

Before I go any further, permit me to anticipate objection from any quarter that I am guilty of the cardinal sin of omission by not counting the Turkish or Egyptian revolutions, so let me make myself plain: these were not revolutions but *coups d'état* on the familiar Middle Eastern model, i.e., they go back to the point at which Middle Eastern history went wrong, the March 31 incident, when in 1909 'Abdul Ḥamid II was deposed. It was the Thirteenth Battalion, not the Egyptian army, which deposed Farouq, and in the case of Sultān 'Abdul Ḥamid Khan it was the Third Army Corps which marched on Istanbul from Salonika (a hotbed of Freemasonry) to depose him. Atatürk's *coup* flows from the notorious March 31 incident. Since it happened nothing in Middle Eastern history has gone right.

Revolutions are copycat phenomena. The Russian Revolution was modeled on the French Revolution and the Chinese

(Communist) Revolution on the Russian. This applies no less to pseudo-revolutions, otherwise known as *coups d'état*: Reza Shah's *coup* was inspired by Atatürk's.

It may be that there are some people naïve enough to imagine that the independence movements in Third world countries rank as quasi-revolutions. There is no way that people like the Wafdists or the Muslim League could lead a revolution. These people were products of the system and enslaved to its values. No one saw this more clearly than 'Allāmah al-Mashriqī; when Pakistan came into being, he said, 'You have become slaves of the slaves.' That about says it all.

I said that revolutions are copycat phenomena, but in the light of the examples cited, the Islamic Revolution would appear to be unique. This is so only because it emerges from a historical context peculiar to Iran and lacking precise parallel elsewhere, even in the Muslim world. This is one reason why it took other Muslims, including sympathetic ones, by surprise. Nonetheless, it was not totally without antecedents. Imam Husayn's abortive revolution was a protest against the transformation of *khilāfah* (or *imāmah*) into *malakiyya* on the Byzantine or Sassanian model. Imam Khumayni saw in Ḥusayn's campaign a forerunner of the movement he led because Ḥusayn's struggle against Yazid represents a permanent, unresolved conflict in history, the struggle between the forces of good and evil for supremacy. This struggle forms a recurrent pattern typified by Ḥusayn's tragic gesture of protest. It is a conflict destined to continue until the advent (*zuhūr*) of the Mahdi resolves the situation once and for all. The *zuhūr* is therefore the definitive, ultimate revolution. Thus, Khumayni's revolution is both a repetition of one revolution and an anticipation of another; as such it fits a teleological pattern, looking both forward and backward in time. If correct, this means that the Khumayni revolution though taking place in time transcends temporality; it takes on metaphysical meaning.

It is amazing how many Muslims seem to have missed its significance. With some notable exceptions, few leaders of Islamic movements outside Iran grasped its historic significance, its relevance to their case, and held aloof; they failed to identify with the historic events taking place in this sector of the *ummah*, events which had the potential to transform their own societies and put Middle Eastern history back on track. We are forced to ask why. One explanation could be jealousy, envy of Iran's achievement. The sad truth is that these groups of organizations had been trying hard for 40 years without getting anywhere. If a movement has not gotten anywhere in 40 years, it is not going to succeed at all. Another reason, in my view, is the defective source of their inspiration, in Wahhabism, which created an elitist mentality, introverted and lacking the common touch and effectually cut off from the masses. These groups – I am thinking of the Jama'at-i-Islami and the Ikhwan al-Muslimin – proved incapable of abstracting from their chosen model an ideology that would bring them to power. This enabled the Muslim governments to impose on their peoples a theology of powerlessness. The point which must never be lost sight of is that Wahhabism contains no theory of *khilāfah*; and without a clear goal or even a clear concept of leadership any movement is doomed. It suffices to point out the contrast with Chechenia, where the people organized around the power of the *ṭariqah*, have succeeded in imposing on the Russians a humiliating defeat, which makes even their humiliation at the hands of the Finns in 1939-40 seem insignificant by comparison.

To return to the point at issue, whether the revolution led by Khumayni be unique, we said that his revolution is poised somewhere in history midway between Ḥusayn's revolt against Yazid and the *apparition* of the Mahdi. Whilst its relevance is ultimately teleological, it heralds the advent of a new era in world history because the Islamic Revolution marks the beginning of the end of the bourgeois nation-state. Its significance operates on

several levels of which only one is Iran. The second is its relevance to the entire *ummah*, and a third is the message of hope it constitutes to all the oppressed of the earth groaning under the chains of the World Bank, the IMF, GATT and the UN.

Khumayni, like Ḥusayn, may prove more influential dead than living. His brooding, messianic image stares out at us unsmiling – for what is there to smile about in the Muslims' condition? – from posters all over walls in the Middle East. It is the relation to millennialism that explains the iconic power of this image. In what he has bequeathed to us of revolution, of transformation, are vested some at least of the chiliastic expectations of the entire *ummah*, irrespective of sect. In the ascetic image of a man who habitually sat on a mat and ate yogurt we see reflected the simple lifestyle of the early caliphs or of a man like Ṣalāḥuddīn al-Ayyūbī. Imam Khumayni's example is the counterpoint to the brutal secularism, selfish hedonism and obsessive egoism that dominate the post-1945, American-dominated West, where the traditions of Central European idealism have been submerged under a tide of Anglo-Saxon pragmatism. Imam Khumayni's life of voluntary abnegation, of self-sacrifice (*fidā'*) so a corrupted *ummah* may be redeemed, focuses us once again on the example of Ḥusayn. If the comparison with Ḥusayn comes naturally to mind; it is also difficult to avoid comparing Imam Khumayni with the Prophet. His lectures at the Fayḍiyyah Madrasah in Qum challenging the power of the Shah powerfully recall the letters sent to the emperors of Rum and Persia asking them to give up their illegitimate power. It can hardly be a coincidence that these two states were the first to be attacked by the nascent power of Islam. Although Islam is frequently (mis)interpreted today under a different model, as a support system for the *status quo* in countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, in origin Islam was a revolutionary force; it first overthrew the commercial oligarchy of Mecca and then moved out of the

Peninsula to defeat the two superpowers of the day, Persia and Byzantium, achieving in the case of the former in a single day what the Romano-Byzantine Empire had not been able to do in six centuries.

As nationalism was a European export to the Muslim world it was bound to ally itself with that other Western export – secularism: hence the phrase ‘secular nationalism’. But Islam recognizes no form of national identity outside membership of the *ummah*. Unlike Christianity, where the community of the faithful is united through the Mystical Body of Christ, in Islam the unifying principle is law. The function of law is the regulation of society, but to do so requires the coercive power of the state. This is *siyāsah*. Thus Islam and its statal embodiment are inseparable. The laws embody ‘*adl*’; they protect the individual against tyrannical and iniquitous rule. This is why the first target of despots like Atatürk is always The *Shari‘ah*. the *Shari‘ah* constitutes the only protection people have against the arbitrary will of the ruler. Herein we may discern another aspect of the importance of this revolution: it had as one of its aims the reinstatement of the *Shari‘ah*, i.e., the restoration of the rule of law. It is no accident that the revolution was led and directed by a jurist.

Ḥusayn’s prototypal uprising was a protest against Yazid’s distortion of *khilāfah*. Though it failed, it established a paradigm for future generations. Ḥusayn’s struggle foreshadows Khumayni’s against the similarly illegitimate authority of the Shah. In fact, the Shah’s authority had even less legitimacy than Yazid’s because in his administration of the state he ignored the *Shari‘ah*; his reliance on instruments of force like Savak enabled him to dispense with the Constitution. Had the 1906 constitution, which provided for a college of five *mujtahids* to examine any piece of legislation to make sure it conformed to the *Shari‘a*, been followed, the political situation in Iran might have developed differently, but it was not

and Iran fell under the arbitrary tyranny of the Pahlavis; the state retained not even a vestige of legitimacy.

The German writer Dietrich Eckart quotes Schiller as saying that 'order was the daughter of heaven', and goes on to state that 'in Schiller, but especially in Goethe, there are innumerable proofs of the divine origin of law'. No idea of state can be realized without law; law forms the indispensable basis for a state's existence. But unlike Europeans Muslims do not need a legislative assembly because God is the legislator; however, an assembly is necessary to apply and, on occasion, interpret the law. *Wilāyat-i-faqīh* rests on a very simple basis: Islamic government presumes an extensive acquaintance with jurisprudences, and it is the jurist who possesses such knowledge. This could be construed as constituting an argument for the indefinite governance of the jurist, but the caliph or sultan can approach the Shaykh al-Islam for a ruling concerning any aspect of government. Ultimately, then, *Wilāyat-i-faqīh* coincides with or approximates to the Sunnī theory of government, the convergence of which Kalim Siddiqui spoke in one of his most brilliant lectures. In the absence of a *khalīfah* (or an *imam*) such responsibility devolves upon the *faqīh*. In his *Roots of the Islamic Revolution* Ḥamid Algar traces this evolution back to the Uṣūliyyah and the Akhbāriyyah, the polemic between the two schools of *fiqh*, in late 18th century Iran, and argues that it was the victory of the Usulis in this debate that made Khumayni's revolution possible. *Wilāyat-i-faqīh* supplied the revolution with a rationale and a slogan exactly as the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat did with the Marxist revolutions of this century.

Imam Khumayni's reformulation of this traditional concept not only made revolution possible but was tantamount to a revolution within Shi'ism, turning the most apolitical of all the major divisions of Islam into the most *engagee*. This signified a repudiation of what Dr. Shari'ati called Safavid Shi'ah and a return to 'Alid Shi'ism. Imam Khumayni eschewed the political

neutralism of his predecessors in Qum, whose silence was taken as encouragement by the Shah. He told people, 'You should not say that the Imam will not come until the earth be filled with the corruption. Learn the purpose of your religion, and go out and strive for it'.

In *malakiyya* the state's resources are assumed to belong to the *malik* personally, or to his family, or to his tribe. In this way resources which properly belong to the *ummah* are misapplied to promote personal, family or tribal interests which may on occasion coincide with those of the *ummah* but which more often do not. Even where they do coincide they are pursued for the wrong reason. This promotes dissension (*fitnah*). Dissent can take the form of futile but symbolic protest, like Ḥusayn's sacrifice; more often the cupidity of one group excites the cupidity of another who launch a 'revolution' in order to enjoy the fruits of office themselves. This is the *raison d'être* of all the revolutions that have plagued the Middle East since that fateful day in 1909. The Banu 'Abbas played on popular resentment against the Banū Umayyah in order to install themselves. Once ensconced on the throne they proceed to do exactly the same things. The Banū Umayyah retaliated by taking over Spain, where they ultimately proclaimed themselves caliphs, so at one time a single *ummah* had three 'caliphs': an Abbasid one in Baghdad, an Umayyad one in Cordova and a Fatimid one in Cairo; all the while the Christian powers were advancing deep into Muslim territory, in Spain, in Syria and Palestine. Time and again, dynastic rivalries have imperiled the *ummah*, dividing the Muslim world into mutually antagonistic sectors which Western powers have exploited to their advantage. By setting his face firmly against *malakiyya* Imam Khumayni has brought the course of Muslim history back on track after it had gone off it following the death of 'Alī ('a). This signifies a return to the Muḥammadi system.

Secular legislation was introduced into Muslim countries on purpose to emasculate the energies of the *ummah*. In the face of a discredited, declining, devalued and exhausted nationalism Islam seeks to revive these energies. These were the energies that led 50,000 people to sacrifice their lives to overthrow an American puppet in Iran and which expelled the Israelis from Lebanon.

Imam Khomeini's is frequently referred to as a charismatic leader, but in my view this represents a misreading of the situation. His authority rests on more than charisma, for if it were only charismatic then it would have died with him. It is ideological, deriving its legitimacy from the *Shari'ah*. This explains why the revolution did not collapse in anarchy on the Imam's death, as Western observers predicted.

As remarked, two of the West's most successful exports have been secularism and the nation-state; the two in fact go together: in a nation-state your loyalty is to the state, which may include Christians and Jews as well as Muslims; in an Islamic state your loyalty is to the whole *ummah*. Thus the nation-state is *ipso facto* secular, inimical to and incompatible with Islam. The more Oriental societies can be remodeled according to a Western pattern, the easier it becomes to exploit them; education is recruited as an instrument of hegemony. A culture of dependence is inculcated. Japan is the classic, textbook case of cultural transformation. Down to 1945 Japan was an independent fish-and-rice culture; after 1945 the Americans turned it into a dependent meat-and-wheat one.

Similar forces are at work in the Arab countries, generating an appetite for needless luxuries. Capitalism works by the creation of false needs through advertising, an insidious process ending in addiction. Presently, the Arabs are busy squandering their resources in an orgy of consumerism, while their countries are ruled over by agent classes installed in power that they might preside over their country's pillage until, one day, the last barrel of oil is drawn off and the country reverts to a camel economy.

Moreover, these proxy rulers have succeeded in derailing the Islamic movements by allowing them to create political parties which proceed to contest elections on the same basis as parties with secular agendas.

The result is that the Khomeini formula worked where theirs has dismally failed. Fortunately, Islam's enemies have also failed to spot the true significance of the revolution. This could be because the Islamic Revolution resists definition in terms of the mental categories in which they have been trained to think while in the West. In the West revolutions have generally seen the release of anarchic forces not amenable to law; most revolutions in the West (or exported by the West, like the Chinese Revolution) have been negative and destructive in their effects, resulting in the dislocation of the societies in which they have occurred. But the Islamic Revolution, although unique or almost so measured by Western experience of the phenomenon, is not unprecedented in Islam, since it differs in no essential respect from Ḥusayn's uprising or that of the Mahdi in the Sudan. However, Imam Khomeini succeeded where the Mahdi failed and did so without any claims to Mahdism. But though he was not the *Mahdi al-muntazar* his chronological position at the start of a new century may lead future generation to accord him the status of a *mujaddid* (according to a well-known *ḥadith*). I see the Imam in a dual capacity, as embodying the two chief aspirational models of humanity, as hero and saint, two roles which in Western culture are seldom conjoined but which in Islam frequently go together, witness the examples of Ṣalāḥuddīn and Shamil. Heroism, like sanctity, is one of those terms whose currency has been devalued in the West. Carlyle got it right: 'The hero', he said, 'is a messenger sent from the impenetrable infinite, bearing news for us.'

The Philosophy of Prophet Ādam (‘a)

by Dr. Muḥammad Legenhausen

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Praise be to He, to Whom alone belong the East and the West, Whose face is to be found wherever one turns, and Who guides whom He likes along the straight path. And may His peace and blessings be with Muhammad, the best of those who have been given wisdom and sound judgment, and with his Ahl al-Bayt, and those who have been firmly rooted in knowledge, all of them.

In order to steer a middle course between two extreme positions to be found among contemporary Muslim thinkers similar to hard rationalism and fideism in Christian thought, it is suggested that reflection on the universality of philosophical speculation with respect to religion reveals that the rational philosophical defense of religious thought should not be abandoned, but that philosophy must be understood as including much more than that which is associated with the famous ancient Greek philosophers and their legacy. In order for Islamic philosophy to flourish and to serve Islam, it should

be developed beyond the confines of its own heritage without neglecting that valuable heritage. It should aspire to the wisdom and humility exhibited by the prophets, ever since Prophet Ādam, peace be with all of them.

The word 'philosophy' is derived from Greek, but what is denoted by this word is something whose origins cannot be confined to the Greek city-states of the millennium before the life of Ḥaḍrat 'Īsā ('a), not even if we construe philosophy rather narrowly. Often Thales of Miletus (c. 640-546 B.C.) is taken to be the first philosopher of ancient Greece. A descendant of Phoenician immigrants to Greece, he taught that even stones and seemingly dead matter were full of life. He had a mystic's appreciation of nature, and claimed that everything was full of gods. Some historians conjecture that his most famous belief, that the universe began from water, was something he adopted from Egyptian lore.¹ Regardless of whether or not it is proper to regard Thales as the first ancient Greek philosopher, we can be sure that he was not known by the term 'philosopher' in his own time, for the term was coined by followers of one of the most important students of Thales, Pythagoras. Thus the inventors of the word 'philosophy' were the members of a secret cult of ascetic mystics, the Pythagoreans.

Ancient Greek philosophy is often divided between pre-Socratic philosophy and that which came afterward. Others consider Socrates to have been the first real Greek philosopher. In either case, Socrates is certainly one of the most important of the ancient Greeks to have become known as a philosopher, that is, a lover of wisdom.

While the etymology of the word philosophy provides some clue to its proper meaning, this meaning has become rather more specific than that suggested by the simple love of wisdom. Ancient Greek philosophy is the foundation upon which the history of Western philosophy, the sciences and the humanities all rest. Because of its foundational position for Western thought, some writers define philosophy as that chain of ideas which includes the giants of modern European thought, such as Descartes, Hume and Kant, and which can be traced back through the Christian medieval period to

Greece, Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, or Thales, one of whom is to be designated as the originator of genuine philosophical thought. But if we begin to wonder about the origins of Greek philosophy, and if we try to find some reason for choosing one of the above figures above the others as the true father of philosophy, then the definition of philosophy as the chain of thought including the well known greats will not be satisfactory. The earliest links of the chain seem so different from the later links that it seems impossible to say whether any particular ancient Greek thinker should be included or not.

In order to answer the question of which Greek should be considered the first philosopher we must abandon the definition of philosophy solely in terms of the chain of teachers and pupils and turn instead to the question of what characterizes philosophical thought.

Finding the essential character of philosophical thought is no easy matter. Certainly it should not be characterized as any particular set of doctrines, although there have been periods in which such an identification was popular. Thus, when Ghazzālī wrote his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* he was not attempting to refute philosophy as a topic or set of topics for reflection and investigation, but to refute specific doctrines associated with the mix of neo-Platonic and Aristotelian thought whose major champion was Ibn Sinā. As far as method and subject matter are concerned, Ghazzālī was no less a philosopher than Ibn Sinā or Ibn Rushd. It would have been more precise if Ghazzālī had titled his book *Tahāfut Falsafah-ye Ibn Sīnā*, but the thought of Ibn Sinā had so come to dominate the philosophical thought of the Islamic world that philosophy itself was identified with the doctrines taught by Ibn Sinā and his followers. This line of thought was a form of rationalism which Ghazzālī branded as heresy (*bid'ah*) because he considered the conclusions it advanced as dictated by reason to be not only contrary to religion but based upon faulty arguments in which reason overstepped its own limits. The idea that philosophers make unwarranted claims on behalf of the intellect became the object of Mawlavī Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's sarcasm in the *Mathnavī*.²

Mawlavī claims that the philosophers sin in two ways: first, they

overestimate the power of the rational intellect; and second, they fail to appreciate the importance of a more direct form of knowledge through illumination.

The philosopher is in bondage to things perceived by the intellect;
 the pure rides as a prince on the Intellect of intellect.
 Know that knowledge consists in seeing fire plainly,
 not in prating that smoke is evidence of fire.
 O you whose evidence, in the eyes of the Sage,
 is really more stinking than the evidence of the physician,
 Since you have no evidence but this,
 O son, eat dung and inspect urine!
 O you whose evidence is like the staff in your hand
 indicating that you suffer from blindness!
 Noise and pompous talk and assumption of authority (means)
 "I cannot see: excuse me."³

The object of Mawlavi's ridicule is not just any form of philosophy, but is the same form of philosophy against which Ghazzālī inveighed. The association of philosophy with medicine in the second passage quoted above recalls the fact that Ibn Sīnā was as famous a physician as a philosopher. Clearly, Mawlavi does not mean to include Socrates among those he finds guilty of 'noise and pompous talk', for Socrates, like Mawlavi, was engaged in exposing the ignorance of those who proudly but falsely claimed to know. Plato, as well, does not seem to fit Mawlavi's image of the philosopher, for he was just as emphatic as Mawlavi about the importance of illumination over finding evidence and engaging in syllogistic reasoning. Even Aristotle does not entirely fit with the image Mawlavi portrays of the philosopher, for he was much more concerned than the medieval Aristotelians to point out problems for which he could offer no clear cut solution (like the problem of substance in the central books of the *Metaphysics*, or the problem of future contingents in *De Interpretatione*). The most interesting question which is raised by these reflections is how neo-Platonism

and Aristotelianism came to be considered as an official philosophy, a rationally authoritative set of doctrines, rather than the tentative speculation suggested by the Greek thinkers. How did the unresolved problems which were so important for Aristotle move to the sidelines so that bold claims for reason should dominate? How did philosophy become corrupted, dogmatic and proud, when it began in wonder? However, to pursue these questions would be to abandon the task we have set for ourselves of characterizing philosophy.

Philosophy can neither be defined in terms of a single chain of teachers and pupils, nor can it be defined in terms of a set of doctrines. At the same time it is important to try to characterize philosophical writings in such a way that we might distinguish them from religious texts and from what is sometimes referred to as wisdom literature. Of course, we do not wish to claim that no religious texts are to be considered as philosophy, nor should we deny the philosophical content of some wisdom literature. We are looking for a way to distinguish *falsafah* from *hikmat*, philosophy from wisdom, while allowing for the possibility that the two may overlap. Since we have already ruled out historical succession and doctrinal content as means to identify philosophy, there appear to be two alternatives left to us: subject and method.

Since the time of Aristotle, metaphysics, or first philosophy, has been defined as the science of being *qua* being, and this definition was generally accepted by the Muslim philosophers. This definition, however, does not provide a means to include all the branches of philosophy. Philosophy has the following branches: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic, and aesthetics. There are other branches of philosophy as well: the philosophy of law, the philosophy of language, the philosophy of science, the philosophy of medicine, social and political philosophy, philosophical anthropology, the philosophy of mind, etc. The 'etc.' is important. There seems to be no way to eliminate it, no list whose claim to being exhaustive could not be undermined by the development of a new branch of philosophy. We need some way to know when a new branch of human inquiry should be considered as a kind of philosophy, and

when it is something else, psychology, ideology, or cultural criticism, for example. We may hope to find some criterion by turning to method.

Philosophers differ from sages because of their employment of reason, it is sometimes said. While the sages draw wisdom from folklore, religion, mythology, and other elements of culture, the philosopher is held to rely on pure reason. But surely the sages employ reason as well. This seems to be implied by Mawlawi's claim that the pure ones ride on the Intellect of intellect. Sometimes it is said that although all science makes use of rational principles, philosophy is unique in relying on reason alone, with no appeal to empirical findings. Two objections will be raised here. First, there are sciences other than philosophy which rely on reason alone, the sciences of pure mathematics, such as number theory and Euclidean geometry. Secondly, philosophy, or at least some of its branches, on close inspection does not turn out to be completely immune from empirical discoveries and the ideas abstracted from them. There is no clear line which divides the philosophy of mathematics from pure mathematics, or pure mathematics from applied mathematics.⁴ Reason seems to be used in the same way or perhaps to shift only gradually as we move from a particular science to the philosophy of that science. Metaphysical theories have been proposed on the basis of philosophical reflection on elementary particle physics, cosmology, and even biology.⁵

The questions seem to be different. The questions of a science are internal questions, questions that seem to presuppose that their answers can be found through a continuation and extension of the methods currently employed in the field. Questions concerning a particular science seem to break out of the confines of established modes of inquiry in two directions: at one end there is the matter of applications, and at the other, philosophy. Reason, however, is relied upon equally throughout the spectrum, it is equally vital to the design of a machine and to speculation about the nature of being. Since philosophy is at the opposite end of the spectrum from the applied sciences, it is tempting to define philosophical method as non-empirical in some sense, even if it is granted that no theorizing

is completely immune from ideas that spring more directly from reflection on observation and measurement. Even if philosophy does not rely entirely on reason alone, and experience can be an avenue for uncovering philosophical truth as well as rational reflection, still, philosophers do not attempt to formulate their theories in ways designed to allow for empirical confirmation or refutation.

In the end, it seems that if we are to be honest, we must admit that we cannot provide an exact definition of philosophy which will include all that is traditionally considered to belong to the field while excluding the special sciences. Perhaps we do not really know what philosophy is, or maybe we do know what it is, but only in a vague way which eludes our attempts at exact definition. The closest we seem to be able to come to identifying philosophy is by means of its subject and method, by saying that philosophy includes metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, logic, and inquiries into the foundations of the special sciences. The method of philosophy is rational as opposed to empirical, but this does not mean that empirical investigations are irrelevant to philosophy. For example, the results of empirical investigations have led to the development of quantum theory which has raised a number of interesting philosophical questions about the nature of matter and energy, and the displacement of Newtonian physics by relativity theory has done much to undermine some of the central theses of Kant's philosophy. To admit that philosophy must be cognizant and responsive to developments in the empirical sciences is not, however, to say that the method of philosophy is empirical. The tool of the philosopher is reason, but this is not very informative, for it is a tool used by students of the natural sciences and the humanities. There is no *'ilm* which does not require reason.

The methods of philosophy are analysis and synthesis, and in both special attention is paid to logical rigor. Synthesis is an attempt to provide explanations at a quite general level often by constructing a theory or model, or by advocating a project through which such explanations are to be given. For example, materialism is a theory the acceptance of which requires a rejection of all explanations

which contain ineliminable reference to non-material entities. This requirement creates special difficulties in the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of mathematics, and many other areas. Thus materialism generates a program of attempting to provide a uniform type of explanation for various phenomena in all the fields of human inquiry. Utilitarianism in ethics provides another example of a programmatic theory by means of which explanations are to be provided for the various moral features of life. Each broad philosophical thesis or theory generates its own problems. The successful defense of a philosophical thesis requires that the thesis be shown to be free from contradiction, that it can be integrated within a general philosophical outlook, that the problems it generates are interesting and seem susceptible to solution, that the thesis can be applied in various areas and that it provides interesting insights into the areas in which it is applied.

The application of a thesis to a specific area of inquiry often requires the employment of the other major philosophical method, analysis. Analysis can take a number of forms. There is linguistic analysis, conceptual analysis, and other types of analysis. Perhaps they can all be lumped together as ways to analyze problems. When Socrates asked 'What is justice?', he was extending an invitation to engage in philosophical analysis. Some will respond by speaking of how the word 'justice' is used, and of its etymology; others may respond by considering how people generally think about justice; still others will try to explain what justice is by placing it within a broader philosophical theory. So, the methods of synthesis and analysis are complementary. By synthesis theories are constructed through which problems are to be analyzed; and analysis proceeds by providing an account of a problem in accord with a more general theory, or by showing how the problem may be solved by means of the theory. So, for example, Heidegger will provide an analysis of a problem by sifting through the etymologies of the relevant terms involved, picking out the most salient issues thus suggested, and then providing some thesis about the problem which incorporates the points brought out in his analysis, often by extending a train of thought to be found in several thinkers in the Western philosophical

tradition.

The process of philosophical analysis and synthesis takes place in a context of criticism. At each stage, the work of the philosopher is subject to the criticisms of others working in the same area. Objections are raised when a theory has counterintuitive consequences, when it contains a logical flaw, or when the arguments produced in its support are found to be unsound. Philosophical theories are also criticized for their inability to handle important problems, or even when they lack elegance. The main method of philosophical criticism is the analysis of arguments. Here the importance of logic comes to the fore, since it is by logic that arguments are identified and evaluated as valid or invalid. Logic, however, is not always capable of providing insight regarding the truth of the premises upon which a given argument is based. For the evaluation of premises, sometimes an appeal will be made to empirical investigations, sometimes to rational intuitions, and sometimes further argument will be suggested. A complete characterization of the philosophical methods sketched here would require a text on logic and critical thinking. Indeed, such books are numerous, and have been throughout the history of philosophy which they have helped to shape. However, enough has been said to indicate in a rough way what may be understood as philosophy.

Philosophy is that field of inquiry which includes the subjects of metaphysics, epistemology, etc. and which employs the method of analysis and synthesis in a context of logical criticism. Given this understanding of philosophy, we are sufficiently armed to challenge the claim that the exclusive origin of philosophy lies in ancient Greece. Philosophy can be found in ancient China, India, and Africa. By philosophy here we do not mean only the wise pronouncements of sages or religious figures, but the critical employment of reason in analysis and synthesis directed to some of the central issues of metaphysics, ethics, etc.

A word should be said about religious thought. Some religious thought is devotional, and some of it expresses illuminative insights, some of it concerns pronouncements of doctrine, but sometimes also it is philosophical. The meeting place of religious and philosophical

thought is sometimes described as the philosophy of religion and sometimes as philosophical theology. Occasionally these can be distinguished. The philosophy of religion can be understood analogously to the philosophy of mathematics, or the philosophy of history. It is a subject of inquiry into the most foundational questions concerning religion: the nature and attributes of God, the relation between religion and ethics, and apparent paradoxes involved in religious belief. Philosophical theology is the employment of philosophical method to address important questions of theology under the assumption that a given theological creed is correct. Often philosophy arises out of philosophical theology. As theologians employ critical methods to debate differences of opinion among those who accept a given creed, eventually critical attention may be turned to the most basic assumptions shared by those who confess a common faith. We must be careful, then, not to dismiss all theological discussions as unphilosophical. In the Islamic tradition, for example, there is much true philosophy to be found in *kalām*. The early *mutakallimūn* owed much in their perception as well as their analysis of the problems which they addressed to the concepts developed by grammarians of the Arabic language. By the end of the third century after the hijrah, one of the central occupations of the *mutakallimīn* of Basra was the systematic explanation of the ontological implications associated with the use of Arabic predicates, *ṣifat*. While they were certainly interested in specifically theological questions about the nature and attributes of God, they developed much more general theories about the existence of things indicated by subjects and predicates.⁶

The tradition which began in ancient Greece is especially distinguished by its length and the volume of literature it has produced, by the number of its branches, and by the depth of insights which continue to attract new students. The glory of the Western philosophical tradition, which includes Islamic philosophy as one of its most important branches, must not, however, blind us to the existence of traditions of philosophical thought which developed independently of Greek philosophy. Of these, the most notable are Chinese and Indian philosophy.

Centuries before Socrates began his philosophical career, the Indians of South Asia were reflecting critically on their universe and doing metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and philosophical theology.⁷ Chinese and Buddhist philosophers who were contemporaries of Socrates also developed a philosophical dialectic based on a tradition of thought which extended back for some centuries. In many ways the critical reflections of Eastern philosophers are similar to those of Western philosophers. Both Eastern and Western philosophers are preoccupied with questions about the nature of man, the universe, reality, and the ultimate. There are also more specific areas in which similarities between Western and Eastern philosophy are especially obvious. Early in both traditions materialism asserted itself as a philosophical alternative to the more prevalent modes of thought, and in both traditions thinkers are to be found who placed more emphasis on experience or on reason for acquiring human knowledge. Finally, both groups also saw in this questioning a great opportunity for self improvement.

One of the most important areas of philosophy to have been developed independently in Greece, India and China is logic. The earliest known work in the Indian tradition on logic is the *Tarka-Sastra* of Gotama, which has been estimated to have been composed in 550 B.C. This work included two subjects, the art of debate (*tarka*), and the means of valid knowledge (*pramana*). By the second century C.E., the subjects of syllogistic reasoning and the examination of contemporaneous philosophical doctrines had been added to Gotama's work and the whole became known as the *Nyaya sutra*.

While some have speculated that the syllogism in Nyaya may have been influenced by the Aristotelian syllogism which may have come to India through Alexander, this is highly conjectural, and most contemporary historians seem to think that the Indian syllogism developed independently of Greek thought.⁸ This work served as a foundational text for the subsequent development of Indian logic among various Buddhist and Jain as well as other Hindu philosophers.

Logic is said to have originated in China with the work *Mo-tzu* of Mo-ti who is believed to have died before 400 B.C. Mo-ti discusses truth and falsity, affirmation and denial 'with a view to produce order and avoid disorder.'⁹ He describes a method of philosophical analysis and comparison of elements as well as a method of synthesis. Analysis comes from reason and ends with evidence. Synthesis groups together various facts and ends in a conclusion. Practical and theoretical reasoning are also distinguished. The discussions to be found in the *Mo-tzu* are not merely the pre-philosophical fragments of a sage, but display a highly refined degree of logical sensitivity. The philosophy developed by Mo-ti influences a long line of Chinese philosophers known as Moists and they interacted with thinkers of other Chinese schools of thought by criticizing them and being criticized.

There is also some speculation that Greek thought may have entered China by way of Bactria and the Alexandrian conquest, but again, this is highly speculative, and in any case Mo-ti's work was completed long before Greek or Indian influence would have been possible.¹⁰

Only those who are ignorant of the logical discussions in the Nyaya school of Indian philosophy or the Moist school of Chinese philosophy and the dialectic which took place between the advocates and critics of these schools could claim that philosophy as it has been defined above has its exclusive origins in Greek thought. Excuse for such ignorance is no longer possible since a number of books have been published in which Indian and Chinese philosophy are described in addition to those mentioned above. In addition to books, there are several philosophical journals in which new research in these areas is published: *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, the *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, and *Philosophy East and West*.

In recent years a number of studies of African philosophy have also been published, although it is difficult to make any definite pronouncements about ancient African philosophy since it was carried out in the context of an oral culture. Nevertheless, to declare that ancient Africa was without philosophy, without reasoned analysis and theorizing about various issues in metaphysics,

epistemology, ethics, etc., is to commit the fallacy *ad ignorantium*, to conclude that something is not the case simply because we have no positive evidence.

Even Dr. Shari‘ati, despite his familiarity with Fanon and his commitment to the oppressed, complains of those Europeans who are ignorant of the rich culture of Iran and imagine Iran to be without culture, like Africa. It seems to have been a slip, but it is one which is all too common; and even if such remarks are not motivated by a latent nationalist sentiment, misplaced pride or racism, they are certainly capable of fueling vicious attitudes. This is the dark side of the denial of non-Western philosophies: it may be an indication of something more sinister than ignorance.

In pride, the philosopher says that only I have the ability to understand deep truths, to make fine distinctions, to appreciate great subtlety; only I can reason. And since reason is the specific difference of the human, it follows that only I am human, I and my teachers in the line stretching back to ancient Greece. In the language of many tribes, the word for a member of the tribe and the word for man are the same.

In opposition to this exclusivist denial of the universality of philosophy, we may speak of the philosophy of Prophet Ādam (Peace be with him). This alludes to the fact that it is characteristic of human nature to raise questions about reality, knowledge, goodness, beauty, soundness of reasoning, and to seek to find foundations. And it is characteristic of human nature to pursue answers to these questions through the methods of reason: dialectic, analysis, synthesis, criticism, speculation.

It is written in the Qur’ān: “And He taught Adam the names, all of them...” (2:31). According to Ibn ‘Arabi, these names are the Names of God, although the commentators sometimes claim that for reasons having to do with Arabic grammar the names cannot be of attributes, but must be of living things. The argument is not decisive, since it is possible that the attributes are personalized as a figure of speech. If Adam’s knowledge was of the Names of God, this could be taken to be a symbol of analysis through which the divine reality is understood in terms of the multiplicity of Names.

The Names are multiple while the essence of God is simple and unitary. By learning the Names, Adam learns to analyze the divine simple unity in terms of its relations with created things as a multiplicity of attributes. Even if the names which Adam was taught are not to be understood as the Divine Names, but of some other realities, the originality of Adam's position with respect to the One Creator, and the knowledge given of a multiplicity of names certainly suggests the problems of the one and the many, of naming and reference, and of human knowledge. These allusions add to the propriety of allowing that the wisdom of Adam was, at least in part, philosophical. Adam (Peace be with him) was the first philosopher. This means that philosophy, as we have described it above, is characteristic of human nature, and that philosophical problems may be associated with the knowledge given by God to Adam as related in the Qur'ān.

Mulla Sadra has described the wisdom of Adam as follows:

Know that wisdom (*ḥikmah*) originally began with Adam and his progeny Seth and Hermes, i.e., Idris, and Noah because the world is never deprived of a person upon whom the science of Unity (*tawḥīd*) and eschatology rests. And it is the great Hermes who propagated it (*ḥikmah*) throughout the regions of the world and different countries and manifested it and made it emanate upon the "true worshippers". He is the "Father of the philosophers (*Abū al-ḥukamā'*) and the master of those who are the masters of the sciences."¹¹

To speak of Adam as a philosopher is to go beyond the claim of the universality of philosophy and to introduce a religious element to the discussion. The philosophy of Adam is religious. From the secular Western point of view this sort of claim will sound odd to the point of absurdity. Adam is considered by the atheist as a mythical figure, a character from the tales of the ancients with no relevance to the rational analysis of philosophical problems and the scientific cast of mind typical of the modern philosopher. On the other hand, those religious people with a narrow sense of piety will

consider it contrary to religion and debasing to the prophet Adam (‘a) to describe him as a philosopher. Prophetic knowledge, they will argue, is by revelation and has no need for the paltry methods of reason.

We may respond to the attack on our Western flank by pointing out that philosophy has a mythic dimension which is overlooked by those with a positivistic outlook. Philosophy is a kind of quest motivated by love. The traces of this original love can even be found in such irreligious Western thinkers as Russell and Sartre. It is the desire to free themselves from the recognized illusions of past thinkers which motivates their rejections. It should come as no surprise that the love of truth might inspire one to deny the truth.

The mythic dimension of the philosophical quest for truth is a recurrent theme in the philosophical literature of the Western tradition. Many authors have already emphasized the point that what makes for myth is not falsehood. Important truths may be contained in myths. A story, like the story of Adam, may be called a myth because it is legendary, it has been passed to us from antiquity rather than having been discovered through scientific historical research; but this does not mean that it is false! Rather it is a falsification to deny the mythic dimensions of the philosophical quest and to deny its points of contact with the religious journey.

With respect to those who would deny the philosophy of Adam from a religious point of view, if they persist in their objections even after our explanations of what we mean by this attribution and they understand that we do not mean to claim that we know the position of the first prophet, Peace be with him, on a number of controversial philosophical questions, nor do we make any positive claim even to the effect that the prophet had any philosophical views on any particular philosophical issues, if they nevertheless persist in their opposition even after this, then we shall begin to suspect that their opposition stems from a desire to protect religion from rational inquiry.

There are many theologians and philosophers of religion in the West today who share this sentiment. They are called *fideists*. They hold that there are higher standards than those of reason by means of

which beliefs are to be evaluated, and that with respect to such standards, religious beliefs are to be dearly valued even if they are in opposition to the standards of reason.

One of the most important Christian philosophers to espouse fideism was Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). It is important to understand that Kierkegaard's fideism springs from a rejection of the claims on behalf of reason made by Hegel. During Kierkegaard's age the followers of Hegel seem to have thought that reason by itself was sufficient to show the place of man and God in the universe and to provide the foundations for religious faith. In reaction against the excessive claims made on behalf of reason, Kierkegaard seems to have gone to the opposite extreme of denying any relevance of reason or philosophy to religion.

Particularly important with respect to Muslim-Christian dialogue is Kierkegaard's attitude toward the Bible. Muslims have traditionally reminded Christians of the dubious historical evidence for the authenticity of the Bible, and have compared lack of information about the origins of the Bible with the relative abundance of data about the revelation of the Qur'ān. The response of Christians has often been surprisingly nonchalant. Of course, a significant number of Christian theologians are engaged in extensive historical research about the origins of the Bible. However, I believe one more commonly encounters a lack of interest in the question, and in some cases even hostility. Such reactions are not simply expressions of unreflective dogmatism, but of the widespread theological view that religious matters are independent of objective truth, and may even be opposed to it. The lesson taken from modern forms of biblical criticism is that the spiritual value of Scripture is independent not only of the shortcomings of its literal interpretation, but of any claim to objective historicity. This view finds strong expression in the works of Kierkegaard. He argues that even if the Bible were proven absolutely authentic, it would not bring anyone closer to faith, for faith is a matter of passion and is not the result of academic investigations. Furthermore, he claims that the scientific establishment of the authenticity of the Bible would actually be detrimental to faith, because passion and certainty are incompatible.

On the other hand, Kierkegaard claims that even if the Bible were shown to be inauthentic, that its books were not by the supposed authors, and that it lacked integrity, it would not follow that Christ never existed, and the believer would still be at liberty to retain his faith. Karl Barth, perhaps the most influential Protestant theologian of the twentieth century, takes a remarkably similar view. He is willing to accept historical criticism of the Bible, but claims that faith does not depend on the historical accuracy of beliefs. Christ transcends history. The danger here is that in the rejection of historical, scientific, philosophical or rational criticism, one ensures that no evaluation from outside can threaten one's religious beliefs. Narrow mindedness is protected.

The second most important philosophical influence on contemporary Christian fideism is Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). Wittgenstein's fideism is in some ways more moderate than Kierkegaard's. He holds that in different areas of life different 'language games' are played, and that confusion results when the rules of one game are applied to another game to which they are not applicable. The rules of science do not apply to religion. According to Wittgensteinians, the proper place for reason is in science. In religious belief something else appears to be operative. Against this view one may point out that both religious and scientific discussions tend to obey the logical laws characteristic of rational thought. Where they differ is in the relevance of empirical findings, particularly those of a quantitative nature. However, it is not at all clear why philosophical reason should be considered the province of that which depends on empirical data and the formal sciences instead of on revelation. The logical principles which are shared by different scientific, religious, and other traditions seem to violate the idea of strict autonomy which Wittgenstein defends.

Perhaps the greatest problem for the Wittgensteinian idea of the autonomy of religious belief is that of incommensurability. Wittgenstein himself complains that he is not sure how religious and non-religious people are able to understand each other. Since it is clear that they are able to understand each other, religious and non-religious languages are not completely independent. But if they are

not completely independent, then the possibility of mutual criticism arises, which the doctrine of autonomy denies. If we are to have spiritual progress, we must be willing to face challenges, not to cut ourselves off from the possibility of challenge. If our religious ideas are to have sufficient flexibility to find proper application in all the spheres of our lives, religion must be permitted to leak out from the confines of ritual procedure and other-worldly preoccupation.

Finally, there is the problem of demarcation. Where does one language game end and another begin? If religion is a form of life analogous to science, how are the various religious traditions to be treated? Are they like competing scientific theories? There is good reason to think not. Buddhism and Judaism are so disparate that it does not make much sense to say that they are alternative attempts to describe the same reality. Perhaps they are as different from each other as each is from quantum theory. Perhaps they are like different branches of science. But this is wrong, too. The various religions do compete with one another in some sense. The Qur'ān speaks not only to Muslims, but directly addresses Jews and Christians, idolaters and infidels, and if the Qur'ān employs its own specific concept of rationality, it is one which others are expected to be able to understand. Furthermore, the different branches of the sciences merely focus on different aspects of what is agreed by all to be a common reality. In any case, there is little one can find in Wittgenstein or his followers to assist in determining how traditions of thought are to be classified, when they are to be seen as competitors and when they are to be seen as autonomous. To the contrary, the very existence of the philosophy of religion and philosophical theology indicate that there is no line of demarcation which separates religious from philosophical thought. In practice the two often merge. Indeed, the philosophical critique of religious ideas is necessary if we are to adequately defend our beliefs, even privately within our own souls, from the charge that we have gone astray, that religious emotion has prompted us to accept absurdities. Like every other area of culture, if isolated from intellectual commerce, religion will suffer the depression of a ghetto economy.

Against our rejection of fideism, we might imagine the protest of

Mawlavi: when the mother offers milk to her child, is the child to seek evidence that this is in fact nourishing milk, and that it is offered by its own mother? The immediate recognition of the truth needs no evidence. We can grant the insight of Mawlavi without going as far as he seems on occasion to have done, without rejecting the relevance of philosophy to religion. It may be admitted that there are circumstances in which it is inappropriate to look for reasons and evidence, not only in religion, but in the sciences and mathematics, and in virtually all the areas of human inquiry. A large part of wisdom in philosophical investigation is knowing what things are to be questioned and what things are to be accepted without further questioning. An unregulated demand for reasons and evidence only brings scepticism.

Philosophical reason is a tool, a vehicle. By itself, it can go nowhere. Syllogisms can be constructed *ad nauseam* without taking one a step closer to the truth of any matter, but the judicious use of logical technique and the other methods of philosophy may transport us distances which we would otherwise be unable to traverse in security. For the key to the religious element in the philosophy of Adam we may turn again to the *Mathnavi*. Adam's employment of reason was combined with humility. Even though he was taught the names and the angels prostrated before him on account of his knowledge, when he sinned he admitted his mistake and turned in humble repentance toward God. Mawlavi contrasts this attitude with that of Iblis, who uses his reason in order to excuse his disobedience. The philosophy of Iblis is a philosophy tainted by pride. The philosophy of Adam is a philosophy purified by humility.

Today, in the Muslim world as well as among Christians, there is a discussion of what role philosophy can play *vis a vis* religion. On the one hand, there are those who hold that philosophy provides a rational foundation for religious belief and a general framework for the interpretation of religious beliefs through which the truth of basic religious beliefs may be demonstrated. This has been the dominant view among Muslim philosophers from Ibn Sinā to those inspired by the teachings of Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'i.¹² Another school of thought among Shi'i scholars, known as *maktab-e tafkik*, denies

that philosophy can or should serve as a basis for religion (the word *tafkik* indicates the *separation* of religion from philosophy).¹³ Both groups seem to have valuable points to make, although both can also easily pass beyond the limits of plausibility.

The exaggerated claims of rationalist philosophers to be in possession of deductive proofs for religious claims which must be accepted by all reasonable persons invites the response that given the fact that atheists seem to be no worse at logic than theists, faith must be independent of reason. But to abandon reason is to deny the birthright we inherit from Prophet Ādam ('a). What we must deny and seek to separate from religion is Iblisi philosophy, the pride which overextends the claims of human reason. What we must seek is the wisdom of the prophets ('a), including the latent philosophical reasoning to be found there, a humble reason, but one which keeps a firm hand on the reins of the passions and emotions, not to stop them, but to direct them on the straight path, *in shā' Allah!*

1. Cf. Peter Gorman, *Pythagoras: A Life* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 35.

2. This subject is the topic of a paper delivered by Dr. 'Abd al-Karim Soroush at the 1992 Conference on Greek Orthodox Christianity and Islam in Athens. The topic is also addressed by William C. Chittick in *The Ṣūfī Doctrine of Rūmī*, (Offset Press, 1974), and later in his *The Ṣūfī Path of Love*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983). Also see "The Concept of Religious Reason" by Muḥammad Taqī Faḍīl in this issue of *The Message of Thaḡalayn*.

3. Bk. VI, 2505 f.

4. See Morris Klein's *Mathematics: The Loss of Certainty* (New York: Oxford, 1983).

5. For example, see Elliott Sober's *From a Biological Point of View* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

6. Cf. Richard M. Frank, *Beings and Their Attributes*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), p. 14.

7. Cf. R. T. Blackwood and A. L. Herman, eds. *Problems in Philosophy: West and East*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1975), p. 7. Most of this paragraph is paraphrased from the introduction to this work.

8. See the article 'Logic' in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards. For the conjecture of the Greek connection, see Satis Chandra Vidyabhusana, A History of Indian Logic, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971).

9. Cf. Leo Wieger, S.J., A History of the Religious Beliefs and Philosophical Opinions in China, Edward Chalmers Werner, tr., (New York: Paragon, 1969), p. 213.

10. Cf. Weiger, p. 286.

11. *Risālah fi al-ḥudūth*, in *Rasā'il Šadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī*, (Tehran, 1302), p. 67. The passage is cited and translated by S. H. Nasr in "Hermes and Hermetic Writings in the Islamic World" in his *Islamic Studies* (Beirut: Librairie Du Liban, 1967), p. 69.

12. One of the most prominent of these philosophers is Prof. Mišbāḥ Yazdī, whose *Āmūzesh-e Falsafeh* has appeared in translation by Muḥammad Legenhausen and 'Azīm Sarvdalīr in *Al-Tawḥīd*, beginning with Vol. XI, Nos. 3 & 4, 1414/1994, p. 96f.

13. See Muḥammad Riḍā Ḥakīmī, *Maktab-e Tafkīk* (Qum: Markaz-e Barrasihā-ye Islāmī, 1373/1994).

The Concept of Religious Reason*

by *Muḥammad Taqī Fādīl*

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ABSTRACT

The author of this article sheds some light on the concept of reason in philosophy and religion, then he proceeds to make clear whether or not it is possible to defend both normative and factual religious propositions in a rational way. To elaborate his idea, he puts his argument in historical perspective and refers to the concept of reason in Islam and then poses the question of whether reason in the Qur'ān and *sunnah* is identical with the concept of reason in philosophy. He himself answers that reason in the Qur'ān and *sunnah* is associated with faith, love and feeling, that is, the term *ta'qqul* (intellection) in the Qur'ān signifies a kind of reflection. The author is of

*The original Farsi version of this article was published in Qum in the journal, *Naqd va Naẓar*, Vol. 1, No. 3-4 (Summer & Fall, 1995), pps. 166-183.

the view that there is a grave difference between reason in religion and in philosophy, for the latter relies on deduction only. Thus, a rational defense of religion, in the sense of speculative philosophy, is not feasible, and in this regard it is better to take recourse to a practical approach. The end of the article is about the rational defense of religion in the West.

What is the scope of human reason in dealing with religious teachings? Is human reason able to analyze religious statements? Is it possible to rationally defend all types of religious propositions, including both normative and factual propositions, and through what philosophers call "linguistic analysis" to make them meaningful, so as to bring about a reconciliation between faith and reason, and pave the way for cooperation between philosophers and the religious elite and make them consider reason and faith as two sources of knowledge?

The issue of reason and faith is not a new issue any more. As is known, mystics used to keep faith away from reason, for they maintain that the essence of faith is love. But later on, following the eruption of the scientific revolution, this issue became the subject matter of *kalām* and philosophy of religion and gave rise to various opposing views.

Following the advent of Christian philosophy, Greek rationality which after Thales had no competitor in the arena of culture, began to weaken and dim, but after a period it gained a renewed vitality. There was a struggle between philosophers and clerics, and later between rationalists and those who sought to rely solely on scripture (*muḥadithin*). The rivalry between philosophers and religious leaders before Islam resulted in the closing of the

academic schools in Athens, following which some of the philosophers and scholars took refuge in the court of Anūshirvān, the Iranian king. Gradually the domain of the philosophers and religious leaders became separate.

In this regard Philo of Alexandria, the well known Jewish philosopher, made an attempt to explain Jewish philosophy. Church fathers as well as Platonist philosophers also tried to explain Christianity rationally and thereby to reconcile reason with faith.

Philo, the well-known Jewish Alexandrine philosopher tried to reconcile the reality of Jewish religion with that of Greek philosophy and through hermenutical works and symbolic interpretations of the Sacred Book he tried to resolve certain differences between religion and philosophy. In his view, truth is in the Torah, yet Platonist philosophers also succeeded to attain truth. Philo set out to reconcile revelation with Plato's philosophy and maintains that it is possible to do so , but only provided one knows the way of interpreting the text of the Torah in the light of philosophy. That is, he sought to provide an account of Being in Plato's philosophy as the same as the God of the Torah that the Prophet Moses talked about and Who is beyond substance and thought, and outside of space and time.¹

Thus, the history of the world's religions bears witness to the conflict between reason and faith. Before the renaissance and the scientific revolution in the West, philosophers tried to involve themselves in religious issues and to treat them sympathetically. But after the renaissance in the West, new trends in philosophy came to the fore and the controversy between reason and faith found new dimensions, following which reason and scientific knowledge won the confidence of people and overshadowed philosophy and religious teachings in the sense given to them in the medieval ages. Theologians and religious leaders tried their best to maintain the power of the churches and their superiority but failed to do so, for the sword of science was sharp enough to destroy any

obstacle. At any rate, the Aristotelian approach toward science collapsed and the pioneers of the new science declared the fall of faith and the rise of science.

Studying the Roots

Religious propositions are of two kinds: declarative and imperative. There is little or no conflict between imperative propositions and philosophical and scientific reason. Usually, disagreement takes place between declarative religious statements and declarative philosophical or scientific propositions. Just as philosophical and scientific propositions are demonstrated by means of their own logic and reason, religious statements also invite intellection. Accordingly, religious teachings neither do away with reason nor keep away from reason but accept reason.

In this article, an attempt is made to examine the question of whether the concept of reason or intellect (*'aql*) in religious texts, the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth* is the same as the philosophical and scientific concept. And if these concepts are judged to be equivalent, can religious claims be rationally defended and demonstrated by logical methods? In other words, the question is whether the languages of philosophy and religion are the same, and whether both of them have the same goal and interpret the nature of man and the universe from the same viewpoint of speculative wisdom, and deal with the perfection of man in practical wisdom in the same way. In other words could we say that there is no blatant difference between religion and philosophy regarding their ultimate aims except that philosophy is guided only by reason and logic, i.e. the way of pure reason, that is, it accepts no truth that is not verified by reason, while religion relies on revelation as well as the employment of reason and considers the sayings and experiences of the prophets as authoritative.²

There are two possibilities: either the philosophical meaning of religious teachings are or are not on good terms with reason, that is,

either the scope of religion and philosophy are completely different or they are the same. The objectives of the prophets are no different from those of the philosophers or the prophets are concerned only with hearts, considered as the centre of the sentiments, while the philosophers deal with reason and thought. One of them aimed at guidance of the people and the other aimed at describing and interpreting being. In this regard Rūmī says:

بحث عقلی گر دُر و مرجان بود آن دگر باشد که بحث جان بود
بحث جان اندر مقامی دیگر است باده جان را قوامی دیگر است

(Yet) the intellectual quest, though it be (fine as) pearls and coral, is other than the spiritual quest.

The spiritual quest is on another plane: the spiritual win has another consistency. (Bk 1, 1501-1502)

بند معقولات آمد فلسفی

شهباز عقل آمد صفی

The philosopher is in bondage to things perceived by the intellect; (but) the pure (saint) is he that rides as a prince on the Intellect of intellect. (Bk III, 2527)

The prophets ('a) tried to change life while the philosophers tried to interpret the world. The former addresses the reason of reason, while the latter addresses only reason.

عقل دفترها کند یکسر سیاه عقل عقل آفاق دارد پُر زماه

The intellect makes books entirely black (with writing); the Intellect of intellect keeps the horizons (the

whole universe) filled (with light) from the Moon (of Reality). (Bk. III, 2531)

Accordingly, harmony or disharmony between reason and religion is rooted in the question of whether religion also contains normative and factual statements as philosophy comprises speculative wisdom and practical wisdom. Do they enjoy the same organization and does philosophy aim at giving a rational base for religion? Or do philosophy and religion have two messages with two different languages such that there is no place for positive statements in religious teachings and religious propositions are only normative in nature and incline towards certain objectives? To reply such questions it is better first to examine whether *reason* in the Qur'ān and philosophy is same, and is it possible to apply a rational approach to explain religious teachings and to demonstrate the truth of religion by philosophical reasoning?

As is known, one of the ways of understanding the meaning of the words of the Qur'ān is to take into account common sense. As a matter of fact, the Qur'ān was revealed with the tone, literature, and meaning of the people of that age, and conveyed its message with the language of the common people. The term reason, or intellect, (*'aql*) and its derivatives are repeated more than fifty times in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān calls people to intellection and studying its verses with the tool of reason.

In order to prove that reason in religious texts is different from that of philosophy, and that it is not possible to understand the realities of religion through reason, it is better to study the different aspects of reason from a philosophical point of view.

The Intellect of Philosophy

Philosophers consider the intellect to be of the category of substance and define it as follows: the intellect is an immaterial substance, abstract from matter and its attributes, and is removed

from sensible phenomena, and its function is comprehension and intellection. The intellect passes through the following four stages:

1. *Intellectus Materialis*: This is a substance that has achieved all animal perfections and all its animal faculties also are actual. But its human perfections and intellectual perceptions are merely potential, though it is possible to actualize them through education.

2. *Intellectus in Habitu*: At this stage the soul is a substance, but is stronger and higher than the *intellectus materialis*, for at this stage a part of the perceptive power of man comes in act gradually becomes actual. At this stage the soul can perceive self-evident and universal truths, such as the law of non-contradiction, and the law of causation. Reason at this stage is not able to draw logical inferences and rational conclusions through syllogisms.

3. *Intellectus in Actu*: At this stage the soul is endowed with intellectual power and deduction and is able to deal with highly technical and logical issues and to resolve scientific problems. One who enjoys such reason is called a real scholar. Reason at this stage is no doubt fully actual, but there is a possibility of error as well.

4. *The Acquired Intellect*: At this stage the soul is free from any dust that may blur the eye of the mind and merges in strong comprehension of pure intelligibles to the extent that no power can direct it towards the sensible and divert it from the conception of the intelligible. This stage is the culmination of the perfection of reason and actuality of man.³

There is no doubt that foregoing definition and classification of reason is rooted, as Muṭahhari states, in Greek and Alexandrine philosophy which later was used in Islamic culture as well. Philosophers like Abū Rayhān Birūnī, in his debate with Ibn Sinā, never accepts such a concept of reason and criticizes it, for Aristotle advocates the principle of act and potency in nature and believes in similar stages about the intellect as well. This view opposed the following two views, one is that of Plato, and the other one is that of the materialists. The former believes in the existence of the

world of Forms, and the existence of soul before the creation of the body. The latter maintains that intellection is nothing but the reaction of the body or soul. That is, when we start thinking, a kind of sketch would appear in our brain and nothing else.

The late Muḥammad Taqī Majlisi severely criticizes the philosophers for maintaining that reason is an immaterial substance and he is of the view that such an idea would lead us to deny certain necessities of religion, including the idea of the temporal creation of the world.⁴

Reason in the Qur'ān and Sunnah

The word reason, or intellect (*'aql*) and its derivatives are repeated more than fifty times in the Qur'ān and more than thirty verses of the Qur'ān call human beings to contemplation, reflection, and intellection. At the same time, none of them deals with the essence and reality of reason. What we can understand from those verses is that God has bestowed upon man the ability to ascertain evil from good and the false from truth. And every man necessarily is aware of this fact through immediate knowledge, and God wills that such reality should attach to His sign so that the principle Reality who is the creator of being is known and worshipped, and in this way that permanent values also may be revived. It is related that *reason is an entity through which God would be worshipped and heaven would be gained*.

By viewing the available traditions about reason, we can conclude that reason is a power to perceive good and evil, and to distinguish them, and is a faculty that causes man to keep away from evil and satanic temptations.⁵

In order to clarify the point that reason is not only a philosophical instrument to resolve scientific or philosophical problems, and that the Qur'ān never tries to prove the existence of God through philosophical and logical reasoning, we deem it better to examine this term *reason* from the point of views of pagan

literature first, and then look at it through Qur'ānic verses and the tradition of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The word reason (*'aql*) in the pagan era was a kind of practical conscience and strength of relation and link. *'Iqāl* meant a strong connection, which constitutes the root of the term (*'aql*) reason, and since the Qur'ānic terms are based on common sense, it uses the same words which were used in Arab culture and literature, and pagan poetry.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr is of the view that *'aql* has the same root meaning as do 'religion', and 'religare' which mean to join, that is, to join to reality, something that would attach man to reality and bind him to it.⁶

In the Qur'ān, the word *'aql* is used as a key word and has a specific religious meaning which implies faith, love, and sentiment. The heart, which is the centre of love, relation, and zeal, is synonymous with *'aql*. The author of *Qāmūs al-Lughah* writes: "the heart: the heart or that which is specific to it and the intellect, the pith of a thing."

Regarding the following verse of the Qur'ān: "Most surely there is a reminder in this for him who has a heart" (50: 37) Imam Ṣādiq (a) said: "*has a heart means has an intellect.*"⁷

Farrā' Kūfi (144-207) the author of *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* writes, "Your heart is not with you, means your intellect is not with you."⁸

The Difference Between Philosophical Reason and Religious Reason

Ta'aqqul (intellection) in the Qur'ān does not mean to arrive at some conclusion through certain premises, or to prove a case through a logical procedure in such a way if the conclusion proved to be wrong then at least one of the premises also would be wrong. Rather by *ta'aqqul* in the Qur'ān is meant *tadabbur* (reflection) on affairs. *Tadabbur* is derived from *dabara* which means to pursue a case to reach its end.

The aim of the intellect is to use its epistemological power which is inborn in nature, and follow it up to know the Creator of the world and so to pave the way for faith.

On this basis, the heart, which is considered to be the centre of love and enthusiasm, is juxtaposed to reason, and this sense of reason differs from that reason that aims at arriving at a conclusion through deduction and a major premise and minor premise. Therefore, it seems that unlike philosophy, religion is not going to defend its propositions in a philosophically rational way. For such an approach presupposes all objects of the world as a whole and sets out to defend its propositions philosophically, while Qur'anic reason views the objects of the world individually and considers them as *āyāt* (signs). For instance, regarding the rain that God sends down from the clouds to give life to the earth after its death, the Qur'ān says: "Most surely there are signs in this for a people who would hear" (30:23-24).

Similarly, in referring to ancient cities that were ruined due to the evil doings of their inhabitants, God says: "And certainly We have left a clear sign of it for a people who understand." (30:34-35)

The following verses also are worth mentioning:

"And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes-you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who ponder" (16:67).

"And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His commandment; most surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder;" (16:12).

We can infer from the above mentioned verses that religious reason sees this world as composed of particulars each of which it considers as an *āyah* (sign).

When the word '*aql* (reason) is used in Islamic Philosophy, unlike its meaning that deals with the objects of the world individually and the tendency of the world to turn towards God, it

was replaced by logical reasoning which is devoid of love and gnosticism (*irfān*), and instead of viewing all objects of the world as *āyāt* (signs), it considered them as ends. In other words, practical reason was replaced by speculative reason. In the words of Iqbāl Lāhūrī:

The Qur'ān is a book of action not thought, and the chief aim of the Qur'ān is to awaken the supreme awareness of human beings so they may understand the multifaceted relations they have to God and the world. Owing to this aspect of the teaching of the Qur'ān, when Goethe was viewing the educational aspect of Islam he said: "This teaching never fails..." and there is no doubt that the direct aim of the Qur'ān from the observation, contemplation, and looking at nature is to awaken the awareness of human beings towards something for which nature is the symbol and representative.⁹

Therefore, if it is not possible to defend religion rationally in the sense of speculative reason, the best way to explain the fundamentals and teachings of religion will be through practice, for the content of Qur'anic reason is identical with the content of practical reason. The method of defending religion and proving its propositions is this same practical way, which is the method of pragmatism, that is, the effect of belief on action, and verifying the truth of a belief through action. It is said that Ibn Sinā the well known peripatetic philosopher and commentator on Aristotelian philosophy, is of the view that the origins of religion and philosophy are different. As he says:

"Religion has a fundamentally practical aspect, while the fundamental aspect of philosophy is theoretical. The origin of practical wisdom and its perfection are to be found in the divine law, and the

origin of speculative wisdom is gained through the masters of the divine religions for awareness.”¹⁰

Accordingly, the arena in which a religion is to be tested is the history of that religion which plainly shows its success or failure. There is hardly any person who embraces a religion through philosophical arguments. Abū Dhar, the righteous companion of the Prophet (ṣ), or Bilāl, the devout believer and enthusiastic lover, or Salmān, the sincere seeker of the Truth, none of them ever sought philosophical arguments from the Prophet (ṣ). The only factor behind their sympathetic feeling is the truth in the sayings and the deeds of the Prophet (ṣ). The admirable tradition and ethical life of the Prophet (ṣ) opened a new light and perhaps it is due to the inefficiency of philosophical reason and the success of the practical reason that Imam Ṣādiq (‘a) said:

“Call people to God by other than language, so that they may see piety, and seriousness in worship, praying, and goodness, which are the best proofs for religion.”¹¹

It seems that the arguments of the Imams (‘a) before their opponents were polemic and sentimental rather than logically strong. For instance, a physiologist may disagree with Imam Ṣādiq’s (‘a) views in his discourse with Mufaḍḍal on the proof of God and see some disagreement between religious statements and science. But he should note that Imam Ṣādiq (‘a) was not trying to solve a problem scientifically, rather he was trying to settle the matter with regard to the cultural atmosphere of his time in order to direct the people to right path. So, he never attempted to defend religious teachings philosophically, for scientific or philosophical proofs are changeable and refutable.

Aristotle’s argument of motion for proving the existence of the prime mover which came to the sphere of *kalām*, and the argument of the temporal creation of the world which was accepted by the *mutakallimūn*, both were considered unsound by Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā.

In his commentary of Ibn Sina's *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, Khwājah Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī says:

The *mutakallimūn* argue from the fact that bodies and their accidents each have a temporal beginning to the existence of the Creator... and the natural philosophers, as well, argue from the existence of motion to the Mover.... However, the divine sages will argue from an examination of existence, and that it is either necessary or contingent in order to prove the Necessary... and it is this proof which yields certainty, the proof from the cause to the effect; the reverse of this, which is reasoning from the effect to the cause, perhaps will not yield certainty.¹²

The arguments of the *mutakallimūn* and the philosophers, which take the way of the temporal beginning of bodies and of motion in bodies, are considered by Ibn Sinā as failing to guarantee certainty. He believes that the argument which does yield certainty is that of necessity and contingency, which has been taken as a version of the cosmological argument. He calls this the "proof of the sincere" (*burhān al-ṣidiqīn*), mention of which can be found in various narrations attributed to the Prophet (ṣ) and Imams (‘a). This proof maintained its status for several centuries as the foremost proof for the existence of God. The famous Christian theologian, Thomas Aquinas, employed this proof, and thus it entered into Christian theology. However, after several centuries, the lamp of this rational method gradually grew dim, and the famous sage and gnostic, the pride of the philosophers, Mullā Ṣadrā, mentioned that this proof was incomplete, and criticized it, and he himself used another method to prove the existence of God.¹³

The Rational Defense of Religion in the West

In his book *The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought*, ‘Allāmah Iqbāl Lāhūrī writes that although rationalism in Germany appeared as a supporter of religion, this rationalism soon discovered that the dogmatic aspect of religion is not verifiable. The only way out was to exclude the dogmatic elements of religion from the sacred scripture. By excluding the dogmatic elements of religion, ethical utilitarianism came to the fore, and in this way a rationalism without faith came to dominate.... This was the condition of theological thought in Germany in Kant’s time. Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* showed the limitations of human reason, and in this way he razed the edifice of rationalists to the ground.¹⁴

It was not long before the age of rationalism, which could have constructed rational explanations for all phenomena, was overturned, and other philosophical movements, such as romanticism and reactions against it, appeared.

Henceforth, all philosophical arguments in the West that were based on reason became vulnerable, and similarly most of the theologians and philosophers of religion came to believe that it is not possible to discuss God through rational argumentation. Some of them even stated that it is not possible to defend religious propositions rationally.¹⁵

Soren Kierkegaard, whose ideas inspired the theology of the twentieth century in the West is of the view that we can deal with natural science and mathematics objectively, that is keeping them away from personal feelings, but the chief aim of religion is not to know beliefs or dogmas, but rather to live according to them. He criticizes those philosophers who build up imaginary edifices from their hypotheses without living them. The real aim of philosophical and religious thought is to lead us towards a committed life. If these thoughts fail to help man answer the question, “What is to be done?” then it would be a treachery to humanity. Reason and logic can solve scientific problems, but they fail to help us to understand

God, for God is not an object to be proved. The God discovered by the philosophers is nothing but their own conceptions. The real God can be attained to the extent that He appears as a living factor in our lives.¹⁶

According to Kierkegaard, who is the father of existentialism, religious methods may not correspond to logical and rational methods. For religion does not aim at rational knowledge of an object but is a matter of love and the way of love, so it has nothing to do with reasoning. If it does apply reasoning, then it will be weak reasoning. The problem here cannot be solved by abstract logic alone. Anyhow, he is of the view that it is not possible to pass this stage through the philosophical tradition taken as wide as Plato to Hegel.

According to Kierkegaard, just as formal logic is not able to express and analyse beauty and all arguments are unable to explain the reality of love efficiently, pure reason is also unable to comprehend faith. Anyhow, most Western philosophers since the time of Kant kept this point in their minds, that it is not possible to prove or reject the existence of God logically or rationally. Even mystical philosophers like Bergson and theist existentialist philosophers admitted that it is not possible to provide a rational construction of the principles of faith.

Of course, this is nothing new. Muslim mystics have already expressed more or less the same point. As Rūmi says:

غیر این معقولاتها، معقولاتها

یابی اندر عشق با فرّ و بها

*In Love, (which is) glorious and resplendent,
you will find intelligible things other than these
intelligible things.*

غیر این عقل تو حق را عقلهاست

که بدان تدبیر اسماء سماست

To God belong intelligences other than this intelligence of yours, (intelligences) by which the mediate celestial things are ruled. (Bk. V, 3233-3234)

عشر امثالت دهد تا هفتصد
آن زمان چون عقلها دریافتند
چون بازی عقل در عشق صمد
بر رواق عشق یوسف تاختند

When you gamble away (sacrifice) your intelligence in love of the Lord, He gives you ten like unto it or seven hundred.

Those women (of Egypt), when they gambled away (sacrificed) their intelligences, sped onward to the pavilion of Joseph's love. (Bk. V, 3236-3237)

اصل صد یوسف، جمال ذوالجلال
ای کم از زن، شوفدای آن جمال

The beauty of the Almighty is the source of a hundred Josephs: O you who are less than a woman, devote yourself to that beauty! (Bk. V, 3239)

Kant analyzes religious issues through ethics and is of the view that through ethical experiences it is possible to believe in the existence of God. Our certain knowledge of God is more practical than theoretical. He further says that in no philosophical school is there a rational or philosophical way to arrive at the Necessary Existent. Of course, there is no rational way to disprove it either. Perhaps the reason for this failure is that logic, which provides the basis of philosophy, after many years of dogmatism and surity, has lost its way, and this occurred in 1637, when it was declared that ancient logic, that is deduction, has not helped scientists to discover anything of which they were ignorant, and has played no role in scientific and intellectual movements. Descartes, by writing his

Discourse on Method tried to open a new way to attain truths. Owing to this revolution, the inductive logic of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) arose against the deductive logic which was backed by the church fathers. Finally, Kant exempted reason and philosophy from demonstrating the existence of God, and declared that reason is too weak to shoulder the heavy burden of epistemology. He put some of the burdens of classical metaphysics on the shoulder of practical reason and dealt with the issues of the eternity of soul and the existence of God in the domain of ethics.

When we try to prove the existence of God through ontological argument or cosmological argument or natural argument we come to the conclusion that these theories are misplaced arguments, for soul and God are analytical concepts not synthetic concepts.¹⁷

Apart from Kant's ideas, according to which it is not possible to tread the path of religion by speculative reason and explain religious statements rationally and philosophically, through an insight into religious texts we can also arrive at the conclusion that according to the Qur'ānic verses and *aḥādīth*, reason is not only an instrument of scientific or philosophical knowledge. Moreover, the Qur'ān is not going to propose a scientific and philosophical method, rather the language of the Qur'ān is the language of guidance towards the Creator of being. The Qur'ān considers this world as an *āyah* (sign) and its aim is to direct the attention of people towards the unseen world. In other words, it is possible to tread the path of religious knowledge through intuitive knowledge and practical reason. Without improving practical reason and the ethical aspects of man, it would be difficult to know God. In other words, religious experience is not a matter of knowing but moving.

The authors of sacred books are concerned more with worship and obedience to God than proposing reasons for the existence of God. The faith of the people of the Book is not rooted in any

philosophical argument. Moreover, such attempts hardly ever serve as a method to lead man to believe in religion.¹⁸

It has been narrated from the Apostle of God (ﷺ), "Increase your reason to increase your closeness to God."¹⁹ And Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "When a man's reason increases, his faith also becomes strong."²⁰

As has already been mentioned, reason in religious literature means the heart and constitutes the source of sentiment and feeling and has nothing to do with its logical and philosophical sense which lack love and zeal. The Qur'ān calls those people who deny the Qur'ān and do not believe in any religion, blind men who have blurred the eye of their heart.

"What, have they not journeyed in the land so that they have hearts to understand with or ears to hear with? It is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts within the breasts." (22: 45)

Ibn Abi al-Ḥadīd interprets the phrase from *Nahj al-Balāghah*, "to fulfill the covenant of the nature [with which God endowed man]," by explaining that since the knowledge of God and the arguments for *tawḥīd* (monotheism) and '*adl* (Divine Justice) are proved by natural reason, God has sent His prophets ('a) to lay emphasis on natural reason. And every human being is born with the bases of this nature (*fiṭrah*).²¹

Some Muslim scholars have expressly stated that it is not possible to prove the existence of God through philosophical arguments. In his commentary on Imam 'Ali's tradition, 'Allāmah Majlisi says that Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs wrote a book in which he referred to one hundred and twenty proofs to prove that knowing God is naturally inborn. He further says that experience also supports it, for expert scholars have tried to formulate certain proofs but have been unable to accomplish any more than that with which they had been created.²²

The late Sayyid Ḥaydar 'Āmulī not only takes for granted the inborn *tawḥīd* as an obvious principle, but is of the view that the

creation of all other beings are on the basis of this primordial nature characterized by *tawhīd*. On the concept of primordial nature, intellects and human souls, he says, "And among the reports from our master and guardian Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq ('a) it is narrated that in prayer he said, 'And I ask You by Your *tawhīd* which you have placed in the nature of the intellects and by which you have taken Your covenants and sent your Messengers and by which You have sent down books.'²³

It is in this regard that the issue of knowing God can be considered as the first rational issue, without relying upon or being aided by any philosophical principle.²⁴

If the issues related to the origin and end are based on certain philosophical principles and rational methods, and if religious reason is considered to be the same as philosophical reason, then the opposite conclusion will be obtained.

در کارخانه ای که ره علم و عقل نیست

و هم ضعیف رای فضولی چرا کند

It is perhaps due to the inappropriate interference of reason and science that pagan philosophers in history are not less in number than theist philosophers, for they try to prove the existence of God through the inappropriate use of science, speculation and deductive method.

But the path of the religious leaders, which they have discovered through experience and recommended to those who would tread the spiritual path, is the path of natural inborn reason and vision of the heart, that is, mystical intuition.

جان شو و از راه جان جان را شناس

یار بینش شونه فرزند قیاس

Become spirit and know spirit by means of spirit: become the friend of vision (clairvoyant), not the child of ratiocination. (Bk III, 3192)

خویشان نشناخت مسکین آدمی
زین سبب افتاد در بیش و کمی

Wretched Man does not know himself: he has come from a high estate and fallen into lowlihood. (Bk. III, 1000)

این همه علم بنای آخور است
که عماد بود گاو و اشتر است

All this is the science of building the (worldly) stable which is the pillar (basis) of the existence of (persons like) the ox and the camel. (Bk. IV, 1518)

Normative Reason

From the foregoing discussions we can conclude that the term *reason* in religious texts is normative in nature, that is, it is a value-laden concept and has nothing to do with any method. Indeed, this term does relate to the matter of understanding, but not in a scientific or philosophical sense, for reason in this sense is not able to grasp religious concepts. When a pious man speaks about God, he in fact expresses his inclination and considers God as his Guide. A philosopher takes recourse to philosophical arguments to prove God as the first mover and Necessary Being. He ignores love and worship in his approach and instead uses his own language in speaking about God. Therefore, it can be said that the concept of God in religion is different from the concept of God in philosophy. According to Kierkegaard, "The God of philosophy, like other objects in the world, is the subject of a discussion of its being or of

the negation of its essence, but it is not possible to live with Him.” Even if we mention the name Necessary Existent a thousand times, no love or awe would be brought about. But the God of religion is He to Whom reference is made in the following *āyāt*: “When Allah is mentioned, their hearts tremble”. (8:3 and 22:35), also, “Surely by the remembrance of Allah are the hearts set at rest.” (13:28).

The prophets (*'a*) in their attempt to prove the existence of God speak with the language of the common people, which is the language of our inborn nature. In speaking about God versus his opponents the Prophet Abraham (*'a*) said: “Who created me, then He has shown me the way; And He Who gives me to eat and gives me to drink; And when I am sick, then He restores me to health; And He Who will cause me to die, then give me life; And Who, I hope, will forgive me my mistakes on the day of judgment.” (26:78-83)

Similar to these verses there is a story in Rūmi's *Mathnavi* about the Prophet Moses (*'a*) and a shepherd. A shepherd in this story speaks to his God with his own language and starts wooing Him, but the Prophet Moses (*'a*) tried to change his language into a scientific or philosophical language so God said:

...هرکسی را سیرتی بنهاده ایم
چند از این الفاظ و اضممار مجاز
هرکسی را اصطلاحی داده ایم
ملت عشق از همه دینها جداست
سوز خواهم سوز با آن سوز ساز
عاشقانرا مذهب و ملت جداست

“I have bestowed on every one a (special) way of acting: I have given to every one a (peculiar) form of expression...”

How much more of these phrases and conceptions and metaphors? ... The religion of Love is apart from all religions.

*I want burning, burning: become friendly with that burning!
For lovers, the (only) religion and creed is—God.²⁵*

We are well aware of what is pursued by the reason of faith, what Rūmī calls “the intellect of the throne” (*‘aql ‘arshī*), it is the attainment of certainty by which spiritual tranquility is found and which leads to human perfection. In the history of epistemology demonstrative reason has fallen short of comprehending the truths of faith and finding certainty, and sometimes religious certainty becomes clouded by philosophical disputes and doubts. Fakhr Rāzī was a powerful philosopher and theologian who sought to tread the path of faith through philosophy and theology, but in the end, he remained a skeptic.

اندرین بحث ار خرد ره بین بدی
لیک چون مَن لَمْ یَذُوقْ لَمْ یَذَرِ بود
فخر رازی رازدار دین بدی
عقل و تخیلات او حیرت فزود

If the intellect could discern the (true) may in this question, Fakhr-i Rāzī would be an adept in religious mysteries;

But since he was (an example of the saying that) whoso has not tasted does not know, his intelligence and imaginations (only) increased his perplexity. (Bk. V, 4144-4145)

Divine Names

Many names have been coined for God by philosophers: the First Cause, the Cause of Causes, the Necessary Existent, etc., but none of the Imams or gnostics have used such names. Perhaps the reason behind this is that in the concepts of the names of God there should be an inclination and attraction towards Him, as well. Thus the names *Raḥmān* (the Compassionate) and *Rahim* (the Merciful) are used for God more than other names. The reason is that these names bear some special attraction as compared to other names.

When we use such names we establish in fact a friendly and intimate relation with God.

Commentators on the Qur'ān and traditionalists are of the view that Divine Names are divinely ordained, and names for God ought not to be coined, for it is stated in the Qur'ān: "And Allah's are the best names, therefore call on Him thereby, and leave alone those who violate the sanctity of His names; they shall be recompensed for what they did." (7:180)

Despite his philosophical outlook, the late 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'i was in agreement with the idea that it is not possible to tread on the path of religion through philosophy and logic. In his *Al-Mizān* the 'Allāmah says:

"*Mutakallimun* and philosophers were mistaken when they started applying deductive reasoning and logical arguments to prove religious statements. For the use of arguments in religious normative propositions and in the case of theological issues such as good and evil and reward and punishment it is not possible to use logical concepts such as genus and species. Such fallacies of normative and positive statements progressed to the extent that even logical propositions were used in the dogmas and practical rules of religion. These are some of the misfortunes of such scholars.

In his book *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant also arrived at the same conclusion and stated that pure reason fails to achieve pure reality. However, Rūmī has acknowledged this fact even before Kant as he said: "Reason is the shadow of the Truth, and Truth is like sun." In another place he says that truth is the ruler and reason like a soldier, and when the ruler enters the soldier disappears.

نقل آمد عقل او آواره شد
عقل خود شهنه است چون سلطان رسید
عقل سایه حق بود حق آفتاب

صبح آمد شمع او بیچاره شد
شهنه بیچاره در کنجی خزید
سایه را با آفتاب او چه تاب

*The Desert came: his reason became distraught.
The Dawn came: his candle became helpless.*

Reason is like the perfect: when the sultan arrives, the helpless perfect creeps into a corner.

Reason is the shadow of God: God is the sun: what power hath the shadow to resist His sun? (Bk. IV, 2109-2111)

عقلِ عقل و جانِ جان ای جانِ تویی
عقل کل سرگشته و حیرات تست
... عقل جزوی عقل را بدنام کرد
کام دنیا مرد را ناکام کرد

The intellect of intellects and spirit of spirits, O spirit, is You. The intellect and spirit are created. You are the Sultan.

The entire intellect is in wonderment and awe of You. All existents are at your command. (These lines are not in Nicholson's edition).

The particular intelligence has given the (universal) intelligence a bad name: worldly desire has deprived the (worldly) man of his desire (in the world hereafter). (Bk. V, 463)

Notes

1. *Tarīkh-e Falsafah dar Jahān Islāmī*, Ḥannā al-Fākhūrī and Khalil al-Jar, translated into Farsi by 'Abd al-Muḥammad Āyatī, Vol. 1, pps. 82-83.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 7.

3. *Asfār*, Vol. 9, *Nahayah al-Ḥikmah*, p. 248, Treatise of 'Allāmah Qazvini on the reality of reason, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 1, p.101.

4. *Biḥār al- Anwār*, V. 1, p.101.
5. *Biḥār al- Anwār*, Vol.1, pp. 99-101.
6. The journal *Nāmeḥ Farhang*, No. 12, p.78.
7. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, Vol. 1, p.12.
8. *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 3, p. 80.
9. 'Allāmah Iqbāl, *Iḥiyā-ye Fikr-e Dīnī dar Islam*, tr. to Farsi by Ahmad Ārām, pp. 12-18.
10. The journal of the Faculty of Literature of Tehran University, No. 90, p.57, quoted from the first essay of nine by Ibn Sinā on philosophy and the natural sciences.
11. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, Vol. 12, p. 12.
12. Ibn Sinā, *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, Vol. 3, pps. 66-67.
13. See his *Asfār*, Vol. 6, p. 14 f.
14. 'Allāmah Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p.8.
15. Cf. *God in Philosophy*, tr. Bahā' al-Dīn Khurramshāhī.
16. William Hordden, *Rāhnamā-ye Ilāhiyyāt-e Protistan*, tr. Tahēh Mikailian, p. 97.
17. Albert Awi, *Sair-e Falsafah dar Urupa*, tr., 'Ali Aṣghar Ḥalabī, p. 299.
18. Ian Barbour, *Ilm wa Dīn*, tr., Bahā' al-Dīn Khuramshāhī, p. 261.
19. Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Vol.1, p. 81.
20. *Ghurār al-Ḥikam*, the term reason ('aql).
21. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ-e Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 1, p. 115.
22. Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī, *Mabda' wa Ma'ād*, p. 97.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
25. These are lines taken out of sequence from Book II, lines 1750-1770 of the *Mathnavī*, the story of Moses and the Shepherd, Nicholson's translation, (London: Gibb Memorial, 1977), pps. 311-312.

International Conference: Imam Khumayni and Revival of Religious Thought

The existence of Imam Khumayni was in itself a paragon. His entity became a mirror preserving the rays of religion and gave life to the tradition which he himself had to guide through history – a war between Truth and falsehood.

Scholarly manifestation so glittered in him that for the guidance of masses the candle of his life became a magic lantern to the people. On the way to reach the beloved, people have labored their paces under a heavy weight of simplicity and sincerity upon their shoulders. Thus the dimensions of his existence became an example of good to be followed. And, indeed millions of God seekers found room in the vastness of his embrace where their honor and dignity took a new birth.

To dig a tunnel deep into his thought and bring out the hidden treasures of his blest age, spent in mystic holy war, to blow life into the pristine Islam of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and to put on display the reality of the religious message of Abraham across

the world became incumbent upon all those who sought the heritage of the hoard of his speech.

On the eighth anniversary of the death of Imam Khumayni an international conference was held for the revival of religious thought in Khordād 1376. The sponsors were The Institute for Composition and Publication of the Works of Imam Khumayni.

The following report is a birds' eyeview of this conference.

The Scholarly Committee:

The Scholarly Committee of this conference commenced its formal activities at the end of Aban 1375. The following clergies and scholars extended their cooperation to the committee: Dr. Aḥmad Aḥmadi, 'Abbās 'Alī 'Amīd Zanjāni, Muṣṭafā Mūsawī Khu'inihā, Sayyid Muḥammad Khātami, 'Alī Muḥammad Ḥāziri, Muṣṭafā Delshād Tehrani, Ḥusayn Mustaufi, Mir Ḥusayn Mūsawī, Dr. Najaf Qoli Ḥabibi, Dr. Ḥusayn Zargar and Mrs. Dr. Zahra' Rahnaward. These persons were the permanent members. 'Abbās Manūchehri, Ghulām 'Alī Khoshirū, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Jamshidi and Mrs. Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā'i, Shāyesteh Shari'atmadāri later joined to evaluate the articles. Scrutiny of 130 local essays and 58 foreign essays was also one of the activities of this committee. Amidst the articles 28 local ones and 13 foreign ones were selected for oratory purpose. For publication 48 local essays and 20 foreign essays were chosen. Supervision over the publications and organization of speeches was also another task of the committee. The committee published three books simultaneous to the holding of the conference. These three books are:

1. The first volume of the collection of essays of the conference (around 650 pages).
2. A collection of interviews and panel discussions about revival of religious thought (160 pages).

3. A summary of the essays of the conference.

The opening ceremony of the conference of Imam Khumayni and the Revival of Religious Thought was performed by the speech of Sayyid Muḥammad Khātami, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was Sunday in the 'Allāmah Amini's hall at Tehran University. Mr. Khātami described the sense of 'revival' into two meanings. He said: Revival necessitates the return to the past. Sometimes concomitant with denial of the realities of the day towards resolving the difficulties of time. Sometimes it is tantamount to a return to the reality which although existed in the past; but it is so wide that neither time nor place could confine it. It is the element to transport the present to the future. It provides a strong station in confrontation of the difficulties of time and place.

The President added: Revival of religious thought of which Imam Khumayni was a symbol is of a different kind. Imam Khumayni retreats to the very essence of piety. To him religion is something sacred. Imam tries to gain and avail a strong identity from the sanctity of religion so as to solve the problems of his time. A readiness he wanted to bring so that people could receive the future. The President proceeded: The Imam sanctified on universal level the job he held. One of the distinctions of Imam was his compendious personality.

The President also pointed out that Imam used to attach importance to the values of religion and at the same time he kept the harmony with the republic too.

He further stressed that the prosperity of a man, who is after religion, shall be in the mortgage of the scale of his religiousness and the extent of his moral towards acknowledging the truth. The destiny of man is in his own hands. The success of the Islamic Revolution happened at a time when the values and the experience of the Revolution had created self confidence among the Muslims and given a personality to them. This pushed them to the scene.

With their presence over the spot they were above to announce their entity and demand their rights.

He said that our Revolution was the front force preceding the verbal or conversational movement. Instead of confrontation of civilizations we must propagate the dialogue between the civilizations. We do not conflict. We converse. But there are two handicaps on the way – historical and the agewise. So, he asked the scholars of different sects of Islam and the Divine religions to set aside bigotry and depend on reason, thought and logic to reach the goal of recognizing each other by mutual discussion and discourse.

The Guests of the Conference:

Hundreds of professors, scholars, thinkers, specialists – local and foreign – attended the conference. They took an active part by delivering lectures or reading their essays in the conference. Viewing the importance of the essays we here under give a brief sketch of some of them:

Beyond the Reformation and Revival of Religion

Dr. ‘Abbās Shaykh Shujā’i

Dr. Shujā’i in the beginning of his speech tries to explore the literary meaning of the word ‘religion’ and introduce the dimensions of the sense of this word used in Holy Qur’ān. But in the end he suffices on the contents that wombs the word and contends on what acceptable to the religious people. Then he takes up the word ‘reformation’ to explore its literary and terminological sense. He dwells on the theory of giving system or an organization individually and partly and throughout the changes confined to specific case. It is not a change or movement on a large scale. He pays attention to ‘life’ and ‘revival’ in the literary terms and its

aspects utilized in Qur'ān. Likewise, he never falls short of care to explore the ramifications of this word from the angle of tradition. He concludes that the meaning of revival is to give life to a lifeless thing. Of course, he takes into consideration all the various patterns that can be said about a lifeful and a lifeless being and the degrees or grades relevant to life.

After the introductory stages he dwells on reformation or the revival of religion. He says that the reformation in religious thought is tantamount to correction of mistakes and errors which the religious scholars do have in some of their religious matters. But they are not at a mistake with regards the way or direction of religion. The revival of religious thought means to correct the direction of the motion or the aspect of the march among the religious scholars. To goad them to the path of Truth is a great change in itself which, of course, has its own obligations too. This is a task which can not be performed by all. He refers to two great revivers of Islam. One: Imam Ḥusayn ('a), two: Imam Ṣādiq ('a) He describes the qualifications that a reviver should have. In the end he refers to Imam Khumayni as a reviver of religion in our present age.

Islam, Woman and Feminism in the View of Imam Khumayni

Mrs. Zahra' Rahnaward has written an essay in which she describes and criticizes the above subject. She puts a question as to why the women are not fortunate enough while two modes of thought from two corners of the world have sprung to their rescue. The divine stand preached by Imam Khumaynī and the secular feminism about the women. She dwells on three pivots of feminism – that is, patriarchy, equality and liberty. All these three dimensions she dwells on from the viewpoint of Imam Khumaynī introducing his liberalizing thoughts, in the dominion of theory and

practice which finally have resulted in bestowing the due personality to woman in Iran and worldwide. The author examines different approaches to the feministic argument, that is (1) criticism, (2) equality, (3) freedom, (4) leadership (5) demeanor (6) education. She finally concludes that although in criticism feminism has succeeded to show the historical vices done to women, but since the philosophy that views feminism is not based on the divine dignity, it can not present the way of prosperity and happiness nor could it offer a destiny to woman. On the other hand, Imam Khumayni has produced a fragrance from the blossom of Islam which shows the solutions in which the human dignity of a woman is secured and the status, whether individual or social, is elevated high.

Imam Khumaynī and Various Readings of Islam

Mir Husayn Mūsawī

He spoke about the history of social and theoretical changes in Europe. He referred to the vogue which religion has taken to itself there. He also pointed out the varieties of Islam extracted from the speech of late Imam Khumayni. Those varieties are Islam of bare footed people, Islam of those who are happy and fortunate but without having a feeling of others' pain, Islam of the narrow-minded sanctimonious, the American Islam and the pristine Islam of Muḥammad, the Prophet. He pointed out that the classification of Islam in the said categories is necessary for the constancy and continuity of the Revolution.

All the conceptions about Islam are not equal in value nor do they have equal credit. He stated that without distinguishing. These varieties from each other, it is not possible to continue with the Revolution. He added that we do not sit at the table of negotiations with the religions who raise the banner of the authority of the West. Likewise, we do not have any business with

the ideologies which protect the powers. Today the West and its politicians have no problem with the American Islam. They, of course, have problem with Islam which they name Islam of the fundamentalists.

In the evening of Tuesday the international conference on Imam Khumayni and revival of religious thought came to a close amidst scholars, thinkers and experts – native and foreign – in the ‘Allāmah Amini hall at Tehran University. The son of late Imam Khumayni, Sayyid Ḥasan Khumayni addressed the closing session.

The Imam’s son spoke about the revolution of Imam Khumayni in the third stage of his speech. He said the highly elevated name of the everlasting leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khumayni, shall glitter in the horizon of humanity.

He said: “The name of Imam Khumayni is a cry of ‘Be ready’ of this present generation. The Revolution of Imam Khumayni is a Message that leaks out through a window and seeks air to blow across the globe. It shows the near future in the vast and stintless horizon of Islam. It is the sun, more bright and blazing, keeps the Islamic Revolution ever bright and turns the corner of this earth into a great revolution.

Sayyid Ḥasan Khumayni said that the Islamic Revolution of Iran 1357 has three aspects: political, social and historical. While explaining he went on to say that Islamic Revolution is a political one because it has changed the whole political structure of society from the very foundation. Besides its being a political revolution it is a social revolution too. It has changed the constitutional monarchy into Islamic system based on the high conjecture of the late Imam Khumayni and the guardianship of jurisprudent. Sayyid Ḥasan Khumayni pointed out that in the view of the historical revolution of Imam there lies a better tomorrow in the mortgage of our return to human originality, and the forgotten moral of today’s

society and social piety. This view that holds the world as a farm of the hereafter, life of this world is a prelude of the eternal life.

He further added that the revival of religious thought is the revival of pure nature of human beings. It is a return to the nature of the far reaching message of the historical revolution of Imam. This revolution is still in the beginning of its way. It is incumbent upon us to hold the banner of the revolution high on the pride and honor and to make the real message of the revolution of Iran heard in every corner of the earth.

About Religion and Islamic Revolution and Imam Khumayni – the Thesis

Dr. 'Ali Muḥammad Ḥāziri, chairman of scholarly committee of the International Conference of Imam Khumayni and revival of religious thought, told in the last day of this gathering that since the victory of the revolution a serious and sincere attention towards religion is being seen in the recent two decades. This attention is witnessed in the literary circles and at the university level all over the world. More than 1,200 essays in the various aspects of the subject are written in the foreign magazines. 800 titles of the books are made public in the various fields of the subject. Dr. added that the Institute of Organization and Publication of the Works of Imam Khumayni and the Research Center of Imam Khumayni and the Islamic Revolution is regarded a most important Institute of Research not only inside but outside Iran. This center is very useful source for those who are in the research of Imam Khumayni's thought. He told that in the next coming two years a hundredth birthday of Imam Khumayni will be inaugurated.

The Side Programs

In order to utilize the presence of scholars and authors of the essays a special program was held by the organization of the representation of the Leader in the Medical College of Mashhad. Three writers of the essays, foreigners, and three writers of the essays, native ones, were introduced to the authorities by the Scholarly Committee. Although this was after the close of the conference but they enhanced on the pomp of the celebrations. For the coming years too such side programs could be held.

Philosophy of Religious Thought in Islam and Christianity

by Louis Garudy and George Qanawati

translated from French into Arabic by Farid Jabr and Dr. Şubhi Şālih (Beirut: Dar al-‘Ilm lilmalayin, 1978-1983) 3 vols.,
383+448+464 pp. Reviewed by Sayyid Ḥasan Islāmi

This book, originally in French, is arranged in three volumes. The first volume comprises three chapters and concerns the history and development of *kalām*, and its problems within Islamic culture. The second volume has two chapters which deal with the origins of Christian theology and its common points with *kalām* in Islam. The third volume also contains two chapters on the nature and method of *kalām* and Christian theology, and at the end discusses the future of these two sciences.

This book explains the methods of scholarly defense employed by these two great religions against their opponents. In other

words, this book represents the theological approaches of Muslim and Christian scholars towards their religious teachings.

The present book is neither a history of *kalām* and Christian theology, nor is it a study of the problems of these scholarly traditions, yet there is a sense in which it is both. The main thrust of the book is to examine and explain the method of religious thought in dealing with its problems. In this regard both religions, Islam and Christianity, are treated equally, and regardless of their contents, their viewpoints are taken into account.

The authors wrote the book to respond to one question: How does religion explain and defend its teachings? Then they take the two great religions of Islam and Christianity as examples. Of course, this choice is not accidental, for both religions possess strong theology and great thinkers and enjoy rich culture and glorious history and have produced invaluable books.

Although the authors do not discuss the historical background of *kalām* in Islam or theology in Christianity, in order to reach certain conclusions they deem it necessary to refer to their origins, historical backgrounds, and their developments, albeit briefly.

To begin with, the authors discuss the possibility of a sincere dialogue between the two great religions and maintain that they aim at understanding and comparing rather than antagonizing and impairing. However, it should be kept in mind that focusing on common points of the two religions should not lead us to hasty conclusions, for this could bring in its wake harmful consequences.

Therefor, the authors promise to take three steps in every chapter: (1) to quote from the original texts, (2) to analyze, and (3) to examine.

Then, the authors refer to the novelty of such work and the absence of its background, and are of the view that sympathy is the only way for treading on this road. We also intend to follow them gradually and take a look at its content as well.

The first chapter of the first volume deals with the development

and background of *kalām* in Islam. In this chapter, while pointing to the history of Islam from the beginning to the thirteen century, the authors examine the development of *kalām* during seven periods as follows:

(1). Pre-*kalām* Period. During this period Muslims were confined to the Qur'ān and the explanations of the texts, without heeding to the possible contradiction of certain verses of the Qur'ān and their problems.

(2). Period of Theology. Two important events regarding *kalām* took place in this period: (1) the appearance of political disputes tinged with religious colour, and (2) the transfer of the capital of Islamic government to Damascus.

(3). Period of Debate of Mu'tazilite and Traditionalists and Greek Philosophy. This period with its events effected the future of *kalām*. These events are as follows: (a) the transfer of the Muslim caliphate to the Abbasids which grew into a victory for the Iranians; (b) the emergence of schools of Arabic grammar; (c) the advent of schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*); and finally, (d) the translation of Greek books into the Arabic language. This period bears witness to the growth, development, victory, dominance and ultimately to the decline of Mu'tazilite. They appeared to challenge their opponents with the weapon of freedom, but as they assumed power, they forgot their goal and suppressed their opponents in the most violent manner, and paved the way for the period of hardship which turned against and suppressed them for ever.

(4). Period of the Victory of the Ash'arites. Abū al- Ḥasan Ash'ari was one of the protagonists of the Mu'tazilite, but later became disillusioned with such dogmatic rationalism and tried to bring about a balance between different approaches and in this way to reconcile the rationalists and traditionalists. Since his speech and thought was smooth, he succeeded to attract other schools of thought concerned with Islamic jurisprudence. It should be pointed

out that Ash'ari was an able speaker, but weak in writing. His writings lack careful arrangement and organization. Anyhow, his school introduced three great figures to the world of Islam: Qāḍī Bāqlāni, Imam al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwayni and Imam Ghazzālī.

(5). Ghazzālī's Critique and the Method of the Latter Thinkers. Undoubtedly, Ghazzālī is still at the peak of the history of Islamic thought and can be considered to be the end of a period and initiator of a new period. Heedless of fame and people's criticism, he left his high position in religious office and began his spiritual wayfaring, and made trips to distant lands in search of truth. Then, he returned to the public and started examining the science of *kalām* meticulously, and introduced it as a medicine which is harmful in large doses but useful in small quantities. He critically examined his predecessors and proposed his own method for future generations.

(6). The Period of Stagnation. Ghazzālī's successors forgot his critical spirit and confined themselves to his teachings, and paved the way for the decline of *kalām*. At this stage, *kalām* was developed quantitatively, and *mutakallimūn* involved themselves with writing commentaries on the books of their predecessors. This trend was extended to the point that one of the great contemporary reformers, namely Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh commented that they expelled reason from its place and used the logic of accusing others of blasphemy and corruption and they continued this to such an extent that, like certain earlier religious communities, they claimed that there is disagreement between science and religion. 'Abduh is of the view that this decline took place due to the unfamiliarity of Muslim scholars with the main sources of religion.

(7). Period of Reform. The thirteenth century hijri bears witness to the awareness of Muslims and the reconstruction of their thought. *Kalām* also had the same fate. There are two persons who are considered to be the pioneers of this trend, Sayyid Jamāl

al-Din Asadābādī (popularly known as al-Afghānī), and his pupil, follower, and his colleague, Muḥammad ‘Abduh. Ernest Renan describes Jamāl al-Din as follows: “His independence, sublime morals, and sincerity during our talk made me think that one of the great thinkers like Ibn Sinā or Ibn Rushd who were the representatives of Islamic thought and tradition for five generations, has come into being once again.”

Accordingly, Jamāl al-Din should be considered as a man who revolutionized the general Islamic concepts. Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh was the best person who understood the teachings of Jamāl al-Din and applied them in accordance with the requirements of his time and place. He was the first person who tried and succeeded in the reconstruction of *kalām*, and he wrote a book under the title of *Risālah al-Tawḥīd*. According to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Razzāq, he was the first Muslim scholar of *kalām* who took into account an historical perspective on the development of *kalām*.

At the end, the authors once again look at the whole chapter analytically, and try to interrelate the events and periods mentioned in it.

The second chapter of the book examines the place of *kalām* among the Islamic sciences. In the beginning the authors lay emphasis on the importance of science and the place of scientists in Islamic culture and make a contrast between the Muslim scientists and the Christian scientists in the mediaeval period. A Muslim scientist is respectable among the people because he tries to direct the people towards God; so he is their leader as well.

In this chapter, the authors present Aristotle’s classification of the sciences and consider it as the background for later discussions, then they try to explain the relation of *kalām* with the other Islamic sciences. To this end, they shed some light on Fārābī’s classification of sciences in *Iḥṣā’ al-‘Ulūm*, Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’s classification, Khwārazmī’s classification in *Mafātīḥ al-‘Ulūm*, Ghazzālī’s classification, and those of Ibn Nadīm and Ibn Khaldūn,

then they explain their views regarding the value of *kalām*.

The value of Christian theology, whose task is like that of Islamic *kalām*, is then viewed with reference to the ideas of the church fathers like Augustine, Boethius, Cassiodorus, Moor, Scotus Arius and Thomas Aquinas. These figures developed their own classifications of the sciences of their ages and cleared the place of theology among the sciences.

Following the classification of the sciences in Islam and Christianity and a comparison between them, the authors draw two conclusions: first, the classification of sciences by Christians is based on the principle of real priority and posterity of sciences. But Islamic classifications were sometimes based on the distinction of '*aql* (reason) and *naql* (tradition), and sometimes on the basis of the difference between spiritual sciences and mundane sciences. Second, lack of a clear and distinct criterion for the classification of the sciences grew into the presentation of separate criteria by each person, upon which classifications were developed. Such freedom in presenting the classification of sciences, which were mostly on the basis of the function and role of science, brought them closer to the modern classifications that were developed by Western thinkers like Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer.

This chapter has an appendix in which the place of *kalām* in contemporary Islamic culture is discussed and which contains the current courses of Al-Azhar University. At this university, religious studies are being carried out in four successive stages. There is a primary course (four years), intermediate course (five years), higher course (four years), and specialized course. After completing their intermediate course and entering the higher course, students are free to undertake their specialized course in one of the following colleges: college of Arabic literature, college of *shari'ah*, and college of religious beliefs.

The third chapter is the most important part of this volume, for

which the two previous chapters serve as a prelude.

It is no easy task to trace the issues of *kalām* in ancient sources, but the authors try their best to trace the structure and the body of *kalām*.

The essence of the religion of Islam is summarized in the *shahādatayn* (two testimonies), namely, that there is no god but Allah, and that Muḥammad is His prophet. However, these mottoes are the result of earlier disputes in *kalām*, which later became the departure point for the latter *mutakallimūn* and constituted the central issue of the dogmas of religion. These mottoes, naturally, have some requirements and effects which should be added to the basic teachings of religion. The issue of the reality of faith, *tawḥīd*, *qaḍā'* (predestination), the Qur'ān, the hereafter, belief in the prophets, etc., are the result of inquiry in the concept and requirement of these *shahādatayn* (testimonies).

Besides the internal issues of *kalām*, many *mutakallimūn* were engaged in the defense of sectarian beliefs pertaining to *kalām*. In this regard they wrote many books such as: *Maqālāt al-Islamiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*, written by Ash'arī, *Al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, written by Baghdādī, *Al-Faṣl* of Ibn Ḥazm, and *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* written by Shahrastānī. These books indeed reflect the origin and growth of the issues of *kalām* and reflection on these issues also would lead us to their origin.

It seems that by the advent of the Mu'tazilite and their five principles, *kalāmī* issues found systematic form. Following these issues the further development of *kalām* also took place. Abū al-Ḥudhayl 'Allāf considers the following issues as the main issues of *kalām*: (1) predestination and justice, (2) *tawḥīd* (monotheism) and the divine attributes, (3) the divine promise and threat, (4) names and commandments, etc., and (5) enjoining the good and forbidding evil, prophethood and *Imāmat*. This classification was accepted by others, and later on scholars like Ibn Ḥazm and Shahrastānī endorsed it as well.

The turning point of the history of *kalām* is the use of Aristotelian logic in *kalām* which distinguishes the method of earlier *mutakallimūn* from the later ones. This trend was initiated by Qāḍi Bāqlānī and culminated in Ghazzālī's works.

By applying logic, *kalām* reached its zenith, and the following works were authored: *Al-Muḥaṣṣal*, by Fakhr Rāzī, *Ṭawālī' al-Anwār*, by Bayḍāwī, *Al-Mawāqif*, by Ijī and his commentator Jurjānī, and *Maqāṣid*, by Taftāzānī.

The main thrust of the later scholarly *kalām* was to analyze the issues of *kalām* using philosophical premises. But later on a group of the followers of Ash'ari appeared and diverted *kalām* from its path and founded popular *kalām*. That is, besides the scholarly *kalām*, popular *kalām* also was developed and figures like Sanūsī with his book; *Umm al Barāhīn*, and Laqqānī with his book, *Jawharah al-Tawḥīd* were the pioneers of this trend.

Stagnation, fear and avoidance of philosophy and the elimination of philosophical elements from *kalām* were the characteristics of popular *kalām*.

Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh tried to reconstruct *kalām* and in this way to save it from the static condign of scholarly *kalām* and the triteness of popular *kalām*. Following this move, *kalāmī* issues centered around the following five main issues: (1) *tawḥīd* and its issues, (2) ethical issues and the issue of man's free will, (3) prophethood, (4) The Qur'ān, and (5) Islamic *sharī'ah*.

After stating the outlines of Christian theology in history, the authors embark upon referring sketchily to the main issues of the following great books on *kalām* like *Al-Shāmil*, by Juwaynī, *Al-Bayān 'an Uṣūl al-Imān*, by Ibn Muḥḥam, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, by 'Abd al Qāhir Baghdādī, and *Al-Laṭā'if*, by Ibn Ḥazm. They end this volume with a bibliography which is more than twenty pages.

The second volume starts with the title, *The advent of Christian Theology and its Common Points with Islamic Thought*, which comprises two chapters. This volume deals with meeting points

and the interplay of these two great religions of the world.

In the earlier years of the second Islamic century, according to the authors, *kalām* which was in its formative stage, confronted a Christian theology that was at its seventh century and already taken shape at the hands of the church fathers and its great exponent at that time was St. John Damascene. In the sixth and seventh centuries hijri Christian theology also confronted Islamic philosophy, through which it became aquatinted with Aristotle's works, that is, at that time while *kalām* was opposing philosophy, it had borrowed certain valuable elements from it.

There are two religious methods in Islam and Christianity both of which are called the science of creed and both of them deal with the issues related to God and realities of faith. These two methods, at least at two historical stages confronted each other. We are aware of the course of the development of *kalām* and its methods.

Now, the question is whether the process of the growth of this science was like that of Christian theology, that is, did they have the same problems? Can we assume the same rout for them, to some degree, however modest? If the answer is positive and we succeed in drawing more common points, then we can embark upon a comparison of these two sciences and study the level of their mutual impact.

The first chapter of this volume concerns the first confrontation and its consequences. In this chapter the authors deal with the problems of the growth of these two sciences and try to identify their common points. These two sciences had the same problems and acquired the same methods.

Greek philosophy also had the same impact on these two sciences. However, the Church Fathers distinguish between Aristotle, Plato and Plotinus's ideas, and as a result their idea of Aristotle was different from that of the Muslims. However, during the period of the Church Fathers, there was hardly any difference between philosophy and theology, unless philosophy of atheists.

Such harmony between them yielded some fruits in favour of philosophy.

In this regard the authors refer to two points:

(1) *Kalām* rapidly developed a method for itself and *mutakallimūn* found rational reflection and philosophical contemplation over their problems to be necessary; accordingly, they used philosophy to defend their beliefs.

(2) Unlike *kalām*, for a long time Christian theology was unaware of the difference between its duty and that of philosophy. Therefore, Christian theologians were not able to develop any special method, and Christian theologians later on benefited from Greek philosophy and not only did they not find any dichotomy between reason and faith, but they held that faith is the prerequisite of reasoning.

Now, if we attempt to contrast between these two sciences and verify *kalām* in Islam and Christian theology in the time of the Church Fathers, then we may conclude that *kalām* was more successful, though they were not in the same stage of their development. *Kalām* succeeded to deal with its basic issues and obtained the best methods and paved the way for different schools of thought, though the relation between reason, faith and philosophy is still in obscurity. It should be pointed out that these two sciences did not have the same goals. The Church Fathers were trying to understand mysteries but *kalām* aimed at defending beliefs.

The second chapter covers the confrontation of Christian theology with *kalām* in Islam which took place after four generations, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This confrontation really took place with philosophy rather than *kalām*, a philosophy opposed by Sunni Muslims, and from which some of the great *mutakallimūn* borrowed certain elements knowingly or unknowingly.

The other difference was the place of confrontation, that is, if

the first confrontation was in Damascus, the centre of the Islamic caliphate, this second one took place in the western part of the Islamic lands within Christian culture, i. e., Toledo, Spain and Italy. If the Arabic language in Damascus in the second Islamic century is considered to underlie the transition from Greek, in this confrontation Arabic itself became the main source and Latin became the media of transferring the content of Arabic sources.

Familiarity with the incidents of this period would pave the way for a better understanding of the subject in question. This is the task that was carried out by the authors. The translation movement from Arabic to Latin from the twelfth century onward is one of the important incidents which should be known. The centres for translation were as follows: Toledo, Sicily, and Naples. It was during this period that by the order of Patros (1141) the glorious Qur'ān was translated into Latin in Toledo, though this translation was not devoid of error.

This movement was welcomed very much by Latin scholars; thus, they did not confine themselves to the translation of the Qur'ān, books of hadith, and philosophy, but included the books of other branches of science, such as medicine, astrology, etc.. It should be mentioned that philosophical works were given top priority, for they thought that they could find what they lacked in philosophy.

Accordingly, the first half of the twelfth century is called the period of Ibn- Sinā's presence in the Christian world. Ibn Sinā and Fārābī are considered to be the most creative thinkers. However, Westerners are still willing to consider Ibn Sinā's *Al-Shifā'*, as a copy of Aristotle's work rather than an original work.

Besides translation from Arabic into Latin, translation from Greek to Latin also was started by Gerard of Cremona. This trend reached its zenith in the thirteenth century.

Religious Thought

If theology in a general sense deals only with unseen issues and gives rise to a faith backed by reason, then we can claim that this science, i. e. theology, in the world of Christianity had no opponent at all. Moreover, if we ignore certain stagnated trends, then all of them appear to be unanimous, though they used to discuss the methods and ways of achieving their goals.

In the ninth century until the twelfth century three great church men namely Origen, Anselm, and Abelard made attempts to explain these realities and clarify the relation of reason and faith. Each of these scholars were the representative of a period.

However, it was Thomas Aquinas who succeeded to develop a new approach in Christian theology. It is to be pointed out that he was influenced by Ibn Rushd. In dealing with theological issues it seems that he was familiar with the ideas of the Mu'tazilite and Ash'arites, although he would quote other's views without making any reference to them.

Questions and needs paved the way for a change in Christian Theology. After Thomas Aquinas, this science was developed further, and even in the contemporary period some scholars have tried to reconstruct it on the bases of the philosophies of Descartes and Kant, and moved against their predecessors' tradition.

To the contrary, Muslim scholars in *kalām* were faithful to the tradition of their predecessors. However, a change should take place in the nature of *kalām* aimed at defending religious beliefs, undoubtedly paying attention to the needs and revision of the methods prerequisite for the efficiency and revival of *kalām* and Christian theology.

This volume contains a separate chapter dealing with the thought and beliefs of the Fathers of the Church from the fourth century until the seventh century and covers the history of Christianity and divisions within Christianity, as well as the biographies of their scholars during those periods.

The third and last volume has two chapters, dealing with the nature and the method of *kalām* and Christian theology, and makes a comparative study of them. The first chapter concerns the relation of faith and reason in *kalām* and Christian theology. It also treats the following topics: the relation between philosophy and *kalām* in Islam, concept of faith in Islam and Christianity, faith and *kalām*, the place of reason in Islam and Christianity and the methods of the *mutakallimūn* in dealing with their problems.

The following issues which concern faith are discussed: What is the value of blind faith? What are the constitutive elements of faith (intuitive affirmation, vocal confession, awareness, action, etc.)? What is the relation between the concept of Islam and faith? Can faith be increased or decreased?

Christian scholars consider the concept of faith as a down payment on the unseen. One should first have faith then try to realize its reality, i. e., to understand one must have faith.

This chapter covers the views of scholars of *kalām* on the relation of faith and reason and their limits, and provides examples.

The second chapter of this volume concerns the principle of dialogue and knowledge in the science of beliefs. The main thrust of this issue is to study the sources used by the *mutakallimūn* in their attempts to explain and defend their beliefs. The main sources of the Sunni *mutakallimūn* are as follows: the Qur'ān, *Ḥadīth* and *Ijmā'*. The sources of Christian theologies are: the Bible and the treatises written by the Fathers of the Church.

The main goal of this chapter is to introduce and analyze the aforementioned sources and different approaches towards these sources and to assess their validity.

In a separate section under the title of 'General Conclusions' the authors try again to look at the past and present condition of *kalām* and Christian theology and outline their conditions to get lessons from them. The main thrust of this section of forty-six pages is that today *kalām* as well as Christian theology remain in

isolation. Today Thomas Aquinas has been replaced by Auguste Comte. Comte's teachings are so influential that some contemporary thinkers try to analyze Christian theology on the bases of the positivistic classification of three periods of philosophy. *Kalām* in the world of Islam also suffers this forlorn state but in a different way. Here two apparently opposing groups are instrumental in this undesirable condition of *kalām*. One group are against any innovation in *kalām*, its problems and methods. They are of the view that the works of the past great *mutakallimūn* still can solve the present problems. They also humiliate the new works. Another group who are familiar with the modern sciences and historical issues, made their utmost effort to explore the ancient and classical texts and Islamic heritage. They held that such attitudes can help us to solve the present problems of the world of Islam. Undoubtedly such an approach is admirable, but the question is one of priority? Today *kalām* faces new problems and objections and its aim is still to defend Islamic beliefs, but it takes recourse to the old sources and repeats the same answers, bringing to light again the dispute between the Mu'tazilite and the philosophers.

Today both *kalām* and Christian theology can play their roles, but only provided they revise their problems and methods and take into account their times, that is, they should welcome the new waves in philosophy and thought and keep in mind that to defend religion this will be appreciated more than old problems.

Those problems of *kalām* and Christian theology which today are considered to be permanent and perpetual were new problems and innovations once upon a time. The authors conclude that it is better to clarify the date of these problems and inject new problems into the feeble body of these two sciences to give a fresh breath to them.

Further points on the book

This was a report on the book *Falsafah al- fikr al-dīnī bayn al-Islām wa al-Masihiyyah* (Philosophy of Religious thought in Islam and Christianity). It is an interesting book for students and scholars of this subject. Yet there are certain points to be mentioned as follows:

(1) The authors, particularly at the end of the book, seem to be staunch religious men rather than ordinary Christians. So, they look at *kalām* and Christian theology from this perspective and suggest the same prescription for them, and are of the view that they aim at protecting divine religion rather than their own Christian beliefs. Thus, this section is interesting even for those who are not interested in the history of *kalām* and the related disputes.

(2) The authors are faithful in their quotations and their book is full of references, adding to the value and authority of the book, making it more reliable for the reader.

(3) The authors try to deal with *kalām* and Christian theology in an objective way by relying on undeniable reasons, but in a subtle manner they take Christian theology to be of greater significance.

(4) The book is concise and its language is technical and sometimes complicated to the extent that sometimes it become difficult to understand.

(5) The first volume, which mainly concerns *kalām* is translated into Arabic by Dr. Farid Jabr who is a Christian priest, and the second volume concerns Christian theology and is translated into Arabic by Dr. Subḥī Ṣāliḥ who is a Muslim cleric. Though both the translators checked each other's work and both share the responsibility for the entire book.

(6) The authors willingly or unwillingly have frequently commented about Islam and Islamic sciences which are not devoid of error.

(7) In this book, when they discuss Islam they mean Sunni Islam and ignore Shi'ah Islam, partly this may be due to a lack of access to Shi'i sources, and partly it may stem from the unwillingness of the Western studies of Islam to recognize the Shi'ah.

(8) The Persian translation of this book is being undertaken by the centre for Islamic study and research, which is affiliated to the Office of Islamic Propagation of the Seminary of Qum, and it is hoped that in the near future it will be available in the market.

Notes:

1. The authors and the translators prefer to use 'Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī' and consider him as an Afghānī, but the reviewer considers him an Iranian who was born in Asadābād of Hamadan. Anyhow, it is the reader who should decide.