

CHAPTER VII

THE PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL ORDER

I. UNIQUENESS OF ISLAM

In its social dimension, Islam is absolutely unique among the religions and civilizations the world has known. In contrast to the religions of the world, Islam defines religion itself as the very business of life, the very matter of space-time, the very process of history — which it declares innocent, good and desirable in itself because it is the creation, the gift of God. The very business of life, the very matter of space-time, the very process of history, are in turn declared by Islam to constitute religion. They are piety and righteousness when well conducted, impiety and unrighteousness otherwise. Hence, Islam sees itself relevant to all of space-time, and seeks to determine all of history, all of creation, including all of mankind. What is of nature is innocent, good and desirable as such. Neither piety nor morality can be based on its condemnation. Islam wants humans to pursue what is of nature to eat and drink, to have lodging and comfort, to make of the world a garden, to enjoy sex, friendship and all the good things of life, to develop the sciences and to learn, to usufruct nature, to associate and build socio-political structures — in short, to do all these things, but to do them righteously, without lying and cheating, without stealing and exploiting, without injustice to self, to neighbor, to nature, to history. Islam calls man the *khalifah*, precisely because to do all these things well is to fulfill the will of God.

As we shall see in the sequel, Islam regards the aforementioned goals as the natural objectives of all humans, their basic human rights; and it seeks to guarantee them. On this purpose, Islam found its social theory. The social order, it holds, is necessary if that purpose is to be realized at all. Granting that human association is natural, Islam adds to this quality that of necessity. The social order and its felicity, the *ummah* or *Dār al Salām* (the House of Peace) is the ultimate goal of Islam in space-time. The relevance of the religion of Islam to it is not only crucial, but definitive. Only a tiny section of the law of Islam has to do with

rituals and worship and strictly personal ethics;¹ the larger part of the law deals with the social order. Indeed, even the personal aspects of the law, those which concern the rituals of worship, and the rituals themselves, acquire in Islam a social dimension so grave that denial or weakness of that dimension is *ipso facto* invalidation of them. Some rituals like *al zakāh* and *al ḥajj* are obviously social in their nature and effect. Others like *al ṣalāh* and *al ṣawm* are a little less so. But all Muslims recognize that prayer which does not "imply the cessation of evil" on the part of the worshipper is invalid;² and that pilgrimage which does not "bring social benefits to the pilgrims" is incomplete.³ The social order is the heart of Islam, and stands prior to the personal. Indeed Islam views the personal as a necessary prerequisite for the societal, and regards human character as warped if it rested with the personal and did not transcend it to the societal. It agrees with all the religions which cultivate the personalist values, and recognizes those values (the fear of God, faithfulness, purity of heart, humility, love for and commitment to the good, charity, the whole galaxy of meanings expressed by the traditional term *la bonté chrétienne*, all that Immanuel Kant could have meant by "the good will") as absolutely necessary; indeed, as conditions *sine qua non* of all virtue and righteousness. But it regards them and their pursuit as empty unless their cultivators effectively increase the good and benefit of others in society.

A. UNLIKE THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA

In some religions, particularly Upanishadic Hinduism and Buddhism, the world is regarded as evil, and salvation or felicity is understood as its negation, namely, as freedom from the world. Moreover, these

¹The larger portion of the corpus of Islamic law belongs to *mu'āmalāt* which is obviously social in its purport. If the portions concerning the state, the family, the judiciary and criminal law, which are equally social, are added to *mu'āmalāt*, they would constitute all but a small fraction of the corpus, which deals with rituals and personal ethics.

... إِبْرَءِ الْمَكْلُوءَ تَتَعَنَّى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ... (العنكبوت: ٤٥)

²The *Ṣalāh* prohibits the works of shame and evil, the sinful acts (29:45).

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ يُشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ ... (الحج: ٢٧-٢٨)

³Proclaim the pilgrimage a duty to all. People will come [to perform it] on foot or riding from every corner of the world, that they may achieve benefits provided for them therein (22:27-28).

religions hold salvation to be a personal, individualistic affair, since they define it in terms of states of consciousness which can only be personal. Interaction with the world, with a view to promoting it, and hence in increasing it, intensifying the objectification process within it, is evil. Interaction with the world is tolerated at all when its object is the opposite, namely, achieving total freedom from the world's clutches, from its *karma* (the law of its self-perpetuation), for the subject alone—in Hinduism, or for the subjects as well as others, and hence in missionary activity—in Buddhism. In both cases, the personal dimension is not only primary but constitutive by itself of the whole process of ethics and salvation. On the other hand, the social action of man, whether in the political or the economic field, is essentially evil, for by nature, it is meant to prolong or increase the world, i.e., the biological, material, economic and political life, in short—the world.⁴ If the Hindus have developed a social order—a state, an empire, a civilization, a distinctive human community persisting to this day, they did that in deviation from their Upanishadic vision. If their social order has even found sanction in their religious tradition, it did so on sufferance, i.e., as a compromise with the inevitable, a tolerance of that which Brahman would be better off without. The Buddhists, on the other hand, could affirm and give positive support to the political effort of an Ashoka, for example, as an attempt to help others achieve the desired release from the world. In this regard, the Buddha has organized a social order in the *sangha*, the first community of monks or persons in search of salvation.⁵

B. UNLIKE JUDAISM

At the other end of the spectrum, and no less diametrically opposed to Indian religiosity, is the case of the Hebrews. As they have seen themselves, and had their vision recorded in their scripture, the Torah, they constitute a people apart from mankind. They are God's "sons and daughters," whose special relation to the Creator demands their differentiation from the rest. The revealed law of God applies to them, not to the others. The social order it enhances by its imperatives and prohibitions belongs to them alone. Theirs was a tribalist religion which defined good and evil in terms of tribalist benefit and harm. Their social order

⁴Murti. *The Central Philosophy...* vol. 1, p. 19; Robert Zaehner. *Hinduism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 125-26.

⁵John B. Noss, *Man's Religions* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 5th ed. pp. 126-27.

had a biological base: only born-Jews are Jews, and conversion of non-Jews to Judaism must be emphatically discouraged and kept at a minimum. That is the racism of *jāhiliyah*, without the cult of values, *murū'ah* (courage, chivalry, generosity), attenuating its basic evil. For Hebrew history, as idealized or simply sanctified by the Torah, the prophetic and other literature constituting the Old Testament is, as it is commonly known, full of the very opposites of these values.⁶ Here, with the Hebrews and their descendants, the Jews, survival of the tribe is pursued at any price to honor or justice; and survival of the race, at any price to piety or morality. Even Israel's own holiest social laws—the laws against incest and adultery—are not immune against breach, when continuity of “the seed of Abraham is in question”.⁷

C. UNLIKE CHRISTIANITY

Christianity began as a reaction to this terrible ethnocentrism which, by the time of Christ, had fossilized into dispirited legalism. Necessarily, the call of Jesus was universalist, and personalist or internalist. Indeed, Jesus was so sensitive to the evils of Jewish racism that he got angry at the slight suggestion that his own relatives deserve more because they were his relatives.⁸ This call of Jesus, whose essence is thoroughly ethical (his God and his scripture being essentially identical with those of the Jews) would have developed into a reform movement correcting the exaggerations of the Jews had its adherents remained Semites, i.e., the Palestinians and their neighbors. But, taken over by the Hellenes, the call was transubstantiated into another “mystery religion”.⁹ The transcendent God of the Semites became a “father” in a trinity whose second member was constructed in the image of Mithras and Adonis, dying and rising to provide salvation through catharsis.¹⁰ Jesus' inter-

⁶Isma'il R. al Fārūqī, *Uṣūl al Ṣaḥyūniyah fī al Dīn al Yahūdī*, (Cairo: Ma'had al Dirāsāt al 'Arabīyah al 'Alīyah, 1963).

⁷The younger daughter also had a son, whom she named Benammi (Genesis 19:38).

⁸Jesus was still talking to the people when his mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside, asking to speak with him. So one of the people there said to him, “Look, your mother and brothers are standing outside, and they want to speak with you.” Jesus answered, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” Then he pointed to his disciples and said, “Look! Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does what my father in heaven wants him to do is my brother, my sister, and my mother” (Matthew 12:46-50). This is also recounted in (Mark 3:31-35).

⁹Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 210.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 117, 134: M. John Robertson, *Pagan Christs* (Secaucus, N.J.: University Books, 1911), p. 108 ff; Carl Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and Its Non-Jewish Sources* tr. Robert G. Nisbet (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), pp. 182 ff.

nalism was wedded to the morbid hatred of matter characteristic of Gnosticism; and his critical attitude toward Jewish tribalist politics into a totalist condemnation of the state as such, of all political life. The separation of citizens from slaves and the civil and political impotence of the latter, was the beginning of the doctrine of separation of Church and state. That the Christian Church has achieved political dominion, and a "theory of the two swords" was at one period commonly accepted political theory, but ran against the pristine Christian conscience. That conscience rebelled in the person of Luther and pushed the Church back into the cage its early doctrine had built around it. Today, hardly any Christian subscribes to the Middle Ages theory. Hardly any Christian would agree to give the Church a share in the political life, other than that of the detached critic.¹¹

Christianity today has no theory of society.¹² Its condemnation of space-time, of the political process, its holding of every worldly activity, the social order itself, as futile and irrelevant to the salvific process, precludes it from having a theory, apart from regarding the social order as necessarily evil, standing outside the "order of grace." Even the Church, as far as its worldly existence is concerned (not its eternal existence as body of Christ which is neither of nor in this world) is a transient palliative where charity and faith are the order of the day, but where neither programmatic action nor law are worth the effort; where history itself is irrelevant and devoid of importance. We should recognize that since the Industrial Revolution, Christian thinkers in Europe and North America have increasingly asked for and worked out plans of higher measures of social justice in the name of Christianity. But all their work so far has not shaken Christianity out of its anti-worldliness. Though necessary and highly beneficial to alleviate the miseries of the poor or to inject a sense of morality and justice into the political system, intellectually, their work has been worthless.¹³ What is indeed a reform of the basic premises of the faith which hardly anyone has yet dared to do; namely, the nature of God, the purpose of creation, the nature and destiny of man. Unless this is done, Christian thought will remain at contradiction with itself, whatever advances it may make on blueprints for social justice.

¹¹Karl Barth, *Against the Stream* (London: SCM Press, 1954), pp. 29-31.

¹²Reinhold Niebur, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Scribner's, 1955).

¹³See this author's *Christian Ethics*, pp. 279 ff.

D. UNLIKE MODERN SECULARISM

Evidently, the social system of Islam is the diametrical contrary of modern secularism. The latter seeks to remove the public affairs of society from every possible determination by religion. Its main argument, as the history of secularism in the West has presented it, is that religion is a vested interest of one section of society, the Church, over all others. Since the internal structure and the decision-making process of the Church are authoritarian, and since all society is not therein represented, determination of public affairs by the Church is tantamount to tyranny, a form of exploitation and suppression of the nation by one group. This argument is certainly true of the West where the Catholic Church represented a part of the population, and where religion, namely, Catholic Christianity, established itself as authoritarian, and developed vested interests in competition with the people. Because the Catholic Church was for many long centuries the wielder of the greatest political and economic power in Europe, it was natural for any movement of social, political and economic liberation to assume the form of a struggle against the Church.¹⁴

More recently, secularism has presented its case as the opposition to the determination of public affairs by values stemming from religion, a source which it declares untrustworthy.¹⁵ That source, it is claimed, is irrational, superstitious and dogmatic—charges with which one can sympathize when directed against Christianity and those religions which based their doctrines upon dogma; or when directed against other religions in certain decaying periods of their history. But it is irrelevant to those religions endowed with a natural—i.e., rational—theology which acknowledges the universal validity of the criteria of reason; or to those religions seeking to outgrow their period of stagnation and decay by rational appeal to premises which they present critically, as embodying real humanistic values. In most cases, however, secularism is pursued on superficial grounds claiming its identification with the age of science, with realism and progress while religion is charged with the promulgation of the opposite values—a claim at the farthest possible remove from the truth. Indeed, the claim is in most cases hypocritical since no society

¹⁴For references to the long list of theories and theoreticians who analyzed the Reformation into its social, economic, political, and ethnic components, see: *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, s.v. "Reformation" (I. Theories of the Reformation), vol. 9, pp. 417-418.

¹⁵Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan, 1956).

can claim determination of its affairs by no values at all, or by values totally not derived from its own religious legacy.

II. AL TAWHĪD AND SOCIETISM

To acknowledge that there is no god but Allah (SWT) is to recognize Him as sole Creator, Lord and Judge of the world. It follows from this witnessing that man was created for a purpose, since God does not work in vain; and that this purpose is the realization of the divine will as it pertains to this world in which human life finds its theater. This commits the Muslim to take space and time seriously, since it is his fulfillment of the divine patterns pertinent to that space and that time in which he stands that constitutes his felicity, or his damnation. God has commanded him to act and to do so in cooperation with his fellows. Under *al tawhīd* the life of the Muslim falls under constant monitorship. Allah (SWT) knows everything, and everything is recorded and counts for its author whether for good or ill. God's will is indeed relevant, and His patterns are to be observed. Man's objective therefore ought to be the worldwide actualization of the divine patterns.

In His Holy Book, God commanded: "Let there be of you an *ummah* which calls [humanity] to righteousness, which enjoins the good and forbids the evil. Only such an *ummah* is felicitous."¹⁶ This command is the charter of the *ummah*, creating it as well as giving it its constitution. It is an association of humans for the purpose of actualizing the will of God. It is a cosmic institution, since only through such association does the higher, i.e., moral, part of the divine will become history. Because being moral requires the freedom of the agent, the *ummah* which is an association of moral agents, must be free and open. It is guided in its life by the divine will alone which constitutes its *raison d'être*.¹⁷

وَأَتَيْنَكُم مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةً يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
(آل عمران: ١٠٤)

¹⁶Let there be of you an *ummah* which calls men to good works and prohibits evil. Such are the felicitous (3:104).

كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ...
(آل عمران: ١١٠)

¹⁷You are the best *ummah* brought forth unto mankind, for you enjoy the good works, prohibit the evil and have faith in Allah (3:110).

The divine will has been revealed in the Quran and the *sunnah* of the Prophet (SAAS). It is in nature, empirically or actually, for reason to discover and establish; and it is in nature potentially for the faculties of reason and intuition to deduce or to perceive. Furthermore, the divine will has been figurized in the Arabic language of the Quran, and concretized in the deeds of the Prophet (SAAS). The *hadith* is its form *in percipi*. It has been translated into prescriptions for daily observance by the Prophet (SAAS), his companions (RAA) and the jurists of the *ummah*. Whereas in its normative form the law is divine and immutable, it is in its perspective form always subject to the requisites of justice and equity, to the empirical and spiritual advantage of the individual and the *ummah*.

The *ummah*, therefore, is ruled neither by its rules, nor by its people, the ruled. Both of them are under the law. The ruler is a mere executor of the law. The rules, whether the agent who acts or the patient who suffers the action of others, are instruments of instantiation of the law. The *ummah* is not a legislative assembly; it does not make the law. Nor is the law an expression of the general will of the people. The law is divine. It comes from God. As such, it is supreme. When the Muslim says, "No sovereignty but to Allah," or "Allah is the sole King, Sovereign, Lord, Master," which is the very core and essence of his religious experience, he commits himself to obey the will of God. God, the Sovereign, holds absolute power over all creation. In the *ummah*, the holder of political power is the divine law, not the ruler who merely executes it. Hence, the *ummah* is a nomocracy, a republic where rule belongs to the law. Obviously, the *ummah* is not a "theocracy" since no one may assume the divine post and rule in the name of God. It is not a "democracy," an "oligarchy" or an "autocracy" since nobody, whether the individual, a group or the totality of people, enjoys as such any right to rule. None of them is a source of the law so that it can be said that the purpose of political rule is satisfaction of that person, group, or totality. The *ummah's* existence and action are legitimate when they fulfill the divine commandments. The moment Islamic law is no longer enforced in the *ummah's* affairs, that *ummah* loses its Islamic privilege. It is then ripe for revolution. Indeed, in such a case, revolution is the duty of the Muslim citizens, which should be observed in fulfillment of the divine commandment, "Let there be of you an *ummah*" ¹⁸

¹⁸Ibid.

III. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Realization of the divine will, or actualization of value, requires the *ummah*, i.e., a corporate body of humans held together and moved to action by the divine will. The need for the *ummah* is dictated by the following consideration, all of which flows from the nature of religious experience in Islam.

A. PUBLIC NATURE OF THE ISLAMIC LIFE

In the ethic of intention where moral merit is a function of the self's commitment in its personal moment, and hence of the subject's state of consciousness, there can be no judge other than the subject's own conscience — and God. For, since the matter is entirely personal and subjective, no one knows the purity of the heart, of its motivation and its inner workings, except the subject himself. That is why any social system based on the ethic of intent has to operate on an honor system where the judge is always the person's conscience. The only role which another person may plan in the process is that of advisor. Even where conscience has declared the moral agent guilty and passed a verdict of atonement or compensation, it alone is the judge of the implementation of the judgement. At any rate, the transformation sought is of conscience, in, by and through conscience. Obviously, only conscience is needed to determine the guilt as well as the reform. The real existence of the neighbor, of "other men" is not necessary. Such could well be the "idea" of neighbor or other men, since presence (even if only a hallucination) of this idea in the subject is sufficient to make his will, act or intention, moral. It is otherwise with the ethics of action, where space-time has been disturbed and measurable effects have been wrought which constitute the merit or demerit of the deed. Here, law is not possible; it is necessary, along with its organs of research, legislation, promulgation, a hierarchial judiciary system and an executive machinery. These organs and machineries are constitutive parts and functions of society, i.e., of the *ummah*. This in no way invalidates the conscience which continues to operate as well here as in the ethics of intent. Over and beyond it, the new machinery of society (the legislative, judicial and executive) has to enter the field and govern men's lives; nor men's intentions, but their deflections of the causal nexus of creation, their distur-

bance for better or worse of nature's cosmic equilibrium. Beyond the conscience, therefore, Islam set up the law; and beyond the church and clergyman as elder, teacher and exemplar, it set up the court of law and the state.

B. NEED FOR A REAL-EXISTENT, CONCRETE, SOCIAL FABRIC

It follows from Islam's conception of the moral religious imperative as the transformation of space-time, and of the nature of the *amānah* (divine trust) as a moral value, that Islam is impossible without mankind and the world. It is obvious that a transformation of space cannot take place unless there is space-time and it exists in such relation to mankind, its users, as it does, for unless the earth is usufructed by men, its transformation is meaningless. It cannot take place more than once, and certainly not throughout time as Islam demands, unless the fruits of transformation are consumed by mankind. A toiling, suffering and enjoying mankind is then necessary, one which cannot live or survive without social order.

As for the realization of the moral part of the divine will, it is possible only in the context of human interrelationships such as exist among members of a social order. For the *matériel* of a moral value is precisely the fabric of human relations and inter-human intercourse. Where there is no buying and selling and no exchange of goods and services, for instance, there can be no exercise of equity and honesty, *ipso facto*. Where there is no scarcity, where some human beings do not stand in abundance and others in want, and where nobody suffers and needs comforting, there can be no exercise of charity. Society, then, as we know it today, is the *sine qua non* condition of morality, for it is no more and no less than the context of free individuals interacting with one another and mutually affecting creation in one another's person. *A fortiori*, therefore, society is a condition of religious *falāh*. Conversely, no society can continue to exist, or survive in the long run, without morality. Otherwise, there would be no escape from what Thomas Hobbes called the *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Even a band of bandits has to establish some moral discipline for its members if it is to continue as a band of bandits.

C. RELEVANCE OF AXIOLOGY

Fulfillment of the divine will necessitates knowledge of it. This knowledge is not the same under individualism as under societism, because the divine will itself is not the same in the views of the two ideologies. Firstly, societal pursuit of value produces qualitatively different results from the personal. Under societism, the order of rank of any given value is different because everything has to be reconsidered in light of the interest of the societal whole. From this perspective, new axiological relations obtain between various values; old antinomies may be solved and new ones discovered; and, in fact, new values may be established which could have never been the object of consciousness on the personal level. Secondly, while the ought-to-be depends upon value alone and is indeed only a modality of it, the ought-to-do of value is inextricably connected with the real existential materials it is supposed to transform. A fuller realization of value which is the first desideratum of deontology, may not be possible without consideration of all possible ought-to-do's of that value. Ought-to-do's vary structurally from one theater of realization to another. The societal theater does not mean a mere quantitative increase. Thirdly, because values are transitive, i.e., because they move other persons besides those upon whom they first exerted their moving appeal whenever their realization is public, it would be a definite loss to the total value of the universe if their transitivity is in any way restricted, for group perception and group actualization may issue in the discovery of a "field of causes and effects" which none can fathom *a priori*. Fourthly, there is the benefit of an existential dialectic of vision and fulfillment which far transcends anything theoretical discussion can bring.

IV. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The last group of considerations makes it imperative that the realization of the divine will be societal. Together with the first two axioms of the ethic of action and the real existence of an ongoing social fabric these considerations, as constitutive of Islamic religious experience, imply three major principles affecting the practice, activity or life of Islamic society. These are universalism, totalism and freedom.

A. NO PARTICULARISM

The identification of the divine will with value realizes the latter from all particular bodies usually cognized as normative sources of value, such as tribe, race, land and culture. Since God alone is God, and every other being is a creature, and the two orders of reality are mutually exclusive, all creatures are equally creaturely. This means that the unity of God, understood as unity of truth as well as value, implies that value is value for all, and so, independently of all; that moral obligation and ethical vocation, being predicated of the creature, fall equally upon all. Just as the patterns of God in nature apply to all of creation, thereby making creation an orderly cosmos, so His will for man applies to the whole of mankind. As far as ethical vocation is concerned, any distinction between man and man is a threat to the unity of value and, in consequence, to the unity of God. Value, or the moral imperative, is therefore one for all. Its claim or obligatoriness, its ought-to-be and ought-to-do, cannot be restricted to any segment of humanity.¹⁹

Two consequence follows from this principle for Islamic society. In the first place, Islamic society can never restrict itself to the members of any tribe, nation, race or group. Certainly it can, indeed must, begin somewhere, with somebody. And for a limited time, in a limited way, it can impose any restrictions it likes under considerations of strategy. But it can never close its doors on principle; nor can it ever rest until it has included all mankind. It would have betrayed its very *raison d'être* if it ever hindered any man from joining its ranks. Man's right and title

أَفَأَمْرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: ٤٤) مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِمَّنْ دَكَرَ أَوْ أَنْفَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (الزل ٩٧) إِنْ أَلَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكُ حَسَنَةً يُضَاعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ٤٠) لَّا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ نَجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: ١١٤)

¹⁹Would you command the people to do good works and absolve yourselves from the same? Would you do this while in full possession of the Book? Will you contradict yourself so manifestly? (2:44)... Whoever does a good deed out of faith in Allah, whether male or female, shall be granted a good life and shall be rewarded in proportion to the best of their deeds (16:97). Allah does not deprive anyone of an atom's weight of good deeds he has earned. The reward for good deeds is double. Great reward from Allah awaits good deeds (4:40)... Much of their deliberations are futile, save for the enjoining of charity, a good deed, or peace-making among people. Whoever performs any of these for the sake of Allah and in obedience to Him will be granted a great reward (4:114).

to membership is a natural birthright conferred upon him by his very creatureliness. In the second place, Islamic society must expand to include humanity. It cannot rest until it has done so and succeeded. The society's claim to Islamicity, and hence to legitimacy under Islam, issues from its activist acquiescence to the call of God.²⁰ This call is not merely a call to existence, nor to affluence and the pursuit of personal happiness, nor to an Islamic existence of a number of humans, but a call to transform all men, all space, and all time. Islamic society is both the means and the end. It is the end when it covers it all.

The utilitarian theories of society run counter to the Islamic claim because they represent society as an instrument of material survival, as a means to specialized labor and additional comfort. Though these are certainly elements in the growth of Islamic society, to explain society in their terms is to commit the reductionist fallacy.²¹ The other theories which do not require society to expand on the grounds of "chosen people," race, or language and culture, are relativist; and they contradict Islamic universalism as well as *al tawhīd*.

The two consequences aforementioned have been well understood by Muslims throughout history. The Quranic verse proclaiming all men descended from one and the same pair, asserted that men were constituted into peoples and nations that they may cooperate and mutually enrich one another.²² This and other similar verses have been on every lip,²³ as is the Prophet's proclamation at his farewell pilgrimage: "All men issue from Adam and Adam issued from dust. Therefore, no Arab may claim distinction over a non-Arab except in piety and righteousness."²⁴

ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ
مِّنْ رُّسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ (البقرة: ٢٨٥)

²⁰The Prophet Muhammad believes in the truth of what was revealed to him, and so do the believers. All of them believe in Allah, His angels, books and other prophets. They do not discriminate between the prophets of Allah. Rather, they acknowledge what was sent through them, obey Allah and seek His forgiveness. To Him is everybody's ultimate return (2:285).

²¹Harold A. Larrabee, *Reliable Knowledge* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945), pp. 305-6.

يٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَىٰ
(الحجرات: ١٣)

²²O Mankind, We created you male and female; and We constituted you into peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Noblest among you is the most righteous (49:13).

²³Such are the innumerable verses of the Qur'an which affirm the felicity of those who believe and do good deeds, or of the pious, the righteous, etc, which are exempted from a general condemnatory judgment, or a general derogatory description of all humankind.

²⁴Duwaydar, *Ṣuwar*..., p. 593.

Evidently opposed to these implied principles of Islamic society, tribalism and nationalism are identical in their foundation; though the "tribe" of the one may be far more restricted and smaller than the "nation" of the other. Both claim that value is value for members of one group only because, they argue, it is the group that makes values what they are. It is their source and creator. This view at once entitles every other group to set up its own standard, its own value, if it so wishes; for "groupness" can never be shown to belong exclusively to any one group. Since it is the ultimate criterion, any number of men who constitute themselves into a group may claim the same right. Relativism, therefore, necessarily implies pluralism, and this *ex hypothesi* necessarily implies difference or divergence without supplying an overarching means valid for the contending groups. Here, if the contention is not solved by accidental similarity or identity of the two views, or by voluntary acquiescence of one group to the other, conflict becomes absolutely inevitable. The assumption here is that the group is the ultimate source of its own values, and hence that no standard transcending the group is valid in terms of which the issues and differences between the conflicting parties may be composed. On this very account the conflict is *ex hypothesi* insoluble. If, under his own terms of reference each contender conceives of the conflict as ultimate, there is no resource except *ad baculum*, with the resultant vanquishing or destruction of one by the other. Relativist axiology, however, does not permit any peace even to the victor who has vanquished his opponent, for just as being a cohesive group has enabled that group to establish and defend its case, any members within it has equal right to set itself up as a different group with a different cause. The larger group has no defence against its splinter sub-groups except force. Soon the fabric of society itself falls apart. Rival tribes, or clans within the same tribe—very much like the situation in Arabia which Islam confronted at the turn of the seventh century—would engage one another in endless and hopelessly insoluble conflicts. The history of Europe since the Reformation has hardly been different, though the struggling units were considerably larger.

Under Islam, we may conclude, there can be no discrimination between man and man. Islamic society is open; and every man may join it either as a constitutive member or as *dhimmi* (covenantor). Secondly, Islamic society must seek to expand itself to include mankind, or lose its claim to Islamicity. It may continue to exist as a Muslim community, waiting to be absorbed by another Islamic or non-Islamic community.

B. EVERYTHING IS RELEVANT

The second practical implication of *al tawhīd* for society may be defined as the application of Islamic society's determination to every department, aspect and concern of human living. The will of God, or value, includes all goodness wherever it is to be found; and goodness is certainly ubiquitous, found or capable of being found in all departments of human life. It follows that society ought to seek actualization of the divine will on all fronts wherever it can reach and influence that front for better.²⁵ This does not mean that society does not establish a hierarchy of priorities; and no one would cavil at it devoting a fair portion of its total energies to *al da'wah* (mission), defence, education, or economic development.

Islamic jurisprudence and ethics have conveniently classified human activities into five classes: obligatory, prohibited, recommended, recommended against, and neutral. Islam promulgated public laws, viz., the *sharī'ah*, for the first pair. It projected a model of conduct out of the personalities of the Prophet (SAAS) and his companions (RAA), and taught its men and women to emulate it in their pursuit of the second pair. Further, Islam developed a style of life which it promulgated through folklore, poetry, court pageantry and public functions. Although these measures differ in the degree of coercion and censure they prescribe against the violators, and of praise and respect in favor of the conformers, they are one in their assumption of the relevance of Islam to the activities they govern. Any Islamic society would lose its claim to Islamicity if it were to restrict its activities to any one or two departments of life. In that case, it would degenerate into a public corporation club, or cooperative society whose justification is the satisfaction of one or more economic, social, cultural or political needs of its members. Islamic society is consistent because it is ideological. What it prescribed for itself, it sought to get implemented by the state. Totalism was therefore not only a desideratum for society but an administrative policy for the state (caliphate) as well.

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَفَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمُ الْأُمُورِ (الحج: ٤١)

²⁵Righteous are those who, if given dominion on earth, uphold the *ṣalāh*, pay the *zakaḥ* with good heart, enjoin kindness and prohibit all deeds of evil. To Allah will be the reckoning for all things (22:41).

Such consistency is wanting in Western society because society and state are assigned different roles. Whereas the societies do in fact exercise great power in homogenizing their citizens and acculturating the newcomers, their status is restricted in their exercise of power, largely because of the long history of abuse and struggle between kingship, feudalism, the Church and the masses. In consequence, constitutionalism means for them that political power may be used by the state only to the minimum extent necessary to establish internal peace, to maintain an external defence and to provide the minimum services required by the public welfare.²⁶ Only in very recent times did the concepts arise of a public welfare for the destitute, of recreation and leisure, of control of basic industries and services.²⁷ The basis on which the state's political power was restricted in the past is the principle that the pre-social state of nature is good and hence needs no interference by organized society, or that it is evil and hence needs the minimum power necessary for restraining it.²⁸ The latter view, which is the more common, bolstered its position with the skeptic's claim that the good is unknowable, that all that is given is diversity of desire and moral purpose, and hence that relativism, or *laissez-faire*, is the only alternative to tyranny. None of these bases agree with the Islamic view that all nature is good and innocent; that nature needs to be remolded so as to fulfill the divine pattern; that the divine will, or the good, is knowable through reason as well as revelation; that in this exercise, man may do right as well as wrong but he is responsible for either.

C. RESPONSIBILITY

The third practical implication of *al tawhīd* for society is the principle of responsibility. Totalism is forever exposed to becoming totalitarianism, where regimentation and collectivism rob society's effort of achieving moral value. Another principle is hence needed to guard against such degeneration.

Every man, Islam tells us, is *mukallaf* (charged) with the realization of the divine will. This *taklīf* is based on his natural endowment which

²⁶See this author's analysis of the relevance of Christianity to society in his *Christian Ethics*, chap. VII, pp. 248 ff.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 293-94.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 254-56.

constitutes his *sensus communis* which he shares with humanity. This innate but educable *sensus* is the faculty by which he recognizes his Creator and perceives His will as the ought-to-be of his life. Islam therefore not only declares every man responsible but categorically denies every assumption of non-*taklif* to any being who is neither a child nor clinically deficient. It expects every man to carry his own personal burden in full consciousness; and metes out its respect in proportion to his realization of that responsibility. This follows from the nature of the *amānah*, entrusted by God to man. Certainly God could have created a world in which value is realized as irrefragable, with the necessity of natural law. In fact He did create such a world, namely, nature. Only man He fashioned differently, endowing him with the freedom to realize or violate the divine will and thus enabling him to be responsible for his deeds. This responsibility is of the essence of morality, for wherever it is absent, no deed can have moral value, and the higher, greater part of the divine will will not be realized. Consequently, the divine will would be frustrated; and a God Who suffers frustration is not the One, Transcendent and Absolute God of *al tawhīd*.

Totalist and universalist as it may be, value realization by Islamic society must be responsible if it is to be morally worthy. The Quran has emphasized the personal character of responsibility and denied every possibility of vicarious responsibility, whether for the good deed or for the ill.²⁹ Hence it decreed that there shall be no coercion;³⁰ and required at least every religiously-worthy act to be prefaced by the subject's *nīyah* (personal, internal decision) to take it, as a final proof of its deliberateness, of the subject's responsibility.

Responsibility arises from moral vision, that is, the perception of

... فَمَنْ أَهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَاصِيَتِي لِنَفْسِي... وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَلِنَاصِيَتِي عَلَيْهِ وَأَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكَيلٍ (يونس: ١٠٨)
... وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ... (الاسراء: ١٥) فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ
مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (الزلزلة: ٨-٧)

²⁹Whoever follows the revelation which has just come from Allah is rightly guided. This will be reckoned for him. Whoever goes astray does so at his own cost. I [Muhammad] was not sent to compel you to follow me [but to persuade and warn] (10:108)... Nobody is responsible for the deeds of another (17:15)... Whoever does an atom's weight of good or evil deeds will be judged accordingly (99:7-8).

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ... (البقرة: ٢٥٦) ... أَفَأَتَىٰ تَكْرُهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ (يونس: ٩٩)

³⁰No compulsion in religion (2:256)... Would you [Muhammad] compel the people to believe? [Assuredly not.] (10:99).

values, of their ought-to-be's and ought-to-do's in their proper order of rank. Because men can be coerced to do but never to perceive, moral responsibility provides its own guarantee. When coercion has taken place, responsibility is absent and morality has in fact been violated. But granted value-perception cannot be coerced, it can certainly be induced through teaching, whether by concepts or percepts, through dialectics and through example. This defines the work of Islamic society in these terms: to assist the whole of mankind to perceive and, having perceived, to actualize the values constitutive of the divine will. This is education in its noblest and greatest sense. Islamic society is a school of cosmic size where every effort is calculated to be educative; to the end that the realization of value such education would engender may be responsible and hence moral. For only thus would be the higher scales of the divine will be actualized.

Such are the implications of *al tawhīd* for social theory. In effect, these implications produce the *ummah*: a corporate, organic, civic body, which is not limited to land, people, race, culture; universalist, totalist, and responsible in its corporate life as well as in that of every one of its members; and indispensable for every man's achievement of happiness in this world and the next, for every actualization of the divine will in space-time.