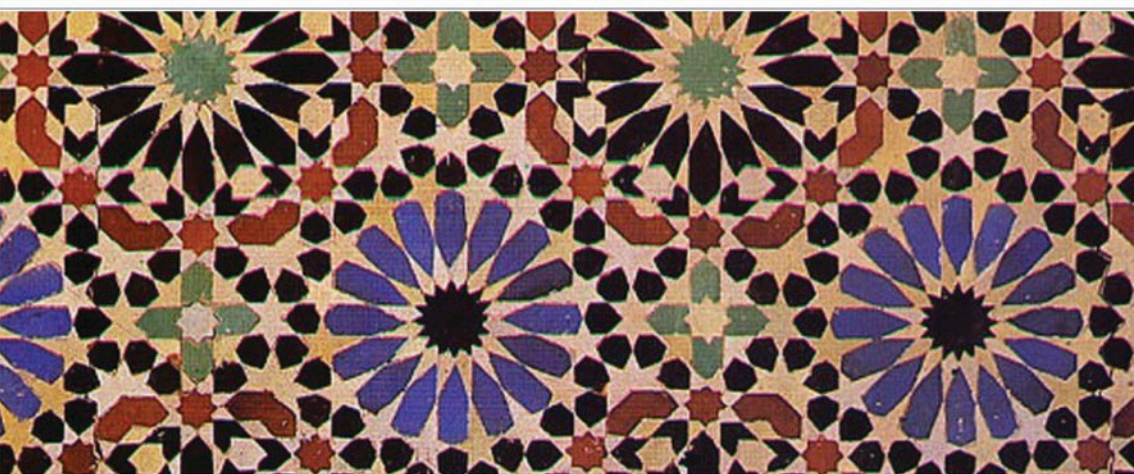


THE CONTEMPORARY ARAB READER ON POLITICAL ISLAM



EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

IBRAHIM M. ABU-RABI'

The Contemporary Arab Reader on Political Islam

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Edited and with an Introduction by
Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'



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Editor's Introduction

Islamism from the Standpoint of Critical Theory

Islamic resurgence is unique as well as universal, because in Islam there is unity with diversity and variation that does not destroy uniqueness. Islam is a universal religion. There is nothing like Arab Islam, Pakistani Islam, Iranian Islam or Turkish Islam. Within Islamic universalism, there is unity but not uniformity.¹

Much of the desolation of the contemporary Muslim panorama is the result of the almost total absence of vigorously independent and devoted intellectuals. There are, however, indications that intellectuals who are true to the worldview of Islam are coming to the fore; but their number is below the critical mass for take-off. However, if the Islamic movement ideologues, who dominate the reformist scene and the Islamization debate, could change a few of their character traits, the number of genuine Muslim intellectuals would swell beyond the critical mass and they could begin to make their presence felt in both Muslim society and contemporary Muslim thought.²

We, as critical theorists, need to make Western audiences aware that Islamism as a political discourse embraces far more than the dogmatic fundamentalism and terrorist violence that dominate in the Western press. It is also a powerful source of critical debate in the struggle against the undemocratic imposition of a new world order by the United States, and against the economic and ecological violence of neo-liberalism, the fundamentalist orthodoxies of which fuel the growing divide between rich and poor.³

INTRODUCTION

Islamism⁴ is a bewildering, multifaceted phenomenon in the contemporary Arab world intent on challenging the post-World War II political order in the region. The articles included in this volume have been written primarily by Arab Islamist thinkers and activists during the past three decades. They present a wide range of views on such issues as the transformation of the New World Order since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s; the impact of this transformation on the Arab world and, specifically, the Islamic movement; self-criticism in the Islamic movement since the 1980s; the current ruling elites in the Arab world; and the present status and active currents of the Islamic movement.

This volume seeks to achieve the following objectives: first, to present Islamist arguments on the issues detailed above and on other subjects, without mediation. In spite of the fact that Islamism has replaced Communism as the

West's public enemy number 1, there aren't many original Islamist writings in European languages. Instead, there is much written by Western social scientists and Orientalists *about* the Islamic movement, in some of which the authors fail even to consult original Islamist sources. The time has come to hear the complex Islamist arguments about history, education, politics, the New World Order, and the future of Islamism from the proponents themselves, so that we can begin to engage with these arguments and, from this foundation, concur or not with the conclusions drawn. Second, the Islamic movement in the contemporary Arab world is the product of local, national, and international factors and causes. We need to understand what is behind its emergence in the modern Arab world, why it has persisted through the past three decades, and whether or not Islamism, in its complex varieties, has replaced the former Soviet Union to become the most significant enemy of the New World Order. Third, we need to understand the social and economic composition of Islamism. Is it a movement of the poor or the alienated middle classes in contemporary Arab societies? In other words, what are the social and economic reasons that make Islamism such a challenge to the status quo in most Arab states? How is it that Islamism is at loggerheads with most Arab regimes? Is it because most of these regimes are secular or un-Islamic, or because they have failed to articulate the Islamist vision of social justice and effect a more or less equal distribution of wealth? Fourth, we need to understand the complex relationship between state and religion in contemporary Arab societies and where Islamism fits in this. In spite of some Western reflection on the matter,⁵ I believe it is important to highlight Arab and Islamist voices of the political elite in the Arab world, their relationship to the international system, and their treatment of the local forces in their societies, notably Islamism. Fifth, these articles prove that Islamism, far from being a passing phenomenon, occupies center stage in intellectual debates about a number of significant issues and challenges facing the Arab world.

At present, most academic discussion about Islamism is critical of the Islamist movement without necessarily succeeding in engaging complex Islamist discourses and their modern historical formations. The events of September 11, 2001 seem to have resulted in an intensification of criticism of the Islamic movement without helping us to understand its arguments, its persistence on the political and social stage in the contemporary Arab and Muslim worlds, and its challenge to the ruling elites. All fingers simply point to Sayyid Qutb, the leading theoretician of Arab Islamism, to the extent that we are led to believe that Qutb, who was executed by the Egyptian regime in 1966, is solely responsible for those tragic attacks on the United States.⁶

Many Western politicians and commentators argue that they do not have a problem with Islam *per se* but do have a problem with what they call "political Islam" or the "Islamic movement." This position is best represented by former US president George W. Bush. However, as Susan Buck-Morss reminds us, "By attempting to silence Islam as political discourse, by reducing it to a religious practice, Bush is in effect closing off public discussion of how the many varieties of Islamism are challenging and extending the discursive field

of political resistance.”⁷ Coming to grips with the conceptual framework of the “many varieties of Islamism” is precisely the major objective of this volume. In Edward Said’s words, we need to understand the many “political actualities” that the “return to Islam” embodies.⁸

Without going into too much detail about the historical origins of Islamism in the modern Arab world, it suffices to say at this point that Islamism emerged in response to the following major factors:

1. The failure of the Pan-Islamic movement of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries to achieve its vision of a total renaissance of the Ottoman Empire, often referred to as “Tanzimat” in Ottoman historiography, and consequently of the Muslim *ummah*.
2. The emergence of a new colonial order in the former Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire, which coincided with the division of the modern Arab world amongst new imperialist masters (mainly French and British).⁹
3. The emergence of nationalism in most of the Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East in the interwar period, the struggle against imperialism, and the Islamist response to or engagement with the various nationalist movements in the Arab world.
4. The rise of the US to world dominance after the end of World War II and the onset of the Cold War.

Modern Islamism was primarily the product of the modern capitalist system created by several Western powers over the past two centuries. From the very beginning, Islamism revolted against the modern Western system and sought alternative ways of imagining and building new Arab and Muslim societies. According to Wallerstein, Islamism “is simply one variant of what has been going on everywhere in the peripheral zones of the world-system. The basic interpretation of these events has to revolve around the historic rise of antisystemic movements, their seeming success and their political failure, the consequent disillusionment, and the search for alternative strategies.”¹⁰ It is only within this historical and political context that we can truly understand the intellectual formulations of modern and contemporary Islamism in the Arab world (or, for that matter, in the entire Muslim world). In other words, the Islamist political imagination, contrary to Olivier Roy’s argument,¹¹ is not driven by the historical events of the distant past (i.e., early Islam) as much as by the events taking place in the modern world, such as the creation of the modern world system, the emergence of imperialism, and the moral and political bankruptcy of most, if not all, of the ruling elites in the postwar Arab world.¹²

Take the issue of reform. A good number of Muslim thinkers have reflected on this from a theological perspective. However, that reflection was never carried out in isolation from the political and social dynamics of the modern Arab and Muslim worlds. That is to say, most Muslim thinkers conceived of theological reform in the context of their response to and understanding of such issues or challenges as imperialism, nationalism, and other social and

economic concerns. This is why the founding texts of modern Islamism in the Arab world (that is to say, the texts of Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad Ghazali, Mustafa al-Sibai', and Taqi al-Din Nabhani) concern themselves with sociopolitical issues in addition to "pure" theological questions and arguments.¹³

It is possible to classify the main intellectual concerns of the Islamic movement under the following major headings: The West, imperialism, and the emergence of the modern world system; nationalism, the nation-state, and modernity; the meaning and reinstitution of *shari'ah* at the present time; the meaning and direction of Salafiyyah in modern and contemporary Islamic thought; the nation-state versus the Islamic state. To a large extent, these issues are deeply intertwined and underscore many of the implicit and explicit arguments of Islamist thinkers.

ISLAMISM AS A RESPONSE TO EUROPEAN HEGEMONY?

Let us carefully examine the following arguments: first, the capitalist world system cannot survive without external enemies, and Islamism has replaced Communism as the new enemy of the West in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second, the current revival and even strength of Islamism is due to the fact that the West considers it as its primary enemy. Thus, the Muslim masses, who have suffered so profoundly from colonialism and its contemporary consequences, rally to Islamism as a movement of the oppressed. As Bobby Sayyid argues, "Islamic fundamentalism is considered to be the vehicle by which many of the victims of the western enterprise seek revenge and redress."¹⁴ Third, Islamism seeks to threaten the status quo, especially the one caused by Western intervention in the Arab world. Fourth, Islamism seeks to claim Islam as "a master signifier," thus widening the conceptual gap between the Western conception of the world and the Islamic one.

The recent policy of waging all-out war against terror, announced by the Bush administration in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, is not all that different in principle from the war the US waged against Communism before 1989. Positing a credible global enemy seems to be one of the hallmarks of modern capitalism.¹⁵ Islamism was born in the Arab and Muslim worlds from the womb of colonialism. It is principally a modern phenomenon that sought to end the chaos unleashed by colonialism and the exploitation of modern Muslim societies. Therefore, its solution was not to re-embodiment an Islamic past as much as to build a modern and aggressive Islamic political and economic system that reflects Islamic ideals.

As noted above, modern Islamist movements were formed in the pre-American world system. European hegemony over the Muslim world before World War II reflected the financial and military power of three major European countries: England, France, and The Netherlands. World War I had not drastically affected the West's control of its colonies throughout the world; that process began to take place after World War II.¹⁶ Dutch rule in

Indonesia came to an end, as did British rule in South Asia and other parts of the world, and French rule in the 1940s and 1950s as well.

So Islamist movements, like nationalist movements, were anti-imperialist in nature—its proponents understood early on that it would be impossible to achieve their political objectives as long as the imperialist hegemonic system was in place. In anticipation of the collapse of the European hegemonic system, the Islamic movements in the Muslim world, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Arab world and the Jama'at-i-Islami of South Asia, seized the opportunity to create an alternative worldview and social and even political institutions in order to combat the effects of the declining European system. In that sense, the Islamist movement's vision of a universal *ummah* was not an idealist proposal as much as an alternative, in Islamic terms, to the world system and its exploitation of the Third World.

The leading ideologues of the Islamist movements, from Muhammad Muntasir in Indonesia to Abu al-'Ala al-Mawdudi in India and later Pakistan, to Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb in Egypt, were driven by a global vision which they translated to their followers in the local idiom; that is to say, in the language of Islamic jurisprudence and theology. The cornerstone of this is the concept of the *ummah* and the necessity of unity at this critical stage in Islamic history.

The West failed to take Islamism seriously from the beginning. Pakistani Islamist Khurshid Ahmad contends that "The West has failed to see the strength and potential of the Islamic movement. It has chosen to denigrate it as fundamentalist, fanatic, anti-Western and anachronistic. It appears that the West is once again committing the fatal mistake of looking upon those who belong to a different paradigm from the prism of its own distorted categories of thought and history."¹⁷ Perhaps this is what caused a leading theorist to argue that "Of the many specters that have haunted western civilization from time to time, perhaps none is so perplexing or so irredeemably strange as the contemporary resurgence of Islam."¹⁸

What is important to underline here is that one must understand modern Islamism in the context of the massive social, economic, political, and structural transformations initiated by modernity since the inception of imperialism. Islamism is one of the major religious and ideological responses to a series of severe transitions and changes in modern Muslim societies. We cannot juxtapose Islamism and modernity or argue in binary terms. Islamism in this sense is a product of modernity and its imposition on the Arab world. That is to say, its presence in the modern Muslim world has been made possible by modernity, although in the final analysis, Islamism hopes to replace modernity as an historical and philosophical system with an Islamic *Weltanschauung*.

The emergence of the US as a hegemonic power in the world system after World War II, the implementation of the Marshall Plan, and the ensuing conflict between the Soviet Union and the US had profound repercussions for Islamic movements throughout the Muslim world. One can summarize these consequences as follows: the polarization of the Arab world into two warring camps during the Cold War; the promotion of authoritarianism in

the Arab world by Western powers to shield Western interests and strategies in the area; the collision of the Islamic movement with different regimes in the above context; and the exploitation of the Islamic movement, or some major segments of it, in the ongoing battle between East and West, especially in Afghanistan.

The collapse of the Soviet system in the early 1990s coincided with the collapse of liberalism as a leading political and economic ideology of the West. As Wallerstein rightly points out, "Liberalism was never a doctrine of the Left; it was always the quintessential centrist doctrine."¹⁹ In the US, liberalism was enshrined in the ideals of the New Deal launched by the Roosevelt administration in the 1930s. The welfare state was the hallmark of this liberalism. Conservative forces in the US in the 1950s tried to undermine the outcome of the New Deal. According to American historian Richard Hofstadter, "The McCarthyist era brought to a head several forces engaged in a long-standing revolt against modernity. The older America, until the 1890's and in some respect until 1914, was wrapped in the security of continental isolation, village society, the Protestant denominations, and a flourishing industrial capitalism."²⁰

Liberalism lost its momentum, especially after the collapse of Communism. The rise of conservative forces began with Reagan and Bush Sr.; these forces capitalized on the fallout from 9/11 and have enabled the conservative bloc in American politics to reinforce American hegemony overseas by military rather than economic or cultural means. One has to agree with Wallerstein that the period after liberalism

is a period of major political struggle more consequential than any other of the past five hundred years. I see forces of privilege who know very well that "everything must change in order that nothing change," and are working skillfully and intelligently to bring that about. I see forces of liberation who have literally lost their breath. They see the historical futility of a political project in which they have invested 150 years of struggle—the project of social transformation via the obtaining of state power, state by state.²¹

There is a lot to be learned from this. Have Islamist movements in contemporary Muslim contexts lost their momentum since 9/11? Have they given up realizing state power? Is it possible for them to survive the global, especially Western, pressure imposed on them since 9/11?

The predicate here is that the situation in the Muslim world, politically speaking, is more depressing than ever. The post-9/11 situation entrenched the role of the military in many Muslim societies; there is a distressing disconnect between the military and civil society in most Arab countries. Civil society in the Muslim world seems to be frozen because of the unprecedented intervention of the military in civilian life. What does this mean for Islamist movements? It means that it is impossible to realize the dream of the founders of the major Islamist movements in constructing an Islamist political system,

and that any serious attempt to do so will bring the Islamist movements into a head-on collision with the military.

It is also important to realize that military regimes, often patronized by the US, pay only lip service to democracy. This is predictable in the absence of sufficient external pressure on them to revise their domestic policies. What this means in effect is that the US and other Western powers have not been sincere in their efforts to disseminate democracy in the Arab world, because genuine democracy would not serve American interests in the region. The establishment of true democracies would deepen dependency on the center and increase oppression at home.

Islamist movements, both moderate and extremist, are at a crossroads. They emerged as anti-imperialist movements after World War II and 70 years later they have still not achieved their vision of an Islamist polity and true social justice. Their story is one of repression by the local elites, who have served more or less as lackeys of the American world system. Therefore, it is critical at this stage to consider in depth the many changes in the world system, understand the rise of conservatism in the center and the entrenchment of the military elite, and to see how civil society in many Arab and Muslim countries has been suffocated. Islamist movements' need to review the objectives and rationales enumerated by their founders, critique them honestly, and come up with alternatives if necessary.

Many think-tanks in the West and university-based research institutions consider Islamist movements to be the primary threat to world security. This has become glaringly apparent since 9/11. This means that the controllers of the world system are indifferent to the inequalities in the world system, the increasing gap between rich and poor in almost every country in the world, including the center countries, and the loss of civil liberties. What they do worry about is how to fight "Islamic terrorism." In his important study of the Rand Corporation, the leading American think-tank, Alex Abella argues that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Rand analysts became obsessed with terrorism. One such analyst was Bruce Hoffman, who

was one of the world's leading terrorism experts, recognized for his contribution to the study of political violence. Two years earlier, in his book *Inside Terrorism*, he had argued that the rise of religious fanaticism, coupled with the increased availability of weapons of mass destruction, foretold an era of great bloodshed.²²

Although some Rand analysts paid attention to the social and economic causes of terrorism, nothing substantial was done to seriously address these matters.

There are huge differences between Islamism and the defunct communist system. Islamism is not a well-unified political system and, in spite of some attempts to institutionalize it in such countries as Sudan, Iran, and Afghanistan under the Taliban, Islamism on the whole has emerged as an opposition movement with a vested interest in changing the status quo.

Globalization has had far-reaching effects in the contemporary Muslim world. Although some of its impact has been positive, it has on the whole weakened the social foundations of society by increasing the gap between the haves and have-nots and has mostly benefited the political elite and their vigilant armies. The tragic attacks on the US have also had extensive repercussions, the most disturbing of which in the context of the Muslim world has been a dramatic increase in the power of the security state and the marginalization of the poor.

MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMISM

There are three main forms of Islamism in the modern Arab world: pre-modern, modern, and contemporary. The Wahabiyyah movement is an example of the first,²³ while the Ikhwān or the Muslim Brotherhood Movement of Egypt and the Arab world is an example of the second,²⁴ and the Jamā'ah al-Islamiyyah and Jihād of Egypt are examples of the third.²⁵ In this sense, at the very least, Islamism is a multifaceted phenomenon.

Where do we begin in our discussion of contemporary Islamism? Is it with the 1967 Arab defeat by Israel or the 9/11 attacks on the US? What are the major differences between the texts of the founding fathers of Islamism, such as Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, and those of contemporary Islamists, such as Rashid Ghannoushi, Fathi Yakan, and Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah? The past three decades have witnessed tremendous changes in the Arab world that cannot be easily summarized. The fact is that since the 1970s, there has been a steady and unprecedented increase in the US military presence in the Gulf.

In addition to discussing its social and intellectual origins, it is important to come to grips with the significant changes within Islamism from the 1980s onward. The 1980s was the decade of *jihad* in Afghanistan, which was supported by numerous powers.²⁶ (See chapters 5 and 6 by Abdullah Anas and Abdullah Azzam respectively.) However, that decade also witnessed the most thorough examination and period of self-reflection on the part of leaders such as Qaradawi, Ghazali, Fathi Yakan and many others (see Part IV of this book). On one level, it is impossible to separate the 1980s from the attacks of 9/11, just as it is impossible to separate the collapse of the Soviet system from the need of international capitalism to create a new international enemy.

It is impossible to understand Islamism's intellectual formulations since the early 1980s without appreciating the nature of political, social, and religious changes in the international system, the Arab world, and the status of the ruling elite in the Arab world. The collapse of Nasserism and the withering of the Arab nationalist project in the 1970s and 1980s left a political vacuum in the Arab world which was quickly filled by the tribal elites of the Gulf states, who were supported by two major factors: oil and the US.

The relationship between the authoritarian tribal elite and the US in specific and the West in general is well known. Suffice it at this stage to refer to the well-argued book by Robert Vitalis on this and related issues.²⁷

However, what is significant in my view is the impact that the collapse of Nasserism and the strengthening of the conservative alliances had on the social structure of Arab society and the religious responses to the shifting foundations of those societies. By “religious responses” I refer not to those of the pro-state traditional *ulama* or religious scholars, since the *ulama* were not in a position or did not dare to mastermind a major political coup against conservative forces in the Arab world in the same way that the Shi‘ite *ulama* in Iran were able to do in the late 1970s. What concerns us is the response of the religious youth, which led to what we now call “extremism” in their ranks in the 1980s and 1990s. There is no doubt that the solidification of the dictatorial state in the Arab world in that period and the increased materialism and avarice of the ruling classes led to a major religious backlash in contemporary Arab societies.

What is more important is that these huge transformations also led to the corrosion of societal institutions and to the unapologetic and unchecked rise of the security state in the Arab world. That is to say, in the eyes of the security state, religious and social questions can be dealt with by police or military means—there is no space in the security state for dialogue, reconciliation, or the redistribution of wealth in the Arab world.

The international alliance to convince tens of thousands of passionate young Muslims to go to Afghanistan to wage *jihad* against the Soviets helped to ease the pressure on the political elites in the Arab world, but only temporarily. One can imagine that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980 was a blessing in disguise for the dictatorial Arab regimes, giving them a chance to improve their image *vis-à-vis* society and spread their new hegemony by sending scores of young people to Afghanistan, where they were hailed as fighters on the path of Islam and God. The same regimes that supported, financed, and armed these young men then hunted them down two or three decades later, particularly in the wake of the attacks on the US.

Those who returned to their countries after the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan were determined to use their newly acquired and *jihadist* military skills against what they saw as the “usurpers of power” in their own countries. The *jihadist* diagnosis of the situation in their own countries was more or less valid; one of the reasons for young men to go to Afghanistan in the first place was so that they could leave the oppressive conditions of their countries behind for a while. However, we must realize that there is an indissoluble link between their *jihad* in Afghanistan and what happened in their home countries. That is to say, the *jihadist* identity was fundamentally shaped by the oppressive conditions in their countries, and their *jihad* in Afghanistan was seen as just a stepping stone in their larger *jihad* against conditions of oppression. Some *jihadists* did not return home, especially the Egyptians from the Jama‘ah Islamiyyah and Jihad; instead they headed for Albania and Bosnia and other places in the world.²⁸ The Afghanistan experience of the 1980s and 1990s, according to the theoretician of Jihad Abu Masa‘ab al-Suri, paved the way for all of these *jihadists* to launch an international movement for *jihad*, which is known as al-Qaeda nowadays.²⁹

The bottom line here is that the security state in the Arab world that supported *jihad* in Afghanistan in the 1980s began to feel its power in the 1990s, and perhaps still does today. On the domestic level, the security state ceased to be ideological; this was true in the case of both Iraq and Syria under the Ba'ath Party. That is to say, the driving force was no longer ideological, as it had been under Nasserism; now it was *survival*, which meant an alliance with international imperialism and the repression of all aspects of civil society in the Arab world.

In the trajectory of the contemporary Islamic movement and its status in the 1980s, we see three broad streams of Islamism: the first is the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, which more or less opted for a truce with the security state and tried to persuade it that elections and democratic means were the best way to resolve the intractable political and economic problems of society. The intellectuals of this trend embarked on a highly sophisticated self-criticism from the 1980s onward, which is discussed in Part IV of this book.

The second stream was a hodge-podge of *jihadist* movements which believed that the best way to change things was through armed struggle against the state and that the situation was quite hopeless. This is represented by the Jihad and al-Qaeda organizations. The third represented the average Muslim, who hoped for a better life.

The 9/11 attacks and the global war on terror conducted by the US and its allies in the West and the Arab and Muslim worlds have placed severe pressure on the Islamic movements. On the domestic level, the war on terror gave the security state in the Arab world a new lease of life. Ideologically, the US was preaching the need to spread democracy in the Arab world. Politically, however, the US bolstered the power elite in exchange for their almost total obedience to the US and its policies in the Middle East. The Arab political elite, divided as they are, have not been able to resist the massive pressure placed on them.

Of course, the 9/11 attacks had direct consequences in the Arab world, one of which was the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks. The invasion of Iraq sent a direct warning to the weak Arab elites that anyone who dares to oppose the US will be destabilized, if not invaded. The second major result was the opening of the can of worms of the relationship between *jihadists* and the state, especially in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia.

In its contemporary manifestations, Islamism seems to be a global phenomenon unrestricted to one country. Islamism in the larger sense also seems to be the concern of Muslims living in both minority and majority situations. In its quest for a suitable place in the contemporary world, Islamism has appealed to the multifaceted and rich Islamic tradition. This appeal has taken ethical, social, political, and sometimes militant forms. In this sense, Islamism cannot be confined to the political arena. There are many Islamist movements that do not concern themselves with politics but with the revival of either community or doctrine in the contemporary era. Because of its appeal to Islam and Islamic tradition, Islamism has a sacred status in the

eyes of some of its adherents and an advantage over its secular opponents.³⁰ Although appealing to a long and established tradition within Islam, Islamism is primarily a modern phenomenon, which has invented Islamic tradition to its own liking. This has given it a backing that no other social or secular force possesses in society. The last point begs the question of the relationship between Islamism and the *ulama* class in contemporary Muslim societies. In this collection, some of the major contributors hail from the *ulama* class in the contemporary Arab world. However, it is important to investigate the status as well as the religious formulations of this class in view of the fact that the ruling elites, however secular and pro-West, cannot do without them. For example, why have the *ulama* in the modern Arab world failed to articulate a revolutionary Islamic vision like the one in Iran in the twentieth century?

Although some prominent *ulama* joined the ranks of Islamism, it was primarily led by lay leaders who envisioned a certain type of Islamic political regime and who came into conflict with the established *ulama* class in their societies (see chapter 29 by Ahmad al-Raysouni). This has been true in North Africa, the Middle East, and the Gulf. In addition, we must understand that due to the enormous changes Muslim societies have undergone in the modern era, the official *ulama* have gained in prestige, contrary to the view that they have been marginalized in the modern nation-state. Once again, this is clearly seen in such countries as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Although the *ulama* and Islamism have both advocated the implementation of *shari'ah*, their visions of constructing contemporary Muslim societies have been sharply at odds.

In the modern era, one can talk about two distinct stages of Islamism in the Muslim world: the colonial and the postcolonial. In the colonial era, Islamism worked along with forces such as nationalism and Marxism to eradicate imperialism. This was the intellectual articulation stage of Islamism, according to Khurshid Ahmad.³¹ However, in most cases, Islamism did not succeed in establishing the political regime it had envisioned. In the postcolonial era, Islamism has had to deal or coexist with all sorts of currents, most notably nationalism, tribalism, and the army.

The nation-state that emerged from colonialism after independence has gone through a multitude of trials and tribulations, not the least of which was the defeat by Israel in the case of the Arab world and the series of coups in Pakistan and Indonesia. The attitudes toward the modernization program adopted by the nation-state seemed to be optimistic in the 1950s and parts of the 1960s. However, in many Muslim countries, hopes for a healthy process of modernization were dashed in the 1960s and 1970s. In the case of the Gulf states, the explosion of petroleum wealth irrevocably changed the social and economic structures and made them more dependent than ever on the international market. However, this explosion also unleashed the forces of "puritanical Islam" in some of these countries and created "militant Salafiyyah," a movement that refuses to coexist with the social and political status quo in the same way that most leading *ulama* did. This has led to the creation of fringe, "militant" Islamist movements, which believe violence is the only means of constructing the envisioned Islamic society and state.³² The

Jihad movement and the Jama'ah Islamiyyah in Egypt are cases in point. Both advocated violence to eradicate "modern Jahiliyyah" at the political, social, economic, and intellectual levels. Although some leaders of these groups hail from bourgeois backgrounds, such as Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Jihad, the rank-and-file come from the impoverished rural and urban areas in Egypt.

What is interesting is that these movements pose a challenge not just to the official *ulama* class but also to the leadership of the mainstream Ikhwān—the movements accusing the Ikhwān of corruption and failure to implement divine law in their thought and practice. That is to say, these movements fought several battles in order to establish themselves amongst the youth: against the state, the *ulama*, and the Ikhwān. However, what is interesting—and this will become clear in chapter 1—is the way these movements have articulated the Islamic problematics in the contemporary Muslim world. In addition to focusing on the domestic front, these movements have had a conspicuous international agenda, and hence their utilization of the Afghan conflict, which they considered a God-sent opportunity.

CONTEMPORARY ARAB ELITES AND ISLAMISM

Most political elite in the Muslim world treat Islamism as a dangerous phenomenon which justifies the use of state violence against it. This security mentality in dealing with Islamism perhaps has something deep behind it: the different expressions of Islamism in the Arab and Muslim worlds are the most popular and would carry any popular election if held openly. Furthermore, Islamism, as opposed to the religious authorities allied with the state, articulates a vigorous interpretation of the Islamic doctrine which finds resonance with youth and the masses. In this sense, Islamism is a major competitor of the "official" interpretation of Islam. The creative reworking of the Islamic doctrine is not confined to abstract theological and philosophical discussion as much as it dwells on the problems and concerns of the contemporary Muslim *ummah*.

It is therefore impossible to understand the resurrection of the tribal elite in modern Islamic politics without grasping their constant efforts to be part of the capitalist system, which has been, of course, made easier by the oil wealth of their countries. In his classic study of the American elite, C. Wright Mills argues that "The American elite often seem less a collection of persons than of corporate entities, which are in great part created and spoken for as standard types of 'personality'."³³ However, in the Gulf states most of the elite come from the family or tribe that exploited religion in order to preserve their own power and enhance their alliances with the capitalist system (see chapter 26 by Muhammad al-Masa'ari).

In their quest to solidify and increase their power, the tribal elite have used religious symbols and the intelligentsia for two reasons: first, because religion plays an important role in tribal society, and second, because the tribal elite in the Gulf would not tolerate any religious rivalry from the most

organized Islamic movement, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Movement. The literature of the Ikhwān before 1952 is replete with attacks on Wahhabism and tribal leaders. The rise of the Islamic movement in the Gulf can be explained by the fact that the alliance with capitalism has fundamentally and irreversibly changed the social, economic, and moral fabric of Gulf societies to the extent that a good number of the religious intelligentsia have become uneasy about the dramatic change in values and the unquestioning alliance with exploitative capitalism.

In addition to seeking the support of the local religious intelligentsia, the ruling elites in many Arab states have sought the support of the West, which, as everyone knows, has a significant vested interest in the region's oil. According to Ankie Hoogvelt,

The core has, of course, economic interests in the oil of the Middle East. But this is only a starting point. In order to access the oil in the past it was in the interest of the oil companies backed by the political power of the imperialist core countries to make deals with local feudal rulers, kinglets, or sheikhs in exchange for concessions for exploration and so on. Now, when one is only interested in a raw material like oil, and not in labor on consumer markets, one's profit strategy at this stage dictates a preference for dictatorships rather than democratic regimes. A sovereign ruler is all that is wanted. *Oil and dictatorship go together.*³⁴

In the Arab and Muslim worlds, by and large, the political elite are suspicious of critical intellectuals and prefer to work with technocrats or professionals willing to go along with the political status quo. Their interest in knowledge is confined to its instrumental and utilitarian uses; their vision of education is that of training students who will be subservient to the political elite.

It is a cliché to argue that Islamism has never been a homogeneous phenomenon in the modern Muslim world. Furthermore, although the capture of political authority is an Islamist aim, a number of Islamic resurgence movements have not been concerned about capturing political authority. Take the example of the Sufi revivalist movements or the Tabligh Jama'at, which have annual gatherings in a number of countries in South Asia that attract several million people. These movements have aided the political elites in their efforts to hold on to power. So Islamism does not only mean political power. Most of the contributors to this book treat the question of power from various angles. While some Islamists, under the impact of the failure of their movements to control power, have renounced political authority as their major goal, many still place the control of political authority at the top of their religious and activist agendas.

On the whole, it is possible to discern three major patterns of Islamic activism in contemporary Muslim societies:

1. Official Islam, which is often allied with the political elite of the country, except in the case of Iran, where the clergy are in power. Official Islam

draws its legitimacy from a number of factors, one of which is its interpretation of the primary sources of Islam, its access to funding from either governmental or endowment sources, as well as from controlling historical institutions in Muslim societies, such as old universities. The primary example of this is Azhar University in Egypt;

2. Mainstream Islamist movements that have kept a measure of independence from the government and that over the years have learned to promote democracy as the only means to participate in government and reform society; and
3. Militant Islamist groups, which are a small minority but which have attracted the most attention both nationally and internationally.

Islamist political imagination is not simply controlled by the paradigm of the first ancestors. As Olivier Roy claims, “[We must] admit that there is an Islamic political imagination dominated by a single paradigm: that of the first community of believers at the time of the Prophet and of the first four caliphs.”³⁵ To my mind, this argument is untenable for the simple reason that there is too much that is contemporary in the Islamic movement to constitute one single paradigm, even if that paradigm was the ideal way of the Prophet and his Companions.

A careful reading of the chapters in this book will serve to enlighten the reader about the many dilemmas the contemporary Islamic movement faces in the Arab world. We must raise the question of whether or not the Islamic movement will ever be able to carry out its Islamist vision—that is to say, to establish an Islamic political system and apply *shari’ah* to fulfill that vision. I think it is unlikely that the Islamic movement will achieve its political goals in the foreseeable future. Rather, it will remain an oppositional force for a long time to come.

STRUCTURE OF THIS BOOK

One of the main objectives of this book is to help the reader come to grips with the conceptual worldview of Islamism as envisioned by its thinkers and ideologues. I agree with Roy’s assessment:

The Islamist movement [in the Arab world] has developed over half a century, beginning more or less in 1940. Concepts have of course evolved, historical circumstances have changed, and splits and differences have brought diversity. Nevertheless, *there are a conceptual matrix and a sociological base common to all groups.* (emphasis added)³⁶

In spite of this, we should remind ourselves that the Arab Islamist movement went into a period of self-criticism and self-doubt in the 1980s and 1990s, especially in the wake of the bloody clashes between the Islamic movement and some of the Arab regimes, notably in Syria and Algeria in the 1980s and 1990s respectively. What that meant at the time is that some major

Islamists changed their mind about the classical formulations of the founders of modern Islamism about the compatibility of state and religion. In effect, some post-1980s Islamist leaders no longer believe in the centrality of politics in Islamist discourse but in the importance of preserving Islamic faith in times of crisis and transition. In that sense, their views are akin to those of the Turkish theologian Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1876-1960)³⁷ (see the chapters 16, 28, and 29 by Rashid al-Ghannoushi, Zaki Ahmad, and Ahmad al-Raysouni, respectively).

In order to undertake serious consideration of the various dimensions of Islamism, I have divided the book into six broad parts: Toward a Theoretical Appreciation of Islamism in the Contemporary Arab World; Islamism, *Jihad*, and Martyrdom; Islamism and the Question of Israel/Palestine; Contemporary Islamism: Trends and Self-Criticism; Islamism, the West, the United States and 9/11; and Islamism in the Contemporary Arab World. The chapters elaborate these themes in a major way and shed important light on the relationship between religion and politics in contemporary Arab societies. In addition to having national importance in almost every Arab country, these themes have an international bearing, and this is a major rationale for why these chapters have been selected.

In Part I, Islamist thinkers shed important light on the internal debates within Islamism about such issues as Wahabiyah versus Salafiyah; reform and *shari'ah* in contemporary Islamist thought; and Islamism and women. Although no woman author was selected for this *Reader*, some of the chapters deal with Islam and women. Part II focuses on *jihad*, violence, and resistance in contemporary Islamist discourse, in both its Shi'ite and Sunni formulations. Part III deals specifically with the Palestine question, Israel, and the US and the Israeli lobby. Part IV deals with the notion of self-criticism within the Islamic movement, a movement that began to acquire momentum in the 1980s, especially in the wake of the assassination of former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat³⁸ and the military confrontation of the Ba'athi's regime in Syria with the local Muslim Brotherhood Movement in the early 1980s.³⁹ Part V deals with the historical topic of the West and the Muslim world with a specific focus on this relationship after the 9/11 attacks. Part VI deals with current manifestations of Islamism as seen in several different Arab countries.

Some of the contributors are Islamist activists, ideologues, and thinkers who have had both a traditional Islamic education as well as a modern one. However, a large number of the contributors have primarily received a traditional Islamic education.⁴⁰ I have in mind the following contributors, each of whom bears the title *'alim* or *shaykh*: Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Muhammad al-Ghazali, Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti, Fathi Yakan, 'Abdullah 'Azzam, Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah, and Umar Abdel Rahman.

It is interesting to read the arguments of these traditional scholars of Islam in order to see why they joined the movement of Islamist politics against that demanded by the state. This should shed important light on the complex relationship between religion and state in the contemporary Arab world, as well as on the relationship between the Islamist *ulama* and the official *ulama*

(those who have sided with the state) in the contemporary Arab world. There is no doubt that such Islamist *ulama* in the contemporary Arab world as Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Muhammad al-Ghazali, and Fathi Yakan are much sought after by those who oppose the state. Official *ulama* have been forced to articulate state views on religion and society; in other words, they are not permitted to cross the line drawn by the state.

Finally, it is important to note that the ideas contained in this book do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, the publisher, or any of the translators, but are presented for the reader to consider according to his or her own intellect and conscience.

TRANSLATIONS

Out of the 33 articles included in this volume, 18 are translated into English here for the first time. The translated articles are the following:

Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti, *Salafiyyah is a Blessed Historical Phase Rather Than an Islamic Legal School*

Ahmad Kamal Abu al-Majd, *Toward a Modern Islamic Perspective: A Declaration of Principles*

Muhammad al-Ghazali, *The Headscarf Battle*

Abdullah Anas, *The Birth of "Afghan-Arabs"*

Abdullah Azzam, *What Jihad Taught Me*

Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah, *Islam and the Logic of Power*

Ramadan Abdallah Shallah, *The Islamic Movement and the Tasks of the Current Period*

Shaykh Umar Abdel Rahman, *The Present Rulers and Islam*

Sami al-Aryan, *The Islamic Movement's Performance in Crisis: Assessment and Strategic Outlook*

Mounir Shafiq, *On Modernity, Liberalism, and Islamism*

Kamal Habib, *The Islamic Movement's Approach to Understanding Shari'ah*

Yassir Zaatira, *The United States and Islamism Before and After September 11, 2001*

Fahd al-Qahtani, *Islam and Saudi Paganism*

Muhammad al-Masa'ari, *Definite Proof of the Illegitimacy of the Saudi State*

'Abd al-Qadim Zalloum, *How was the Caliphate Destroyed?*

Ahmad al-Raysouni, *The Moroccan Islamic Movement: Rising or Declining?*

Ishaq al-Farhan, *Toward a Common Arab and Islamic Strategy for the Middle East*

Malik Bennabi, *The Ideational World and its Impressed and Expressed Ideas*

Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti's chapter was translated by Kholoud al-Nounou, Professor of Islamic Studies at the Fath Islamic Institute in Damascus, Syria. All the other chapters, with the exception of Malik Bennabi's, were jointly translated by Zahra Boussalah of the US and the editor of this book. Bennabi's chapter was translated by Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi,

Professor of Islamic Studies at the International Islamic University, Malaysia and a leading authority on contemporary Islamic thought. I would like to thank all the translators for their impressive work in rendering these important pieces into the English language.

NOTES

1. Khurshid Ahmad, "Preface: Islam and the New World Order," in S. M. Koreshi, *New World Order: Western Fundamentalism in Action* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1995), p. 8.
2. Ziauddin Sardar, "Reformist Ideas and Muslim Intellectuals: The Demands of the Real World," in Sohail Inayatullah and Gail Boxwell, eds., *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), p. 113.
3. Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (London: Verso, 2003), pp. 49-50.
4. In this Introduction, I prefer to use the term "Islamism" rather than "fundamentalism" or "political Islam." However, what is important is that we reflect on the notion of whether Islamism is primarily a political or a social movement. I believe that Islamism is both a social and political movement with a clear religious worldview. An elaboration on these ideas is found in Edmund Burke III, "Islam and Social Movements: Methodological Reflections," in Edmund Burke III and Ira M. Lapidus, eds., *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 17-35.
5. See Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Arab World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).
6. See Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Knopf, 2007), and Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 2004). I think the best analysis of the pre-9/11 events is to be found in John Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), and Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, From the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004).
7. Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (London: Verso, 2003), p. 42.
8. Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 60. After 9/11, Said wrote a short piece in which he talks about many 'islams' instead of one Islam. He argues that, "'Islam' and 'the West' are simply inadequate as banners to follow blindly. Some will run behind them, but for future generations to condemn themselves to prolonged war and suffering without so much as a critical pause, without looking at interdependent histories of injustice and oppression, without trying for common emancipation and mutual enlightenment seems far more willful than necessary. Demonization of the Other is not a sufficient basis for any kind of decent politics, certainly not now when the roots of terror in injustice can be addressed, and the terrorists isolated, deterred, or put out of business. It takes patience and education, but is more worth the investment than still greater levels of large-scale violence and suffering." ("There Are Many Islams," in www.counterpunch.org/saidattacks.html).
9. See David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt, 1989).
10. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Islam, the West, and the World," in his *The Decline of American Power: The U.S. in a Chaotic World* (New York: The New Press, 2003), pp. 120-1.
11. See Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).
12. As the chief ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Egypt in the 1940s and 1950s, Sayyid Qutb was mainly concerned about the impact of the West on Arab and Muslim societies. In the words of Roxanne Euben, "Qutb's political thought is an indictment not

- just of Western imperialism and colonialism, the corruption of Middle Eastern regimes, Arab secularist power, or modernity *per se*, but also of modern forms of sovereignty and the Western rationalist epistemology that justifies them.” Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Western Rationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 5.
13. On these founding texts, see Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi’, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996); and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi’, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in post-1967 Arab Intellectual History* (London: Pluto Press, 2004).
 14. Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed Press, 1997), p. 4.
 15. Wallerstein argues that, “One would have thought that the events of September 11 would have shattered the illusions. And no doubt they did so for many. But the Bush administration has been working hard to prevent us from looking soberly at what happened in order to pursue an agenda that predates those events and to use them as an excuse to ram through this agenda.” Wallerstein, *The Decline of American Power: The U.S. in a Chaotic World*, p. 3. See also Richard A. Falk, *The Declining World Order: America’s Imperial Geopolitics* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
 16. Benedict notes that in the process of colonizing the Third World, the “Portuguese and Spaniards arrived in the late feudal sixteenth century, the Dutch in the mercantilist seventeenth, the British in the enlightened eighteenth, the French in the industrial nineteenth, and the Americans in the motorized twentieth.” Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 5.
 17. Khurshid Ahmad, “Preface: Islam and the New World Order,” in S. M. Koreschi, *New World Order: Western Fundamentalism in Action* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1995), p. 11.
 18. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, p. 1.
 19. Immanuel Wallerstein, *After Liberalism* (New York: The New Press, 1995), p. 1.
 20. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 44.
 21. Wallerstein, *After Liberalism*, pp. 3-4.
 22. Alex Abella, *Soldiers of Reason: The Rand Corporation and the Rise of American Empire* (New York: Harcourt, 2008), p. 265.
 23. See Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).
 24. See Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, new edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
 25. See Fouad Zakariyya, *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamic Movement*, tr. Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi’ (London: Pluto Press, 2006). See also Alastair Crooke, *Resistance: The Essence of the Islamist Revolution* (London: Pluto Press, 2009).
 26. John Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).
 27. See Robert Vitalis, *America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).
 28. See Abdel Rahim Ali, *Tanzim al-Qaeda: ‘Isbrun ‘Aman wa’l Ghazw Mustamir [al-Qaeda Organization: Twenty Years and the Invasion is Still Going On]* (Cairo: al-Mahrousa, 2007).
 29. See Abu Masa’b al-Suri, *Da’wat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah al-‘Alamiyyah* (Kabul: Dar al-Ghuraba’, 2004).
 30. See Zakariyyah, *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamic Movement*.
 31. Ibrahim Abu-Rabi’, ed., *Islamic Resurgence: Challenges, Directions and Future Perspectives, A Roundtable Discussion with Khurshid Ahmad* (Tampa, FL: The World and Islam Institute, 1993), 98.
 32. See Amelie Blom, Laetitia Boucaille, and Luis Martinez, eds., *The Enigma of Islamist Violence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

33. C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 15. Mills also says, "Moral distrust of the American elite—as well as the fact of organized irresponsibility—rests upon the higher immorality, but also upon vague feelings about the higher ignorance. Once upon a time in the United States, men of affairs were also men of sensibility: to a considerable extent the elite of power and the elite of culture coincided, and where they did not coincide they often overlapped as circles. Within the compass of a knowledgeable and effective public, knowledge and power were in effective touch; and more than that, this public decided much that was decided." *Ibid.*, p. 245.
34. Ankie Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 195.
35. Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 12.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
37. For a fuller appreciation of Said Nursi's life, see the following works in English: Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989); Camilla Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative* (Bergen: United 1997); Fred A. Reed, *Anatolia Junction: A Journey Into Hidden Turkey* (Vancouver: Talon 1999), and Sukran Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992); Sukran Vahide's *Islam in Modern Turkey: An Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi' (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005); Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', ed., *Spiritual Dimensions of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Risale-i-Nur* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, July 2008); and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', ed., *Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003).
38. The definitive study of Sadat's assassination is Mohamed Heikal, *Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat* (New York: Random House, 1983).
39. On this, see Patrick Seale, *Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988).
40. Roy claims that "most Islamists were educated in a 'Westernized' environment." Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 21.

Part I

Toward a Theoretical Appreciation of Islamism in the Contemporary Arab World

Salafiyyah is a Blessed Historical Phase rather than an Islamic Legal School¹

Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti

It is incumbent on every Muslim man and woman to follow in the footsteps of the righteous ancestors in understanding and practicing both the Qur'an and Sunnah, especially if they are committed to God's Book and the Messenger's guidance. In the Qur'an, God commands the people to obey His Messenger: "And whatsoever the Messenger [Muhammad] gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it]."² On the other hand, the Prophet commands the people to pursue his Sunnah and that of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and to follow the path of the people of virtue, who belong to the first three generations of Islam. The Prophet says: "Beware of innovations in religion since they lead someone astray; instead, people should firmly follow my Sunnah and the path of the Rightly Guided Caliphs." In another *hadith* he says, "The most righteous are my generation, then the next, and then the next." The benefit from this superiority is to follow in their footsteps.

However, embracing a new legal school, called Salafiyyah, which is based on fanaticism, has nothing to do with following the right path, and differs from it in general and particular details. However, is there a difference between this type of belonging [*tamaddhub*] and following the ways of the ancestors?

To start with, the difference is huge. It is akin to our saying Mohammadans or Muslims. As is well known, for a long time Orientalists have referred to Muslims as Mohammadans, which is not acceptable from an Islamic perspective, as well as from the perspective of righteous Muslim life. The term "Mohammadans" gives the false impression that Muslims belong to Muhammad and are committed blindly to his person; however, the term "Muslims" expresses Muslims' submission to God's authority and their acceptance of the divine revelation passed on to them by the Prophet. The Muslims' commitment to the Prophet derives from their obedience to God, and their love of the Prophet is predicated on the fact that he is God's Messenger.

This obvious difference between the terms Mohammadans and Muslims is the same as the difference between embracing Salafiyyah as a legal system and following in the footsteps of the ancestors, or *salaf*. In the former case, embracing the Salafiyyah would mean that the blessed ancestors possessed their distinctive school of thought expressing their character and collective entity, and that anyone following them represents the true form of Islam. In other words, from this perspective Islam would ally itself with this school of thought, adopt its principles, rules, and morals, and fight its enemies.

However, following in the footsteps of the blessed ancestors, without considering them as the founders of a legal school within Islam, means honoring those whom God's Messenger has commanded to honor, those who lived in the first three generations and who were sincere in their belief in God and clung firmly to the Rope of Allah, which stretches out to them. Furthermore, it means following them—the *salaf*—in understanding Islam and imitating them through the *manhaj* (a clear way), which they follow to understand the texts of the Qu'ran and Sunnah and interpret their teachings and rules.

Islam is, in fact, the entity that must be followed, and its divine method in knowledge and understanding is the pillar of its foundation. The pious *salaf*, committed as they were to the divine path of Islam, are our guides to this divine foundation. Their standard, as our predecessors on the path, is measured according to their own commitment to the method and scale of this religion That is the difference between embracing Salafiyyah as a legal school and following the pious ancestors, or *salaf*, as a way of realizing God's Messenger's advice. It is clear that the latter ensues from the divine core of this religion and one of the primary foundations of the Prophet's Sunnah which God's Messenger has invoked, while the former is a theological innovation, not permitted by God, and a form of false consciousness without any historical basis.

The first three blessed generations of Islam never witnessed the emergence of a legal school in Islam called Salafiyyah, distinguishable from other Muslims. However, there was one distinguishing characteristic [in early Islam], which was how best to vie for the righteous application of this religion. Anyone honored with this trait [i.e., of vying in good deeds] became a full member of the Muslim community, regardless of time and place, and came to occupy a high status in this life as well as in the afterworld ...

It is well known that the age of the blessed ancestors had a great many heretical sects in addition to the People of the Book. Although some of these sects belonged to Islam, they deviated from the Islamic creed accepted by the religious scholars of the time. These sects included the Mu'tazilites, Murji'tes, and Kharijites, which in turn split into smaller sects, with each accusing the others of blasphemy.

In addition to these, the age of the ancestors included most of the Muslim masses who followed in the footsteps of the Prophet and his Companions in their understanding of Sacred Scripture and its exegesis. These people were rightly called Ahl a-Sunnah wa'l Jama'ah (the People of Tradition and Community) ... This nomenclature was given to the masses of Muslims because of their commitment to a conceptual method based on close collaboration between reason [*'aql*] and emulation [*naql*] and their understanding of Arabic grammar in the interpretation of the Sacred Text. (The Qur'anic discourse, no doubt, alerted people to this conceptual method.) The best practice of this method was carried out by the Prophet and his closest Companions ...

We have never heard in over 1,400 years of Islamic history that any major religious scholar of Islam ever argued that embracing the so-called doctrine of Salafiyyah would be certain proof of the righteousness of their religious path. So, when did Salafiyyah emerge? This movement has been a seedbed

for theological disagreements in most of the modern Muslim world and has created much noise in Europe, where a good number of people express an interest in understanding and even converting to Islam.

The banner of Salafiyyah was raised in Egypt [in the nineteenth century] during the British occupation of that country and when the Islamic reform movement, headed by both Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh, appeared The reform movement [of al-Afghani and 'Abduh] has had the greatest impact on disseminating the term *salaf* or Salafiyyah amongst the educated classed in the Muslim world, where previously it had had limited circulation.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the term Salafiyyah was freed from its limited theological and scholarly usage and chosen as a title for books and magazines and a name for presses, such as the Salafi Press [al-Matba'ah al-Salafiyyah] and al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, founded by the famous Egyptian thinker Muhib al-Din al-Khatib. From that time on, the term Salafiyyah was widely used, especially for its association with the honor gained by the Islamic reform movement.

At the same time, the Wahhabi doctrine (*madhab*), ascribed to its founder Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab (1703–92 CE), was widespread in Najd and other parts of the Arabian Peninsula. There was a common denominator between the Egyptian reform movement and the Wahhabi doctrine in that both aimed at combating innovations and superstitions, especially those of the mystics. Therefore, the term Salafiyyah was adopted by the leaders of the Wahhabiyyah because of the common thread between the two movements mentioned above. These leaders preferred the term Salafiyyah because they disliked the term Wahhabiyyah, which suggests that this [Wahhabi] doctrine is premised on Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab alone, who asked his followers to change the name from Wahhabiyyah to Salafiyyah. Thereafter, these followers began to promote this new nomenclature in order to prove to others that their Wahhabi thought was not the creation of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahab *per se* but that its history can be traced to the ancestors (*salaf*). That is to say, in their adoption of the Wahhabi doctrine, they wanted to show that they were the true heirs and trustees of the creed, doctrine, and path of the ancestors in their understanding of Islam.

Thus, the term Salafiyyah mutated from a motto raised by the Islamic reform movement of the nineteenth century to a nomenclature given to the Wahhabis in the Arabian Peninsula, who consider themselves to be the only righteous Muslims. They further consider themselves to be the only heirs to and trustees of the ancestors' creed [*'aqidat al-salaf*], who alone understand and practice Islam correctly ...

NOTES

1. Excerpts from Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti, *al-Salafiyyah: Marhalah Zamaniyyah Mubarakah la Madhab Islami* (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 2006). Translated by Kholoud al-Nounou.
2. Q 59:7.

2

The Islamic Movement: Problems and Perspectives

*Fathi Yakan*¹

THE ISLAMIC WORKER'S PERSONALITY AND HOW TO BUILD IT

Islamic workers are in danger. I do not mean that they are threatened by their enemies or because of the machinations of their foes and the conspiracies of those who hate Islam. These dangers, despite their gravity, are nothing compared with the danger of deviation. The Islamic worker is safe as long as he is free from the defects and diseases of his own soul, regardless of how strong his enemies are. It is in this context that we understand Omar Ibn al-Khattab's valediction to the Muslim army:

Pay more attention to your sins than you do to your enemy. Indeed, soldiers' sins are more dangerous to them than their enemy. Muslims are granted victory because their enemy disobeys Allah. You should know that you are accompanied by angels, who record your deeds. So do not do anything that might incur Allah's wrath when you are pursuing His cause.

I say this since I know that at the present time Islamic workers' paths are surrounded by lures and temptations. The *jahiliyyah* of the twentieth century has destroyed every vestige of virtue, goodness, and dignity. It has revealed an ugly, pallid face, which expresses corruption, temptation, and abnormality. The materialism of this age has filled every nose with its odor, so much so that the individual thinks of nothing else, lives for nothing else, and judges everything according to the criteria of this materialism. It has blinded him and has deadened his senses and emotions. "If it had been Our will, We should have elevated him with Our signs; but he inclined to worldly things, and followed his own vain desires. His semblance is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue; if you leave him alone, he [still] lolls out his tongue. That is like those who reject Our signs. So relate the story; perchance they may reflect" (7:176).

Islamic workers must bear this heavy legacy with the best preparation of their faith, morals, and intellects, and with all the strength they may possess, whether ideological or moral.

The Front Lines of Struggle

The most serious threat facing Islamic workers at present is a type of psychological defect in the form of occasional submission to what is often

called “the present reality.” In addition, they are ready to compromise their Islam by accepting half-measures. Quite frequently, this policy of relaxation and neglect even leads some to violate the indisputable principles of the movement and to deviate from Islamic norms of thought and behavior.

We understand the heavy burden and the great responsibilities that await Islamic workers in the present and the future. When we consider the temptations and tests we are facing, we know that their primary and immediate task is to secure the means of preserving their souls and their intellects in order to overcome what might stand in their way.

The Islamic Mentality

The Islamic mentality is one element of the Islamic personality. It is the result of sound Islamic thinking regarding the universe, man, and life. Thoughts, judgments, things perceptible through the senses, as well as supernatural reality, should be subjected to sound Islamic evaluation. In this way, the Islamic mentality will be the ideological basis which reflects Islamic principles and laws in all things.

The Islamic mentality, then, is that mentality which sees everything through the eyes of Islam and assesses all matters by Islamic criteria. For the Islamic mentality, Islam is the criterion for everything, the solution to every problem, and what controls every affair. Perhaps the most important factor that occasionally leads some Islamic workers to go astray is their hazy understanding of Islam as an ideology and Islamic work as a method.

In order to develop the Islamic mentality, the following elements are essential. First, a sound understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which establishes in the Islamic worker's mind the general principles of human life. Second, a comprehensive understanding of the goals of Islamic thought as determining behavior and morals, an incentive to work, as well as a guide for, and shaper of, human behavior for the best in this life and in the hereafter. Islam is not a mere collection of theories and abstract ideals. This will make Islamic concepts positive and practical and have a great impact on the development of the Islamic personality. Third, a sufficient understanding of all aspects of Islamic thought. Too often a shallow understanding of one aspect leads to dangerous deviations. The intellect grows normally as long as it receives a well-rounded education. It stops developing or even becomes stunted if it is neglected or receives an impoverished education.

Dr Sabri al-Gubbani, in the first book of his series *Your Physician with You*, writes:

the mind enjoys diversity of research. It harmonizes and restores its liking for thinking. One type of thinking exhausts it. It is like the ear which dislikes a monotonous tone; or like the muscles of the leg which tire from ascending or descending hills. Thus, we should offer our brains diverse studies to keep them young and active.

We often see that those who devote all their reading to spiritual or literary works tend to like only isolation and introversion. Those who concentrate on pure scientific research and do not offer their intellect its other necessary nutrition may fall victim to nervous fits and psychological depression.

In order to achieve balance and a deep understanding, one's mind should be open to all the knowledge and education life offers, accepting or rejecting it within the framework of sound Islamic thought. The Islamic mentality cannot be purely Islamic unless it sees the world through the eyes of Islam. It thinks and evaluates, likes and dislikes, and draws comparisons in the light of Islamic principles.

The Islamic Psyche

The Islamic psyche, the second element of the Islamic personality, is a reflection of the interaction of the Islamic conception of the universe and its impact on the life of the individual. The individual's inclinations and instincts are closely tied to his concepts and ideas. Thus, the Islamic psyche consists of the manner in which the Islamic worker acts out his instincts, inclinations, and natural needs.

One of the important things that concerns us and that we should include in our curriculum is the transformation of the principal Islamic concepts into behavior. This will strengthen the relationship between the mind and the psyche, and between thought and its application. Islam criticizes separating the two halves of the personality: "O you who believe, wherefore do you say what you do not do?" (61:2). The following steps should be considered in training oneself to observe Islamic directives and legal principles.

Neither Neglect nor Excess

From the beginning, Islam was careful to restore the human soul to its natural inclination through a well-planned and balanced program, which provides the spirit, mind, and body with their natural needs without resorting to self-denial or excess. This should be the basis for training oneself. It should grow in a natural way in which excessive solitude is avoided. Those who neglect the needs of their souls are as wrong as those who neglect the needs of their bodies. The personality of such individuals will never be regulated or balanced according to the principles of Islam.

It is reported that the Messenger of God visited 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr. He was received by 'Abdullah's wife. "How are you, O mother of 'Abdullah?" the Prophet asked. "How do you expect me to be? 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr is a man who has forsaken this worldly life." "How is that?" the Prophet inquired. "He swore that he would not sleep [during the night], break his fast, eat meat, or perform his duty toward his wife." The Prophet said, "Where is he?" She said, "He went out and will be back soon." The Prophet said, "When he comes back, tell him to wait for me." The Prophet left and 'Abdullah arrived. The Prophet soon returned. He said, "O 'Abdullah, is what I have heard about you true? You don't sleep?" 'Abdullah said, "I am seeking refuge from the Greatest Terror." The Prophet said, "I was told that you don't perform your

duty toward your wives.” ’Abdullah said, “I am hoping for better than them ...” The Prophet said, “O ’Abdullah ibn ’Amr, you have the best example in Allah’s Messenger. Allah’s messenger fasts, breaks fast, eats meat, and renders to his wives their right. O ’Abdullah, you have duties to carry out in regard to Allah, to your body, and to your wives.”

The successful Islamic worker is the one who give his heart what will make it good, pure, and clean. He should not neglect himself or be too lenient in self-evaluation. That is what the Prophet said: “The wise man is the one who judges himself and works for what is after death, and the fool is the one who follows his desires and indulges in vain wishes.”

Omar Ibn al-Kattab alluded to this when he said: “Call yourself to account before being called to account and evaluate yourself before you are evaluated; and be prepared for the Day of Judgment.” Despite this, one should not deprive oneself of what Allah has made permissible among the good things, including food, drink, and clothing. In doing this, one is following Allah’s instructions: “Say: who has forbidden the ornament of God which He brought forth for His servants and the good things of His providing? ... Say: my Lord has forbidden only indecencies, inward and outward, sin, and unjust insolence” (7:31).

It is true that the lower self inclines toward evil and that it needs training and limits until it is tamed and easy to control. However, just as we may claim rights from it, so we have obligations toward it. If one demands rights from the self, it will claim its own, and one who deprives it of its natural needs will be overcome and destroyed by it. This is indicated in the following verse: “God charges no soul except to its capacity” (2:286). In his explanation of this verse, the *shahid* (martyr) Sayyid Qutb says:

It is the creed which recognizes a man as a man, not as an animal, an angel, or a devil. It recognizes him with all his weaknesses and strengths. It accepts him as a unit composed of a body which has desires, an intellect capable of evaluating, and a soul which has aspirations. This creed requires of him what he is able to do, and takes into consideration the balance between responsibility and ability without any hardship or overburdening.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned us against neglect or excess. ’Aisha reported that the Prophet entered her house while a woman was visiting her. He asked, “Who is she?” She said, “This is so and so, and she mentions how much she prays.” He said, “What! Do whatever you can. Allah does not stop His reward for you until you are bored.” That is, you should do whatever you can do regularly so that His reward and blessing will be consistent.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet said: “This religion is easy. Anyone who takes this religion to extremes will be defeated by it. Try to be as right and as close as you can and rejoice. Use the morning, the afternoon, and a late into the night.” In explaining this *hadith*, Nawawi says:

It means this: seek help in obeying Allah by performing your worship when you are active and have nothing to worry about so that you will enjoy it, you won't be bored and you will achieve your goal. This activity is like an experienced traveler who travels during some periods but takes a rest during other times so that he reaches his destination without becoming exhausted.

The Prophet also said: "The over-hasty person neither covers a distance nor spares a mount."

The self finds it difficult to assume a characteristic which is not innate to it and to perform deeds which are not inherent in human nature. Even if it is able to bear this to begin with, it becomes weary by the end. The wise man is one who elevates himself without becoming bored and endeavors to accustom the self to bear additional responsibility without overtaxing it. In this way, he achieves his goals.

THE ESSENCE OF FREEDOM

The Islamic worker will not be able to perfect his Islamic virtues and divine characteristics unless he frees himself for Allah's sake and denounces all that might enslave him or cause him to exceed his proper bounds. If it is wealth, he should renounce it; if it is fame, he should denounce it. His wealth should be his inner contentment and not property; his dignity resides in his belief in Allah and not in fame. Women in life are a means to virtue, not a factor of degeneration and moral corruption. It is reported that the Prophet was asked who was the most ascetic among people. He said: "The one who does not ignore graveyards and decay, who prefers the everlasting to the temporary, and who considers himself one of the dead." He also said in another *hadith*: "Renouncing this world is the key to real desire in the hereafter." Ibn al-Summak was reported to have said, "The ascetic is the one who would not rejoice though he were to be given the whole world, and who would not be sad if disaster were to strike. He smiles in public and weeps in private."

These are some of the general features of the Islamic personality and its characteristics. It might need elaboration and simplification. I hope that these observations inspire profitable hopes. May Allah grant us success.

TOWARD A UNIFIED INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

The methods for conducting Islamic work in modern times have branched out in various directions. It is feared that this state of affairs will lead to defacing the original beautiful image of the nature and characteristics of Islamic work. Consequently, these methods may lead to the weakening of Islamic powers and potentialities through verbal disputes and cheap factional competition. Not only do these not serve Islam or further the Islamic cause, they may also confuse people and drive them away from Islam, if they have not already done so. All this will eventually lead to losing people and alienating them from Islam, whose enemies are already far too numerous.

The logic of confrontation, as well as the logic of Islam, require the unification of the Islamic forces in one powerful march against the *jahiliyyah* to establish a state guided by Allah's *shari'ah* and to take the initiative toward the guidance of mankind.

The Justifications for Establishing a Unified International Islamic Movement

The justifications for establishing a unified international Islamic movement are far too clear to be disputed and too numerous to be counted. Muslim workers are called to study and examine in depth these justifications so that any effort to establish the desired Islamic movement is based on faith and conviction, and not on passion or spontaneous bursts of short-lived enthusiasm.

Today, Islam faces fierce challenges from more than one direction. Islamic principles and laws, which are derived from *shari'ah*, are not applied anywhere in the Muslim world. Not only this, but also the rule of *taghut*, satanic authority, and materialistic, man-made ideologies and laws, which oppose, hate, and contradict Islam, as well as their universal philosophy and moral percepts, prevail. Materialistic ideas and atheistic philosophies have ravaged the younger generation's minds and moral corruption is at its worst. The tyranny of the ruling governments, the oppression of current laws, and the lack of justice, freedom, and equality pave the way for Marxist, leftist, and atheistic invasions to sweep away the *ummah* in the name of establishing justice, liberating the oppressed, and raising the status of the impoverished working classes.

The battle which is now raging between Islam and *jahiliyyah* is no longer at the stage of abstract scientific research or within the bounds of purposeful intellectual discussion. This struggle has become fierce and bloody in the literal sense of these two words. In its war against Islam and its workers, the present *jahiliyyah* uses all sorts of malicious, deadly weapons. Murder, imprisonment, torture, expulsion, false rumors, spreading doubts, and accusations of treason are but a few of the methods adopted by the modern *jahiliyyah* to destroy Islam and its workers everywhere.

The entire world is living in a state of destruction. It is groaning under the pressure of moral corruption, deviation, and a spiritual vacuum. This world is blinded by the manifestations of modern civilization, consumed by the first of the sexual revolutions, and destroyed by the bohemian struggles (e.g., hippiedom, existentialism, etc.). All these threaten human existence, human morals, and human thoughts—even the abstract ones—with total annihilation.

There is another reason which necessitates the establishment of a unified international Islamic movement. In the final analysis, the challenges which face Islam stem from international movements such as Zionism, Freemasonry, Communism, and the Christian missionary movement. Such international movements, which have tremendous human, material, and technological capacities and resources, cannot—and must not—be met except on their own level and by the means that they adopt. Any alternatives amount to no more than retreat and destruction.

These justifications and others do not allow for delay, doubt, or hesitation concerning the establishment of a unified international Islamic movement, which must meet the challenge in terms of thoughts, organization, planning, and preparation. Allah said: "Make ready for them whatever force and tethered horses you can, to terrify thereby the enemy of God and your enemy" (8:60).

Experiments in the Field of Islamic Work

Before discussing the general characteristics and basic features that the international Islamic movement should have, it is necessary to review some of the experiments which have been performed in the field of the Islamic work in the modern age. This should offer some lessons and be a source of experience. May Allah guide us to the right way.

1. *Preaching: The Experience of the Tablighi Group.* This is the approach that is usually followed by preachers as individuals and practiced by the tablighi organization. The tablighi group requires its members to free themselves for a specific period of time to perform this duty: one hour per week, one day a month, or one month a year. During these periods they promote *da'wah* throughout the Muslim world.

Despite the dedication, enthusiasm, truthfulness, sincerity, and purity of its workers, the tablighi group will not prevail against the mighty *jahiliyyah*, especially if it continues to use the same tactics in the future or if these tactics become the only policy in all phases of its work, for the following reasons:

- (a) Their method cannot lead to a dynamic, organized movement capable of facing *jahiliyyah* and its increasing challenges, one which would eventually lead to the realization of an Islamic society and establishing an Islamic state.
- (b) The impact of this method is limited to mosques and to the people who frequent them. In other words, its influence will not reach those who constitute the large majority of people or to their different fields of activity.
- (c) This style cannot meet the challenges of modern philosophies and ideologies with suitable answers because it uses, in most cases, the approach of stirring, impassioned preaching and fear. This approach cannot have any effect on those who are not religious.
- (d) It seems that there is no plan to nurture the seeds until they grow and become fruit-bearing trees. This method is similar to that of Tahir al-Jazayriri and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, which is expressed in the saying: "Have your say and leave." This approach guarantees nothing. In addition to being very slow, it has little effect.

The emir of the Jama'at-i-Islami in Pakistan, Abu al-'Ala al-Mawdudi, refers to the barrenness of the preaching method in the following discourse:

It is in vain to follow the Christian missionary approach to call people to Islam. If millions of publications were put out to call people to hold fast to Islam and cry "Fear Allah" day and night, they would not have any significant result. What practical value will result from assuring people in writing and in speeches that Islam is suitable for every era and every place, and that its advantages are without peer? The needs of modern times require that the advantages be manifested in practical forms in the real world. The actual problems of the world are not going to be solved by merely saying that Islam has the solution. The real, intrinsic value of Islam must emerge as a reality in the form of a practical dominant system in which people can see its impact and taste its fruits. We are living in a world of struggle and conflict. Rhetoric and preaching will not succeed in changing its course. Only revolutionary struggle can do this. (*The Epistle of Muslims' Disease and Cure*, p. 15)

2. *Spreading Islamic Education and Ideas: The Liberation Party's Experience.*

The Islamic Liberation Party believes that the way to save the *ummah* from its ills is to restore its confidence in the soundness of Islam and its principles. The route to this restoration is an ideological path of revolution, which destroys false ideas and sweeps away corrupt governments. That is why the party has issued a number of books and pamphlets on various topics. It continues to issue occasional ideological and political publications to explain the Islamic point of view or the party's position on certain issues.

The Islamists' views on the Liberation Party vary. Some doubt the origin and the goals of the party. They do not consider its establishment to have been authentic. Rather, they feel that the aim was to confuse people and foster doubt about already established movements or groups. Those who hold this view find justification in the ambiguity which shrouds the Liberation Party and its leaders. They also find support in what was stated in the introduction of the Partisan Bloc, which considered all groups, blocs, and movements which preceded the Liberation Party as failures and founded on false premises. They also find support in the fact that the party's activities are limited to watching the active Islamic elements and trying to attract them by raising doubts about the soundness of the course of action of their group, the weakness and contradiction of their ideas, and finally, their failure to establish an Islamic state during their long lives. The party tries to persuade these elements of its strength and magical power to quickly create an Islamic state to the degree that some of them imagine it to be already established, believing that all they have to do is declare its existence. The supporters of this view claim that the intended psychological result of this tactic is to psychologically destroy those that the party attracts for a while, then cast them out as disfigured, wronged elements which are a burden on Islam, or abnormal, useless, and confused members who are shocked by sad reality, having once entertained bright hopes.

There are others who think of the Liberation Party as one of the experiences which Islamic work has gone through. This experiment has both advantages and disadvantages. It is a failure because it could not achieve its goals within the timeframe it set itself: the same failure which the party used as an argument against other movements. Today, it tries to justify its failure, as in this quotation from one of its local publication, *Questions and Answers*:

From this it is clear that the apparent lack of influence of the party among people concerning basic Islamic ideas is not the result of misunderstanding, misapplication, or deviation from the method. Rather, the nature of the method itself does not allow its impact to be seen immediately, and the nature of societies is such that the transference of heat is very slow, i.e., their acceptance of ideas takes long periods of time and strong doses.

I do not wish to cover everybody's views concerning the Liberation Party. My objective is to profit from studying the party as an experiment in the field of Islamic work in modern times, regardless of what others may think of it. There is no irrefutable evidence which might discredit the party or tarnish its allegiance or goal. Repeating or spreading rumors are the tactics of the riff-raff, which Islamic workers should abhor. Objective, logical, and constructive criticism is the best way to judge the party's performance. It is also the best way for the Islamic movement to attain the level it deserves as an international pioneering movement.

In the following paragraphs I survey some of the arguments leveled against the party as an experiment in the preparatory stage in making ready for the establishment of a united international Islamic movement:

1. The Liberation Party went astray when it relied, in all instances, on thought as the means to build the Islamic personality. It was also mistaken when it criticized the Muslim Brotherhood for overemphasizing training, and spiritual and moral formation. The Muslim Brotherhood in turn criticized the party for relying too heavily on thought, which it does not neglect. The Prophet's approach was clear: he built the Islamic personality through due emphasis on intellectual awareness and spiritual, moral, and military training.
2. The Liberation Party also made a mistake when it decided to jump from the stage of education to the stage of interaction. By moving from internal education to interaction, i.e., by destroying *jahiliyyah* ideas and identities, the party is like someone trying to cross a deep gorge without a bridge. That is because the educational phase does not enable the party to stand once and for all against the *jahiliyyah* challenge. Nor does it prepare party members for confrontation with the ferocious challenge they are facing. Therefore, it was necessary to have a period during which the party could reach out to people and secure a foothold and establish bases among them for support and protection. This is identical to the Prophet's migration,

which was a method of conducting a general preparation and a basis for defense before he declared war.

3. The Liberation Party made another mistake when it adopted external powers and potentialities, i.e., from outside the party or, in its own words, “seeking help” in an effort to seize power. The Liberation Party considers it necessary to seek powerful help to attain power and to restore Islamic life, but it does not deem it necessary to possess such power. The party says in *Questions and Answers*:

The party sought help in Syria in order to carry on Islamic work and seize power. It also sought help in Iraq so that it could carry on the Islamic work and seize power. The situation continued unchanged until the beginning of 1974. Nobody was ready to offer any help ... Help could be sought from a head of state where a delegation or young man is needed. It could be sought from a president of a party, a leader of a group, a chieftain of a tribe, an ambassador, or the like. In this case, it is necessary to choose introductions and a choice of young men. Sometimes one experienced young man is enough.

The party’s principle of “seeking help” is based on a strange logic. It is rejected out of hand because nobody is ever going to respond to it. The best and safest method available to the movement if it is to achieve its goals is to depend on its own strength and to enable its members to take control of certain strategic sectors in the country. This is especially necessary in the prevailing circumstances in the Muslim world, which is under the protection of the governments of internal and external intelligence.

The logic behind the principle of “seeking help” adopted by the Liberation Party to realize the Islamic revolution and to attain power is unsound. This principle renders the desired Islamic revolution a futile undertaking.

4. The Liberation Party made another mistake when it committed itself to adopting ideas and rules in their general forms. It answered every question and adopted a solution for every issue. At first this might seem, especially for the young, whose Islamic education is limited, attractive and wonderful, but it results in various distortions of Islamic culture and the narrowing of Islamic thought by limiting it to the realm of those books issued by the Liberation Party.

The strategy of adopting solutions to the major controversial issues and important affairs which are reflected politically is good and useful. But its absolute application where it includes every aspect of the Islamic law is bad and to be feared.

I would like to quote here a paragraph from Sayyid Qutb’s *Milestones*, which expresses this idea quite clearly:

Some sincere, hasty people—who do not contemplate the nature of this religion, the nature of its sound, divine method, and its knowledge of human character, and the needs of life—might think that presenting

the principles of the Islamic system or even the Islamic laws to people will facilitate Islamic *da'wah* and attract people to this religion. There are some who do not want Islam to form theories, shape models for organization, formulate rules for life. This is when there is no single society on the face of the earth which has really decided to apply Allah's *shari'ah* alone, reject any other law, and provide Islam with the power which legislates and executes all these. Those who want all this from Islam neither understand the nature of this religion, nor know how it works in life as Allah wants it.

I will not go any further in enumerating the points of criticism which were apparent during the experiment of the Liberation Party. (Lately, the party has been criticized for various political and *fiqhi* [legal] issues which are not discussed here.) I would like to go on to another experiment in the field of the Islamic work in modern times.

5. *Deep Faith, Accurate Formation, and Continuous Work: The Muslim Brotherhood's Experience.* The Muslim Brotherhood is the movement which has spread across the majority of Muslim countries. However, in these countries it is not yet a unified movement in terms of its planning and organization. The founder of the movement, the martyr Imam Hassan al-Banna, clarified, from the outset, the approach, style, and goal of his movement:

Dear Brothers,

It is Allah's will that we should inherit this legacy burdened with responsibilities; that the light of your *da'wah* should shine amidst this darkness; and that He should have prepared you to make His word supreme; to announce His *shari'ah* and to establish His authority anew. How are we going to work towards these goals?

Sermons, discussions, letters, lessons, lectures, diagnosing the disease, and prescribing the cure: all these by themselves will be to no avail and will fail to achieve the goal. Missions require certain means to be followed. These general means do not change. They are always among the following points: (1) deep faith, (2) accurate formation, and (3) continuous work.

Dear Brothers ...

You are not a charitable organization, a political party or an *ad hoc* committee for specific purposes. You are a new life which runs in the heart of the *ummah* to enliven it with the Qur'an; a new light that shines to shed by Allah's light on the darkness of materialism; and a roaring voice which responds loudly to the Prophet's call. It is only fair that you feel that you are carrying this burden after others have abandoned it.

If you are asked: "What are you calling for?" you should answer: "We call to the Islam which Muhammad (peace be upon him) brought; government is part of it, and freedom is one obligatory duty among its principles." If you are told that this is politics, you should answer: "This is Islam, and we do not recognize these divisions." If you are told

that you are advocating revolution, you should say: "We are advocates of truth and peace, which we believe in and are proud of. If you revolt against us and become an obstacle in the way of our *da'wah*, it is time for us to defend ourselves, and you are the rebellious transgressors." If you are told that you should seek help from individuals and organizations, you should answer: "We believe in Allah alone and reject what you associate with Him." If they persist in antagonizing you, you should say: "Peace be upon you! We have no desire for the ignorant."

We can see from this that the Muslim Brotherhood is distinct from other movements by its comprehensiveness. It is an intellectual movement by virtue of its advocating holding fast to Islamic ideas and rejecting every other idea, legal system, or philosophy (to formulate the Islamic mentality). It is an educational and spiritual movement because it calls for commitment to, and application of, Islamic morals and precepts, and to the purification of the self and to its elevation to a state of piety (to formulate the Islamic personality). It is also a *jihad* movement because it campaigns for the preparation of *jihad* by every means. That is because truth should have the power to protect itself so that the *da'wah* can face challenges and overcome problems. Imam al-Banna alluded to this idea in *To What Do We Call Mankind?*

How wise was the man who said: "Force is the surest way of implementing the right." How beautiful is it that power and right should march side by side. This struggle to propagate Islam, quite apart from preserving the hallowed precepts of Islam, is another religious duty prescribed by Allah for the Muslims, just as he enjoined upon them fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, *zakat*, doing good, and avoiding evil. He required it of them and delegated this task to them. He did not excuse anyone possessing strength and capacity from doing it. It is a Qur'anic verse of warning and a binding order: "Go forth, light and heavy! Struggle in God's way with your possessions and yourselves." (9:41)

The martyred imam emphasized this meaning related to *jihad* in most of his speeches and sermons, because unarmed truth will not achieve anything, and because truth which is not backed by force makes no real impact. This meaning was especially emphasized in his speech to the Fifth Conference of the Movement in 1356 AH. He said:

At the time when you are, dear Muslim brothers, three hundred battalions, and each battalion is prepared spiritually by faith and creed; intellectually, by knowledge and education; and physically, by training and sport, at that time demand from me to plunge with you into the waves of the sea, to raid with you the clouds in the sky, and to invade you with very obstinate tyrants. If Allah wills, I will do so.

The Prophet was correct in the following *hadith*: "Twelve thousand will not be defeated because of a small number."

The Islamic Movement, Circumstances of the Area, and Logic of Confrontation

The Muslim Brotherhood became a very important movement. It was expected to succeed and to achieve its goals. Therefore, the powers of destruction everywhere unified against it, the forces of imperialism conspired against it, and successive blows befell the movement. They began with the martyrdom of its founder, Imam Hassan al-Banna, in 1948. This was followed by the martyrdom of a large number of the leaders and important members of the movement itself, but also in the eyes of the entire world.

The result of all this was that their activities were reduced and were withdrawn from the arena of political struggle. Its intellectual and ideological activities continued. Another result of the calamity which befell the Islamic movement was that non-Muslim governments took over the lands of the Muslims. The atheist, Marxist invasion did what it could to destroy people's minds. Thus, everything in the area, especially in the Arab world, changed. The democratic life which allowed partisan work has gone forever. The established regimes in the area are characterized by profound hatred of Islam and Muslims. Partisan confrontations are no longer on the plane of ideological debate and dialogue; instead, they have become bloody, mob-like, and cruel.

These and other circumstances make it necessary for the Islamic movement to plan a new strategy so that it can move on, to produce and to progress. This is required in order to become the desired international Islamic movement and to be at the level of real confrontation with the international challenges which Islam currently faces.

Aspects of the United International Movement

Although contemporary Islamic movements have not achieved their main goal, namely, establishing an Islamic state and restoring Islamic life, they have left a wealth of experience in terms of practice and preparation toward achieving this goal. These movements have also left a vast intellectual heritage which paves the way for the emergence of a united international Islamic movement capable of challenging modern *jahiliyyah*.

Revolution

The main characteristic which the desired Islamic movement must possess is revolution. Islam is a revolutionary and not a compromising approach. To achieve this complete transformation requires that the movement which directs Islamic work be capable—in terms of awareness, methodology, and ability—of achieving an Islamic revolution.

This Islamic movement urgently needs a revolutionary strategy which will take it to the stage of practical execution of its goals and principles. What I mean by “revolutionary strategy” is that the movement's theory and approach should replace the existing *jahiliyyah* reality with the desired Islamic reality. This change requires a comprehensive, accurate understanding of the existing situation, informed evaluation of the powers and factors which direct its movement, and, consequently, a deep understanding and conceptualization of the desired Islamic reality.

This strategy must insist that the Islamic movement implement on its own its program for an Islamic government. Contrary to what some think, it is far from sincerity and self-denial to disdain assuming power. That is because the world and history have never known a movement which offered the result of its struggle to other than those who believed in its goals and who strove alongside it on the road of struggle and conflict. The first Islamic state was the result of the struggle of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions.

Such an understanding accurately assesses the movement's conceptualization of its responsibilities and roles. The movement is neither a counseling association which does not go beyond preaching and guidance, nor a literary club for lectures and debates. Nor is it a legal institute which produces scholars of *shari'ah* and Islamic thought, or a publishing house which prints books and Islamic works for disseminating education and reviving the Islamic heritage. The movement's responsibility is *da'wah*. This means that it carries the heritage of Prophethood and the message of Islam in modern times. It carries this heritage with all its dimensions and responsibilities. The movement carries the Islamic *da'wah* as an ideology which exposes the falsehood of other oppressive and materialistic ideas, principles, and philosophies. It also carries the *da'wah* as a struggle which opposes all forms of evil and destroys all tyrants until there is no persecution, until religion is wholly for Allah, and until an Islamic state, which will spread virtue and achieve security, justice, and equality for all, is established. This state will free people from worshipping other people so that they can worship Almighty Allah alone; it will release them from the constriction of this life and open to them the plenitude of Islam, and from the injustice of others religions to the justice of Islam. Such responsibilities require that the movement be thoroughly prepared and greatly skilled on all levels.

Decentralization

Another main characteristic of the united international Islamic movement is decentralization, or going beyond artificial national membership. The Prophet's migration, in its profound sense, is an indication of the need for decentralization in Islamic work, and that establishing Islam may be easy and possible in one place, difficult or impossible in another. In this case, it is necessary to direct efforts toward what is possible and easy in order to avoid wasting resources and time. This reasoning requires international planning for Islamic work in modern times to direct all resources, mobilize power, and use every potential in order to achieve the best possible results.

Rationality

This means that the Islamic movement must adopt reason, not emotion, in its progress. This Islamic *daw'ah* is the call of sound argument and proof, the call of reason and logic. This is what distinguishes Islamic *da'wah* from other calls in the past as well as in the present.

One of the conditions for this rationality is that understanding Islam, calling people to it, and defining what it requires must be based on a deep

understanding, totality of approach, and clarity of vision. Another condition is that confrontation with *jahiliyyah* must be based on prior detailed study of the ideas, principles, methods, and strategies of this *jahiliyyah*.

Scientism

What is meant by scientism here is that the movement should try to benefit from all scientific experience of human civilization, as well as from everything the human mind has produced in all fields of knowledge, as long as it is possible to benefit from these means.

One aspect of this scientific approach is that the movement should gain from the most recent theories in organization, the most effective and best methods in the field of information, and the best dynamic strategies in the field of political and public activities. Another characteristic of this scientism is that the movement should depend on a vast and accurate knowledge of the society in which it lives. Knowledge of society includes its psychological, ideological, political, and partisan conditions, as well as its international commitments and relationships.

Spirituality

Lastly, the Islamic movement must depend on spiritual training and education to prepare its members. The Islamic personality cannot be developed by abstract intellectual education alone. Spiritual training and preparation are necessary until Islam alone becomes the principal criterion in satisfying desires, in defining good and evil, and the *halal* (the lawful) and the *haram* (the forbidden).

An Islamic personality is the key factor in preparing for the Islamic revolution and the establishment of an Islamic state. The movement's success in forming the Islamic personality will enable it to possess the strongest and most potent capabilities in its struggle against hardship and its endeavor to achieve its hopes and goals. That is why it is essential to prepare the Islamic avant-garde in the best possible way so that it can bear its extraordinary responsibility. It needs to be prepared psychologically and morally, ideologically and behaviorally, intellectually and organizationally, so as to be able to fulfill its greatest function.

The Islamic movement everywhere is urgently called upon to face up to its destiny and accept its immense responsibility by re-examining its experience and defining the steps of its march in the light of its present and future. All this should be done with the speed, accuracy, and capability which modern times require and made necessary by confrontation with a cunning and ferocious *jahiliyyah*. Then, and only then, will the practical explanation of the following verse be realized: "Make ready for them whatever force and saddled horses you can, to terrify thereby the enemy of God and your enemy" (8:60).

NOTE

1. From Fathi Yakan, *Islamic Movement: Problems and Perspectives*, tr. Maneh al-Johani (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1984).

3

Toward a Modern Islamic Perspective: A Declaration of Principles¹

Ahmad Kamal Abu al-Majd

There is a need to create a new Islamic intellectual current in order to inspire the Muslim masses throughout the world and empower them to sort out their centuries-old problems with the help of legal formulations and solutions derived from the original perspective of Islamic belief in God, His Messenger, Islamic principles, and Islamic teaching and ethics. The creation of such a current of thought has become both necessary and urgent.

It is quite impossible to address these problems with partial and isolated solutions that lack the necessary vision of the cosmos, human life, human needs and interests. In the absence of this essential perspective, solutions would be half-baked and visions blurred.

We can discern three distinct political and social trends of thought in the contemporary Muslim world. The first is a capitalist liberal trend, implemented in the Arab world by colonial powers, which led to the creation of a social and political system embraced by a whole generation of rulers and educated people. This trend has brought to the Arab world many of the pitfalls of extremist capitalism and opened the door, especially in countries suffering from extreme poverty and low wages, to economic injustice and social perversions that are still threatening the stability, security, and unity of these countries. This current of thought has benefited from the historical relationship between capitalism as an economic system and political freedom as a system that organizes the relationship between the state and its citizens. Furthermore, this current of thought has been able to use its liberalism as a cover to maintain class divisions and economic injustice. In addition, capitalism in the Arab world has sometimes used Islam for the purpose of gaining Islamic legitimacy for its ideals and behavior.

The second current of thought is Socialism. A good number of Arab and Muslim states followed the socialist model in the 1970s at a time when state hegemony restricted individual freedom and oppressed the people in the name of safeguarding the revolution and resisting the counter-revolution. Partisans of this trend failed to implement this model successfully, and, by and large, the whole socialist experiment stumbled in the Arab and Muslim worlds due to the fact that there was some hesitation in carrying out comprehensive social and economic reform; also, the essence of justice was not understood and there was an over-reliance on the experience of other nations in implementing this model. If the capitalist current has created havoc in the realm of social justice

under the pretext of protecting freedom, the socialist current has committed the sin of curtailing individual freedom in the name of preserving social justice, in addition to destroying the individual's incentive to work and produce. Laborers and producers were replaced by a huge army of employees.

The third trend is Islamic in nature; no one can doubt its resilience and the fact that it has gained in popularity over the past decade. There are many underlying currents to this trend, one of which revolves around issues of belief and doctrine. In most Muslim countries, this underlying current of Islamic thought and practice is represented by state institutions and associations that lack real freedom.

In addition to the above, there is another Muslim current that is independent of the religious establishment. This current is based on authentic Islamic sources and is supported by the masses in most Arab and Muslim countries. However, this current has faced numerous hurdles erected by the ruling elites and many internal crises caused by unfettered emotionalism while pursuing poorly defined goals and objectives. This current has also suffered from its inability to come to terms with objective reality and from its failure to understand the relevance of Islamic legal rulings to Muslim realities.

However, a third current has recently emerged, which represents an angry and unqualified response to the dominant and unjust social and economic systems. Various reasons account for the rise of this phenomenon: government pressure, a passionate and emotional commitment to Islam, and isolation from the masses. Some youths who represent this current have gone as far as to reject society and rebel against its general rules. This current grew out of people's frustration with daily social and economic realities and a lack of hope in the future.

These youths are the main representatives of this current of thought, most of whom reject society, accuse it of both *jahiliyyah* and disbelief, and are anxious to implement far-reaching changes in the Muslim world. However, some of these groups have resorted to violence in their urgency to achieve their goals, which has added to their isolation from the rest of society and has consequently alienated the Muslim masses from the Islamic trend in general.

Our need for a moderate and enlightened Islamic perspective reflects not just the conditions in the Arab and Muslim worlds, but also the development of human societies. Throughout the whole world there is a growing and widespread belief that scientific and industrial wealth has enabled humans to gain excessive control over the environment and subordinate nature for our own sake in order to gain material benefits. However, material progress has not been associated with concomitant progress in human relations. On the contrary, material progress is associated with ruthless competition and exclusiveness, and has led to the collapse of many traditional family and ethical values. Thus, the poor wandered around aimlessly, family relations unraveled, violence and crime rates increased, fear and anxiety intensified, generosity in giving was replaced by voracity in taking, and, subsequently, a great part of people's contentment, calm, stability, and happiness diminished.

While the scientific and industrial revolutions brought luxuries and wealth, they have robbed man of security and sociability with himself, with life, and with others. In its essence, Islam is a system of values whose objective is to maintain a balance between man and society, and between matter and soul. It seems to me that the perception of man's contemporary crisis has led to the revival of those principal values revealed by God to His messengers and prophets and which God has set as stable poles on earth, without which the earth will shake under the burden of the people and nations it bears.

Among the unfortunate paradoxes that need swift and decisive rectification is that Muslims who have been long invested in these sublime values have faced intellectual and civilizational stagnation that has made it impossible for them to lead other nations on the path that embodies these values. In addition, Muslims have for centuries faced "civilization deprivation and loss" (*istilab hadari*), which has caused them to dissociate from their Islamic creed and accept the ethical and behavioral values of Western civilization, especially in times of crisis. Both Islamic stagnation and Western crisis have characterized the life of modern Muslims.

While many nations burdened with the materialism of Western civilization have found hope in Islam, its values and rules (even if they don't refer to it by name), Muslims so far have failed to articulate this hope in their lives because of their own stagnant, divided, and hopeless condition. Therefore, there is a global need to revive the basic values of Islam, and it behooves Muslims to achieve this goal immediately.

The underlying role of the Islamic trend, which we all need, is principally to serve humanity in order to reflect the Qur'anic verse "You are indeed the best community that has ever been brought forth for [the good of] mankind." What this means in effect is that proponents of this trend have to act compassionately toward all human beings, share their daily concerns, and relate positively to all strata of society. Furthermore, these proponents must be tolerant of the negative aspects associated with patriotic work in the Arab and Muslim worlds, and realize that achieving change is not an easy task and that the masses must participate in effecting such change for their future. The masses will not participate in any movement until they understand its parameters and find in it solutions to their problems.

The Islamic trend I am proposing here must humbly interact with all segments of the Muslim *ummah*, since only true cooperation will lead to the success of our mission. Proponents know very well that ideas precede action and a united vision and doctrine should unite all of these ideas.

Most Muslims strongly believe that Islam, in its essence, with its sublime values and innate tolerance, is the best starting point to guide the current renaissance and endow it with longevity. Some people have mixed feelings, however, about their experiences with the traditional (conservative) current of Islamic thought, which has proven barren, stuck in the past, and lacking the courage to deal with present reality. Others are profoundly wary of the other current of Islamic thought that is characterized by extremism, rigidity, imbalance, and alienation, which one can see among Muslim youth. Most

Muslims refuse to offer any form of allegiance to this extremist, harsh, and self-centered trend, which fails to distinguish between substance and form in Islamic teachings. The Muslim masses are conscious of the fact that if the extremist current were to seize the reins of the current Islamic revival, this would lead to a major catastrophe in the Muslim world, the extent of which will be known only by God.

BASIC STARTING POINTS

To begin with, Islam must be the starting point of the contemporary Islamic perspective and the blueprint of its method. This perspective is derived from both an authentic understanding of Islam as well as a contemporary understanding of the Muslim world.

Second, Islam is God's guidance to all mankind and is one of God's great bounties, like water and air, for people to benefit from according to their circumstances without an intermediate power, be it an individual or a group, institution, history, or heritage.

Third, religion governs life with its values, goals, general foundations, and set rules. Thus, we must distinguish between religious values contained in scripture and their application under different historical conditions. That is to say, we must liberate religion from the prison of past applications, since all economic and political systems are man-made. We believe that it is necessary to resume our efforts in researching the principles of Islamic jurisprudence and familiarizing ourselves with the work of past religious scholars as a necessary prelude to applying the foundations of Islam in the world today. To conduct this type of research, we need first to cultivate enough scholars and jurists familiar with these branches of knowledge. Scholars, however, do not grow on trees. We need solid and strong institutions to carry out this vital task.

We must be proud of the achievements of Azhar University and other like-minded religious institutions over the past centuries. However, we must not be blind to the tragic retreat of these institutions of late and their failure to fulfill their mission in a way compatible with the new realities of Muslim nations and of the world as a whole. These institutions are in need of a true revolution with regard to their work and the vantage point from which they view the scope of their mission.

Fourth, it is necessary to draw a distinction here, especially as we call for the application of Islam in the contemporary world, between God's rule and Muslim legislation. God's rule incorporates the commandments of God that are clearly enunciated in both the Qur'an and the authentic *hadith* collection. Based on the preceding understanding, proponents of this trend are not the official spokespersons of Islam.

Fifth, although belief in the Unseen lies at the heart of the Islamic message, the Islamic method of dealing with the world is scientific in nature. Muslims have wasted a lot of time trying to reconcile science and faith, as it is called in the West, and reason and emulation, as we say in the Muslim world. It is high time to put an end to such a futile discussion.

Muslim societies need a comprehensive revolution in their curricula, systems of education, information, and general behavior, and they need it now. We need to reclaim the scientific method after centuries of stagnation. Let those who worry about Islam when exposed to science and reason say that Islam does not accept the work of atheists and that those who associate partners with God will fall. Islam does not accept people who do not use their brains, and thus stop thinking and producing. "They are like cattle—nay, they are even less conscious of the right way." We will be able to achieve Islamic renaissance only after Muslim reason and senses are fully awakened and can glean from the vast universe signs of wisdom and production, and consciously start to interact with God's laws in His creation, for God supports and gives His victory to those who open their minds and souls to life around them.

Sixth, taking steps to apply Muslim legislation after a long absence does not mean canceling out other forms of legislation practiced in the Muslim world. It is wrong to argue that progress in Islamic legislation ceased when divine revelation stopped. The question here concerns the best way to convey the message of Islam to the people.

Seventh, many callers to Islam and proponents of *shari'ah* underestimate and despise the experiences of other nations in the field of economics and politics under the pretext that Muslims do not need them and cannot import the fruits of an experience outside the framework of historical and geographical Islam. The new Islamic trend must counter this attitude.

Eighth, exercising the right of *ijtihad* in *shari'ah* is the prerogative of religious scholars and researchers. However, human legislation in Muslim societies is the prerogative of Muslims at large. No one has the right to prevent the people from exercising this right under the pretext of "God's sovereignty." The individual endeavor in general legislative matters is a fixed right of scholars and researchers. "God's ruling" alone is true when it means that Islam's values and principles come from God, and that any endeavor to understand God's rule requires conditions not accessible to all people. Yet, holding on tenaciously to this idea has been an introduction to a falsehood and a way to an injustice in our distant and recent past, for the rule is God's at all time, but people have to know that rule and know how to manage their affairs by efforts to understand what they are presented with.

Ninth, Islam is a comprehensive system, which aims to guide life's activity with all its aspects and values of truth, justice, and good that were revealed to God's Messenger (peace be upon him). However, Islamic scripture has not articulated any particular system of government in a clear fashion. Therefore, an Islamic system of government is not limited by one form of rule practiced by Muslims in the past. Any form of government in the contemporary Muslim world would be Islamic as long as it abides by the basic principles discussed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. The following are some of these principles:

1. Consultation (*shurah*) in organizing societal matters;
2. Rulers' responsibilities;

3. Divine legislation as the primary source; and
4. Respect for human rights and individual freedom.

Unfortunately, *shurah* and human rights issues do not figure prominently in the extremist trend so widespread amongst angry youth.

Tenth, transforming society requires a comprehensive outlook. It is not scientifically acceptable to present the crisis of contemporary Muslim societies as simply a matter of ethics and values. This consideration, one-sided as it is, neglects to consider the depth and extent of the problems of contemporary human societies. Those who carry the banner of change in their societies and who hold this primitive view are embarking on a huge adventure, and thus neglecting their responsibilities and the ramifications of their actions. The successive scientific and industrial revolutions, the continuous progress in the means of production, movement, and transportation, communication, and of transforming, storing, and using information have all created novel social problems and given old problems dimensions that did not exist in the past. Pioneers of contemporary Islamic reform and proponents of *shari'ah* can no longer ignore such questions as the distribution of wealth and economic planning, the shortage of foodstuffs and their poor distribution in the world, ecology and pollution, international relations among states, and the production of weapons of mass destruction capable of destroying in an instant our civilization and annihilating much if not all of mankind. The absence of these issues in the programs of Islamic revival exposes a rupture between those revivalists and their societies; people will hesitate to follow their lead and will not take their slogans seriously.

Many of the complex problems accumulating over recent years in the Arab and Muslim worlds have arisen due to a lack of scientific planning, or reliance on partial planning that ignores the connection between cultural, social, and political factors.

Eleventh, guidelines for reform and social change: Islam's inclusiveness is but a reflection of unity in human life and the correlation of its parts, as it is an explanation of the unity of the Creator and Legislator: "How could it be that He who has created [all] should not know [all]? Yea, He alone is unfathomable [in His wisdom], aware." Hence, Islam's interest in these different parts does not mean that each Islamic organization must shoulder all responsibilities alone. Each person has his own capacities, and each is responsible for what he can do. Specialization is a necessary means to perfect any work. It is a characteristic of our time and reflects the diversity and development of different aspects of knowledge and science. So, it should come as no surprise that organizations are numerous and diverse: some are interested in the intellect and culture, others in education and social activity, and yet others in politics and systems of rules. All of this is done without refuting or underestimating what any of these groups is presenting to the others.

I believe that a single institution based on the principles of Islam that works to realize people's interests and aspirations is much more effective than 1,000 preachers calling for change. Therefore, our efforts should focus

on establishing institutions and think-tanks capable of carrying out Islamic principles and ensuring their continuity. The worst and most dangerous thing that can happen to these institutions is for the people running them to raise slogans and sanctify Islamic names while covertly cheating and doing other acts that violate Islamic principles and values. Any contradiction between goals and practical behavior is apt to hurt Islamic work very badly, to the extent that the distortions of Islamophobes will seem like nothing in comparison.

NOTE

1. Kamal Abu al-Majd, *Nahwa Ru'yah Islamiyyah Mu'assirah: I'lan Mabadi'* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1987), pp. 37–51. Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.

4

The Headscarf Battle¹

Muhammad al-Ghazali

We would like the contemporary Islamic awakening to achieve two objectives: first, to avoid the mistakes that have misled and weakened the Muslim *ummah* and ignited the enemies' avarice toward it; and, second, to present a positive and practical image of Islam in order to eradicate old suspicions and do justice to God's revelation. It is indeed unfortunate that some proponents of this awakening have failed to achieve these objectives but, on the contrary, have succeeded in scaring people away from Islam, so opening the way to verbal assaults against it.

Let us consider the battles such people have instigated, one of which is the battle of the *niqab* or face-covering.

In a book published in the Gulf, one author argues that, "Islam forbids adultery and uncovering the face is a means to that. It is forbidden, for it leads to the path of deviation." My answer to this is that Islam allows the face to be revealed during *hajj* (pilgrimage) and prayers (*salat*). Does this uncovering, in two of Islam's pillars, lead to crimes being committed or man's carnal desires being excited? How deviant is this reasoning!

The Prophet (peace be upon him) saw women's faces uncovered in the marketplace and mosques and at conventions; it was never reported that he ordered face covering. Are you more vigilant about this religion than the Prophet himself?

Let us seek clarity on the issue in God's and His Messenger's book.

First, if faces are covered, why do believers have to cast down their eyes? The noble verse says: "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity; this will be most conducive to their purity."² A man should avert his gaze whenever he sees a woman's beauty so that he does not see her twice, as the following *hadith* explains. The Prophet (peace be upon him), said to Ali (may God be pleased with him), "Oh Ali! Don't have one look followed by another. You have the right to have one look but not a second one."

Second, the Prophet (peace be upon him) encountered some men who had become excited after taking that first look. His advice was that a married man should be content with what he already has. Jabir narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "If someone amongst you sees a woman who attracts him, then he should go to his wife because that will stop what he has in himself." But if he does not have a wife, then he has to ponder God's message: "And as for those who are unable to marry, let them live in continence until God grants them sufficiency from His bounty" (Nur: 33).

According to the jurist Ayyad, as narrated by Imam Shawkani, the woman does not have to cover her face when she goes outside her house, but men should lower their gaze as God has ordered them.

Third, in his sermons during an Islamic festival, the Prophet (peace be upon him) preached to women, saying, "Give charitably; for I was shown Hell-fire and the majority of its dwellers were ungrateful women." A woman with dark-brown cheeks sitting in their midst said: "Why did you describe us like that?" He said: "Because you often complain to the point that you drive your husbands away." The Prophet (peace be upon him) meant that many women refuse their husbands their rights despite their husbands efforts to maintain the household; you hear nothing from the wives except complaints. The narrator said the women took their rings and earrings and gave them to charity. The question is, how did the narrator know that the woman had dark-brown cheeks? It is clear he knew because the woman's face was indeed uncovered.

Fourth, some scholars have said that after the end of the *hajj* season, women must cover their faces and hands in normal daily life. My reply to this is that God ordered male pilgrims to uncover their heads, so does this mean that they have to cover their heads afterwards? One does as he wishes, is covered or uncovered.

Fifth, we need to ponder God's saying, "Let them draw their head-coverings over their bosoms" (Nur: 33). If this means that the woman must cover her face, God would have said: "Let them draw their head-covering over their faces," if face covering was indeed a token of Islamic society and has the importance that some have been placing on it. To do this, women were obliged to cover only the lower part of their faces so as to be able to move, because covering the whole face conceals the eyes and makes it difficult to see. Therefore, we think that the verse does not mean covering the face.

There is no doubt that some women in the pre-Islamic era used sometimes to cover all of the face except the eyes. This was part of their tradition and has nothing to do with worship. So, there is no worship without a text.

Against the above, we would like to point out that Muslim society, in terms of dress etiquette and ethics as legislated by God, is different from Western society with its communist and Christian aspects; the latter is associated with pure materialism and naked desire. In such societies, clothes are designed for attraction and not modesty; ornaments are not worn indoors but outdoors; and mixing between the sexes is freely practiced. In addition, being alone with a non-relative is permitted; the law does not consider consensual sex to be a form of adultery, and the family has no role to play whatsoever.

Islam has a totally different view of this irreligious and mindless behavior. Yet we Muslims have presented an ugly and repulsive image of Islam. A famous Muslim preacher argues on the basis of one *hadith*, "Woman leaves her house only once in her lifetime, either to [go to] her husband's home or to her grave." The *hadith* quoted by this preacher centers on a woman in early Islam who sought her husband's permission to visit her sick father. The husband's answer was in the negative. When her father passed away, she again sought her husband's permission to leave the house in order to attend

the funeral. Again, the husband's answer was in the negative. The preacher went on to say, "When she mentioned this to the Prophet, he said to her: 'God has forgiven your father's sins because you obeyed your husband.'" What a miserable way of presenting our religion! It is as if religion becomes a prison for the woman, in which the rules of consanguinity as set down by God are violated.

Recently, I received a letter from a female student whose father had prevented her from enrolling at university. She wrote: "Our father has said to me and my sister 'God has buried you alive and it is forbidden for you to leave the house, so I will not let you leave either.'" This foolish man's decision to prevent his daughter from leaving their house is based on his false interpretation of the following Qur'anic verse addressed to women: "And abide quietly in your homes, and do not flaunt your charms as they used to flaunt them in the old days of pagan ignorance."³

WOMAN, FAMILY, AND GENERAL DUTIES

I dislike households that don't have female heads. The female head of a household is a soul who spreads peace and love to its corners, who endeavors to raise virtuous human beings. I also abhor female infanticide. We must agree first that it is a crime to be contemptuous of womanhood and to drive her toward illicit behavior to satisfy other people's desires. A just religion such as Islam opposes those traditions and mores that imprison women, suffocate them, and keep them from fulfilling their rights and duties. Also, a righteous religion opposes other types of traditions and mores that encourage licentiousness or give free rein to man's carnal desires.

It is quite acceptable from an Islamic perspective for women to work outside the home as long as there are guarantees in place to safeguard the future of the family and if the proper environment of virtue and piety is provided. If there are 100,000 physicians or 100,000 teachers, there is no harm if women constitute half of each number. What is important in a Muslim society is that *shari'ah* laws concerning the mixing of the sexes, or excessive display of charms, or seclusion with a non-relative are respected: "These are the limits ordained by Allah. So do not transgress them. If any do transgress the limits ordained by Allah, such persons wrong (Themselves as well as others)" (Qur'an 2:229).

The basis of a good family life is the household. I am not comfortable with the idea of employing a child-minder or sending children to daycare. The mother's soul has a deep impact on developing virtue and protecting her offspring. We have to do our utmost to encourage women to faithfully fulfill their original duty, and this is possible if we comprehend religion in the right way.

I have met many virtuous mothers who are successful administrators of schools and successful doctors and who excel in their jobs because of their piety and religiosity. I have also noticed that Jewish women are trying to defeat us, establish the Israeli state, and perform valuable military and social work

for their religion. Also, it was a Jewish woman, Golda Meir, who was the leader of her people and who humiliated a group of bearded and moustached Arab men in the Six-Day and subsequent wars. I have also noticed that in North Africa and other parts of the world there are many nuns and other women, married and unmarried, who enthusiastically devote themselves to the dissemination of Christianity. Also, we must not forget the foreign woman doctor who stayed in the Palestinian refugee camps that were turned on the heads of their inhabitants, and who remained there steadfastly eating human and animal flesh until she was able to save some Arab children and take them to England for medical treatment when the blockade was finally lifted. There is female activism in some noble places that we should not overlook because of abuses in other parts of the world.

Social and religious *jihad*, undertaken by some non-Muslim women in our land and beyond, reminds me of the great *jihad* undertaken by the wives of our ancestors (*salaf*) on behalf of Islam. These women endured exile with immeasurable courage for the sake of their religion. They emigrated and sought refuge when they were ordered to do so; for years, they went back and forth between their homes and the mosque to pray and, when needed, they fought. Before that, they provided medical services and helped as needed in the military.

In recent centuries, Muslim women's conditions have deteriorated; both illiteracy and general human degradation have been imposed on them. It is also very clear that some undisputed Qur'anic rules, such as women's inheritance rights, have been totally ignored because they protect the woman's welfare. Thus, women seldom get their property or are even consulted about their own marriages. Women who are divorced are rarely treated well. We simply do not obey God's saying, "And the divorced women, too, shall have [a right to] maintenance in a goodly manner: This is a duty for all who are conscious of God."⁴ It is commonplace for men to reject their wives on a whim. This renders God's saying "And if you have reason to fear that a breach might occur between a [married] couple, appoint an arbiter from among his people and an arbiter from among her people" no more than ink on paper. The woman is of a lower rank and position, so a reconciliation council should be convened on her behalf. I have criticized the idea that a man's mistake is forgiven while the woman's deserves death in the past.

In its latest attack on Muslims, international imperialist forces have exploited this evil deviation in our practice toward women and launched a savage campaign against Islam's teachings. Is Islam responsible for the chaos that is so rampant among its followers? What is even more astonishing is that so-called defenders of Islam and its spokespersons have defended this inherited chaos because, due to their extraordinary stupidity, they identify Islam with chaos. Ignorance can sometimes be very creative.

The pillars supporting good relationships between men and women are clear in the following Qur'anic verse: "I shall not lose sight of the labor of any of you who labor [in My way], be it man or woman: each of you is an issue of the other";⁵ or in another verse, "Whoever works righteously, man

or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions" (Qur'an 97:34); and also in the Prophet's saying, "Women are sisters to men."

Religion has remained silent *vis-à-vis* certain issues though. Thus, legislators have also kept silent on some matters regarding freedom of action. No one is allowed here to render his view into dogma; it is only an opinion. It is perhaps the reason behind Ibn Hazm's saying that Islam does not forbid women from holding any position of responsibility except that of the Caliphate. Some have accused Ibn Hazm of going against God's pronouncement about this, since God says: "Men shall take full care of women (men are masters of women) with the bounties which God has bestowed more abundantly on the former than on the latter, and with what they may spend out of their possessions" (Qur'an 4:34). We cannot accept this interpretation since matters of *qiwama* (that is, men are masters of women) are limited to a man's house and family. When Caliph Omar gave the administration of price control in the marketplace to a certain woman named Shifa', she was given absolute responsibility for people in the marketplace, both women and men, in order to administer justice and prevent violations. If a man had a wife who was a doctor, he did not have the right to interfere with her job or control her duties. It might be said that Ibn Hazm's attitude is contradicted by a *hadith* that states: "A community of people will never succeed as long as their leader is a woman." However, it is Ibn Hazm's opinion that this *hadith* applies to political authority only and has nothing to do with other responsibilities that women can undertake.

We have to consider this *hadith* in detail. I am not keen on appointing women as state presidents or heads of governments; I am only passionate for one thing, namely, that the state or government must have at its head the best qualified human being in the *ummah*. I have examined the preceding *hadith* myself, knowing that it is authentic in its *sanad* (chain of narrators) and its *matn* (content). What is the correct meaning of this *hadith*? When Persia was conquered by the Muslims, it was ruled by an evil form of dictatorship. The religion of Persia was pagan in nature and the royal family had no respect for *shurah* (consultation) or any differing opinions. Relations between individuals were so bad that a man could kill his father or brothers to gratify his ego, without being held to account. In this context of defeat, it was possible for military leaders to take firm control of the situation and reduce the number of casualties. However, the head of state was a weak woman who had inherited the position from her father. In commenting on this, the Prophet uttered the *hadith* quoted above to describe the situation in Persia at the time. I am sure that if Persian politics were based on *shurah* and the woman in power was like former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, the Prophet would have commented on the situation with a different *hadith*.

Again, I emphasize that I am not keen to elect women to high positions. Women rarely speak up and their voices are not heard. What I want to do is to explain a *hadith* that is mentioned in books and prevent any contradiction

between the Qur'an and some *hadiths* that have not been well understood. Also, I want to prevent contradictions between this *hadith* and historical reality.

Britain enjoyed its golden age during Queen Victoria's reign, and it was led recently by a female prime minister (Margaret Thatcher); Britain is now more prosperous than ever. So, where is the problem in all of this? Elsewhere, I have discussed the deadly attacks against the Muslims of the subcontinent of India when that country, under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Ghandi, was able to split East from West Pakistan in 1971. General Ayub Khan (President of united Pakistan at the time) was humiliated on the battlefield. As for the numerous catastrophes befalling the Arabs during Golda Meir's administration, we need at least a whole generation to pass before we can erase the traces of our defeat at her hands. The issue is not one of womanhood or manhood, but of morals and skills.

In India, Indira Ghandi stood in elections she did not win. Later, she was elected when the people willingly voted for her. As for Muslims, we seem to be specialists in forging election results to gain power against the will of the masses. Which group deserves God's care and election to be his vicegerent on earth? Why don't we take into consideration Ibn Taymiyyah's saying: "God certainly does render victory to a disbelieving country that has justice over a Muslim country that is full of injustice."

Woman- or manhood has nothing to do with all this. A woman with religion is much better in the eyes of God than an ungrateful bearded man. Muslims constitute one fifth of the global population and we need to give some thought to how to present our religion to others.

NOTES

1. Excerpts from Muhammad al-Ghazali, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah Bayan Abli al-Fiqh wa Abli al-Hadith* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1989), pp. 36–52. Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.
2. Q 20:30.
3. Q 33:33.
4. Q 2:241.
5. Q 3:195.

Part II

Islamism, *Jihad*, and Martyrdom

5

The Birth of Afghan Arabs¹

Abdullah Anas

Due to the sensitivity of the subject to different parties, I have been hesitant to write about my experience in Afghanistan. However, since the events of September 11, 2001 have propelled Afghanistan onto the international scene again, it has become my responsibility to give urgent priority to the subject. Discussing Afghanistan will necessarily lead to a discussion of the subject of the Arab volunteers, often referred to by the media as the “Afghan Arabs.”

As I find myself more or less concerned with this subject, I have decided to write about my experience in Afghanistan so that I can present a true picture of these “Afghan Arabs” without any distortion or exaggeration. It is certainly true that a number of parties, some of which are represented by dictatorial regimes [in the Muslim world], participated in creating this distorted image of the “Afghan Arabs” by blaming them for terrorism in order to disguise their political and economic failures. The clearest example of this is the ongoing drama of bloodshed in Algeria that has followed in the wake of the military coup leading to the cancellation of the results of the election won by the Islamic Salvation Front in 1992, which the Afghan Arabs had nothing to do with.

There is also the other side represented by the racist elites in the West, who have exceeded themselves in distorting the image of Islam and Muslims in public. Their main objective has been to realize the “Clash of Civilizations” thesis on the ground, relying in this on the statements made through Western mass media by some Muslims who did not realize the harm they were doing to Islam and Muslims.² Some of these so-called Islamists went as far as to declare on British television that Western civilization is merely a dirty restroom. Islam has never denied the achievements of other civilizations; nor has it denied the rich experience of other nations. Nor can we forget the negative impact of the threats made [by some Muslims] against gay people that they would throw them from the top of Big Ben in London. Others went as far as to threaten to segregate men from women in elevators. Had they studied the Prophet’s biography in Mecca and those of his Companions who migrated to Abyssinia, they would have realized that they [the Prophet and his Companions] took a different course of actions from these contemporary Muslims.

The reader will discover from reading these pages that most of my experience was in northern Afghanistan, specifically with the Islamic Association Front headed by Burhanuddin Rabbani, and the Islamic party headed by engineer Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.³ These two leaders have had no links with what is now called the Northern Alliance, formed in Afghanistan in the wake of the

Taliban coming to power in 1996. I cannot talk about this period in Afghan history since I was distant from its events and unaware of its details. In this I follow the divine command, “And never concern thyself with anything of which thou hast no knowledge” (Qur’an 17:36).

Also, my experience does not cover all the activities of the Arab volunteers, be it inside Afghanistan or in refugee camps in the Pakistan city of Peshawar where there ran medical, educational, communication services, and others. May God reward those volunteers for their good deeds. This is merely my experience of my humble efforts within the circle of my activities and I ask God for success and rightness.

ENCOUNTERING SHAYKH ABDULLAH AZZAM⁴

Jihad in Afghanistan went through two phases. The first began in 1975 when the Afghan Islamic movement, centered at the University of Kabul, an intellectual battleground between Islamists and communists, declared *jihad*. The Islamic movement then was headed by the dean of Shari’ah college, Ghulam Muhammad Niazi. Coming to power in 1973 in the wake of a military coup against the monarch, King Zahir Shah, President Muhammad Daoud Khan launched a series of arrests against the leaders of the Islamist movement, notably Ghulam Muhammad Niazi and engineer Habib al-Rahman, who were executed within two years of their imprisonment. Hence, the other leaders who escaped imprisonment, such as engineer Qalb al-Din Kekmatyar and Ahmad Shah Masood, began to seriously consider the possibility of armed resistance against the Daoud regime.

At the invitation of the then President of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, these leaders moved to Peshawar in order to find a safe refuge and organize resistance against the regime in Kabul. For his part, Bhutto sought to exploit the Islamic resistance to his own advantage by placing pressure on the regime in Kabul in order to gain from the territorial dispute with Afghanistan over Pashtunistan.

After a year preparing the ground for armed resistance, the Islamic group led by Hekmatyar carried out its first military action inside Afghanistan by attacking a government compound; however, it was forced to retreat due to the heavy resistance it encountered. The second group, headed by engineer Ahmed Shah Masood, went to the Panjshir valley in the north on July 28, 1975 and occupied most of the government installations there.⁵ However, this control lasted only a few days because the central authority in Kabul sent well-armed forces to regain control of the river.

Both groups of fighters had to return to Peshawar in the wake of their defeat, which marked the beginning of a split between Hekmatyar and Masood, especially after Masood accused Hekmatyar of being incompetent to lead the young fighters. Masood shared with me many of the stories about his differences with Hekmatyar, which I do not intend to repeat here, not because I don’t trust Masood’s reports for he always told the truth, but because I did not hear Hekmatyar’s side of the story. The Prophet, peace be upon him, says:

One should refrain from reporting anything he hears about a person. It is closer to me and to my religion those who report people's advantages than those who report what will distort people's dignity and character, for the believer finds excuses for his fellow believers while the unfair reports mistakes.

That is a summary of the Islamic movement's declaration of *jihad* in 1975, a movement that was then remote from the Afghani people, who remained indifferent to the battle that was won by Afghani President Daoud. One may derive a lesson from this experience, which is that any armed or political movement that does take the masses into account is doomed to failure.

However, the second Afghani *jihad* was different. This period was marked by many changes within Afghanistan: President Daoud and his family were killed in April 1978 and Noor Muhammad Taraki, leader of the socialist Khalq faction, was elected President in May of the same year. His rule lasted for only 16 months, for he was overthrown by Hafizullah Amin on September 16, 1979. These struggles within the socialist regime in Afghanistan drove people to protest on the streets of the capital, Kabul. The regime, in turn, crushed these demonstrations, resulting in the death and arrest of more than 10,000 people.

These events almost overwhelmed the communist regime in Kabul, which led the Soviet Union to invade Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, declaring Babrik Carmel as successor to Hafizullah Amin, whose death was announced three days after the Soviet invasion. The Soviet invasion forced the religious scholars (the *ulama*) of Afghanistan to issue a *fatwa* declaring that Communism was an atheistic creed and that the sole goal of the Soviet Union was to gain access to the oil wells in the Gulf. This *fatwa* ignited the Afghani masses and later the Muslim masses in the entire Muslim world, who wasted no time in extending their hands to their Afghani brothers. I, a humble person from Algeria with no knowledge of the history and geography of Afghanistan, heeded the cry for help of my brothers in that country.

In 1983, I went to a library in a nearby town and came across *Mujtama'* [a magazine published by the Islamic movement in Kuwait], which contained a *fatwa* backed by Ibn Baz, Mufti of Saudi Arabia, and other eminent scholars in Egypt stating that *jihad* in Afghanistan is a religious duty for every individual Muslim [*fard 'ayn*]. Among the signatories was Shaykh Abdullah Azzam, whose name had been well known to me even before he joined the Afghani *jihad*, through his tapes and books. At the time, I was affiliated to the Islamic movement intellectually but not organizationally. After a careful reading of the *fatwa*, I began to realize the dangers behind the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, such as eradicating the independence of Afghanistan by incorporating it within the Soviet Union and imposing an atheist creed on the Afghani people. These dangers convinced me of the reliability of this *fatwa*.

DEPARTURE TO AFGHANISTAN

In 1983, even before coming across this *fatwa*, I intended to go on pilgrimage (*hajj*). I then undertook the pilgrimage with the intention of finding a way to

get to Afghanistan. I happened to enter the well of Zamzam area [in Mecca] where I saw a man with his children. However, I was not sure whether he was Abdullah Azzam or not. I had seen him a year before in Medina where I had been on *'umrah* (a short pilgrimage). A friend of mine had pointed out to me a man at a distance from us in the dark and told me that it was Abdullah Azzam, who suddenly disappeared into the night. Doubting that he might be the man I had seen that dark night, I approached him and asked if he was indeed Abdullah Azzam. He replied: "Yes, I am Abdullah." Then I told him: "I have read the *fatwa* you and the other scholars issued about the obligation to go for *jihad* in Afghanistan and I am convinced by it but I don't know how to get there." He replied: "It is very easy. This is my phone number in Islamabad, I will return to Pakistan after the *haji*. When you get there, call me and then I will take you to the Afghani leaders in Peshawar." He asked me when I intended to travel and if I had the money to do so. I told him that I had enough money for the trip and I would be ready in 15 days.

After receiving my visa to Pakistan, I took a Kuwaiti airline flight to Karachi. On landing I felt lonely and alienated for I found myself a complete stranger in a country where people spoke English, which was unknown to me at the time. My sense of alienation increased when I left the airport, where I witnessed all sorts of contradictions—homeless and rich, Mercedes and carts drawn by animals. I was not familiar with such sights back home in Algeria.

After buying an internal ticket, I boarded a plane to Islamabad. On my arrival, I used a public phone to contact Shaykh Abdullah Azzam, who answered immediately. He remembered me right away, and then he asked me if I had eaten. When I said no, he said he would be waiting for me at his home for dinner. I took a cab to his house, located in a wealthy neighborhood, where he welcomed me so warmly that I forgot my homesickness. Over dinner, I met a number of guests who were his students at the International Islamic University in Islamabad. Shaykh Azzam invited me to stay in his home until the time of his departure to Peshawar because I would not recognize the Afghani leaders if I went there by myself. Three days later, we flew to Peshawar, a 20-minute flight from Islamabad, accompanied by Shaykh Azzam's son-in-law and a friend of his.

The night we flew to Peshawar, Shaykh Azzam introduced me to a new guest named Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi youth deeply enamored with the idea of Afghani *jihad*. Little did I know then that this man would become the most wanted in the world. What drew my attention was his absolute modesty and humble speech.

I hope the reader will forgive me for not covering in these pages the activities of the Mujahid Osama Bin Laden, for we operated in different fields: his activities were concentrated along the border in places such as Jalalabad and Jaji, while I was active in the north. I never had the opportunity to work with him in Afghanistan.

Here, I would like to take this opportunity to discuss Shaykh Azzam in brief only, for I know that I would not be able to do justice to him even if I were to write about him at length. I have known many virtuous people of

this *ummah* and it is no exaggeration when I say that I never knew a man with such traits and skills as those of Shaykh Azzam (may God have mercy on his soul).

As a scholar of *shari'ah*, Azzam never thought that his doctorate was sufficient to gain knowledge. In spite of his busy schedule and many concerns, he never wasted a minute in his pursuit of knowledge by reading as much as he could, a habit he maintained until his death. He was also an ascetic, fasting by day and praying at night while reciting the Qur'an as a means of strengthening his relationship to God. In addition, he was a *mujahid* in the true sense of *jihad* who sought death for the sake of God. Whenever a martyr was buried, he would weep profusely and exclaim: "This is irrefutable proof that I am not yet entitled to martyrdom." Furthermore, he was an outstanding athlete who paid careful attention to his physical fitness for he was the first to go to the gym after morning prayers. He was also a great orator, skilled in this art. In addition, he was an editor and author who would write a book every few months and who would edit almost half of the *Jihad* journal [published in Peshawar], in addition to other publications.

Shaykh Azzam was a very generous host. The poet Abdul Rahman Barood described him as appearing like the Prophet Joseph, who was known for being handsome, and for having the will and determination of Omar [the second caliph] and for being decisive in his life.

As pointed out previously, I cannot write more about Shaykh Azzam's virtues for this would require volumes.

NOTES

1. Excerpts from Abdullah Anas, *Wiladat al-Afghan al-'Arab* (London: Dar al-Saqi, 2002). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.
2. Here the author refers to Samuel P. Huntington's famous book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1996).
3. On these leaders of the Afghan *jihad*, see John Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), and Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, From the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004).
4. Abdullah Azzam was born on the West Bank in 1941. He was killed in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1989. According to Coll, "As the founder of Hamas, Azzam was increasingly in the crosshairs of Israel. Afghanistan's still-active intelligence service had him high on its enemies list." Coll, *Ghost Wars*, p. 204.
5. On the Panjshir Valley, see *ibid.*, pp. 115–18.

6

What *Jihad* Taught Me¹

Abdullah Azzam

Praise be to God; prayer and peace be upon the Messenger of God, and then:

Any person with insight knows that *jihad* in Afghanistan has become a unique school for the entire Muslim world. God has indeed honored me to be among the students who drink from the fountain of this *jihad* and get nourishment from its table. After six years of continuous *jihad* in Afghanistan, I can summarize the principal lessons I have learned so far from both Afghanistan and Palestine.

First: The tenet of divine predestination (*qadar*) is most clearly felt in the human soul when man is totally engaged on the battlefield of *jihad*. Furthermore, the tenet of reliance on the Lord of the universe does not come alive *except* in the battlefield, especially in the matter of one's appointed hour and sustenance, which represent the greatest pillars of human life. This creed dominates the pages of the Sacred Book (the Qur'an) in such verses as:

And no human being can die save by God's leave, at a preordained time.
(Qur'an 3:145)

And:

And in heaven is [the source of] your sustenance [on earth] and [of] all that you are promised [for your life after death]. (Qur'an 51:22)

People assert belief in the unity of God with the doctrine of the appointed hour and sustenance. However, *jihad* undoubtedly ensures the transformation of the doctrine of divine unity from a purely theoretical realm to a practical one, whereby words are transformed into reliance on God, which makes man take huge risks with his soul, wealth, and life. Man becomes like an unmovable mountain with his feet firmly set in the ground.

We have seen a number of examples of martyrs who vie for death and who even weep when prevented from engaging the enemy on the battlefield in the land of Afghanistan. This is best expressed by a certain Afghani, Mujahid Safillah Afdali, who for eight long years engaged the enemy on the front line. When asked about this by some *mujahidun*, he replied: "Didn't God, the exalted say 'But when the end of their term approaches, they can neither delay it by a single moment, nor can they hasten it'?" (Qur'an 16:61).

Sayyid 'Ala al-Din, another leader of *jihad*, also highlighted this by saying "Sleep is not possible without *jihad*" and "My ear enjoys hearing the rattle of swords; bloodshed rejoices my soul." As for the matter of sustenance, you will be astonished by the average Afghan's reliance on God in this. Once Sayyaf, a *jihad* leader, told me:

Sometimes, I reflect on the issue of how to send troops to the front and find enough food to support them and my mind goes blank from the sheer size of this task. Afterwards, I leave the Lord of the Universe to take care of it.

There is no doubt in my mind that the United States is busy chipping away at this Islamic doctrine of reliance on God by presenting itself as the custodian of Islamic *jihad* in Afghanistan.

THE GREAT COMPLEX

The biggest problem in the lives of the callers to God (*du'ah*) is fear, meaning worries about sustenance and death. If this problem is overcome, then all other complexes are dissolved. Nowadays, the complex of secret services, that is, fear from the harm that spies can do, has changed Islamic *da'wah* and the movement in that it now utilizes covert signals and cryptic codes in its communications. The secret services have indeed become like a phantom chasing callers to their sleep and making their lives quite difficult. However, engaging in *jihad* leads to perfect emancipation from fear. Praise be to God for delivering us from this complex. So, when someone tells me that so and so works for the secret services, it is as though the Abbaside poet Abu Tammam were to praise the Caliph al-Mu'tasim, meaning that it does not concern me or instill any fear in me.

Second, glory: *jihad* has taught me that the believer who is engaged in *jihad* is the most honored creature on earth because he risks his soul, which is the most precious thing he possesses, and each day he offers it to its Creator to take away. So, how is it possible for such a person to accept the rule of another human being? God spoke the truth when He said:

Be not, then, faint of heart, and grieve not: for you are bound to rise high if you are [truly] believers. (Qur'an 3:139)

I learned this lesson from a certain Afghani elder who, when approached by former US President Richard Nixon, refused to shake hands with him because Nixon was an infidel. Another Afghani elder refused to meet Ronald Reagan, although the latter had requested the meeting.

Third: The smallness and contempt for life in the sight of the believer, as reported in the following authentic *hadith*: "If this world meant no more to God than a mosquito's wing he would not give an infidel a sip of water." This *hadith* matches the psychology of the believer, his lofty concerns, and his high position in Islam. The lies of this world are trivial in his sight. One

of the greatest leaders of *jihad*, Sayyaf, said to one of the children of the rulers: “By God, a hundred thrones like that of your father’s are not equal to a moment of *jihad*.”

Fourth: I have learned that the true life of a human being is that of *jihad*; therefore, I consider myself to be only seven years old, six years spent in *jihad* in Afghanistan and one year and some months in Palestine. This is in accord with the opinion of some interpreters of the following verse:

O you who have attained to faith! Respond to the call of God and the Apostle whenever he calls you unto that which will give you life. (Qur’an 8:24)

Fifth: *Jihad* has taught me that Islam is like a tree that is nourished by blood only. If the supply of blood were to dry up, then the veins of this religion [Islam] would wither away and Islam would disintegrate.

Sixth: *Jihad* is an essential component of the contemporary Islamic movement, and the fire of *jihad* can be lit only by the Islamic movement. Furthermore, the Muslim masses constitute the fuel of *jihad*. If the Islamic movement does not strive to achieve its goals of *jihad*, then it will decline and be subject to sedition and be afflicted by internal conflict and polarization.

The Islamic movement represents the trigger that detonates tons of explosive. The masses are the explosions and the Islamic movement is the detonator that ignites them into action. It is quite impossible for an Islamic movement to wage a sustained war against a state, however small, if it cuts itself off from the masses—this is like a branch falling from a tree. A well-educated movement without *jihad* is extremely dangerous for the soul because it engenders arguments and spoils the heart.

Seventh: One can understand this religion [Islam] only through *jihad* and Islam can be realized through *jihad* alone. Those who spend their lives between pages of books and papers of jurisprudence cannot realize the nature of this religion except when they struggle to gain victory for this religion. Thus, this religion does not reveal its secrets to jurists. As Sayyid Qutb says:

It is outrageous ignorance of the nature of this religion for one to think that he could understand it while he is reading cold pages. Far from being derived from frozen structures, jurisprudence can only be derived from the running and warm spring of life, which meshes with the movement of this religion in the world of reality.

The above understanding is in agreement with the interpretation of the following verse according to classical Muslim exegetes, such as Hassan al-Basri al-Tabari and Ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with them):

From within every group in their midst, some shall refrain from going forth to war, and shall devote themselves [instead] to acquiring a deeper knowledge of the Faith. And [thus be able to] teach their homecoming

brethren, so that these [too] might guard themselves against evil. (Qur'an 9:122)

The party or the group that passes its time learning the ropes of jurisprudence is the one that runs away from *jihad*. In the past, when Muslims faced a difficult legal issue, they would bring it to the attention of the people of the frontiers, that is to say, those who waged *jihad*. In reality, it is only the pious who can distinguish between truth and falsehood in religion:

O you who have attained faith! If you remain conscious of God, He will endow you with a standard by which to discern the true from the false, and will efface your bad deeds, and will forgive you your sins: for God is limitless in His great bounty. (Qur'an 8:29)

Muslim theologian Ibn Taymiyyah says:

In issues relating to *jihad*, it is obligatory to refer to the opinion of people of true religion who have experience real life; and refer to neither those who have an apparent look at the religion nor those who lack practical experience.

This means that issues related to *jihad* can only be addressed by those scholars engaged in *jihad*. Subservience was the foundation of this religion in the past and jurisprudence is but a reflection of the real movement of this authentic Islamic society.

Eighth: *Jihad* has indeed taught me that the Muslim state can be established only through a long and sustained popular effort, which hones people's capabilities and their determination. It is only through genuine sacrifice and courage that true leadership will emerge. The caliph is one of those who wage *jihad*. The scale of preference among the Orthodox caliphs was determined by the number of battles they were engaged in. This is why in early Islam the consensus of the Muslim *ummah* was to choose Abu Bakr as the first caliph (following the death of the Prophet), and did not require any recommendation or election.

Ninth: *Jihad* has taught me that the Muslim state that emerges from it will not risk a *coup d'état* because everyone is armed and because its leadership has emerged from their work, patience, and sacrifice. It is also because gaining power did not take place in the dark through plotting, but came out clearly like the sun at noon. Leadership is for the strongest, the purest, the truest, and the simplest. Leadership belongs to the fittest, the purest in morality, the most truthful in pronouncements, and the most ascetic in life. This leadership has indeed paid a handsome price in order to establish the foundations of the Muslim state in Afghanistan, which it cannot give up easily. The leadership of *jihad* has emerged from the ranks of the warriors (*mujahidun*), who have led harsh and ascetic lives and who can continue in this course of action.

If you enter the house of Afghani warriors such as Sayyaf, Hikmatyar, Youness Khalis, and Rabbani, you realize that it is possible to live the life of the Umayyad Caliph Umar b. Abdelaziz in the twentieth century. I became privy to the personal expenses of Hikmatyar and his family, which were less than 400 riyals a month.

Tenth: *Jihad* has taught me that it is the best means to cultivate the human soul, since danger opens up the primordial nature of man to his Lord, and the terror of war links the heart directly to its Creator. The soul warms up in the heat of inquisition and bitterness of experience and becomes smooth and obedient to orders like metal—when it is hot it becomes flexible. *Jihad* polishes the soul and helps rid it of its delusions. It fills humans with fear and anticipation of death at any moment, which frees one from the inattention that results from comfort and welfare. Even disbelievers supplicate God in times of crisis. Nearly a week ago, two Russian planes were shot down over Pakistan and one of the surviving pilots told his Pakistani captors, “We are most fearful of Stinger missiles, which leads us to supplicate God from your Holy Scripture [the Qur’an], taught to us by Communists.”

Eleventh: I have also learned that *jihad* is the greatest factor behind the unity of the Muslim *ummah*. Nowadays, *jihad* in Afghanistan is the single most important issue preoccupying the entire Muslim world, which I see from the huge number of letters that reach our journal, *Jihad*, from across the Muslim world.

Twelfth: I have learned that leadership and responsibility should be entrusted to righteous and truthful people, who are the most capable of safeguarding people’s souls, honor, and money. Some of the leaders of the Afghani groups were inclined to support the traditional leadership from the *ancien régime*, who are called lords and representatives. However, these traditional leaders would defect to the communist camp with their weapons overnight for transient greed and glory.

Thirteenth: I have learned from *jihad* that education is essential prior to holding weapons. For those who hold weapons without education are like armed gangs who stop people sleeping peacefully, threaten their security, and scare them by day and night. You notice this when comparing two leaders in Afghanistan: one was raised in the Islamic movement and the other was not. So, you would find people in the area under the control of the first leader extremely at ease, while the complaints of those who live in the area under the control of the second are endless.

Fourteenth: I have learned that patience is the backbone of *jihad* and even the marrow of this religion. There is no *jihad* without patience. You can learn this from those who spent ten years in *jihad* suffering hunger, sickness, and nakedness. It is astonishing to hear the story of conquering a certain castle in Afghanistan, which is situated in a large terrain that made it difficult for fighters to enter—they spent a year and a half digging a 10 km tunnel in order to enter the citadel, if God so wills.

Fifteenth: *Jihad* has taught me that the big halos drawn around such superpowers as the US and the Soviet Union are nothing compared to God’s

overwhelming power and His support for the believers. Let anyone who doubts my argument inquire of the Russians about their fear and trepidation of the Afghani warriors. There is no doubt that Afghani *jihād* has destroyed forever the Russian legend.

Oh God! Glory and praise to You.
 I bear witness that there is no God except You.
 Grant us forgiveness, and I repent to You.

NOTE

1. Excerpts from Abdullah Azzam, *Fi Khiddam al-Ma'rakah* (Peshawar: Markaz al-Shahid Azzam al-I'lamī, 1993). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.

Preparing the Appropriate Climate for *Jihad*¹

Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti

The first steps of *jihad*: Having established a clear idea about the true meaning of *jihad* and the way each of its kinds leads to the other, there remain two more concluding subjects:

1. The appropriate climate which must be established as a precondition to the achievement of the kind of *jihad* permitted by Allah.
2. The first exemplary *jihad*, which imposes itself on the Arab and Muslim worlds, is represented in the Palestinian problem and the Zionist pillage of this sacred land and the dispersal of its people. Here we have a number of questions requiring answers: *How can we make this problem [of Palestine] a field of methodology from which Muslims can draw an example to fulfill the injunction of jihad? What is the attitude of Islamic shari'ah to the peace treaty which Egypt signed with the Zionist state and which the West is trying to impose on us today?*

This chapter tackles the first issue, the establishment of the appropriate condition for *jihad*.

Combative *jihad* is the second kind of *jihad* (having established the first kind which is peaceful *jihad* or *jihad* by preaching). This type of *jihad* is a common rule addressed to the Muslim community represented by its imam. Unlike the other rules of *salat* (prayers), *hajj* (pilgrimage), and *zakat* (alms), *jihad* is not an individualistic rule. Hence the obligation of *jihad* requires an appropriate social atmosphere; and achieving this requires a certain independent kind of *jihad*. Briefly, it needs a faithful and honest group strong enough to form both the framework and the unifying factor of the Islamic state or society. Ultimately, this group can fill the internal gaps through which the enemy may find its way to cause problems and create chaos. This body can never be founded by disputes or fighting, nor can it be an explosive creation erupting into existence like a new world. It requires much suffering and perseverance, that is by conveying Allah's religion and *shari'ah*; by following the various educational methods which purify the soul and help to establish, in people's hearts, the love of Almighty Allah. Conveyors of this message should not seek any self-secularistic interest or goal to gain worldly authority. The aim is, hopefully, a great, independent kind of *jihad*, but most people seem to be heedless of its significance. However, this kind of *jihad* needs to be clarified as follows.

Jihad was legislated to defend something that already exists: by this we mean combative or violent *jihad*, which Allah devised only after He had endowed Muslims with both a territory and a state, and after He had strengthened Islam in their hearts. As such, Islam was/is a religion represented in a controlling *shari'ah* and an authoritative system, as has been shown above. This means that Muslims possessed a kind of “wealth” far more valuable than worldly treasure and funds—such a “fortune” would become simultaneously a target for enemies to possess and a source of anxiety to them; consequently, it is liable to attack by this enemy through various means.

In early Islam, when the Prophet and his Companions came to settle in Medina, all the forces of evil conspired against them, aiming at destroying the God-given religion and spoiling the territory in which Muslims had founded their state. It was really the “wealth” which had fired the enemy’s ambitions against Islam. And it was because of such aggression that Allah legislated *jihad* to Muslims to defend their endowment of land and state—this is what we mean by “*jihad* was legislated to defend something that already exists.”

We must always bear in mind that combative *jihad* was never formulated to found a state or gain “wealth” out of nothing. Allah’s Prophet never fought to gain a territory for Islam, or to found a state, or create a mass by whose power he would constitute a political body. It was only after Allah had given him land and a state that the Prophet resolved to defend and guard these possessions.

What exists today for the sake of which we must make jihad? What really exists is Islam’s territorial abode (*dar al-Islam*) because the once-united territory has been divided into small, independent territories; nonetheless, this remains the most durable “wealth” Muslims possess today.

The second existing thing, emerging from the first, is the Islamic regimes, which are represented in countries belonging to Islam, regardless of whether these regimes apply *shari'ah* or not.

Jihad is a pre-eminent, legitimate obligation when the defense of these two rights is called for. *Jihad* is a legal duty against anyone who lies in wait to attack what Islamic jurists call “*dar al-Islam*.” We must bear in mind that if Islam’s right to possess and rule a certain territory is an established one, then this territory becomes a permanent *dar al-Islam*. However, in the event that this land has fallen/falls under enemy occupation, it does not change the fact that, ultimately, it belongs to Muslims whose duty is to continue fighting the occupants and aggressors by all means possible in order to regain it.

Most jurists, except the Hanafites, state that Islamic territory can never become an enemy’s domain (*dar al-Harb*). The Hanafites, however, proclaim that *dar al-Islam* could become *dar al-Harb* in any of the following three cases:

1. If non-Islamic rules are performed [in a certain state] instead of Islamic rules;
2. If the territory concerned is adjacent to an enemy’s territory;
3. If both Muslims and *dhimmis* believe their lives are at risk.

If all these three conditions are fulfilled, Muslims would, according to the Hanafite school, presumably, no longer be in a position or under an obligation to restore it to the domain of Islam.

Jihad is also permissible against anyone who tries to destroy any of the Islamic states, no matter to what extent any of these states fail to apply Islamic principles and rules, so long as both its leaders and people did originally belong to Islam. This mostly applies to those who lie in wait for Islam and its followers like the colonialist states today. Hence, *jihad* becomes justifiable; Muslims must defend both land and state against enemies by all possible means.

Talking about combative *jihad*, we might ask ourselves: *What methods does jihad have to use to compel deviant, aimless, and sinful people to submit to Allah's commands and orders?* Of course, in this case, we must bear in mind that Arab and Islamic countries abound with people who were brought up in non-Islamic societies (or enemy countries). These people could have mixed ideas about Islam and its true sources. There is no doubt that Muslim leaders and preachers bear the responsibility of restoring those people to the domain of Islam and making them conform to its rules and customs. *But must these leaders and preachers achieve all this through violent jihad? Should jihad be waged to restrain deviating people or depose a government and replace it with an Islamist one which could force people to submit to religion and commit themselves to its rules?*

As a matter of fact, *jihad* was never devised for such purposes: it was authorized to defend something that already existed, not to bring something into existence. Had this case of *jihad* been otherwise, the Prophet would have been the first to have used it. He would have been the first to have fought the leaders of unbelief in Mecca and would have controlled them by Islamic rules in order to establish an Islamic state there, but he never did that. Hence, *jihad* was only permitted to maintain already existing possessions and not gain new ones. But one might ask again, *Did not the Prophet himself send forces to areas outside the domain of the Islamic frontiers? Did he not sometimes lead some of these detachments with the aim of compelling people to join Islam, consequently, founding an Islamic state out of non-existence?*

Which method should be used to guide people and establish Islamic rule? The method is to follow the example of the Prophet who guided the deviants and unbelievers to Islam in increasing numbers until they formed a nation and, consequently, a state.

The Prophet continued to conduct such a unique peaceful *jihad* until he and his Companions achieved the most appropriate atmosphere for the second kind of *jihad*, combative *jihad*. Today, what we, as Muslims, lack are men willing to follow the unique example of the Prophet to create a suitable environment for this latter kind of *jihad*, by means of which we could fulfill the ultimate aim of the Holy War, that is, victory or success.

We have on our Muslim land many sacred things—both physical and spiritual. Our duty is to defend and, if necessary, fight for these God-given

possessions. However, it seems that there is no Islamic community today where faith and consciousness are mature enough to constitute a comprehensive unity aiming at creating the appropriate climate for the Islamic *jihad* that could shield these sacred things from the enemy's plans and dangerous tactics.

To follow the Prophet's example of establishing *jihad* requires another *jihad* of the kind the Prophet himself (aided by the minority of his Companions) conducted in the face of all kinds of difficulties and confrontations for its achievement. Sometimes such encounters were harder than real conflict in the successive battles which later took place, during the Prophet's life. Despite the many calls to arms, the kind of *jihad* which provides the best setting for the desired battle is missing or, rather, it is considered missing because of the very limited number of people who are really concerned about it, or even practice it.

There are a great many Muslims who now have no clear concept about the Islamic system or the Islamic state which we are striving for. There are a great many Muslims who are attracted to democracy and its slogans. They, for instance, see how Islamists call for and insist on the application of democratic rule, so that when they [Islamists] seize power it is in the name of democracy. The proponents of democracy have always wondered whether *the Islamists would rule democratically if they gained power or not*. Many such questions remain unanswered.

Many Muslims nowadays are obsessed with Western civilization. They believe that we should apply the Western banking system (charging interest) and the Western mode of social relationships between men and women. They also believe that going back to the restriction of *hijab* is a kind of punishment which is almost impossible to impose.

There are many Muslims who have within them a struggle between the religious feeling that Allah is One and materialistic conceptions of life and nature, which deal mostly in terms of materialism. *But where are those who claim to be practicing jihad when trying to solve the problems of these [secularist] people in an attempt to free them from the domination of Western civilization and its legacy; who allege to fortify the roots of faith that Allah is One in the hearts of these people; who pretend to convince them that the Islamic state is a concrete, achievable reality; that the whole Islamic system is well disposed to the humanity of all kinds of people at large?* Surely, what is urgently needed is peaceful *jihad*, which is the safest key to the second kind of *jihad*, the combative one, which is the overriding subject of many of the Islamists who endlessly talk about it today. Combative *jihad* can never be conducted by other than committed believers who, supposedly, conducted the original kind of *jihad* (*jihad* by preaching), for how could we impose an Islamic system on people before acquainting them with this system?

The enemies of Islam are enlisting "an army of temptations," which will be their first "arsenal" with which they can confront their Muslim enemies. *How can these Muslims liberate themselves from these "lures and their fires" unless they are safeguarded by a sublime Islamic education and shielded with an honest submissiveness to Almighty Allah's will?* A great many paradoxical ideologies and creeds are "cast" into the "arena" of Islamic thought to create

divisions between various groups, in consequence of which they fight one another. *How can these warring factions, then, unite on the one path of jihad in the cause of Allah?* Wherever we look we see no one who might be concerned enough to solve any of these dilemmas, no matter how serious and grave they might sound and no matter how hard the colonialist circles might try to maintain, if not add to, these problems in the Islamic society.

In fact, what we hear in our Islamic societies is no more than loud, rhetorical, and stirring words and slogans; but when it comes to action, these calls are no more than accusations of blasphemy and treason committed by rulers. As a result, they wage war against these rulers. Surely, such rage and rhetoric, besides the wars against rulers, bear no sound fruit. It gives no true guidance to errant, apprehensive, and sinful people.

It is a known fact that rulers, in every age and in every place, basically belong to the kind of people they govern. Good and evil, in both rulers and ruled, stem from the core of the broad base in every society upwards in a hierarchical fashion. The best solution, as such, is that if there is unbelief, disloyalty, sin, and dissension, it must all be addressed by dialogue and guidance, which must start from the wide popular base and work up to the ruling political elite. Of course, while calling for such a dialogue, there should be patience, endurance, resolution, and courage in the face of difficulties and troubles. Naturally, if we followed the peaceful methods of persuasion, good results would be achieved; that is what Allah promised us. The result: a solid Islamic atmosphere will prevail; a fruitful and successful *jihadic* result can easily be achieved. Unless this kind of Islamic climate spreads in a clearly conducive manner, these Islamic groups will remain in a state of stasis; of *jihad* we will hear nothing but slogans. What we might see instead are problems and clashes occurring between these Muslim people and their rulers, and/or among Muslims themselves. Hence, Islam and Muslims will be destroying themselves; the colonialists, happy enough by events such as these, will have nothing to do than to sit and watch the outcome and prepare to benefit from the ensuing chaos.

I now call to mind a chapter in the biography of Salah al-Din (Saladdin), which reflects the great care he took in preparing the exact atmosphere for the kind of *jihad* we are talking about here; namely, the solid base of *jihad* and its most appropriate form to suit every age and time. Saladdin visited the foothills of Quassian mountain (in Damascus) and the suburbs of Cairo (in Egypt) and, in both places, established legal religious sciences. Saladdin supervised, directed, and sometimes cooperated in the organization and teaching of the courses of these establishments. Sometimes, this Muslim leader attended the classes himself to add to his knowledge and education. It was out of these religious teaching centers in Damascus and Cairo that Saladdin formed the army with which he faced the Crusaders. We probably all know the success that both Saladdin and Nur al-Din al-Shaid achieved in ridding the Holy Land of the aggression of the Crusaders. The secret of their success was the essential founding of a good climate of *jihad* by preaching, followed by combative *jihad*, which was the natural outcome of this climate.

Setting up Islamic educational institutes is an indispensable factor, but is by no means sufficient to establish the appropriate atmosphere for *jihad*. The various other factors are to be found in the traditions of our Islamic nation which are available to the leaders of *da'wah* and education in the nation.

The most important problems which delay the founding of the appropriate climate of jihad: despite the variety and abundance of these problems, we can point out the most urgent and serious of these problems. We present here the best methods to overcome these problems, so that our Muslim brothers, who are aiming to gain power and establish an Islamic society, can exert their best efforts to minimize these problems as far as possible and establish the best mode of *jihad* for which they must have been calling in order to create the Islamic society they dream about. Here are the most serious of these problems and the best tactics to overcome them:

The first problem: a divided Islamic nation (the state of disunity from which Muslims suffer): This takes two forms—

1. Division at the level of countries and governments. It is a fact that colonial establishments did their best to create this state of separation by various means, the last of which was the [second] Gulf crisis, its war, and its consequences. Of course, I am in no position to explain this kind of disunity between governments and countries, nor do we (individuals and scholars of humanities and knowledge) have the means to solve it.
2. Division at the level of groups, creeds, and sects. The colonial establishments not only have a hand in dividing Muslims at the level of states and regimes, but also have a hand in the division of Muslims into groups and sects. Some examples have been given earlier.

But what is the solution to this sectarian “tearing up”? And what remedy is needed to restore these divided sects and groups to the “sanctuary” of Islamic unity? The primary remedy is that the leaders of these groups and sects should purify their hearts by showing self-denial by invoking Allah’s surveillance upon them. They should invoke their position in front of Him in the hereafter for reward or penalty ...

The second most urgent remedy is that the leaders of the various Islamic sects and groups must have full knowledge of the priority of rules of *shari’ah* and its common purposes. Details about this are available in the fundamentals of Islamic law under the name of “Aims.” ... What we see nowadays is a disregard of the major aims, such as safeguarding the nation’s unity, and a concentration on minor, individualistic judgments and a persistent call for others to follow it.

Minor, individualistic judgments have always been controversial. In the past, it was the norm for most Muslim scholars to overlook the less significant issues when they faced major ones; sometimes, they would follow a common judgment. Those scholars must have been fully aware of the need to maintain their social and ideological unity and avoid differences of individual outlook.

The third significant solution is that these leaders should differentiate between an Islamic course of action and political activities at the basic level of Islamic *da'wah*, so that Islamic activity has a clear agenda, that is, calling people to join the truth (Islam), preaching to them, and commanding them to do good deeds and abstain from evil ones. The reason for this recommended differentiation is that Islam's political activities have mixed with Islamic activities; that the latter will be distributed between the various political terms and its various tactical moves. Islamic preachers must, in this case, be divided between different political centers, something which will nonetheless affect the state of the Islamists affiliated to these centers.

This is what was seen nowadays: Islamic groups are always different from each other, and in this they have no choice since they originally had divergent trends. If these groups follow the three remedies cited above, they will be able to dedicate their work wholly and achieve solidarity, God willing.

The second problem: the influence of Western civilization and its moral effect [on Muslims]: this is a common moral and ideological problem and its epidemic is about to reach almost all people at all levels except for the few who have safeguarded themselves by continuously taking refuge with Allah and adhering firmly to His commandments and teachings. It is a widespread phenomenon, one that forms a significant climate for the interest of the West and their colonial establishment. It is in such a climate that they conduct their activities and from among the victims of this climate they are able to choose agents and employees. Hence, it is essential for the preachers of *da'wah* and for Allah's claimants of *jihad* to start their mission by purging society of this dilemma and uprooting its causes and reasons. It is the right of everybody to undertake this task; the method is recognizable, easy, and within reach of any Muslim who chooses to follow it faithfully.

Because of the nature from which Allah created man, there is hardly a human being trapped by the attractive, fanciful intrigues of Western civilization who is not liable to obey Allah's commands and follow His straight path. Since the makers of this civilization are liable to such submission to God's rules, then Muslims, who are deceived by the vanities of this civilization, are supposed to be more ready for submission to His will.

The problem of these Western vanities and ornaments is that they have penetrated deeply into our societies, influencing especially those who have no religious teachers capable of instilling the fear of Allah in them and warning them of the likely dangers of the lures of Western temptations.

If only Islam preachers in our societies were to dedicate their efforts to meeting the errant ones in clubs, markets, schools, and universities, preaching to them, guiding them to the truth of Islam, and opening up a dialogue with them in order to dispel their doubts, for no other reason but sincerity to Allah, then these straying ones would inevitably listen attentively and follow the proofs and advice of these preachers. As a result, faith and guidance would penetrate their hearts and minds: it is a law of Allah that He sanctifies some people to preach and rewards some for the sake of others. Nowadays, it is hard

to find anyone who can revive the method, style, or manner that the Prophet used in his preaching for the cause of Allah. We can hardly find a single person in our societies who can follow in the footsteps of the Prophet's Companions, such as Mus'a ibn Umair, Mu'as ibn Jabal, Abu Musa al-Asha'ari, Abdu-llah ibn 'Umar, Abdu-llah ibn Mas'ud, to mention only a few ...

The third problem: the doubts with which Muslim brains are stuffed and through which problems are created. This comprises various confusions emerging mainly from the Western media, whether publicly or privately; whether through known organizations or underground ones—all in a furious, incessant campaign. Undoubtedly, this is a powerful Holy War, but it is a war that aims to destroy Islam and its infrastructure. Hence, one might ask: where is the counter-Holy War? Where is the *jihad* that refutes this doubt and disproves this falseness and futility in the same informative way conducted by the plotters and deceivers? *Where is the jihad of academic dialogue and logic that can firmly evaluate the religion of Islam beyond doubt, inequity, and fables so that nobody can feel doubt about it?* [Unfortunately,] we hear nothing but revilement of Muslim rulers and talks and speeches about establishing Islamic rule.

I am in no position here to answer all misconceptions about Islam—that is beyond the aim of this chapter; nonetheless, some examples might be mentioned, if only to draw attention to how serious they are in case they are left to influence simple and naïve people, to refute the feigned falsity and delusion weaved around the truths of Islam and its humanistic, just principles, and to show the degree to which these Islamists neglect this serious *jihadic* duty. It is a duty which, at Allah's command, falls to the religious scholars and preachers. In His words: “And remember when Allah took a Covenant from those who were given the Scripture to make it (the news of the coming of the Prophet Muhammad) known and clear to mankind and not to hide it ...”

Here are two examples which show the clamor of the biased people who act on their own judgment of religion and its rules. The aim here is to prove the falseness of this tumult and sweep away the uncertainties which might find their way into the minds of some ignorant people. My second aim is to guide all men of Islamic *da'wah* and those who are interested in establishing Islamic rule to the best way of cleansing Muslim thoughts of such falsehoods and negativities; and in consequence, to bring an end to the deeds of promoters of false thoughts against Islam.

NOTE

1. Excerpts from Muhammad Sa'id al-Buti, *Jihad in Islam: How to Understand and Practice It*, tr. Munzer Adel Absi (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr Publishing House, 2006).

Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah

In their struggle against arrogant powers (*quwa mustakbirah*), exploited nations (*shu'ub mustada'fah*) have been totally preoccupied with the question of power; in their daily vocabulary, there is a huge distinction between power and weakness. The most challenging task facing proponents of justice and freedom who are waging a bitter battle of emancipation is to undertake the correct application of their theories into practice. In other words, we must transform the Islamic discourse on power into a comprehensive educational movement with adequate curricula so that it can function at various levels of action. It is quite dangerous for weakness to impose itself on the Muslim *ummah* in the context of its underdevelopment, pressures from the arrogant, or apathy in confronting challenges.

Some transform enlightened Muslim concepts, the product of balanced activism, into negativities that do not reflect the original intention. They drive a wedge between such terms as “moderation,” “pietism,” “devotion,” and “flexibility,” and the domain of “revolution,” “resistance,” and overcoming challenges. Therefore, a word such as *jihad* remains merely an epistemological term without practical and dynamic connotations. Proponents of such an approach are preoccupied with self-preservation and neglect their duty to be faithful to the Islamic message, the Muslim *ummah*, and to make just decisions.

The Muslim personality moves in small circles of regionalism which makes it quite impossible for Muslim citizens across Muslim states to cooperate on shared solutions to common problems. We also find that the nationalist question takes the lion's share of attention in the Muslim mind, while they forget the Islamic dimension in meeting the challenges of the day. In other words, the nationalist question takes idiosyncratic primacy, whereby interests, realities, and challenges are thought of in national terms instead of within a Muslim scope. Therefore, the battlefield becomes political and regional in nature to the extent that parochial contradictions prevail, while the Muslim identity deeply and extensively disconnects from itself. The scope of Muslim identity in terms of idea, action, soul, and life shrinks and weakens. The Muslim identity ceases to be a unified body or individual members of the same body. The reason for the weakness of Muslims in our age is the division of the Muslim world into small, independent states in terms of their economies, politics, culture, peace and war—a fact that prevents this world from seeking to unite and cooperate.

In the context of the production of power, we believe that it is necessary to move in the direction that presents Islam as an independent economic,

political, and conceptual formula and a project capable of confronting challenges emanating from unbelieving, arrogant powers. This is the only alternative for Muslims today. Islam should enter the battlefield from its position of openness to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Therefore, we must focus on the Muslim personality and activism so that no Muslim will be deceived by the arrogant powers.

In order to achieve Muslim unity, we must study its economic, cultural, and political aspects. In terms of economic production, it is necessary to consider that all wealth in a particular Muslim country belongs to Muslims at large. This unity can be achieved through economic integration among Muslim nations. In the same vein, sectarianism should not polarize the Muslim masses, but should instead open up activist Muslim thought and work for the welfare of the Muslim people. Power in Islam is based on cooperation and integration.

It is possible to appreciate the regional nature of differences among Muslims. However, unbelieving and arrogant powers tend to exploit political differences among Muslims and turn them into something doctrinal. We must develop and strengthen our consciousness in order to understand Islam in its unifying, general concept, so that we do not give our opponents the chance to claim that there are multiple "islams" vying for power, and not only one Islam.

Mobilizing Muslim unity in the context of general Islamic principles in relation to *shari'ah*, the common welfare, economics, and politics would convince Muslims before all others that their differences revolve around detailed legal issues, not general principles. Power in the Islamic context can ensue from the above understanding.

There are multiple discourses of power, and the Islamic discourse has to deal with unity, movement, and challenge. Our society faces huge challenges and thus we cannot afford to relax. It is a society at war and not peace. By war, I mean emancipatory war, not offensive war. Our opponents are pursuing Islam everywhere to weaken its intellectual core, its center, and its people, crush its spirit and bring an end to the movement so that disbelief prevails and Islam is removed from real life and confined to small circles.

In the battle against the powers of arrogance, where does man stand? Should man become submissive in order to be realistic? Some people look at the issue from the perspective of "fate and divine decree" or "God's will." They claim that since our destiny is intertwined with that of oppressive power, we must accept this condition as a divine decree. The alternative is that man should rebel against oppression and attempt to change reality from multiple positions or directions; if he fails in one, then he should try elsewhere.

Where does Islam stand in all of this? Does Islam support rebellion or submission, or both? This is a real social issue with many philosophical connotations.

To my mind, the authentic position of Islam lies in rebellion and movement in order to topple oppression and dictatorship. It is possible to overcome weakness; we should not justify apathy and retreat. The following Qur'anic verses best expresses this:

Behold, of those whom the angels gather in death while they are still sinning against themselves, [the angels] will ask, "What was wrong with you?" They will answer: "We were too weak on earth." [The angels] will say: "Was, then, God's earth not wide enough for you to forsake the domain of evil? For such, then, the goal is Hell—and how evil a journey's end! But excepted shall be the truly helpless—be they men or women or children who cannot bring forth any strength and have not been shown the right way: as for them, God may well efface their sin—for God is indeed an absolver of sins, much-forgiving."²

The above verse talks about the obligations of weak people on the Day of Judgment and how they are judged for their submission to injustice and oppression in this life. People do injustice to themselves by submitting to oppressors' dictates, thinking that their inertia gives them an excuse to submit to "reality." The above verse, however, stipulates how people should face up to moments of responsibility. They suggest that there is the option of emigration if one cannot react internally. The earth is so vast that whoever wants to can emigrate to look for opportunities elsewhere to establish justice and truth on earth far away from pressures that may make him deviate. Then, if he dies while on his journey, he will be rewarded for migrating for the sake of God and His Messenger.

The Holy Qur'an exempts only old men, women, and children from this responsibility, since they naturally lack the strength to act. A great number of Qur'anic verses discuss the undeniable position of weakness in which the oppressed find themselves because of the arrogance of the elites. They submit to the plans, deeds, and deviations of arrogant powers. These verses present the dialogue that these two groups of people will have on the Day of Judgment, urging the weak to revolt against the power of the strong in this life before they have to face God on the Day of Judgment. These verses also urge them to use the power God has given them to withstand small and large pressures. For the weakness that leads to deviation, as long as there is an ability to resist, does not justify deviation in God's sight. The individual has full responsibility. God says:

And all [mankind] will appear before God [on the Day of Judgment]; and then the weak will say unto those who had gloried in their arrogance: "Behold, We were but your followers: can you, then, relieve us of something of God's chastisement?" [And the others] will answer: "If God would but show us the way [to salvation], we would indeed guide you [towards it]. It is [now] all one, as far as we are concerned, whether we grieve impatiently or endure [our lot] with patience: there is no escape for us!"³

In this respect, the Qur'an sets out to deepen the sense of revolt the weak and oppressed feel for their oppressors, who mislead them. Furthermore, the Qur'an draws a vivid picture of the responsibility of each group in this

situation: the responsibility of the oppressors who oppress and the responsibility of the oppressed who accept their oppressors' dictates and leadership.

Also, the Qur'an personalizes the situation by inviting the oppressed to rid themselves of the weak who submit to the authority of the oppressor.

[On that day] it will come to pass that those who had been [falsely] adored shall disown their followers, and the latter shall see the suffering [that awaits them], with all their hopes dashed! And then those followers shall say: "Would that we had a second chance [in life], so that we could disown them as they have disowned us!" Thus will God show them their works [in a manner that will cause them] bitter regrets; but they will not come out of the fire.⁴ And [Abraham] said: "You have chosen to worship idols instead of God for no other reason than to have a bond of love in the life of this world, between yourselves [and your forebears]: but then, on Resurrection Day, you shall disown one another and curse one another—for the goal of you all will be the fire, and you will have none to succor you."⁵

THE QUR'AN MOBILIZES THE WEAK

The Qur'an starts to actively mobilize the oppressed from within through many channels that concentrate on emptying souls from any feeling of weakness, which is the reason for their obedience to their oppressors. The Qur'an, then, narrates the story of the pagan idols, equivalent to the oppressors nowadays, who are worshipped instead of God by the weak. In a way, the Qur'an cuts off their source of power by arguing that life and death are not bound to them, and their contributions to the welfare of society amount to naught. The source of everything is God, Who is the Omniscient and owner of the universe. This is what the following verses clearly explain:

Say: "Would you worship, beside God, aught that has no power either to harm or to benefit you—when God alone is all-hearing, all-knowing?"⁶

You worship only [lifeless] idols instead of God, and [thus] you give visible shape to a lie! Behold, those [things and beings] that you worship instead of God have it not in their power to provide sustenance for you: seek, then, all [your] sustenance from God, and worship Him [alone] and be grateful to Him: [for] unto Him you shall be brought back!⁷

And yet, some choose to worship, instead of Him, imaginary deities that cannot create anything but are themselves created, and have it not within their power to avert harm from, or bring benefit to, themselves, and have no power over death, nor over life, nor over resurrection!⁸

Say: "Call upon those [beings] whom you imagine [to be endowed with divine powers] beside God: they have not an atom's weight of power either in the heavens or on earth, nor have they any share in [governing] either, nor does He [choose to] have any helper from among them."⁹

The Qur'anic narrative style describes the idols as feeble no matter how strong they may seem, for they cannot even benefit or harm themselves, much less others. This style intensifies in many verses to the point where the Qur'an calls on the oppressed to throw off their sense of inferiority *vis-à-vis* the oppressor and not be deceived by them. The oppressed are asked to compare themselves to the oppressor and reach the conclusion that the arrogant possess no esoteric or mysterious, supernatural power. They are simply finite human beings. Hence, why submit to them?

Verily, all those whom you invoke beside God are but created beings like yourselves: invoke them, then, and let them answer your prayer—if what you claim is true!¹⁰

Some may question the preceding interpretation of the Qur'anic verses by saying that they fight against worshipping other than God and have nothing to do with the oppressor and oppressed. The answer to this is that paganism was the result of the pagans' belief in the absolute power of gods made from stone or blood, which is exactly like the state of the oppressed, who blindly worship their oppressor. This is a kind of classical paganism. Therefore, the Qur'an tries to address this sense of weakness from within the oppressed and empties their souls from any feeling of fear when they cease to acknowledge the power of their oppressors.

THE POWER OF THE OPPRESSED IN CONFRONTING THEIR TYRANTS

In empowering them to act strongly against their oppressors, the Qur'an permits the oppressed to fight for their right to remain in their land and freely practice their religion. The following verse states:

Permission [to fight] is given to those against whom war is being wrongfully waged and, verily, God has indeed the power to succor them—those who have been driven from their homelands against all right for no other reason than their saying. “Our Sustainer is God!” For, if God had not enabled people to defend themselves against one another, all monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques—in [all of] which Gods name is abundantly extolled—would surely have been destroyed [by now]. And God will most certainly succor him who succors His cause: for, verily, God is most powerful, almighty.¹¹

God allows them to fight, pointing to the aspects of this permission and its causes, which are represented in the defense of their legitimate right to protect their homes and be free to practice their creed and work. God has promised them victory over their enemies if, in their means and goals, they follow the path God has assigned them so as to be sure that the process of resistance of the weak against their oppressors matches the natural law of life. Otherwise, no law would be resisted and no morals would endure. It is naturally and

legitimately justifiable to fight and kill the enemies of freedom and life, for that is the realistic way to build a life and have it continue on the basis of a just law. Again, the verse reassures these fighters that victory is God's promise to those who support Him. Also, the verse reassures fighters who support God by taking victory that this is God's promise; it may be delayed, but it is imminent. The intent here is to lift people's morale on the one hand, and on the other, to point to the fact that this fight is God's and is well taken care of. In this, the Qur'an stirs the souls of the weak and helps them generate their own power to fight their oppressors, relying first and foremost on God and on themselves. The Qur'an contends that weak people have this power but they ignore it because they are possessed by the power of their oppressors, and this leads ultimately to their failure. We have noticed that some Qur'anic verses suggest that victory over oppressors represents a great Islamic value, as expressed in the following verse:

And who, whenever tyranny afflicts them, defend themselves.¹²

Many Qur'anic verses deal with pious believers who have been granted God's forgiveness and approval. Likewise, many others point out that the oppressed are not responsible for the chaos that results from their fight against oppression, for the main responsibility falls on the oppressors who are the cause of all the chaos:

Yet indeed, as for any who defend themselves after having been wronged—no blame whatever attaches to them: blame attaches but to those Who oppress [other] people and behave outrageously on earth, offending against all right: for them there is grievous suffering in store!¹³

The Qur'anic approach reaches its pinnacle when God highlights a divine promise, or when He takes an oath upon Himself, that the oppressed will indeed seize the reigns of authority on earth, as stated in the following verse:

But it was Our will to bestow Our favor upon those [very people] who were deemed [so] utterly low in the land, and to make them forerunners in faith and to make them heirs [to Pharaoh's glory], and to establish them securely on earth, and to let Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts experience through those [children of Israel] the very thing against which they sought to protect themselves.¹⁴

Although the above verse is mentioned in the story of the Children of Israel, it represents a general rule of God's law on earth; this is meant to prevent an unjust power from prevailing, as is stated in the following verses,

For it is by turns that we apportion unto men such days [of fortune and misfortune].¹⁵

Say: "O God, Lord of all dominion! Thou grantest dominion unto whom Thou willest, and takest away dominion from whom Thou willest; and Thou exaltest whom Thou willest, and abasest whom Thou willest. In Thy hand is all good. Verily, Thou hast the power to will anything."¹⁶

COMMANDING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL

Islam commands good and forbids evil, making this a religious duty on Muslims, as is the case with any other religious duty that requires punishment of the individual in the event of disobedience; he or she is totally responsible for his or her passive stance if in fact he or she has the means to take counteraction.

In sum, God orders all Muslims to track down any form of social deviation, be it religious deviation represented in the revolt against God's will in matters of worship and interaction, collective deviation represented in social behavior against the welfare of both the individual and society, or political deviation represented by the political oppression of weak people. Muslims must fight against unjust rule, which is a process of oppression of people and country in the interest of holding on to power, or the economic deviation represented in exploitation, cheating, usury, stealing, bribery, denying the rights of the weak, and other means of injustice and tyranny. God also urges Muslims to support the upright and just and protect the individual's welfare in any matter of general and private life.

NOTES

1. Excerpts from Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah, *al-Islam wa Mantiq al-Quwwah* (Beirut: Dar al-Ta'arruf, 1987). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.
2. Q 4:79–100.
3. Q 14:21.
4. Q 2:166–7.
5. Q 29:25.
6. Q 5:76.
7. Q 29:17.
8. Q 25:3.
9. Q 34:22.
10. Q 7:194.
11. Q 22:39–40.
12. Q 42:39.
13. Q 42:41–2.
14. Q 28:5–6.
15. Q 3:140.
16. Q 3:26.

Part III

Islamism and the Question of Israel/Palestine

Ismail'î Râjî al-Faruqî

THE INJUSTICE OF ZIONISM AGAINST NON-JEWS

What is the position of Islam concerning Zionism, its politics, faith, and their achievements to date?

We have seen that Zionism, the politics, is an exercise in political power, designed to transform Palestine and its adjacent territories into a Jewish state, “as Jewish as England is English.” Zionism’s pursuit of this objective is thoroughly Machiavellian. Its single-minded purpose is given absolute priority over all other considerations, including the moral. Prior to 1948, it sought to fulfill its purpose first by bribing and then by threatening the sultan of the Ottoman state of which Palestine was then a part. When this failed, it began to work for the destruction of the Ottoman state and put its forces at the service of its enemies.

The principal enemy of the Ottoman state was the British Empire. Zionism deployed all its powers—financial through the Baron de Rothschild, strategic through Chaim Weizman—to extract from the British government the Balfour Declaration by which the British government pledged its support to the Zionist cause, though it had already pledged to the Arabs freedom and unity of all territories evacuated by the Ottoman forces.

Having secured the Balfour Declaration, Zionism exercised its power to the hilt to acquire territory. It stopped at nothing in this regard, including the application of pressure, blackmail, bribery, speculation and, as we have seen, the forced eviction of Palestinian farmers from the lands they had inherited from their ancestors through the millennia. Zionism wanted the land at any price; but by 1948, it got about 3 percent of Palestine by any means—moral and immoral. Equally, Zionism sought to extract the Jews of Europe and settle them in Palestine. To this end, it used indoctrination and bargained with fascist and other governments. Its strategy was not to save all Jewish lives, but only those that could serve its purpose of military occupation and agricultural colonization of Palestine.

It was after 1948 that Zionism revealed its true nature and began to operate openly. Its plan was to empty Palestine of its native inhabitants and to occupy their lands, farms, homes, and all movable properties. In so doing, Zionism was guilty of naked robbery by force of arms; of wanton, indiscriminate slaughter of men, women, and children; of destruction of men’s lives and properties. In order to obtain the human resources necessary to fulfill this plan, Zionism undermined the Jewish communities of the whole world. In

the Arab world, where uprooting the Jewish communities would provide an argument presenting the emptying of Palestine of its inhabitants as one half of a “population exchange,” Zionist action was brutal. Zionism terrorized Arab Jews by bombing their synagogues, destroying their businesses, and assassinating their questioning or reluctant leaders. In its occupation of Palestine since 1948, Zionism has perpetrated untold injustice against the Palestinians who survived its onslaught and remained in their homes. Internationally, the Zionist state has, since its establishment in 1948, terrorized the whole region, massacred the innocent by the thousands, destroyed countless villages, and drained the resources and energies of a whole generation of a hundred million awakening Arabs on futile wars, which it waged against them.

UNDOING THE INJUSTICE AGAINST NON-JEWS

For this long list of crimes against the individual Palestinian men and women, against the corporate existence of the Palestinians, against the individual Arabs of the neighboring countries as well as the *ummah*, Islam condemns Zionism. Islam demands that every atom’s weight of injustice perpetuated against the innocent be undone. Hence, it imposes on Muslims the world over to rise up as one to bring an end to injustice and reinstate its sufferers in their lands, homes, and properties. The illegitimate use of every movable or immovable property by the Zionists since the British occupation will have to be paid for and compensated. Therefore, the Islamic position leaves no option for the Zionist state but to be dismantled and destroyed, and its wealth confiscated to pay off its liabilities. This obligation—to repel, stop, and undo injustice—is a corporate religious obligation (*fard kifayah*) on the *ummah* and a personal religious obligation (*fard ’ayn*) on every able adult Muslim man or woman in the world until the *ummah* has officially assumed responsibility for its implementation. Defense of the *ummah*, i.e., of every province over which the banner of the Islamic state has once been raised, is *jihad*, or holy war, and it is a prime religious duty. Fulfillment of this duty is *falah* (felicity) in this world and the next, i.e., victory in this world, martyrdom, and paradise in the next (Qur’an 3:169). Moreover, God commands Muslims “to avail themselves of all means and instruments of force in order to overwhelm the enemy and bring the war to a speedy end” (Qur’an 8:60).

However, dismantling the Zionist state does not necessarily mean the destruction of Jewish lives or properties. Such destruction will, however, be regarded by Islam as a necessary evil if Zionist forces resist the dismantling and confiscation process. It is a first Islamic principle that aggression and injustice be met like for like (Qur’an 2:194). Excess is absolutely forbidden. Moreover, hostilities must, according to Islam, end as soon as resistance ceases. To continue beyond acquiescence of the resistant is unpardonable injustice (Qur’an 8:61; 5:90). Islam commands Muslims never to transgress, never to go beyond the termination of injustice, never to give vent to resentment by increasing the suffering one atom’s weight, but to dole out to the enemy exactly what he dealt them, in equal measure (Qur’an 5:45). Islam equally commands

its adherents to spare no effort, no *materiel*, no wealth needed to bring the war to a victorious conclusion. It sets no time limit on the declaration or conduct of the war; for a moral religious obligation is *ex hypothesi* timeless. Islam further commends pardon, mercy, and forgiveness (*ibid.*). But these virtues cannot be forced; and they have moral value only if they are practiced from a position of strength and self-sufficiency. Moreover, they are strictly personal. They must be the outcome of a personal decision on the part of a free subject for them to be the moral value they purport to be.

The injustice perpetrated by Zionists is so complex, so multifaceted, and so grave that there is practically no means of stopping or undoing it without a war of aggression in which the Zionist army, state, and all its public institutions will be destroyed. Even if the Western world abandoned the Zionist state altogether, its leadership would still muster enough desperate courage to persist, for it is, by its nature, an ideological state, necessarily prepared to save itself at all cost to life and property. All the more reason, therefore, for the Muslims of the world to take it more seriously and to prepare realistic plans which they are unquestionably capable of executing.

DE-ZIONIZATION

Once the Zionist state, its army, and other public institutions are destroyed, the problem of what to do with its population will have to be faced. That Islam cannot and will not compromise on Zionism is a lesson that must be taught to every Jew living in the Muslim world. Hence, Islam will not tolerate the establishment of a Zionist alternative to the Zionist state. All Zionists who wish to live in the Muslim world will have to de-Zionize themselves, emigrate, or face prosecution for their Zionist activities. De-Zionization, it must be borne in mind, is the rejection of Zionism, the political program to transform Palestine into a Jewish state on the European or Western model.

Islam's unequivocal condemnation of Zionism is not restricted to it as a political program in which individuals were unjustly dispossessed of their personal properties. It goes beyond even the corporate Palestinian existence which the Zionist state has destroyed in its aggression and which adds to its crime and responsibility. The condemnation in fact extends to the realm of thought and emotion. For, even if the injustice against the Palestinians were to end and the Palestinians were to be adequately compensated for their losses incurred since the Balfour Declaration, Islam still would condemn a Zionist program whose object is not Palestine, but a non-Muslim corner of the world. Indeed, Islam will condemn a Zionist state even if it were set up on an isolated island or on the dark side of the moon.

The cause of Islam is universal. The truth and value which God granted through Islam is intended for all mankind, not merely for Arabs, Semites, or Asians. The moral and religious imperatives deriving from the Islamic revelation are valid—and hence, obligatory—for all. The most basic of these, which are the other side of *tawhid*, or [oneness] of God, and are hence inseparable from it, are the egalitarian creatureliness of all men before

God, their universal obligation to do justice, and their innate, personal, and inalienable right to hear the word of God. Whether or not they are convinced by it is their individual decision, which cannot be made for them, ultimately, by any ruler or government. Any violation of these first principles is a defiance of God, an attack on His unity [and] transcendence.

The Injustice of Zionism against Judaism

Firstly, Zionism interprets Judaism in accordance with a preconceived European romanticism based on arbitrary feeling. It understands God's election of the Jews as racist superiority over all God's creatures, and His covenant as an irrevocable promise to His children, whom it ambivalently understands in biological and spiritual terms by referring to it as being "in the flesh" and independent of moral conduct. This is discrimination among God's creatures insofar as they are His creatures. Such discrimination is a reflection on God's nature; for the first and essential definition of God is that He is the Creator of all. Zionism redefines God as the Creator of all men in one way, but the Creator of the Jews in another, special way. This characterization reduces the Godliness of God, i.e., His unity and transcendence, because it distinguishes contradictory, defining characteristics in His essence. Thus, Zionism is an attack on divine transcendence. This error, this blind judgment which Zionism accepts absolutely and bases its whole life and world perspective on, leads its adherents to a life of moral casuistry and turpitude. The very same cause led Nazi Germany first to extend its domain in order to secure an empire. For there is no sense to racist superiority if there are no other races over whom to exercise that superiority, just as expansionist Israel has been seeking to do [since its creation].

Secondly, the racist discrimination of Nazi Germany led it to commit untold injustices against its own citizens, as well as those citizens of other nations who fell under its domination, who did not fulfill the requirements of racist superiority as the standard-bearers of Nazism defined it. The Holocaust of Jews, Poles, Slavs, and numerous others followed with logical necessity once the premises of German racism were postulated. Likewise, the Zionist state has reduced its non-Jewish citizens to second-class status; confiscated their lands and properties; subjected them to martial rule; jailed, banished, or executed them without due process of law—all in the name of Jewish racist purity and Zionist political ideals. Regardless of whether these unhappy humans were Arabs or non-Arabs, Christian or Muslim, the discrimination is against them as *goyim*, i.e., as non-Jews. Indeed, the children of mixed marriages, where the mother is non-Jewish, have been subject to the same discrimination in the Zionist state, recalling what a racist redactor reported about an earlier occurrence of racist discrimination and disowning of legitimate wives and children (Ezra 10:10ff; Nehemiah 10:28–30). Being directed against humanity at large, racist discrimination is a sin, an injustice, of which Zionism is guilty on a large scale. Islam binds its adherents to rise up against injustice wherever, whenever, by whoever and against whomsoever it is committed.

Thirdly, no racist regime can maintain itself without setting up a defensive shield around it. Its ideology cannot withstand alternatives, for it is arbitrary and dogmatic. Its adherents are necessarily single-minded and bent on intolerance of alternative views. It does not make its claim rationally, i.e. with evidence and in openness to further evidence, but doggedly on a “take it or leave it” or “if you are not with us you are against us” basis. That is why the Zionist state is a police state in every sense of the term, placing those of its citizens who do not share its ideology in a category which amounts to a large concentration camp if they are *goyim* and under special supervision if they are Jews. That is also why no man, Jew or *goy*, may settle in the Zionist state unless he adheres to Zionism’s racist ideology. Differences of opinion with the ruling ideology may be tolerated to mislead the outside observer into thinking the state is a free, democratic one. But such differences can only be chosen which refer either to strategy or incidentals, never to basics. The very thesis of Zionism cannot ever be questioned by those who live under its dominion. The policy of a Zionist state must therefore be isolationist, shutting its people off from the word of God which challenges its essential doctrine.

NOTE

1. Excerpts from Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, *Islam and the Problem of Israel* (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2003).

From Basel to Oslo: Zionism and the Islamic Narrative

Mustafa Abu Sway

This chapter attempts to survey the Islamic movements' position(s) regarding the now defunct Oslo Accords, which were signed between Israel and the PLO on September 13, 1993. It will also reflect on the nature of the Zionist project which perpetuates the major conflict in the Middle East between the Zionists on the one hand, and the Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims on the other. It is the Zionist project that led to the rise of the Palestinian resistance movements, nationalists and Islamic alike. The Oslo Accords were supposed to end the conflict, which began with launching the Zionist ideology in Basel, Switzerland at the end of the nineteenth century, but especially when this ideology manifested itself in the creation of Israel in 1948 on 78 percent of the land of Palestine. Israel occupied the other 22 percent of Palestine, along with regions of other Arab counties, in 1967. Whenever there is talk about the two-state solution, the proposed Palestinian state means 22 percent, or less, of historical Palestine! The Zionist project received, and continues to receive, full support from Western powers, beginning with Britain's infamous Balfour Declaration On November 2, 1917:

His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

Britain had no jurisdiction over Palestine and, therefore, it was illegal under international law to make such a declaration. The second part of the declaration, which concerns protecting the civil and religious rights of "non-Jewish" communities in Palestine, is meaningless; the Palestinian people were wronged and they have suffered ever since. The Palestinian issue is grievance-based, and almost all the proposed solutions attempt to circumvent the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Palestinians' story is unique, not only because of the pain being continuously inflicted on them, but also because their story continues to unfold with the full knowledge of the United Nations and world leaders. Nevertheless, they shamefully allowed the Palestinian Odyssey to undergo more than six decades' trekking along

a Via Dolorosa, which passes through the four corners of the earth, carrying the famous symbol of the Palestinian refugee's key on their shoulders, yet facing multiple crucifixions. Zionism is a zero-sum ideology; it only proposes "solutions" above the zero mark when the international community insists on the illegality of the Israeli occupation.

The Jewish problem was above all a European one, but Zionists sought to solve what they had suffered in Europe by creating yet another problem elsewhere. The first Zionist conference in Basel adopted as its goal the establishment of a "Jewish national home in Palestine" and marked the founding of the supremacist Zionist ideology, comprising little Jewish history and theology, and much myth and legend. That decision was made with total disregard to the fate of the indigenous people who had lived in Palestine for thousands of years. Nothing is more absurd than the claim that the Jews were a "people without a land" and that Palestine was "a land without a people." It was the attempt to implement this absurdity that gave rise to an existential conflict that would never have occurred had the Zionists not come to Palestine, to take over no less, as Palestine was and still is home to the Palestinian people who are deeply rooted in the Holy Land.

The Zionists used the "we were there first" argument. Yet, history does not support their claim. The first known agricultural settlement in the world was in Jericho, on the eastern border of today's West Bank. It was founded 10,000 years ago. The earliest communities in the present location of Jerusalem were founded in approximately the year 4000 BC. Historians name the Canaanites, Jebusites (a Canaanite tribe), Hyksos, Babylonians (Chaldeans), Greeks, Persians, and Romans amongst the peoples and rulers of the Holy Land. In short, the history of the land did not begin with the arrival of the Jewish nomadic tribes from Egypt in 1250 BC. According to the Old Testament, these newcomers had to face the established inhabitants of the land.

The Zionist conference failed to recognize and take account of the history of the relationship of Jews with the larger region, which had been shaped by the presence of Islam since the seventh century CE. The decision of the Zionist movement to take steps to establish an exclusivist state for Jews in Palestine meant that a bloody and historic clash with the indigenous Palestinian Arab population was inevitable. The Zionists persisted in their hostile objective to colonize Palestine with no regard whatsoever for the fact that the Palestinians were already there. The Palestinians were terrorized and forced out of their homes, yet they are unwilling to accept Diaspora as their final destiny. They are also unwilling to accept living under yet another foreign occupier. Now, more than a century after the beginnings of the Zionist colonial project in Palestine, it should be surprising to no one that this clash is ongoing.

The Jewish presence in Islamic lands pre-dates the beginning of the Zionist movement and, as such, pre-dates the subsequent immigration to Palestine in order to fulfill the Zionist ideology and establish a state. Palestinian nationalist and Islamic literature reflects the distinction between Judaism and Zionism. There is no organic relationship between the two; Judaism existed for thousands of years without Zionism as an ideology. In a way, Jews

themselves are victims of Zionism. There are also Christian Zionists, mostly in the US, who support Israel. One should not forget that the concept of the modern nation-state is a product of the European Enlightenment. There are ultra-orthodox Jews who do not recognize the legitimacy of the Zionist state, with some of them being radically anti-Zionist, such as the small Haredi Jewish community Neturei Karta, who believe that a Jewish state can only be established after the coming of their Messiah. (For Christians and Muslims, he has already come, albeit they have serious theological differences.) There are Zionists who are atheists, and there are postmodern Jewish intellectuals who think of solutions in terms of a post-Zionist paradigm. The latter position recognizes the fact that nation-states are modern political forms that need to be deconstructed. It is clear that it could not have been possible for Divine revelation, which took place millennia ago in the case of Judaism, to adopt and advocate a modern notion such as the nation-state.

The Zionist project aimed to establish a Jewish political entity in Palestine rather than simply to restore a Jewish presence in such a way that Jews could be accommodated by the existing population without raising any kind of tension. The Islamic Caliphate, for instance, had a Jewish presence throughout its entire history, including in the Holy Land, a presence that expanded for 14 centuries. Jews, who were prevented from living in Jerusalem under Christian rule, were able to re-establish their presence in the Holy City only after Islamic rule began in 638 AD. This coexistence with the People of the Book, a category comprising mostly Jews and Christians, is deeply rooted in the Qur'an and in the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. Coming after Judaism and Christianity, Islam officially recognizes the right of Jews and Christians, by name, to live alongside Muslims in what I describe as an existential pluralism, a concept that runs deep in the Islamic collective consciousness.

Muslims in North Africa and the Middle East accepted the Jews who fled the Spanish Inquisition (Spain is much celebrated today for its historical paradigm of *convivencia* under Islamic rule, especially in Andalusia). Subsequently, good relationships continued between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The Ottoman Empire, which ruled over all the Middle East, could have easily rejected the Jews who were fleeing modern European persecution, but that would have been contrary to Islamic mores and principles. It is perverse how Jews in general ignore this past relationship with Muslims and continue to be strange bedfellows with their former persecutors in the West.

It should be noted that the decision to establish a Zionist state in Palestine was undertaken decades before the rise of Nazi Germany. The Jews, and obviously the Roma, the Poles, and almost everyone else, were in need of protection from the Nazis. Yet the problem was and still is the issue of the Zionists' forcible undertaking to establish a sovereign state in Palestine against the will of the Palestinian people who already populated this land, and who were subsequently forcibly displaced (in 1947–48) and militarily completely occupied (in 1967) to accommodate the Zionist entity and its "security needs." Israel is a nuclear power; Israel exports arms; and Israel has one of the strongest armies in the world. It is the security of the powerless Palestinian

people that is at stake. It is puzzling how a people who suffered so much at the hands of the Europeans would then commit such an historic injustice against a people totally innocent of the European persecutions a continent away. The objective of the Zionist project was, and still is, to maximize the area of Palestinian land under their control while minimizing the number of Palestinians living there in order to secure the “Jewish” character of the state. This is not a case of discrimination or apartheid; it is ethnic cleansing. The exclusivist approach of Zionism—the mentality of “us against everyone else”—was translated into a systematic assault on the sanctity of life and, when spared, the quality of that life.

It is this exclusivist characteristic of Zionism that led to the displacement of the Palestinian refugees during the *nakba* (catastrophe) of 1947–48, another wave of refugees in 1967, and perpetuating the presence of these refugees in exile even today. The narrative presented officially by Israel to explain this human tragedy accuses the Arab leaders of the time of asking the Palestinians to leave their homes so that these same leaders could wage war against Israel and asserts that the Palestinians simply deserted their homes in response to that call. Subsequently, they claim, Jewish immigrants moved into “abandoned” homes and lands. One cannot but assert the fact that it was primarily British and French colonialism that divided the Middle East and established these Arab “states,” an important step without which there could have never been a Zionist state in their midst. The official website of the Arab League states that it was Britain that established it. Pan-Arabists (Al-Qawmiyyun Al-‘Arab), leftists and Islamists do not recognize the legitimacy of the borders that were artificially erected to create these states.

Palestinians attempted to refute this Zionist line, or rather, lie, for almost 50 years. Despite the equal impact that a Palestinian victim’s testimony should have, the affirmation of that testimony by an Israeli Jew seems to have a greater impact in the West. Realizing the difference between the official Israeli version of what happened and the version of the “new historians” as to the true reality on the ground, the Israeli journalist Gideon Levi, writing in *Ha’aretz*, pointed to the role of the Israeli establishment of the time in perpetuating the mythology surrounding the refugees. He implicated it in spreading the “many lies—lies and half-truths—that we told ourselves and the rest of the world.”¹ Levi reflected on the original role of the Israeli press in sustaining these myths:

Have we really changed, or perhaps, in testing times, does the Israeli press return to its bad old place of being the state’s trumpet, just as it was in Kibya [Qibyah] [Ariel Sharon’s first known massacre, of 14 October 1953, in which 67 Palestinian villagers, including women and children, were killed], just as Morris describes? Then, the press inflamed passion by giving prominence to the Israeli victims—relatively few—and playing down the Arab [victims] tenfold more—greatly enhancing the Israelis’ sense of being the victim, the exclusive sufferers.²

Prior to 1947, the Palestinian people, both Muslim and Christian, formed 75 percent of the total population of Palestine and owned 93 percent of the land. At the turn of the century, prior to the major waves of Zionist invasion, Palestinians constituted some 95 percent of the population and owned almost all the land. Today, in contrast, Israel—or rather, the Palestinian land within the 1948 Green Line—occupies 78 percent of the total area of Palestine, and the so-called Israeli Arabs (i.e., Palestinians with Israeli citizenship) constitute only 20 percent of the total population of that territory. The remaining 22 percent of the land, of course, fell under Israeli occupation in 1967. Palestinian land in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, was confiscated by the Israeli military, which is entrusted with defining the borders. The military then handed it to Jewish settlers, who eventually built their colonies in such a way as to surround the Palestinian cities and towns, cutting off any natural contiguity between them and choking them, in order to prevent natural expansion. The placement of these settlements and the roads built on nearby Palestinian lands confiscated for their use have transformed Palestinian cities and towns into South African-style Bantustans, with no freedom of movement between them and no access to the open spaces around them. The illegal Apartheid separation wall, which is built on land deep inside the West Bank, exacerbated the isolation of the Palestinian communities, had a negative impact on their livelihood, and deprived them of free access to their holy sites in Jerusalem.

Therefore, a solution, if it is to be legitimate, must bring an end to the terrible injustice that befell the Palestinian people. If and only if the Palestinians are recognized and re-categorized as human beings entitled to the same rights as other members of the human race will we ever see the light at the end of the tunnel. The question is: Did the Oslo process envision that kind of justice? Did it recognize the inalienable right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes as called for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Is it not fundamentally unjust to assert that any Jew from anywhere in the world can “return” to Palestine simply because there were Jews there 2,000 years ago, but that the Palestinian who is alive today, who was there as recently as 62 years ago and who literally holds the keys to her home from which she was illegally expelled by the armed Jewish militia terrorist groups in 1947 or 1948, cannot?

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND THE ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW

This treatment of the indigenous people of this land, Muslims and Christians, by foreign Zionist rulers can now be contrasted with the treatment of this region's indigenous Jewish and Christian communities by Muslim rulers in past centuries.

The official and public acceptance of Jews in Islamic lands under Islamic rule was not an extraordinary act in Islamic theology and *shari'ah*. Islam reflects the final stage in which the historical line of monotheism culminated. Judaism represents its initial stage, whereas Christianity represents its intermediate

stage, having appeared prior to Islam but after Judaism. The Islamic worldview as manifested in the Qur'an and the Sunnah recognizes all the previous prophets and messengers as having been sent by God, including those sent to the Jews (i.e., Moses and all the other prophets) and to the Christians (i.e., Jesus). The Books of Revelation that these messengers brought to them are also recognized as such, and hence Jews and Christians are known to Muslims as the "People of the Book." People of the Book, although non-Muslims, share with Muslims a belief in the prior authentic Divine revelations as revealed through these messengers by the one God in the form of the Jewish and Christian Holy Books (the Old Testament and the Christian Bible) prior to the appearance of the last in this line of prophets, the Prophet Mohammad, and the final and most complete revelation, the Holy Qur'an.

In addition to the freedom to practice these legitimate precursor religions and to conduct their private lives according to their teachings, the status of the People of the Book in Islamic-majority states is protected and upheld by a covenant they have with the Islamic state defining their mutual rights and obligations. To reflect the extent of the protection they enjoyed, the Prophet said: "He who harms a *dhimmi* [one of the People of the Book] harms me." Thus hurting a Jew or a Christian is tantamount to hurting the Prophet himself. These teachings, in contemporary language, represent nothing but a theologically motivated form of affirmative action which aims to protect the rights of the People of the Book. Such teachings are inculcated deep into the Muslim consciousness and therefore contain the potential to act as the cornerstone for a future resolution of our contemporary conflict. Any resolution of the conflict, if it is to be historically realistic and lasting, will depend on the construction of a different kind of Jewish presence and relationship with the land and its indigenous population from that which exists now.

For the protected status of the People of the Book is valid only so long as Jews and Christians consider themselves to be part of the society (such as Arab Christians in all of Palestine, and the old Jewish sect in Nablus) and so long as they do not collectively commit acts of aggression against the larger society or import ideologies and implement them in a way that endangers the fabric of civilized society (e.g., Zionism or Communism). Very explicitly, presaging what the Zionists have done, the Qur'an says: God forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for [your] faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them, for God loves those who are just (Qur'an 60:8). In other words, Muslims should be just and benevolent in their interactions with non-Muslims, except for those non-Muslims who aggress against Muslims because of their faith, or, in the case of Zionism, who aggressively drive Muslims out of their homes. Indeed, it is expected that Muslims are to act in defense of their faith and/or their homes whenever they come under attack. Struggle against the occupation could take many forms. Civil disobedience, non-violent resistance, boycotts, and divestment are among the tools that any occupation should be resisted with.

To go back to the Oslo Accords, they provided for an interim Palestinian National Authority (PNA) which would administer the civil life of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for five years, during which a permanent agreement would be reached regarding Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli colonies, borders and security, and a host of other issues.

Sixteen years later, Israel and the Palestinians have still not reached an agreement and the situation on the ground is far from being conducive to peace. A second *Intifada* erupted in the year 2000 after the collapse of the Camp David II summit between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PNA Chairman Yasser Arafat. US President Clinton practically adopted the Israeli position. One of the major issues where the negotiations failed was the Al-Aqsa Mosque. This is precisely why [the Israeli politician] Ariel Sharon, then in the opposition, made a show of force there, igniting the second *Intifada*.

The 2006 PA legislative elections were held amidst reports of Fatah corruption. Hamas' Change and Reform Party surprised everyone when it won a majority, taking 76 seats. Fatah won only 45 seats. All other Palestinian parties won less than a handful of seats, reflecting the reality on the ground that Palestinian political life has two major centers of power, Hamas and Fatah. For any future scenario, both should be involved. A Hamas-led government was sworn in by PA President Mahmoud Abbas on March 29, 2009. Within a week, the US and the EU formally boycotted the new government, demanding that Hamas recognize Israel and dismantle its security forces. These international powers decided to bypass the government and distributed aid directly to the Palestinian people. By July 27, Israel had detained 27 Hamas-affiliated ministers in an attempt to disrupt the work of the new government. The impasse led President Abbas and Prime Minister Haniyeh to agree to a national unity government, which was welcomed by the quartet, since it would not be considered a Hamas-led government. In the meantime, according to a *Vanity Fair* article, the US administration backed Muhammad Dahlan, a Fatah leader and commander of one of the security forces, to get rid of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, igniting a civil war. This policy backfired and Fatah lost. As a result, Hamas is the only major power in the Gaza Strip and its governmental structure is still intact, despite the hermetically sealed Gaza Strip, which is imprisoning 1.2 million Palestinians.

At the end of 2008, when it became apparent that the collective punishment against the Gaza Strip had failed and that Fatah is not in a position to effect change, Israel launched a major war ("Operation Cast Lead") against the Gaza Strip, which is led by Hamas. The subsequent UN Goldstone Commission Report accused Israel of committing war crimes during the three-week campaign, which left the Gaza Strip in ruins and suffering a severe humanitarian crisis. Israeli colonies in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continue to mushroom at the expense of Palestinian land, cutting off the north of the West Bank from its south, preventing land contiguity and, literally, cutting off East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, using the Separation Wall. The Israeli colonies are a stumbling block; their existence renders any peace initiative ineffective. These colonies became a point of

friction with the new administration in the White House. President Obama called for a one-year freeze on all settlement construction in order to move the negotiations forward. Israel refused to comply. Obama, in a speech to the UN General Assembly, his first after assuming office, dropped his demand for a freeze on settlement construction. The Quartet picked up the banner and demanded that Israel stop building in the settlements. The bottom line is that the PLO has been hammered by endless rounds of negotiations without reaching a desirable result. The peace *process* became an end in itself. The unequal balance of power between Israel and the Palestinians renders the negotiations an exercise in futility. Opposition to the Oslo Accords came from all Palestinian factions, including from within Fatah itself.

Palestinian Islamist movements and organizations, such as the largest Islamic movement, Hamas (The Islamic Resistance Movement), which was established in the mid-1980s, but with roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, the world's oldest and largest Islamic movement which was established in 1928; Al-Jihad Al-Islami (established in the late 1970s); Hizb al-Tahrir (Islamic Liberation Party), which was established in the early 1950s in Jerusalem when it was under Jordanian rule, a strictly political movement that does not participate in secular governments or parliaments, and does not provide social services, but became very vocal in Palestinian politics and with a strong presence in many countries around the globe; and the post-Oslo, newly established, small but significant Salafi militant movements, Jund Ansar-Allah (The Soldiers of God), whose leader, Abdullatif Musa, was killed in clashes with Hamas security forces in the Gaza Strip on August 15, 2009, after he declared an Islamic principality in the Gaza Strip that would be ruled according to Islamic *shari'ah*; Ansar Al-Sunnah (Supporters of Sunnah) and Jaish Al-Ummah (The Army of the [Muslim] *Ummah*)—in their opposition to the Oslo Agreements and their continuation of their struggle against the Israeli occupation—do in fact conform to the centuries-old Islamic theological and legal (*shari'ah*) framework, which considers Palestine to be part of the Islamic lands and defending it a religious duty. This same worldview shaped the position of their predecessors, including Islamic organizations and scholars in all Islamic countries throughout the twentieth century. The rise of the Salafi-Jihadi movements has been linked to Hamas' participating in the general Palestinian elections. For Hamas, the Oslo Accords were no longer applicable. For the Salafi-Jihadi movements, Hamas' participation in the general election was tantamount to becoming secular. They were also dissatisfied with Hamas' ceasefires/cessation of hostilities with Israel. As a result, it has been reported that some of Hamas' members left in order to join the Salafi-Jihadi movements. Some analysts would go as far as stating that all the Salafi-Jihadi movements in the Gaza Strip constitute in effect one movement, or at least have the same ideological background which is that of al-Qaeda. People on the streets of the Gaza Strip use one common reference to all of these Salafi-Jihadi movements, "Jaljalat," as in the loud voice of thunder.

Some secular movements, such as Fatah, the largest nationalist resistance movement, are not totally bereft of an Islamic narrative. Even leaders of leftist

movements reconciled themselves with various levels of the Islamic narrative, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is true for the status of Islamic law (*shari'ah*), which continues to be part of the common Palestinian narrative. The draft Palestinian constitution considers the *shari'ah* a major source of the law. Though the word “major” cannot be quantified, it does reflect the prominence of the *shari'ah* in Muslim societies.

The same *shari'ah* that considers the People of the Book to be protected also places an obligation on every Muslim to defend Islamic land if it falls under occupation, regardless of the religion of the occupier. The religious background of the occupier is incidental. All Islamic authorities rejected Zionism and its subsequent realization as a “state” (still without official borders!) as a matter of principle, because it was achieved by force against the will of the indigenous population. It is for this reason that Azhar University in Cairo, one of the most important centers of Islamic learning and the seat of leading Islamic scholars, called on Muslims to save Palestine and declared fighting imperative on competent Muslims, and why again in 1956 it explicitly prohibited any peace treaty with Israel. In 1968, the International Islamic Conference issued a *fatwa* (authoritative religious ruling) reiterating a position similar to that of the Azhar. The Azhar confirmed its position in 1977. And in 1990, all major Muslim scholars prohibited the surrender of any part of Palestine, stressing that no person or institution has the right to legitimize Israel's occupation of any part of the Holy Land. Indeed, it is hard to enumerate all the *fatwas* that have been issued on this subject in every part of the Islamic world, including in countries as far away as Indonesia.

The general language of the 1990 *fatwa* covers all Muslim individuals, including Muslim leaders and heads of state, and all Muslim institutions, including governments. This and many similar *fatwas* prohibit Muslim leaders from recognizing Israel regardless of what it might “offer” them in lieu of their land. In simple language, a truncated Palestine, regardless of its size, which is not identical with the land of historical Palestine, is not acceptable. A *de jure* two-state solution, therefore, is not acceptable, for such a solution will not be able to address basic Palestinian rights, such as the right of return. Israel will continue to reject this right in particular because it would negate what the Zionists call the “Jewish character of the state,” an artificially constructed demographic ratio in which Jews are maintained in the majority—artificial because it is not the true ratio, but an enforced one which is maintained only by keeping more than five million indigenous Palestinians outside of their own country against their will.

The position of individual Islamic organizations and political parties thus falls within the parameters of decades-old religious rulings that reflect the Islamic worldview. Hamas' position, as an example, reflects a continuum of previous rulings and uses the same language. Article 11 of its charter states: “The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic land entrusted to the Muslim generations until Judgment Day. No one may [relinquish] all or even part of it.” In addition, Article 15 says: “When an enemy usurps a Muslim land, then jihad is the individual religious duty of

every Muslim.” The rejection of Israeli occupation, as reflected in the charter, is identical to the position of Muslim scholars and institutions throughout the history of the Palestinian issue.

Furthermore, the issue of the land as presented in the Hamas charter is consistent with Islamic theology and jurisprudence. Accepting the same terms of reference, which in the Islamic worldview means accepting and following the Qur’an and the Sunnah as the only sources of law governing Islamic life, applies to all Islamic movements in terms of how they guide political action. Khaled Hroub, a student of Hamas, noted that Hamas’ understanding and conduct of the struggle is “equally valid for any other Islamic movement.”³

Hroub’s observation is certainly true with regard to Israel. Yet, while the Islamic movements have a common position regarding the relationship with the occupation forces, they do not share the same political discourse with regard to intra-Palestinian relations. It is possible to detect the influence of modern Western political thought on the political discourse of some Islamists as it pertains to internal relations within the state, or the future state, as it applies to Palestine. This discourse can be found in the area of interpretation of the texts of the Qur’an and the Sunnah, never by adding additional sources. Knowing that some readers might raise questions about the other “sources” of *shari’ah*, which include consensus (*ijma*) and reasoning by analogy (*qiyas*), it is clear to Islamists that these do not constitute sources on their own; they are merely tools of understanding.

Each of the Palestinian Islamist resistance movements subscribes to the overall Islamic framework. Dr Ramadan Shallah, leader of the Islamic Jihad, expressed it in this way: “Considering the Islamic [character] of the [Palestinian] issue, the position of the *shari’ah* is that the liberation of Palestine is an individual religious duty of the people of Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt ... until the last of the Muslims.”⁴ Shallah’s words are a clear reference to the Islamic legal system, which is based on the Qur’an and the Sunnah as the sources that inform the positions undertaken by his movement.

The rejection of Oslo is also the position of Islamic groups such as the Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb Al-Tahrir Al-Islami), which, despite its name, does not participate in armed struggle against the occupation. It limits its action to political activity, including direct criticism of the Palestinian Authority for signing agreements with Israel. Nor does it refrain from naming individual leaders who have gone too far, accusing them of treason. Similar to what has happened in the past to the political leaders of Hamas, Islamic Liberation Party leaders, including several imams of mosques in East Jerusalem, were arrested by the Palestinian Authority in the past because of their criticism of the agreements it illegitimately concluded with Israel.

One can also detect indirect dissatisfaction with Oslo even in the prayers of such apolitical religious groups as the Da’awah and Tabligh, an international Islamic movement that “preaches and advocates,” hence its name. This movement had never previously engaged in politics and has always refrained from taking sides in local politics in individual countries; this movement has

millions of followers throughout the region. Yet a subconscious nurtured by Islamic theology and a sense of Islamic history manages to find room to express a dissenting view of Oslo in its supplications, a dissent that flows spontaneously (since no Muslim recites a supplication from a text in formal prayers).

There are numerous influential scholars and preachers in every country who are known to be independent of any particular Islamic organization yet who have also been highly critical of Oslo. This is true, for example, of all the five or so preachers who deliver the Friday sermon at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Holy City of Jerusalem. Almost every week, they express their dissatisfaction with a state of affairs that has worsened dramatically because of Oslo.

If Islamic groups, movements, institutions, and individual scholars share the same theological and legal background, then in order to understand their political stances it is necessary to understand the central position that the Holy Land occupies in the Islamic worldview. The Qur'an itself mentions the Holy Land in the story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) when he attempted to lead the Jews out of Egypt:

Remember Moses said *to* his people: "O my People!

Call in remembrance the favor of God unto you, when He produced prophets among you, made you kings, and gave you what He had not given to any other among the peoples. "O my People! Enter the Holy Land which God has assigned unto you, and turn not back ignominiously, for then will you be overthrown, *to* your own ruin." (Qur'an, 5:20–1)

The context is that of Moses (peace be upon him) inviting the Jews to enter the Holy Land, having miraculously delivered them from Egypt across the Red Sea. The Jews refused to enter the land because it meant that they had to fight its people, who were known for their overwhelming strength. Their refusal earned them Divine punishment. God said: "Therefore will the land be out of their reach for forty years: in distraction will they wander through the land: but sorrow you not over these rebellious people" (Qur'an 5:26).

These verses are important because they show that the invitation of Jews to the land was as a community of believers and not as cultural Jews. It was their submission to God's will, and not to specific genetic codes, that determined their relationship with the land. The Holy Land, or any land, is a vehicle whereby one fulfills the covenant with God. Therefore, Muslims as those who submit to God (the literal meaning of the term Muslim) are at the end of a continuum that began with the followers of Moses, Abraham, and Noah (peace be upon them all). When a specific community of believers transgresses against God, it is stripped of the privileges granted by Him. Furthermore, no specific religious group was ever granted the upper hand or sovereignty in the Holy Land. The history of the Holy Land and the Palestinians pre-dates the history of the Jews who lived there, but if we restrict our discussion to "monotheistic" sovereignty, it is a fact that none of the three monotheistic religions was ever capable of maintaining a continuous hold on power there.

One of the most celebrated verses of the Qur'an relating to the Holy Land is the first of the chapter of *Al-Isra'*:

Glory be to [Allah] Who did take His Servant [the Prophet Mohammad] for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque [Al-Masjid Al-Haram] to the Farthest Mosque [Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa] whose precincts We did bless, in order that We might show him some of Our Signs: for He is the One who hears and sees all things. (Qur'an 17:1)

There are political implications of the story of the journey by night as contained in *Al-Isra'* and the ascension from Jerusalem to the heavens (*al-mi'raj*). This story is taken by all Muslim scholars to establish the Islamic character of the Holy Land even before the historical arrival of the Muslims during the time of the second caliph, Omar Ibn al-Khattab, in 638 AD (15 AH in the Muslim calendar). There are many traditions related to these miraculous events that are in line with the miracles granted to the previous prophets, those who were thus made capable of performing such exceptional acts as the parting of the Red Sea by Prophet Moses and the resurrection of the dead by Prophet Jesus, all by leave of God, reflecting His omnipotence. The relevant verses in the Qur'an and the many traditions of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) that relate to the Prophet's presence in Jerusalem or that define the spiritual significance of the Al-Aqsa Mosque are interpreted by Muslim scholars as indicating that Islam is the trustee of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem, and the Holy Land. In contrast, the current usurpers of the land, in apparent defiance of God's will, have tried to recategorize the Holy Land as a worldly possession.

LEGAL STATUS OF THE HOLY LAND IN *SHARI'AH*

After Omar Ibn al-Khattab signed an agreement with Bishop Sophronious in Jerusalem, he refused to distribute the land amongst the Muslim army and declared it an Islamic endowment (*waqf*) for the benefit of future generations, allowing people to use it without owning it. The *waqf* category in Islamic law is by definition a property that belongs to God until the Day of Judgment. It has its own sanctity and Divine ownership that cannot be transferred even amongst Muslims. Once a piece of land or property is declared a *waqf*, not even the person who once owned it can change its legal status.

In accordance with this concept, Article 11 of the Hamas charter states: "The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic trust [*waqf*] for the Muslim generations until the Day of Judgment." Islamic literature and discourse, similarly, is full of references to Palestine as an Islamic trust or endowment. These references contribute to the Islamist psyche which rejects Oslo, because it means that the vast majority of this *waqf* will be passed, or rather was already passed, to the control of a non-Muslim entity, one that illegally tried to alter its status.

OTHER LEGAL NOTIONS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PALESTINE-ZIONIST CONFLICT

In Islamic political thought, the prevailing idea is that treaties with the enemy may be concluded if they are temporary. The idea of a temporary truce or ceasefire is acceptable from a *shari'ah* standpoint if it is in the interest of the Muslim community. There are detailed legal discussions centered on the Prophet's treaties with non-Muslims, especially with the tribe of Qureish, in what became known as the truce of Hudaibiyah. From the history of Islam, the treaty considered most relevant to the conflict in Palestine is that which Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi concluded in Ramlah, near Lyd (a coastal city in 1948 Palestine), with the Crusaders. In both cases, the treaty was temporary.

There has been a willingness among some Islamists to accept a truce with Israel if it withdraws to the 1967 borders, releases the Palestinian prisoners it is holding, allows the refugees to return to their homes within the Green Line, and so forth. However, such a deal is always temporary and means that the conflict will ultimately resurface. Hamas sees the creation of a Palestinian mini-state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as an interim solution, as opposed to the total liberation of Palestine, which Hamas regards as the historic solution.

One should note that Hamas has attempted to put forward its ideas on interim agreements with Israel. Mahmoud Al-Zahhar, a Hamas political leader, presented a proposal to Shimon Peres in March 1988. Zahhar's proposal for a short-term solution provided that Israel withdraw to the 1967 borders, with the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip being placed under UN custody, and that the Palestinians name their representatives for negotiations that should cover all rights. Unfortunately, the Israeli authorities did not take this seriously, for they were not, and still are not, ready to withdraw to the 1967 borders. In addition, Israel has traditionally refused to accept any UN role in Palestine because it is apparent that this will act to the benefit of the Palestinian people.

Another problem emerges from the requirement that the truce be concluded with the leader of the Muslims. This raises the problem of representation. Who is this leader? Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, stated when he returned to Gaza upon his release from prison in October 1997 that the Palestinian people have one leadership and one address, which is the Palestinian Authority and President Yasser Arafat. Nevertheless, Sheikh Yassin did not conform to the Palestinian Authority's position and rejected the Wye River memorandum, which had been negotiated to facilitate the implementation of the Oslo II Agreement of 1995. He maintained that military resistance against Israelis is legitimate for as long as the Palestinian land remains occupied.

Against the diplomatic statement of Sheikh Yassin, one might recall those articles from the Hamas charter which define what a leader can and cannot do in relationship to any "peace process." According to Article 11: "[N]o

king or president nor all kings or presidents, and no organization nor all organizations, Palestinian or Arab, have the right to dispose of [Palestine] or relinquish or cede any part of it, because Palestine is Islamic land.” Hamas nonetheless attempted to foster a positive relationship with the Palestinian Authority without losing sight of its long-term commitment to the liberation of historical Palestine.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that any peace process that results in *de jure* recognition of an Israeli state over 78 percent of Palestine cannot be accepted from an Islamic point of view. In fact, the very existence of Israel is considered illegal. Chairman Arafat’s letter to Yitzhak Rabin of September 9, 1993 contained within it a direct recognition of Israel. In exchange, Rabin’s letter to Arafat included a commitment by the Israeli government merely to engage the PLO in negotiations. It was an exchange of ends for means. The Israeli government made good on its promise and one round of negotiations led to another. The end result was that the Palestinian leadership found itself glued to a perpetual table of negotiations.

Today, there are many Israeli and Palestinian politicians who were directly involved in the Oslo process and subsequent agreements who believe that the Palestinians made a grave mistake not to insist that a freeze on Jewish settlements be included in the treaties. This example shows that the so-called “declaration of principles” was fatally flawed from the very beginning. The unprecedented harsh realities on the ground that emerged as a direct result of Oslo and that ultimately led to the second *Intifada* are clear proof of the need for a different type of solution.

The position of the Islamic movements, as well as that of individual Islamic scholars, cannot be against peace. It is treaties that consecrate injustice that they oppose. Justice remains the prerequisite for peace. The solution has to take into consideration the larger regional Islamic context into which Judaism and the Jews should be reintegrated. If not, the only choice for Israel is to live forever in a heavily armed ghetto, one that will never gain legitimacy except superficially in the form of treaties that do not have an impact on the collective memory or consciousness of Muslims, except negatively. It is a choice between a *de jure* integrated existence and a *de facto* occupier status.

It should be mentioned, however, that on June 27, 2006, Fatah and Hamas adopted the Prisoners’ Document, which calls for the creation of a Palestinian state within pre-1967 borders, alongside Israel, while asserting the Palestinians’ refugees’ right of return to Israel proper. This position can be understood as a major development in Hamas’ political position. Mahmoud Al-Ramahi, a Hamas legislator, admitted when he discussed a book written by Paola Caridi on Hamas, that Hamas’ charter was written hastily and that certain aspects in it could be modified.

NOTES

1. Gideon Levi, book review of Benny Morris, "Correcting a Mistake: *Jews and Arabs in Palestine/Israel, 1936–1956*," *Ha'aretz*, November 3, 2001. The reviewed book aimed to correct the mistakes in the official Israeli version of what happened to the Palestinians during the said years and the role of Israeli media in distorting the truth.
2. Ibid.
3. Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000), p. 56.
4. Naser-ed-Din Al-Sha'ir, *Amaliyyat al-Salam al-Falastiniyyah al-Israiliyyah: Wijhat Nazar Islamiyyah* [The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process: An Islamic Perspective] (Nablus, occupied Palestine: Center for Research and Palestinian Studies, 1999), p. 113.

The Role of the Israeli Lobby*

Ataullah Bogdan Kopanski and Mohsen Saleh

INTRODUCTION

It is generally believed that the Israeli lobby in the US has a huge impact on the country's foreign policy, especially toward the Middle East. Several arguments have been presented to explain this. Among the recent studies, *The Israeli Lobby and the U.S. Foreign Policy* by John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt stands out. The authors claim that the effect of the Israeli lobby is largely reflected in the fact that the US's Middle East policy is conducted with Israel's welfare in mind ... and though there are other interests/lobbies involved in making US foreign policy in the Middle East, the Israeli lobby's impact in this sense is highly influential compared to its competitors, such as the oil industry lobby or Arab lobby.¹

The Israeli lobby has not only succeeded in ensuring continued and increasing US aid and support to Israel, but also in shaping US foreign policy in the Middle East toward continually repressing the Palestinians and targeting Israel's primary regional adversaries, such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria. This, according to Mearsheimer and Walt, causes many Americans to project "a worrisome case" against "the American interest."²

Questions about whether Israel is a moral/strategic asset or a liability for the US have long been a subject of debate among political analysts, especially since the 9/11 attacks. Some viewed US foreign policy in the Middle East and particularly toward Israel as a liability, arguing that such a policy could cause the US huge losses and distort its image and values. As a result of this policy anti-Americanism has spread in the Muslim world and the American intervention was discredited as being biased. For others, Israel is a moral asset because it is "the only democracy in the Middle East" and a "civilized" state, which shares Western values. Israel is also presented as a strategic asset, because of its location and because it is the US's "only reliable" military ally. A common argument along this line is that even when US foreign policy is in favor of the Israeli interest, this doesn't mean that US interest is not involved, i.e., supporting Israel in itself is an American interest.³

A significant issue of the above argument was raised by Plitnick and Toensing in their article "The Israeli Lobby in Perspective." They emphasized the need to distinguish between the "sufficient" and the "necessary" in the cause-effect relation between the Israeli lobby and US foreign policy in the Middle East. "Necessary" is when the lobby's effect was "the reason" behind the policy; "sufficient" is when the lobby's effect shaped that policy. But, had this effect

not been present, the policy could very possibly have been the same. Thus, it has been argued that examples of instances when the US response to the Israeli demands were not altogether positive, such as Reagan's sale of AWACs to Saudi Arabia, suggest that the affinity between the Israeli lobby and US foreign policy in Middle East is "necessary" but not "sufficient."⁴ However, these cases are very rare, especially in US foreign policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such an argument could be more relevant and possibly useful in the context of the lobby's effect in shaping US foreign policy toward Iran or invading Iraq, where oil, geopolitics, and other American interests do play a more significant role.

Another argument that highlights that US support for Israel depends on the key fact that most American Christians are evangelicals and believe in millennialism.⁵ The millennial theme became dominant only in the second half of the twentieth century, due to the development of nuclear arms and the creation of the state of Israel.

The continuous escalation of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East has brought together huge numbers of evangelicals in support of pre-millennialism,⁶ who predict the worsening of global conditions due to disastrous wars and natural calamities, etc. The pre-millennialists see Armageddon as inevitable in the Middle East, which would be the sign that Christ's Second Coming is imminent. Hence, in the evangelical context, Israel is considered to be a catalyst of events in the end times. This realization increases the enthusiasm of Christian fundamentalists for support of Israel, which must be able to defeat its enemies in order to serve as a precursor to the millennial peace. Therefore, the Christian Right considers US support of Israel to be "an absolute requirement."⁷ Anything else is contrary to God's will.⁸

Mearsheimer and Walt argue that "as long as Christian communities in the U.S. remain strong supporters of Israel, the U.S. will most likely continue to provide Israel with foreign aid and other support."⁹ A survey conducted by a Washington-based evangelical organization found that 82 percent of them believe that they have a moral obligation to support the Jews and Israel.¹⁰

DEFINING THE ISRAELI LOBBY

Lobbies and pressure groups are considered to be essential components of the American democratic policy-making process. Although their impact is typically associated with domestic issues, there are lobbies that have important impact on US foreign policy. Most significant among the latter is the Israeli lobby. US law defines a lobbyist as an individual or organization whose job is to influence the passing or defeat of legislation, and who receives funding for that purpose.¹¹ By exerting pressure on individual politicians and political parties, lobbyists push for their specific goals in the policy-making process.

However, the term "Israeli lobby" includes not only the above lobbyists but expands by not necessarily requiring the financial aspect. In their study, Mearsheimer and Walt use the term "Israeli lobby" as a "shorthand term for the loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively work to shape

US foreign policy in a pro-Israeli direction.”¹² Others, such as Terry, offer a slightly different definition, suggesting that along with supporting pro-Israeli interests, the Israeli lobby acts as an anti-Arab and anti-Muslim lobby.

Although there are always individuals and groups whose positions are hard to classify, there are others that can be easily identified as components of the Israeli lobby. Clear examples include: the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), the American Jewish Committee (AJC), and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (CPMAJO), etc. AIPAC and ADL are two of the most visible Jewish American organizations actively involved in lobbying. AIPAC is actually considered as the core of the whole Israeli lobby in the US. CPMAJO is a key umbrella organization for the various lobbying groups, with leaders representing more than 30 organizations.¹³

Besides the above “typical lobbyist-like organizations,” the Israeli lobby is distinctive in having a very wide array of institutes and establishments, which work on various levels and areas: school and university programs, academics, news agencies, writers, actors, singers, reporters, policy-makers, congressmen, the FBI and CIA key figures, politicians, ambassadors, in addition to American policy and research centers and institutes.¹⁴

THE JEWS IN THE US AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISRAELI LOBBY

Although it is hard to consider the Israeli lobby without referring to Jewish Americans, the Israeli lobby is not exactly a “Jewish lobby.” The lobby’s core indeed is unsurprisingly composed of Jewish Americans, but the lobby includes influential Christian Zionists, Christian Evangelicals, and non-Jewish neo-conservatives.

America’s Jewish population is the second largest Jewish population in the world followed by Israel, according to the Jewish Agency 2007 statistics. There was an estimated 5.3 million Jews in the US in 2007, accounting for 40.2 percent of the world Jewish population, and around 1.76 percent of the estimated 301 million population of the US.¹⁵ Yet this percentage is declining. In 2000, the percentage was about 2.5 percent, a 5 percent decline from the 1990s percentage.¹⁶

Jewish emigration to America started as early as the seventeenth century.¹⁷ In the 1880s, the number of Jewish families emigrating from Russia to US each year rose from 13,000 in 1881 to 45,000 in 1889. Almost two million Jews left their *myastechka* and *shtetls*¹⁸ in Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, and eastern Poland for the US, France, and British colonies.¹⁹

After 1924, the Jewish population in North America increased rapidly. According to statistics of The Immigration and Naturalization Systems of the US, in 1890 there were no more than 475,000 Jews in the US. In 1906 their number rose to 1,775,000. In 1916, there were 3.3 million Jews living in 1,900 congregations. In 1936, 4,641,184 Jews resided in the cities, towns, and villages of the US. The *World Almanac* for the year 1947 informs us

that there were 15,713,638 Jews in the world and that over 50 percent of them resided in the Western hemisphere., i.e., at least 8 million Jews lived in the Americas. The largest Jewish communities are found in New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Ohio, California, and Michigan. Retired Jews moved *en masse* to Florida, where Cuban Jews had resided since the fall of Batista's regime in Cuba. All of these states have a large electoral vote. After World War I, the German-origin Jewish bankers formed a powerful financial lobby in the US, and during and after World War II, the so-called "Frankfurter boys"²⁰ dominated crucial positions in the administration of Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Dwight Eisenhower. Felix Frankfurter succeeded Prague-born Harvard Jew, Louis Dembitz Brandeis, the old Jewish American guardian of the "gentile" Supreme Court during the Wilson administration.

Early Israeli lobbying instances can be found within the US foreign policy realm, although it was more secretive and behind the scenes, mainly dependent on personal contacts and friendships. This doesn't mean it wasn't influential or effective. Wilson's support for the Balfour Declaration was due in part to the influence of his Jewish friends, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis and Rabbi Stephen Wise. It was similarly the case with President Truman's ominous decision to back the creation of a Jewish state in 1948.²¹

More than 2,000 American Jews, mostly members of the street gangs from Brooklyn and The Bronx, traveled to Palestine and joined the Jewish militant groups of *Lehi*, the Gang Stern, *Irgun*, and *Haganah*. About 50,000 American "reservists" declared their readiness to "defend Israel." Many of these "volunteers" were mercenaries and contract killers, well paid by the international sponsors of Zionist terrorism. Some of them, like Colonel David Marcus, a graduate of the Military Academy at West Point and a leading commander of the Israeli troops in the Jerusalem front,²² were killed by the Arab self-defense forces.

Following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, very few Jews migrated from the US. Of the 35,000 American and Canadian Jews who migrated to Israel in its first decade only 5,400 stayed.²³ In the short term, the reluctance of American Jews to migrate soon became a source of tension between them and the political establishment in Tel Aviv. After all, the *raison d'être* of the state of Israel was to "ingather the exiles." In the view of the state's first prime minister, David Ben Gurion, a good Jew was a Zionist and a good Zionist must migrate to Israel. Having decided to remain under the US's protective care, Israel, at the very least, required that American Jews give their money and exercised their political influence in the US for its advantage.²⁴

During the 1940s and 1950s, Jewish Americans established and joined a large array of civic organizations (educational, cultural, social, and religious) and programs, as well as specific ones for the support of Zionism and Israel. Many of these organizations still exist. The American Zionist Emergency Council (AZEC), active in the 1940s, later evolved into the American Zionist Council (AZC). The ZOA was led by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, a tireless campaigner for Israel in the post-World War II era. Silver met President

Eisenhower and was in regular contact with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Research and education institutes were also supported and established. The best example possibly is the Jaffee Center in the late 1940s, devoted to the study of the US political system. The American Zionist Council of Public Affairs, along with other Jewish American organizations, worked during the 1950s to “counteract perceived anti-Israeli forces in the Eisenhower administration. The barrage was so great that the state department officials joked that the person at Palestine desk had to be very tall because a short man would be submerged by Zionist telegrams in moments of stress.”²⁵

This was one of the two main reasons why the Zionist influence increased exponentially during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. The other was that Kennedy and Johnson themselves had numerous Zionist Jews among their close advisers, donors, and personal friends.²⁶

Julius Evola declared the US as the lowest and simultaneously most brutal empire of inferiors, controlled by a Judeo-Zionist cabal of plutocrats. Baltzell named these new American elite of power “the Philadelphia Gentlemen” or “the American Business Aristocracy” (ABA).²⁷ Until 1967, membership of the new upper class in postwar US depended on “the stock accumulations of their fathers, the private schools they attended, support of presidents of the Ford Motor Company, the General Motors, the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation, places of their eating and the women they marry.”²⁸ But not all members of ABA are peers of the New American power elite, even if they are fellows of Freemason lodges, members of Lion Clubs, the “right” fraternities and sororities, and “white” gentlemen’s clubs, breed horses, hobnob with directors of international corporations, or own private jets and ocean-going yachts. The governing class of “Foxes” and “Lions” in the US (or, as the Americans prefer to call them, “doves” and “hawks”) pays homage and tribute to their overlords, who control the foundations, the elite Ivy League universities (Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Cornell, Stanford, Vanderbilt, Amherst, Georgetown), the “mainstream mass media,” and such pivotal decision-making global organizations and institutions as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Foreign Policy Association, the Committee of Economic Development, the Business Advisory Council, the National Advertising Council, the Federal judiciary, Federal Reserve System, Pentagon, CIA, FBI, NSA, the IMF, and the Washington-based World Bank. The power elite does not control, but profoundly influences, the legislative branches of the federal government, the presidency, Supreme Court, and the Congress.²⁹

After the 1967 war, the lobby’s size, wealth, and influence expanded substantially. In the 1980s, they began to play a decisive role in the American banking system and in the 1990s they were the chief recipients of corporate mergers and cartelization.

It is worthwhile noting that the Jewish American community is diverse *vis-à-vis* domestic matters, but relatively united in supporting Israel. Since the 1990s, the policies of the Israeli lobby have been hard-line, reflecting not necessarily the mainstream, but the stance of those running the lobby’s key organizations (who generally support the Likud Party). On the other hand,

the Jewish American community shares a general identification, sympathy, and affiliation which make any individual or group within it very reluctant to criticize Israel (or the lobby) in public, or to air divisions within their community before the larger American society.³⁰

Detailing the views of American Jews about a broad range of subjects, a survey has been conducted annually by the AJC since the year 2000. Regarding the Jewish identity of the American Jews, the AJC survey revealed in 2000 that 92 percent considered being Jewish as important in their lives. Meanwhile 79 percent of American Jews affirmed in 2005 that caring about Israel is a very important part of their being Jews compared to only 19 percent who disagreed.

When asked about their attachment to Israel, 67 percent of American Jews in the 2008 survey felt close to Israel compared to 77 percent in 2005. In the same vein, 37 percent of the American Jews (according to the same survey) have visited Israel once or more; 49 percent of those who had never been to Israel stated that this was due to travel costs, and 20 percent to personal safety concerns.

In 2006, 77 percent of the American Jews depicted the US's relationship with Israel as warm (positive), compared to 86 percent in 2005 and 84 percent in 2004. Finally, when asked to rank certain groups in the US with regard to anti-Semitism, the American Jews viewed (in 2000 AJC survey) Muslims as the most anti-Semitic group, followed by the American Religious Right.³¹

Maybe it is due to all of the above facts that, quite impressively, the impact of Jewish American lobbying (i.e., within the Israeli lobby) far exceeds their demographic presence as a community in the US. The Israeli lobby's efficiency and activity outweigh those of any other lobby or interest group in the foreign policy realm.

THE AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (AIPAC)

In its issue of July 6, 1987 *The New York Times* described the AIPAC as "a major force in shaping United States policy in the Middle East."³² AIPAC is considered the core of the Israeli lobby and the lobby's influence. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon once told an American audience: "When people ask me how they can help Israel, I tell them: help AIPAC."³³

AIPAC is a registered lobby based in Washington. Its mission is "to insure close and consistently strong US-Israeli relations."³⁴ It evolved out of the AZC and was founded in 1954 by I. L. ("Sy") Kenen. AIPAC's role was interpreted then by Kenen as "to tell the president to overrule the state department."³⁵ When Morris Amitay succeeded Kenen in 1974 as executive director of AIPAC, he transformed the AIPAC into a major lobby force in Washington. During the 1980s, the AIPAC extended its activities to encompass anti-Arab programs. A full-time employee from ADL was hired to track the so-called "enemies" of Israel. This went as far as videotaping funerals of Palestinians in the mid-West. Lists of names of Arab Americans were sent to the FBI, including those of academics and intellectuals. In 1984, the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) condemned both the AIPAC and ADL blacklisting. In 1993, a group

of activists and committees filed a class action suit against the ADL. The case resulted in a permanent injunction against them for spying on Arab Americans, but AIPAC's "policy analysis" section continued under Michael Lewis (son of historian Bernard Lewis), to monitor the so-called "enemies" of Israel. Following the 9/11 attacks, such activity escalated.³⁶

The AIPAC is a vast organization. Leaders from various Jewish organizations serve on its board, and although it claims to have only around 50,000 members with a \$50 annual membership subscription, it has an estimated \$15 million budget, 150 employees and half a dozen full-time registered lobbyists.³⁷ AIPAC is believed by many congressmen and former congressmen to be "the most effective" lobbyist group.³⁸ Besides using the regular lobbying techniques of meetings, media, campaigns, conferences, consistent follow-up of voting records, etc., AIPAC focuses and relies heavily on two mainstream activities that ensure its influence:

1. Consistent and persistent information process on the Middle East events and suggested "needed policy." The weekly *Near East Report* is published and circulated to a wide circle of White House officials, members of US Congress, and their aides and government officials. Similarly, *Facts and Myths* publishes "action alerts" on government actions that adversely affect Israel, and other constantly streamed publications and policy papers, which are consistently pro-Israeli and anti-Arab.³⁹
2. Influencing the Congress and Executive/administration members and staff, through accessing networks and targeting campaigns.

Arguably, AIPAC is currently the most effective lobbying organization involved in Middle East affairs.⁴⁰ It is the most important, best known, and visible component of the Israeli lobby in the US and has consistently been ranked among the most powerful and most influential lobbies in Washington.⁴¹ By the 1990s, AIPAC ranked as the second most effective lobby in the country (behind the American Association of Retired Persons) thereby exceeding the power and clout of even organized labour.⁴² Similarly, in 1997, AIPAC was named by *Fortune* magazine as the second most powerful influence group in Washington.⁴³ Furthermore, in March 2005 AIPAC continued to rank second in "Washington's muscle rankings" of the *National Journal* study.⁴⁴

As might be expected, this huge influence from a foreign-interest group invited many controversies and critiques, although most are ineffective and marginalized. On the legal aspect, AIPAC violates four important US laws:⁴⁵

1. The Logan Act, which prohibits unauthorized diplomacy on the part of Americans with no official mandate to negotiate on behalf of the US.
2. Federal election laws, which prohibit individuals from making excessive contributions and prohibit non-profit organizations from coordinating Political Action Committees (PACs) funds nationally to support or defeat candidates for office.

3. The Foreign Agency Registration Act (FARA), which requires disclosure of the activities of agents lobbying for a foreign principal in the US.
4. The 1917 Espionage Act, which prohibits trafficking US national intelligence information in ways that can be used to “the injury of the U.S. or to the advantage of another country.”

AIPAC is registered as an American lobbying group funded by private donations and maintains that it receives “no financial assistance” from Israel or any other foreign group!⁴⁶ Very few dare write about this. Most of the file suit cases were closed on the basis of insufficient evidence, and AIPAC continues to be highly influential in determining US foreign policy in the Middle East.⁴⁷ In 1984, the FBI discovered that AIPAC possessed secret information that American companies had supplied to the International Trade Commission, but no criminal charges were pursued.⁴⁸ In 1988, the *Washington Post* published internal AIPAC coordination memos which indicated AIPAC’s alleged contributions to PACs in violation of its non-profit status. The case reached the US Supreme Court, before fading into oblivion.⁴⁹

One of the few, if not the only, successful cases was in 1992, when AIPAC’s president, David Steiner, was forced to resign after he was tape-recorded boasting about his political influence in obtaining aid for Israel. The evidence was crystal clear. Steiner also claimed to be “negotiating” with the incoming Clinton administration over who Clinton would appoint as Secretary of State and Director of the National Security Agency.⁵⁰

Another case was filed in 2005, and in late 2008 was still running in the Supreme Court. Colonel Lawrence Franklin was indicted for passing AIPAC a classified presidential directive and other secrets concerning America’s Iran policy. Two executive AIPAC officials were also indicted—Steve Rosen, AIPAC’s then foreign policy chief, and Keith Weissman, its Iran expert—for forwarding highly sensitive information to Israeli government officials and select members of Washington’s media establishment. However, this case continues on the basis of an appeal requiring to prove that “the alleged AIPAC leaks of national defense information actually harmed the United States,” even though the 1917 Espionage Act requires a much lower standard of proof: “the injury of the U.S. or to the advantage of a foreign country.”⁵¹

In the “list of achievements” posted on its website, AIPAC leaves no doubt regarding the influence of the Israeli lobby on US foreign policy in the Middle East. This includes: reiterating standards for the Palestinian government through letters signed by 259 House members and 79 senators urging the EU and US not to provide aid or grant recognition to any Palestinian government until it fulfills internationally backed requirements; strengthening US-Israel homeland security cooperation by passing landmark legislation creating an office within the Department of Homeland Security to support joint research and development projects between the US and key allies such as Israel; prohibiting US aid and contacts with the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority (PA); passing the Iran Freedom and Support Act, which renews and strengthens sanctions aimed at curtailing funds and international cooperation

necessary for Iran to pursue the development of nuclear weapons; designating Hizbullah's TV station as a terrorist entity through legislative language as well as support of a letter to President Bush signed by 51 senators; passing the Syrian Accountability Act, which allows the president to sanction Syria for its continued involvement in Lebanon and support of terrorism, etc.⁵²

THE ISRAELI LOBBY'S SOURCES OF INFLUENCE

Many arguments have been presented to explain why the Israeli lobby is so effective, whereas the American Jewish population, on which it relies for the bulk of its membership, is a mere 2 percent or so of the total US population.⁵³

There are arguments which ascribe its influence to voting patterns. For what distinguishes the Israeli lobby from other lobbies (specifically ethnic ones) is that most of the latter (for example, the German and Irish diasporas, Arab Americans, etc.) base their power on votes not money, thus limiting their potential influence to the cities and states where they are concentrated. On the other hand, the Israeli lobby "is not primarily a traditional ethnic voter machine," but a unique ethno-political "donor machine" within the US political system.⁵⁴

Helmreich believes that what makes American Jews distinctive and influential is primarily "the group's voting patterns."⁵⁵ According to him, American Jews' political or financial clout is overestimated.⁵⁶ Jews have the highest percentage turnout of any ethnic group. Mitchell Bard notes that while the Jewish population is around 2 percent of the US, 94 percent of them live in 13 key electoral college states, which combined have enough electors to elect the president.⁵⁷

On the other hand, Mearsheimer and Walt argue that:

The Israeli lobby's power flows from its unmatched ability to play this game of interest group politics. In its basic operations, it is no different from interest groups like the Farm lobby, steel and textile workers, and other ethnic lobbies. What sets the Israeli lobby apart is its extraordinary effectiveness. But there is nothing improper about American Jews and their Christian allies attempting to sway U.S. policy towards Israel. The Lobby's activities are not the sort of conspiracy depicted in anti-Semitic tracts like the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. For the most part, the individuals and groups that comprise the lobby are doing what other special interest groups do, just much better.⁵⁸

They identify two broad strategies pursued by the lobby in order to promote US support for Israel, and two key facts within that context which make the lobbying process more efficient. The two strategies are:

1. Wielding significant influence in Washington, and pressuring both Congress and the Executive to support Israel wholeheartedly. Whatever

an individual lawmaker's or policy-maker's own views, the lobby tries to make supporting Israel the "smart" political choice.

2. Ensuring that public discourse about Israel portrays it in a positive light, by repeating myths about Israel and its founding and by promoting Israel's side in the policy debates of the day.⁵⁹

The two other key facts are:

1. The relative absence of pro-Arab interest groups, most of which are "weak to non-existent,"⁶⁰ makes the discourse of the Israeli lobby in US foreign policy much easier regarding pro-Israeli and anti-Arab policies, especially in the Middle East.
2. Mearsheimer and Walt describe the charge of anti-Semitism as "the great silencer." This is used against any criticism of Israel's actions or the influence of the lobby/AIPAC on US foreign policy. Pro-Israeli groups are pushing to define a new anti-Semitism that is equivalent to criticizing Israel's actions, supporters, or lobby in the US.⁶¹ Mearsheimer and Walt faced anti-Semitism charges following the publication of their article and book. Even President Carter was accused of the same charges following the publication of his book *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid* in November 2006.

However, not everyone agrees with Mearsheimer and Walt that the Israeli lobby is just like any other lobby, and is simply doing a better job than other lobbying groups while working openly in public. This argument has been challenged by declassified documents of the various AIPAC hearings and sessions, and by the inability so far to prove that the AIPAC is legally a lobby, or that it illegally channels funding for political purposes or serves the interests of a foreign country, no matter how obvious and commonsense these arguments seem.⁶²

Mohsen Saleh observes seven key points that make the power and influence of American Jews so distinctive. Some of these points are also included in Mearsheimer and Walt's analysis. Saleh's account relies on observing the mix of three factors which make the dominance of the Israeli lobby a reality. These are 1) the resources and the organizational abilities of the American Jewish community; 2) the nature of the American community and its political system; and 3) the skillful and effective employment of these two factors by American Jews in their lobbying. Saleh noted that in the economic field American Jews' share of the US economy is only 10–12 percent. Although this is about six times their demographic percentage, it is not a threatening or controlling share in terms of ownership. What makes this wealth critical is the way it is used in financing electoral campaigns. Saleh added that the American Jewish community is very well organized and efficient in its lobbying. They understand the realities and context of the American political system and the specific individual politicians' mentalities, and how to deal with them. He furthermore focused on the high Jewish voting turnout (92 percent vs. 54 percent average) and their concentration in cities with high electoral college votes.⁶³

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ISRAELI LOBBY

Patrick Buchanan, a prominent conservative politician and tough-talking political commentator in the US, described the Congress and the White House as “Zionist-occupied territory” ruled by “Amen Corner.” He added that “before the Palestinians liberate themselves, we must liberate the Congress and the Executive Branch.”⁶⁴

The American political system offers activists many ways of influencing the policy process. Interest groups can lobby elected representatives (in the House and Senate) and members of the Executive, make campaign contributions, vote in elections, etc. Pro-Israel groups based in the US frequently coordinate single and unified lobbying efforts, thereby strengthening the overall effectiveness of their programs. Familiarity with the US system enables the Israeli lobby to manipulate US political realities to its own advantage.⁶⁵

Influencing Congress

A key pillar of the Israeli lobby’s effectiveness is its influence in Congress, where Israel is virtually immune from criticism. This in itself is remarkable, because Congress rarely shies away from contentious issues. Where Israel is concerned, however, potential critics fall silent. One reason is that many key members of the Congress from both the Democratic and Republican parties are pro-Israel.⁶⁶ According to *American Prospect* magazine, AIPAC’s 2002 annual conference included 50 senators (out of 100), 190 representatives (out of 435), and more than a dozen senior administration officials,⁶⁷ while over half the members of Congress attended at least one event during AIPAC’s 2004 annual conference.⁶⁸

The 2006 US congressional elections resulted in a sweeping victory for the Democratic Party, and six new Jewish legislators joined 37 familiar faces in the 110th Congress, making their number the highest ever.⁶⁹ Also, most of the Democratic leadership is considered pro-Israel, including Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and Rahm Emanuel, head of the House Democratic Caucus. At the same time, many Republican backers of Israel, who no longer head committees, continue to serve in minority leadership roles.⁷⁰

In September 2002 Dick Armey, the most senior Republican in the House of Representatives, proclaimed, “My no. 1 priority in foreign policy is to protect Israel.”⁷¹ The fact that Israel took priority over his own country, the US, indicates the strength of influence the Zionists exert on US policy-making. Earlier in that same year Armey shocked the nation when he appeared on national TV and called for the expulsion of the Palestinians from the West Bank, and urged for its annexation by the state of Israel. He claimed that “There are many Arab nations that have many hundreds of thousands of acres of land and soil and property and opportunity to create a Palestinian state. I happen to believe the Palestinians should leave.”⁷² Moreover, Tom DeLay, former member of the House from Texas, House Majority Leader 2003–5,

and a prominent member of the Republican Party, once described himself as “an Israeli at heart.”⁷³

Another source of the lobby’s power is its use of pro-Israel congressional staffers. As Morris Amitay, a former head of AIPAC, once admitted, “There are a lot of guys at the working level up here [on Capitol Hill] who happen to be Jewish, who are willing ... to look at certain issues in terms of their Jewishness ... These are all guys who are in a position to make the decision in these areas for those senators ... You can get an awful lot done just at the staff level.”⁷⁴

Israeli lobby’s influence on Capitol Hill goes even further. According to Douglas Bloomfield, a former AIPAC staff member, “it is common for members of Congress and their staff to turn to AIPAC first when they need information, before calling the Library of Congress, the Congressional Research Service, committee staff or administration experts.” More importantly, he notes that AIPAC is “often called on to draft speeches, work on legislation, advise on tactics, perform research, collect co-sponsors and marshal votes.”⁷⁵

In this context, congressional members or candidates who are hostile to Israel are usually subjected to barrages of mail and calls from their constituents and past and present campaign contributors. By vigorously adopting these measures, AIPAC has over the years brought about the downfall of many politicians. In 1982 AIPAC engineered the ousting of Paul Findley from Congress after he publicly criticized Israeli policies in the late 1970s and tried to act, against the advice of AIPAC, as an interlocutor in the Middle East by contacting Yasser Arafat and Hafiz Assad.

In 2002, the Congressional Black Caucus lost two of its most prominent figures, Earl Hilliard (Alabama) and Cynthia McKinney (Georgia), following their criticism of American funding of Israel’s military occupation of Palestinian land. Hilliard especially angered the pro-Israeli lobby when he opposed a congressional resolution that gave Ariel Sharon a more or less free hand to pursue his policies in the West Bank. Former Senator J. William Fulbright, chairman of the instrumental Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), stated in 1973 that “Israel controls the Senate.” He was removed from office under the pressure of the AIPAC he dared to expose.⁷⁶ Senator Charles Percy, a successor to Fulbright as chairman of the SFRC, confessed on CBS’s *60 Minutes* in 1988, “I finally reached the point where I saw our foreign policy totally turned around with the Muslim world ... Can Israel and her PM have more power than the Congress?”⁷⁷

His public question was supported by George Ball, Under Secretary of State and Ambassador to the United Nations, who stated that “Practically every Congressman and Senator says his prayers to the AIPAC lobby ... they have done an enormous job of corrupting the American democratic process.”⁷⁸

Influencing the Executive

The Israeli lobby has a significant leverage over the Executive. It is not only a traditional ethnic voter machine, but also an ethnic donor machine. Unique among ethno-political machines in the US, the Israeli lobby has emulated the

techniques of national lobbies based on economic interests (both industry groups and unions) or social issues (the National Rifle Association, pro- and anti-abortion groups). The lobby uses nationwide campaign donations, often funneled through local “astro-turf” (i.e., phony grassroots) organizations with names like Tennesseans for Better Government and the Walters Construction Management Political Committee of Colorado, to influence members of Congress in areas where there are few Jewish voters.⁷⁹

Political Action Committees (PACs) are another key component of the Israeli lobby. PACs are committees that pressure congressmen for specific legislations.⁸⁰ Under US law, a PAC is allowed to donate no more than \$10,000 to an individual in a single election year, either as a reward to an incumbent or to sponsor a candidate who is sympathetic to their cause. In order to exceed this limit the pro-Israeli lobby in the US has mobilized the largest possible number of like-minded PACs to support its recommendations.⁸¹ Pro-Israeli PACs usually have names with no visible association with Israel/Zionism/Jews. Among the largest are: Citizens Organized PAC, Washington PAC, Joint Action Committee, Maryland Association for Concerned Citizens PAC, etc. Hence, in 1988, 78 pro-Israeli PACs donated more than \$5.4 million to 477 congressional candidates. This sum was unsurpassed by any other special interest lobby. As a result, three candidates received more than \$200,000 each from pro-Israeli PACs, and four candidates received more than \$100,000, 10–20 times more than candidates are permitted by law to accept from any single special-interest PAC.⁸² Although this expenditure is regulated by strict US laws, which make most of it illegal, it is a major means through which the Israeli lobby gets support and access to key persons within US politics, specifically in election campaigns, where candidates rely heavily on PACs for financial backing.⁸³

Wisconsin Republican Senator Robert Kasten received \$128,300 during the 1986 election for his role as chairman of the foreign operations subcommittee of the SFRC, in co-sponsoring (with Senator Daniel Inouye) a law that reduced the interests on all outstanding US government loans to Israel from an average of 11.4 percent to 5 percent. This turned out to be less than the US government pays on its own debts, part of which is the money Israel still owes it.⁸⁴

Hamilton Jordan wrote a memorandum to President Carter in June 1977, in which he said:

Out of 125 members of the Democratic National Council, over 70 are Jewish; in 1976, over 60 percent of the large donors to the Democratic Party were Jewish; over 60 percent of the monies raised by Nixon in 1972 was from Jewish contributors ... Wherever there is major political fundraising in this country, you will find American Jews playing a significant role.⁸⁵

Many political leaders have addressed AIPAC conferences, including George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Dick Cheney, Senators John McCain, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, current and former members of the leadership of both parties in Congress, and current and former prime ministers of Israel.⁸⁶

As well as campaign contributions, the Israeli lobby's power is exercised through its influence on government appointments. Until recently, Democrats and Republicans differed in their attitude toward the Israeli lobby, but now both parties are significantly influenced by it, though in different ways.⁸⁷

AIPAC pays particular attention to State Department officials who shape policy on the Middle East. The scale of the overall lobby's output was exemplified in March 1981-April 1983 when Jewish individuals held 350 meetings with officials from the White House, the State Department, and the Pentagon—an average of one meeting every two days.⁸⁸ In addition, AIPAC purchases and distributes large numbers of copies of books favorable to Israel.

Though hardly publicized or documented, these meetings offer the pro-Israeli lobby an opportunity to obtain firsthand information about US policy. Because of Israel's pervasive influence on Capitol Hill and the ease with which information is leaked, officials are often reluctant to document matters. A serving senior diplomat with many years' experience in the Middle East once admitted, "If I have something I want the Secretary of State to know but don't want Israel to know, I must wait till I have a chance to see him personally."⁸⁹ Likewise, former Congressman Paul Findley recalls that if something about Israel is mentioned even in an interdepartmental meeting, that information is quickly passed on to the Israeli embassy. If it is deemed critical or contrary to Israel's interest, the offending official is usually reported to the Secretary of State to be disciplined.⁹⁰ In November 2005 when the president of the Israel Policy Forum, Seymour Reich, urged Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to pressure Israel to open the border crossing into Gaza, his action was denounced as "irresponsible behavior." Subsequently, when the heat was turned up on him, Reich retracted his statement and said, "The word pressure is not in my vocabulary when it comes to Israel."⁹¹

During the Clinton administration, Middle East policy was largely shaped by officials with close ties to Israel or to prominent pro-Israel organizations. Among them were Martin Indyk, the former Deputy Director of Research at AIPAC and co-founder of the pro-Israel Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP); Dennis Ross, who joined WINEP after leaving government in 2001; and Aaron Miller, who has lived in Israel and often visits the country.⁹²

George W. Bush has, in practice, been influenced more by the Israeli lobby than by the oil industry lobby. The State Department under Colin Powell, who has described himself as a "Rockefeller Republican" and supports Palestinian statehood, rapidly lost influence to the Defense Department, where a cadre of pro-Israel hawks allied with Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz had seized the initiative.⁹³ Along with Wolfowitz, the Bush administration included other fervent advocates of the Israeli cause, such as Elliot Abrams, John Bolton, Douglas Feith, I. Lewis ("Scooter") Libby, Richard Perle, and David Wurmser.⁹⁴

The presence of sympathizers in the White House and other top-level government bureaus gives the pro-Israeli lobby a considerable advantage. In particular, liaison officers are often appointed on the basis of their close personal contacts with the Jewish community, or recruited by Israeli lobby

organizations, think-tanks, or interest groups. These liaison officers not only arrange meetings and roundtables with the president and other officials, but also pass on information to Jewish American organizations, so that they can tailor their political efforts to specific government concerns.⁹⁵

Influencing the Media

For many aspirants to political office, the media have been a convenient vehicle. The Jewish presence in the American mainstream media is by no means insignificant. They have influenced not only public opinion, but also official perceptions on the conflict in Palestine. Jews own all the major newspapers. These include the *New York Times*, which was formerly owned by the Jewish entrepreneur Adolph Ochs; his great-grandson, Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., currently runs the company. The family also owns other notable newspapers such as the *Boston Globe* and the *International Herald Tribune*, often acclaimed as the most widely distributed English daily in the world.⁹⁶ The Jewish stranglehold on the American media extends to the influential *Washington Post*, which was purchased by Eugene Meyer in 1933 and is now run by his daughter, Katherine Meyer Graham.⁹⁷ Jews or pro-Israel figures are owners of or dominant in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, and *Time* magazines. This is equally the case with the major TV channels and networks (CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, and Fox News) and the four largest film studios.

Furthermore, the Israeli lobby concentrates on the cultural agenda, specifically in defining images and attitudes towards the Middle East, Israel, Arabs, etc. Pro-Israel organizations in this sense have the “built-in advantage” of playing before an audience that is generally favorably disposed to them. They make use of their familiarity with American culture and community, of the low level of knowledge about the Middle East and foreign affairs among the general American public, and of the weakness of the counter-efforts of the “other view” (i.e., of Arabs and Muslims) to popularize many myths or false information regarding Palestine, Israel, and the Arab world. Pro-Israel groups are much more consistent and persistent in “information campaigns”—more than any other groups—specifically on Middle Eastern issues, devoting considerable time, money, energy, and resources. This applies on the level of policy-makers and the general public, with each approached with relevant and appropriate means. A sufficient example here is *Exodus* (the novel and film of 1958), which modeled the attitudes toward the Arab Israeli conflict for an entire generation of Americans.⁹⁸

In his film *Jihad in America*, Steven Emerson argued that there was a global terrorist network operating in the US and that they were raising funds for Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Lebanon. Significantly, the film was part-funded by the pro-Israeli media mogul Mortimer Zuckerman, owner of *The New Republic*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The US News and World Report*, and the *New York Daily News*. The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation also provided funds. Apart from Emerson’s work, the Bradley Foundation had also funded the widely publicized book by Steven Kaplan titled *The Arabists*:

the Romance of an American Elite, which condemned as anti-Semites those officials in the State Department who criticized American support for Israel.⁹⁹

Influencing the Think-Tanks and the Academic Elite

The Israeli lobby has a significant impact on American think-tanks, which play an important role in shaping public debate as well as actual policy. The lobby created its own think-tank in 1985, when Martin Indyk helped to found WINEP. Although WINEP plays down its links to Israel, claiming instead to provide a “balanced and realistic” perspective on Middle East issues, it is funded and run by individuals deeply committed to advancing Israel’s agenda.¹⁰⁰

In 1996 a group of opinion-makers at the Washington-based Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies (IASPS) produced a report for the then Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu titled *A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm*. The report recommended a clean break from the Madrid peace process, which produced the Oslo Accords. The authors included Richard Perle, James Colbert, Charles Fairbanks, Jr., Douglas Feith, Robert Loewenberg, David Wurmser, and Meyrav Wurmser. Perle and Feith later went on to become key Pentagon officials under President George W. Bush.

The task of implementing the first phase of the change in US policy toward the Middle East and Palestine was entrusted to an organization called Project for a New American Century (PNAC). In a letter to President Clinton dated January 26, 1998 they asserted that the current policy toward Iraq was not working and that US interests in the Middle East and those of its allies were threatened and that he should use his forthcoming State of the Union Address to set out a new strategy, which would lead to a change of regime in Iraq. The signatories included Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, John Bolton, Richard Armitage, and Donald Rumsfeld, all of whom would work under the future Bush administration and orchestrate the war in Iraq.¹⁰¹

In another letter written to President Bush in January 2002 the PNAC thanked him for his courageous leadership in the war on terrorism. They added: “No one should doubt that the United States and Israel share a common enemy ... Israel’s fight against terrorism is our fight. Israel’s victory is an important part of our victory. For reasons both moral and strategic, we need to stand with Israel in its fight against terrorism.”¹⁰²

However, the Israeli lobby’s influence extends well beyond WINEP, IASPS, and PNAC. Over the past 25 years, pro-Israel forces have established a commanding presence at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Brookings Institution, the Center for Security Policy, the Foreign Policy Research Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA). These think-tanks employ few, if any, critics of US support for Israel.¹⁰³

THE IMPACT OF THE ISRAELI LOBBY ON US FOREIGN POLICY

Studies of the foreign policy decision-making process have shown that policy-makers, unlike the general public, usually operate on the basis of a set of

assumptions, often inherited from predecessors, and do not scrutinize or challenge those assumptions. This has been the case with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Policy-makers are particularly reluctant to seek out opposing views, in the belief that everyone's position is known and everyone is in tune with the prevailing policy line.¹⁰⁴

The "set of assumptions" in dealing with the Middle East is due largely to the activities of the Israeli lobby who openly work to push US foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction. Tony Smith observes in his authoritative study, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy*, "to be a 'friend of Israel' or 'pro-Israel' apparently means something quite simple: that Israel alone should decide the terms of its relations with its Arab neighbors and that the US should endorse these terms, whatever they may be."¹⁰⁵ One former Democratic senator, Ernest Hollings, noted on leaving office, "you can't have an Israeli policy other than what AIPAC gives you around here."¹⁰⁶ Or as Ariel Sharon once said, "AIPAC has proven a close friend to Israel ... AIPAC's continued support is more important now than ever before."¹⁰⁷

With regard to the Palestinian issue, it is hard to explain America's failure to put pressure on Israel to reach a final land-for-peace settlement, particularly since the Oslo Accord in 1993, without bringing to mind the Israeli lobby. The influence of the lobby may be easier to detect in the way US positions have shifted on more specific totems of the conflict. For example, Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were deemed to be illegal during the Carter administration. Under Reagan, they shifted to be seen as an "obstacle" to peace and are being viewed now as simply a "complicating" factor. US officials are talking these days about "considering realities on the ground," which were illegally and forcibly made by the Israelis. Similarly, East Jerusalem was considered by the US to be part of the occupied territories, but recently its status has become rather more ambiguous.¹⁰⁸

The 1981 disagreement over the sale of AWACs to Saudi Arabia is perhaps the only example that witnessed a clash between the Israeli lobby and the oil industry lobby. Otherwise the special relationship shielded Israel from scrutiny, even when egregious violations of US law and international law were involved. Such violations occurred during the Reagan and Bush Sr., Clinton, and Bush Jr. presidencies, but they failed to have any adverse effect whatsoever on the special relationship.¹⁰⁹

In 1981, Israel crossed the borders of four sovereign Arab states and bombed the capitals of two states, causing severe devastation and more than 1,500 casualties. The raids on the Iraqi nuclear facility in Baghdad and the residential areas of Beirut were carried out using sophisticated American weapons, including F-16 jets.¹¹⁰ Moreover, Israel violently suppressed the first Palestinian *Intifadah* which erupted in 1987, reoccupied the whole West Bank in 2002 during the second *al-Aqsa Intifadah* which erupted in 2000, and destroyed large inhabited areas of Lebanon during the second Lebanon War in July 2006.

The principal issue during the Bush Sr. presidency was the controversy over loan guarantees to Israel and Prime Minister Shamir's plan for a Palestinian-Israeli settlement. Bush Sr. was the last president to criticize the lobby publicly, in September 1991, when he complained that "there are 1,000 lobbyists up on the Hill today lobbying Congress for loan guarantees for Israel and I'm one lonely little guy down here asking Congress to delay its consideration of loan guarantees for 120 days."¹¹¹

With Clinton in the White House, the controversies ceased. Although he supported the Oslo peace process and favored the creation of a Palestinian state, pro-Israel Clinton's closest advisers at the Camp David summit in July 2000 did so only within the limits of what would be acceptable to Israel. The American delegation took its cue from Ehud Barak, coordinated its negotiating position with Israel in advance, and did not present any independent proposals. Not surprisingly, Palestinian negotiators complained that they were "negotiating with two Israeli teams—one displaying an Israeli flag, and one an American flag."¹¹² Samuel (Sandy) Berger, Clinton's National Security Adviser, reports that at one point during the negotiations at Camp David (July 2000), Dennis Ross made the remarkable comment that, "If Barak offers anything more, I'll be against this agreement."¹¹³

Bolstered by September 11, US policy during the Bush Jr. administration was definitely pro-Israeli. It can be comprehended in three points: fix the blame on the Palestinians, "demonize" them, and provide a cover for the Israelis to crush the second *Intifadah*.¹¹⁴ By February 2003, a *Washington Post* headline summarized the situation: "Bush and Sharon Nearly Identical on Mideast Policy." The main reason for this switch was the Israeli lobby.¹¹⁵

Maintaining US support for Israel's policies against the Palestinians is essential as far as the Israeli lobby is concerned, but its ambitions do not stop there. It also wants America to help Israel to maintain its position as the dominant regional power. The Israeli government and pro-Israel groups in the US have worked together to shape the administration's policy toward Iraq, Iran, and Syria, as well as its grand scheme for re-ordering the Middle East.¹¹⁶

The Israeli lobby's impact can also be traced to the recent US policies, including the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. Neo-conservatives inside the Bush administration, as well as leaders of prominent pro-Israel organizations, play a key role in making the case for war. It is believed that the US would not have attacked Iraq without their efforts.¹¹⁷

With Saddam Hussein ousted from power, the Israeli lobby is now focusing on Iran, whose government seems determined to acquire nuclear weaponry. Despite its own nuclear arsenal and conventional military might, Israel does not want a nuclear Iran. Yet neither diplomacy nor economic sanctions are likely to curb Tehran's ambitions. Almost no country in the world favors using force against Iran except Israel, along with AIPAC and many of the same neo-conservatives, who advocated attacking Iraq among the chief proponents of using military force against Iran.¹¹⁸

Today, the Israeli lobby is distorting US foreign policy in a number of ways. Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, enabled by US weapons and

money, inflames anti-American attitudes in Arab and Muslim countries. The expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land makes a mockery of the US commitment to self-determination of Kosovo, East Timor, and Tibet. The US strategy of dual containment of Iraq and Iran pleases Israel, which is most threatened by them, but violates the logic of *realpolitik* and alienates most of America's other allies. Beyond the region, US policy on nuclear weapon proliferation is undermined by the double standard that has led it to ignore Israel's program while condemning those of Iran and Pakistan.¹¹⁹

CONCLUSION

All in all, the Israeli lobby in the US is highly active and influential in shaping foreign policy in the areas where the interests of Israel are present. Accordingly, the Israeli lobby purposely invested many ways of influencing the policy process; they lobby elected representatives and members of the Executive Branch, make campaign contributions, vote in elections, and try to mold public opinion by manipulating the media, think-tanks, and academia.

The surveys conducted by the AJC show that the majority of American Jews are highly supportive of Israel. About three-quarters of American Jewry, according to these surveys, affirmed that "caring about Israel is a very important part of their being Jews." Thus, the AIPAC is considered to be the core of the Israeli lobby and the lobby's influence.

Apparently, the Israeli lobby in the US could realize its goals by presenting Israel as a strategic asset for the country and, therefore, serving American interests. That particularly explains US aid and support to Israel, during the Cold War or under the slogan of fighting terrorism. Depending on the key fact that the majority of American Christians are evangelicals, the Israeli lobby has invested such religious and cultural backgrounds to enhance American ties with Israel.

However, while the Israeli lobby is not all-powerful, it is still far too powerful in shaping the US policies in the Middle East and elsewhere. Still, in few exceptional cases, the Israeli lobby demands were rejected by American decision-makers, on the grounds of greater national interests. In the same vein, there are other lobbies which are active and influential in the American policy process, among them the oil industry lobby.

There are many striking examples about the influence of the Israeli lobby on the US's Middle East foreign policy. With regard to Palestine, it is hard to explain the US's failure to pressure Israel into a final land-for-peace settlement without factoring in the Israeli lobby. The pro-Israel groups in the US have worked together to shape the administration's policy towards Iraq, Syria, and Iran, as well as its grand scheme for re-ordering the Middle East.

NOTES

- * The authors would like to express their gratitude to Abdul Hameed al-Kayyali, Mariam Itani, and Amal Itani, who are working at al-Zaytouna Center, for their help and assistance in preparing this chapter.

1. John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), p. 112.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
3. This debate has been active in newspapers, op-eds as well as in academic and scholarly articles. See, for example, Cherrie Heywood, "Israel May Have Become a Liability for U.S." (October 13, 2008), ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=44235 (accessed November 10, 2008); and Robert Katz, "An Asset, not a Liability" (December 17, 2001), web.israel21c.net/bin/en.jsp?enDispWho=Views percent5El16&enPage=BlankPage&enDisplay=view&enDispWhat=object&enVersion=0&enZone=Views&. (accessed November 10, 2008).
4. Mitchell Plitnick and Chris Toensing, "The Israeli Lobby in Perspective," *Middle East Report*, 243 (Summer 2007): 42–7.
5. Millennialism (from millennium, Latin, "thousand years"), or chiliasm in Greek, is a belief held by some Christian denominations that there will be a Golden Age or Paradise on Earth in which "Christ will reign" prior to the Last Judgment and future eternal state (the New Heaven and New Earth). See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennialism.
6. Premillennialism in Christian eschatology is the belief that Christ will literally reign on the earth for 1,000 years at his Second Coming. (Seventh-day Adventists interpret this as a reign in heaven.) The doctrine is called premillennialism because it views the current age as prior to Christ's kingdom. It is distinct from the other forms of Christian eschatology such as amillennialism or postmillennialism, which view millennial rule as either figurative and non-temporal, or as occurring prior to the Second Coming. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premillennialism.
7. Muhammad Arif Zakaullah, *Religion and Politics in America: the Rise of Christian Evangelists and their Impact* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Center for Studies and Consultations, 2007), pp. 126–7.
8. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, pp. 132–7.
9. *Ibid.*
10. www.ynet.co.il/english/articles/0,7340,L-3531796,00.html.
11. Janice J. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups* (London: Pluto Press, 2005).
12. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 112.
13. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 29.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 29–32.
15. A. Pfeffer, "Jewish Agency: 13.2 million Jews worldwide on eve of Rosh Hashanah, 5768," *Haaretz* (September 12, 2007), www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/903585.html (accessed November 6, 2008).
16. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 69.
17. J. Klinger, "The Canary in the Coal Mine? American Jewry 1654–1770," *Jewish Magazine* (May 2004), www.jewishmag.com/79mag/usahistory2/usahistory2.htm (accessed November 6, 2008).
18. Polish *miasteczko* = very little town, Ukrainian *mestechko*, often equivalent of Jewish *shtetl* (in Yiddish and Hebrew *Ashtot* = little town, pl. *shtetlekh*. An exclusively Jewish village = *dorf*).
19. See W. W. Kaplun-Kogan, *Doe Judischen Wanderbewegungen* (Bonn: 1919), pp. 19–25.
20. Vienna-born Felix Frankfurter left his professorship in Harvard Law School and became a Supreme Court Justice and President F. Roosevelt's top adviser on legal and political affairs. His Eastern European Jewish-origin "boys" included Dean Acheson, Alger and Donald Hiss, Lee Pressman, David Niles, Benjamin V. Cohen, David Lilienthal (chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission), Joe Rauh, Nathan Margold, Milton Katz, Manly Fleischman, Anna Rosenberg, Nathan P. Feinsinger, Russian Jew Isador Lubin (Lube), Leo Pasvolksky, Samuel Rosenman, the infamous Henry Morgenthau (Secretary of Treasury and author of the genocidal Morgenthau Plan on starvation, enslavement, and gradual extermination of Germans), and Herbert Lehman (Director General of the United Nations and UNRRA, 1943–46). All of them made decisions about wars and use of weapon of mass destruction and shaped US foreign policy. See *Who is Who in America*, Vol. 26 (1950–51).

21. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 51.
22. AP dispatch, *Evening Star*, Washington (June 12, 1948).
23. Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p. 29.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
25. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East.*, p. 70.
26. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 118.
27. See: E. Digby Baltzell, *An American Business Aristocracy* (Philadelphia: np, 1964). First published by the Free Press of Glencoe (1958) as *The Philadelphia Gentlemen*. E. D. Baltzell was a leading Philadelphian “elitologist” in the Hippie decade and is author of *The Protestant Establishment*. He obtained his PhD in sociology from Columbia University. Like many other liberal-minded Philadelphian freemasons he agrees with the Jewish Frankfurt School of cultural communism (Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, and Jürgen Habermas) on a critique of corporate state capitalism, industrialization, and technology, but his Tocquevillian values are very different from those of the Judeo-Communist expatriates from the Nazi Third Reich.
28. G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967), p. 9. Domhoff is a Professor of Psychology and Fellow of Cowell College, University of California at Santa Cruz. Most of the children of these “doves” and “hawks” of the ABA attend St. Paul’s, St. Mark’s, Choate, Hotchkiss, or St. Andrew’s, the most exclusive private schools for boys in the US, which New Conservatives, New Leftists, New Judeo-Zionists, New Democrats, New Republicans, and New Rightists attend. Only New Ummatists and the Muslim New Riches in the US are not yet graduates of these “gardens of knowledge and virtue” (Illuminatis’ term for the “new schools of edification” in nineteenth-century America and Europe) which seriously hampers their effort to be recognized as potential members of ABA. But those private schools do not discriminate against “Mohammedans” who “share western common values”, drink alcoholic beverages, and expose their “properly unveiled” females at cocktail parties and banquets.
In these schools, the children “learn upper-class values, upper-class manners, and most of all upper-class speech, one of the most telltale signs of class and regional origin.” *Ibid.*, p. 23.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
30. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 69.
31. www.ajc.org/site/c.ijIT12PHKoG/b.846741/k.8A33/Publications__Surveys/apps/nl/newsletter3.asp.
32. D. Shipler, “On Middle East Policy, A Major Influence,” *The New York Times* (July 6, 1987). select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F40711FD39540C758CDDAE0894DF484D81 (accessed November 6, 2008).
33. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*.
34. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 71.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 71–3.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 117.
39. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, pp. 71–2.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
41. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 117.
42. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 72.
43. “AIPAC Listed 2nd Most Powerful Group on Fortune List,” *Jewish News of Greater Phoenix* (November 11, 1998). www.jewishaz.com/jewishnews/971128/aipac.shtml (accessed November 6, 2008).
44. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 117.
45. Grant F. Smith, *Foreign Agents: The American Israel Public Affairs Committee from the 1963 Fulbright Hearings to the 2005 Espionage Scandal* (Washington, DC: Institute for Research, September 2007).

46. "What is AIPAC? A Voice for the U.S.-Israel Relationship." www.aipac.org/about_AIPAC/Learn_About_AIPAC/26.asp (accessed November 6, 2008).
47. Two books by Grant F. Smith on the subject stand out: *Foreign Agents: The American Israel Public Affairs Committee from the 1963 Fulbright Hearings to the 2005 Espionage Scandal*; and *America's Defense Line: The Justice Department's Battle to Register the Israeli Lobby as Agents of a Foreign Government* (Washington, DC.: Institute for Research, August 2008).
48. "AIPAC Report Reveals Long History of Activities Harmful to US—Irmep," *US Newswire* (June 2, 2008).
49. Ibid.
50. "The Complete Unexpurgated AIPAC Tape," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Dec/Jan 1992/1993. www.wrmea.com/backissues/1292/9212013.html (accessed November 6, 2008).
51. "Declassified Old Documents Shed New Light on AIPAC Espionage Prosecution—Irmep," in *Science Letter* (September 2, 2008): 3781.
52. "AIPAC—Learn about AIPAC." www.aipac.org/about_AIPAC/default.asp (accessed November 6, 2008).
53. Although a clear distinction was set earlier between the two, it is hard under this specific title (discussing the sources of power and influence) to distinguish between the American Jewish community and the Israeli lobby.
54. Michael Lind, "Distorting U.S. Foreign Policy: The Israeli Lobby and American Power," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (May 2002).
55. Jonathan Weisman and Michelle Boorstein, "Obama Working to Ensure Jewish Vote," *The Washington Post* (July 24, 2008). <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2008/07/24/ST2008072400052.html> (accessed November 6, 2008).
56. S. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 150–65.
57. Mitchell G. Bard, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Middle East Conflict*, 2nd edition (New York: Alpha Books, 2003). <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsources/US-Israel/lobby.html>. (accessed November 6, 2008).
58. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 12.
59. Ibid., p. 169.
60. Ibid., pp. 140–6.
61. Ibid., pp. 191–6.
62. See Smith, *Foreign Agents: The American Israel Public Affairs Committee from the 1963 Fulbright Hearings to the 2005 Espionage Scandal*.
63. Mohsen Saleh, *Dirasat Manhajiyya fi Al-Qdiyyah Al-Falastiniya* [Methodological Studies in the Palestinian Issue] (Kuala Lumpur: Fajr Publishing, 2003), pp. 249–56.
64. Right-wing Americans use the tag ZOG (Zionist-occupied government) in their characterization of Capitol Hill.
65. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 69; and Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 151.
66. See Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 152.
67. Laura Rozen and Jason Vest, "Cloak and Swagger," *The American Prospect* (November 2, 2004): www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=cloak_and_swagger.
68. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 72.
69. *The Jerusalem Post* (January 4, 2007). www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPostpercent2FJPArticlepercent2FShowFull&cid=1167467657033.
70. Ibid.; Yedioth Ahronoth (November 9, 2006): www.ynetnews.com/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1,2506,L-3326053,00.html; and Haaretz (January 5, 2007): www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/810011.html.
71. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 16.
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Part IV

Contemporary Islamism: Trends and Self-Criticism

Islam between Ignorant Followers and Incapable Scholars¹

Abdul Qadir Awdah

We Muslims take pleasure in belonging to Islam and are proud of it. Yet unfortunately, we do not know its most important injunctions and neglect its major issues.

PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM

By principles of Islam is meant the doctrines and theories inscribed in the Qur'an and established by the Prophet (peace be upon him). These doctrines and theories taken together are called Islamic jurisprudence. Thus, Islamic jurisprudence is the sum of the principles enacted by Islam in the disciplines of divine unity, faith, worship rituals, personal status, crimes, civil transactions, administration, politics, and all other objectives and trades.

The main principle in Islam is to apply its laws and ordinances, as there is no reason for Islam to exist unless people know its principles, perform its rituals, and enforce its laws. Accordingly, he who neglects to enforce Islamic jurisprudence or limits it would be neglecting and limiting Islam itself.

ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE FOR SECULAR AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

Islamic laws and rules are of two categories. The first consists of commandments set down for religious and spiritual purposes. These include the rules of faith and worship. The second category comprises the rules and laws administering and organizing the state, government, and community, as well as relations between individuals and their communities. These include the rules of human behavior, penal laws, laws of civil status, constitutional laws, international laws, etc. Thus, Islam combines the secular and the spiritual, the mosque and the state. It is a religion that embraces spiritual and secular life simultaneously. Faith and belief are one part of Islam, government is the second integral part; one can dare say it is the more important part. Othman Ibn-Affan truly expressed this when he said: "God urges through the ruler what may not be urged by the Qur'an."

The many and various rules of Islam were intended to help people attain happiness in this world and in the hereafter. Hence, all secular activities are relevant to worship. Any worship or civil, penal, constitutional, or international act has its repercussions in this life, whether this is the fulfillment of a task,

the establishment of a right or nullifying it, the imposition of a penalty, or incurring a responsibility. Yet, such an act, which has its effect in everyday life, has a consequence in the celestial life also, i.e., a reward in the hereafter.

As jurisprudence is meant to be a means to make people happier in this world and in the afterlife, it follows that jurisprudence must be considered indivisible, or an integral whole, because adopting one part of it and rejecting another would not be conducive to achieving its objectives and purposes.

Islamic jurisprudence is distinct from manmade legislation in that it blends religion with secular acts and promulgates precepts for this life and for life in the hereafter. This is what urges compliance with its teachings in the public and private life of Muslims, in good times and in bad. Muslims, according to their jurisprudence, believe that such a response is a phase of worship which brings them closer to God and that they will be rewarded.

ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE IS PERFECT AND PERMANENT

God has given this jurisprudence, complete and comprehensive as it is, in a short period of time, starting from the first day of the Prophet's mission and ending on the day of his death, or on the day when the following verse was revealed:

This day have I perfected your Religion for you, completed My favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. (Qur'an 5:3)

This verse is the authoritative pronouncement relative to the perfection and permanence of the jurisprudence, especially since another verse has expressly stipulated that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last Prophet:

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but [he is] the Apostle of God and the Seal of the Prophets ... (Qur'an 33: 40)

If one scrutinizes the rules and laws of Islamic jurisprudence, one can see that they are complete, perfect. They embrace and organize matters concerning individuals and societies, personal status, dealings, and all sorts of private transactions, government and administration, political affairs, as well as other matters concerning nations and their relations with others in war and peace.

Islamic jurisprudence was not revealed for application to a specific age and no other. It is a system for every age and time. It is forcefully valid and will continue to be so until the end of life on earth. Its injunctions were laid down in such a way that they are not affected by the passage of time. They do not become obsolete, nor do their general principles and basic tenets need to change or be revised. Their generalized drafting and flexibility allow even an unprecedented new case to be brought under their jurisdiction, even though it was impossible to anticipate its occurrence at the beginning of revelation. Hence, the provisions of Islamic jurisprudence are not susceptible to change or substitution, as are other laws and legislation.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE INITIATION OF ISLAMIC AND NON-ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

We have already indicated how Islamic jurisprudence was initiated. Manmade laws are gradually enacted in any society to administer and organize activities and behavior in society as they exist at that time. They are restricted by the current needs of individuals and societies, and they change in line with how that society evolves. The more intellectually advanced that society becomes, the more the need for new laws is felt. This new legislation is usually enacted by the rulers of that society. It is they who modify and change laws; thus it is representative of the society that creates the laws and enacts them in order to meet its own requirements. It follows that such laws are subordinate to man and that how they evolve depends on him.

According to jurists, law developed with the establishment of the family in early ages, evolved with the formation of tribes, evolved again with the institution of the state, and reached its final stage at the end of the eighteenth century, greatly influenced by the new philosophical and sociological theories of that age. Since then, manmade law has undergone a tremendous evolutionary change, so much so that it is based now on principles and theories that were inconceivable in previous ages.

PECULIARITY OF ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

Having reviewed the institution of both Islamic and manmade jurisprudence we can rightly say that the nature of the two is quite different. If Islamic jurisprudence were similar to secular laws, its form and substance would not have assumed the characteristics listed above. In fact, it would have been a primitive set of laws necessitating periodic review. Nor could it have contained such modern concepts and theories as were known until recently, and which would have taken thousands of years of development to reach its present standard.

Basic Differences

Islamic jurisprudence differs from manmade laws in three respects:

First, Islamic jurisprudence is inspired by God while other laws are made by men. Each aspect of Islamic legislation clearly reflects the attributes of its author. Manmade laws bear the limitations, weaknesses, and shortcomings of human beings, and accordingly, their laws are always susceptible to modifications and change, or to what we call legislative evolution in response to any social change which had not been anticipated by those who organize the affairs of human societies. Both sets of laws have the same objectives, but Islamic laws are not subject to change or substitution. Logically speaking, this requires:

- that the principles of legislation as well as the text of provisions must be flexible and universal enough that they can embrace all the requirements of human society regardless of the passage of time, societal evolution, and the multiplicity and diversification of human needs;
- that these principles and texts must be so perfect and comprehensive that they do not fall short in matching the standards of society at any point in time.

In truth, the above requirements are inherent in Islamic jurisprudence, and its principles and provisions are universal and elastic in the extreme, and are absolutely far-reaching and perfect. This jurisprudence has existed for more than 13 centuries, during which conditions have changed more than once, and ideas and sciences have greatly evolved. Law is subject to change again when new events, previously unknown, occur. Thus, law is always flawed, incomplete, imperfect and cannot predict the future, though it may comprehend the past.

On the other hand, Islamic jurisprudence is God-made. It bears the mark of His omnipotence, His perfection, His magnanimity, and His illimitable knowledge of all that exists. That is, it was compiled by the All-knowledgeable, the All-capable God in a way that suits present and future contingencies alike.

Second, laws are temporary rules enacted by society to administer its current affairs and meet its proximate needs. Thus, they lag behind the standards of advanced societies, or at best, they are at the same standard on the day they are enacted. Of necessity, they become outdated after a while unless they change quickly enough to catch up with the evolution of society. In the short term, laws suit the conditions of society at or for a certain time, but they have to change when conditions change.

By contrast, Islamic jurisprudence is the sum of eternal rules which were originated by God ... and the principles and rules of manmade laws have been frequently revised for the purpose of adjusting to the innovations of progress with its diversified conditions and circumstances. This ongoing revision has been going on for so long that the present principles of human legislation are completely different from those prevailing when Islamic jurisprudence was inspired. Despite this great change, Islamic principles of jurisprudence, owing to their perfection, continue to be applicable and have proved to be in advance of any social standard at any time, and are most appropriate to man's instincts and most reliable in ensuring his security.

This glorious fact is attested by historical realities to the credit of Islamic jurisprudence. Qur'anic injunctions are even more convincing when viewed from this perspective. God says: "And consult them in affairs ..." (Qur'an 3:159); "Their affairs are [conducted] by mutual consultation" (Qur'an 42: 38); and "Help you one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancor" (Qur'an 5:3).

The Prophet says: "Islam forbids harming others and oneself." These statements from the Qur'an and the Sunnah show the extent of the generality and elasticity beyond which one cannot go. They establish the principle of

consultation as the basis for government so that no harm or enormity can possibly be inflicted on the community and where cooperation for doing good and righteous deeds can be realized. By such principles, Islamic jurisprudence has reached a higher state of perfection than man can ever attain.

Third, the objective of jurisprudence is to organize and direct society, to cultivate the right kind of individual, and to establish the ideal state and ideal world. For this reason, its provisions were far in advance of the standards of societies at the time they were inspired. They are still ahead of our contemporary conditions. They entail principles and theories that non-Islamic communities have never had the opportunity to experience or realize, except after long centuries of work. But God saved humanity from much unproductive effort by revealing this jurisprudence, which is exemplary of perfection, with a view to orienting people endeavoring to attain the noble standard required by His jurisprudence.

Laws were originally enacted to organize the running of society, but not to guide or pilot it. This explains why we stated above that laws lag behind the evolution of society. Laws have assumed the new function of guiding society and organizing it simultaneously only when states have started adopting new doctrines and have resorted to legal amendments as a means to orient their peoples toward specific ideas and the achievement of certain purposes. This is the situation in Russia, Turkey, Germany, Italy, and many other countries. In this way, manmade laws have finally come to acquire the determinant functions assumed by Islamic jurisprudence, 13 centuries ago.

The Advantages of Islamic Jurisprudence over Manmade Laws

We can deduce from the above that Islamic jurisprudence has three main advantages over manmade legislation:

1. Perfection: Islamic jurisprudence has the advantage of perfection over manmade laws. By this is meant that it entails all that a perfect and complete legislature requires in the way of judicial decisions and concepts necessary to meet the needs of human societies at present, and in the near as well as the distant future.
2. Excellence: The principles of Islamic jurisprudence always exceed the social standards of societies while, by virtue of their intrinsic content, they maintain their excellence, however much human standards may rise.
3. Permanence: Islamic jurisprudence, unlike manmade laws, is distinguished by its immutability, as its fundamental provisions are not subject to modification. Nevertheless, these provisions continue to be peerlessly appropriate in every society and in every age.

Method of Legislation

Islamic jurisprudence was originally structured by Allah for the purpose of administering the activities of people in their different phases, and to be the arbiter in all their secular and spiritual affairs. However, Islamic jurisprudence did not include detailed provisions for partial and subsidiary matters as is the

case with manmade laws, but achieved sufficiency by giving divine statutes in elastic, general terms and provisions. Even when a subsidiary provision was mentioned, it was because the issue in question was considered a principal one, entailing other minor questions there-under.

The principal injunctions stipulated by Islamic jurisprudence are rightly considered the general precepts of Islamic legislation, its image, which reflects its characteristics, and its landmark, which defines its scope. It was left to the jurists and legislators to erect the legal structure on these foundations and in accordance with these broad regulations enacting legislation for the details and subsidiary issues within the ambit of Islamic principles of jurisprudence.

There was only one way for legislation open to Islamic jurisprudence to be true to itself and to preserve its characteristic excellence, perfection, and permanence. Excellence and perfection require unambiguous texts defining the principles and doctrines which enshrine wealth and happiness for society, and which bring about justice, equality, and benevolence among individuals, thus exhorting them to contend for progress and excellence. Permanence, by definition, requires that no provision would be set for a temporary case, which would be judged differently whenever circumstances differed.

Rulers' Right to Legislate

Though Islamic jurisprudence confers on the ruler the right to legislate, this right is not absolute. On the contrary, it is a right restricted to this condition: that whatever the ruler may legislate must be compatible with the text, spirit, and general principles of Islamic jurisprudence. Consequently, such a restriction confines the right of legislation to two categories:

1. Executive legislation, intended to guarantee the implementation of the provisions of Islamic jurisprudence. In this case, legislation takes the form of rules and regulations similar to those presently issued by government officials in the course of their daily duties, for the purpose of ascertaining the execution of the relevant laws.
2. Organizational legislation, intended to organize society, protect it, and meet its needs in accordance with Islamic jurisprudence. Generally, such legislation is not called for except in cases where there are no relevant provisions in jurisprudence administering them. In any circumstance, legislation by rulers must be in harmony and in agreement with general principles and the spirit of the original jurisprudence.

Rulers Exceeding their Limits

It is the consensus that all acts of the ruler are legitimate as long as they are within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence and compatible with its judicial decisions and spirit. Then, and only then, would the ruler be acting within his rights and, accordingly, should be obeyed. However, if he acts otherwise, issuing laws which contradict Islamic jurisprudence, his acts or laws are illegitimate and offensive. This statement is based on the Qur'anic verses:

O ye who believe, obey God, and obey the Apostle and those charged with authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to God and the Apostle. (Qur'an 4:59)

Whatever it be wherein you differ, the decision thereof is with God. (Qur'an 62:10)

Thus, Allah imposes on us obedience to Him, His Prophet, and our rulers. Such obedience is commanded by Him alone, not by the Prophet or by rulers; thus, if rulers contravene the injunctions of God, they cannot command our loyalty or expect our obedience. Their rule and authority then become illegitimate.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has confirmed this by saying: "No obedience shall be observed by created [beings] to those who command disobedience to God." And again: "He who commands you to sin, has no authority over you."

Do Rulers Act within their Limits?

In most Islamic countries, since the nineteenth century, rulers have been formulating codes of laws in the various legislative matters along the same line as that followed by European countries. In fact, they copied European constitutional, criminal, civil, commercial, and other codes without reference to Islamic jurisprudence except in a few minor matters such as *waqf* and the like.

Admittedly, many of these codes are in accord with the basics of Islamic jurisprudence and do not contravene its general principles. But it is only fair to add that some of these codes are contrary to our jurisprudence and have been established on principles opposed to it. For instance, some of these codes allow adultery in most cases and consumption of alcoholic beverages, while Islam categorically prohibits both.

I should like here to draw attention to those Muslim countries which voluntarily opted for European legislation. These countries had no intention whatsoever of contradicting Islamic jurisprudence. There is no better proof of this than the Egyptian penal law decreed in 1883, in which Article I stipulated:

It is the prerogative of the Government to punish the crimes inflicted upon individuals on account of perturbing public security caused by such crimes. Crimes committed against the Government directly are likewise punishable. Accordingly, this law has specified the degrees of penalties which legitimate rulers are entitled to impose, but without prejudice, at any rate and in any case, to the individual rights as inscribed in Islamic jurisprudence.

This text was copied from the Turkish law enacted in 1853.

I should like to add that, in my opinion, rulers in the majority of Muslim countries, whether in the past or present, never intended contravening Islamic jurisprudence. Nevertheless, many of the laws in these countries were formulated contrary to the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, despite the

intention of the rulers to do otherwise. The reason for this paradox is that the authors of such laws were either Europeans unfamiliar with the dictates of Islamic jurisprudence, or Muslims who studied European law but never made themselves familiar with Islamic law.

NOTE

1. From Abdul Qadir Awdah, *Islam between Ignorant Followers and Incapable Scholars* (Riyadh: IIFSO, 1991).

The Islamic Movement and the Tasks of the Current Period¹

Ramadan Abdallah Shallah

It is not possible to discuss the future of the Islamic movement or its current status within the New World Order, which resulted in the first Gulf War of 1991, without first defining the position of this movement *vis-à-vis* this order. For a long time, the world order has wrestled with such issues as the arms race, the energy question, and the struggle for natural resources; it has targeted Arab and Muslim countries for their strategic importance in these matters.

The West has been carefully observing the development of what it likes to call “Islamic fundamentalism” for a while now, which is the only force, were it to gain power in the Muslim world, that would be able to undercut the West and prevent it from achieving its objectives in the region. For the past decade and a half, there have been some turning points in the Western thermometer in its measurement of the Islamist phenomenon, beginning with the Islamic Revolution in Iran, followed by the *Intifada* in Palestine and ending with the Gulf War.

Despite the marginal role of the Islamic movement during the Gulf crisis and its inability to influence the course of events, it was the first to be attacked when the process of the settlement of accounts began for leading the angry masses and its popular rejection of foreign intervention and attack on Iraq. It was clear immediately after the end of the Gulf War that the New World Order had two fundamental questions to settle: the first was the Islamic movement and the second the Palestine question. In the eyes of most Islamists, these two questions are intimately entwined.

If this is the case, then what is the Islamic movement’s stand and what are its plans and options in facing the challenges of this period? In other words, if the priority of the New World Order is to attack and phase out the Islamic movement and its central preoccupation, Palestine, will the Islamic movement be able to articulate and solve the tasks and challenges facing it? Is there a clear conception of what must be done immediately and steps that can be taken at a later stage? The presence of such a conceptual framework will save us from the endless theorizing which takes years to bring to fruition, with no mention of what should be done at the present time.

The Islamic movement must determine precisely and objectively the specific tasks it is shouldering at this particular phase in history, and distinguish between what can and cannot be realized. To my mind, the tasks that face the movement are as follows.

RAPID REVIEW AND REFORM OF THE COURSE OF ACTION OF EACH GROUP OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

A serious examination of the process of Islamic work should be based on evaluating the work of each individual Islamic movement and its specific experience. The prevailing generalizations in Islamist discourse when discussing the Islamic movement are mostly superficial and lack a detailed diagnosis of the problems at hand. There are some segments within the Islamic movement who feel at ease when they vent their anger at it, while others do not dare to question any policy or thinking of the movement. It is important to get out of this Catch-22 situation. Sincere proponents of the Islamic movement must move quickly and courageously to critically evaluate their Islamic work with the objective of reform so that this process can be generalized and begun.

REVIEW OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT'S OPTIONS

The subjective and objective trials that the Islamic movement has been undergoing indicate that the reformation approach, adopted in various parts of the Muslim world, needs revision for the following reasons:

1. The only option imposed by the regimes on the Islamic movement is that of clash and confrontation. That is to say, the main challenge facing the Islamic movement is to be or not to be. This is precisely what happened in Algeria, Tunisia, and Sudan, where the Islamic movement was faced with the challenge of confrontation.
2. Through so-called "democratic" experiments, the ruling regimes impose a certain ceiling on the mobility of the Islamic movement beyond which it cannot maneuver or transcend. At the end of the day, this ceiling is based on allegiances to the regimes themselves and collaboration with foreign powers.
3. The successful models of the Islamic movement so far have been the popular Islamic Revolution in Iran and the military movement in the Sudan, both of which took place outside the reformation approach. Therefore, if the only choice open to the Islamic movement at this stage is confrontation (and that choice had succeeded in the above two models), then what is the point of all this hesitation and waiting?

A review of the Islamic movement's options in the process of change necessitates a re-evaluation of the role of the masses (in the case of Iran), the role of military institutions (in the case of Sudan), and the role of those political forces that compete with the Islamic movement. The main objective of this re-evaluation is to realistically lay out the options in these difficult times, while remaining open to the two models of victory mentioned above.

IMMEDIATE CONTACT WITH FIELDS OF CONFRONTATION WHERE THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT HAS BEEN ATTACKED

Since the process of the settlement of accounts with the Islamic movement has indeed begun in such countries as Algeria, Tunisia, and Sudan, it is absurd and naive for the Islamic movement in other Muslim countries to take a neutral stand *vis-à-vis* this process. What is even stranger is that some segments of the Islamic movement in these countries of confrontation claim their neutrality while the regime attacked the other wing of the Islamic movement. This is what happened in Algeria, where the military are brandishing their weapons again and waging a fierce battle against the Islamic Salvation Front. All the different groups of the Islamic movement must recognize that the battle of Algeria and the ones going on in Tunisia and the Sudan are their own battles as well, which we must wage with all of our moral and material capabilities.

SERIOUS SUPPORT OF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AND CONFRONTING THOSE WHO PROPOSE TO ELIMINATE IT

After destroying Iraq's military capabilities in the Gulf War of 1991, the US and its allies tried to "pull the plug" on the Palestine question, to which Iraq frequently referred during the war. The US is taking many steps to further this objective by bringing the *Intifada* in Palestine to an end, imposing more blockades on the Palestine Liberation Organization to force it to make more concessions, pushing other Arab regimes to follow in the footsteps of the Egyptian regime in its normalization of relations with the Zionist entity, affirming Zionist military superiority, supporting Soviet Jewish migration, encouraging Zionist settlement and expansion, and, finally, supporting Zionist penetration of the entire Muslim world.

All the above impose a major challenge for the Islamic movement. The above means robbing it of its central concern, which has been the question of Palestine, and which has also been at the forefront of its confrontation with the arrogant powers and their allies in the region. The Islamic movement must urgently set about rallying all the necessary energies to support the blessed Palestinian *Intifada* and enable it to achieve victory over all attempts to suppress and neutralize it. Also, the Islamic movement should confront the so-called "projects of reconciliation" which aim primarily at eliminating the question of Palestine entirely, and should take the initiative in declaring unambiguously that any decision regarding Palestine is in the hands of the Muslim *ummah* and not in the hands of the Palestinians or their official leadership alone.

FACING THE NEW WESTERN CHALLENGE

Currently, the West, under the leadership of the US, has resolved to destroy the Islamic movement in spite of the fact that its opposition to the Gulf War never went beyond mere pronouncements, marches, and demonstrations, or carrying anti-Western slogans. The West has decided to stamp out

the Islamic movement because of its so-called “negative resistance” to the imperialist project.

I firmly believe that the Islamic movement must face the Western challenge in order to regain legitimacy in the eyes of its masses, which are still experiencing the shock of the Iraqi defeat in the war. Furthermore, the Islamic movement must prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that its confrontation of the Western challenge, which threatens its existence and that of the Muslim *ummah*, is an intrinsic and original approach. It should prove the correctness of its adherence to the path of the Prophet, who after defeat in the battle of Uhud was able to rally wounded Muslims behind him and give chase to the enemies of Islam until he received the following revelation:

The believers who responded to the call of God and the Apostle after misfortune had befallen them. A magnificent requital awaits those of them who have persevered in doing good and remained conscious of God. Those who have been warned by other people, “Behold, a host has gathered against you; so beware of them!” Whereupon this only increased their faith, so that they answered, “God is enough for us; and how excellent a guardian is He!” (Qur’an 3:172–3)²

Clearly, the Islamic movement has a lot to do, least of which is the serious call within the Muslim world to boycott Western products and goods, especially American ones.

FORMING OBJECTIVE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT’S ALLIANCES

The Gulf War, which has brought out two contradictory positions from within the Islamic movement, has brought to the fore the crisis of the movement *vis-à-vis* its policies and alliances. The movement must set out objective criteria and conditions that govern its alliances with non-Islamists immediately. A mere declaration of reconciliation between Islamists and Arab nationalists cannot serve as the foundation in our common fight against the enemy. It is necessary to define the essential pivot points and objective foundations dictated by common interests in confronting the common enemy.

The writer acknowledges that the issue of alliances is complex and requires close scrutiny and constructive and serious discussion among the parties. However, it is possible to point to the following essential criteria to guide us in this matter:

1. Islam is the source of the *ummah*’s glory, civilizational glory, and the road to victory.
2. It is possible to benefit from the Other as long as they do not constitute any danger to the Islamic creed, values, and ethics, and can help us to gain power.
3. Palestine is a Muslim and Arab land, whose cause is central to the Muslim and Arab nations. The Zionist presence on its land is illegitimate and

should be eliminated; there should be no recognition of Zionist legitimacy in any of its territories.

4. The need to challenge all forms of Western hegemony, as well as Western military, political, and cultural interference in our land.
5. Resist all forms of dependence on the West and work to realize independence, economic development, and economic self-sufficiency.
6. Fight to achieve freedom, justice, and equality in Muslim and Arab societies and ensure a just distribution of wealth.
7. Fight the current state of political division and undertake the responsibility of achieving the unity of the Muslim *ummah*.

REALIZING THE MINIMUM UNITY OF THE ISLAMIC COURSE OF ACTION

The call of Islamists to reconcile with Arab nationalists is meaningless if it is not preceded by serious and swift steps to reconcile Islamists themselves. If Islamists blame the Arab world for its division, and describe all calls for the unity of Arabs and Muslims as lacking credibility and diligence, then what about their state and reality? And if the Arab call for unity ended in failure, then at least there was an attempt in that direction. The Islamists, however, have not even moved beyond the stage of calls and slogans, which sometimes seem to be radical, thus intensifying the state of disunity.

It is possible for the Islamic movement to restore the unity of the nation and gain power. However, I believe we cannot be too optimistic about the future of the Islamic movement at present, especially in relation to a voluntary coming together of the *ummah*.

It is important to note that our call for the unity of the Islamic movement does not necessarily mean that the movement as a whole will become a monolithic group. This is why we pointed earlier to the unity of the Islamic course of action, and not to the unity of the Islamic movement. This means that despite the existence of diversity and difference in the views of the different groups of the Islamic movement, there should be a minimum meeting point which would help in forming a view for the future Islamic course of action that would be presented to the masses to help them escape the state of frustration and disappointment that prevails among them. They have nearly if not totally lost all confidence in past attempts and in their producers.

The Islamic movement should transcend its state of division, for it entails only weakness and draining of the movement's energies. It must proceed toward a new reality, for it is the only means to a role in the new global transformation at the end of the Gulf crisis period.

NOTES

1. Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, "al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah wa Mahham al-Marhalah al-Rahinah." In Ahmad Bin Yousuf, ed., *al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi Dhil al-Tahawullat al-Duwalīyyah wa Azmat al-Khalij* (Chicago: UASR, 1991). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.
2. Muhammad Asad, *The Message of Qur'an* (Baltimore, MD: The Book Foundation, 2008).

*Shaykh Umar Abdel Rahman*¹

So far we have learned that the rulers [in the Muslim world] are of four types. The first is the just Muslim ruler; the second is the oppressive Muslim ruler; the third is the heretical ruler [*mubtadi*']; and the fourth is the disbelieving or infidel ruler. We have defined every class of rulers. Now, we move on to discuss the most sensitive legal issue that has baffled many Islamic workers or preachers, which is the Qur'anic verse, "And whoever does not rule by what Allah has revealed" (Qur'an 5:44).

What does Ibn Abbas mean when he says "*Kufr dun kufr*"? Could it be that the ruler who abandons rule by what Allah has revealed may be in a state of disobedience rather than rebellion?

Here, we find ourselves considering two types of rulers: the first is a Muslim ruler who, while ruling by the Qur'an most of the time, diverges from it occasionally, knowing full well that by doing that he is being rebellious and obdurate. The second type of ruler is the one who does not even claim Islam or rule by the Qur'an. On the contrary, he imposes manmade legislation and forces people to follow this type of legislation in their lives, thus sidelining Divine rule.

What is to be our attitude toward this and how should we understand it in the light of the Qur'anic verse: "And whoever does not rule by what Allah has revealed indeed they are of the disbelievers [*kafirun*]?"

What of the man who rules by establishing his rule in Islam and recognizing that he is but a servant of Allah bearing a responsibility to establish His rule and to implement His *shari'ah*; however, out of human weakness, commits an act of disobedience and departs from this *shari'ah*, who neither denies its authority nor attempts to replace it, who adopts no other creed or code preferring it to the rule of Allah, who does not legislate independently and who does not order others to follow his example? Is he to be equated with the man who founds his rule on the shifting sands of secular law, who does not rule by what Allah has revealed, and does not even acknowledge his own position as vicegerent, as a servant of Allah? Is this man to be equated with the one who considers himself and others like him, whether they be a party or parliament, organization or ideological movement, to be endowed with the sovereign right to legislate, like Allah or in partnership with Him?

Of course, these two are not the same. The first is clearly a Muslim who has fallen into error. He has diverged from the path of his Lord and left aside rule by what Allah has revealed in an act of simple disobedience, which is neither disbelief nor repudiation of the *shari'ah*. It is he of whom Ibn Abbas

has said: "Those who follow him are not to be styled disbelievers, his is not the disbelief which takes one out of Islam, it is '*kufr dun kufr*,' a semblance of disbelief."²

The second, however, is an enemy of Allah and an infidel or *kafir*. Indeed, he seeks to make himself or others partners with Allah, he even presumes to ascribe to himself divine qualities and attributes, for is not one of His qualities the determination of the law? In the words of Allah: "Or have they partners (of Allah) who have made lawful for them in religion that which Allah allowed not?" (Qur'an 42:21).

Whoever does this is without doubt a *kafir* and his is the major disbelief which reflects directly upon the community which he governs. He is a *kafir* even though he may pray and fast and claim to be a Muslim, this is the opinion of the *ulama*, or scholars of religion, about which there is no disagreement. Once we all come to understand this then we will no longer be beset by the prattling of the ignorant or the sophistry of the pundits, those high priests of *fitnah* or civil discord who have sold their religion in exchange for power in this world, who would have us believe that this is still a point of contention. Their argument is as follows: "Would you say that the Muslim leader who abandons rule by what Allah has revealed while clearly not denying the legitimacy of *shari'ah* or attempting to replace it is disobedient though not necessarily a *kafir*?"

Your response may well be, "Yes, it is disobedience rather than *kufr*, so long as he maintains that his authority to rule is dependent on his ruling in accordance with *shari'ah*."

"But if he persisted in his disobedience, if it became habitual, what then, would he then become a *kafir*?"

"No, rather he is a corrupt Muslim. This is not *kufr* in the wider sense."

"Of course, but this is only half of the picture. The man who, ruling by his *kufr*, replaces the *shari'ah* with another law is in fact only misbehaving but, by persisting in his disobedience, he has come to abandon rule by what Allah has revealed in most, or indeed in all, cases. You see, he too is only a corrupt Muslim, certainly not a *kafir*."

"You must be joking. If you consider the source of legislation, you will see that this is clearly *kufr*. This man has not simply abandoned the *shari'ah* in one or two instances of disobedience, but has made himself a partner with Allah Most High, the Glorious, the Sublime. He has abandoned the *shari'ah* of Allah with the intention of legislating himself. He and others like him would draft their own law and give it precedence over the *shari'ah* and by this act usurp the divine attribute of Legislator, hoping to acquire for himself and for others like him the sovereign right to rule, denying that this is the right of Allah, Lord of the Worlds, for Allah has said, '*Inna al-Hukma illa liAllah*' ('sovereignty is but to Allah'). Whoever replaces the *shari'ah* is a *kafir*, there is no disputing the matter, *kufr* is his state, of this there can be not even a shadow of a doubt."

[The Egyptian scholar] Ahmed Shakir mentions, in relation to the report of Ibn Abbas regarding "*kufr dun kufr*": "Those who follow him are not to

be styled disbelievers, his is not the disbelief which takes one out of Islam, it is '*kufr dun kufr*,' a semblance of disbelief."

[The traditionist] al-Hakim said this means that "those who follow him are not to be styled disbelievers, his is not the disbelief which takes one out of Islam, it is '*kufr dun kufr*' ..." Some people, though, have taken these words out of context and misused them to justify their position, claiming impudently to be people of knowledge while playing with words to distort their meaning in their eagerness to apologize for and to justify recourse to the secular law which has been imposed throughout the Islamic world ...

Today, we are witnessing the total abandonment of the *shari'ah* and its replacement by laws which have no relation to the Qur'an or to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Today, any law derived from Islam is deemed to be null and void. Secular law has come to take precedence over that which was revealed by Allah. Some people now maintain that the *shari'ah* is unsuited to our times, that its revelation was accomplished within an historical context which is no longer relevant. They claim that, for this reason, it is now obsolete and that its continued enforcement would at best be anachronistic.

NOTES

1. From Umar Abdel Rahman, *al-Mawî'zah al-Hassanah* (Kuwait: Dar al-Siyassah, 1988). This is a modification of Omar Johnstone's translation published by al-Firdous in London.
2. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm lil Malayin, 1996), p. 91.

The Islamic Movement's Performance in Crisis: Assessment and Strategic Outlook¹

Sami al-Aryan

In times of crisis, the Muslim masses have discovered that the performance of the Islamic movement is quite negligible. Most Islamists hope that when faced with a crisis, the movement will rise to the challenge by overcoming the shortcomings witnessed in the past. However, they are likely to be disappointed; the fact is that the Islamic movement has not yet learned from its mistakes.

The Islamic movement exhibited a number of contradictory attitudes toward the Gulf crisis on August 2, 1990. One camp took the American-Saudi side; a second took the side of the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein; a third camp avoided this "civil discord" (*fitnah*) whether through escape, cowardice, or a failure to absorb the recent global changes.

What is even worse is that, so far, no one has conducted a scientific and objective study of the multiple crises that have befallen the *ummah* or attempted to evaluate its performance and its leadership in order to correct past mistakes, or even grasp these momentous changes in order to be prepared for what comes next. Although the Islamic movement and the Muslim masses have been able to introduce substantial changes regionally, such as the Islamic revolution in Iran, *jihad* in Afghanistan, Islamic resistance in Lebanon, the Palestinian *Intifada*, and changes in Sudan, etc., the standard of performance of the Islamic movement has fallen short of our expectations.

As mentioned above, the leaders of the Islamic movement have failed so far to conduct any thorough and critical study of current Muslim conditions. For example, the Islamic library lacks any scientific research addressing the following issues:

1. What is the West? How has it developed and what is its relationship to the Muslim world?
2. The Western conceptual and material framework of reference and whether or not the Muslim world is separated from this framework!
3. What is Islamic unity? What is the *ummah*? Is the nation-state legitimate?
4. The meaning of *jihad*, and violence and non-violence in contemporary Muslim societies.
5. Why and how did Palestine and Jerusalem fall? And what is their position in the world conflict today?

6. Why did the secular and leftist organizations that arose in Palestine and the Islamic movements flounder from 1968 to 1980?
7. How did the Ba'ath Party come to rule in both Iraq and Syria though the Islamic movement arose well before this party was formed?
8. Why and how did the Hama massacre in Syria take place in the 1980s?
9. Why and how did Palestinians get out of Jordan (in 1970) and Lebanon (1982–83)?
10. Was the performance of the Islamic movement and its attitude to the Camp David Agreement and the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty satisfactory? If not, why not?
11. Why and how did Saudi institutions and positions come to control a number of regions and institutions in the West as well as in the Muslim world?
12. Why was the Islamic movement fragmented in Egypt? And why did the Muslim Afghan factions fragment?
13. What is the Islamic movement's perspective on such issues as development and social justice in contemporary Muslim societies?
14. What about the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq? What is the right position to take regarding this?
15. Why is coordination between the various Islamic movements in the Arab and Muslim worlds totally non-existent?
16. What is meant by "American hegemony" in terms of international resolutions, and what are the repercussions of American policies on the Arab and Muslim worlds?

For a number of subjective and objective reasons, the above issues have never been examined critically. On the subjective level, Islamist leaders shy away from any form of criticism, especially self-criticism, since this would uncover multiple deficiencies in their work. On the objective level, the Islamic movements lack the institutions, such as think-tanks, which could undertake a thorough examination of the above issues without distraction or media exaggeration.

The first lesson to be learned is that we must establish scientific think-tanks in order to help the Islamic movement and its leadership learn how to understand and react to world events, thereby averting any negative repercussions from these events, including checking the responses of capricious and opportunistic leaders. The second lesson is that we must separate Muslim scholars and popular religious institutions from the states and regimes at any price. What this means in effect is that the Islamic movement should take care of the financial needs of the religious scholars, protect them, and provide them with the necessary environment or incentives to exercise *ijithad* (reasoning) in various matters relating to contemporary Muslim needs. This in turn would guarantee that the masses and religious scholars are not deceived by propaganda issued by the regimes and their own scholars. Third, it is important to formulate a comprehensive strategy for the Islamic movement

when dealing with a crisis. In order to develop such a strategy, the following conditions must be met:

1. Identify the goals of the movement: The goals must be well defined, realistic and concrete. It is impossible to realize the objectives of the Islamic movement by understanding them in their historical context only; an absolute belief in ideology or doctrine is necessary as well.
2. Unity of leadership: A unified leadership is necessary to achieve the unity of the *ummah* as well as to respond to the various needs of the Muslim community. This in turn requires a mechanism by which to carry out appropriate decisions and to channel them to the masses.
3. An action plan: The main goal for the Islamic movement is to formulate policies that can be implemented. The action plan should be flexible and dynamic so that it can be assessed and adjusted on a regular basis if need be. This also implies the formulation of an alternative action plan, should the first not work out. The plan should be comprehensive and incorporate perspectives from all segments of the Muslim community; it should also be capable of mobilizing and rallying the support of all influential forces.
4. Establish a steadfast principle, which implies the convergence of the plan with the strategy, as well as the resistance to submit to any form of pressure.
5. The ability to maneuver and shift from one stage to another after fulfilling the first objectives, as well as concentrating gains and evaluating the situation.

If we applied these five precepts to the Islamic movement's reactions to the recent [first] Gulf War, we discover that Islamist leaders, as well as lay people in society, have not had clear objectives, and that is why so many found the situation so confusing. The Islamic movement utterly failed to provide unified leadership when dealing with the issues of this crisis. I believe the problem is that the Islamic movement has form without substance; this is the great weakness in the current Islamic situation.

In summary, in order to empower the Islamic movement to deal with the next crisis, and enable it to take the initiative and gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Muslim masses, we must establish our think-tanks, benefit from the results of serious research, drive a wedge between religious scholars and corrupt regimes, re-link scholars to the affairs of the masses, eliminate those Islamists who benefit from a close relationship with corrupt regimes, and formulate a comprehensive Islamic strategy to deal with emergencies and crises.

NOTE

1. Sami al-Aryan, "Ada'al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi'l Azamat." In Ahmad Bin Yousuf, ed., *al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi Dhil al-Tahawullat al-Duwaliyyah wa Azmat al-Khalij* (Chicago: UASR, 1991). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.

Islamic Movements: Self-Criticism and Reconsideration

Rashid al-Ghannoushi

Looking at the Islamic revival worldwide today—a revival aiming to rebuild the individual and society and recompose the nation’s thought and politics based on Islam—we find it making progress. It is achieving victories that no other ideology is making in today’s world. This progress is not limited to the idea, because the idea itself is improving. The Islamic movement has been able to discover new areas of Islam, and the discoveries continue along the path forged by men in the nineteenth century like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and continued by men like Hassan al-Banna and Abu Al-A’la al-Mawdudi. The ideas of these men gave birth to modern Islamic movements which rediscovered the Islamic basis on which to build life. Islam is not a collection of individual beliefs, rituals, or gestures. It is a total way of life. Islam existed before the modern Islamic movement, but it had been thought of as a preparation for heaven, not a system to mold society.

Today, Islam is progressing forcefully while secularism is falling rapidly. While Islam attracts people who are seeking justice, secularism is losing major footholds and has lost its ability to defend itself, except by violent means. When you see a secular state using more and more violence, know that it is bankrupt. The secular state has lost its legitimacy. Instead of being based on popular support, these states are based on international support and on violence. Meanwhile, Islam is progressing vertically and horizontally. Its idea deepens daily while spreading from fields such as politics and economics to art, human resource development (including women), and institution-building.

Despite this remarkable progress, however, I must raise some negative points, emphasize some shortcomings in the performance of the Islamic movement, and warn against certain pitfalls, because we cannot always focus on the positive side of things.

One of the elements of repentance is reconsideration. We must review our actions every day. Are we really on the truth path, or can we be described by the Qur’anic verse: “We found our forefathers doing something and here we are doing the same” (Zukhruf: 23). This verse was intended to describe the polytheists, but Muslims should learn to understand the meaning of continuous evaluation. So repentance is not restricted to our relationship to God, but includes consideration of the self at every stage of life. This is why self-criticism is so important. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says, “Hold yourself accountable before you are held accountable.”

It is imperative that every movement should correct its performance. It should ask: has our plan been fulfilled? Why were we late in fulfilling it? What can we do to avoid delays next time? If a movement has 20 members in parliament in one election, and five in the next, shouldn't it ask why? If the state has conspired against us, why and how did it do this? Such a movement should not get angry because we ask that it re-evaluate itself. We have performed such re-evaluations in our movement and were able to identify a number of mistakes that we made in dealing with the regime in our country.

What I am proposing is a number of comments that have a lot of scope for personal interpretation. Some might agree, disagree, or partially disagree.

My first comment is about the strategy of the Islamic movements in dealing with minorities. Muslim minorities comprise 45 percent of the entire world population of Muslims. They are a major value for Islam and are the pioneers of Islamic propagation. Either they help open up the path or they will become extinct. Supporting these outlying regions must be a priority before extinction. Consider what happened in the Balkans. In the days of the Ottoman Empire, the spread of Islam was rapid. Since the demise of the Caliphate, the Islamic presence there is like puddles of water at low tide, waiting to dry out.

The balance of international power is not on the side of these minorities. They should not have to overextend their resources and carry the burden of Islamic governance. This is a role for countries with a Muslim majority. If these Muslim minorities adopt the ideas of Islamic governance laid out by Sayyid Qutub and others at this point, they will have signed their own death warrants.

The role I suggest for Muslim minorities is to reinforce the Islamic presence in the countries they live in. There is a big difference between maintaining a presence and working to establish an Islamic government. The most a minority can hope for is political participation. In fact, their entry into the realm of politics is sometimes a major reason for the attention minorities get. So they do better to focus on social work. Politics is a debilitating area. The race for government is a race for wealth and influence.

Sometimes we find Muslim minorities asking for independence or a separate state. This is permissible from a legal point of view, but in reality it must not be allowed. We can ask: is the quest for independence necessary? Or can we except a lesser arrangement, like self-rule, in preparation for the return to Islam? This goes for the Chechnyans, where the Muslim minority is demanding independence from Russia. Russia is a decaying empire; Islam can get there in time. So why should we prevent that by splitting from it, especially if independence is simply not viable and would lead to the annihilation of the Muslim minority? Also, the incessant clamor for independence might damage the relationship between the Muslim world and the nation that the Muslim minority wants independence from. If the Muslim minority in China takes up the demand for independence one day, and the Muslims find an interest in allying with China against a mutual enemy, the Muslims will find themselves facing a serious dilemma.

The Islamic nation has an interest in not picking fights with China, India, or even Yugoslavia at present. Wherever Muslim minorities can live safely and practice their religious rites freely, independence is not necessary. In fact, the pursuit of independence could prove fatal. Generally speaking, Muslim minorities are not asked to govern the countries they live in by Islam or to think about independence, because this will lead to their genocide and put the entire Islamic nation's interests in danger.

The second comment is about priorities. Is our priority social work or gaining power? These two might not be mutually exclusive—Islam wants to Islamize politics and society simultaneously—but if the interests of social missionary work (*da'wa*) contradict political interests, the social interests must take priority over anything else. It has been proven that what is achieved socially is more permanent and better than what is achieved politically.

Modern experience has taught us that things achieved through the state are rapid but short-lived, because they depend on force. But what is done through social activity endures, because it depends on persuasion. Humans do not like to be forced. The Meccans offered Muhammad (peace be upon him) the government but he refused it, preferring instead to establish his calling.

The Islamic movement must not have the government as its first priority. Taking power should not be the greatest achievement possible. A better achievement would be if the people loved Islam and its leaders. Our entire activity is based on the Islamic state of Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, which lasted only for two years, and the Guided Caliphate before him. Who remembers anything from the Umayyad or Abbasid Caliphates? Umar ibn Abdul Aziz was a beacon because he restored the prophetic form of government. The issue is not how long you governed for, but what you did. The years of Umar left a long-lasting effect in the hearts of Muslims for the rest of history. The most dangerous thing is for the Islamists to be loved by the people before they gain power and then hated afterward.

The third comment deals with civil society. The Islamic movement should be keen to develop and strengthen civil society even after the state is established. Even the Islamic state doesn't control everything under it. Government is a small part of the institutions of civil society. It is there to support and strengthen society. There must be more institutions of civil society, enough so that the people don't need the state. The Islamic movement must restore power to society through grassroots institutions. These institutions must be run by elected officials.

There shouldn't be institutions exclusively for Islamists. It's better to have nationwide institutions in which anyone can compete for leadership. It is a waste of time to have a leftist student organization, an Islamic student organization, etc. The Islamic movement should not be an excuse to divide the people. All are Muslims, but the Islam of some needs a little rejuvenation. Even the notion of Islamic parties should be given up. While the word "Islamic" usually is prohibited for political reasons from being included in the name of Islamic parties, that might be a blessing. Any party that the Islamists participate in must be an open, national party.

The fourth comment is on the current conflict between the Islamic movement and the secular state. The movement is being subjected to horrific violence and suppression. The question is: how should the movement respond to oppression by the secular state? Is state violence a justification for popular violence? There are many religious replies to this question and most do not condone violence against a government that calls itself Islamic. Pragmatically speaking, however, all of the episodes where Islamists responded violently to state violence have been negative. Popular violence, whether Islamic or otherwise, has not been able to damage any regime's standing. Leftists and Islamists have carried out violence and it has led to nothing but disaster, as in Syria.

The Islamic movement must abide by peaceful methods. It must refuse all forms of military activity. This is the lesson we can learn from the Rafah Party in Turkey. The achievements of the Islamic movement were overturned more than once by the military. Had the Islamists called for revolution against the army, it would have been utter stupidity and a catastrophe. Today the Islamic movement in Egypt is suffering from hard times, but its leaders refuse to be misled into violence. These regimes want the Islamists to enter the fighting arena, because the government has more resources. Violence is what these regimes specialize in, and they are rather creative at it. The arena of the Islamists is thought, and that is where the rulers are bankrupt. We should not be dragged onto a field where they will surely win.

The fifth comment deals with democracy. Many Islamists associate democracy with foreign intervention and non-belief. But democracy is a set of mechanisms to guarantee freedom of thought and assembly, and peaceful competition for governmental authority through the ballot box. The Islamic movement's negative attitude to democracy is holding it back. We have no modern experience in Islamic activity that can replace democracy. The Islamization of democracy is the closest thing to implementing *shurah* (consultation). Those who reject this have not produced anything other than one-party rule.

The Islamists have two examples: Iran and Sudan. Both are searching for an identity, searching for a modern Islamic form of government. We have no modern example for implementing Islamic government. The uneducated think that the Islamic program is a ready-made entity: stick it on the ground and implement it. I don't see any choice open to us but to adapt the democratic idea. It might even be dangerous to ignore democracy. Even more dangerous is for the Islamic movement to reach a state where either it remains in power or dissolves. The movement's options must be open to guarantee its existence. The ones who can gain the most from democracy are the Muslims; they should be the keenest for it. They might come to power whenever free elections are held. The secularists are in the minority these days. They are the ones who have problems with democracy. They are standing in the way of democracy in the Islamic world, because they would lose.

The Islamic mind must adjust until it sees things in their true light. America, the Zionists, and the secularists are the ones who are afraid of democracy in

the Islamic world. So why do you, brother in Islam, share their fear? Why are you helping them destroy this beautiful thought?

The Islamists must realize that, despite the achievements of the Islamic movement, the balance of power is simply not in their favor. Rather, it is in the secularists' favor. Governance might be something the Islamic movement cannot do alone. Maybe the better option is to participate in government as long as the balance of power remains what it is. This would maintain the achievements that the movement has gained over time. Governing single-handedly would put the Islamists in the spotlight, followed by isolation. Rather, they must open up to all the political forces and forge alliances with all national parties. Islam is facing the threat of Zionism. The Islamists must look for common ground to establish a dialogue with the national forces, even Western non-xenophobic streams of thought, to face the Zionist threat together. The Zionist threat is endangering the Islamic nation and the world, and is a threat to values, family, and religion. It aims to get rid of everything good about humanity.

We must work to reduce the conflicts between the Islamic trend and other political trends in the Muslim world. May God help us.

"If anyone fears God, He will find him a way out for him that he never thought possible. If one trusts God, he will enough for him" (Talaq: 2–3).

Such promises must remain in our souls and in the souls of the generations to come. The sun of Islam will shine the world over.

But we must affirm the need to educate ourselves in Islam, fear God, observe prayer, read the Qur'an, and find time to experience God in our everyday lives. We must believe that, without God's presence, we cannot change any balance of power. And God will have His way, but most people do not believe" (Yusuf: 21).

Extremism: The Accusation and the Reality

Yusuf al-Qaradawi

Logicians argue that one cannot pass judgment on something unless one has a clear conception of it, because the unknown and the undefined cannot be judged. Therefore, we must first determine what “religious extremism” means before we can condemn or applaud it. We can do so by considering its reality and its most salient distinguishing characteristics. Literally, extremism means being situated at the farthest possible point from the center. Figuratively, it indicates a similar remoteness in religion, thought, and behavior. One of the main consequences of extremism is exposure to danger and insecurity. As one Arab poet states,

They were the protected center until they were overtaken by misfortune
and tottered on the brink.¹

ISLAM’S CALL FOR MODERATION AND ITS WARNING AGAINST EXTREMISM

Islam recommends moderation and balance in all things: in belief, worship, conduct, and legislation. This is the straight path to which God calls us. Moderation or balance is an overall distinguishing characteristic of Islam and of the Muslim nation. The Qur’an says: “Thus we have made of you an *ummah* justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves ...” (2:143).

As such, the Muslim *ummah* is a nation of justice and moderation which testifies against every deviation from the “straight path” in this life and in the hereafter. Islamic texts call on Muslims to exercise moderation and to reject and oppose all kinds of extremism: *ghuluw* (excessiveness), *tanattu’* (nitpicking religiosity), and *tashdid* (strictness, austerity). A close examination of such texts shows that Islam is emphatically against *ghuluw*. Let us consider the following: “Beware of excessiveness in religion. [People] before you have perished as a result of [such] excessiveness.”² The people referred to above are the people of other religions, particularly the “People of the Book,” namely, Jews and Christians, especially Christians. The Qur’an addresses these people thus:

Say: “O People of the Book! Exceed not in your religion the bounds [of what is proper], trespassing beyond the truth, nor follow the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by, who misled many, and strayed [themselves] from the even Way.” (5:77)

Muslims have therefore been warned not to follow in their footsteps: he who learns from the mistakes of others is bound to live a happier life. The purpose of the above *hadith* is to alert us to the fact that *ghuluw* may crop up as an insignificant action, which we then unwittingly allow to continue and develop into a menace. After reaching Muzdalifah during his last pilgrimage to Mecca, the Prophet asked Ibn 'Abbas to gather some stones for him. Ibn 'Abbas selected small stones, and when the Prophet saw them he said approvingly, "Yes, with such [you should stone Satan]. Beware of excessiveness in religion."³ This clearly indicates that Muslims should not be so zealous as to believe that using larger stones is better, thus gradually allowing excessiveness to creep into their lives.

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah argues that this warning against excessiveness applies to all forms of belief, worship, and transaction, and notes that since the Christians are more fervent in faith and practice than any other sect, God admonishes them in the Qur'an, saying, "Do not exceed the limits of your religion" (4:171). "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'Those who succumb to pedantry and nitpicking religiosity (*al-tanattu'*) will perish.' And he repeated it twice."⁴ According to Imam al-Nawawi, the people referred to here are those who delve too deeply [into matter of religion] and go to extremes in their words and actions. One notes, moreover, that this *hadith* and the one quoted immediately before it identify the outcome of excessiveness (*al-ghuluw*) and nitpicking religiosity (*al-tanattu'*) as perdition, that is, destruction which is both material and spiritual. In other words, it is a loss worse than death. And what greater deterrent do we need than this?

Abu Ya'la relates in his Musnad on the authority of Anas ibn Malik that the Messenger of God used to say, "Do not be overly strict with yourselves lest [God] be all the stricter with you. For you see what remains [of those who have done so] in the hermitages and monasteries. [As God states in the Holy Qur'an,] 'But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them'" (57:27).⁵

Consequently, the Prophet resisted every tendency toward excessive religiosity and rebuked those of his Companions who overemphasized worship and asceticism to the point where they exceeded the limits of moderation affirmed by Islam. The Prophet himself, thanks to Islam, struck a balance between the spiritual and the material, between the concerns of this world and the concerns of the world to come, and between the individual's right to life and its enjoyment and the Sustainer's right to receive the worship and service for which human beings were created.

Islam has instituted acts of worship which serve to purify the human soul and elevate human beings, both spiritually and materially. At the same time, such acts of worship serve to elevate the entire community, setting it on a foundation of brotherhood and solidarity without negating the human task of developing and populating the earth. For prayer (*zakah*), fasting, and the pilgrimage to Mecca are both individual and communal acts of worship; as such, they do not isolate the Muslim from life or society. On the contrary, they strengthen the individual Muslim's bond with life and with others in

both sentiment and action. Consequently, Islam did not institute monasticism, which requires the individual to isolate himself or herself from life and its enjoyments and from working to improve and elevate the life of society. Rather, Islam views the earth as one huge prayer niche for the believer and life on earth as both worship and *jihad* so long as one's intention is sound and one abides by the limits which God Almighty has set out for us.

Islam approves of neither the pursuit of spirituality at the expense of material life, nor the tendency to "purify and elevate the soul" by depriving and disciplining the body as advocated by other religions and philosophies. Rather, Islam has brought a balance in all these spheres: "Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the hereafter" (Qur'an 2:201). And as the Prophet prayed, "O God, set right for me my religion which is the safeguard of my affairs; and set right for me the affairs of my earthly existence wherein is my living; set right for me my hereafter which is my place of return; make life for me [a source] of abundance for every good and make my death a source of comfort for me, protecting me against every evil."⁶ Likewise, the Prophet declared, "Your body has a right over you."⁷ Moreover, the Qur'an rebukes the tendency to prohibit the sources of enjoyment and means of adornment which God has provided for his servants. In a verse revealed in Mecca, God says:

O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer. Eat and drink, but waste not by excess, for God loves not those who waste. Say: who has forbidden the beautiful gifts of God which he has produced for His servants, and the things clean and pure which He provided for sustenance? (7:31-2)

In another *surah*, revealed in Medina, God addresses the believers in the same way: "O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which God has made lawful for you. But commit no excess, for God does not like those given to excess. Eat of the things which God has provided you, lawful and good, but fear God, in Whom you believe" (5:86-8). These verses explain to the believers the true Islamic way of enjoying the good things in life while at the same time resisting the excessive indulgence found in other religions. It is reported that these Qur'anic verses were revealed when a group of the Prophet's Companions decided to castrate themselves and roam the land like monks. Ibn 'Abbas also reported: "A man came to the Prophet and said, 'O Messenger of God, whenever I eat of this meat I [always] get the urge to make love. Consequently, I've decided to abstain from eating meat,' in response to which these words were revealed: 'O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which God has made lawful for you' ..."⁸

It is reported in Muslim's and al-Bukhari's collections of authentic *hadiths* on the authority of 'A'ishah, that,

A group of men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet asking about what he would do in private, and when they were informed about this

matter, they considered their own worship insufficient. Then one of them said, “I won’t eat meat any more!” Another said, “I won’t get married.” Another said, “I won’t sleep on a bed any more.” When the Prophet heard what they had said, he declared, “What is this that I hear? So-and-so says [that he’s going to do] such-and-such ... However, I fast, and break my fast, I sleep and I rise. I eat meat. I also marry. And whoever does not follow my example does not belong to me.”

The Prophet’s Sunnah signifies his understanding of the faith and its application, i.e., his duty toward his Lord, himself, his family, and the people around him, giving to each his or her due in a balanced and moderate way.

NOTES

1. In other words, the poet believed that his tribe had been a safe haven before becoming vulnerable when afflicted by calamities and forced into an extreme position.
2. Reported by Ahmad, al-Nasa’i, and Ibn Majah in their *Sunan*.
3. Reported by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*.
4. Narrated by Muslim.
5. Mentioned by Ibn Kathir in his commentary on Surah 57, *al-Hadid*.
6. Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*.
7. An agreed upon *hadith*.
8. These accounts are mentioned by Ibn Kathir in his commentary.

The Islamic Movement: Hopes and Aspirations

Jamil Hamami

ESTABLISHING THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

The upsurge of Islamic activities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the 1970s was not separate from Islamic activities in other Arab and Islamic countries. In fact, they were an extension of the Islamic revival which began in the aftermath of the June 1967 defeat and were a result of the failure of the secular and nationalist initiatives promoted to solve the problems facing the Arab and Islamic world. These activities grew and developed along with the growth and development of Islamic activities and the revival in other Arab and Islamic countries, especially in the countries neighboring the Occupied Territories. Accordingly, the Islamic movement in Palestine began to build its own educational, health, and social institutions as a means to interact with Palestinian society.

Initially, this process focused on educational, spiritual, and social activities to stimulate and activate Islamic thinking in the minds of the Palestinian people. The reason for this is that education and other forms of preparation take a long time to make minds accept something new. But this approach must not take precedence over other issues, since we live in an era of civilizational competition, political changes, and international developments. Thus, it is necessary for the Islamic movement to introduce its political agenda with confidence and at a steady pace into the political arena without any reluctance or hesitation. In order to give an explanation and an overview of the situation, it is essential to present a brief overview of the status of the Islamic movement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip before and after the occupation.

In the West Bank

The Islamic movement in the West Bank, especially the [the Muslim] Brotherhood, is an extension of the Islamic movement in Palestine, although its situation in the West Bank is a little better than its situation was in the Gaza Strip under the Egyptian administration. This is a result of the strained and deteriorating relationship between the Egyptian government and the Brotherhood in Egypt. Nonetheless, the Brotherhood was allowed to be active in the West Bank and with the recognition of the Jordanian government, which viewed the group as a purely social institution without any political practices or activities. With this limited freedom, the Brotherhood was able to publish books and promote its ideals. After the Israeli occupation in 1967, the

Islamic movement viewed this defeat as a defeat for the secular, national, and social ideologies in the Arab world, and consequently they began a new stage of preparation, guidance, and education. They established student bodies in Palestinian institutions and universities as a nucleus for Islamic action, which proved to be highly effective in guiding and directing its activities afterwards.

In the Gaza Strip

The Islamic movement in the Gaza Strip is an extension of Islamic activities in Egypt; it interacts with it in both negative and positive developments. The Brotherhood became popular in the Palestinian streets as a result of their participation in the events of 1948 which were the cause for this support and admiration. Consequently, the Brotherhood grew to become one of the largest and most important organizations in the Gaza Strip. Most of the members of this organization were students and Palestinian refugees. The Israeli occupation of Arab territories in 1967 provided a good opportunity for the Brotherhood to form a central leadership within the Occupied Territories to bolster and enhance its effectiveness.

Establishing the Islamic Assembly in the Gaza Strip as a public front for Islamic activities proved to be very effective in providing the right atmosphere for Muslim youth in the Gaza Strip. Subsequently, Islamic activities spread to the rest of the cities and refugee camps of Gaza. The vigorous personality of Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, the first head of this organization, helped in activating, developing, and promoting Islamic activities. Shaykh Yasin was charged by the Israeli authorities with organizing an armed organization, and consequently he was sentenced to 13 years in prison in April 1984. He was released in an exchange-of-prisoners agreement with Ahmad Jibril (the General Command).

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AND THE *INTIFADA*

The *Intifada* was not the outcome of specific planning or the product of a specific group. Rather, it was the spontaneous response by the Palestinian people living in refugee camps and villages, as well as in cities. If we take into consideration the factors that led to the outbreak of this *Intifada*, we can conclude that the Islamic movement was the main element. These factors are:

1. The frustration which prevailed among Palestinians in the aftermath of the events in Beirut, the exodus of civilians from the city, and the poor political performance of the PLO.
2. The state of fragmentation and hostility that dominated the Arab countries after [President] Anwar Sadat's trip to Jerusalem.
3. The ugly forms of torture practiced by the occupation forces against the Palestinian people.
4. The deteriorating social, economic, and security situations inside the Occupied Territories.
5. The prominence of Islamic awareness within Palestinian Muslim society.

6. The active and visible participation of important leaders of the Islamic movement in the *Intifada* and its ability to influence activity on the Palestinian streets is a clear indication that the Islamic movement was one of the main forces that led to the outbreak of the *Intifada*.

Had the Islamic movement failed in preparing minds and had it not received a favorable response from the Palestinian masses, it would have been no different from any of the pre-*Intifada* organizations, and the *Intifada* would have been just a temporary demonstration that would cease with the end of an incident.

Subsequently, the Palestinian people in general were shocked to hear the news of the Oslo Agreement and the appointment of a delegation to join the negotiations. We issued a warning at that time that this agreement would create divisions within the ranks of the Palestinian people for several reasons which cannot be dealt with adequately in this chapter.

The Islamic movement opposed and rejected the Agreement because it bypassed many of the basic demands of the Palestinian people and destroyed the aspirations of a large sector of the Palestinian people inside and outside the homeland. The Agreement was vague regarding the issues important to the Palestinian cause and can be interpreted in many ways. The Agreement was clear, however, on issues that dealt with Israeli concerns, and here the Israeli interpretation prevailed. This Agreement was concocted at a time when the Arab region was (and still is) suffering from fragmentation, which it remains unable to recover from despite the attempts that have been made. Additionally, this Agreement is taking place at a time when the balance of power is in favor of Israel and when international decision-making is dominated by the US.

The Palestinian opposition forces, Islamic as well as non-Islamic, united in their efforts to confront the new developments arising from the Oslo Agreement despite their different agendas and strategies, but this attempt did not succeed for many reasons. The Palestinian opposition adopted many slogans to thwart the Oslo Agreement, but it did not succeed in turning any of them into reality.

The opposition did not succeed in any of its joint efforts to confront the Oslo developments except for some celebrations and joint announcements. The reason is the opposition forces' mutual fear and lack of trust. To understand the status quo of the Islamic movement as the largest group in the Palestinian opposition inside and outside the homeland, we need to give an overview of the Islamic movement and identify its future role.

The Status of the Islamic Movement within the Occupied Homeland

The Islamic movement was as active and influential in the *Intifada* as other Palestinian groups. It brought about a fundamental change in Palestinian society that no one can deny or ignore. In fact, the actions undertaken by the Islamic movement inside and outside the homeland astonished everybody. Some people, however, blamed the Islamic movement for being late in resisting the Israeli occupation, and some even dared to level charges against it. The

Islamic movement was, in the meantime, educating and spiritually and morally preparing the state of mind of the people. When the time was ripe and the circumstances became intolerable, the powerful *Intifada* erupted to confront occupation, and, as a result, we were subjected to intensive oppression and torture. This in turn had adverse effects on the movement's infrastructure and actions. One of the forms of subjugation was the mass deportation of the movement's leaders in an effort to paralyze and abort the movement. Nonetheless, the prudence of the deportees thwarted the plans of the enemy. Nevertheless, I believe that by failing to use deportation as a means to develop a clear Islamic political agenda, the movement lost an excellent opportunity to address the Palestinian people. Instead, the movement was satisfied with emotional speeches which were unable to challenge the events that followed deportation such as the Oslo Agreement. I do believe that the performance of the opposition, including the Islamic movement, was inadequate to confront the Oslo Agreement and its harmful conditions, and, as a result, it became a status quo imposed on our people.

The Islamic Movement outside the Homeland

I used to think that the Islamic movement outside the occupied homeland would be more forthcoming in specifying its position regarding what is taking place in Palestine and would prove to be a more powerful and effective force in communicating and delivering that message. The truth, however, is that the performance of the movement inside the homeland was far more effective and influential despite the restrictions imposed on it by the occupying forces. The movement outside the homeland limited its activities to issuing statements, holding celebrations, and giving speeches carefully tailored so that they would not embarrass the various regimes.

By this I am not calling for confrontation with the regimes. On the contrary, I am opposed to confrontation with the systems in power, because I know what the outcome would be, and I know the potential of the Islamic movement. What I mean is that we need to develop a clear Islamic strategy and a defined agenda that can be widely and forcefully presented to the public. Not one of the leaders of the Islamic movement has come up with a clear plan, with the exception of Dr Musa Abu Marzouq. At the time he presented his initiative, I stated that it was an indication of the ability of the Islamic movement to deal dynamically with current events while upholding the inalienable and unnegotiable rights of the Palestinian people. I would like to emphasize here that politics are not that black and white. We know that international politics today are based on a balance of power and the interests of each individual country.

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT, THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, AND THE SUBSEQUENT AGREEMENTS

The Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles heralded a new stage in Palestinian political life inside and outside the homeland. This agreement was

the culmination of secret negotiations in Oslo which bypassed the Palestinian negotiating team in Washington, which came as a surprise to everyone. Moreover, dealing with this agreement and adapting to was achieved so quickly and was such a harmonious process that it exceeded all expectations. The reason for this is that the previous negotiations, which started at the Madrid Conference, prepared the ground and paved the way for accepting the new stage and dealing with it as the status quo on both the popular and political levels, especially when the PLO was recognized by Israel as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It is worthwhile remembering that this is a recognition of an existing Palestinian authority by an occupying force which originally denied that Palestinian people even exist.

Despite this change in the Palestinian political situation, our political circumstances were shaped before the Agreement was signed. Nevertheless, this Agreement did not introduce any changes at all in the political life of the Palestinian people or the Palestinian political map. On the contrary, the performance of the alliances that existed before the Agreement deteriorated, the Islamic movement found itself besieged, and, consequently, it was forced to enter into alliances with groups that differ from it ideologically and politically. For example, most of the Palestinian opposition forces agreed to avoid using violence to express their rejection of the Agreement or to thwart it. These forces resorted to the political option and relied on the people's choice. In my view, they adopted an historic and important position which is responsible for the absence of internal fighting and the use of arms against the Authority.

At the same time, we find that the Islamic movement's opposition to the political settlement was stronger and clearer. While some of the opposition forces oppose the Agreement as a tactical position and others as a strategic stand, the Islamic movement opposed it ideologically. I do not belittle the significance of this position, but it should be combined with a practical program that takes into consideration the present situation of the Islamic movement, its capabilities, its potentials, and its understanding of the international political system.

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AFTER THE CREATION OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

When the Palestinian Authority was established in Gaza and Jericho and became part of the status quo, the Islamic movement found itself facing a new situation; there was an Authority that exists regardless of its structure and mechanisms, and Palestine was still occupied. The Palestinian Authority has signed an agreement with the Israeli government and considers any act that causes embarrassment to the Israeli government a direct insult to the Authority. Under these circumstances, the Islamic government was obliged to continue its opposition to the Israeli occupation.

In the meantime, Israel held the Palestinian Authority responsible for any action directed against it from the Palestinian administered territories. To solve this complex situation, confrontation was inevitable. The movement

and the Authority adopted the position that internal fighting is proscribed, a red line not to be crossed. There are some elements within the Authority, however, that consider the Islamic movement a threat to Palestinian rule, and there are those within the Islamic movement who consider the Authority an arm of the Israeli occupation.

As a result, acute tension has developed and the relationship between the Authority and the Islamic movement has deteriorated. The massacre of Palestinian worshippers in a Palestinian mosque and the assassination of some of the leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad by Israel led the two movements to defend themselves. Lack of trust and confidence became more profound, and consequently some attempts were made to prevent this situation from worsening further.

The options for the Islamic movement need to be identified in order for it to be able to protect itself, its potential, and the respect it gained as a result of its numerous activities in Palestine. I disagree with those who claim that the Palestinian opposition forces, including the Islamic movement, cannot reveal their real positions and strategies during the transitional stage, especially now that it is evident that the Agreement is a fact and the Authority a reality. Moreover, the international consensus to end the conflict in the Middle East and to establish a (temporary) state of stability in the region requires the Islamic movement to declare its position and its strategy in a manner that fits its potential, capabilities, and responsibilities in building the Palestinian homeland. I do not believe that any agreement will be binding on our peoples forever. An accurate understanding of the political status quo at every stage can best identify the demands of any movement. Accordingly, the following steps must be taken:

1. Evaluate the Islamic movement's role in enforcing the Agreement and decide to what extent it can influence the course of events.
2. Work toward self-protection and defending future gains.
3. Define its relationship with the rest of the opposition groups, especially those who deal with the situation from a tactical point of view.
4. Re-evaluate the approach of education and guidance within the ranks of the movement and promote political awareness among the supporters of the Islamic movement.
5. Conduct a real internal dialogue based on scientific methods in order to allow new ideas to be discussed within the ranks of the movement.

Unless it takes these steps, I believe that the Islamic movement will remain locked in a vicious cycle without achieving any renewal, and that this, in turn, will lead to the creation of factions within the Islamic movement and will eventually motivate the Authority to establish various Islamic groups in order to abort the larger movement. This is indeed what took place when Islamic groups and movements, official as well as semi-official, were licensed to operate by the Authority. The official media began to give them increasing coverage, although the Palestinian masses hardly paid them any attention.

In fact, some of these groups were limited to the members of the office staff, and their activities were limited to a poem or an article here and there from time to time.

I believe that the "Islamic Salvation Party" experiment was stillborn because the relationship between the movement and the party was misunderstood. Additionally, the desire of the movement to extend its control to the party, its ineffective interaction with the masses, and its attempt to impose restrictions on the party, hoping that elections within the party would enable it to play an effective role in Palestinian politics, were the most crucial factors that led to its dissolution.

A vital Islamic party must be strong organizationally, forceful in presenting its agenda, steadfast in maintaining its positions, and clear in its initiative. A party of this stature will be able to gain the support of the masses and play an important political role in the Palestinian arena. But if the Islamic movement wants to keep the Islamic party within its political and decision-making domain, it will never succeed.

In order for the Islamic movement to remain strong and effective and avoid a great deal of vacillation, a clear Islamic political agenda must be developed.

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AND DIALOGUE WITH THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Taking the above thoughts into consideration and in view of the emergence of the Authority, we must learn from the lessons of the past, maintain the survival and gains of the Islamic movement, fulfill its obligations in building the infrastructure of the Palestinian homeland via existing institutions, and reserve its right to express its positions on what is taking place on the Palestinian field, which is a right which no one can deprive it of. I believe that entering into a national dialogue with the Authority to reach an agreement on the basic issues will build a peaceful relationship with the Authority and enable the movement to interact with Palestinian society. If the Islamic movement remains unfocused in its opposition, however, and continues quarrelling with the Authority, it will provide the Authority with an opportunity to deal a blow to the movement. This would needlessly keep the movement in a constant state of alert and mobilization in order to survive. The present restrictions imposed on the movement are premeditated and carefully planned. The events that followed the Sharm Al-Shaykh Conference are clear evidence of that. The international competition to appease the international Jewish lobby is nothing but a concerted international effort to end the conflict in the Middle East.

I am not calling for a dialogue similar to the Cairo Dialogue, which was designed only to exact concessions, but a dialogue on the basis of respect of the other's opinions and a commitment from the Authority to approve a multi-party system that would guarantee freedom of expression within Palestinian society.

The Islamic movement, and Hamas in particular, cannot afford to remain marginal in Palestinian society. It is an important and integral part of this

society. If we intend to bring an Islamic environment to Palestinian society, we must get involved with the people, interact with them, and endeavor to have them play an effective role in society without becoming part of the official Authority. The situation in Palestine does not differ much from the situation in Jordan. It is very important to initiate the role of a political party that enjoys freedom of expression and an independent platform.

This projection of the Islamic movement's future is a loud voice from within the Islamic movement calling for a new approach. I hope that this will not be considered a defection or a departure from the ranks. I also hope that we have open minds and respect others' opinion. At the same time, I hope that others will respect our opinion as well.

Part V

Islamism, the West, the United States, and 9/11

The Imperialist Epistemological Vision¹

Abdul Wahab'al-Masseri

There is a view that imperialism, as an historical practice, constitutes a deviation from Western civilization and its conception of the universe, and that the adoption of the imperialist solution, which involves exporting problems to the rest of the world and hegemony over other nations, is inconsistent with being a liberal, humane, and enlightened civilization that has accepted democracy as a philosophy of government, *laissez-faire* as its economic order, and rationalism and humanism as a universal philosophy. It is our contention, however, that these various philosophies do not stand in contradiction to the imperialist epistemological vision. Rather, there is a close link between the two, which will be fully understood once we turn to the epistemological level. In order to appreciate such a link, it has to be recognized that all these philosophies are secular in nature, in the sense that they do not admit of any philosophical system outside the domain of the materialistic order.

In our view, secularism is not a separation between religion and the state, as propagated in both Western and Arab writings. Rather, it is the removal of absolute values—epistemological and ethical—from the world such that the entire world—humanity and nature alike—becomes merely a utilitarian object to be utilized and subjugated. From this standpoint, we can see the structural similarity between the secular epistemological vision and the imperialist epistemological vision. We can also understand that imperialism is no more than the exporting of a secular epistemological and ethical paradigm from the Western world, where it first emerged, to the rest of the world.

FACTORS BEHIND THE EMERGENCE OF THE IMPERIALIST EPISTEMOLOGICAL VISION

The following factors constitute the underlying reasons for the emergence of the imperialist epistemological vision and its effects:

1. Ever since the Renaissance, materialistic secular philosophies have extended their hegemony over the Western mind. The Westerner has claimed that God does not exist or that He is, in fact, dead. If He does exist, He has nothing to do with epistemological processes and ethical control. The Westerner has also declared that nature is no more than matter subject to the laws of motion and that it is capable of being defined, measured, classified, invaded, utilized, and subjugated. This is the essence of humanistic thought. Furthermore, humanity itself is part of nature, of this material world, and,

as a material unit, human beings can be transported, used, and pressed into service for generating energy. In this, human beings are defined as producers and consumers, sellers and buyers, invaders and invaded, dominators and dominated, as well as conquerors and conquered. That humanity differs from nature in that they are able to dominate and control it means that humanity is, in the final analysis, part of it. This is what is called, in this context, the “normalization” process by which humanity becomes an integral—indeed organic—part of nature, with no distinctive standing or status. Human desire is part of nature or matter. Such beliefs or concepts became widespread and deep-rooted as rational utilitarian philosophies held increasing sway during the eighteenth century.

2. The increase in the hegemony of materialist philosophies has been accompanied by a disregard of ethics, which are considered both immaterial and unquantifiable. Ethics has become synonymous with benefit and enjoyment, and the purpose of life is to find this benefit and enjoyment as well as increase production and profit. Such purposes are characterized by being materialistically quantifiable and, indeed, measurable and as having nothing to do with the transcendental or spiritual. Furthermore, ethics has lost its absoluteness and is reduced to relative social facts attributable in their entirety to materialistic roots. Indeed, attempts have been made by utilitarian philosophies to establish ethics on scientific laws and mathematical formulas.
3. Political science in the West, particularly in the cases of Nicolò Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes, and following the increase in the secularization of political theory, used to emphasize that the humans’ existence has neither ultimate objectives nor absolute goals. Rather, the good was interpreted as that which was in the greatest interest of the state. But if enjoyment (as defined by utilitarian ethical theory) is the purpose behind individual’s existence, and serving the state’s interest (as defined by political theory) is behind collective existence, then any increase in, and the sheer expansion of, production becomes that absolute good and the means to attain paradise on earth. In this way, the state acquires its weapons and humanity increases its material gain or enjoyment. There is no question that a capitalist economy, founded as it is on production, increasing production, and dominating markets, has contributed to entrenching this vision and rendering it an integral part of the acquisitive European’s conception of human nature.
4. With the expansion of market economies via such mechanisms as supply and demand and competition, an individualistic view based on struggle and conflict has prevailed. This has led to an absence of sympathy among individuals and an increase in impersonal relations and contracts. All intermediary institutions, such as the Church and the family, have collapsed. This has led to the emergence of an individual who works pre-eminently for his or her immediate self-interest and independent motives, an individual with no profound inner values or any measure of balance in his or her make-up. Such an individual is part and parcel of nature as it is defined and can be seen to be a product of his or her immediate economic motives

and tireless pursuit of enjoyment. That is how individual power has come into being as a fundamental mechanism for settling disputes and, given the absence of absolute values and any ethical or spiritual frame of reference, this is completely understandable.

5. In parallel there has been so-called faith in endless progress, which stems from the belief that natural resources are infinite and that humanity's ability to control, suppress, and employ these resources is likewise limitless. Given this faith in infinite progress, ultimate expansion and growth become debatable and essential issues.
6. Added to all of these factors is the Westerner's ignorance of the cost of progress, inasmuch as this secular endeavor began with the invasion and control of nature and the claim that material happiness alone is true happiness. This perception has obsessed the Westerner to the extent that even when the price of progress has become all too clear (be it at the material level in terms of pollution or at the moral level in alienation and social breakdown), it continues to be ignored. Consequently, the Westerner continues to invade without ever heeding the warning signals of the limits of humanity and nature.

These factors—the materialistic view of humanity and nature, the reduction of reality to what can be invaded and the measurable, the prevalence of an individualistic view based on conflict, faith in progress, and denial of the price of progress—taken together, have led to the emergence of the imperialist epistemological vision. This vision takes its point of departure from the view that the world (humanity and nature alike) is pure matter and that the *raison d'être* of humanity—or rather, specifically, of the Westerner who sees himself or herself as the center of the universe—is to continue to add to knowledge of the laws of motion and human nature as well as to dominate them by continuous, endless progress until everything (humanity and nature) has been subjected to reason and to the law of quantification, itself a law that receives its legitimacy from materialistic scientific epistemology.

Furthermore, greater control over reality could be expressed in terms of a process of rationalization and secularization. The aspect of rationalization is concerned with means and never with ends. In this sense, it is a procedural rationalization, although it is possible to argue that this process, as part of the concept of material benefit, has not been procedural, but rather is an essential mechanism for turning the world into something material and turning reality (natural as well as human) in its entirety into an organic, integrated part consisting of a network of material economic interests. In this way, the world becomes much like a factory or a marketplace: every part of it is calculated and controlled, excluding, as it were, all such non-materialistic considerations as transcendental, absolute, or distinctive matters that, in other words, could not be measured or controlled.

With the Westerner's renunciation of the transcendental absolute and commitment to endless expansion and the legitimacy of the use of power, self-limitations are no longer recognized or accepted. Such an individual, therefore,

is ready to pursue endless expansion and increase his or her hegemony until the whole world is devoured. The end result is the supremacy of individualistic ideologies, invasion, hegemony, and domination for the purpose of consuming the world. The Westerner's model has thereby become that of Dr Faustus, who would devour all knowledge (even if this resulted in self-destruction), or of Macbeth, who would seize the throne (even if that led to insomnia), or of Don Juan or Casanova, both of whom would "devour" all women (even at the cost of every human emotion). This imperialist trend has culminated in Darwin's social philosophy, or in that of Nietzsche, when power and the will to power have become the only acceptable metaphysics and the only epistemological and ethical point of stability.

In its wake, the ethnic theory emerged, the theories of ethnic differences, and that of the white man's burden—all of which have been supported by "scientific" theories about skull size, skin color, and capacity for productivity, as well as the relation between all of this and the insatiable European and his or her racial and ethnic supremacy. Indeed, these theories have provided this European with the psychological justification required in the process of the invasion and annihilation of others.

THE INTERNALIZATION OF THE IMPERIALIST EPISTEMOLOGICAL VISION

In theory, the imperialistic epistemological vision, as well as its outcome in terms of rationalization, secularization, expansion, and invasion, could have been confined within Western communities had its emergence not been accompanied by what might be called the internationalization process. This process views the entire world as a single entity which is not divided into different cultural or economic formations, a phenomenon whose importance should be acknowledged following the emergence of the so-called New World Order. This internationalization vision, or international vision as it is called by some, has contributed to the crucial escalation of the Westerner's tendency to imperialism. Several factors have contributed to the escalation of the process of the internationalization of the imperialist epistemological vision:

1. The most important factor contributing to the emergence of the internationalization or international vision is the very materialistic and scientific vision of man and nature which has given rise to the imperialist epistemological vision. The materialist vision, as mentioned above, conceives of all things as matter governed by the same materialistic scientific laws. Chinese or Egyptian, Oriental or Western, man, as much as stars, trees, or insects, is only a unit of matter. In a unit of matter, what is important is neither specificity nor identity, but rather submission to the laws of motion. Matter does not act in accordance with the laws of history or civilization (different as it may be from one civilization to another); nor does it conform to religious or moral laws. Rather, it functions in accordance with general laws of motion. The age of Enlightenment, in its strict scientific epistemological enterprise, was "preaching" the rational

man, the international man, the natural man, and man's natural right. But this brand of humanity is irrelevant to civilization since it is based on a general materialistic state—an international state which transcends any specificity, be it national or religious.

2. Intrinsic to the belief in endless progress is a clear call for endless expansion. By the same token, the rationalization process, by virtue of being a process of controlling reality, would also lead to the desire to devour the world in its entirety.
3. The emergence of the European problem can be summed up as follows: (a) Capitalism, as is well known, is a system that seeks to increase production. This generated the need to import raw materials and export commodities worldwide, which in turn contributed to and promoted the process of internationalization. (b) The wealth accumulated by colonial imperialism and redoubled by the Industrial Revolution was not distributed equitably among all social classes. This in turn led to a terrifying social imbalance that generated social tension and threatened the internal security of Western communities. As a result, society was divided into a destitute majority which produced but consumed very little because of their poverty, and a rich minority that did not produce but also consumed very little because of their small numbers. This caused cycles of economic recession, in which commodities accumulated due to the limited purchasing power of the unemployed (or the employed but poorly paid). The rise in the rate of consumption on the part of the "acquisitive European" went in tandem. (c) An unprecedented population explosion in Europe, which resulted in the emergence of a huge population surplus, itself instrumental in increasing unemployment rates.
4. The communication and information revolutions have contributed to this internationalization process. The Industrial Revolution has facilitated geographical mobility regardless of ethnic or cultural origin, and, what is more, has made it possible for messages, printed media, and news stories to be distributed throughout the world on the same day.

The combination of these four factors has been instrumental in the formation of the imperialist epistemological vision and induced its diffusion as a solution to the European problem, itself an outcome of the European's greed and surplus population and goods. However, the imperialist epistemological vision did not turn into an historical phenomenon or become internationalized except through the growing influence of the secular national and centralized state. Through its centralized institutions of government, such a state could reach the remotest parts of the country as well as every individual. This was both vital and central: if the aim of existence is complete control over and efficient utilization of natural and human reality, then all human and natural resources in society have to be thoroughly engineered in accordance with measurable criteria. Otherwise, it will be difficult to control society so that such an objective can be achieved successfully. Indeed, such a centralized state could muster such massive production capabilities that it could achieve

massive material progress. This achievement was made possible by reshaping individuals and their identity in accordance with its vision and requirements.

IMPERIALIST MANIFESTATIONS OF WESTERN SECULARISM

Industrial progress in the West was associated entirely with military progress and the state of war that Europe experienced over several centuries. A centralized government could mobilize armies directly and without any approval or opposition from the Church or feudal princes. Military technology developed in such a way that the gains acquired from waging war far exceeded its costs (on the other hand, opponents of the imperialist enterprise often argued that the costs of establishing an empire far exceeded its expected gains). Furthermore, Western military technology far excelled its counterpart in the East.

Imperialism is but one manifestation of the secular Western ethical and epistemological paradigm. Secularism is the underlying theory, and imperialism is its most important practice. Indeed, imperialism is the greater mechanism through which secularism is internationalized. The close correlation between secularism and imperialism can be seen in such brutal acts as the genocide of millions in Asia and Africa, which, in our view, does not constitute a deviation from the course of Western civilization. On the basis of the materialistic, utilitarian, and rational view that the world is purely matter that can be utilized, oppressed, and transported, it was decided that millions of people should be transported from Europe to the Americas and from Africa to the Americas in order to increase their usefulness and augment their productivity.

However, it also has to be concluded that, in principle, if such an operation was difficult to carry out or if it was carried out at a high cost, millions of useless people had to be annihilated. This is exactly what happened to the American Indians. While whites were annihilating American Indians, they were simultaneously hunting blacks in Africa and transporting them to a land whose inhabitants had been driven out. Such an operation cannot be understood except in the context of the utilization and maximization of production. Black Africans, given their muscular strength and cultural disintegration, could be exploited because they had no human rights. American Indians, for their part, did constitute an integrated cultural bloc with its own historical rights, but because their extremely weak immune system could not withstand the microbes carried by the white Europeans, it was very difficult to absorb them into the new order. And in that lay their near-total annihilation.

The Nazi genocide directed against some sectors of the European population was in turn no more than a sophisticated application of the imperialist vision. To be sure, the Nazis applied the principle of "material benefit" in assessing the worth of human beings (i.e., Gypsies, children, the handicapped and elderly, German soldiers wounded in action, Jews, and Slavs) whom they classified as useless (useless eaters, as the Nazi phrase goes). These categories were classified into useful elements to be utilized and useless elements, whose fate was to be no better than that of the American Indians. As a matter of fact,

the carcasses of these useless human beings were utilized in “beneficial” ways: gold tooth fillings were extracted and melted into ingots, human hair was said to have been used in making shoe-brushes, and bones in a high quality fertilizer, and so on.

In order to shed light on the imperialist nature of the Nazi genocide, a brief comparison can be drawn between Hitler and Balfour. These two Western political figures were the product of a well-defined view of minorities. The view in question is that of the need to dispose of human surpluses—minorities. This, in essence, is an application of the principle of material benefit. The imperialist solution is to dispense with human surplus by exporting it. Balfour exported human surplus to Palestine, whereas Hitler exported it to Poland. However, because Poland was an independent state, it returned the Jews from whence they came. Consequently, Hitler deemed it necessary to dispense with them by unconventional means. In other words, the imperialist epistemological vision was, in both cases, one and the same. What actually changed were the imperialist practices, given the historical and geographical complexities. Hitler was but another Balfour, albeit one that had no Asian or African colonies to which he could send his human surplus.

To be sure, Western democracy itself and Western welfare are inseparable from Western imperialism. This democracy originated under an imperialist umbrella by which Western democracies, via the imperialist solution, could export their respective social problem, overcome the unequal distribution of wealth, and at the same time, deal with their minorities. Western democracies could also accumulate capital and establish a huge infrastructure that, by stripping the Third World of its natural and human resources, could achieve social welfare for their respective citizens.

THE IMPACT OF THE IMPERIALIST EPISTEMOLOGICAL VISION ON THE MODEL OF WESTERN LIFE

The secular imperialist epistemological vision maintains a stranglehold on the Western individual, even as far as relations with self and with other members of one’s community are concerned. Whenever a Westerner builds his or her place of residence, he or she acts in a manner entirely subject to the rationalization process. It is built as if it were a profit-making business, only to move out a few years later. In relationships with the opposite sex, there is no search for stability or peace of mind, but, rather, the maximization of enjoyment. This turns a sensitive and emotional relationship into a process of invasion (this is an example of what can be regarded as a culture in which the private/intimate talk of people in mutual love recedes and gives way to the external/imperialist mode of address characteristic of invasion and conflict). A Western individual is always on the move in order to make a profit and improve his or her standard of living. When old age is reached and he or she is no longer productive, he or she consents voluntarily to be removed to a home for the unproductive elderly, to await death in an air-conditioned room. Indeed, the so-called “throwaway culture” is an imperialist utilitarian culture that

consumes, utilizes, and squanders everything: energy, raw materials, songs, the female body, and the ozone layer. The gradual trend toward imposing automation on every aspect of life, which has become a source of complaint for all Western philosophers, is no more than an expression of the epistemology of invasion, despotism, and imperialist rationalization.

This culture of imperialist rationalization subjects the Westerner to the worst kind of imperialism—what might be called “psychological imperialism.” In other words, one turns oneself into a marketplace that expands “permanently” due to boundless ambition and expectation and by means of the dream industry, manifested in advertisements (in which sex plays an essential role), fictional tales, and the regulation of the rhythm of life itself. This is also done by what might be called the “sensual enjoyment” industries in modern communities: the view of the individual as a set of pure, carnal drives and needs to be satisfied. These industries continue to prepare the individual for an earthly paradise that could relieve him or her entirely of the burden of history. Indeed, the way in which Western cities are built incorporated such a rational imperialist vision and manifests it in roads and highways that glorify speed, or daily traffic that dissipates human and natural energy, pollutes the air, and reduces every aspect to the attraction of markets and stocks.

The imperialist epistemological vision is a relatively stable cognitive model. However, it is also governed by historical developments. We have shown that the greatest mechanism in the implementation of the secular “imperialist” program is the centralized state. One can identify two stages in the study of secularism and the history of capitalism. The first is a stage of accumulative austerity in which the secular individual postponed his or her enjoyment and the satisfaction of his or her desires to a later stage, under the pretext of accumulation, to enable later generations to live happily and comfortably. This is followed by a euphoric consumption stage: the secular individual has decided that the postponement state had ended and that it is high time to begin the stage of immediate satisfaction without further delay.

It seems that the imperialist model has now reached a euphoric consumption stage. The imperialist epistemological vision in the austerity stage, having stressed ethnic disparity between nations and individuals and the right of invasion on the basis of absolute power, had given way to the discussion of the white man’s burden and to a stream of theories about Western identity. However, in the new stage, the discussion centers on a natural individual who is colorless, tasteless, and odorless—a mere flexible, productive, and consumerist person. In fact, human nature itself has come under attack as an absolute that represents a final frame of reference for human thought, which has abandoned all absolute religious, ethical, and epistemological values. It is therefore possible to monitor the impact of the imperialist epistemological vision on several aspects of Western life as follows:

1. It has been noticed that references to human nature have disappeared completely from human sciences. Scientific deliberations now take place only through parameters, quantities, and statistical tables.

2. Even literature, the last resort of the human soul, is characterized by the emergence of structure and analytical theories that attempt to expurgate literature from the last of its absolute human values, namely, human nature.
3. We can see that the persistent rhetoric on “human rights,” now led by the most imperialist administration in the world (that of the United States) is, in essence, an onslaught on humanity and human nature. The individual, whose rights are allegedly defended, has become an independent entity unrelated to a family, community, or state. In this sense, he or she is a set of abstract needs defined specifically by monopolies, advertising and fashion companies, and by several entertainment industries. In this context, the individual is no more than a unit reduced to a receptor of heavy instructions from public institutions that have no individuality and no value other than increasing profit. These institutions resemble an absolute state that has appointed itself as an absolute power and that has remodeled individuals so that they can play the roles or perform the functions assigned to them. To talk of human rights (in the abstract) is, therefore, to continue the original assault on the intermediary institutions that began in the Renaissance and left humanity completely naked before the state and its institutions.
4. The spread of sexual deviation is also an assault on human nature, for human sexuality is an ultimate frame of reference through which one can pass judgment on what is human and what is not. In this respect, it should be mentioned that among those human rights defended by the epistemological vision of imperialism is the right to indulge in sexual deviation.
5. In our view, the spread of licentiousness in the Western world is not just a purely ethical problem, but also an epistemological problem. Licentiousness is part of an offensive against human nature and human dignity. The imperialist vision, as mentioned above, has “naturalized” the individual, for it considers him or her as merely a natural being and as matter. Licentiousness is an expression in this direction. Stripping the human body of its clothes is to dismantle its honor and respect and thereby reduce an individual human being (God’s deputy on earth in religion’s view, and the center of the universe in humanity’s view) into mere flesh to be utilized and exploited as a source of sensual enjoyment. Viewed from this perspective, the Nazi genocide of the Jews, that is, converting human beings into stockpiles or employable and utilizable flesh, is but one form of libertinism.
6. Finally comes the ideology of postmodernism (or the ideology of consumption imperialism), which declares the demise of humanity (following that of God), denies the existence of any “center,” and negates any frame of reference. It is a state of complete liberty and utter submission to the law of chance. It is a philosophical order fully expurgated of philosophy, humanity, and absolutism.

This philosophical laxity is the fundamental feature of the imperialist vision in the new era. Therefore, there is a trend toward the complete erasure of identities (except as a thin decorative shell) and the removal of boundaries. The

secular, national, centralized state will, in turn, begin to erode and gradually give way to multinational companies characterized by their absence of color or religion, taste, or odor of any sort. A semi-universal culture, indeed a civilization, obsessed by sensual enjoyment will emerge. Maxime Rodinson sums up the difference between the two stages of the epistemological vision of imperialism by referring to cocalizing (from Coca-Cola) nations instead of colonizing them (or Coca-Colaism instead of colonialism).

The history of imperialism is, in some respects, similar to the history of the secular national state. In its absolute (i.e., accumulative) stage, the centralized national state used to force nations to become matter and a changed source of energy. In the democratic (i.e., euphoric) stage, this has changed as Western nations have agreed to be no more than producers and consumers. These nations now harbor the epistemological and ethical paradigm they once resisted. The New World Order—this new manifestation of the Western imperialist phenomenon or the Old World Order—today is trying to make the nations of the world become engrossed in the vision that they are no more than producers and consumers, that is, usable matter, so that they will enter the iron cage satisfied and contented. The New World Order's greatest instrument in the penetrative process is those Third World intellectuals that have been Westernized via the information revolution, scholarships, and so-called scientific conferences. The New World Order, then, is the complete internationalization of the materialistic secular model as well as its total penetration everywhere. It is also the imperialist epistemological model in the age of universal consumption.

ZIONISM AND THE IMPERIALIST EPISTEMOLOGICAL VISION

As for the impact of the imperialist epistemological model on the Jewish faith and Jewish communities, it could be argued that Zionism is a secular imperialist epistemological paradigm. The impact of Nietzsche on nineteenth-century Jewish philosophers and on the structure of Zionist thought is known to those who research the history of Zionist thought. Furthermore, Zionism is an ideology that believes in the white man's burden. In this context, the white man is a Jew who takes possession of Palestine in the name of human rights. It is a paradigm emanating from the conviction that this very Jew has the right to invade the land and deport its people (or annihilate them) or employ them in his service. Guided by a deep-rooted racism, Soviet Jews (who would not choose to emigrate to Palestine) are brought in and Palestinians are prevented from returning to their homeland, regardless of their struggle for that goal.

Israel has managed to make itself a tool, in both intent and practice, in the service of Western imperialism. It is expected that Israel will change its identity in line with the change in the imperialist epistemological vision and its entry into the age of consumption. In this sense, it is expected that Israel will relinquish a little of its Jewishness and emerge as a peace-loving state willing to cooperate economically within the framework of the New World Order. The whole issue is production and consumption, and these have nothing to

do with epistemological and ethical absolutes. Therefore, Turkish water, Arab Gulf capital, Egyptian labor, and Israeli know-how will combine in a sheer material enterprise with no identity or sense of direction. Consequently, there will be no feeling of pain caused by loss of dignity.

NOTE

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Islamists and the West: From Confrontation to Cooperation

Ahmed Bin Yousuf

The drastic, complex metamorphosis undergone by the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, in such a short span of time, has shaken the global order. The West, particularly the United States, has had mixed feelings regarding this upheaval. The general reaction was one of euphoria and a sense of completion (as a result of the Cold War's demise). Once the initial elation began to subside, however, the West started to relish the prospect of finding a new foe(s). This nemesis would be subject to the accumulated hatred and enmity stored within its social fiber—a reality already apparent in the writings of several authors who claim to have identified candidates to fill the void left by the Cold War, the most prominent of which are Islam and the Muslims.¹

The questions that emerge, demanding a response, are overwhelming: Why Islam? Indeed, why the Muslims? Why has the Western media reinvigorated its quest to decipher Islam and the Islamists? Why is it bent on fomenting animosity toward the Islamic revival? Why does the West—with all its power—give importance to the study of the Islamic resurgence, encouraging the sponsorship of symposia and study groups to analyze the Islamic drive for change and potential for success?

Each time Islam is mentioned, why is extremism and terrorism immediately—all too readily—integrated into any commentary? Why do writers often take the initiative in reports and news analyses aimed at deepening the rift between Islam and the West? Who is it that instigates such rabid hate campaigns, undermining the chance of mutual recognition and coexistence between Islam and the West?

Who benefits from the inflammatory enmity created between the Islamic movement and the political establishment in the West? Is this collision course avoidable? Is the opportunity for bridge-building still present? Did the Islamists linger in discussing their agenda and addressing the possibilities for cooperation with the West, thereby consolidating Islam's status and its progressive message?

Does the contemporary Islamic discourse promulgate ideas that supersede the problem of coexistence with the West? What expectations do the Islamists have of the West, and vice versa, in order for the two cultures to engage in the promotion of true civilization? Finally, are there any points of convergence, particularly after the religious and ideological dimensions have been extracted from Western political culture with its two essential components: Marxism,

which gave birth to Socialism, Communism, and, to a lesser degree, Fascism; and Western liberalism, in the form of capitalism, pluralism, democracy, and libertarianism?

These questions reflect the apparent quandary faced by those who seek reconciliation between bipolar ideologies—spiritual versus secular. Yet only when they are sufficiently analyzed, addressed, and redressed will realistic opportunities for coexistence come to the fore and marginalize mindless prejudice.

Uncovering the historical origins of the deep-seated enmity harbored by many Westerners toward both Islam and Islamic movements necessitates a methodological approach. Having defined the problem, it will be significantly easier to create an outline for the Islamists to consider in initiating a measure of harmony with the Western world.

WESTERN PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAM: HISTORY

The West has consistently conceptualized the Islamic world in terms of an ideological foe. This simplistic perspective was rationalized according to a preferred, rather than an actual, reality. Images of a formidable enemy have generally been fostered within a framework of friction and conflict on the one hand, and distrustful communication on the other.

Mere observation of the geopolitical transformations—revolving, in one form or another, around the strategic interests of the West—during contemporary and current history makes uncertainty about Western intent, unfortunately, an easier task. These changes, however, have also prompted curiosity in the Western world—as a cultural rather than geographic entity—driving people to delve deeper into the dynamics of this mysterious force called Islam.

The Western psyche has been traumatized by the tumultuous nature of politics in the Islamic region: the multidimensional, turbulent issue of Palestine; the uncompromising rhetoric adopted by the Islamic Revolution in Iran; the mystique behind the Afghani *jihad*; and the mass appeal of Islamic movements within their respective socio-political environments—in Lebanon, Egypt, the Sudan, the Arab Maghreb, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and so on. Unable to decipher these contemporary phenomena within its self-reference criteria, the West responded erratically and fallaciously, often invoking clichéd images and banal statements. The Islamic world was viewed with contempt as a one-dimensional region capable neither of exporting productive ideals nor of being receptive to external ideas.²

The ever-increasing number of symposia and conferences on Islam were born of this irrational fear. These events strive for a better understanding of the dynamics behind Muslim development. As a result, many in the West have reconsidered past misperceptions and recognized the Islamic movements, based on the vision of its leaders who seek a new age of enlightenment and renaissance, as advocates of progressive change.

While some studies view the Islamic revival as merely a dying ember rather than a spreading flame, others have made a more optimistic evaluation. The former's assumptions are rife with negativism and are often colored by the personal animosity felt by the individuals involved toward the Islamic trend and the future of a modern, Islamic civilization. The latter has provided a clear insight into the potential for an Islamic culture to participate effectively amidst an array of competitive civilizations. These endeavors, backed by irrefutable evidence unlike the former theorists, hold that Islam's future role is based neither on wishful thinking nor on wistful reminiscence of historical cycles that ebb and flow.

Western observers often assume, patronizingly, that their perception of the Islamic region is based on informed opinion; yet true appreciation of the Muslim revival has eluded them. It is only with a conscious effort, incorporating the Muslim sociopolitical environment into the paradigm, that a realistic, accurate assessment can evolve. Furthermore, the popular support enjoyed by Islamists as well as their (potential) relationships with global powers, which have numerous interests in the region, must be added to any theorization on the viability of a religio-political force.

Islamist responsibilities, however, cannot be excluded from the overall model. It is incumbent upon leaders of these groups to dismantle their perceptual barriers, particularly when it comes to overestimating their cohesion and power. Such delusional opinions are often embedded in the invocation of former glories as representative of current trends. The Islamists, in order to excel, are obliged to make sense of the various policies and attitudes prevalent in the international arena—be they aggressive, critical, cautious, or captivated by the contemporary Islamic revival.

These considerations must be taken seriously because both East and West deem the Islamic revival one of the most important phenomena of the century. It is an integral part of the civic scene in an Islamic world that has become known geopolitically as the "Belt of Instability" or the "Arc of Crisis." The trend toward "re-Islamization" also has a profound effect on Western interests, in terms of the region's unique geography, the straits under Muslim control, and the abundance of natural resources within Islamic territorial boundaries.³

Thus, the West has vital strategic interests in the Muslim sphere, especially with respect to the wealth of oil reserves in some Arab states. In light of such tangible reasons for cooperation, one must ask why the West insists on turning to history for its policy decisions while the issues at hand are geopolitical. Why, indeed, is there an attempt to settle accounts which, as the colonial era evinced, is incapable of succeeding? Why has the West curiously followed a contradictory path, attempting to vindicate ancient vendettas while simultaneously proclaiming a desire for regional stability?

The answer is simple: Islam was, and remains, the primary force behind the emergence of an Arab civilization, its socio-geographic cohesion, and its historical identity as a dominant force in the Mediterranean basin and the rest of the world. According to Syrian-French thinker Burhan Ghalyoun, the Western reaction has been "to attack Islam as [an entity] synonymous

with the Arab's historic, cohesive identity; to distort its image and humiliate its adherents; and to aggrandize those who oppose its ideals or advocate its suppression."⁴

Habib Boulares, author of *Islam: Fear and Hope*, has responded to European trepidation regarding Islam. He asserts that Europeans perceive the Islamic revival as a wave of radical extremism tempered by aggressive bloodlust and an expansionist agenda. As a result, many Europeans are apprehensive of future relations. Boulares states:

[It seems to me] that there exists a widespread, emotive detestation of Islam in the West. This is something I have often referred to as the "Spirit of the Crusades." It underscores the Western rejection of Islam as a peculiar ideology far removed from "real" civilization and cultural, intellectual symmetry. Westerners believe they are the protectors of the Judeo-Christian heritage. This view, coupled with European colonialism, has led some to look upon the Islamic world in the North Africa and East with self-righteous disdain. Others look fearfully at the Islamic trend, basing their assumptions on a history rife with conflict: from the spread of Islam, to Poitiers in France, and to the Islamic withdrawal [from Europe] followed by sweeping colonial expansion in the Islamic world. For these reasons, the confrontational relationship with Islam has been inculcated into the European psyche.⁵

World War I heralded an era of division, with the Allies arbitrarily carving the Arab, Islamic geopolitical sphere into colonial satellites. The indigenous population sought independence via rebellion and thus added yet another dimension to the antipathy between Arabs and the West, which accused the former of treason, disloyalty, and inconsiderate disregard for the benefits of colonialism.

The most recent factor shaping East-West ideological warfare has been the introduction of Zionism into the region. Western liberals, social democrats, leftists, journalists, and university scholars have displayed an unprecedented measure of sympathy for Zionism. This explains the lack of empathy with the Arabs, particularly those states surrounding Palestine. Arab observers have viewed these aggressive overtones within the collective sphere of the "spirit of the Crusades."

ISLAMIC "FUNDAMENTALISM": REALITY VERSUS FALLACY

The foreign media, while representing an array of diverse opinion on issues facing the world community, has formed a unified front against the Islamic revival behind an unethical banner of sensationalism. Although this generalization is unfair to the minority of journalists who have displayed a higher standard of investigative reporting, it is no exaggeration to accuse reporters of pandering to the immoral representation of Islam in negative terms. The grossly overblown and unsubstantiated threat from Islamists has been billed as

a force intent on urban warfare, stemming progress and cultural enlightenment, and undermining democracy; it has been collectivized under the looming shroud of “fundamentalism.” Insignificant events or errors of judgment (apparently Islamists are not allowed to make mistakes) are thrust into the headlines because the “fundamentalists” have infringed secular precepts of acceptable conduct. In fact, every sociopolitical force that associates itself with Islam—a tactic employed by all, including socialists and atheists, due to Islam’s cohesive powers—is summarily included in the fundamentalist fold. Even individual incidents, carried out by a frustrated few, are reported as the work of a destructive fundamentalist force. Anyone who breaks the law, and happens to be a Muslim by identity, is a fundamentalist. The inflammatory headlines associated with these perverse suppositions have been the defining factors for Islam in Western perceptions: “Islam’s War against Modernity”; “God on the Gulf”; “Can Islam, Democracy, Modernization Coexist?” “The Roots of Muslim Rage”; and “A Bloody Islamic Revolt Derails Free Elections?” The assumption is that Islam is not only a separate entity from democracy and modernization, but also an adversarial ideology. The last headline is a thinly disguised attempt to resurrect in the Western heart fear of an Iranian-style revolution.

The Western media have depicted fundamentalism as an uncontrollable tide: it is radicalism in the name of *jihad*; its goal is opposition in the name of God; its ideals are extremist in the name of faith; and the sole driving force behind Islamic leaders is lust for power in the name of religion. The diatribe often portrays fundamentalists as neither possessing the intellectual capacity to understand the dynamics of contemporary politics nor having the fortitude to engage in mature discourse with secularists. Fundamentalists, so the theory goes, are willing to attain their objectives irrespective of the methods they employ; and they believe that opposition to government is a sacred trust and that death in the name of politics paves the way to heaven.

A significant part of the problem is the semantic dilemma. Youssef Choueiri addressed this in *Islamic Fundamentalism*. Summarizing his observations, a book review notes:

No Muslim can be entirely happy with the term “Fundamentalism” even if he does not reject it out of hand. Moreover, this term is employed with such cheerful abandon in the Western media that, in the end, one has to ask: “Where do we find a non-fundamentalist Muslim? Does such a creature exist?” The problem is to find an alternative. Here we have a parallel with the use of the term “Third World.” Everyone agrees that it is rather absurd, particularly now that the Soviet Union has disappeared from the map, but nobody can agree on a convenient alternative. “Fundamentalist,” as applied to the Muslim *ummah*, is another such term that has come into common usage without being precisely defined.⁶

Thus, the issue is one of both definition and alternatives. The *Encyclopedia Americana* defines fundamentalism as the meticulous adherence of Christian

devotees to the fundamental principles of their faith. These worshippers strive for the implementation of biblical tenets at all levels of public life. The term's etymology is traced back to Protestant factions calling for the governance of the Bible and unquestioning consecration of the literal interpretation of its text. Were use of this term to be used conscientiously regarding Islam, the appropriate comparison would be the Salafiyyah movement, which believes in an absolutist return to the pure practices of Medina residents during the Prophet Muhammad's era.

However, even were terminology to be applied accurately, the damage inflicted by media negativism might not be easily removed. Islamic fundamentalism, as described by the Western press, is a far cry from the representation of a movement calling for piety and Islamic purity. Rather, it is sententiously portrayed as an unrealistic ideology striving for an impossible utopian ideal: "[Fundamentalism is] a catch-phrase used to describe the militant ideology of contemporary Islamic movements."⁷

A representative definition of fundamentalism is elusive, particularly when sought within the contemporary political, Islamic context. Generally, fundamentalism, or the Islamic revival and Islamists, manifests an increase in the political expression of Islam in response to the regressive state of the Muslim *ummah*, the community of Islam. This drive has developed into a cohesive force characterized by the contemporary Islamic movements that seek the restoration of the Muslim *ummah* as a civilization among nations.

Achieving these goals requires the implementation of Islam on both the political and economic fronts, as well as diplomatic relations within the *ummah*. Many leaders of current regimes in the region have reacted uncompromisingly by fanning Western fears of an Islamic cataclysm, appealing for support in stemming the Islamic revival's popularity. Each government suffers from potentially destabilizing characteristics—corruption, crippled economies, repressive policies—and as such could easily crumble when faced with an organized domestic or regional rebellion. Ruling elites fabricate an external threat, i.e., a danger not associated with their governing clique, that threatens the West, thereby ensuring their grip on power; and this holds the possibility of their ouster at bay. As a result, many political parties and regimes deceive themselves and the West by exaggerating an imaginary foe. The problem falls into a cyclical pattern: the indigenous elites dramatize the existence of an illusory menace; this terrifies the West; the West denounces the "extremist elements" and provides moral, financial, or military support for the "pragmatic," though recognizably brutal, tyrannies; the media respond by sensationalizing a purported danger; the indigenous elites see the Western aid and media headlines, and believe their own stories, and so on. Somewhere in between, the Islamists must withstand the suppression and torture inflicted by despots and try to rid themselves of the shackles of an unwarranted reputation.

Why, then, if the Islamic world is ruled by such an array of tyrannical governments, does the West continue its overt or clandestine support for these regimes? One reason is the prejudicial comments made by some scholars. For example, Daniel Pipes writes: "The violence of the Middle East symptomizes

these disagreements [among Muslims]. The Iran-Iraq war, a purely Muslim conflict, lasted a horrifying eight years and consumed in its peak days as many lives as the Arab-Israeli conflict has over four decades.”⁸ The misnomer that the conflict was Muslim is reprehensible. The war was politically motivated, and the participants happened to be Muslim. It was no more a symbol of religious infighting than were the American invasions of Grenada or Panama a Christian schism.

The ferocity of the prevalent enmity poses a question that begs a response: who gains from the animosity? Hermann Eilts, former US Ambassador to Egypt and Director of the Center for International Relations at Boston University, has noted that the predominant *modus operandi* of the American media is to demonize the Islamic revival without explanation or justification. Eilts also asserts that the pro-Israel lobby in the US promotes fear of the Islamists by saying that its proponents seek to undermine American and Israeli vital interests.⁹ Egyptian journalist Fahmi Huwaydi concurs with Eilts’ evaluation, adding his own observations:

Irrefutably, there is only a single, lone beneficiary, and it is the international Zionist movement that dominates much of the Western communication capabilities—newspapers, radio, television; and it uses its wiles to create friction between the Christian West and Islam, in order for it to maximize the advantages such a conflict [will bring].¹⁰

Thus, fundamentalism, by Western definition, is synonymous with Islam. Repeated use of the term has enabled Western journalists to denigrate whomsoever they wish without the need for any direct reference to Islam. The media have even transformed perceptions of Islam from a peaceful faith to a religion of immutable extremes. By associating hijackings, assassinations, and hostage-taking with the Islamic revival, Western journalists have created a mythical monster. They have instilled in the general public and leadership an animus towards an Islam seen only in terms of radical extremism.

ISLAMISTS AND AGGRESSION: ACCUSATIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

“Islamophobia,” the result of repeated attempts by Western media circles to find evidence of Islamist failings, as well as the inflammatory exaggeration of isolated incidents, has consumed the Western imagination. This phenomenon characterizes Islam and Muslim activists in terms of an uncompromising “evil empire” which has no room for diversity. Subsequently, the deep-seated animosity promotes hostility toward the Islamic revival.

Islam, by definition, does not condone terrorism because, as a faith, it propagates justice, forgiveness, peace, faith, tolerance, and enlightenment. The historical, political belligerence that the West uses as leverage in deriding Islam happened to be a series of coincidental events. At the same time that Islam was beginning to thrive, political aggressiveness began to assert itself; yet no historian has claimed that this militancy was religious extremism or a

religious plan. It would have been outlandish to propose that the murder of some caliphs or disciples of the Prophet Muhammad was the act of Islamic fundamentalism or part of a drive for religious theocracy.

Similarly, the isolated incidents reported as “kamikaze Islam,” i.e., the suicide bombings of American interests in the Middle East, are politically motivated. They are reciprocal actions in a conflict between a regional power and the US. Thus, it is unjust to utilize such events as proof that Islam is anti-American. Such actions must remain in context, i.e., within the confines of the conflicts between nations, and not in relation to the Islamic movements—movements that are suppressed, politically impotent, without military backing, and censored (with the exception of Iran and, more recently, the Sudan).

None can refute the incendiary comments included in some Islamic rhetoric. These statements are latched onto by the media, at times unintentionally at others quite deliberately, and used as proof of Islamic terrorism. However, it is the Islamists’ right to use such language to their advantage. It is ironic that when presidential candidates in the US use inflammatory remarks during their debates, particularly regarding foreign policy, they are brushed aside by “experts” who deem such talk part of the political game. Yet when Islamists use the same tactics, they are accused of being agitators. Nevertheless, when careful study is accorded the Islamist agenda and outlook *vis-à-vis* regional and global politics, there is ample evidence of a willingness to coexist with the West. The animosity that asserts itself at times is merely because

[Islamic] movements are more often motivated by objection to specific Western policies than by cultural hostility. Differences between Western and Muslim societies can best be explained by competing political, socioeconomic, and cultural interests. U.S. presence and policy, not a generic hatred for Americans, is often the primary motivating force behind acts against American government, business, and military interests.¹¹

Huwaydi expressed a similar view: “We are against the West if it wants to dominate us; for we are against Western hegemony, Crusade-like tactics, and Christianization.”¹² He notes that Islamists oppose any party that refuses to acknowledge their legitimacy or defend basic, inalienable liberties. Islamists, he explains, do not carry the geographic and ideological antagonism harbored by nationalists that restricts dealing with the West. The only complications to overcome are political in nature. “I am not against the West in general,” he states, “I am specifically against Western oppression.”¹³

ISLAMISTS AND THE WEST: FACE TO FACE

Islamists cannot trust or believe Western protestations of support for the democratic process and human rights in the Muslim world. The reprehensible reaction to the crises in Tunisia and Algeria, where the electoral process was dismembered and political pluralism aborted, has added to such suspicions. The West, faced with a challenge to its professed support for democratization,

adopted a “hear-no-evil, see-no-evil” stance. Only choice events and select voices were drawn from the political spectrum; and the Islamists, to their consternation, found that they were not included.

The West’s paralysis came about because it was caught between its rhetoric supporting democratic ideals on the one hand, and its intrinsic colonial streak on the other. *Simply put, the West is incapable of dealing with a mentality that does not conform to its own set of values and outlook.* If the Muslim people’s demands precede their rebirth and progress rather than their segregation and disunion, the West is perfectly willing to curtail its “principles” regarding democracy and human rights. Liberties, it seems, are good only insofar as they do not undermine the dominance of interests over ideals.

Western hypocrisy has been a bitter pill for the Islamists to swallow. It plays on the people’s emotions, spewing meaningless demands for humanism and plurality while disregarding violations of those very principles. The Western political establishment acts as though the Islamic revival is a rampant danger, necessitating manipulation irrespective of the human and material costs. This has been most clearly shown in the Western reaction to North Africa and the former Soviet republics. Washington’s mixed signals evince a public display of democratic chauvinism, while in reality encouraging democracy’s subversion.

Nevertheless, the Islamists see their relationship with the West in terms of advantage. The West has vested interests in Arab-Islamic resources and the Muslims require Western technological expertise to harness them. Realistically, the West has the developmental technology to assist the Islamists in restructuring their respective states. If there is equality in the exchange of resources, there is no reason for the two civilizations not to prosper in an environment of openness and techno-cultural development. The Islamists have incorporated within their agenda the basis for a dialectical relationship with the West; and, as such, do not feel the West is justified in pursuing an isolationist policy that disdains the Islamic world.

The Islamists view Western attempts to undermine their political aspirations—creating a reactionary, rejectionist monster—with bemused frustration. This process is due largely to the misperception of dichotomous civilizations in conflict, which leads the Islamists to believe that the West poses the greatest challenge to their vision of governance based on an Islamic framework. Many Western observers, deriving their opinions from newspaper stories and slipshod research, have contributed significantly to the idea of divergent cultures on a collision course.

The biased mentality of these predominantly secular academics, whose knowledge about the Islamists and Islamic dogma is limited, has been instrumental in disseminating a generalized, monolithic image of political Islam. They have woven a tapestry rife with divisive imagery: Islam versus the West, fundamentalism versus progress, rigid traditionalism versus dynamic cultural evolution, and a regressive obsession with the past versus an acclimatized, harmonious satisfaction with modernity. This fabricated rendition of Saracen viscosity has remained constant in the many theorizations on the Islamic revival. Islamists have never ceased to be defined in terms of Christian funda-

mentalism. Academies have voluntarily and/or immaturely elided the facts in their research: thousands of so-called fundamentalists live in the West, abiding by its laws; they are professors, doctors, lawyers, engineers, businessmen, and coordinators of Islamic institutions; in many Islamic and Arab states they hold executive and high-level positions; and they have participated, when given the chance, in the democratic process. The concentration on a “clash of civilizations” minimizes, and often neglects, the reasons—social, economic, and political—for Muslim actions. The selective studies impress on readers the hallucinatory nightmare of irrational reactionaries instead of explaining Muslim behavior as a response to specific grievances.

Thus, Islamists have developed in their consciousness a dual perception of the West. First, in spite of libertarian claims, Westerners are deemed ideologically rigid and in a state of moral degradation and regression. Second, the West has gained a reputation for being a power intent on containment and vicious intervention. While it has been known for espousing equality and human rights, it has become notorious as a paranoid, colonial, uncompromising foe filled with contempt for others.

Islamists, cognizant of this fearsome impression, deal with the West cautiously. Although many Islamists live in the West and participate within its socio-cultural environment, they are apprehensive of its potential for deception, particularly since the West treats the Islamic revival as a threat. Nevertheless, Islamists define the East-West relationship within a constructively competitive framework—one that does not necessarily mean imminent danger to Western culture. They view the nature of this (potentially) amicable rivalry as the encouragement of cultural resuscitation tempered by a language of coexistence and solidarity, not alienation or containment.

It is incumbent on the West to employ foresight in its dealings with the Islamists. Scholars and political analysts alike agree that Islamic movements are likely to prevail. The West is a “cultural imperative” for the East, and vice versa. This undeniable reality would be better served if it developed within the guidelines of friendly competition rather than confrontational enmity.

The burning questions in the West are concerned with how the Islamists would govern were they to succeed in coming to power and how they would deal with Western interests in the region. While the questions are justifiable, the augmentation of Western attempts to undermine the Islamic revival is an illogical way of curtailing this dread. Observers agree that the Islamic movements will remain an integral part of regional politics well into the twenty-first century.

There is no doubt that colonialism spawned a multitude of problems—problems that should not be exaggerated. They should, following analysis, be equitably solved. Although people differ in comprehension and understanding, necessity breeds cooperation. Islam is clearly a challenge to the West; yet its challenge is one of friendship not enmity.

In the final analysis, what conclusions can be drawn from the research conducted by those specialists who view the Islamic movement as a potential Western ally or, at the very least, a socio-political peer? First, the results

will help provide a balanced, pragmatic paradigm for decision-makers in Western circles to study. Having removed some of the false accusations and nonsensical historical arguments, this may open channels for civilized discourse. In addition, they direct observers to the mature political dialectic adopted by Islamists. Robin Wright, for example, writes:

During the 1980s, activist Islam became synonymous in the Western mind with political extremism, terrorism, hostage ordeals, and suicide bombings. As the decade came to a close, the Islamic resurgence began a new phase; Islamic movements began to participate in the political system instead of opposing it. Increasingly, the Iranian model has been shunned and the fanatics' bullets have been forsaken for the ballot box.¹⁴

Whatever critics would like to believe, the fact remains that there is a readiness on the Islamic front to open a dialogue with the West. There is also a readiness to clarify the sociocultural reform proposed by the Islamist agenda, if the efforts are met with positive inquiry rather than preconceived prejudice. The Islamists consider cooperation with the West a necessity and not a luxury, particularly in terms of democracy, political freedom, and human rights. Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a leading Muslim scholar and thinker, expresses Islamist sentiments on this issue: "[Dialogue with the West] is a mandatory obligation for us in order for it to understand what we want for ourselves and our people."¹⁵ The discourse should be conducted on a number of levels—religious, intellectual, and political. Al-Qaradawi concludes: "Were we to convince Western leaders and decisionmakers of our right to live according to our faith—ideologically, legislatively, and ethically—without imposing our views or inflicting harm upon them, we would have traversed an immense barrier in our quest for an Islamic state."¹⁶

Much of the fear associated with the actions of an Islamic government are self induced. Islamists have proven themselves not for the sake of Western audiences, but out of firm, deep-rooted convictions. They deserve acknowledgment for their acceptance of the electoral process, pluralism, and recognition of women's and minority rights. These are defined within an Islamic context that Islamists do not feel necessitates justification by Western standards. Nevertheless, similarities with the West exist on the level of human rights, political freedom and plurality, multi-party participation, and counter-terrorism. There is an undeniable parallel between the ideological principles espoused by the West and those practiced by the Islamists. These provide a logical alternative to the incumbent, oppressive, dictatorial regimes.

The Islamists seek kinship with the West not only for political or economic parity, but also as part of their belief in the universality of human relations. While Muslims are not naive, especially where politics is concerned, cross-cultural relations are considered an integral part of human development. The West has a moral and ideological obligation if it intends to practice what it preaches, to establish communications with Islamist leaders regarding the possibilities for future relations. The Islamists are just as obliged, should

the West deliver on its rhetoric, to present their proposals and visions on a multitude of issues—issues to be discussed within a sociocultural framework serving the purposes of coexistence and cooperation. Mutual compromise and recognition will enhance the likelihood of world peace, or at the very least, global stability.

Today's Muslims have shed the initial stages of personal spiritual revivalism and adopted the philosophy of communal regeneration. This latter phase has created a collectivized momentum, including in its outlook realistic methodologies for achieving Islamic goals.

CONCLUSION

Most Western policy-makers, media, and intellectuals have been concerned about the increasing popularity enjoyed by Islamists in recent decades. These movements have challenged, by force when elections are disallowed, the legitimacy of secular regimes. Their goals are to eliminate the influence of Western sociocultural ideology, oust corrupt ruling elites, and establish a sociopolitical system based on *shari'ah*. Nevertheless, democracy, despite its Western origins, has been incorporated into the Islamic discourse by contemporary Islamist thinkers. The Islamists accept democratic principles insofar as the people freely choose their representatives and leaders, basic and human rights prevail, and there is a rotation of power. Islamists enjoin *shurah* in their governmental platform and incorporate useful democratic principles for its implementation—elections, a parliamentary system, division of power, plurality. Islamic movements in Jordan, Turkey, Malaysia, and the Sudan have proven their commitment to the application of democratic practices in their tracts. Islamists, when their organizations have been legalized, have exercised responsibility and have displayed a great deal of moderation. Nevertheless, the democratic process has been suspended in some countries when Islamists appeared to be on the point of electoral victory. Thus, one can only conclude that a plan exists, written or otherwise, to achieve three goals: undermine Islamist attempts to participate in elections, force Islamists to lose faith in democracy as a result, and compel them to resort to violence as a means of venting their frustrations.

Western leaders must choose between two options. They can opt for tolerance, setting aside their fears and prejudices, and accept political Islam as a legitimate, potentially progressive system of beliefs and practices; or they can perpetuate the current state of distrust and antagonism. Clearly, the former is preferable. The Islamist dialogue encourages openness, coexistence, and cooperation among nations. The West must realize that “Islamic fundamentalism [is] no long-term threat.”¹⁷ Unfortunately, however, when Islamist ideologues come to Western capitals to expand on their views, they are shunned. In those rare instances when they are invited to address Western political institutions, they are rudely interrogated instead of respectfully engaged in discussion. Perhaps the best way to seek Western flexibility is to recount the admonishment of Western scholars:

[N]either Islam nor Islamic fundamentalism is by definition “anti-Western.” ... [T]he anti-American attitudes of Islamic groups and movements in the Middle East are not directed against Christianity or Western civilization *per se*. They are instead a reaction to U.S. policies, especially Washington’s support for authoritarian regimes and the long history of U.S. military intervention.¹⁸

NOTES

1. Sa’ad al-Din Ibrahim, “The West: Looking for a New ‘ism’,” *Al-Shera*, 417, March 19, 1990.
2. Hasan Al-Emrani, “Islam in the Western Mirror.” *Al-Ummah*, April 1986, Sha’aban 1406: 70.
3. Ahmed Yousef, “Political Islam and Change in Contemporary Thought.” Paper presented at a conference sponsored by the Muslim Arab Youth Association, 1988.
4. Burhan Ghalyoun, *Reflections in the Arab World on the Gulf Crisis* (London: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1991), p. 19.
5. Interview with Habib Boulares. See also H. Boulares, *L’Islam. La peur et l’esperance* (Paris: 1. Clattès, nd).
6. G. Eaton, “Islamic Fundamentalism” (book review), *The Islamic Quarterly* 36(2) (second quarter 1992): 143. See also Y. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Pinter, 1992).
7. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
8. D. Pipes, “The Muslims Are Coming! The Muslims Are Coming!” *National Review*, November 19, 1990: 30.
9. A. Ghazali, “America’s Perception of Islamic Fundamentalism,” *Al-Ahram* 10 (1992).
10. Fahmi Huwaydi, “Islam is not an Enemy of Civilization,” interview, *Al-Muslimun*, July 17, 1992.
11. J. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 207.
12. Huwaydi, interview.
13. *Ibid.*
14. R. Wright, “Islam’s New Political Face,” *Current History* 90(552) (January 1991): 25.
15. Y. al-Qaradawi, *The Islamic Movements’ Priorities for the Next Era* (Cairo: Wahba, 1991), pp. 172–83.
16. *Ibid.*
17. G. Fuller, “Islamic Fundamentalism: No Long-Term Threat,” *The Washington Post*, January 3, 1992.
18. L. Hadar, “The Green Peril: Creating the Islamic Fundamentalist Threat,” *Policy Analysis Series*, 177, Washington, August 27, 1992, p. 35.

Mounir Shafiq

A number of scholars have penned volumes criticizing “fundamentalism,” referring to the Western usage of the term. However, the fundamentalist Islamist would not deny that he is one. The Islamic meaning of the term refers to the return to the fundamentals of religion, or to the employment of the foundations of religion in the process of *ijtihad* and jurisprudence.

The widespread use of the Western definition of the term fundamentalism has recently been adopted in Arab mass media, due to the influence of those writers who concur in this use of the term. However, it is not easy to settle on a specific and acceptable definition of the fundamentalist phenomenon they criticize. One must search the annals of critical philosophy to truly come to grips with the meaning of fundamentalism. Defining this term is even more difficult because some writers regularly use such terms as “fundamentalist Marxism,” “fundamentalist nationalism,” or “fundamentalist religion.” These terms are grouped together because they reflect a monolithic and absolute state of mind that is extremist in nature, unable to tolerate difference in the “Other.”

Let us posit some historical examples. Can we use the category “fundamentalism” to include and characterize the Companions of the Prophet or the early religious scholars of Islam? If we give the example of the four founders of the Sunni legal schools—Imams Abu Hanifa, Malik, Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, and Shafi’i—can we truly say that their ideas and legal discourses were expressions of monolithic and closed thinking, and that they were intolerant of the Other? This clearly is not historically true.

In discussing the modern period, can those authors who write disparagingly about fundamentalism give us vivid examples of religious scholars who claim the ultimate truth and yet who are extreme in their behavior? Can they give us an example of a leader of the Islamic movement, such as Hassan al-Banna (founder of the Muslim Brotherhood)? I believe that there is a qualitative difference between someone who defends his perspective because he thinks it is true and one who considers his perspective to be the absolute truth which is beyond any argument or debate.

Let us suppose that there are some who are convinced of the absolute truth of their attitude, is it worthwhile talking about them? Is it correct to generalize and ascribe fanaticism to any form of fundamentalism (be it Marxist, religious, or nationalist)? There is a strange focus on fundamentalism these days, primarily Islamic fundamentalism, and, to a lesser extent, nationalist fundamentalism, and calling these forms of extremism. To be scientific and straightforward, authors who discuss fundamentalism must

distinguish between the different currents of thought that embrace the Islamic or nationalist conceptual *Weltanschauung*. It is facile simply to call them all extremist.

Those authors who put all “fundamentalists” in one basket and accuse them of intellectual terrorism, oppression, and all sorts of violence do not realize that in fact they heap accusations on the accused that they consider far more serious than accusations of collaboration with the enemy or at least equal to that. If people are looking for sources of oppression, terrorism, violence, fanaticism, and intolerance, they won’t find them in the Islamic *Weltanschauung* or “Islamic fundamentalism” in its juristic meaning. On the contrary, they will find them in their own liberalism, which is essentially derived from their antagonism to fundamentalism and to the Muslim world; it is by necessity a form of antagonism toward Islam and the Islamic *Weltanschauung*. This places liberalism squarely within the sphere of intellectual oppression and terrorism from the outset.

If liberalism fails to recognize the right of many segments of the Arab and Muslim *ummah* to adopt the Islamic *Weltanschauung* and establish Islamic movements, associations, and trends of thought, then liberalism itself is surely a site of fanaticism, oppression, and intellectual terrorism. Those who think that fanaticism, oppression, and intellectual terrorism are features of Islamic or Marxist fundamentalism should take a hard look at themselves and at what they say about fundamentalism. In sum, if not for fear of further confusion, it would be easy to talk about the sources of liberalism as closest to fanaticism, oppression, and the rejection of others.

NEUROSIS AND INTELLECTUAL TRENDS

A neurosis is a disease or mental disorder caused by a functional or organic disorder. Neurosis, of course, has many manifestations and nuances. It has become fashionable for many modernist Arab authors to ascribe neurosis to a number of social and intellectual trends and movements. You will be diagnosed with this disease as soon as you express any concern about the identity of the Muslim *ummah* and defend it against the horrendous global American cultural attack which aims at destroying the *ummah* so that it can impose its own value system. You will be also accused of being neurotic if you refer to cultural specificity without denying globalism, or if you consider globalism to be the sum total of a great number of human cultural specificities, and not just the American. You are neurotic as long as you want to affirm your religious Islamic identity, or if you dare to consider the immense Arab and Muslim history and heritage from a perspective that is not Orientalist in nature.

Those who do not see in the liberalist attitude oppression, terrorism, the subjugation of will, and a confiscation of free thinking are like one who seeks protection from heat with fire or who runs away from a leak to the waterspout. By the way, when one is oppressed in the Arab world, American-style, when one’s name and work are ignored by the liberal mass media and you are subjected to long psychological and material struggles, you are much worse

off than the Soviet artists and writers oppressed by the system in the past. At least those people were able to gain international sympathy. Those thinkers and authors who dare to seek change outside of the formula of Western liberal modernity, who struggle against capitalist oppression and were subjected to McCarthyism, are never mentioned in our mass media.

We must ask a number of questions about the West in general and the US in particular. Have they dealt with the Muslim world and the Islamic movement in a Euro- or Americo-centric way? Is there a need to delve into the Orientalist perspective of the East? Is there a need to mention what Bernard Louis, Samuel Huntington, Francis Fukayama, and Daniel Pipes have written? Perhaps we should remember what the white man in the US did to the native Indians, African slaves, and the US and Europe to the nations they colonized.

Also, are the political and cultural discourses of modernity characterized by tolerance of and respect for the choices of other nations, especially Muslim nations? Last but not least, what do we make of what is going on in the US, where, when someone points out or criticizes the Zionist influence in Hollywood, Congress, and the White House, that person is harshly penalised?

In sum, it is possible to escape one-dimensional thinking only when you conduct a thorough and critical study of the Western, and especially American, experience, and when there is an open and tolerant reading of Islamic historical experience, interaction with it according to its heritage and with respect to its integrity and choices. Western modernity has been at fault in viewing the Other as inferior. We Muslims are on the defensive and are the victims of this alleged modernity. We read in the Holy Qur'an the following:

And never let hatred of any-one lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being God-conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do.²

MODERNITY AND PERCEPTION OF THE "OTHER"

When we talk about contemporary modernity, we mean its dominant American version. Arab modernists promote modernity as the most advanced *Weltanschauung*, in which people treat the "Other" with dignity and respect. They then move on from this to present a totally different image of Arab and Muslim societies, while demanding that these societies merge with modernity and adopt its worldview. What this means in effect is that they ask the Muslim world to deny its historical and cultural heritage. All of this is done in the name of modernity and its allegedly superior treatment of the Other.

Answering questions about modernity will lead to the study of the real conditions of those societies who espouse it, for they are the most at fault when it comes to poor treatment of the Other, even if equality is enshrined in the law itself. The disdain and distortion that the Other faces in the Western mass media and movies is not merely a matter of marginalization, but a form of racial, elitist, and cultural discrimination.

Where are all these modernist societies? Where is that modernity that is founded on the recognition and respect of the Other and granting him equal rights and opportunities? Where are the societies that are known for cultural diversity that are not characterized by the hegemony of the majority culture and the marginalization of other cultures, even if, according to the principle or law, they are recognized? Here, we should not forget the monopolization that characterizes universities in modern nations, especially in America, and in the mass media, in field of arts, and in publication and distribution. This makes equality and equal opportunity, so clearly stipulated in the American Constitution, simply ink on paper when one mentions the role of the big corporations that own the largest presses and the rights to distribute books, magazines, etc., not to mention those centers of power that many universities and research centers rely on for their funds and continued existence.

In a word, those who promote modernity without taking into account its practical application in so-called modernist societies will sell us a forged bill of goods. So far, we have not discussed the relationship between Western modernity and nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and especially in Arab and Muslim nations, where Western talk about respecting the Other and concepts of equality, tolerance, and democracy amount to nothing.

We also notice that pioneering global cultures such as the one in France also find themselves threatened to the point of extinction by the hegemonic and global modernity of the US. That is to say, the fear here is that in moving toward global modernity, there is an attempt to impose a monolithic culture on the world that neither recognizes global cultural pluralism nor respects the marginal independence that some cultures have enjoyed in the past. It is wrong to assume that the general trend of Western modernity is toward cultural pluralism, egalitarianism, and mutual recognition. I believe that the current movement of globalization, if not resisted by the masses, will annihilate even partial cultural pluralism in Western societies themselves. This is what American cultural globalization is trying to achieve, against which many European cultural and political leaders have already revolted.

Accordingly, it is possible to argue that the principle or motto of cultural diversity, based as it is on mutual inclusiveness and not exclusiveness, is going to be a primary feature of the universal battle against global American cultural monopoly or hegemony, which some loosely call modernity or globalization.

I believe that Arab and Muslim nations, with their combined cultural and political power, can play a significant role (along with Third World countries as well as Japan and Europe) in resisting and stopping the reactionary movement of American modernity and globalization. There is an underlying tendency in American global modernity to subjugate all the diverse nations of the world to one economic, political, or cultural monolith, which is a sure sign that we are returning to the law of the jungle or the original state of nature. What this means is the "survival of the fittest," where the country that has the largest military in the world, such as the US, veers away from inclusiveness and global cultural diversity and gets away with it. The current phase of modernity, in its American guise, has been but a rude awakening to the historical association

between Western modernity on the one hand, and imperialism and neo-imperialism on the other, since the end of the Cold War.

In sum, those with true respect for the “Other,” cultural pluralism, human rights, and dignity, and who work for the welfare of the global human community, must look beyond modernity for a role model. In fact, we should all assume a critical perspective on modernity and side with those forces that fight against American globalization, injustice, and racism.

NOTES

1. From Mounir Shafiq, *Fi'l Khitabah wa'l Khitab al-Hadathi* (Casablanca: al-Markaz al-thaqafi al-Arabi, 1999), pp. 49–59. Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.
2. Q 5:8.

The Islamic Movement's Approach to Understanding *Shari'ah*¹

Kamal Habib

Shari'ah is a clear, unequivocal, and unambiguous approach. It represents the straight path to salvation, as God Almighty says, "And, finally, [O Muhammad,] We have set thee on a way by which the purpose [of faith] may be fulfilled: so follow thou this [way], and follow not the likes and dislikes of those who do not know [the truth]" (Qur'an 45:18). *Shari'ah* represents God's final and conclusive word to mankind because it combines all the virtues of previous divine laws and encompasses their goodness and blessings. With *shari'ah* God completed His religion and His blessings to mankind, and was satisfied with *shari'ah* as a clear, unambiguous path with no distortion or twisting, "Today have I perfected your religious law for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your religion" (Qur'an 120:3). Also God says, "Behold, it is We Ourselves who have bestowed from on high, step by step, this reminder? and, behold, it is We who shall truly guard it [from all corruption]" (Qur'an 99:9). This provides proof that God protected Islamic *shari'ah* from the distortion, replacement, and tampering to which previous divine laws were subjected.

The Noble Prophet (peace be upon him) received the Qur'an as an inspiration from Allah, accompanied by the Sunnah (the Prophet's tradition), which represents the Prophet's words to clarify and interpret incomprehensible ideas, place necessary restrictions on absolute issues, and explain the meaning of the Qur'an and the purposes of *shari'ah*. In the Qur'an, God says, "[and they will tell you that their prophets, too, were but mortal men whom We had endowed] with all evidence of the truth and with books of divine wisdom. And upon thee [too] have We bestowed from on high this reminder, so that thou might make clear unto mankind all that has ever been thus bestowed upon them, and that they might take thought." *Zikr* or remembrance here is the Sunnah which explains the Qur'an to Muslims. Sunnah informed people how to perform rituals and worship, as well as dealings related to agriculture, trade, *zakat*, retribution, judiciary, and testimonies.

After the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the expansion of Islamic conquests and the inclusion of new races, countries, and civilizations in the world of Islam, the Prophet's Companions started to make conscientious efforts (*ijtihad*) offering their opinions. The issue of *al-masalih al-mursalah* (interests for which there is no text in the Qur'an either proving or prohibiting

them, left for people to perform *ijtihad*) and people's customs entered into the Companions' *ijtihad* at that time. Among the *ijtihad* performed by Caliph Omar was his decision that booty be transferable while rendering fixed the property of the state available to Muslims and their descendants. He also performed *ijtihad* in favor of the people whose land was forcibly conquered, rendering their rule closer to countries conquered peacefully, as was the case with the land that is today's Iraq and Iran. The inhabitants were allowed to cultivate the land they owned and pay land tax (*kharaaj*) to the Muslim state. He considered the thrice-uttered divorce a final divorce, as people had taken it lightly. He also appointed a representative of the Muslim state to take charge of stray cattle during Othman's era for fear that people would steal the cattle from its owners. He also established offices similar to those of the Persians and stopped paying newly converted Muslims when they were no longer needed after Islam became powerful and well established. Omar also brought together all the Holy Qur'an rather than leaving it dispersed on the leaves and bones the Companions had been using to record it.

Ijtihad during the time of the Prophet's Companions was characterized by *shurah*. The Companions used to consult each other on matters presented to them. However, with the Companions' dispersal to various countries, schools of jurisprudence opened, which were influenced by the environment each of them emerged and developed in. The People of the Hadith School emerged in Hijaz, while the People of the Opinion School emerged in cities in Iraq. Each school had its own approach and methodology, which opened up important horizons for Islamic jurisprudence. The Hijazis collected Companion *fatwas* (religious opinions) and strictly adhered to them in issuing their own *fatwas*. Hijazis even refrained from issuing *fatwas* on matters for which no Companion *fatwas* had been issued. The inhabitants of Kufa searched for the reasons behind judgments and rational comparisons. In this, they all followed the Companions. The Hijaz School followed Abdallah ibn Omar's and Ibn Abbas's approach, while the Kufa School followed Ibn Masoud, Omar ibn al-Khattab, and Ali ibn Abi-Taleb. Jurisprudence schools were thus established as the highest expression of academic and scientific truth and discipline. Schools were not established because imams wanted to have schools named after them. Their followers were the ones who recorded their questions and explained their approaches to understanding and deduction, which later developed into a jurisprudence school or a method to understand *shari'ah*.

Islamic jurisprudence and *shari'ah* developed slowly in response to emerging questions and new situations. Islamic *shari'ah*'s tool to achieve this is *ijtihad*, where specialized jurists strive to understand the people's situation and respond to the new challenges they face.

ISLAMIC MOVEMENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF *SHARI'AH*

As previously explained, the majority of Islamic jurisprudence revolves around issues of *ijtihad*. When a jurist (*faqih*) performs *ijtihad* he focuses on issues that allow for differences. By performing *ijtihad*, jurists meant to expand the

capacity of the Islamic legal text to accommodate new issues as they occur. Jurists study texts and derive new meanings that previously were not apparent in order to facilitate matters for people and render texts and inspiration constantly linked to people's situation and lives. In Ibn al-Qayyim's important book *Paths of Wisdom*, he explained that *shari'ah* is capable of responding to reality; that *shari'ah* is much broader than the mere text, particularly on matters of governance and *shari'ah* policies.

With the advent of the Islamic movement following the fall of the Caliphate and attempts to restore *shari'ah* to people's reality after secularism had divided them, the movement focused on the fixed, unchangeable aspect of *shari'ah* and jurisprudence. This is natural as the movement wanted to take people back to the values, faith, and issues that enjoy consensus. In science it is necessary for people to learn the major issues before the minor ones. Hence the attention to faith as the foundation upon which to build Muslim individuals, followed by issues of worship, particularly those related to prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and *zakat*. The Islamic movement, however, did not pay attention to the issues of reality, particularly that they were required to address reality on an every day basis, as well as offer alternatives, make decisions, and define positions toward issues of reality.

THE JURISPRUDENCE OF REALITY AND PARTICIPATING IN ELECTIONS

Worship is of course among those issues where we follow our predecessors' tradition. There was no theory with which the Islamic movement could address reality, mainly due to not understanding *shari'ah* itself and the difference between issues of consensus and worship on the one hand, and issues of reality and their answers, which fall under what we term the changeable aspect of *shari'ah*, on the other. For example, a decision such as how to deal with reality and give it its due attention is one torn between interests and harms. It involves understanding and contemplating reality itself, which in turn involves studying the means of social change reached by the human mind and available means of change. No previously established means exist that may not be surpassed, for example.

This includes the decision to participate in elections. This is related to examining reality and the range of answers is open. Muslims may run for elections then change their view of their reality, which in turn changes their *ijtihad*. The issue here falls under what is known in politics as "political decision theory." A Muslim's participating in, voting in, running for, or winning an election is not linked to violating monotheism as classified by some brothers, who called it "the sound opinion that joining the People's Assembly violates monotheism." From a methodology point of view issues of monotheism fall within a different Islamic legal context from the context that participating in elections falls under. Issues of monotheism relate to decisive issues in *shari'ah* that enjoy consensus and form part of a Muslim's faith. On the other hand, the issue of participating in, running for, and voting in

elections relates to reality and its questions, where *ijtihad* represents a tool to face it. How did the two issues become conflated?

The confusion stemmed from the fact that the Islamic movement lacks an approach to understanding *shari'ah* in a way that distinguishes between issues of consensus and fixed faith on the one hand, and changeable issues of *ijtihad* on the other. The Islamic movement addressed them using one approach as if they were the same. Faith and issues of consensus have their nature and approach. They should be acknowledged and addressed with faith, and an effort to understand or merely interpret them. On the other hand, issues of reality are changeable and as such fall within the realm of *ijtihad*. A jurist's or an intellectual's work within this changeable context must use reasoning in order to assess interests and harms, discovering the causes and rules, and being aware of the change of *fatwa* when facts, contexts, circumstances, and conditions change. Differences are not allowed on issues of faith, except in rare cases. Disagreements are not allowed on issues subject to consensus. However, differences are bound to occur on the changeable issues of *ijtihad*. This doesn't call for denunciation, altercation, or fighting.

I have noticed while contemplating this issue that Allama Mawdudi [founder of the Jama'at-i-Islami in India and Pakistan], who wrote on the four expressions in the Qur'an establishing the meaning of God (*ilah*), Lord (*rabb*), legislation (*tashri'*), and divine sovereignty (*hakimiyya*), offered extremely open and reality-related *ijtihad* when addressing political systems in his book *Codification of the Islamic Constitution*. This can only be understood by disengaging the methodologies used for decisive issues of faith and consensus on the one hand, and issues related to reality and *ijtihad* on the other in a way that does not bring faith into issues of reality that fall under the umbrella of *ijtihad* where the most harm befalling a person performing *ijtihad* is having erred.

The Islamic movement's correct understanding of *shari'ah* and jurisprudence is the key to establishing a theory for dealing with all the complex and difficult issues of current reality. This is achieved through systematic discrimination within *shari'ah* between issues of faith and fixed values on the one hand, and unending issues of reality that fall under *ijtihad* on the other. Islam does not know an end to history, but believes in an unending dialect between man and his reality.

THE JURISPRUDENCE OF REALITY AND THE MOVEMENT'S RENEWABLE FORMS

The Islamic movement needs to reconsider the direction it is taking. The institutional forms it adopted, such as the group or the organization, are not sacred. They represent the product of *ijtihad* reflecting a specific phase. When the phase changes it is the duty of the people of the new phase to perform *ijtihad* again to build new institutional structures that correspond to these changes.

An Islamic group cannot ignore or discard the regulatory framework which takes the form of an advocacy and educational group, as God Almighty

said: "Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors" (Qur'an 3:110). Thus, we propose to keep the traditional entities in charge of Islamic advocacy (*da'wah*) and education as expressions of advocacy, while establishing new and completely independent political structures. These may take the form of civic Islamic parties with Islamic terms of reference. Such modern political structures would establish their tools in accordance with the law and the political set-up. They will establish the idea of devolution of power and respect for the law, building a genuine political vision that is effective in the political sphere.

The experience of the Moroccan Justice and Development Party is instrumental in this context. Islamists who participated in Morocco's parliamentary elections in 2002 under the Justice and Development Party were members of Morocco's 1970s Islamic revival generation. They then established the Monotheism and Reform Movement, which attempted to establish a political party under the name of National Renewal but was rejected by the Moroccan regime. They tried to join the People's Constitutional Movement, headed by Dr Abdul Karim al-Khatib, who has reformist Islamist tendencies. Dr al-Khatib accepted them and they exercise their legitimate political activities through his party. In 1996 the Reform and Renewal Movement merged with the Islamic Association of the Future under the name the Movement for Monotheism and Reform. It is basically an advocacy and education movement, which believes nevertheless that its activities should extend to other areas of reform, such as intellectual, cultural, educational, scientific, social developmental, family reform, youth, student, political, and union work. It believes it can contribute to these areas through institutions to be established by the movement's members or existing institutions with which they cooperate within a framework of integration and cooperation. With the introduction of members of the movement into Dr al-Khatib's party, the movement changed its name to The Justice and Development Party and in 2003 won 38 seats in Morocco's first election under King Mohammed VI. It believes in what is called the "smooth flow in political life." It stood in 56 of a total of 91 constituencies because it wanted to prove its political presence rather than sweep the political board.

Concepts such as participation, the majority, devolution of power, the rationality and distribution of political power, and refraining from monopolizing authority in one power, choice, election, and opposition all exist in Muslim civilization. The absence of civilization and historical experience from being a source of knowledge within the Islamist movement pushed us into touching upon concepts of jurisprudence and faith without delving deeply into civilization experience and the daily practices of Muslims and Islam which render Islam part of everyday life.

Traditional Islam, which Muslims experienced and lived, is what preserved continuity for Islam until it reached us. Then we performed the process of

renewal and revival through contemporary reform groups. The Islamic movement needs to find a link with what preceded it. It also needs to express the mainstream, what we call "the People of Sunnah and Jama'ah." We are aware that Islam as everyday life needs *ijtihad*. The movement needs roots and origins, links, approximation, and facilitation. This can only be achieved through understanding *shari'ah* in the context of its purposes, universality, survival, and validity for every time and place.

THE APPROACH OF JURISPRUDENCE IN DEALING WITH THE ISLAMIST PHENOMENON

The "Islamist phenomenon" here means the forms and expressions inspired by Islam as a method for life. This phenomenon may be a social orientation, such as when large numbers of Muslim women and girls wear the veil, abandoning Western-style fashion, or when a segment of Islamist activists direct their efforts to charitable work to exercise the Islamic concept of solidarity (*takaful*) among Muslims, reviving the tradition of the rich giving *zakat* to the poor. An example of the Islamist phenomenon in the social sphere is when segments of Muslim youth revive the traditions of Islamic marriage which separate men and women. In addition to the social aspect, there are also the intellectual and cultural ones where some researchers and those working in the scientific and academic fields try to create systems of knowledge and science inspired by Islamic methodology. This is known as the Islamization of sciences and their curricula. In the field of *da'wah* (advocacy) there are specialized groups and associations that steer people away from negligence and loss into the light of guidance, truth, and Islamic commitment. In the area of trade unions, Islamist unionists expressed themselves in union and student work. They were able to provide important services within this context. Islamists running for parliament succeeded in achieving a significant presence in Yemen, Egypt, and Jordan. In order to implement this as a way of life, some members of the movement were inspired by those who used violence against governments which do not apply *shari'ah* but rather Western traditions of governance and politics. Some political movements inspired by Islam even attained power in some countries, such as Iran and the Sudan.

The 1970s was the period which witnessed what is known as Islamic revival. It has become the subject of research in Western think-tanks wishing to understand the major shift in the Islamic world as it represents, according to Western estimation, a threat to Western interests on the level of values and ideas, as well as on the level of presence and influence. Various think-tanks in the West have devoted much energy and money investigating the future of the Islamic movement. But in their analysis of the new Islamist phenomenon, such research centers lacked a methodological vision and what is termed the "jurisprudence approach" in addressing the Islamist phenomenon.

THE ABSENCE OF AN APPROACH IN THE WESTERN ANALYSIS

1. Western analyses lack an approach as Western researchers focus on the political movements hostile to the authorities in their countries whether through armed confrontation or political dispute. Western research seemed to fuel the tendencies of confrontation and conflict between these movements and their political regimes.
2. Western researchers based their work on quantitative analysis of a partial character. Hence, when studying a number of Islamist groups in one country they failed to distinguish between their relative weights in their countries, their approaches, and ideologies.
3. Western analysis approaches primarily focus on the material aspect of a positivist character. Thus, most Western analysis attributed the Islamist phenomenon to economic, psychological, and social reasons, linking the Islamist players' class to their Islamist orientations. They also focused on the expectations gap and the issues of relative social deprivation. These are all Western theories that seek to interpret social explosions, revolutions, *coups d'état*, or acts of political violence, such as demonstrations and the often accompanying destruction. Despite the importance of positivist approaches in interpreting political and social violence movements, they remain inadequate in their quest to interpret, analyze, and understand the Islamist phenomenon.

NOTE

1. From Kamal Habib, *Tabawwalut al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah wa'l Istratijiyyah al-Amerikiyyah* (Cairo: Dar Misr al-Mahrousa, 2006), pp. 19–28. Translated by Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.

The Islamic Movement Before and After September 11, 2001¹

Yassir Zaatira

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 events, a staple diet of the Arab and leftist intelligentsia has been their tedious and repetitive discourse about the relationship between the United States and what is commonly called “political Islam,” to the extent that some have argued that Islamic revivalism in the Arab and Muslim worlds has been fabricated by the US. The discourse betrays a shameful ignorance of both history and the present as well as of Islam, its components, and transformations. Otherwise, does the return of Muslims to their religion and their commitment to it need such an American conspiracy and foreign intervention?

In the course of history, there are interests that meet and disperse among human groups, whether they are regimes, organizations, or nations. This intersection of interests does not mean that one has fabricated the other or even has completely employed it for its own sake. Thus, when some say that the US used the Afghani militants to destroy the Soviet Union, wouldn't it be possible to say that the Afghanis exploited Washington's hatred of Moscow to gain victory over their enemy who pillaged their land with the intention of transforming it from a nursery for Islam to a refuge for atheism?

All or most of history's transformations were the outcome of the equation of competition, separation, and struggle for niches and interests between the great powers. This law of struggle between people was set by the Lord of the universe when, His Majesty, says: “And if God had not enabled people to defend themselves against one another, corruption would surely overwhelm the earth.”

Many states have indeed suffered since the rise of the US to hegemonic power since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Most states are looking for positive signs of global transformations that will pave the way for a multi-polar world where weak states can play a role outside of what is set for them by the policies of diktat and the American hegemony.

This equation applies to Islamic revivalism, which has been a reaction to the defeat of the Muslim *ummah* by the Zionist project. Furthermore, Islamic revivalism was born out of the wave of Westernization and atheism imposed on us by the imperialist West, which wanted to force us into its world of modernity as a way of destroying our solidarity [as Muslims]. The Islamic awakening is also a natural reaction of an *ummah* that never ignored its essential values in spite of all the invasions on its cultures throughout history.

It is a reaction to return to the hidden fundamentals and historical creed store in the nation.

For 15 centuries, Islam has been a title of honor for this *ummah* which did not know any victory outside of its context. So, how is this *ummah*'s return to Islam associated with an American conspiracy? Islamic awakening did indeed pre-date this and this is true of the so-called current of violence or *jihad*. Didn't some Islamic groups clash with more than one regime before 1980? Didn't others participate in *jihad* in Palestine in more than one period, the last of which were the years 1969 and 1970?

The Islamic phenomenon is a natural consequence of this *ummah*'s siding with its religion. Yet, radicalism or violence is the outcome of objective circumstances, on the top of which is suppression and corruption from within, and stubbornness and humiliation from without, whether American or Soviet. However, the participation of this party or that in motivating this phenomenon or strengthening it is a natural response that does not have any relation to plotting and planned fabrication for it.

It is quite clear to almost everyone that foreign powers have failed to control the Islamic awakening and this is the reason behind the global powers' mutual agreement to fight it now. Otherwise, what is the meaning of one British spokesman's statement that the battle against [Islamic] terrorism will go on for at least 50 years, which is similar to the battle against Communism in the recent past? Thus, it is in the supreme interest of the *ummah* to guide Islamic awakening by empowering it to rid itself of the shortcomings associated with it for decades. This can happen only through positive dialogue. However, to sideline or fight the Islamic movement is a certain way of aiding the enemies of Islam.

THE UNITED STATES AND ISLAMIST PHENOMENON: FROM "UTILIZATION," TO "COLD WAR," TO "THE HOT ONE" AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

First, I want to make clear that, in this study, I will refrain from employing the term "political Islam," used by the mass media to describe the Islamist phenomenon before and after 9/11. Islamic revivalism is a broad phenomenon and it is impossible to limit it to that term, which carries negative connotations implying that the supreme objective of revivalism is the control of power.

Throughout Islamic history, there have been countless movements attempting to revolt against the sultan, the ruler, or the caliph. However, these movements were not described, as is the case today, as Islamic movements. For, the issue of separation between the state and religion, or to be more precise, canceling Islam as a reference to the state, is a modern issue arising before the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate.

Throughout their history, there has been a power struggle among different parties in Muslim societies. Yet, none disputed the fact that Islam was the blueprint for both state and society. The modern question began when the West discovered the fundamental role Islam plays in the Muslim *ummah*, which becomes a refuge in times of crisis. The West was quick to understand

that eliminating Islam by any means would be a certain way to guarantee its triumph by polarizing and dividing the Muslim world.

For this reason, there was a systematic attempt to replace Islam as a reference point for Muslims by secularism, and maliciously to associate Islam with backwardness and retardation through education curricula, communication, cinema, and television. Thus the division between modern regional states and Islamic reference was achieved, except in the case of Saudi Arabia which managed to keep this reference and with which the West has no problems for known considerations. Accordingly, we can say that the Islamic movements emerged in reaction to the separation of state and religion (mentioned above) and also as a clear aspiration to restore Islamic authority in matters regarding state and society.

It is true that raising the banner of religion and the state in order to gain political power can be understood as a desire on the part of the Islamists. However, neither the ruling elites nor foreign powers have given Islamists the opportunity to take power, owing to the danger this power entails. The overwhelming power of the West will render the Islamist project quite impossible. We must remember that the contemporary regional state, a postcolonial state which is the product of the Sykes-Picot agreements, is too weak to challenge the West and its ability to create havoc in the domestic affairs of weaker states.

For many decades, Islam has been neutralized from Muslim states and societies until the emergence of the US as major contender on the global scene [in the Cold War] when it found itself facing the ideological challenge of Communism. Here, the new American empire decided to employ Islam in its armory in confronting communist expansion in this sensitive region of the world. The US then began to encourage its allies in the region to exploit Islam to achieve this goal. The leftist circles [in the Arab world] considered these regimes to be undeveloped.

Islamists were not oblivious to this political equation, i.e., being in line with some regimes loyal to the West, to confront communist expansion. For example, martyr Sayyid Qutb, executed by the Nasser regime in 1966, wrote in June 1952, just three weeks before the 1952 Free Officers' revolution, in his classic article "Americanized Islam," the following:

These days, the Americans and their allies are interested in Islam. They wanted it to fight communism in the Middle East for them after they have been fighting it for nine centuries or more since the crusades. They are in need of it as they need Germany, Japan, and Italy, all of whom they destroyed in the past war and today they are trying with all means to have them stand on their feet to help them fight the communist thread. They may re-destroy them tomorrow if they could.

This awareness did not prevent the Islamic movement, its scholars, associations, and intelligentsia, from cooperating with those Arab regimes opposed to Communism, especially in the wake of the persecution of the Islamists by the

progressive regimes. In general, the Islamists considered Communism to be an ideological threat in view of the fact that they were working tirelessly to restore the paramount importance of religion in society. However, we must point out here that the Islamists did not work hand in glove with the US. They opposed Western civilization's mode of existence, the imperialist spirit of the US and the West, and their support for the colonial Zionist project. However, none of this prevented them from sharing an interest with the West in fighting Communism and Socialism.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the socialist and leftist project in the Arab world gained significant momentum due to the charisma of [Egyptian President Jamal] Abdel al-Nasser. The 1967 defeat marked the beginning of the downfall of Nasserism, which began to retreat gradually in the 1970s until its final eclipse in the 1980s.

The Islamic awakening was like a wild horse that invaded the region, especially after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which began to acquire some significant political consequences. In the 1980s, Islamists gained in strength in more than one country and quickly moved closer to authority. Yet, the most significant was the rise of the Islamic resistance under the leadership of Hamas in the Occupied Territories against the Hebrew state, the sensitive nerve for US interests in the area.

After the end of the Afghanistan war [against the Soviets] and the Gulf War of 1991, it was evident to the Americans that the Islamist phenomenon was far from reaching exhaustion. It was necessary to review ways and means of dealing with the Islamic movement for it had been transformed into a leading antagonist to US interests and politics in the region.

THE POLICY OF CURTAILMENT

It was evident in this critical period that the US had decided to curtail the Islamist phenomenon by installing a large army of spies under the cover of journalism and objective writing as a way to assess the weakness and strength of the Islamic movement. It is important here to note the explosion in writing about the Islamic movement in the 1980s and 1990s in the West.

What is important is that most of the Arab and Muslim regimes were able to adapt themselves to the new reality. Most of them adopted the policy of "draining the sources," an expression initially used by the Tunisian regime, in order to prevent any collaboration between activity on the street, that is to say of the masses, and the Islamic movement, in addition to expanding the blockade of its moderate Islamic trend.

For this reason, we can say that the American pursuit of the Islamist phenomenon had nothing to do with the September 11, 2001 attacks, for it had been going only subtly for years before that. There is no need to cite evidence of the praise received by the Arab regimes for reining in the Islamist phenomenon. It suffices to mention here that the Oslo Accords [signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1993] were, in certain respects, a response to the rise of Hamas in the Gaza Strip in 1991–93.

This can be called a new Cold War, waged by the US against the Islamist phenomenon. Many specialists anticipated victory due to the Islamist phenomenon's decline in more than one Arab country in spite of the difference in methodological approaches. The most important policy to curtail the power of the Islamists was through participation in the political process, or absorption through parliamentary politics. While there was much noise in the West directed against Islamist extremism and violence, in practice there was considerable energy directed against the moderate Islamist movements, such as the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front.

The Cold War against the Islamist phenomenon began well before 9/11. I am sure that we all remember a major study undertaken by some think-tanks linked to the US State Department concerning Muslim religious institutions and their impact in the region. One of the main recommendations of this study was to gradually phase out these institutions. An Arab leader went on TV boasting that getting rid of these religious institutions before 9/11 helped his country avoid a possible American attack.

Some argue that the American "Cold War" against the Islamist phenomenon is not a war against Islam *per se* but against the Islamic movements or political Islamic movements. However, this is not the case. In launching this war [against Islam and the Islamic movement], the West has adopted the Israeli strategy of "the swamp and mosquitoes." This theory stipulates that you cannot eradicate mosquitoes in a partial or isolated way; to realize the goal, it is necessary to drain the swamp. If the mosquitoes are terrorism, then the swamp is Islam itself, aspects of religiosity in society, and the moderate Islamic movements. As long as religion has a presence in state activities and in society, then religiosity will increase, which will give power to politicized Islamic movements in general and to violent ones according to current objective circumstances.

THE WAR'S INFLUENCES ON THE ISLAMIST PHENOMENON

We must ask the following question at this stage: What is the future of the Islamist phenomenon after being targeted for so long and the impact of 9/11 in tackling this phenomenon?

The answer depends, to a large extent, on the political conditions that emerge in the near future and the position adopted by the Arab regimes. It is not unreasonable to say that a decision by these regimes to curtail or weaken religiosity in society is a prelude to curtailing the power of the Islamic phenomenon. However, how far this curtailment will go depends primarily on the responses and actions taken by Muslim leaders and movements, and whether their responses are intended to confront the regimes or to avoid confrontation. In addition, the position of the regimes towards religiosity will be determined by US policy *vis-à-vis* these regimes.

It is possible that some regimes will break away from American arrogance by refusing to curtail the Islamic phenomenon. It would be in the interest of these regimes to ally themselves with the Islamic movements and scholars in

order to confront the attempts to subjugate all to US-Israeli interests. There is no doubt that this position will be reinforced by clear reasoning, which was first expressed by the Islamic movements and manifested in their vigilance to the external factor corrupting the internal, threatening the nation and its religion, and the inadequate focus on the conflict with the regimes.

Being aware of the foreign power, the Islamic phenomenon will be urged to find a common denominator with the regimes, hoping to arrive at a common vocabulary (in reality, the ball is in the regimes' court) or remain outside the official equation and continue fighting corruption and calling for virtue as scholars have done during the nation's history.

In summary, it is possible to argue that the US's intentions toward the Islamic phenomenon have become quite clear. Dealing with their ambitions depends on the responses of the regimes and the Islamic movements. There is no doubt that the history of this religion [Islam], since its inception 1,500 years ago, proves that it is impossible to eliminate or marginalize it. This phase of US hegemony is no different from past periods of history.

CHANGE IN CURRICULA IN THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THE WAR OVER IDEAS

In clear compliance with US demands, several Arab states have declared that they are in the process of changing or developing their curricula in order to rid them of any form of "excessiveness in religion, extremism, violence and hatred of the other." We are not sure whether these states are convinced that their curricula breed violence, terrorism, and extremism, or that they are doing this because they want to weather the American storm. Lina Romanski, director of the American-Middle Eastern Partnership Initiative, says that "from now on, we must not give room to hatred, intolerance, and provocation. Our goal must be to live together, and we must change any curricula that do not support this objective."

On the other hand, Donald Rumsfeld, [former] US Secretary of State for Defense, proclaimed that both military power and soft power [i.e., the power of ideas] should coalesce to defeat terrorism. He further pointed out the alleged danger of the religious schools and institutions in the Muslim world is that they breed extremist youth.

In this respect, one can say that the Arab states do not play an equal role in this game, since some of these regimes supported the Islamic movements and others repressed them. Those regimes that oppose the Islamic phenomenon hope that others will follow in their footsteps. What that means in essence is that Arab and Muslim regimes will adopt a variety of means to curtail the Islamic phenomenon, in addition to the educational method of focusing on curricula only.

In the context of employing soft power, the US has pursued two courses of action. First, it has run an expensive media campaign in the Arab world; and second, it has waged an indirect war against the Arab regimes as a means of forcing them to change their curricula and purge their mass media of anything that might encourage extremism and terrorism as a prelude to other demands.

To accomplish the first goal, the US established a number of media outlets directed primarily at the Arab world, such as Sawa, al-Iraqiyyah, and al-Hurrah, etc., to compete with al-Jazeera and al-Arabiyya. To achieve the second goal, the US began to exert tremendous pressure on the Arab states in order to “guide” their media discourse. For example, the Arab media were advised not to use the term “martyrs” to refer to the Palestinian suicide bombers or to reduce the news coverage of both Iraq and Palestine. No one knows where this communication game is leading, or whether or not these changes will satisfy the US administration.

In this context, it is important to consider a report, published in 2003, commissioned by Congress and prepared by [former US ambassador] Edward Georgian on new diplomatic moves to combat Arab and Muslim hatred of the US. The authors of the report admit openly what some Arab and Muslim circles have been saying for a while: “We admit that public diplomacy is part and parcel of the picture. Polls have shown that resentment of the United States stems from our policies. For example, the Arab-Israeli conflict remains the Achilles’ heel of any relationship between the Arab/Muslim world and the United States.”

It is quite absurd to ignore this important reality. Otherwise, why would the wave of terrorism focus only on the US, although the Islamic movement has been in good shape since the 1980s? And how is it that hatred of the US has spread across the world and not only in the Arab and Muslim states?

I believe we must dissociate the question of violence or terrorism from that of the war over ideas, or we will be dancing in the dark. Without justifying it, domestic terrorism in the Arab and Muslim worlds grows in the context of oppression, corruption, poverty, the fight against religiosity, and political dictatorship, which prevents the masses expressing their opinions and releasing their pent-up anger. As for external violence, it takes the form of a reaction against an external party which is targeting the *ummah*, its interests, its religion, and its identity. The US has conducted its foreign policy through extortion and humiliation in the cases of Palestine, Iraq, and the Sudan. In short, hatred has its own reasons. If the issue is related to curricula in Muslim schools and universities, then France, Germany, China, and other major states find themselves in the same position; and when the position is similar, the aspirations are also similar.

It is a well-known fact that concrete conditions, and not legal injunctions [*fatwas*], are behind violence. Legal injunctions can be questioned. When we recall that the trend of violence does not require an army, then we realize that legal opinions are of less importance in the context. So, where are those who learned about violence in school? Did Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri graduate from religious institutions?

On the domestic level, in the Arab world the situation will depend on the nature of change, not only in school curricula but also in the methodology of dealing with the Islamic phenomenon. Undoubtedly, the inclination of some regimes to fight Islamic ideas or to curtail religiosity in society ultimately will create many grave problems. This may lead to a new cycle of violence

against rulers who declare war on Islam and who may find themselves in dire straits, especially if legal injunctions are issued against them accusing them of apostasy and infidelity.

The above could be problematic since the American war on ideas will not be satisfied with changing the curricula, but will go beyond that to ask for rapid action to drain the sources of religiosity in society. An understandable violent reaction, both domestically and abroad, may ensue. I believe that the Americans' understanding of the Islamic sacred text will be futile. Such concepts as disbelief, faith, and *jihad* are part of this scripture. Do we have to uproot these concepts because they are viewed as a form of aggression against the Other? Does this Other view the Muslim as a believer, for instance, or does he refuse even to accept the holiness of his religion?

According to the Islamic creed, rejecting the Other as a disbeliever does not mean declaring war on him, unless he is an aggressor. A central tenet of the Islamic creed is that "there is no compulsion in religion," although it is asserted in the Qur'an that "the true in the sight of God is Islam."

Also, what about those curricula that have a political dimension, such as those that discuss the Crusades, or the old battles of Muslims against Jews, or the Zionist invasion and occupation of Palestine, and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians? How will they be presented in the revised curricula? As for the mass media, I believe that their impact is going to be limited in the Muslim world because of the rich cultural heritage of Islam. Later, they will discover that the unlimited resources they spend on this front have been in vain.

What we must say in the above context is that the game of revising the curricula, along with the American "war of ideas," will lead to more hatred of the US and to instability in the Arab world, especially if the regimes acquiesce to US demands in this regard. However, if there is a real need to develop the curricula and mass media, we must do that with a view to affirming the identity of the Muslim *ummah* using the right compass as an aid to navigation in these stormy times.

Finally, we must point out that American pressure on the Arab and Muslim worlds is a form of extortion. The far-reaching objective of the US is to push the regimes to recognize the Jewish state, normalize relations with it, and abandon Palestinian rights, which would open the gates to Zionist penetration of these regimes, institutions, and societies, thus leading to their complete destruction.

NOTE

1. From Yassir Za'atira, *al-Dhahira al-Islamiyyah Qabla 11 Aylul wa Ba'dahu* (Beirut: al-Dar al-Arabiyyah li'l 'Ulum, 2004). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.

Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah

CRITICISM OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC SPEECH

The value of contemporary Islamic speech, especially for Islamic activists, lies in Islam's ability to face man's various problems in a realistic way which does not get lost in abstraction. We study the Holy Qur'an and find that Allah the Most High, Who is so elevated that nothing is above Him, has come down to His creation so that nothing is beneath Him, and talked to them through His signs, which are spread across the universe, and through His bounties, which are evident in the particulars of their lives, so that they can open up to the unknown as witnesses, and open up to the Creator through His creations.

Our belief in the unknown does not mean distancing ourselves from the reality around us; rather, it strengthens and emphasizes it, and implies that it is not moving in a vacuum, and [so] we should not lapse into worry, confusion, and emptiness when we face difficulties, oppression, complex problems, and deep labyrinths, because we feel Allah's discreet support, mercy, concern with our lives, and guidance from the Lord's position on high, which nurture man throughout his life—in body and spirit—without taking away his will and choice, and everyday responsibilities for building his self. Thus, we want Islamists to fill Islamic speech with Allah, with the intellect's spirituality, and the dynamic movement's reality. This is on the basis that Allah had, in His book, watched over the first Islamic movement in Prophet Muhammad's mission: the verses observed the reality, and judged it, to provide—ultimately—the revelation of the Islamic message, in the Muslims' peace and war, whether in success or failure, and to identify the truthful people and the liars, and to guide the mission into the future, bravely admitting error if it erred, and heroism in changing the course if it deviated.

The value of the Qur'an—the dynamic Divine Book—is that it proceeds in its own way to deal with a reality that is mixed with the unknown; the reality does not become unrealistic when it merges with the unknown, nor does the unknown leave its world of consciousness when it touches on realistic issues. This is because [Qur'anic] speech is for man, who is alive in his bodily existence and unknown in his spiritual secrets and metaphysical aspirations. Therefore, we must keep our Islamic speech subject to its peculiarities and its own elements when dealing with the human soul in the dynamics of reality. It should not be abstract, flying with the imagination, or sensual, sinking into a materialistic world, but should take one part from the former to bring abstractness to reality, and one part from the latter to make reality open up to

the unknown. I want to highlight this vital point because I have seen that there are two extreme tendencies in Islamic speech: an abstract tendency toward the unknown that pushes you to live in a world that is wholly unknown, so you are not conscious of your existence on earth; and a materialist tendency that pursues reality on earth and is steeped in earthly matters to the point of forgetting God and His Divine secrets, which provide man with some unknown element on his journey through life via an unknown supply that watches over his movement, straightens his course, and fills his spirit with confidence and hope.

We must recognize that Islam is a religion that derives its vital features and intellectual roots from a belief in God, His messengers and the Day of Judgment, and [a belief] in the world of the unknown regarding belief and in the world of witnessing in regard to dynamic movement and life. Thus, Islamic speech must combine all of this so that we live our Islam in a way that is balanced in its elements and dynamic in its dimensions and aspirations.

WHY "THE YOUTH AND THE WEST"?

This issue concerns one of the most sensitive, most real, and most future-threatening questions. This is because it relates to [current] youth, who represent the leading [element in] humanity, who have started their growth in life to become the basis of pioneering, leadership, and production in the future, succeeding to the generations of their fathers and forefathers who endured their negative experiences in their past movement, which leans with all its weight on the present, and has its effect on developing the future.

It may be unrealistic to think that youths can be subjected to ready molds, produced by the generation amongst which it lives now or the one before that. This [earlier generation] will close its mind to new things in life, close its spirit to the development of reality, and close its dynamic movement to changes in the arena, because the horizons that it opens up to are different from the horizons people before it have opened up to: there are new conditions which impose themselves on human reality through the dominance of a certain intellectual school of thought or massive force, and there are complicated problems that challenge many of its causes and aspirations, and there are intellectual, political, social, economic, and security labyrinths that [push] the contemporary person into striving to discover the signs which might guide him to the road to peace.

This reality of youth in its new world, which wants to produce a new reality, is perhaps what Imam Ali's words imply: "Do not [try to] give your children your morals, for they have been created for a time other than yours." The meaning of this may be that for every era there are certain conditions which produce new morals for it, with all the meanings implied by the word "morals" in respect of intellectual and practical behavior and the dynamic approach on the levels of public and private relations in issues of production, means, and the dynamics of goals and all dynamic issues

in the arena of humans always searching anxiously for what is new in knowledge and reality.

I am not referring to youths who overindulge in every innovation produced by any intellectual school of thought in their time, so that youths deviate from their historic intellectual roots and become devoid of Islamic belief, like a blank page on which nothing about the intellectual doctrine, approach, or behavior is written. This cannot be what Imam Ali meant in these pioneering words, for there are those Islamic issues of belief, legislation, and approach that are considered unchangeable, since they represent Divine truth which has been revealed to man to guide him through the Divine revelation to the Prophet Muhammad. These cannot be argued about, or changed, except through the Qur'anic or Prophetic methods of change that the Islamic intellectual line allows in its interior dynamic circle.

Rather, I mean, in this extrapolation, that the older generation must not impose its own peculiarities on the younger generation. It is not essential that youths understand from the traditional texts—the Book and the Sunnah—[exactly] what their fathers and forefathers understood, for they can use practical methods in understanding the text to glean from it something different from what they [the fathers and forefathers] have understood when using the text's particulars in a different way to that which they [the fathers and forefathers] used to arrive at the rulings etc. [Moreover,] they may discover some error in their understanding due to the influence of contemporary and cultural objective circumstances, which imposed on them certain ideas, owing to the fact that any jurist or thinker, in any intellectual position, cannot rid himself of the peculiarities of his own culture.

It is not necessary that youths' understanding of life—its styles, means, relations, and dynamics—is the same as that of the forefathers, [as if] making their needs similar to those of their fathers, since development may produce new needs for man; nor that youth's social morals are the same as those of the past society.

UNCHANGABLE THINGS AND CHANGEABLE THINGS

There are certain things in belief, *shari'ah*, and behavior that are unchangeable and that Muslims must adhere to, and there are things that can be flexible and that Muslims may deal with dynamically in their lives. This is the dividing line between what is unchangeable and what is changeable in the life dynamics of the Muslim when he wants to save himself and his life, make his history, and bear the responsibility for all that, as the past generation did in making its history. Allah the Most High says: "That was a people that passed away; they shall reap the fruit of what they did, and you of what you did; you shall not be questioned about their actions" (Qur'an 2:134). This generation has a choice in producing its intellectual and practical gain, and must face its responsibility before God, Who requires every soul to argue for itself on the Day of Judgment.

WESTERN MATERIALISM

The West is a new world characterized by its materialist philosophy, which is so overwhelmed by its service to the realm of the senses that it strives to transform the unknown of its religious thoughts into a world subjected to sensual materialism. It is also distinguished in its absolute belief in man's freedom, which assesses the moral value of behavior according to how close this value comes to that freedom. In light of this, there is a vast difference between Islamic thinking regarding God, man, and life and Western thinking: the philosophy that imagines life as God's creation which He wants His successor to it—man—to be in charge of, on the basis that he should not forget his portion of his materialist needs in this earth when he looks forward to the hereafter, which represents the dynamic element of values, establishing the link between the materialistic means and the spiritual goal, so that the material is "spiritualized" while the spirit takes on a materialistic dimension in its reality dynamics, placing created man, to whom He has given freedom, before his responsibilities in managing his life affairs, on the one hand; and the philosophy which does not see any role for God in man's reality dynamics and in the process of making life on the other.

At the same time, we do not deny that there are some points where we find common ground with the West. When dealing with the West, we acknowledge the scientific and technical advancements it has achieved, which meet some of our essential needs.

There is an important and vital point here: our Islamic societies do not live up to many Islamic concepts in terms of thinking, dynamics, and relationships because they are steeped in an atmosphere clouded with ignorance and backwardness as a result of years that are lost in the labyrinths of deviation. The result is that Islam lives like a foreigner in society which has reason, objectivity, humanistic values, freedom, etc., at both the social and political reality levels. On the other hand, we find that some of these [Islamic] values are present in the relationships between Westerners and others, reducing the intensity of emotional reactions and of the overindulgence in individuality, despite any shortcomings in this or that side. This makes the picture in Islamic society, in some aspects of reality, darker and in Western society less so, in some places, something which leaves an impression on youth when they start comparing their societies and Western societies, regardless of whether the impression is correct or not.

I would like, in this overview, to concentrate briefly on two "circles" of my speech: The first is my speech to youths—youths who might eagerly anticipate overindulgence in the Western world, as if it is the promised paradise that will fulfill their greatest dreams. You have to think about your original intellectual and practical values as represented by your original human values in staying firm to the Islamic line in your dynamic movement in life. I do not mean by original values that you should accept the past wholesale, in all its minutiae. What I do mean is that you should emphasize your Islam in opening up to everything that is new in thought and behavior because the new is not the new

of the age you live in. One can say that you should live in your own time, in all its intellectual development, so that you do not lag behind contemporary reality and become a stranger amongst people. But old and new ideas are the product of man not time—people might submit to a certain intellectual school of thought due to forces which control their reality, imposing it on life without any room for life to produce it as an outcome of development.

In light of this, it is essential that you engage in a comparison process—if you are in a position of intellectual objectivity—between the Islamic intellectual doctrine which you belong to in your adherence to Islam, and the intellectual doctrine prevalent among people due to the force that has imposed it upon reality. You might find in Islam an advanced intellectual doctrine that is open to real human interests, and discover that the contemporary intellectual doctrine is backward and unable to realistically treat the problems of multi-dimensional man, who has both material and spirit.

Adopting contemporary values, in its vital human sense, is not—in essence—something related to time dynamics, but something that belongs to man's dynamics in producing his humanity in his causes, problems, and conditions. Give freedom to your intellectual will in choosing the intellectual doctrine that you adhere to, with awareness and openness, without the social emotional reactions that put pressure on you, steal your thinking in the manner of the "collective mind," and which make a person lose his intellectual independence and free choice in the practical direction he takes.

Original values represent the deep roots of man's humanity in the original thought which proceeds from Allah and His Messenger, and which open up to all time and the whole of life, and are therefore not confined to the past, present, or future in their time limits. Adopting contemporary values, on the other hand, means opening up to the times in the different dimensions of man's needs and true causes. His life will thus become balanced with regard to his adherence to Islam and his opening up to his times' causes, through his awareness of both in his intellectual judgments and spiritual awareness, in what gifts he possesses for making judgments, and awareness to enable him to engage in dialogue with other intellectual schools of thought and other people.

And if the West represents a powerful practical force and wide technological advancement, we have to differentiate between the particulars of science in civilization's dynamics and the particulars of intellectual and behavioral lines in man's relationship with God, himself, and life. We do not see knowledge and scientific advances as proof of the correctness of an intellectual approach in issues of belief, morals, behavior, spirit, and consciousness, but every issue will have to be studied according to its merits and vital influences on reality—in the [essence of] truth.

Moreover, we must study human freedom in more than one aspect, for we must not open up simply to the one dimension that represents the person's individualistic case, but must be perceptive to both the individualistic and social sides and both the materialistic and spiritual sides. In addition, we must be clear about the belief that man is God's creation, and he must act from the position of God's will in his dynamic movement in life and in managing

his and the earth's affairs. This links the matter of his relationship with his Lord, with himself, with the people around him, with the earth on which he moves in its environmental and development reality, and with the living or growing creatures on its surface, to that freedom to become responsible for all this, since man is not the only creature who suffers in limiting his freedom, for there is more than one site for tragedy in the particulars of the universal system. This imposes on him the necessity not to suffer the tragedy as a reaction within his self which weeps from self impoverishment, but to live with it aware of the needs of all around him, in addition to his own needs, since the universe is not a solitary person, but comprises animals, plants, sea and land, plains and mountains, and various other categories, each one of which requires the other to integrate with it and not to disregard it, as this would lead to a breakdown in all its individual and communal situations.

There are other aspects, but due to space limitations I shall summarize the speech in a few words: youth is not pleasure, desire, emotional responses, and happy dreams, but responsibility linked to the whole of existence, humanity linked to man as a whole, spirituality that opens up to God, life, and the hereafter, to think about all this and to achieve a good outcome in this life and in the dimensions of the afterlife.

MY SPEECH TO ISLAMIC ACTIVISTS

This is the second circle: Islamic activists who follow the contemporary person's reality to study all his situations, thoughts, dimensions, methods, and goals to plan for the dynamic movement that combines all these in order to find the best means for rescuing Muslims from their shortcomings and for guiding them to attain more positive achievements. It is natural that the "youth and the West" question should be one of the greatest concerns of the Islamic movement in the fields of the call, culture, and life, [pointing to the need] to study all intellectual, spiritual, and practical influences—negative and positive—and all intellectual anxiety, practical deviation, and loss of conscience, and to confront it with practical means that can provide youths with the opportunity to express all queries, anxiety, rebellion, and aimlessness that they have, so that answers are provided, problems are treated or their effects minimized, all their feelings embraced, and all objective circumstances surrounding their lives are appreciated by acknowledging their weaknesses and strengths. We should not be restricted to talking about the youth's deviation and aimlessness, or accusing them or judging them in order to score points.

Workers in the way of Allah must attend to the youths of the nation, know their intellectual and practical needs, and explain to them all Islamic concepts and particulars, because, in their spiritual anxiety, they [youths] are looking for clarity in vision, awareness, and knowledge.

And if we appreciate that youths have their leisure and social needs, we must strive to establish sport and leisure clubs, which offer permissible leisure activities, so that they can occupy their spare time, diverting them from moving in other directions that provide the prohibited leisure they will turn to when

they do not find acceptable leisure to engage in their spare time. Perhaps it is natural that we should abandon the idea of considering leisure to be a negative force as far as practical needs are concerned, since the narration says: “The believer should divide his time into three hours: one hour to worship his Lord, and one hour to work to earn a living, and one hour in which his soul engages in leisure in what is allowable and nice or something not prohibited, and this hour is a help for [attending to] the [first] two hours.”

Then we should provide Islamic “incubators”: mosques, schools, cultural clubs, and social venues. The integration of committees and societies is essential, so that neither group starts from square one, but each proceeds with the other.

I notice that Islamic movements in the West are very diverse, from one movement that is obsessed with politics, disregarding any dynamic dimension for culture or spiritual atmospheres, to another which indulges in culture and worship, disregarding any role for politics or social issues, to a third which shrinks from the world into its own particulars and peculiarities, shunning reality and living in cultural, spiritual, and political seclusion.

Then there are partisanships that abandon Islamic adherence to what is allowable and prohibited by God. Also, marginal and secondary problems can eat up fundamental and major issues, giving youth a negative idea about Islamic work and making them reject those Islamic personalities more loyal to themselves than to Islam and their Lord, reject Islamic groups—parties, movements, and societies—each of which appear to work to bring down the temple on everyone unless the temple is for it alone, and are loyal only to the narrow framework inside which they imprison themselves and do not open up to Allah, the nation, Islam—now or in the future. These times we are facing are some of the most difficult in the movement and course of Islam: the arrogant world has started a global war against the whole of Islam and all Muslims in the name of a war on fundamentalism which does not exist according to Western concepts, and on terrorism, of which there is no example in our Islamic movement. So, shouldn’t we proceed from this reality to face our responsibility at the level in which we can breach the arrogant wall that is erected between us and advancement in our Islamic positions, in the future of life and man? Islamic unity among schools of thought, movements, and groups is not a mere slogan that we raise for [easy] absorption, but a momentous and vital necessity for the whole of Islamic reality, because the arrogant forces want the head of the whole of Islam. So, shouldn’t we understand the nature of the arrogant game as it affects our reality, dynamic movement, and supreme goals?

NOTE

1. Excerpts from Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah, *Islamic Lanterns*, tr. S. al-Samarra'i (Beirut: Dar al-Malak, 2004).

Part VI

Islamism in the Contemporary Arab World

Fahd al-Qahtani

The Muslim masses have reached the conclusion that, in terms of substance and essence, the Saudi regime is no different from other Arab regimes, except in form. While some regimes masquerade behind revolution and mass support, others claim to embrace both democracy and openness; yet a third group claims to embrace both liberation and independence. The Saudi regime masquerades behind Islam, claiming unwavering commitment to Islamic principles in their slogans when, in reality, their commitment to Islam is only superficial.

There are no fundamental distinctions among Arab regimes, all of which have led the Muslim masses down a path of Westernized secularization that is far removed from Islamic authenticity. Furthermore, the Arab regimes' stances on the issues that haunt the Muslim masses today are similar, especially so with regard to the question of Palestine. Hence, the masses in the Muslim world no longer distinguish between claimants of revolution, struggles or claims of moderation and realism, and those who wave the flag of the White House or of the fortress of the Kremlin.

Realistically, the only difference between the Saudi regime and others lies in its external form. Claims by official Saudi spokesmen lack both substance and truth. Only a deluded few still believe in the superficial religious claims to which the regime adheres. In this humble study, I aim to expose the truth behind the alleged Islamic march by the Saudi state since its foundation, at the heart of which lies profound religious hypocrisy.

It is possible to divide the Islamic project of the Saudi regime into three distinct phases. I believe that due to religious and political conditions, King Abd al-Aziz (1886–1953) had no choice but to raise the banner of Islam in his conquest and expansion without necessarily being a true believer, as his official historians like to claim.

In the first period, from Abd al-Aziz's birth until 1915, he did not raise the religious banner; nor was he committed in his personal life to *shari'ah*. The second period extended from 1915, when he adopted the religious slogans of the Wahhabiyyah movement² to promote the success of his conquest, until 1930, when he crushed that movement. The third period started in 1930 and continues to this day. What distinguishes this period is the fact that the Saudi regime has gradually withdrawn from true Islam to the point of reaching its current state of corruption. It is important to highlight Abd al-Aziz's preoccupation with authority in the first and second stages, and his lack of interest in religion.

It is clear that the common denominator among all Saudi rulers, regardless of time and condition, is their pursuit of power and neglect of the message of Islam. Saudi rulers claim to carry the banner of Islam only when that suits their political interests. We are hard put to find a Saudi ruler who has shouldered the responsibility of the Islamic message and called for the path of God. Up to the recent past, they were no different from other rulers in terms of their religious commitment and personal conduct. We have in the case of King Fahd (1920–2005) and their current princes the truest witnesses and the best proof of this.

However, the Saudi family always boasts through their mass media that they are the protector of the Divine message, as was stated by Abd al-Aziz and his son Faisal (1903–75). What we would like to make clear here with a single example is that Abd al-Aziz, who founded the current Saudi reign, was mainly concerned with political authority. When Saudi rulers raise the banner of Islam, they do so only to further their own political interests.

HIJAZ: THE BATTLE OVER POWER

The disagreements between Ibn Saud (King Abd al-Aziz) and Sharif Husain of Mecca (1854–1931) were never religious in nature, as the Saudi army claims. The Hijaz (western Arabia) was a highly sought-after territory, which Abd al-Aziz's grandfathers lost to the Egyptian military expedition at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Abd al-Aziz claimed he was entitled to restore this territory to its rightful owners, the Saudi regime.

We can understand the intellectual differences between the people of Najd and Hijaz in political terms only. The people of Hijaz believed that the Wahhabiyyah (or Wahhabism) as a religious movement was exploited by the Saudi regime so that it could achieve its political goals. Faisal, son of Sharif Husain, expressed this time and again in his public appearances in Egypt before the disappearance of his father's Hijazi state. That is why the Faisal family opposed the Wahhabi movement and often asked that the Brotherhood be disbanded, not because they did not share their beliefs intellectually, but because the Brotherhood was an effective instrument which Ibn Saud could use to fight them in the name of religion and control their area.

We would like to examine the historical disagreement of interest between the rulers of Najd and Hijaz. The hostility between the rulers of these two areas went beyond mere disagreement in matters of belief and interest to become an historical disagreement between two areas that were completely at odds in the way the people thought and practiced their creed, as well as in their traditions and social and economic states. These disagreements still impact the people of these regions today.

The clash between the Saudi family and nobility (*ashraf*), or descendants of the Prophet, took place in the thirteenth century of the Islamic calendar. This was at first a religious clash between Wahhabi-style Islam and the Islam of the people of Hijaz, who were followers of the Shafi'i or Hanafi school. Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–92) often debated with the

scholars of Hijaz, who occasionally met for a discussion in the presence of the nobleman Ghalib, the ruler at that time. Shaykh Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, then, used to send one of his students for religious debates that would end in disagreement. Neither group accepted the argument of the other, and each kept to its own proofs.

This legal disagreement has only a small and marginal place in the bloody conflict between the two camps—a conflict that went beyond disagreeing over the intercession of saints, worship in graveyards, and venerating the graves of the prophets and saints, all of which the Wahhabis consider as associating partners with God, while others present different views. However, the legal and intellectual conflict between the two camps took on a bloody character when the Wahhabis decided to take up arms against those who opposed their religious views. Consequently, this turned into a major political conflict. The Saudi family took advantage of this early on by arguing that they were fighting in the name of Islam, whereas in reality they were simply expanding their power in Hijaz in the name of Wahabbism.

It was only after the death of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab of Hegira in 1206 [1792 AD] that the disagreement with Hijaz reached its peak. That is when Saud the elder was able to conquer Hijaz (at the beginning of the nineteenth century) and thus dethrone the Ottoman caliph. What is really surprising is that al-Wahhab kept Sharif Ghalib in the government and accepted his nominal adherence and the money Ghalib gave him each year.

After the occupation of Mecca in 1218 of the Islamic calendar, Saud the elder moved to Medina and prevailed over the jewels and other precious objects in the Prophet's mosque and destroyed the graves there because they were un-Islamic. He also refused to pay money to the state treasury, but kept it for himself and gave a portion of it to his four wives and members of his family.

What we want to clarify here is that the disagreement between Saud the elder and Sharif Ghalib at that time was a disagreement over money, wealth, and power. It was no more a religious disagreement than before. Hence, the Egyptian forces that came to put an end to Saudi rule in Hijaz, especially after Saud the elder forbade Muslims from going on pilgrimage, was invited by Sharif Ghalib, who took this opportunity to declare his disobedience to the Saudi family. The people of Hijaz did the same because they were hurt economically by the banning of the pilgrimage.

As we can see, this historical conflict was initially an intellectual disagreement that turned political in nature, with ramifications of rule and power. This reality, lived by the people of Hijaz and Najd in the thirteenth century, was clearly repeated in the fourteenth century with a gap of 108 years; only the faces changed. Abd al-Aziz Ibn Saud replicated the role of his grandfather Saud the elder in "his rudeness, love for life, and transforming religion as a mount for his ambitions." Sharif Husain also reproduced the role of his grandfathers, especially Sharif Ghalib. There was no change in the people of Hijaz in terms of their religious beliefs, which contradict the tenets of Wahhabism. The Wahhabi Ikhwan, who are the core of the Saudi army today, are no different

from their ancestors who were led by Saud the elder in the sense that they were brought up on the creed of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, which they adopted. Like their ancestors, they were exploited by a Saudi regime that does not share this creed except in name and outward practice. Moreover, we find that the disagreement about the borders that took place between Sharif Ghalib and Saud the elder is similar to that between Ben Saud and Sharif Husain and which is summarized in the disagreement about where the borders located in Turba and Khazma are drawn.

There is another similarity—power in the Arabian Peninsula at the beginning was held by the noblemen. This power started to break down when the people of Najd changed the equation in the name of religion and ended up ousting the noblemen. It is very interesting that the downfall of Hijaz in both cases came about under specific conditions; the last district to fall into the hands of the Saudis were in the first and third Saudi states, while in the second state, they were far away from Hijaz. In the first Saudi state, the Saudi family dominated Najd, then moved to Ahsaa', then to other Gulf areas such as Zabara and Oman. Then they moved south to Asir, which is close to Yemen, until finally Hijaz fell into their hands. In the third Saudi state, they controlled most of Najd, then moved to Ahsaa' and controlled Haael, which is the last area in Najd, Asir and the south, which, as happened during the reign of the great Saud, sought protection and thus their dominion. Then, they moved to Hijaz.

From a political point of view, there is another similarity that began with the intellectual disagreement we mentioned, and which then became a matter of interest, then an agreed upon peace, then an explosion of disagreement about the borders. Finally, the people of Najd were prevented from going on pilgrimage in an effort to prevent Saudi invasion and occupation. This also happened in the reign of Saud the elder and Ibn Saud.

However, there was some change in international politics between the reigns of Saud the elder and Ibn Saud. During the reign of the former, the Ottoman Caliphate was quite dominant in Middle Eastern affairs. The great foreign powers of the time, especially Britain, did not yet have control of Arab lands. However, the Ottoman hold on Hijaz was tenuous, which helped the great Saud to occupy it. If he refrained from showing hostility and disobedience to the Ottoman state and did not forbid people from going on pilgrimage, then the Ottoman state would not demand that he abdicate. Saud did not face a hostile and competing power in the Gulf. That is why he was able by deception and with the sword to control a large part of it during the reign of his father Abd al-Aziz; he then proceeded to strengthen his control.

During Abd al-Aziz's reign, the Ottoman state was weak; the Europeans called it the "sick man" of Europe and waited for its demise. Meanwhile, Britain began to exercise control over such regions as Oman, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Iran, Qatar, and Yemen. This foreign control over the Gulf States and the emergence of a European state competing with the Ottoman empire, the historical enemy of the Saudis, emboldened Ibn Saud to stand up to the Ottomans by relying on British support and protection. He started to deal harshly with the Turks, who were extremely weak and

had no power to discipline Ibn Saud and those like him. At the same time, Ibn Saud agreed not to attack British protectorates in the Gulf in exchange for Britain's backing.

Ibn Saud was quicker than Sharif Husain in grasping the nature of political change in the region at the time. He learned from history, namely, the history of his ancestors' rule, and avoided the flash points which had caused the rulers from his family to fall. Yet, Sharif Husain did not learn much from the history of Hijaz. He was deceived by his own power and did not appreciate the true extent of the power of his enemies. For example, the decision of Sharif Ghalib to prevent the people of Najd from going on pilgrimage was a great mistake and an excuse for his enemies to launch an attack on him from a religious point of view. This was repeated by Sharif Husain; Ibn Saud was able to gather people against him and put forward legal opinions about the obligation of pilgrimage in war as well as in peace. Ibn Saud did not repeat his grandfather's mistake, he did not prevent people from going on pilgrimage after the occupation of Hijaz and thus did not incur Muslims' anger. Instead, he rushed to build the main harbor to welcome the *hajjis* and announced that he would welcome them in the harbor of Yanboo'. In fact, thousands of Indians came and Ibn Saud was successful in spreading his propaganda through them.

In any event, the historical material and personal disagreements were the direct reasons for the clashes between Ibn Saud and Sherif of Hijaz. While the base in Najd fought first for religious principle, the people of Hijaz were mostly motivated by a national struggle.

NOTES

1. From Fahd al-Qahtani, *al-Islam wa'l wathaniyyah al-sau'diyyah* (n.p, 1985). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.
2. See Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

Definite Proof of the Illegitimacy of the Saudi State¹

Muhammad al-Masa'ari

In this chapter, we shall consider whether or not the current Saudi regime has implemented *shari'ah* and made it the sovereign rule of the land in political and institutional matters. We shall also examine whether its violations are a product of negligence or injustice due to ignorance, or even desire, as was the case with Muslim caliphs throughout Islamic history. Finally, we have to consider the possibility that the current Saudi regime *has* violated the sovereignty of *shari'ah* and has instituted non-Islamic legislation in its place and handed over the courts to some judges and governors along with the sole freedom and discretion to constrain the rules of their courts or even cancel them altogether.

When we thoroughly scrutinize the constitutional reality in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we can only arrive at the conclusion that the Saudi regime has violated the sovereignty of *shari'ah*. However, the Saudi state avoids using such terms as “legislation” and “rules” and instead uses the words “systems,” “signs,” “instructions,” “orders,” and “rituals”: yet these are really legislation, for they contain the permissible and non-permissible texts and other laws. Among these systems are: bills of exchange law and company regulations; employment and workers laws; the law of banking control; the law of Saudi Arabian citizenship; laws of print and publication, as well as the press; the law of public rules for customs tariffs; the law pertaining to the Saudi army; etc.

Clearly, there is a huge gulf between the tenets of Islam and what the Saudi regime has put into practice. Saudi laws are primarily drawn from Western sources, or from a great number of sources, only one of which is *shari'ah*. The shamelessness of the Saudi regime has reached the point where there are times when *shari'ah* is placed on reserve, to be used when the need arises, as in the case of laws of dispute settlement in the states of the Gulf Arab Council and in Article 185 of the employment and workers law. Moreover, the laws that govern the Saudi Arabian army, bills of exchange, counter-bribery, and others impose punishments that have not been derived at all from Islam.

The Saudi banking system allows banks to engage in usury without reservation, although this is forbidden by the Qur'an and the Sunnah. This completely contradicts *shari'ah* and gives the king the total right of usury. Article 27 of the courts martial law states: “The king alone has the right to execute rules or prevent them or replace one law with another.” To execute

these laws and legislations, called “systems” in Saudi Arabia, the state has created non-Islamic courts, called councils, organizations, constitutions, and committees, whose members are not legislators but rather are knowledgeable and skilled in how these systems operate.

One researcher investigating these courts discovered that more than 30 committees and organizations perform judicial roles that contradict *shari’ah*. For example, we mentioned the organization for resolving bank disputes, trade courts, courts martial, and many others. As a practical matter, the Islamic courts are confined to small circles; they are not themselves free from the organization of non-Islamic laws. Islamic judges have to comply with the generalizations of the council of ministers, particular ministries, districts, and municipalities, even if they are contrary to Islamic law. Judges’ rulings that do not conform to these instructions or the above mentioned laws are invalid. The judge himself, however, must look at the issues “according to the system”; and the system is sorting issues in a way that limits the application of Islamic law within fixed boundaries.

Therefore, the reality in Saudi Arabia is that neither Islam nor *shari’ah* is sovereign in the country. Non-Islamic laws and legislation are part and parcel of the Saudi legal system, and judges are confined to spaces which they cannot exceed. How can anyone claim that this state applies *shari’ah*? And how can a seeker of truth doubt that appealing to those legislations is in fact appealing to idols? Is all of this done out of ignorance or negligence?

The answer is simple: the ball is in the ruler’s court. Such eminent scholars as Shaykh Bin Ateeq, Shaykh Bin Sa’di, the late Mufti Muhammad Bin Ibrahim (may God have mercy on them all) clearly opposed this legislation. The correspondence of Shaykh Muhammad Bin Ibrahim criticizing those rules and systems and warning about each of them has been documented. However, instead of being deterred and accepting the advice of Shaykh Muhammad Bin Ibrahim, the Saudi royal family, following a directive from the king, used the same non-Islamic rules to ban the printing and distribution of collections of Shaykh Muhammad Bin Ibrahim’s *fatwas* (legal injunctions). Recently, a number of scholars submitted a memorandum of advice (*Mudhakarāt Nasīhah*) drawing the king’s attention to these issues in a way that made it impossible for him later to claim ignorance of these matters. The legal ball is in their court at the moment, so to speak.

It is clear that Saudi rulers adopt other than what God has assigned and that this great Islamic *shari’ah* has been disabled; yet the whole nation is responsible for applying *shari’ah*—it is a collective duty of the Muslim *ummah* and not just an individual duty. Finally, I warn those who defend the regime and claim that it complies with the rules of Islam that they are in great danger. Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abd al Wahhab, may God have mercy on him, explained the following verse: “They have taken their rabbis and their monks—as well as the Christ, son of Mary—for their lords beside God.”² Saying, “Whoever obeys scholars and people in power in forbidding what God has permitted or in permitting what God has forbidden, he has taken them as his lords.”

Let us now turn to enabling Islam and instituting its rites as one of the duties of all *shari'ah*-based states, and the responsibility the Saudi regime has in this regard. Before we evaluate the regime on this point, let us consider the general Islamic foundations:

First, both the Qur'an and Sunnah clearly state that it is the legal duty (*wajib shari'i*) of rulers to obey God's word and establish Islam's rites. God says: "[well aware of] those who, [even] if We firmly establish them on earth, remain constant in prayer, and give in charity, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong."³

Classical exegete Qurtubi explained the above verse as follows: "This is a condition set by God for whoever has the responsibility to rule people." Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abd al Wahhab said: "The aim of all states is to establish the religion of God because God has created the universe for that purpose, i.e., the good and piety." Ibn Taymiyyah said: "It must be understood that government is the greatest duty of religion and religion cannot do without it." Al-Mawardi (may God have mercy on him) said: "Imamate [political leadership] was instituted as a successor to the institution of Prophethood in order to safeguard religion and life's politics." Thus the first goal of leadership is to realize religion at the level of society and state.

Second, both the Qur'an and Sunnah state that establishing Islam's rites and enabling God's religion can be achieved only when those in authority command good—all good—and forbid evil—all evil. Hence, commanding good and forbidding evil in its general sense is incumbent on the ruler; if he neglects to do this, then he has invalidated the aim of leadership in Islam. The Qur'an states: "You are indeed the best community that has ever been brought forth for [the good of] mankind: you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong."⁴ "[Well aware of] those who, [even] if We firmly establish them on earth, remain constant in prayer, and give in charity, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong"⁵ "AND [as for] the believers, both men and women they are close unto one another: they [all] enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong."⁶ Thus, the leader is the representative of the nation in realizing the believers' pledge to God, namely, commanding good and forbidding evil. Ibn Taymiyyah clearly elaborated on this when he said: "The goal of all Islamic states is to command good and forbid evil."

Third, it is also proven in the Qur'an and Sunnah that undermining these rites, cultivating evil, and weakening truth will lead to moral and social disintegration and worldly punishment, besides God's wrath. God says: "But when [this has been done, and] it is Our will to destroy a community, We convey Our last warning to those of its people who have lost themselves entirely in the pursuit of pleasures; and [if] they [continue to] act sinfully, the sentence [of doom] passed on the community takes effect, and We break it to smithereens."⁷

Fourth, scholars have stated that the errant group which constrains undisputed Islamic legislations or permits the forbidden should be treated in

the same way as those who refused to give alms after the Prophet's death and who were fought by Abu Bakr—not because they denied the Prophethood or the Qur'an, or did not perform their daily prayers, but because they ignored those fixed rules. Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Any group adhering to Islam and which then refuses to apply some of its clear legislations, then Muslims should wage *jihad* against this group so as to reestablish the religion of God."

After this brief consideration of the Islamic perspective on establishing Islamic rites and commanding good and forbidding evil, let us next evaluate the actions of the current Saudi regime. Clearly, this regime has not only neglected the Islamic duty of leadership as set out in Islam, but has actively abrogated it. It has become clear that in matters of empowering God's religion on earth, calling for God and commanding good and forbidding evil, the current Saudi regime applies a broad strategic plan whose main goal is to distort society in the Arab peninsula and cut off the *ummah* from its great religious heritage. They have transformed Muslims in Saudi Arabia into mere individuals practicing Islam as a private matter of faith between God and people. The following examples serve to illustrate this: the first is *jihad*. The minimum of this duty is meant to protect Muslim residences by fortifying the frontiers so that average Muslims will be secure in their religion, their selves, their property, and their dignity. When listing the leader's duties, al-Mawardi said: "The third: protect the city so people can live and travel peacefully without worrying about money or self." Islamically, exercising *jihad* is a duty. There is no doubt that the Saudi regime has weakened the army, shared state secrets with its enemies, relied on those enemies to protect it, going so far as to make this reliance a normal thing spoken about in public, and signed agreements that disable or completely abrogate even the least of these great Islamic rules. When the terrible crime of stationing US troops in the Peninsula was disclosed in the second Gulf War, some naively believed that the situation could be reversed. However, the reality is that it deteriorated because the "protective" forces stayed in the land of the Muslims and more treaties were signed.

The second example concerns the ban on usury, which is a clear Islamic mandate. The Qur'an describes it as a struggle for the sake of God and His Messenger, stating, "O you who have attained to faith! Remain conscious of God and give up all outstanding gains from usury, if you are [truly] believers; for if you do it not, then know that you are at war with God and His Apostle. But if you repent, then you shall be entitled to [the return of] your principal: you will do no wrong, and neither will you be wronged."⁸

It is also reported in a *hadith* that the ban on usury is even more important than that on adultery, though this too is forbidden and is a struggle for the sake of God and His Messenger. Saudi rulers insist not only on outwardly permitting usury, but also on making it the basis of economic transactions inside and outside the state. They also legally and systematically assist usurious institutions, even financially, as the state has rescued banks from going into bankruptcy on many occasions. Moreover, the state officially prevented the establishment of Islamic banks and the publication of scholars' legal opinions

about banks and usury; they also prevented the publication of all *ahadith* and declarations that support Islamic banks, even those in non-Muslim states. There is no doubt that the law forbidding usury has been disabled in the land of the two Holy places.

The third example regards the Qur'anic mandate to command good and forbid evil, which has been abrogated in Saudi Arabia. The legitimate goal of this command is not what is called in our land "organizations of commanding good and forbidding evil." If we examine how the regime deals with these organizations, we discover that it is carrying out a complete plan, similar to the plan of draining the sources of religious extremism applied in some North African countries. In its plan, the Saudi state has done its best to close all doors that would lead to the dissemination of righteous deeds and words, and made evil accessible to the people.

In the first case, the Saudi state has made the lives of callers to Islam miserable by banning any public talk to the people in mosques or at conferences, except with prior permission from the authorities. In fact, the authorities dismissed a large number of callers to Islam, scholars and preachers from mosques and even from universities, though some of them confined their talks to neutral issues of belief. Furthermore, the state has arrested many religious scholars, callers to Islam, and their students, and put them behind bars. This is the domestic policy of the Saudi regime. On the external level, the country of the two Holy places (Mecca and Medina) used to be a refuge for people suffering oppression and injustice. However, nowadays, it is almost impossible to obtain a visa to perform pilgrimage if you are engaged in political Islamic activity. Even worse is that the Saudi authorities are willing to hand over those who seek refuge to the oppressive regimes from which they had fled.

In addition to the above, the Saudi authorities have banned the distribution of Islamic tapes and the publication of Islamist magazines. Islamists are banned from addressing the media in the country, attaining political or military positions, and from any sensitive teaching post. The state has actively interfered with the appointment of university deans and chairmen to prevent Islamists from spreading good and raising the banner of *da'wah*. Recently, the state stopped all Islamic financial activities, closed all charitable institutions, and prevented any public gathering whose aim is the promotion of Islam.

Obviously, the major Saudi objective is to encircle and weaken Islam itself, which is much more than just an expression of the regime's displeasure with a religious scholar or two. Relevant here is the story of the so-called "Street of Death," which embodies the concept of the state's war on Islam. Some years ago, a number of callers to Islam noticed that a group of delinquent youths used to meet outside the city of Riyadh to race cars, share drugs, and do other deviant things. Callers to Islam built a camp nearby and started gently to call the young people to Islam. Before long, some of them started to accept Islamic ideas and gradually transformed themselves into good, upright young men. Saudi security forces, however, arrived at the camp, destroyed it, and expelled its people under the pretext that the camp had no official permission to be there. These callers to Islam did not lose hope and tried

to obtain personal permission from Shaykh Ibn Baz (the highest religious authority in Saudi Arabia at the time), then reconstructed the camp. Within two days, the security forces had destroyed the camp again. The person who sought permission from Ibn Baz was imprisoned and released only when he signed a letter promising that he would not return to rebuild the camp. Isn't this clear proof of the war on *da'wah* itself and Saudi determination to spread evil in all its aspects?

In addition to besieging Islamic *da'wah* in the country, the authorities have diligently pursued the destruction of the whole society at both the moral and intellectual levels. To prevent any domestic embarrassment caused by the spread of evil deeds and ethical and intellectual deviation in the official mass media, Saudi authorities instructed its mass media outside of Saudi Arabia to spread the same poison; I feel certain that you the reader know what I mean.

Finally, enemies of Islam have been permitted to control the most sensitive positions in the country to the extent that to be employed in an important position, one must demonstrate his non-Islamic commitment. At the same time, reformers and the righteous were banned from addressing the nation, and the door was opened to those who spread corruption in the mass media. Also, corrupt popular magazines, videos, and tapes were permitted to infiltrate the country. Indeed, the Saudi regime, through its influential princes and their corrupt circles, support all forms of immorality, such as adultery, drugs, and alcohol, and protect violators from any form of legal punishment. These are but a few of the mind-boggling examples of what is going on in Saudi Arabia today. Each of the thousands of Saudi princes can do whatever he wishes and protect anyone who might be engaged in corrupt activities.

In addition to the above, the Saudi regime has methodically sought to change the curricula so that students are cut off from religious doctrine and are unable to differentiate between belief and unbelief, tradition and innovation, and so become like beasts searching to satisfy their personal desires.

Finally, I would like to address the so-called "organizations of commending good and forbidding evil" (*Haya'at al-Amr Bi'l Mau'ruf wa'l Nahy 'An al-Munkar*). In fact, these organizations have proven to be problems that the Saudi regime inherited from the past; they have not rid themselves of them for fear of a serious reaction from religious scholars. Instead, the Saudi regime has chosen to use these organizations for a totally different role from what was intended by their creation; that is, they are used to distort the image of Islam. The fact is that these organizations are less influential than the weakest police station in the country. Besides refusing to develop and empower these organizations, the regime has planted a number of employees, well trained by the secret services, solely for the purpose of distorting the image of Islam. If it were not for the great efforts of some sincere people within the secret services, the effects of these organizations' distortion of Islam would be even worse than it is now.

In reality, the regime has launched a well-knit program at the levels of the mosque, bazaar, school, mass media, as well as the individual, community, society, and state in order to distort the *ummah* and alienate it from its religion

and civilization. I challenge anyone who disagrees with me to prove that the regime has been merely deficient in supporting *da'wah*; it is impossible to prove that the regime defends Islam and its mission. In conclusion, the Saudi regime has undertaken a subtle, undeclared war against Islam, its mission, and the callers to this mission in the land of the Two Holy Mosques. How is it possible to justify the legitimacy of a regime that violates great Islamic precepts such as *jihad* and protecting the frontiers; instead, it spreads corruption and usury throughout Saudi Arabia.

NOTES

1. From Muhammad al-Masa'ari, *al-Addillah al-'Aqliyyah 'Ala 'Adam Shari'yat al-Dawlah al-Sau'diyyha* (London: Dar al-Sahri'yyah, 1995). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.
2. Q 9:31.
3. Q 22:41.
4. Q 3:110.
5. Q 22:41.
6. Q 9:71.
7. Q 17:16.
8. Q 2:278–9.

How Was the Caliphate Destroyed?¹

'Abd al-Qadim Zalloum

Nowadays, Muslims experience the worst oppression and affliction in their long history whose effective recovery requires that they become cognizant of life-and-death issues and how to deal with them. If Muslims fail to grasp what afflicts them, they will gradually regress and fail to achieve a respectable status among other nations. Therefore, Muslims must come to grips with their critical issues, both objectively and subjectively, so that they can deal with them firmly.

The reality of the Muslim world today is well known and needs no explanation. Muslim territories are governed by infidel regimes, and therefore, from a *shari'ah* perspective, Muslims live in the "abode of disbelief" (*dar al-kufr*). The Muslim world is divided into more than 40 political entities (states, kingdoms, and shaykhdoms), which are too weak to face up to the threat of the infidels (*kuffar*). Therefore, the central issue facing every Muslim region is how to convert it into the abode of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) and unite it with other Muslim territories. This is the critical issue *par excellence* facing the Muslim world today. This is definitely a life-and-death situation.

The best way to transform Muslim territories into the abode of Islam and unite it with the rest of the Muslim world is through the restoration of the Caliphate. Therefore, restoring the Caliphate is the most urgent issue required to transform the different parts of the Muslim world into a united abode of Islam. However, it must be clear that the problem facing Muslims now is not installing a caliph, but establishing the Caliphate's rule as the ruling system, which is not the same as electing a caliph, even though the establishment of the Caliphate as a rule requires the election of a caliph.

The establishment of the Caliphate is a decisive issue because, besides being a way to transform our land from an abode of disbelief into one of peace, it is also a way to destroy the system of governments installed by infidels in Muslim lands, which is an absolute form of disbelief ... However, Muslims who have been trying to rid themselves of the hegemony of unbelieving systems of power have been unaware that this is a major life-and-death issue. The absence of this awareness has robbed Muslims of their ability and desire and allows them to tolerate harm, punishment, and imprisonment, as well as poverty, destruction, and death. Therefore, all attempts to liberate Muslims [from the unbelieving political systems] have been doomed to failure.

Muslims don't need further thought or contemplation to realize that their issue is decisive. It has long been clear that it will be impossible for the

unbelievers to allow Islam to restore its political power. The hypocrites and apostates [in the Muslim world] have adopted a similar position toward this issue, which is criminal in nature. They will vehemently fight the believers who want to wrest power from them in order to establish the rule of God.

As long as they do not view this issue as a one-way path to life or death, Muslims will not succeed. If they don't realize the nature of this battle and God's rule in it, they won't be up to the level of crucial issues. If the individual does not embark on this issue with a strong resolve to carry on in his mission, bearing in mind that he can end up with life or death, then he will not succeed no matter how strong or powerful he is; for the nature of such a decisive issue such as overthrowing a rule or establishing Islam's rule requires such awareness. So, Muslims, as individuals or groups, have to base their fight on the belief of ending up with life or death, which is the nature of this kind of fight as stated in Qur'an and Sunnah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has taught us how to define our issues. When God endowed him to deliver the message of Islam, he presented it as a conflict of ideas [between belief and unbelief] by defining the issue as a very decisive one. The Prophet narrated that when the tribe of Quraysh petitioned his uncle to ask him to renounce his mission, the Prophet replied, "Even if they would bring the sun and put it on my right and bring the moon and put it on my left for me to give up this issue, I won't till I succeed to bring it to light or die."

When the Prophet established the state and carried out *jihad* by the sword, it means that he purported to spread the message of Islam, which was a life-and-death situation for him. It is narrated that when the Prophet was on his way on pilgrimage to Mecca, he met a man from the tribe of Ka'b and he asked him about Quraysh. The man replied, "They are in their battle armor and determined to prevent you from entering Mecca." The Prophet replied, "Woe unto Quraysh! War has exhausted them. Why don't they just let me in; if they defeat me, then that is what they want and if I gain they will embrace Islam or resist. What do they think? By God! I will continue to fight for this mission God has sent me until it is performed or my neck is torn away."

In the case of the intellectual conflict with the unbelievers and the carrying out of *jihad* by the sword, The Prophet defined his mission as that of establishing Islam, which was a matter of life and death for him. That is why he said, "Until I succeed in bringing it to light or die" or "Until it is performed or my neck is torn away." Otherwise, he would not have been successful. Likewise, if present-day Muslims, who suffer under the unbelieving systems of government and the oppression of the infidels, do not consider their crucial issues, they will never succeed or make even the slightest progress.

Therefore, I urge each Muslim living in the midst of this disbelief which is so dominant in the Muslim world to do their utmost to restore the Caliphate by converting his territory to Islam and uniting the entire Muslim world. In addition, Muslims should carry the banner of Islam to distant places. In this, they should follow the Prophet's example, who said, "Even if they would bring

the sun and put it on my right and bring the moon and put it on my left for me to give up this issue, I won't till I succeed to bring it to light or die" and "By God! I will continue to fight for this mission God has sent me until it is performed or my neck is torn away."

NOTE

1. From 'Abd al-Qadim Zalloum, *Kayfa Hudimat al-Khilafah?* (Amman: Hizb al-Tahrir, 1962). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.

Recent Changes in the Arab-Islamist Movements

Zaki Ahmad

Over the past two decades, contemporary Islamic movements have increasingly re-evaluated their priorities, including reviews of methodology, strategy, and principles. Islamic movements are, in essence, seeking fresh perspectives designed to restructure the way they operate to overcome the problems plaguing them. Striving toward change is a more prominent facet of Islamist ideology today than it has been for over 20 years. Whereas previous attempts at reform progressed at a snail's pace, contemporary movements are more amenable to structural, political, and ideological change.

VISIBLE ELEMENTS OF CHANGE

Many Islamic movements no longer operate in secret. Instead, they are increasingly recognized as legitimate, public service organizations. The transformation is partly due to increased interaction between Islamists and the general public, including secularists. Strategic decisions to mix more closely with the grassroots forced Islamists to become less self-centered. As a result, Islamists are well versed in current events and international affairs.

One example is Tunisia's al-Nahda movement, formerly known as the Islamic Path Movement. Al-Nahda's interaction in the late 1970s with the General Labor Union, the largest labor union in North Africa, significantly influenced Islamist attitudes. Rashid Ghannoushi, the movement's leader, said of those events:

This explosion ... awakened us from our sleep, and made us aware of other issues that were not our concern previously, particularly the social issues, concerning national income and its distribution, and the political issues concerning democracy and participating in government. The movement entered a period of intellectual re-thinking, which concentrated in particular on the thought of Sayyid Qutb ... [He] concentrated on the creed issue, and the morality issue, and an almost complete neglect of the issue of national income and democracy and freedom [The] Islamic movement is far from being an agent of development within society, and is not a group which promotes interaction between Islam as a creed and people's concerns regarding survival, health, housing, education and freedom.¹

Another significant factor of change within Islamism is the goal of advancing Muslim civilization through intellectual as well as structural reform. Islamism today is closer to being relativist rather than absolutist, practical rather than idealistic, moderate rather than extreme, constructive rather than destructive, and specific rather than general. Hassan al-Turabi, North Africa's leading Islamist ideologue, comments on the Sudanese movement's experience:

After being held back by absolutes, abstractions, generalities and internationalism in the movement's preaching and thought, the situation developed into more pragmatism ... The movement's discourse changed from being abstract and general to one that concentrates on social concerns, conditions, and groups. After depending intellectually on international Islamist literature, the movement was forced to interact with reality. Its thought then became linked more closely to Sudan and to local issues or international issues in terms of their local effects. Then its religious, legal thinking became more realistic.²

Understanding society is not limited to North Africa. Levantine Islamists have also called for society's inclusion in the Islamic experiment, irrespective of its various ideals. Lebanon's Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah, in *The Islamic Movement: Issues and Concerns*, looks at key problems facing Islamic movements, such as secrecy versus openness, moderation, and extremism, practicality versus idealism, and issues of regionalism and internationalism. Fadlallah argues that, "Perhaps the value of these reflections is in their ability to amuse thinking toward planning the intellectual project, which tries to innovate a path for a new Islamic movement that works with full strength and awareness toward making Islam a basis for thought and life."³ Fadlallah deals with Islamic movements as purveyors of Muslim thought as opposed to single-party politics. Islamism, in his view, is no longer the domain of Islamists, but rather of society as a whole.

Nevertheless, the stigma still exists in Arab societies, even among international observers, that Islamic movements always lack focus in their proposed solutions. Islamists have come to realize these shortcomings. One hundred and fifty Islamist intellectuals attended a seminar in Egypt entitled "Toward a New Islamic Wave" in 1991. This gathering was designed to address the words of Ahmad Kamal Abu al-Majd:

Many propagators of Islam speak in general and unclear terms about "the Islamic solution" and about the way of Allah versus the ways of humans ... and about the need to Islamize life, knowledge, and science ... [They] do not elaborate ... nor do they present the elements of this method and the content of this solution, and the ways it can be implemented ... [This] led to some people thinking (justifiably) that the Islamic wave has no clear intellectual direction; and that its method of reform is nothing more than idealistic slogans containing Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions ...

without attempting to link all this to the reality of people ... which makes the Islamic wave devoid of any topic and useless to the national struggles of people everywhere.⁴

DRIVING TOWARD CHANGE

Contemporary Islamist reform began in two stages. First, during the vigorous Islamic revival that swept through the Arab world in the early 1980s when the Islamic movement ceased concentrating solely on proselytizing and added political participation to its agenda. Some movements, faced with secular opposition, went beyond that and adopted military tactics. Second, by the late 1980s, many Islamic movements realized the inadequacy of their respective political strategies. They recognized that they had over-emphasized political empowerment at the expense of growth and development. This introspection led to internal power struggles and several movements experienced division within their ranks.

Islamists also realized that emotionalism governed their decision-making, resulting in hasty judgments. This, compounded by democratization in the Arab world and stemming from Europe, affected their strategic goal-setting. In addition to the political upheavals, changes occurred at the intellectual level. Islamist authors began writing critically on the conduct of Islamic movements. In the past, according to Khalis Jalabi, "The intellectual output of the Islamic movements was self-laudatory and devoid of self-criticism."⁵ Yet as Islamists became more willing to listen to criticism, they sought studies that could help in their drive for reform.

The Islamic movement had, in fact, reached a stage where it could no longer avoid self-criticism. People within the movement began to speak up without fear or hesitation after Islamic movements faced a series of crises. In some cases they were faced with armed attacks, others were accused of apostasy, some were forced to engage in dialogue (as in Lebanon), and still others had to answer public accusations based on revelations of secret documents (as was the case between the al-Shabiba al-Islamiyya Movement and the al-Mujahideen Movement in Morocco).

Prominent Islamists have put forward a large number of critical studies of Islamic groups.⁶ Although willingness to accept criticism is not general, its rapid infusion in the Islamist psyche is a promising sign. Islamists, however, are still wary of objections raised by secularists such as Fouad Zakariyya and Khalil Ali Haydar.⁷ The criticism of such authors is deemed malicious and biased. Haydar, for example, admits: "We have spent a long time in the Arab world criticizing the religious trend in terms of its appearances and trappings, and we have taken them to task for some very secondary issues We are still far away from understanding all of their proposals and intellectual problems."⁸ Yet Haydar still identifies similarities between Islamism and tyranny:

The parallel between Islamic and Europe's Fascist movements are not limited to similarities in the objective conditions that led these groups to

power in Germany, Italy, Spain, and Portugal; the similarities in intellectual proposals are quite remarkable.⁹

Despite such extreme views, Islamists generally view reform as part and parcel of the movements' greater political and intellectual potential. Many Islamist journalists today continue to call for improvement; and many Islamist leaders support them in this regard. Such leaders include Hassan Turabi and Rashid Ghannoushi, co-authors of *The Islamic Movement and Modernization*. As in the case of Turabi and Ghannoushi, calls for reform often began among cliques within a movement. This small group put pressure on the larger organization to change its administration, politics, and intellectual output. Some responded favorably, while others did not. Overall, however, those groups embracing reform began to function more effectively and were able to benefit society. In fact, where Islamists adopted cooperative strategies, their secular counterparts were more willing to work with them. This occurred in Tunisia, Palestine, and the Gulf countries. Frequently, nationalists worked hand-in-hand with Islamists and this led some governments to adopt a laxer approach to religious groups. For example, the Cairo "Religious-Nationalist Dialogue" conference facilitated greater cooperation among groups that previously mistrusted one another; and it convinced many recalcitrant Islamists of the need for reform.¹⁰

There are, of course, numerous Islamic groups unwilling to change and improve. Hizb al-Tahreer, for example, still operates in complete secrecy. Some Salafi organizations continue to live in the past, to the point of rejecting scientific discoveries, dismissing them as merely Western propaganda. A new generation of Muslim activists, however, are doing much to correct past mistakes. Despite the presence of hard-liners, the future will bring continued reform.

MOVING TOWARD REFORM

Islamic movements have evolved in many ways at different stages, depending on the sociopolitical circumstances in which they find themselves. Nevertheless, there are universal factors that have affected all groups to varying degrees.

After the Arab world fragmented into nation-states, antagonism, rooted in enmity and mistrust, developed between Islamic movements and other ideological groups. According to Egyptian thinker Tariq al-Bishri: "The relationship between the two sides ... had been one of repelling rather than coming together; and the arguments were confrontational rather than discussion-oriented, and usually in the past the relationship was severed."¹¹

Today, the situation is different. Groups are more tolerant of each other and willing to engage in dialogue. According to Lebanese thinker Ridwan al-Sayyid, "The calls for meeting and dialogue among the intellectual groups in the Arab world are increasing in both the Arab East and the Arab West, after a cutoff that lasted 30 years."¹²

A seminar of Islamists organized in 1990 represents one of the most important signs of change in the relationship.¹³ Calls for dialogue and cooperation were far more numerous than belligerent accusations. Rashid al-Mubarak, for example, advised participants that “the finger-pointing that is practiced by some Islamists should stop, as well as accusing the opposition of having bad intentions or underhand motives. Islamists must stop categorizing people as [sympathizers or adversaries].”¹⁴ He went on to say that in the past, “there were efforts to highlight and create areas of disagreement.”¹⁵ Currently, however, “there are many areas of understanding between Islamists and other political parties, which constitutes fertile ground for dialogue and cooperation.”¹⁶

Even journalists have joined the ranks of the optimists, such as Abdullah al-Nafisi who praised the new initiatives in *al-Qabas* and *al-Hayat* newspapers.

DEALING WITH DEMOCRACY

There are new approaches developing toward certain polemical issues in Islamic thought. Some Islamists used to consider democracy a philosophy that was counter to Islamic teachings. Today, however, they view democracy as a system of government that shares many Islamic principles. In recent years, democracy has increasingly become a crucial element of Islamist discourse. Democracy has become a frequent topic of discussion among Islamic workers; and many Muslim leaders regularly discuss democracy in the Arab world. Egyptian thinker Muhammad Salim al-Awwa states: “We feel that the existence of many political parties is necessary for Muslim societies; and it is needed for freedom of thought and the protection of liberties in order to prevent the dictatorial government practices that have become a staple of contemporary Arab society today.”¹⁷

THE VIOLENT DIMENSION

Islamic movements are often described as violent—sometimes backed by proof and sometimes not. Such generalization is counterproductive. Many Islamists have recognized the inadequacy of violence as a viable form of political expression. Mainstream Islamic movements advocate peaceful reform. Part of the problem stems from the Western and Arab media, which concentrate on the violent spectacular displays of aggression by relatively small groups at the expense of non-violent activists. In fact, mainstream groups previously suffered numerous setbacks—moral and physical—when contemplating the violent path. Based on the lessons they learned, they opted for gradual political reform, as in Turkey, Jordan, and Kuwait.

SHEDDING THE ISLAMIC LABEL

Many Islamic movements have decided to remove the adjective “Islamic” from their official titles, the premise being that content is more important

than names. This could not have happened ten years ago, which demonstrates the movements' more pragmatic and goal-oriented strategies. According to Algeria's Mahfudh Nahnah, removing the Islamic characterization from his party, The Islamic Society Movement, would help avoid accusations by detractors that his group exploits Islam for political purposes.¹⁸

FROM ACTIVISTS TO POLITICIANS

As some Arab countries have adopted more liberal attitudes toward freedom of expression, several Islamic movements have restructured themselves as political parties. In the past, these movements were not officially recognized; and when they were, it was only as social welfare organizations. These movements became convinced that their proposals for social change and national development required a high degree of political involvement within the constitutional limits set by the respective nation. Such movements include Yemen's Truth Party and The Movement for Unity and Islamic World; Morocco's Justice and Excellence Group; Algeria's Islamic Society Movement; Jordan's Islamic Work Front; Tunisia's Renaissance Movement; and Egypt's Community Party.

IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL CHANGE

The lack of an effective program for social change previously contributed to the Islamic movements' overall weakness. Such programs were completely absent or were confusing and unclear. Islamists were unable to provide a credible social program that would appeal to the public. These shortcomings became particularly apparent after the Iranian Revolution. Some movements, in an unsuccessful attempt to replicate the Iranian experience, chose revolutionary change. Without a proper understanding of the context and strategic necessities of their societies, these movements experienced great setbacks as a result. They alienated the masses and earned the enmity of government authorities.

Islamist movements are now more mature. They are generally willing to participate in government efforts at social reform and they articulate their socio-economic programs in clearer, more comprehensive ways. The most successful of these movements have adopted a gradualist approach to social change, using small and continuous successes to promote their goals rather than quick-fix solutions.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Islamic movements have evolved into more effective, streamlined organizations. They are abandoning traditional methods in favor of realistic solutions that better serve the people. As a result, Islamic movements can look forward to a brighter future. Islamists who continue to cling to secrecy and violence will soon be forced to realize the necessity of accommodation and consensual politics; and they will follow their brethren in showing greater

respect for rivals and a willingness to be positive rather than negative when dealing with others.

NOTES

1. *Al-Insan*, 1(1), April 1990.
2. Hassan al-Turabi, *The Islamic Movement in Sudan: Development, Success, and Method* (Khartoum, 1410 Hijra), p. 230.
3. Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah, *The Islamic Movement: Issues and Concerns* (Beirut: Dar al-Malak, 1990), p. 10.
4. Ahmad Kamal Abu al-Majd, *A Contemporary Islamic Vision: An Announcement of Principles* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1991), p. 6. See also chapter 3 by Abu al-Majd's in this volume.
5. Khalis Chalabi, *Self-Criticism: The Necessity for Self-Criticism in the Islamic Movement* (Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 1985), p. 18.
6. See Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *Islamic Awakening: Between Rejection and Extremism* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2004); Fahmi Huwaydi, *The Crisis in Religious Understanding* (San'a: Dar al-Hikma alYamaniyya, 1988); Salahaddin al-Jurshi, *The Islamic Movement in a Whirlpool: A Discussion of Sayyid Qutb's Thought* (Tunis: Dar al-Buraq Publications, 1985); Abdullah al-Nafisi, *The Islamic Movement: A Future Outlook—Papers in Self Criticism* (Cairo: Madbuli Bookstore, 1989); Abdullah al-Nafisi, *The Islamic Movement: Potholes Along the Path* (Kuwait, 1992); Muhammad al-Ghazzali, *Prophetic Traditions between the Jurists and Traditionists* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1990), and *Our Intellectual Heritage between Jurisprudence and Intellect* (Cairo: Dar al Shuruq, nd).
7. See Fouad Zakariyya, *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamic Movement*, tr. Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi' (London: Pluto Press, 2006), and *The Islamic Revival on the Scales of Reason* (Beirut: Dar al-Tanwir, 1985). See also Khalil Ali Haydar, *Criticism of the Religious Revival: The Trajectories of the Religious Revival, and the Future of the Religious Movement* (Kuwait: Sharikat Kadhima, 1987).
8. *Al-Watan*, Kuwait, October 13, 1985.
9. Haydar, *The Future of the Religious Movement*, p. 103.
10. The conference was organized by the Center for Arab Unity Studies, Cairo, September 25–27, 1989.
11. Tariq al-Bishri, "Regarding Arabism and Islam." Paper presented at the Religious-Nationalist Dialogue, organized by the Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 1989.
12. Ridwan al-Sayyid, "Nationalists and Islamists in the Arab World: The Need for Dialogue." Paper presented at the Religious-Nationalist Dialogue, organized by the Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 1989.
13. Seminar on Future Islamic Issues, organized by the Center for the Study of the Islamic Future, London, and the National Institute for Comprehensive and Strategic Studies, Algiers, May 4–7, 1990.
14. *Al-Insan*, 1(2), 1990, pp. 8. 17.
15. Abdullah al-Nafisi, *The Islamic Movement: Potholes along the Path*, p. 81.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
17. *Al-Insan*, 1(2), 1990, p. 26.
18. *Al-'Alam*, London, 9(443), August 8, 1992.

The Moroccan Islamic Movement: Rising or Declining?¹

Ahmad al-Raysouni

Q: The Islamic movement, with its contemporary manifestations, did not emerge until the third decade of the twentieth century; in your opinion, what are the causes behind the rise of these organizations?

A: Yes, undoubtedly, signs of the contemporary Islamic movements began to appear before their organizational structures were formed, and here we mean such movements as the Jama'at at-Tabligh of India, the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, and the Bediuzzaman Said Nursi movement of Turkey. Later came the Islamic movements of India, Pakistan, and Malaysia. Before these movements were formed, there were some Muslim scholars and activists who gave thought to the underlying issues that matured into the development of organized Islamic movements throughout the Muslim world. Here we have to mention such scholars as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, Rashid Rida, and many others who conceptually prepared for the emergence of such movements. A number of historians have pointed out that the single most important reason for the emergence of these movements was the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate, in addition to the successive fall of many Islamic countries. By that I mean that these countries abdicated the Islamic form of legitimacy and moved to new forms, either nationalist or colonial in nature; that is to say, the Muslim states underwent a major shift from Islamic legislation to European legislation in a conspicuous way. These deep transformations intensified the feeling of how dangerous the detachment from Islam had become and, in a sense, Islam and its political systems were thrown to the wind. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on this issue. It is to be expected under these circumstances that the most zealous and vigilant Muslims, who sensed this emerging danger, would shoulder the responsibility of facing up to this alarming danger. I do remember in the Moroccan case that when the Moroccan people were fighting for their independence, they were doing so to restore Muslim society and the Muslim state. At the time, there was no need for an Islamic movement to appear. After winning independence, the people began to anticipate the restoration of Islam, Islamic legislation, and Islamic sovereignty. Even King Muhammad V set up a committee for the codification of Islamic jurisprudence. Up to this point, the people were satisfied. Yet, at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, there was a noticeable departure from Islam in the fields of education, politics, media, legislation, thought, and even behavior. In addition, secular political parties and atheist

movements began to be active among the youth in the universities and schools, which led to the marginalization of the *ulama* (religious scholars) in society.

At this time, and especially at the end of the 1960s, many people began to perceive the danger of this situation and even felt that it was much more of a threat than when both Spain and France began to colonize the country. Hence, the Islamic movement emerged. So, the emergence of the Islamic movement, and the initiatives of *jihad* associated with it, was a response to the dangers and challenges facing the people. In a sense, Islam was orphaned before the rise of the Islamic movement. In Morocco, Islam had been venerated and protected for centuries; the state, no matter how weak and deviant it might be, somehow remained the guardian of Islam, financing religious scholars, establishing mosques and religious schools, reforming Islamic courts, and commanding good and forbidding evil. In the past, if the ruling regime collapsed, another regime would shoulder this responsibility of protecting Islam. For this reason, people began to feel that Islam, with all its sublime meanings and content, had been orphaned. In certain cases, the post-independence state began to pose a threat to this religion. And hence this was a strong reason for the Islamic movements to emerge in order to avert the danger. This also means that there is always in the culture, creed, and religiosity of Muslims a sense of responsibility for this religion. This feeling is always there and implicit, but is incited when danger threatens or there is a sense of imminent danger to Islam and the Islamic existence. This is always the cause which has led and is still leading to the emergence of Islamic movements and their strengthening.

NATIONALIST ORIGINS OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

Q: You have said that the Islamic movement emerged as a result of changes, perhaps the most important of which was the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate. But a movement emerging as a reaction to historical events, couldn't that be an aberrant beginning?

A: First, and so as to be clear, what I meant by changes are the major and deep transformations, be they political, cultural, or social, whether in the regime itself or in society, legislation, or morals. Second, it is a serious mistake to consider reaction as a deviation. To me, deviation is the lack of reaction; the lack of reaction is the biggest deviation because it is death itself. On the contrary, reaction indicates vitality, a return to life and to awareness. It indicates that this awareness is being liberated from its chains and ties, and, as I always say, those who do not react are people of the graveyard. That is why reaction is natural and necessary: reaction means seeing that evil is widespread and then challenging it, seeing that good has been disabled and then working for its victory. Yes, reaction can be fervent or hasty, conscious and discerning, or blind and impetuous. The problem here is the kind and manner of the reaction and not the reaction as such. Therefore, reaction is natural, healthy, and necessary.

Q: Did the attempt to burn the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in 1969 have an impact on the creation of the Islamic movement in Morocco?

A: Personally, I think that the burning of the mosque had no impact on that, except that it was one huge issue among many that led to the creation of the movement. Of course, there was an official reaction to the burning of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which led to the convening of the first Islamic summit in Casablanca. However, if we observe the Moroccan Islamic movement's initiatives and reactions, we find no tangible mark of the burning of the Jerusalem mosque, except as a remote, indiscernible effect. We know, for instance, that in Morocco one of the intellectual leaders of the Islamic movement was Dr al-Mahdi Bin 'Abboud and others, such as al Mukhtar As-Sousi. These people were members of Hizb al-Istiqlal (the Independence Party), were deeply entrenched in politics, and held state responsibilities. Allal al-Fasi, another peer, was the leader of a great political party, a minister, and held numerous political posts. Al-Mahdi Ben 'Abboud was the Moroccan Ambassador to the United States. Al-Mukhtar As-Sousi was a political activist and a great scholar. All of them belonged to Hizb al-Istiqlal and they all experienced failure and despair. There are others still alive from whom I directly heard similar things, but they have given up political activism, political parties, and government, and are starting to think and act outside of these spheres. As a result, we find that the writings and encouragements of al-Mukhtar as-Sousi and Allal al-Fasi, organizations, the foundation of some magazines, some Islamic activities, and the ideas and lectures of al-Mahdi Bin 'Abboud all served as an impetus for the Islamic movement in Morocco. This is how the first formation looks if we look at things at their roots and in their components. Therefore, as mentioned above, the burning of the Al-Aqsa Mosque did not have any particular impact on the creation of the Moroccan Islamic movement. Yes, the Palestinian issue and the colossal events associated with it posed huge challenges to the entire Muslim world, including to regimes which did not know how to respond. Consequently, the average Muslim felt somewhat orphaned, unable to face the Zionist challenge, and realized that there was a form of collusion between Arab-Muslim regimes and the Zionist state. Therefore, the whole Palestine issue had a major impact on the creation of the Moroccan Islamic movement.

Q: Among the reasons behind the emergence of the Islamic movement, you mentioned the marginalization of scholars. However, isn't it true that during the 1960s and 1970s the Islamist youth were fearful of scholars?

A: That's true and I was one of them. In fact, we were fearful perhaps to the point of condemning, underestimating, and accusing them of irresponsibility, for we did not understand how the religious scholars, the *ulama*, had been marginalized. We failed to understand their reasons, and in fact, we did not know many scholars with true zeal and incorruptible attitudes; on the contrary, we noted some reprehensible positions. Yet, this soon ended and the religious youth started to understand the scholars' situation and value their efforts and circumstances, bearing in mind, of course, that their situation

could be summarized in the description of traditional scholars with secondary roles in society. The scholars were marginalized and some succumbed to this process due to their weakness, which has been the case in Morocco until now. However, the situation is beginning slowly to change, thanks to the emergence of the Islamic movement, which stood its ground on the political and social scenes. The Islamic movement has started to attract some *ulama* to its ranks. Some traditional *ulama* have even responded to its activist calls. This happened in both Iraq and Egypt. As for the Moroccan *ulama* in the 1960s and 1970s, many held fast to their traditional role and failed to engage critically with new cultures, trends, and political movements.

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AS AN ELITE MOVEMENT IN THE FIRST STAND

Q: We have seen that the Islamic movement finds an enthusiastic response among the poor. So can we say that the economic factor plays a role in the emergence and spread of the Islamic movement?

A: The fact is that the Islamic movement initially attracted the educated and middle-class stratum of society and its spread amongst the poorer classes came later, except in the case of the Salafiyyah movement, which attracted the poor initially. The bulk of the Islamic movement in Morocco, with its different organizations such as al-Tawhid wa'l Islah, al-Harakah min Ajl al-Ummah, al-'Adl wa'l Ihsan, etc., was made up of teachers, university professors, physicians, and engineers, then gradually small businessmen. This is the essential body of the Islamic movement in Morocco. If we go to Egypt, for instance, such leaders of the Islamic movement as Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Abdelqader 'Awdah, Sayyid Sabiq, and Youssef al-Qaradawi came from middle-class backgrounds. However, the Islamic movement in Egypt, as is known, controls a number of unions, such as the engineers, doctors, and university faculty. So it is clear that the Islamic movement attracted the educated first and the poor second.

Salafiyyah starts on the right of Shaykh Bin Baz and ends on the left of Osama Bin Laden.

Q: You mentioned Muhammad Abduh, Hassan al-Banna, and the Muslim Brotherhood, who all belong to Salafiyyah; in Morocco, Tawheed wal-Islah, as you mentioned, also belongs to the Salafiyyah Movement. Can you give a precise definition of Salafiyyah, especially with the suspicions that this concept has raised in recent years?

A: The term "Salafiyyah" has been applied to the ideas of Muhammad Abduh, Hassan al-Banna, and Tawheed wal-Islah by external forces; however, I do not object to the use of this term. On the contrary, a Muslim feels honored to be considered a *salafi* (that is, someone who follows in the footsteps of the ancestors) or to belong to *salaf*. However, you won't find any of these people applying this nomenclature to himself or his movement. To my mind, the term *salafi* was coined by Western scholars, who applied it to the resurgence

movements in the Arab world, especially in the Middle East, because of their call to return to the ancestors' foundations and way of life. They used the term to distinguish between these movements of religious resurgence and other trends of thought that advocated liberalism and modernity in the Arab world.

However, the most visible current of thought in the Arab world of late uses the nomenclature of *Salafiyyah*, such as Jihadist Salafiyyah and Wahhabi Salafiyyah, etc. I remember that one of the scholars invited a "Salafi person" to a scholarly convention to talk about the "Salafi trend," which he represents. He said (among other things) that the Salafiyyah is a religious manifestation or vision, which starts from the right of Shaykh Bin Baz and ends to the left of Osama Bin Laden. There are some Salafis who go beyond the extreme right-wing tendencies of Shaykh Bin Baz by blindly supporting the ruling regimes, whereas others go beyond Osama Bin Laden's leftism by advocating the total transformation of these regimes. Between these two extreme poles, right-wing Salafiyyah and left-wing Salafiyyah, there are other levels of the same movement. This is the narrow meaning of the term "Salafiyyah." However, when we classify under the banner of Salafiyyah such movements as the Muslim Brotherhood, Jama'at at-Tabligh, 'Allal al-Fasi and his party, the party of Arkaban, and so on, then Salafiyyah becomes anyone who values tradition, the past, and Islam, and seeks inspiration from them. This broad classification allows us to argue that there are two broad movements in the contemporary Muslim world: first, the Salafi religious movement, and, second, the secular modernist movement. Thus, we can divide the Muslim world—its trends, intelligentsia, ruling and non-ruling elites—into two groups of various gradations and inclinations: a group that prides itself on religion and tradition, and another that takes the West as its model. Each has its own gradations, however.

Q: Can we say that the project of the Islamic movement which started with Hassan al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood has exhausted its goals?

A: I would like to argue that with regard to the "Islamic state," regardless of what Hassan al-Banna has to say about it, it is a big mistake for the Islamic movement to focus its priorities on the Islamic state. I have written about this elsewhere. It is a big mistake to conceptualize the Islamic state, its structure, etc. The issue of the state is somewhat relative and is one of the means of promoting Islam, but not the only one. I do believe in the reanimation of society, and not the state, as well as in the reliance on the Muslim *ummah* at large. I would be happy if my position on the Islamic state was proven wrong. Even those Islamic movements that have achieved political authority, such as in Iran and Sudan, have discovered that the state is not an immense power that can change everything overnight. There is something else that can be relied on in addition to the state. Even the religious scholars of Iran have discovered that their influence in society was much greater 20 years ago than it is now. At the time, most people used to revere, love, dignify, and follow them. Because of their roles in the state and because of their political authority, they have incurred many enemies. I do believe that Islamist thought

can yet solve the problematic of the state. When it comes to the issue of the state, the Islamic movement has made many mistakes. The issue of the state does not loom large in the thinking of the Islamic movements, as it once did.

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AND THE DRAINING OF SOURCES

Q: In your opinion, what are the most important challenges facing the Islamic movement today?

A: Of course, there is the well-known policy that some countries, such as Tunisia, used to apply, a policy usually referred to as “draining the sources,” especially the scientific, educational, and missionary sources of the Islamic movement. This is a huge challenge indeed. This policy has taken on a stern global character with unbelievable determination and pressure, especially from the American side, to sideline and marginalize Islamic culture and education.

The second challenge we now face as Muslims is the systematic mushrooming of social and moral decay and disintegration in our societies, and the emergence of a large tourist and media industry to promote, in a devilish fashion, this decay. Thirty years ago or so, we faced the question of irreligiosity amongst our youth. However, it was possible to find a solution to this issue through dialogue. However, the current challenges are breathtaking. Consider drug addiction, for example. This addiction leads to other forms of addiction and is one of the biggest challenges facing Muslim societies and movements.

POLITICAL AUTOCRACY STILL EXISTS

Q: We have talked about the changes facing the Islamic movement. Can we consider political autocracy one of the challenges that the Islamic movement faces?

A: Unfortunately, one of the major dilemmas in the Muslim world is the issue of autocracy. Naturally, autocracy is not new, and it still exists. Yet, the problem of autocracy does not exclusively concern the Islamic movement. It is a disease afflicting all parties and organizations. In fact, it is a chronic disease in the Muslim world. This is why most of the well-known Islamic movements have been quick to shoulder the responsibility of calling for the restoration of public freedom, taking initiatives, and supporting democracy and human rights, since these movements are well aware of the weighty effects of autocracy. The Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has recently taken the initiative of defending the above freedoms. There is no doubt that the Islamic movement has suffered greatly from autocracy and that is why it is in the forefront of resisting it.

NOTE

1. Excerpts from Ahmad al-Raysouni, *al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah al-Maghribiyyah: Su'ud am Uful* (Casablanca: Alwan, 2004). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'.

The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood: Experiences and Prospect

Shaykh Ali Sadr al-Din al-Bayanuni

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Syria was nurtured within the local, regional, and international ups and downs, failures, and successes, of the twentieth century. What distinguishes the Syrian Brotherhood from other parties and movements in the region is the unique mold given to it by its founders. The Syrian MB, from its inception up to this very day, has never been beholden to outsiders for material or moral support. At a time when communists and leftists in general were relying on an influential bloc led by the Soviet Union, with capitalists and right-wingers depending on another influential bloc led by Europe and the United States, it was the MB that operated in the political field without these types of “external connections.” The MB had its internal momentum driven by Islamic analyses and projections.

We can summarize the experience of the Syrian MB throughout the last half-century under the following points of reference.

ACROSS-THE-BOARD ACTIVISM

From the mid-1940s through to 1958, the Syrian MB was united with its Egyptian counterpart. This period culminated in the Syrian MB disbanding for the sake of a “promising” Arab unity. During this period, which was considered to be one in which the people flourished, the Syrian MB was able to perform the full range of its activities in a no-nonsense manner. It should be recalled that this phase was itself subject to the ebbs and flows of authoritarianism. The general climate of freedom was disrupted from time to time with military officers staging *coups d'état*. Several vital elements of the MB program influenced public life in Syria. The most important of these was religious renewal and revival. There was no doubt that an Islamic organization such as the MB would concentrate most of its activity on encouraging popular affiliation with Islam. In this regard there were two courses of action.

The first and most crucial was to correct the people's Islamic concepts. This meant that, at ground level, people would have to revise their thoughts and ideas about what it meant to be a Muslim. Nominal Muslims were victims of centuries of ignorance and decay. Therefore, they had acquired beliefs, ideas, and customs that were contrary to Islam. In some popular quarters there was a certain fatalism, as well as a pseudo-Islam. The Syrian MB set out to correct these deviations, and its success in doing so was impressive. The MB enlisted

Islamic scholars to cooperate either as members or as sympathizers in this popular venture. It should be noted that despite the repression and coercive instruments of government, the Syrian people by and large have avoided extremist agendas, as the Syrian populace is centrist in many ways—especially in religion and politics. Therefore, the Islamic “reaction,” such as the *takfir* (Islamic puritan vigilantes) and *jihad* organizations, which are symptomatic in other countries, have not taken root in Syria. The first priority of the Syrian MB was thus to build a solid popular basis for a moderate and centrist Islam. People would have to be educated to choose Islam of their own free will.

Part of this religious program was to win over those who had abandoned Islam for ideological, doctrinal, or “practical” purposes. In a century of ideological, civilizational, and informational exchange, many of those who were Muslims by lineage opted for what others had to offer. They were troubled by the backwardness, ignorance, and weakness which characterized their *ummah* (community). Therefore, they either lost interest in Islam or were alienated by it. They began to act like inferiors everywhere. They fell in love with their masters and superiors and then adopted their beliefs, behavior, and bylines. These masters and superiors were at one time communists, and at other times, liberals or conservatives. These types became the focus of an intense and extended program of re-education by the MB to win these lost souls back to their Creator. In this particular timeframe, the most difficult encounter was with those who had converted to Communism. The ideology of Communism presented a formidable challenge because its materialistic and atheistic ideology offered a coherent interpretation of life and the universe, and because people and national liberation movements were attracted to the Eastern bloc in reaction to the unconditional support of Israel and Zionism from the West. Fortunately, the Syrian MB was able to shield society and its political future from any serious Eastern or Western penetration. Eventually, people began to understand the Islamic paradigm, which is commonly referred to as Islamic revivalism.

The second element in the program of the Syrian MB was political involvement. The MB operates as a political party. It presents its point of view on the issues of the day, it debates, it agrees or disagrees, it enters into alliances, and it takes a strategic look at national priorities. It believes in freedom and pluralism, not only for political parties but also for ideological and religious organizations. It may see fit to align itself with a liberal faction at one time, or to agree with Christian candidates for parliament at another. MB members have spoken from the pulpits of mosques and churches. The Syrian MB believes that the influence of any organization is rooted in its popularity and ground-level support, as expressed through the ballot box.

The Syrian MB succeeded in getting some of its members elected to parliament in 1947, 1950, 1956, and 1962. Whenever there was an air of freedom, the Muslim Brothers were involved. They even participated in formulating the country’s constitution, which was written in 1950. MB members of parliament shared in that task, and they were outspoken in their support for Arab, Islamic, and humanitarian causes.

MB Chairman Dr Mustafa al-Siba'i attended an ecumenical Muslim-Christian conference in Lebanon in 1954. He also engaged in dialogue with Western missionaries and intellectuals during a tour of European universities in 1956. The results of these activities were very positive ecumenically.

The MB was never opposed to democracy and never took issue with the results of any democratic process, even when it happened to be unsuccessful in such a process. In a spirit of sportsmanship the MB accepted the ballot box results, even when the entire region was gripped with xenophobia. The MB's political message always underlines the concepts of freedom, independence, pluralism, co-operation, and the construction of strong foundations for the state. But it also emphasized the importance of morality in the leadership and in the functions of government. Corruption, in all its forms and manifestations, was confronted.

As far as Arab and Islamic causes are concerned, the MB was always distinguished by its unqualified support of the *ummah* (Muslim nation). The Palestinian issue has always occupied a significant part of the MB's political, public relations, and educational programs. The MB went to war in 1948 with the Arab armies against the usurpers of Palestine. The MB did not waver in its support for the Algerian freedom fighters when they fought against French colonialism. It even went as far as to disband in Syria in order to support the merger with Egypt in 1958, even though its differences with President Gamal Abdel Nasser were not insignificant. The MB refused to sign the secession declaration when Egypt and Syria split in 1961.

The third element in the MB program was foreign policy. The MB was opposed to all political and military pacts that tied Muslims to foreign interests during the Cold War. Rather, it preferred positive and constructive dialogue and common interests as the basis for normal relations among nations.

The biggest problem that the MB faced during these years and which cost it dearly was its naive assumption that the Syrian authorities would not use an army intended to defend the nation from external threats against it. At a bloody cost, the MB discovered that the Syrian authorities had adopted the East European style of using the military to entrench their power and liquidate any real or imagined opposition.

The fourth programmatic element of the MB was social activism. The Arab world, Syria included, emerged from World War II with a crippling burden of illiteracy, ignorance, and inferiority. This was easily detectable at any level of social function. The task now was to rebuild and re-energize the marginalized individuals, and to endow them with the rational and emotional tools that would make it possible for them to move toward a brighter and more enlightened future. A new Islamic model had to be presented to these poor souls, and the MB undertook this task.

The MB had to convince people resigned to illiteracy that illiteracy and Islam were incompatible. Centers had to be built to eradicate illiteracy. Night schools had to be made available for those not able to attend school during the day. Private schools had to fill the social gaps in all the urban and rural areas of Syria. The MB was way ahead of all other parties in this regard. At

a time when sending girls to school was considered a burden or a cultural stigma, it was the MB that called for liberating women in accordance with Islamic teachings, insisting that women should enjoy their full rights. The MB sought to support women through the educational process until they earned the highest degrees. This was an all-out war against ignorance, illiteracy, and lack of communication within society. In addition, Dr Mustafa al-Siba'i initiated a groundbreaking effort to have a *shari'ah* faculty added to the University of Damascus. He was also closely involved in establishing cultural and athletic clubs along with the construction of medical clinics and charitable organizations throughout the Syrian homeland.

The MB was visible in every aspect of Syrian social life. It was there to add moral quality, and to educate and give direction to people who would otherwise have remained lost and confused. Had it not been for the interference of the authorities in Syrian social life, the quality of Syrian society—resulting from the MB's social activism—would have become qualitatively superior to what it is today. Administrative and financial corruption in Syria today is a consequence of the lack of MB activism to offset the totalitarianism and corruption that are associated with one-party systems and dictatorships.

The fifth element was economic activism. Economics are important in the Islamic scheme of things. *Zakat* (mandatory charitable giving) is one of the five pillars of Islam. Islam is, in a sense, a cooperative system. It places special emphasis on the more fortunate taking on responsibility for the less fortunate. This responsibility has three aspects to it:

1. Absolute responsibility at the governmental level to see that no one goes hungry or in need. This is in fulfillment of an interpretation of the Islamic principle that gives the burden of care for the poor to government, rather than to private charities and institutions.
2. Collective responsibility of communities, interpreted in accordance with the context of the time.
3. Individual responsibility for one's neighbor in accordance with the *hadith* (tradition) of the Prophet, which states: "No one has faith when he goes to sleep on a full stomach while he knows his neighbor is going to sleep on an empty stomach."

The MB mobilized forces to work within the areas of these responsibilities. Good deeds were encouraged, charity was promoted, shelters were built, and employment was made available. All this put a damper on the greed of those who were taking advantage of the poor, as were the feudalists and the merchant class. This also helped to discredit the socialist braggarts who were always talking about a utopian society, but doing nothing to attain it.

The sixth element was educational and cultural activism, to which the MB paid close attention. It opened the doors for cultural events and interests. Articulate and learned members in many fields of knowledge and science published newspapers, magazines, and books.

One of the sweetest fruits of freedom in Syria was a person's ability to engage in democratic choice and to experience the consequences of that choice in a society that respected plural expressions of religion, sect, ethnicity, and political party. In Syria, there are Arabs, Kurds, Circassians, and Turkomans. There are also Sunni and Shi'i Muslims, Alawis, Druze, and Isma'ilis; and there are Christians (Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, and Armenians). There were liberal political parties, such as the People's Party and the Patriotic Party. In Syria there were Communists, Ba'athists, and Muslim Brothers. Each party or organization had its own newspaper, headquarters, members of parliament, and, at times, government ministers. Syria, at times, was characterized by mobility, vitality, activity, and security. There were other times, however, when intervention by the military brought a temporary halt to such freedoms. Older citizens always seemed to respond sympathetically to the outbursts of youth. But all this came to an end on the morning of March 8, 1963.

THE CLANDESTINE PHASE

The military coup of March 1963 ushered in a dictatorial form of government. Political life, as it had been known hitherto, ceased. A state of emergency was declared and is still in place. Freedoms were annulled. Newspapers, magazines, and public addresses were stifled. Political parties were disbanded. Freedom-lovers were pursued. Opposing opinions were tracked down. A long list of Marxist slogans and literature became in vogue. The Stalinist model was adopted. The "dictatorship of the proletariat," operating through one party, and "religious hatred" replaced national consensus, while "revolutionary violence" replaced conciliation and unity. This onslaught was so vicious that many politicians were forced to resign their posts, if not flee the country altogether. Society was left to face this sudden and severe onset of trouble with all its ideological misinformation and manipulation.

Only remnants of political opposition survived. Their role was to do as much as possible to raise popular consciousness against this new Syrian Leviathan. The MB had to curtail many of its activities in order to survive in these oppressive times. It had to figure out a new way to avoid dire consequences. Hence, the MB went underground. In doing so, it relied on two channels.

The first was general and public preaching. Islamic scholars in the mosques did this through Friday sermons and teaching sessions. Likewise, teachers and scholars did their best to promote Islamic ideas in schools and classrooms, articles and books, many of which were published abroad. They became involved in an effort to debunk the propaganda of "scientific socialism" and its materialistic and atheistic bases, as well as its authoritarian practices and international pursuits. They tried to explain Islam as an alternative to the government's official propaganda, as circumstances permitted. Some were imprisoned and tortured; others went into exile. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations have detailed lists of the names of thousands of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. There are names of countless people who were tortured to death or executed without due process. Many

Islamic books and literature were banned. It was, and still is, illegal to be in possession of even a single newspaper expressing the MB's point of view.

Syrian officials were not content with placing people and books on their blacklist. They went so far as to impose themselves on the *manabir* (pulpits) of the mosques. In 1978, they virtually decimated education when they dismissed thousands of secondary school teachers and professors from their professional and educational duties. These educators were given jobs that had nothing to do with their professions. And all of this was done in the service of "the socialist revolutionary ideology."

Despite these obstacles and challenges, the MB continued to offer its hand and service at the doctrinal, civilizational, and patriotic levels, always for the overall good and always against the evil of the establishment. Many cultural and scientific elites were won over. The imprints of the MB could be found in unions and guilds, even though these institutions were funded and closely controlled by the Syrian government. The MB made inroads at the impoverished, popular level. Some members even made it incognito into parliament, even though it has a rubber-stamp character.

The second channel was organization. The MB devised a way to recruit and train a highly qualified cadre, which will, in the future, be responsible for enlightening and liberating the Syrian people. They will be responsible for building a civil society that guarantees the people their rights and freedoms.

It was at this juncture that the Syrian government began to target us. The government had a systematic strategy to turn public opinion against us, through building up internal social pressures. We saw what was coming and were careful not to be intimidated. We did everything possible to avoid a head-on clash with the officials and departments of government that were anxious to eradicate the MB. We had access to some of the resolutions of the meetings of the Ba'th Party at the state level. In these meetings, they were discussing the options for eradicating us ideologically and placing us in large internment camps deep in the Syrian desert. Information to this effect is found in the resolutions of the 13th *qutri* (Syrian regional) party conference in July 1980.

Despite our low profile, internal popular discontent with the government grew. The government's sectarian slant and insult to the Syrian people heightened popular unrest. The Syrian people felt affronted. The government was not subtle in its sectarian discrimination and prejudice. The military establishment had become an Alawi outfit, followed closely by the Ba'ath Party. The artillery academy in Aleppo at the time of the massacre was 90 percent Alawi, though 90 percent of the population is not Alawi. Key government positions all the way from cabinet ministers to school principals became the monopoly of party members and sectarian figures, as well as members of diplomatic posts. All of these had to belong to a certain sect or to the party. Journalists and students who wanted to travel abroad on scholarships could qualify only if they were Ba'ath partisans or Alawi sectarians. Real qualifications meant nothing.

The Alawi establishment was capable of igniting internal contradictions. Immolated in its social bonfire were the hapless Syrian people. The casualties exceeded the MB's numbers many times over. The official policies of exclusion and co-optation, along with the hatred coming out of the prisons—and the deaths of scholars and intellectuals under torture—led people to believe they would die in the torture chambers if caught, or would have to defend themselves with whatever available means. The lawyers' guild in Syria issued a statement on September 29, 1979 declaring that government practices had contributed to an atmosphere of fear, terror, and instability. The government was in violation of personal as well as social freedoms: it had broken into homes and violated the sanctity of human life. Hostage-taking and collective punishment had become routine government practices. Prisons were overflowing with men, women, and children. "Security forces" had rounded up large numbers of intellectuals, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and teachers. The Syrian government then declared war on us by implementing Law No. 29 of 1980. This law, with retrospective effect, legalized the execution of any member of the MB. "Field courts," which lacked any vestige of due process and justice, issued trumped-up verdicts for execution.

The Syrian government implemented a scorched earth policy against the Syrian people. Anyone who handed himself in was tortured to death under Law No. 49. Those who were not executed individually were executed en masse, as occurred in the massacre at Tadmur prison on June 27, 1980. Military units systematically slaughtered approximately 1,000 citizens—the cream of the crop—in cold blood. And whoever managed to escape from Syria was hunted down outside the country. Targeted persons were stripped of their human and civil rights; they were denied passports and even educational diplomas.

It was in such a fashion that Syrian society found itself face-to-face with a brutal form of warfare and annihilation. Curiously, the international community remained relatively silent, without any reasonable justification or apology, unless everyone accepts the Syrian government's line that eradicating Muslims is a service to civilization and freedom.

Our people chose to defend themselves and to be true to their principles in the process. They insisted on the restoration of their human, political, and civil rights, and nothing less. From this perspective we still call for a national dialogue through which we can build a modern state with a peaceful transfer of power by way of the ballot box. We are seeking to build a climate of true democracy where human rights are paramount and pluralism is a given. Only through such a process can we expect justice and equality to be enjoyed by all Syrian citizens.

About 20 years have passed since those events. Many of us are living in one form of exile or another, but we still demand that our Syrian people enjoy their full rights by being relieved of a state of emergency that has existed now for more than a third of a century. Thousands of Syrians are in jail and suffer untold miseries behind bars. Others remain unaccounted for—no one knows where they are. Thousands are still living as political refugees, denied

personal documents and basic freedoms. Some human rights organizations have detailed the violations of human rights across the board in Syria.

The Syrian MB moved from one stage to the next, from one position to another, in its adversarial relationship with the Syrian authorities. We continuously re-evaluate and critique ourselves, yet we never tire of saying that we want a free and stable country in which everyone enjoys freedom, justice, and equality. For the record, we are not the only group that is tyrannized in Syria. The entire spectrum of the opposition is included: Islamists, nationalists, and leftists. We, however, have suffered the most.

THE FUTURE

During the last half-century and beyond, we have gained experience through our internal and external activities. We are also aware that many developments are occurring in the world at large that have an impact on our Arab region as well as on our homeland, Syria. We have refined our *modus operandi* to adapt to the realities of the modern world. We are in a continuous process of self-critique and re-evaluation through our intellectual and experienced cadres. We may not go public with our decisions because we are not a public relations firm. Sometimes it is left to the observer to reach his own conclusions. But we have come a long way.

One of the most outstanding critical appraisals is in how we perceive others with whom we have differences, both internally and externally. From the beginning, we have always been open-minded and oriented toward dialogue with others. We believe the distance between us is no longer what it used to be. We are now capable of accepting those with whom we disagree, listening to them, and admitting them. This openness is true of both the decision-makers and the rank-and-file.

We have to point out here that our organization is based on *shurah* (mutual consultation), elections, and majority voting, in order to permit the voicing of counter-opinions, and to assist us in developing an ongoing process of refined decision-making. Our concept of the nature of the Islamic state for which we strive, and of its institutions and processes, has become more modern and practical over time.

Most important, as we enter the twenty-first century, is our call to the people to establish a divine social system which we believe is the solution to many manmade problems, and in this process we are even more confident that our main task is to convince people of this divine social system embodied in the *shari'ah*. We cannot impose it on them by force, any type of force. We now are operating within a patriotic arc, if you will. We are in competition with others for the hearts and souls of the people. This methodology in no way detracts from our belief in the divine source of our program.

We believe that in our age and time, with the abundance and availability of freedom, people will not absorb or accept beliefs, ideas, or social orders that are imposed from above, bypassing society's own thought and conscience. Indeed, we have always worked on the basis of persuasion.

We have developed a better and deeper understanding and appreciation of pluralism, especially political pluralism. Never have we thought of political pluralism or democracy as a means to seize power, and then to subvert the process that brought us there. In our view, pluralism and democracy are essential and indispensable for a modern state and a stable society.

From our perspective, pluralism should go beyond the dictatorship of a one-system party, or even the dictatorship of a two-party system. We should go beyond that to accommodate all the political expressions of political constituencies. We are firm believers in political pluralism, true democracy, and the ballot box as the only means to gain power and exchange it. We honor all human rights, individual, civil, and political, in a manner compatible with our civilization. We want to enter the twenty-first century with these goals as a gift to our Syrian people who have suffered enough from tyranny, censorship, subjugation, injustice, poverty, and corruption. Our people have become an underclass in their own country under the fancy rubric of socialism.

Our mission is to construct a modern state inspired by Islam's essence of justice, equality, and tolerance, an essence that obliges the ruling class to guarantee its subjects basic rights, social stability, and justice. We desire all the positive aspects of modernity and technology that do not conflict with the basis of *shari'ah*. All this should take root on the grounds of love and mercy as enunciated by our Prophet (peace be upon him): "We have but sent you as a mercy unto all peoples."

Our vision of others has changed fundamentally. Our view of the "foreign Other" is that it is not a monolith. The West, as far as we are concerned, is no longer a monolith. We are now better able to differentiate between "the official establishment" and "social establishments" and individuals. We are now more concerned with discovering what each of these has to say. We are eager to classify each accordingly. We want to respond to each of them with appropriate and reciprocal positions.

The world is becoming a small village. The peoples living together in it should pay heed to the wise words in the Qur'an:

O People! We have created you from a male and female and rendered you into kin groups and nations so that you are mutually able to get to know one another.

Getting to know one another as individuals, societies, and nations is a positive development that requires accurate data, precise information, and constructive and fruitful dialogue. The world today is inundated with religions, beliefs, and ideas. Religions are of two types:

1. The religions of large ethnic populations such as Buddhism, Hinduism, etc., which have their values, creeds, and unique heritage; and
2. The religions of unique beliefs that are portable among all human societies, most notably, Christianity and Islam. Both come from the same divine source. Both share the same holy concepts that give us similar values,

behaviors, and ideas. There are, of course, some areas of divergence that serve as opportunities for discussion and dialogue. In addition to these religions, there are human concepts and creeds that cannot be pinpointed in place or time.

The problem of religious dialogue and conflict is that many affiliates of these religions do not practice their religions. This is perhaps more true of Christianity than it is of Islam. The percentage of those who adhere to religious standards in the West is low indeed. Some of these nominal Christians become fanatical Christians when they confront others, with ethnic and/or spiritual ingredients thrown in for good measure. Dialogue is useless with such persons: they who are faithless who are serving as defenders of the faith!

The way we see things, a true Christian is closer to us Muslims than a person who has abandoned his Christian belief. We believe that what Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammad preached all came from the same source, and that the differences that have accumulated down the ages are of man's making.

Mutual acquaintance, which is a cardinal feature of Islam in relations with others, gives priority to a dialogue and discussion as a means toward mutual recognition. This dialogue means that one recognizes others and respects them. In this process, any notion of superiority is avoided, as is the arrogance that comes from holding power. When we have such a positive dialogue, we will realize that the diverse elements of humankind are capable of coexistence. Once such a dialogue is established, only the best of the ideas will be able to survive, while divisive ideas will eventually wither away.

We are convinced that the first step in the direction of dialogue is to abandon and fight against any idea that supports terrorism. Terrorism is a policy that is used at times by those who have concentrated their power at a global level. There are also certain local and regional manifestations of terrorism that are directly or indirectly supported by the world's great powers, and there is a form of terrorism represented by parties and organizations. In the context of what we are discussing concerning dialogue, we shall find that the words of the Messiah (peace be upon him), "Peace on Earth," or, as it is stated in the Noble Qur'an: "Enter into peace all together," will come true.

Toward a Common Arab and Islamic Strategy for the Middle East¹

Ishaq al-Farhan

Any strategy for the Arab and Muslim worlds should take into consideration the following points:

1. The overall reality of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their abilities as well as their strategies;
2. Influential world powers, especially those that have colonial roots in the area, what American hegemony has led to, and its foundation of what it calls the “New World Order” following the end of the Cold War with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries; this political coalition kept the global political balance from the end of World War II until the period up to the Gulf War;
3. Zionist arrogance represented by its control over decisions made by the United Nations and its Security Council; the execution of its plans in occupied Palestine, including the absorption of Soviet Jewry; expansion of settlements in the Occupied Territories, and putting the security of the entire Arab and Muslim worlds at risk;
4. People’s energies and capacities for renewal and development; the importance of all people’s participation, regardless of their racial, political, or religious affiliation, in the projects of revival of the Arab and Muslim worlds; and
5. The goals of the Arab and Muslim worlds, their central problems, aspirations, and priorities.

This chapter aims to explore the following issues:

1. The importance of the Middle East for both the Arab and Muslim worlds as well as for its project of resurgence; the global crusade and Zionist conspiracies facing this region, the last of which was the American war against Iraq, as a major developed region in the Arab world;
2. The given facts about the Arab and Muslim worlds and their possible trajectories; and
3. Future options, alternatives, and activities, as well as setting up Arab and Muslim strategic features.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

1. The Middle East has special significance to the Arab and Muslim worlds for the following reasons:
 - (a) it represents the geographical pivot for the Arab and Muslim worlds combining Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan;
 - (b) it represents the demographic centerpiece of the Arab world since half of all Arabs live in this area. In addition, it represents the center of the Muslim world because this area contains the three most important mosques in Islam to which Muslims make pilgrimage;
 - (c) the region controls over 60 percent of the known oil reserves in the world. If oil wealth were used with the overall potential and energy of the Muslim *ummah*, it could enable the creation of a model Islamic civilization;
 - (d) Western imperialism has planted the most dangerous and strategic Western military base in the region, uniting both global Crusaderism and Zionism. This military base is represented in the Zionist colonial settlement project of Arab and Muslim Palestine, called Israel, which represents the realization of the Zionist ambition on the one hand, and Western strategic interests on the other; and
 - (e) because this region has witnessed the rise of many Arab and Islamic renaissance projects, it has been the focal point of Western plots and conspiracies against Arabism, Islam, and the Arab-Muslim civilization.
2. The Middle East has been a region of continuous conflict between East and West, Western and Muslim civilizations, and Zionist and Western conspiracies on the one hand, and Arab and Islamic renaissance on the other, especially in the twentieth century. This is evidenced by the following:
 - (a) Western colonialism has continuously persisted in inflaming the spirit of regional and sectarian divisions in the Muslim world, especially between Arabs and Persians, Arabs and Turks, Arabs and Kurds, etc. The West will continue to use this weapon against Arab and Muslim renaissance as long as a comprehensive Islamist strategy is missing;
 - (b) the West has persisted in driving a wedge between the Arab nationalist projects of renaissance and the Islamist ones, that is to say, between Arab nationalists and Islamists, so that an internal fight within the Arab *ummah* persists and wastes its energy;
 - (c) international imperialism, led by the US, has moved swiftly to bring an end to Arab renaissance projects, the latest example of this being the attack on Iraq and the destruction of its military capabilities;
 - (d) international imperialism, led by the US, has also moved to destroy Islamic movements in most of the Arab and Muslim world with the objective of obstructing the contemporary Islamic awakening, so widespread in the Muslim world; and

- (e) Western imperialism lost no time in dividing the Arab and Muslim worlds after World War I; it has persisted in promoting and safeguarding this division and challenges any serious attempt at unity between Arab countries.
3. The Gulf War and Operation "Desert Storm," waged by the US and its allies, was the latest crusade in the region. The US found the perfect excuse in the liberation of Kuwait to divide the modern Iraqi state along ethnic and sectarian lines, destroy the Iraqi army, interfere in the domestic affairs of the states in the area, and impose the New World Order (that is, the New Imperialist Order), which will heavily impact the future of this area, as colonialism did in the Arab and Muslim worlds at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The 1991 Gulf War will have severe long-term implications for the New Arab Order, the question of Palestine, Arab wealth, and, consequently, on Arab development plans (economic, scientific, and technological), as well as on future Arab and Muslim generations. It is, therefore, high time that the Arab and Muslim intelligentsia and politicians embark on a critical analysis of current conditions in order to formulate a comprehensive Arab and Muslim strategy that will create some balance between choices and options and suggest solutions that will influence our future generations.

THE ARAB AND MUSLIM REALITY

The following are the givens of the Arab and Muslim situation:

1. The destruction of Iraqi's military force, Arab and Muslim elimination from the face of Israel, and the attack on the Arab revival project at its core;
2. US hegemony and its ascendancy as the single most powerful entity in the world following the end of the Cold War;
3. The domination of Arab oil and sources of energy for the advantage of Zionist and Western projects;
4. The collapse of the Arab political order and the Arab League, engendering a fracture among the Arab people and perhaps among the Islamic and nationalist movements, as well;
5. Denying the role of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and continued attempts to eliminate it from the scene;
6. Focusing on the Islamic movement and attempts by some regimes to collaborate with the West, to attack it and expel it from the circle of action and development;
7. Zionist intransigence and the continuity of Soviet-Jewish immigration, the expansion of settlement in the area, and attempts to expand and implement the plot of an alternative homeland in Jordan; and
8. The upsurge of Arab and Muslim hatred of the US and Zionism, while at the same time exasperation and confusion in the face of US hegemony.

The following are the trajectories of the current reality:

1. More humiliation of Iraq and the final phasing-out of the Arab renaissance project led by Iraq using the following:
 - (a) harsh implementation of ceasefire conditions, the destruction of Iraq's weapons, and the plundering of its oil wealth under the pretext of compensation for the war's damages;
 - (b) the attempt to found a Kurdish state in the north;
 - (c) the attempt to overthrow the Iraqi regime and its replacement by another that will collaborate with the US; and
 - (d) the destruction of Iraqi scientific and technological abilities and interference in its restoration.
2. Punishing the Arab states that supported Iraq in the war by:
 - (e) finding problems in the regimes of Mauritania, Yemen, Sudan, and Jordan;
 - (f) banning economic aid for these states;
 - (g) eliminating the Islamic movement in these countries, especially in the Sudan and Algeria;
 - (h) attempting to expel the Palestine Liberation Organization from the arena of political action and solving the Palestinian issue according to Zionist and American criteria;
 - (i) setting up a regional alliance of Arab states that supported the West during the Gulf War; the destruction of Arab regimes and solidarity, and widening disagreements between Arab states;
 - (j) keeping and expanding American military bases in the region, especially in Iraq and the land of Saudi Arabia; and
 - (k) imposing total control over Arab oil wealth, and using it to the advantage of American and Zionist interests.

OPTIONS, ALTERNATIVES, AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

1. On the levels of ideology and political thought:
 - (a) re-establishing *shari'ah* as the primary source of legislation in the Arab and Muslim worlds;
 - (b) reconstructing Arab reason in light of the quadruple value system: deep-rooted faith, scientific methodology, productive action, and sublime values;
 - (c) resisting attempts of alienation/Westernization and the return to tradition and authenticity by opposing the hegemony of Western thought and civilization over Arab thought and Islamic culture; and
 - (d) declaring the final reconciliation between Arab nationalists and Islamists on an active intellectual level given the fact that Arabism and Islam are not only peers but are identical.

Arabism and Arabs are the concerns of Islam and its intellectual framework. The Arabic language is the language of the Arabs and Islamic culture. Islam is the creed and the religion of Muslims and it is intellect, culture, and civilization for both Arabs and Muslims.

2. On the level of active revival projects:

Arab nationalists and Islamists must embark on full cooperation to achieve the Arab and Muslim renaissance project, which is one of the objectives of both *shari'ah* and Arab nationalists. These objectives are as follows:

- (a) Arab national unity;
- (b) safeguarding public freedoms and deepening both democracy and *shurah* in Arab societies;
- (c) sharing wealth equally among the people;
- (d) realizing social justice;
- (e) realizing economic development goals and self-sufficiency; and
- (f) launching a scientific and technological project that reflects the needs of the *ummah*.

3. On the level of the Palestinian issue:

- (a) establishing the question of Palestine as Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and human issues;
- (b) considering *jihad* to be the only strategic means of solving the question of Palestine, regardless of how long this takes;
- (c) rallying the ranks of Arabs and Muslims and obliterating all contradictions and hurdles on the Palestine level;
- (d) preventing enemies from negating the role of PLO political and military action regarding Palestine; the organization should be in charge of liberating the land, which is its essential commitment;
- (e) refusing to accept concessions in solving the Palestinian issue in times of weakness; and
- (f) avoiding the quagmire of differentiating between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In the final analysis, the conflict with Israel is primary to all Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims.

4. On the level of the Arab states outside of the Western alliance:

- (a) raising the consciousness of Arabs and Muslims about the main issues of the *ummah*;
- (b) educating people about the trajectory of the Palestinian issue and the conflict between Zionism and Arab states. This can be achieved by incorporating all the Arab and Muslim states in educational systems and programs;
- (c) considering the Popular Arab-Muslim Conference, based in Sudan, as a global forum for the Arab and Muslim worlds;
- (d) encouraging cultural, scientific, and economic cooperation among all these states;

- (e) challenging US hegemony and American and Zionist interests in the Arab and Muslim worlds;
- (f) challenging all types of neo-imperialism—its arrangements and economic, cultural, and military plans; and
- (g) encouraging economic self-sufficiency and food security in the Arab world, with Sudan being the center for this.

NOTE

1. Ishaq al-Farhan, “Nahwah Istratijiyyah Arabiyyah Islamiyyah Mushtarakah li'l Sharq al-Awsat.” In Ahamd Bin Yousuf, ed., *al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi Dhil al-Tahawullat al-Duwalīyyah wa Azmat al-Khalij* (Chicago: UASR, 1991). Translated by Zahra Boussalah and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi’.

Islamist¹ Political Parties in Contemporary Algeria

Yahia H. Zoubir

The emergence of Islamist political parties in postcolonial Algeria, like that of secular parties, is a very recent phenomenon. Their legal existence was made possible by the political liberalization that the authoritarian regime initiated following the bloody riots of October 1988. Most of the Islamist parties created in 1989–91 emerged from the Islamist movement which emerged in the 1960s and grew stronger in the late 1970s and 1980s. The Islamist movement, too, is a recent phenomenon despite its presence in the nationalist movement and within the structures of the independent state.² In general, though, the Algerian Islamist movement presents some characteristics which distinguish it from similar Islamist movements in the North African region: a) the brevity of its history as an organized, militant movement; b) the swift entry of the movement into the political arena; c) the absence of an explicit doctrinal reference; d) the movement's odd points of reference to a variety of incongruous religious views; e) the total absence of a coherent, indigenous doctrine worthy of that name; f) the emergence of the movement as the direct byproduct of the state's contradictory policies since independence; and g) its relative presence in some of the state structures.

The exceedingly heterogeneous nature of the movement eventually gave rise in 1989 to an important Islamist political party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), whose membership and doctrinal orientation mirrored that of the movement. A number of other parties also made their entry on the political scene. But although two of them, Hamas and Nahda, have had some support from the electorate, their performance has been less dramatic than FIS's. However, while FIS would be banned in 1992, these two parties were eventually co-opted into the political system.

The difficulty in studying Islamist political parties stems from the brief history of these parties, their ill-defined programs, the heterogeneous nature of the leadership, the contradictory discourse of the vanguard, and the inexperience of both the leadership and the rank-and-file. As for those, like Hamas, which hold a more coherent discourse and seem to have a clearer program, it is difficult to characterize them as political parties in the formal sense. In this chapter,

[A]“political party” generally [is] the articulate organization of society's active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of

governmental power and who compete for popular support with another group or groups holding divergent views. As such, it is the great intermediary which links social forces and ideologies to official governmental institutions and relates them to political action within the larger political community.³

The emergence of political parties in Algeria resulted from the general crisis of the state in the 1980s and from a severe crisis of legitimacy and participation. All this culminated in bloody riots in October 1988, which were followed by the opening up of the political arena, the effect of which was the proliferation of dozens of political parties. In allowing the existence of political parties, the single-party regime sought not to initiate a genuine process of democratization, but a way to overcome the socioeconomic problems and contradictions which characterized the whole political system. More importantly, the objective was to prevent the emergence of a true legitimate party capable of challenging the National Liberation Front (FLN), the single ruling party, which established its hegemony over the political system following Algeria's independence in 1962.

The great majority of the political parties that emerged following the events of 1988 were quite small, without any popular support or strong ties in the urban centers or in the countryside. Regardless of their inexperience or their viability, these parties were subsidized by the state. Funding them provided the justification for the regime to continue subsidizing the former ruling party, FLN. The other, more cynical objective was to atomize and divide the opposition by favoring the multiplicity of small parties made up of few people who could easily be co-opted and/or manipulated. This explains why some parties, such as MDA, FIS, FFS, and MDRA, refused state funding.

Again, many of the newly created organizations would not qualify as political parties for the following reasons:

- Their expected lifespan depended solely on their leaders.
- Their presence did not extend much beyond the capital city and a few localities in the country.
- They never made a conscious effort to gain political power either alone or in a coalition with other political parties.
- They demonstrated few skills or even an interest in recruiting supporters to the party or cultivating popular support.⁴

The most relevant political parties that emerged were those that already had a clandestine existence or those that arose out of an already existing, well-organized movement. The Islamist parties formed in the period 1989–90 belong in this latter category. One cannot grasp their existence properly without looking at the movement from which they sprang.

BACKGROUND TO THE ISLAMIST MOVEMENT IN ALGERIA

Although the significant development of the radical Islamist movement in Algeria is a recent occurrence, Islamist groups have challenged the regime to

various degrees in periods since independence in 1962.⁵ The first association, al-Qiyam al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Values), was founded in 1963 and legalized the following year. The organization's hostility to Ahmed Ben Bella's (Algeria's first president) socialist policies and to some secular aspects of the policies adopted by the single-party at its 1964 Algiers Congress mobilized a few religious figures, such as Moroccan-born El-Hachemi Tidjani, the Imams Ahmed Sahnoun and Abdelatif Soltani (forefathers of Algerian Islamic fundamentalism—Salafiyyah), Abbassi Madani (future leader of the Islamic Salvation Front in the late 1980s), and some individuals from the wartime FLN.⁶

Not only was it opposed to Socialism, but al-Qiyam al-Islamiyyah also called for the full implementation of Islamic law (*shari'ah*). The association demanded that shops be closed during Friday prayers (a demand fulfilled in 1976 by Houari Boumediene's secular regime), to ban the selling of alcohol, to exclude non-Muslims from public jobs, to create separate beaches for men and women, to introduce religious instruction in schools—which it obtained in 1964—and to limit women's participation in sporting events, and parades celebrating national holidays.⁷ This "cultural" association declared in its French publication *Humanisme musulman* that "any political party, any regime, or any leader that is not inspired by Islam, is dangerous and must therefore be banned. Any communist, secular, Marxist-socialist, or nationalist party (the latter putting in jeopardy the unity of the Arab world) cannot exist in the land of Islam."⁸ Al-Qiyam al-Islamiyyah, whose leader acknowledged his affiliation to Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhamed Abduh, Shakib Arslan, Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad al-Ghazali, and Abu 'ala Al Mawdudi,⁹ was disbanded in 1966, following the vehement opposition of its members to the sentencing to death and eventual execution of the Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb by the Gamal Abd al-Nasser regime. Despite the ban, al-Qiyam continued, albeit in a more or less clandestine form, until its official dissolution in March 1970, but not before performing the important task of paving the way for future Islamist organizations in the country.¹⁰ Furthermore, its members remained anchored within the system, thus exerting pressure to exact concessions from the state on moral, socioeconomic (e.g., opposition to socialist policies; pushing for a family law based on *shari'ah*, etc.), and cultural issues (accelerating the teaching of the Arabic language, increasing the number of religious programs on television, etc.).¹¹

Al-Qiyam was not unique in using Islam as a form of resistance to the regime. A traditional current linked to the Jamaat al-Ulama, successor of the pre-independence "reformist" association founded in 1931 by Ibn Badis, and close to al-Qiyam, expressed on several occasions its opposition to government policies and what it perceived as the Westernization of Algerian society and the degradation of Islamic values. One of the bitterest attacks against Boumediene's socialist policies and the alleged breakdown of morals in Algeria came from one of the forefathers of Algerian Islamism, the Imam Abdellatif Soltani. In 1974, he published *Al Mazdaqiya hia 'asl al ishtiraqiya* (Mazdaqism is the Source of Socialism),¹² considered the manifesto of Algerian Islamism, in which the imam criticized Socialism as a foreign ideology incompatible with Islam, a

religion that does not prohibit private ownership. In his view, although Islam is a doctrine of social justice, it has no relationship with the state's conception of Muslim socialism.¹³ Sheikh Soltani also attacked the atheism that resulted from the secular teaching provided in the public schools. He saw *shari'ah* as the answer to all the problems faced by society, a perspective that prevailed in the 1990s amongst most radical Islamist factions.

Another group of Algerian Islamists was made up of Arabic teachers educated in Middle Eastern universities. Their best representative until his death in 2003 was Mahfoud Nahnah, leader of the non-violent Islamist association Al-Irshad wa'l Islah (Orientation and Reform), which gave rise in 1990 to a political party, Harakat al Mujtama' al-Islami, known as Hamas. Nahnah belonged to the larger Da'wa wa al tabligh, linked to Jama'at al-Ikhwan al Muslimin (Muslim Brothers). This group waged a bitter ideological struggle against Boumediene's socialist policies. Although Nahnah resorted to minor acts of sabotage in the 1970s because of his opposition to the 1976 National Charter leftist orientation, Nahnah's association and party have held a moderate discourse (reference to human rights, non-violence, work for women, etc.). Nahnah's followers endeavor to re-Islamize Algerian society through persuasion and, as will be seen, only reluctantly decided to create a political party in 1990.¹⁴ In the 1970s, adherents of this movement chose the language issue, as well as the family question (woman's rights, divorce, inheritance), as their battleground. The question of language had a utilitarian value, for the Arabic-trained students felt that their education was lacking because it offered few job prospects compared to that of French-educated students. Thus, their emphasis on the importance of Arab-Islamic values was motivated primarily by socioeconomic considerations.

The emergence of Islamist political parties in Algeria cannot be understood without explaining the conditions which have given rise to the Islamist movement in general. Clearly, even though the question of Islam in the Algerian political system has always been central, the more recent phenomenon of Islamism as a radical protest movement is the result of a combination of factors, first and foremost of which has been the almost total failure of social, economic, and cultural modernization, combined with the consequences of one of the most excruciating colonial experiences which continues to exert its effects on the evolution of Algerian society.

Modernization in Algeria was understood in a material sense and failed to take into account the need for secularization, which, despite Islamist claims to the contrary, is not necessarily antithetical to Islamic values.¹⁵ Further, the post-independence FLN regime's ineffective developmental policies and the intransigence of the party and the state's personnel to admit the failures of the overall program have led to their total loss of legitimacy and credibility. The regime failed deplorably in its attempt to reconcile a Western modernization model, albeit without its democratic principles, with a traditional, patriarchal society which, in many ways, it helped perpetuate as a neo-patriarchy¹⁶ because of its demagogic and equivocal position on religious and cultural issues. The corruption and inefficiency of the regime, inhibiting any effective

developmental policies, led to intolerable stagnation. Obviously, the shortcoming of the developmentalist strategy cannot be blamed solely on the state, for the demographic explosion contributed a great deal to aggravation of socioeconomic problems. Further, the trauma that followed the chaotic urbanization resulting from the dislocation of traditional society debilitated the precarious modernization program, especially in the sociocultural realm, resulting in an identity crisis with disastrous consequences. The defeat of Arab nationalism and the concomitant humiliations suffered by Arab regimes at the hands of Israel, coupled with the Iranian Revolution, provided further ingredients for the expansion of the Islamist movement.

Islamism has always found a fertile terrain in Algeria even though the political system has been dominated by ostensibly secular elites. Islamists were present in the nationalist movement and continued to hold important positions in the state and party institutions after independence. Further, the presence in the 1960s of hundreds of Egyptian volunteers, primarily Islamists, sent by Gamal Abd al-Nasser to teach Arabic, had a major influence on many Algerian educators. An additional factor that facilitated the rapid expansion of Islamism was the state's monopoly over religion and its decision to build thousands of mosques whose "volunteer," often self-proclaimed Imams it could not control. For example, in 1962, there were only 2,000 mosques in the country, whereas 30 years later that number reached 11,221, 6,000 of which were built by the state.¹⁷ In November 2008, the number reached 15,000, according to the Minister of Religious Affairs.¹⁸ The existence of thousands of mosques is, of course, only natural in a country where 99 percent of the population are Muslim. However, the mosques were not limited to spiritual activities and worship; they became the political base of the Islamist movement and the place where the future leaders of the political parties, as well as emirs, who would eventually head terrorist units, were formed. The state has never been able to control the mosques. The authorities have admitted that there are more mosques than imams.

By the 1980s, the state-appointed imams had been discredited because of their compliance with the regime and their apolitical inclinations. In the realm of education, the state created its own gravediggers, the Arabic-trained teachers with no real prospects for employment, for the state failed—or was unwilling—to set up adequate structures to hire them. By 1988, FIS, founded in March 1989, had already established control over most of the mosques in the country. These mosques were ideal political forums for the Islamists to propagate their ideology and to exploit for political purposes. The mosques constituted the embryo of a counter-power to the state and of the archaic structures of the party. This was the space where marginalized youth could be indoctrinated.¹⁹

Undoubtedly, the regime's policies were conducive to the growth of the Islamist movement, for, despite its authoritarian nature, it never set the boundaries for the Islamists' activities and their allies within the state. To the extent that they did not threaten its rule, the regime allowed the Islamists to operate freely within state and society and even encouraged them to launch

attacks against the secular Left, which also had its allies within the state bureaucracy, mostly francophone cadres. In many ways, the regime, in fact, favored the spread of Islamist ideology not only because it allowed the building of thousands of public and private, uncontrolled mosques, but also through founding Islamic institutes, flooding television with religious programs, and by allocating substantial resources to the holding of international seminars on Islamic thought. It is in fact the state's contradictory policies *vis-à-vis* the Islamists which bolstered the bold stance of the movement, especially in the aftermath of the October 1988 riots.

Radical Islamism in Algeria displayed more violent features in the 1980s in spite of the rather accommodating disposition, if not encouragement at times, of the Chadli Bendjedid's regime (1979–92) toward the movement in general. This violence took place in the universities where bloody encounters with Islamist students, mobilized around cultural and moralistic themes, to leftist/or secular students, Berberists, and to people who did not share the Islamists' interpretation of Islam. Curiously enough, it was the speeding up of the Arabization campaign that led to increased contestation owing to growing cultural distinctiveness, but also to the lack of opportunities for the emerging Arabic-educated elite.²⁰ In other words, these groups disguised their socioeconomic demands behind an ideological discourse built on religious symbols. In fact, the fifth demand in the Islamist appeal of November 12, 1982, which included, *inter alia*, the full implementation of *shari'ah*, demanded that citizens be given access to national wealth through legal means, such as agriculture, trade, or industry. "But, this can be realized only if everyone is offered the same opportunities, without discrimination."²¹

Arabic-speaking students were not alone in using violence to express their frustration with a system that tended to marginalize them. In fact, the 1979 Iranian Revolution bolstered some of the most radical voices of Algerian Islamism—although Shi'ism is more or less non-existent in Algeria. Algerian Islamists used the opportunity—which coincided with the change of regime in Algeria—to make their demands on the new president more forcefully: the introduction of Islamic teaching from kindergarten to university; the creation of specialized Islamic sections in high schools and universities; the opening of Islamic universities; teaching the Qu'ran by popular associations; total freedom for religious associations under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in order to build mosques; training of *ulama* (religious scholars) and imams; increasing the number of religious programs on TV and radio; a ban on selling anything offensive to Islam; a guarantee that the population observe the precepts of Islam and penalize those who violate them.²² The regime could not ignore demands emanating from members of the influential *ulama* association, who were well entrenched in important ministries (Higher Education, Justice, Education, Religious Affairs, etc.) and in FLN.

The most extremist, albeit small, Islamist groups rallied around Mustapha Bouyali, founder in 1982 and emir of the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA) until his violent death in 1987. Bouyali attempted to coordinate an all-out *jihad* against the regime. His actions epitomized the impulsive response

opposed by some Algerians to the lack of democratic channels through which to express their frustration and disenchantment with modernization. The forerunner of MIA was an organization, the Group for the Struggle against the Illicit, also created by Bouyali, which had launched attacks against bars and individuals. The group had little impact, though, and soon Bouyali was compelled to seek a more effective method against the regime, i.e., armed struggle. Although many Islamists were in agreement with Bouyali regarding the foundation of an Islamic state in Algeria, an equally important number of Islamist activists did not share the violence he and his followers advocated and carried out. Bouyali's tactics resembled Blanquism in that the emir seemed to believe that a small, well-disciplined organization, made up of determined individuals, resorting to political assassinations and acts of sabotage, could seize power and hold on to it until they succeeded in winning over the population to their cause.²³ This belief was strengthened following the arrest in 1982 of Islamist figures with no links to MIA, such as A. Soltani, A. Sahnoun, and A. Madani, over incidents that took place at the University of Algiers. Bouyali's organization was soon dismantled by the authorities, but it took years before they could entrap Bouyali and some of his associates. His hardcore disciples were pardoned by Chadli Bendjedid in 1989 in the hope of preventing further radicalization of the movement; but, many of them eventually joined the guerrilla war waged since the early 1990s by much more extremist, well-equipped and better organized Islamist groups in Algeria. The actions carried out by the new generation of Jihadists are reminiscent of Bouyali's, although their targets, degree of sophistication, and brutality are in no way commensurate with the MIA.²⁴

The Islamist movement in Algeria also includes smaller groupings with views ranging from the most peaceful to the most fanatical. Although some of them were little known before the October 1988 events, many have been in existence since the 1970s. The participation of some young Algerians alongside the Afghan *mujahidun* in their war against the Soviets bolstered the prestige of these daring groups whose reputation is equaled only by their ruthlessness. They seem to act as autonomous bands, owing unconditional allegiance to an "emir." In the 1970s and 1980s, Al Muwahiddun, Ansar Allah, Junud al Allah, Da'wa of Sidi Bel Abbès (a western city in Algeria), Ahl al Da'wa of Laghouat (a southern city), al hijra wa al takfyr, and others, targeted bars, breweries, police stations, Soviet citizens (considered to be atheists), Soviet interests in Algeria, etc.²⁵ The nature of the relationship these groups established with FIS and its armed branches could not be clearly established.

In addition to these components of the movement, one should perhaps mention the Mouvement pour la Démocratie en Algérie (MDA), founded in 1984 by Algeria's first president, Ahmed Ben Bella (1962–65), released from house arrest in 1979. The literature of the party suggests some similarities between Ben Bella's²⁶ demands and those of the Islamists. This example is revealing insofar as it confirms the continuity between the Islamo-populism of the pre-independence nationalist movement and Islamism after 1962. Similarly, the second president of the wartime Provisional Government of the

Algerian Republic (GPRA, created in 1958), Youssef Benkhedda (1961–62), founded an Islamist party, al Ummah, in October 1989. Like the multitude of insignificant Islamist parties created throughout the country during the liberalization period, 1989–92, al Ummah made little impact on the political landscape beyond being an outspoken voice against the regime.

Throughout the 1980s, the Islamist movement remained fragmented and spanned from very peaceful fundamentalists and/or Islamists to absolutely extremist groups. Despite the Bouyali affair, the regime seemed to ignore the threat that radical Islamism represented and continued either to disregard the grievances of the movement or to make demagogic concessions (e.g., the Family Law of 1984, which reduced women to second-class status). The major concessions came in the form of an increase in religious programs and the programming of international symposia on Islam. The regime also decided to bring to the country in 1982 an Egyptian fundamentalist from the prestigious Al-Azhar Mosque, Muhammad al-Ghazali, to broadcast sermons on national TV and the radio. From 1984 onwards the imam headed the Department of Islamic Studies at the University of Constantine (eastern Algeria) and had a powerful influence on its students. This imam, held in very high esteem by Chadli Bendjedid himself, served as an ideological cushion to the religious pretensions of the regime, but, through his ambiguous discourse, he also succeeded in encouraging the growth of Islamism in the country.²⁷ He enjoyed a great deal of prestige in a country still suffering from cultural schizophrenia, due to 132 years of brutal French colonial rule, and lacking well-trained autochthonous theologians. But the influence of the late al-Ghazali and other Islamist figures in Algeria cannot account for the massive expansion of Islamism in Algeria after the events of October 1988. Long before the riots, Islamists began to “re-appropriate” Islam, i.e., remove it from the control of the state, an evolution which added much to the de-legitimization of the state.

THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The various crises which rocked the Algerian state and society in the late 1980s led to a series of occurrences which confirmed already unmistakable developments:

- The crises provided the context for the emergence of political parties; even before the state decided to open up the political system, a movement toward the creation of “ideological trends” within the ruling party FLN was made public.
- Algerians ceased to accept the authority of the rulers, thus giving the latter no choice, short of unacceptable repression, than to open the hitherto closed system.
- Groups were already combining in order to bring about change and to change the rules of the system and have access to state power.

Under such conditions, it is clear that the regime had little room to maneuver but had to proceed with liberalization in the hope that it would stem the wave of opposition that welled up spontaneously.

Although the Islamists neither initiated nor were the major force behind the October riots, they succeeded in playing a mediating role between the regime and the rioters and to fill the political vacuum that was suddenly available to them. The meeting of two towering Islamist figures with the president conferred upon the movement—and the future party—a degree of political legitimacy unmatched by any other opposition party. Of major significance is the remarkable speed with which a considerable segment of the Islamist movement was able to constitute itself as a national party and use the opening up of the political system to its own advantage.²⁸

Following the fateful events of October 1988, the most influential members of the Râbitat al-Da'wa (League of Preaching), led by Ahmed Sahnoun, and including the most important figures of Algerian Islamism, such as Abbassi Madani, Mahfoud Nahnah, Ali Benhadj, Mohamed Saïd, Hachemi Sahnouni, and many others, endeavored to unify the Islamist movement and provide it with a structure. The purpose of the league was to be apolitical, confining itself to moral issues, i.e., a league “in the service of God and of Islam [that] would struggle in the realm of thinking.”²⁹ Yet, it soon became apparent that the mutual suspicions, the conflicting ambitions, and the distinct backgrounds of the leaders would make a unified movement a remote possibility. The most radical among the leaders, the fervent propagandist Ali Benhadj, advocated the creation of a mass organization which would be named the “Islamic United Front.”

Theologians, such as Mahfoud Nahnah and Abdallah Djaballah, rejected the idea; however, Abbassi Madani, a product of the nationalist movement, sanctioned the idea and even substituted the term “salvation” for “united,” because “we want to save this *ummah* and this people.”³⁰ Mahfoud Nahnah repudiated the creation of such an entity, arguing that “an Islamic party must be led by an elite of religious scholars, not by immature kids.”³¹ He eventually instituted his own association which would be transformed into a relatively popular political party.

Abdallah Djaballah, who was close to the ideas of the Egyptian fundamentalists, Hassan al Banna and Muhammad al-Ghazali, created his own party in 1989, Harakat al-Nahda al-Islamiyyah (the Movement for the Islamic Renaissance, Al-Nahda). Although close to Hamas and hostile to numerous ideas disseminated by FIS, Djaballah, unlike Nahnah, has maintained cordial relations with that party, despite the dissolution of FIS in March 1992.

THE ISLAMIC SALVATION FRONT

Although the public announcement came on March 10, 1989, FIS was founded on February 18, 1989³² at al Sunna Mosque in the poor neighborhood of Bab el Oued, in Algiers.

FIS's immediate popularity and success can be explained by the fact that it constituted a front capable of mobilizing a marginalized youth around an experiential project and a moral order in total opposition to the corrupt system in place since independence. The party gained mass support, especially among the underprivileged. The largest component was made up of a *lumpen-proletariat* which resulted from the dislocation of traditional society, chaotic urbanization, and from the demobilization orchestrated by the state. The rest of the movement was made up of the unemployed; the *hittistes*, i.e., those who lean against walls all day with nothing to do; those with a diploma in Arabic but with no job (*Arabophones*); Arabic teachers; students and graduates in the physical sciences; and merchants hostile to state socialism who made financial donations for the constructions of mosques and to fund the activities of FIS; artisans; workers; jewelers; engineers; former FLN militants; some urban intellectuals,³³ as well as sympathizers disgusted by the corrupt practices of the regime. Ideological and social differences were blurred by religious solidarity, thus obfuscating the real nature of conflict within state and society.

Unquestionably, FIS was not only the main opposition party, but also the most popular and persuasive organization to have emerged and gained from the liberalization of the political system. This mass party, led by an elite, was the most mobilized and best structured Islamist party in the country. Prior to their arrest in the summer of 1991 and their condemnation a year later, Dr Abbassi Madani, a university professor, but by no means a theologian,³⁴ and Ali Benhadj, a high school teacher, dominated the party. The Salvation Front's leaders claimed that they expressed the general will of the Algerian people and promised to implement *shari'ah* once in power.³⁵ Not only was it implied that there was no regard for any republican constitution,³⁶ but the party leaders bluntly asserted that "if we win the next legislative elections [scheduled for July 1991, but postponed until December 1991], we will suspend the Constitution, and will ban the secular and socialist parties, we will immediately implement *shari'ah* and expel the president of the republic."³⁷ Undoubtedly, although FIS was not a religious party, its emergence augured the *divinization* (deification) of politics, therefore precluding the expression of secular beliefs and the emergence of a genuine civil society.³⁸ FIS, like externally created parties (i.e., parties that do not emerge out of a legislative system), developed a "total formula for the society, or an ideology that excludes a willingness to tolerate opposition."³⁹ Yet, the context of Algerian political culture, marked by decades of authoritarianism and demagogic puritan values, could only have a negative impact on the evolution of the party.

Even though FIS was the main beneficiary of the quasi-democratization process, the violent actions of some of its members (attacks on women, bars, disruption of concerts, etc.) and the inflammatory sermons and speeches of its main leaders led to suspicions that the party was not committed to democratic principles. It is paradoxical that the Islamists condemned democracy even though they could freely express their hostility to it as a result of political liberalization within the context of the botched democratization process.

Indeed, the authorities never sought a negotiated pact among the various political groups to ensure that the transition occur under normal conditions.

FIS was not simply a political party; it was essentially a political movement. The heterogeneous leadership succeeded in channeling what was virtually a leaderless protest movement and to establish itself as the only true opposition—an alternative to the regime. Undoubtedly, FIS owed its success partly to its propensity to act as the heir of the “authentic” FLN of the revolution, i.e., the party which, for Algerians, incarnated the unity of the Algerian people, egalitarianism, dignity, independence, etc. In other words, FIS expropriated FLN’s ideological discourse and wrapped it in an Islamic cover, and portraying FLN as a party which has betrayed those ideals and accusing its members of having used the party to enrich themselves at the expense of the masses. Furthermore, in order to defeat its adversaries, FIS, like FLN on the eve of the Algerian revolution of 1954, claimed to be the *only* force capable of offering salvation to the Algerian society. In practice, this meant developing not only a hegemonic discourse which it can use to fight its foes, mainly the democratic (secular) parties that reject its claims, but also to establish its hegemony *tout court*. By identifying itself with Islam, FIS was able to discredit parties that resisted the movement’s hegemonic ambitions and thus contributed to furthering the atomization of society sought by the regime. Worse still, the party’s discourse suggested that whoever was not with FIS was opposed to Islam and to God.

Notwithstanding the violence it practiced regularly and the seriousness of its unveiled objectives, and despite resistance from the military and important segments of civil society, the regime, in violation of the 1989 Law on Political Associations, legalized FIS in September 1989.⁴⁰

By this time FIS had already gauged its popularity among the youth and many other social strata. The highly discredited FLN could hardly aspire to match FIS’s power of mobilization. The so-called democratic/secular parties for their part were unable to reach any agreement to form a common front to counter the power of the Islamists and/or prevent their manipulation by the old ruling party. Unlike FIS, which focused its attacks on the state, the secular/democratic parties relied on the state to contain the Islamist wave and protect their interests against the progress of the Islamist “mob.”

FIS’S IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL PROGRAM

The difficulty in studying the defunct FIS derives from its heterogeneous membership and complex structures. Indeed, from its creation in February 1989 until its banning in March 1992, FIS was composed of a variety of groups and ideological currents, e.g., Salafiyyah, Jaz’ara (Algernianist), “Afghans,” Hijra wa al Takfir, etc. The discordant leadership, bringing together radicalized salafists and new activist militants,⁴¹ never really agreed on the means to achieve power—their principal preoccupation—in order to establish a loosely defined Islamist state. The aspirations of the different groups diverged greatly. Many upheld a millenarian vision in which recourse to violence is an intrinsic

element and whose major aim is the dismantling of the nation-state as it currently exists; for others, the objective was limited to installing the Islamist elite in place of the elite in charge of the state who were perceived as having failed in both its modernizing tasks and in preserving Islamic values; others had no clear strategy at all. What is certain, however, is that the main objective was the appropriation of the state by legal (i.e., electoral) means for some or through violence for others. This explains the contradictory statements concerning the need or refusal to participate in the electoral process.

Notwithstanding the heterogeneous character of the Islamic Salvation Front, a dominant ideological discourse did emerge regarding important political and social issues. But it should be pointed out that because of the ideologization of Islam, an occurrence which has inevitably shifted the essence of the debate from theological concerns to norms and values of the sociopolitical domain, the core beliefs of Islam had either been retrograded or entirely occluded.⁴²

If one attends the sermons delivered by its imams or reads the publications circulated by the party, one begins to appreciate the influence of Egyptian and Indo-Pakistani Islamists, who have provided secondhand, low-quality interpretations of the works of al-Banna, Qutb, al-Mawdudi, and al-Ghazali.⁴³

The chief commentaries of FIS's leaders concentrate on the "evils" that have plagued modern society and are leading to its "decadence": HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, moral turpitude, prostitution, co-education in schools and universities, the mixing of the sexes in workplaces, and contemporary ideologies (liberalism, Socialism, Communism, feminism, etc.), which have, according to FIS leaders, replaced religion and corrupted societies. All of the evils of the *jahiliyyah* (those aspects that characterized pre-Islamic society) are said to be present in the West and have been blindly emulated in Islamic societies. The only solution to all these problems is to be found in Islam.⁴⁴ The state in Muslim societies is accused of not having performed its duties, of having deviated from the divine commandments, and in fact for having contributed to the *jahiliyyah*. The regimes in these societies are considered to be infidels and should consequently be fought through *jihad*; killing (*qital*) them is *halal* (legal). The other forces which have contributed to the decadence of Muslim societies are, according to FIS leaders, Ali Benhadj in particular: journalists, writers, artists, the state's *ulama*, secularist parties which "militate with unequaled impudence for the separation of state and religion: they are the creatures of colonialism in our country."⁴⁵ These groups must be fought because they are opposed to *jihad*; in fact, "democracy is against the *jihad* which it views as a manifestation of violence and interference in public liberties."⁴⁶

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of FIS differs from the organization of the Egyptian religious movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. FIS was more like an umbrella party which admitted to its ranks Islamist activists from varied backgrounds. FIS's organizational structure was quite simple: it

resembled a pyramid at the top of which was the National Executive Bureau and the *Majlis al-Shura* (consultative assembly), the majority of its 40 or so members that composed it being kept secret. The party imitated the organizational structure of the wartime FLN at the local, regional, and national levels. Most of the decisions were made by the leaders at the top of the pyramid who exerted tight control over the functioning of the organization. At the base, decisions were transmitted through Neighborhood Committees arranged around the mosques. However, the relationship between the base and the apex proved to be rather loose, for the membership was composed mostly of party sympathizers instead of true followers.

The most impressive aspect of FIS was its mobilizing capacity, as witnessed by two successful elections. The weakness of any other credible parties, democratic or otherwise, combined with FIS's power, was all too apparent during the municipal and departmental elections of June 12, 1990. FIS entered the contest with understandable self-assurance: having demonstrated its ability to mobilize (in massive street demonstrations) and, on countless occasions, to intimidate; and having appointed itself the one and only representative of true Islam, thereby virtually preventing any other party from even mentioning Islam. FIS won an astonishing landslide victory with 54 per cent of the votes against 28 per cent for FLN, and 12 per cent for the independents. FIS's victory at the polls proved that its influence extended to most social categories and was no longer limited to the marginalized of society. FIS, in fact, emerged from these elections as the only force both opposed to the old system and capable of bringing about its downfall. Although it lost more than a million votes in the legislative elections of December 26, 1991, FIS succeeded again to win the majority of the votes in the first ballot and was well placed to win an absolute majority in the National Assembly in the second ballot scheduled for January 16, 1992.⁴⁷ But the second ballot never took place, as the military canceled the elections altogether, banned FIS in March 1992, and imprisoned its main leaders. Before long the armed groups that had reluctantly accepted FIS's electoral strategy began a military campaign against the regime and against anyone who did not back them. FIS, as a political organization, eventually fragmented, with its most radical elements forming various armed groups, the dreaded Islamic Armed Groups (GIA), which committed some of the most horrific acts known to humankind. The actions claimed by FIS's military branch, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), which agreed to lay down its arms in 1997, did not seem to have a homogeneous organizational structure with efficient communication channels between the civilian leadership and the armed groups. Its leaders were eventually pardoned under the terms of the Civil Concord of 1999 and the Law on National Reconciliation of 2005.

In 1999, FIS took its first political position by calling on its militants to vote in favor of Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, former Foreign Minister and son of a reputable member of the *ulama*, in the presidential election.⁴⁸ This was the first step toward a political comeback. FIS's return was predicated on the renunciation of two key demands that it had made at the peak of its success: the establishment of a never-defined Islamic state and the definition of Western

democracy as *kufr* (blasphemy). FIS took advantage of the tactical change in the government's policy, which had "moved from exclusion-eradication to negotiation-integration."⁴⁹ Nevertheless, FIS's charismatic leaders were under close surveillance and their actions constrained. Thus, Ali Benhadj was arrested and interrogated in September 2003 because he was preparing a press conference. Before that he had met Ali Benhadjar and Madani Mezrag, of LIDD and AIS, respectively. Internally, Madani and Benhadj's fundamental objective was to prevent the leaders, such as Madani Lazreg and Mustapha Kartali, who had negotiated the truce with ANP in 1997, from gaining the upper hand.

Meanwhile, during Bouteflika's first term of office, in August 2002, a minority, dissident group from FIS met at the Belgian-German border. Dubbed the Congress Abdelkader Hachani, after the former FIS leader assassinated in Algiers in November 1999, the gathering illustrated the complex situation that has long characterized FIS and its legacy. Rather than unifying FIS, it accentuated the divergences between leaders of the interior (those who remained in Algeria) and those based outside (mirroring, ironically, FLN's historic 1956 meeting in the Soummam), such as Rabah Kebir, who lives in exile in Germany. The conflict revolved around the question of legitimacy, namely, who was the true heir of the historic FIS. Attempts at the congress to create a single authority and designate a spokesman for the party failed. Despite the dissolution of two groups that represented FIS abroad in the early 1990s, the Parliamentary Delegation Overseas and the Council of Coordination,⁵⁰ there continued to be two competing groups, the new provisional committee resulting from the congress in Belgium and the Instance Exécutive du FIS à l'Étranger (IEFE), the executive authority directed by the Bonn-based Rabah Kebir. In addition, the rift between the historic and military leaders widened. On one side, veteran FIS figures Abdelkader Boukhamkham and Madani Mazrag constituted a base of support for Kebir's IEFE. On the other side, fellow FIS veteran leaders Kamel Guemazi and Ali Djeddi supported the alliance between the *jaz'ara* and Salafist trends. In addition, the previous primacy of the interior over the exterior was now contested. Following the arrest of Abassi Madani and Ali Benhadj in late June 1991, the Congress of Fidelity (held in July 1991 in the eastern city of Batna) had designated them the supreme source of legitimacy. Rabah Kebir and his two lieutenants, Abdelkrim Ghemmati and Abdelkrim Ould Adda (Brussels), backed by Abdelkader Boukhamkham and Madani Mazrag (Algeria), now rejected this designation. They felt that Madani's years in prison and, later, under house arrest prevented him from making any sound political judgments. Both Kamel Guemazi and Ali Djeddi recognized "the primacy of the interior over the exterior," but criticized Abassi Madani; they emphasized the collegial structure of the decision-making, and designated the Sant' Egidio initiative as the ultimate political reference.

Although by far the most powerful, popular (even years after its dissolution) Islamist political party in Algeria, FIS was not the only Islamist party; thus, it always faced Islamist challengers. Three other parties enjoyed a relatively sizable following, because of their proclaimed "moderation" and their

middle-class membership. Two of them, Hamas and En-Nahda, which have been co-opted into the political system, owed their comparative popularity to their long standing in the mosque and *da'wa* movements.

THE MOVEMENT FOR ISLAMIC SOCIETY

This party, identified with the most well-known figure of Algerian Islamism, Mahfoud Nahnah (1942–2003), was created in December 1990. Nahnah, a staunch anti-socialist, was the first representative of the Muslim Brotherhood in Algeria. A professor of Arabic, he belonged to the larger *Da'wa wa al tabligh*, linked to the *Jama'at al-Ikhwan al Muslimin* (Muslim Brothers). The political party he created, *Harakat al Mujtama' al Islamiy*, known as Hamas, emerged from the non-violent Islamist association *Al-Irshad wa'l Islah* (Orientation and Reform), which Nahnah and his close collaborators founded in 1989. Nahnah was a "*salafi* of the left," i.e., more moderate than the Egyptian Hassan Al-Banna. Hamas, renamed the Movement for Society and Peace (MSP) in 1997 to conform to the 1996 Constitution,⁵¹ has a national representation in the country and was from early on the FIS's main challenger. While initially an important proportion of its membership was made up of Arabic teachers educated in Middle Eastern universities, it expanded to include middle-class, well-educated members. Initially, Nahnah and his disciples were reluctant to create a political party; instead, they sought to integrate all the Islamist parties, associations, and individuals into the National Islamic Alliance, an idea strongly rejected by FIS, thus creating a lasting animosity between FIS and Hamas. Nahnah opposed the creation of an Islamic party because he feared that this would lead to the fragmentation of Islam itself. He believed that the Islamic nation in its entirety was the only Islamic party, which is God's party based on divine laws.⁵² There were profound differences between the two parties at all levels:

1. While FIS had a diverse leadership (Ali Benhadj and Abbassi Madani are very different individuals in terms of their backgrounds, generation, and outlook), MSP has one leader with a very distinct ideology; the less charismatic successor, Aboudjera Soltani, succeeded him as head of the party.
2. The membership of the party is more mature and much better educated. The members have usually undergone a long process of initiation and are much more involved in the social and cultural activities of the party.
3. The party is more committed to pluralism and the democracy.
4. Hamas/MSP has never had hegemonic pretensions.
5. Hamas advocates a democratic Islamic state, *Shuraqraty'a*, i.e., a form of government which combines an Islamic conception of democracy based on consultation and opposed to the concentration of power/despotism with modern notions of democracy.
6. Whilst FIS vowed to ban secular parties once in power and to impose itself as a hegemonic party, Nahnah believed that secular/non-religious parties

could coexist with Islamist parties. The party has embraced the political system and joined two pro-government parties, FLN and the National Democratic Rally (RND), to form the “presidential alliance,” which has supported Abdelaziz Bouteflika and his policies. MSP participates in elections regularly and has representatives in the legislature and in the Executive Branch.

7. The MSP has a less ambiguous project for society than FIS did when it rose to prominence.
8. While FIS sought to accede rapidly to power and to impose *shari'ah* immediately, the leaders of Hamas/MSP endeavor to educate society first before an Islamic state can be established. In sum, it aims to transform society from below, by peaceful means.

Although it is often difficult to distinguish between rhetoric and true belief, the commitment of MSP to democratic values and pluralism seems genuine. During the government-political parties conferences held in Algiers in July 1991, Nahnah said that “even Allah sought to have an opposition: He created Satan in order to have this opposition.”⁵³ Unlike FIS, which saw pluralism as *fitnah* (disharmony) and a threat to the unity of the Islamic community, MSP leaders hold the position that “geographic, linguistic, and doctrinal diversity in the context of Islam [is] a natural and healthy phenomenon which enriches life and stimulates society by means of *shurah*, dialogue, loyal competition, exchange of ideas and constructive criticism.”⁵⁴ The party programs make clear that any Algerian constitution would be inspired by Islamic principles in order to institute an Islamic system of government based on *shurah*, equality, freedom, and justice. This vision of society is incompatible with the Islamic Salvation Front’s, for Hamas insists that individual and public liberties—of conscience, thought, expression, publication, association, the formation of political parties and unions, and for peaceful assembly—would be guaranteed, “provided that these liberties are not exploited to destabilize the bases of society, to plot against the nation or to spread immorality among its members.”⁵⁵ More importantly, Nahnah often affirmed that “Islam must be freely chosen by the people, who would always be able to vote for a non-Islamic party in the future.”⁵⁶ This is in stark contrast to the forceful statement Ali Benhadj made in a sermon at the Kouba mosque in Algiers that “all the parties that are opposed to the Islamic solution are parties of the devil.”⁵⁷

Nahnah’s commitment to non-violence, pluralism, and democratic values was declared on many occasions. During the November 1995 presidential campaign, in which he ran as one of four candidates, Nahnah made a very revealing statement which captures his party’s vision:

[O]urs is a moderate Islamic movement which does not believe in violence. It stresses moral values and adherence to them, and it renounces violence as a means to reach or monopolize power. Our movement recognizes democracy and promotes its principles. We are committed to accepting the will of

the majority of the people in any free elections held in the country. If our movement wins the majority's confidence, the minority's views and interests will be respected. We believe in a pluralist system in which all the various parties compete to win the votes on the basis of their election programs in a secure atmosphere dominated by respect, understanding, moderation, and the rule of law.⁵⁸

One of the major issues dividing MSP and FIS is the question of gender. The moderation of Nahnah's movement on this issue is particularly interesting because of the controversy that the woman question has aroused in Algeria since its independence in 1962. Unlike FIS, which restricted the role of women to raising children and the home, MSP argued that, based on *shari'ah*, woman is man's equal "in struggle and at work, in education, in the building of civilization, and in the elaboration of universal thought whose distinction is equity and the sense of moderation."⁵⁹ In fact, MSP has an important women's section which is very active in social and cultural activities. Many of these women are university graduates. For MSP, women are a central component of human experience and have been created by God as equal to men. Therefore, they are "entitled to organize their lives, control their property, and assume part of the responsibility in the economic, political, and social environment."⁶⁰ The party's program strives to "liberate women from ancient traditions not related to Islam," to encourage them to "accomplish their mission alongside men," to increase their active participation in public, political, social, and economic activities, and to reform "the arbitrary laws *vis-à-vis* women."⁶¹ These views are more progressive than those of any other Islamist party in Algeria.

Overall, the MSP is opposed to any form of extremism, including religious fanaticism. Like his followers, Nahnah believed that "Islam is based on moderation and balance as well as reason, dialogue, and conviction. It calls for tolerance and is historically known for the acceptance of different points of views and ideas and their protection."⁶² For Nahnah, Islamic extremism derives from "ignorance of Islam and obedience to the culture of hatred" and to the "lack of intellectual efforts in Islamic innovation in areas related to economic, social, and political aspects of daily life."⁶³ This is consistent with his opposition to the creation of FIS in 1989, for he believed that an Islamic party must be run by religious scholars "not by a bunch of kids."

Before it became too closely associated with the regime, MSP proposed a project for society that was more credible and appealing to much of the middle class. The moderation shown by the party and its leaders, which has led to accusations of shady deals with the regime, may in fact be part of a methodical approach to changing society. In the mid-1990s, in the midst of the violence that raged throughout the country, MSP gained ground. Indeed, whereas the party obtained less than 6 percent of the votes in the legislative elections of December 1991, in the presidential election of November 1995 Mahfoud Nahnah garnered 25 percent of the votes. It is quite plausible that FIS's moderate membership, opposed to the armed struggle, figured in that percentage.

MSP's weakness stemmed from its Islamist base, which frequently criticized its positions and decisions over the years. The party was censured for not condemning the suspension of the electoral process in January 1992 and for its decision not to join the second round of the Sant'Egidio initiative, which in early January 1995 brought together in Rome the first "conciliators" (*réconciliateurs*), FIS, the secular and mostly Kabyle Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS), the Workers' Party (PT), and individual members of FLN, where they agreed on the *Contrat National*, designed to form the basis for an end to the civil war. Hamas/MSP's generally poor showing at the polls led analysts to offer two possible explanations: either the party had a weak following or it had accepted the authorities' manipulation of electoral results, at times to its own advantage, at other times to its detriment. For instance, in October 1997, MSP won 69 seats in the National Assembly but dropped to 38 seats four years later. Its marginal status was also evident during the local elections in 2002, which saw the party lose 56 seats in the departmental assemblies (APW) and 871 seats in the municipal councils (APC). In the May 2007 legislative elections, the MSP gained 14 seats, bringing it to 52.

The kind of compromises that Hamas/MSP entered into led critics to depict the movement as the regime's third party, after FLN and RND. However, unlike FLN and RND, Hamas/MSP members never held the most important ministerial posts, such as education. They seem to have agreed to this arrangement with the authorities as a tradeoff for their participation in the government.

MOVEMENT OF THE ISLAMIC RENAISSANCE (MOUVEMENT DE LA NAHDA ISLAMIQUE)

Harakat An-Nahdah al-Islamiyyah (En-Nahda) was founded in 1990 by Saâd Djaballah Guetaf, better known as Abdallah Djaballah. The party, concentrated in the eastern part of the country, is identified with Djaballah, who in 1973 (when he was 17) founded the first "free mosque" (i.e., one not controlled by the state). He created some *Jama'at* (groups) which began preaching in improvised mosques—caves, apartments, etc. His objective has always concentrated on the erection of an Islamic state. In 1974, he created al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah, which gave birth to the political party in 1990. The decision to create the party in early autumn was, as for Hamas, the result of FIS's opposition to the National Islamic Alliance proposed by Nahnah.

Before becoming a party, the association led by Djaballah sought to foment a quasi-cultural revolution in the country by occupying certain sectors. According to Djaballah, there were four phases in this revolutionary process:

1. Establish mosques in universities.
2. Set up mosques in the educational sector.
3. Erect mosques in the industrial facilities.
4. "The fourth step consists of a vertical and wide diffusion, with the help of the youth inspired by the orientations it learned from the books of the

Muslim Brotherhood, of al-Mawdudi, in particular, but also of independent *ulama* and of their recordings on audio tapes, such as al-Ghazali, al-Bouti, Malek Bennabi, and Abdelhamid Kechk.”⁶⁴

The Nahda party lost out to the creation of FIS as many of its members joined the newly formed, more radical/populist organization. Yet, despite the animosity between Madani and Djaballah, the latter remained quite close to the FIS leadership. The regime, in fact, used him as a go-between in its negotiations with FIS in order to bring an end to the civil unrest that ravaged the country in the 1990s. The moderation of Djaballah, however, is predicated on fear of repression rather than genuine conviction that violence should not be used.

Nahda's objective remains the establishment of an Islamic state through the implementation of *shari'ah*, but within a pluralist and democratic framework. However, like FIS, Nahda, which would eventually experience various tumultuous changes, is hostile to the lawful existence and representation of secular parties. The party also vows to impose the wearing of the veil on Algerian women.⁶⁵

Owing to its small membership and its regional base, Nahda strove unsuccessfully for an alliance of Islamist parties. The party performed quite badly in the first round of the legislative elections in December 1991, obtaining barely over 2 percent of the vote.

Due to troubles within his party, Djaballah founded the Movement for National Reform (MRN). Djaballah has always presented himself, with some justification, as the sole leader of the legal Islamist opposition. Politically, the 2002 elections confirmed MRN's relative strength, garnering 7.7 percent of the votes, which translated into 43 seats in the National Popular Assembly, 374 seats in the departmental elections, and 39 seats in the municipal elections. Djaballah thus defeated MSP and wiped out his previous party, Ennahda, which he had only recently left. MRN's growing political influence was subsequently demonstrated in 2004 by parliament's passing laws forbidding the import of alcohol and voting inside military garrisons.

At the symbolic level, decision-making centers confirmed the enhanced status of Djaballah's party. Indeed, during the April 2004 presidential electoral campaign, the then regime's strongman, Major General Mohamed Lamari, declared that the army would respect the election results “even if Abdallah Djaballah was the winner.”⁶⁶ This provided the candidate with new weight, designating him as the leader of the Islamist tendency and showcasing him as the guarantee of the army's neutrality.

The presidential election of April 2004 also highlighted MRN's inability to assume a more central role in Algeria's political life. The fact that Abdallah Djaballah obtained a mere 5 percent of the votes meant that the moderate branch of Islam he represented had suffered a defeat. The continuing strength of radical Islamism was reflected in the fact that a significant number of Islamist sympathizers did not accept some of Djaballah's compromises, such as his fashioning of a tactical alliance with the secular Berberist Rally for

Culture and Democracy (RCD). Furthermore, even if MRN did achieve national recognition, its support was concentrated mainly in the eastern part of the country, in Skikda, Djaballah's home city. The decline of the party was evident in 2007 when it only gained three seats (down 40 seats) in the legislature, while his old party, *Harakat an-Nahdah* / Movement of the Islamic Renaissance, won five seats.

As mentioned above, apart from FIS, Hamas, and to a much lesser degree En-Nahda, which splintered at the turn of the century, the Islamist parties in Algeria remain very small and hardly qualify as political parties in the true sense of the term. Nevertheless, these parties, which, more often than not, are identified with their leaders, have obtained public exposure, raised issues, publicized their views in broadcast media and in print, and have gathered some following. Since they represent a current of opinion in Algerian society it is pertinent to mention some of them.

PARTY FOR ALGERIAN RENEWAL (PARTI DU RENOUVEAU ALGÉRIEN)

PRA was founded by Nourredine Boukrouh, a liberal economist and high state official (with membership in FLN). Boukrouh claims to be a disciple of Malek Bennabi (1905–73), a brilliant modernist Islamic thinker,⁶⁷ some of whose works have been edited by Boukrouh.

PRA, like the small political parties in Algeria, is identified with its leader. Boukrouh attracted attention in the mid-1980s through some staunchly anti-socialist articles published by the pro-government *Algérie-Actualité*,⁶⁸ which is close to the liberal views of President Chadli Bendjedid. Boukrouh has consistently supported economic liberalism and the private sector. PRA's economic program leaves no doubt as to its resolute economic liberalism; the role of the state should be limited to national defense, foreign affairs, important infrastructures, public education, protection of property and persons, environmental protection, etc.⁶⁹

In reality, although PRA is considered an Islamist party, Boukrouh has made few pronouncements which would characterize the party as such. Perhaps it is the often repeated references to Islam, albeit in its most modernist interpretation, which has led to the classification of the party in the Islamist category. There is no affinity between Boukrouh and the Islamists of FIS *vis-à-vis* whom he had expressed a great deal of contempt and on whom he places moral responsibility for the violence in the 1990s.

In the appeal for creation of the new organization, it is stated that "the PRA strives to be a national political party, anchored in the civilizational and Islamic values and in the Algerian patriotic traditions."⁷⁰ The party's program makes it clear, though, that the conception of Islam is adapted to modernity: "the best in Islam can only be the best in modernity."⁷¹ The program insists that modernity, as understood by the party, should not be confused with Westernization, for human rights, social and material progress, quality of life, positive mores, social justice, democracy, and woman's advancement are integral to Islam. Inspired most probably by Bennabi's thinking, the program

states that “Everything in the world that is done in the name of reason and intelligence and which has proved positive and useful for humankind is in itself a carrier of *Islamity*.”⁷² What is truly remarkable in the program is the attitude toward *shari’ah*:

PRA does not interpret it [*shari’ah*] ... as a sum of repressive commandments aimed at restricting the human being in general and the woman in particular, but as a historical and circumstantial response open to adaptation and enrichment when confronted with new situations.

PRA, however, avoids the debate over the controversial issue of secularism (*laïcité*), simply saying that this problem does not exist in Algeria since there are no antagonistic religious communities. However, despite the prudent position on this question, PRA implicitly attacked, without naming them, FIS leaders for deciding what is licit and illicit in religious matters and any Islamists who once in power would use Islam to establish a totalitarian order.⁷³

Despite its modernist discourse and moderation, PRA was unable to attract to its ranks more than 1,000 people. The majority of the membership is made up of men who have held important positions in the state’s administration. The party performed rather poorly in the municipal and departmental elections of June 1990, obtaining less than 1 percent of the vote. In the legislative elections in December 1991, PRA obtained only 1 percent of the vote. As presidential candidate, Boukrouh did badly in November 1995, getting only 5 percent of the votes. In the 2007 legislative elections, PRA did quite well, obtaining four seats, three more than in the 2002 election.

Other very insignificant Islamist and Islamist-leaning parties were created in the period 1989–91. These include the Al-Ummah Movement (Mouvement Al-Oumma), founded by one of the leaders of the Algerian War of Liberation Benyoussef Benkhedda, who withdrew from politics after independence; the Parti National Algérien (Algerian National Party), which advocates all-out liberalization of the economy and the application of *shari’ah*; and the Parti de l’Union Arabe Islamique Démocratique (Party of the Democratic Arab Islamic Union), whose objectives are to unify the *ummah* from the Gulf to the Atlantic, the application of *shari’ah*, and to consolidate democracy by respecting individual freedoms. These parties are very small and their existence is made possible only because the Law on Political Associations of 1989 required only 15 members as a precondition for the constitution of a party (Article 14). This partly explains the accelerated mushrooming of political parties, more often than not with almost no popular base. In addition to these very small Islamist parties, a multitude of Islamist organizations, ranging from the most peaceful to the most extreme and violent, such as the Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA), exterminated in 2002, had been in existence since the 1970s or have made their appearance in the 1990s. The most notorious are El-Muwahiddun, Ansar Allah, Junud Allah, Ikhwan fi Allah, Afghans, Daâwa wal Tabligh, Hijra wa al Takfir, etc. Today, the only remaining extremist party is the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), founded in 1998, which joined Al-Qaeda

in 2007 and renamed itself the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Further, it should be pointed out that the FLN, the single ruling party from 1962 until 1992, is also dominated by an important Islamist current. Some of the legislation enacted under its rule, such as the Family Law of 1984, suited the Islamist ideology of relegating women to second-class status. Furthermore, despite pressure from business groups and calls from economists who believe that Algeria loses billions because it refused to restore the universal weekend (Saturday-Sunday), the regime in 2009 managed to move it by just one day (Friday-Saturday instead of Thursday-Friday), due to pressure from Islamist political parties but also from Islamist sympathizers within the FLN.

NOTES

1. Islamism here is defined as a sociopolitical movement that uses religious symbols and discourse to achieve political power and have access to the state either through legal/peaceful or violent means.
2. See Yahia H. Zoubir, "State, Civil Society, and the Question of Radical Islamism in Algeria," in Ahmad Moussalli, ed., *Islamism in the Arab World* (Ithaca, NY: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 123–67.
3. Sigmund Neumann, "What is a Party?" in Andrew Milnor, ed., *Comparative Political Parties—Selected Readings* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969), pp. 26–7.
4. The arguments here draw from Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, "The Origin and Development of Political Parties," in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 6.
5. For a comprehensive chronological analysis of Islam's resistance to the state in Algeria, see Jean-Claude Vatin, "Puissance d'état et résistances islamiques en Algérie, XIX-XXe siècles. Approche mécanique," in Ernest Gellner et al., *Islam et politique au Maghreb* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1981), pp. 243–69.
6. Hugh Roberts, "Radical Islamism and the Dilemma of Algerian Nationalism: The Embattled Arians of Algiers," *Third World Quarterly*, 10(2) (April 1988): 563, included Khider as one of the members of *al-Qiyam*. However, according to Abbassi Madani, Khider was not a member. See Abbassi's interview in *Politique internationale*, 49 (Fall 1990): 181.
7. Jean Leca and Jean-Claude Vatin, *L'Algérie politique: Institutions et régime* (Paris: Presse de la Fondation des Sciences Politiques, 1975), p. 308, and Saadi Nouredine, *La Femme et la loi en Algérie* (Alger: Editions Bouchène, 1991), p. 45; Mohamed Harbi, ed., *L'Islamisme dans tous ses états* (Alger: Editions Rahma, 1992), p. 134.
8. Cited in Leca and Vatin, *L'Algérie politique*, p. 308.
9. François Burgat, *L'Islamisme au Maghreb—La voix du Sud* (Paris: Karthala, 1988), p. 150. This book is available in English, as François Burgat and William Dowell, *The Islamic Movement in North Africa* (Austin, TX: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1993).
10. See Luc-Willy Deheuvels, *Islam et pensée contemporaine en Algérie: La revue al-Asala, 1971–1981* (Paris: CNRS, 1991).
11. For a detailed discussion, see Abderrahim Lamchichi, *Islam et contestation au Maghreb* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989), pp. 151–3.
12. Commentaries and excerpts can be found in Burgat, *L'Islamisme au Maghreb*, pp. 147ff.; Harbi, *L'Islamisme dans tous ses états*, pp. 135ff. Mazdaq is a reference to a fifth-century Persian leader of a tribe reputed for being heretical and communistic.
13. Harbi, *L'Islamisme dans tous ses états*, p. 137.
14. For details, see Mustafa Al-Ahnaf, Bernard Botiveau, and Franck Frégosi, *L'Algérie par ses islamistes* (Paris: Karthala, 1991), pp. 37–42; see also Kate Zebiri, "Islamic Revival in Algeria: An Overview," *The Muslim World*, 83(3–4) (July–October 1993): 215–17; Abderrahim Lamchichi, *L'Islamisme en Algérie* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1992), pp. 104–5.

15. The most serious attempts to study this question, in my opinion, are those undertaken by Egyptian Fouad Zakariya, *Laïcité ou islamisme—les Arabes à l'heure du choix* (Paris and Cairo: La découverte/Al Fiqr, 1989). See English translation, F. Zakariyya, *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamic Movement*, tr. Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi' (London: Pluto Press, 2006); Tunisian Mohamed-Cherif Ferjani, *Islamisme, laïcité et droits de l'homme* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1992), and French Olivier Carré, *L'Islam laïque ou le retour à la grande tradition* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993). See also Yadh Ben Achour, "Islam et laïcité—Propos sur la recomposition d'un système de normativité," *Pouvoirs*, 62 (1992): 16–30.
16. This concept is used in the sense given it by Hisam Sharabi, i.e., modernized patriarchy in which "material modernization ... only served to remodel and reorganize patriarchal structures and relations and to reinforce them by giving them 'modern' forms and appearances." Saharbi, *Neopatriarchy—A Theory of Distorted Change* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 4.
17. Aïssa Khelladi, *Les Islamistes algériens face au pouvoir* (Alger: Editions Alfa, 1992), p. 29.
18. "Algérie: plus de mosquées que d'imams," *Algérie Presse Service*, 22 November 2008.
19. Mohamed Farid Azzi, "Maghrebi Youth: Between Alienation and Integration," in Yahia H. Zoubir, ed., *North Africa in Transition: State, Society, and Economic Transformation in the 1990s* (Gainesville, FL: Florida University Press, 1999), pp. 109–26.
20. For detailed accounts of the issues raised and the violence practiced by the Islamists in that period, see Lamchichi, *Islam et contestation au Maghreb*, pp. 157ff; Khelladi, *Les islamistes algériens*, pp. 51–6.
21. Al-Ahnaf et al., *L'Algérie par ses islamistes*, p. 47.
22. These demands were formulated by Ahmed Hamani, Director of the Superior Islamic Council at the 4th FLN Congress held in January 1979 to designate the new President of Algeria; they were reproduced in their integrality in the state-sponsored review *al-Asâla*, Nos 65–6 (January–February 1979): 59–67, an excerpt of which is cited in Luc Willy Deheuvels, "Islam officiel et Islam de contestation au Maghreb: l'Algérie et la révolution iranienne," in Dominique Chevallier, ed., *Renouvellements du monde arabe, 1952–1982* (Paris: Armand Collin, 1987), p. 138.
23. For a definition of Blanquism, see Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France," in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Karl Marx Reader*, 2nd edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), p. 627. From the trial of its members, it appeared that MIA had planned the assassination of the prime minister and the individual in charge of FLN; see, Lamchichi, *Islam et contestation au Maghreb* p. 159, and Khelladi, *Les islamistes algériens*, pp. 78–9.
24. Yahia H. Zoubir, "Islamism and Insurgency in Post-Independence Algeria," in Barry Rubin, ed., *Conflict and Insurgency in the Modern Middle East* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 232–54.
25. For a summary of these groups, see Khelladi, *Les islamistes algériens*, pp. 117–21.
26. Ben Bella's ideas are published in the forms of lengthy interviews in his *L'Itinéraire*. For his openly Islamist views and his admiration for the Khomeyni revolution, see Deheuvels, *Islam et pensée contemporaine en Algérie*, p. 264 and n. 83.
27. For a detailed discussion of Imam Ghazali's role in the rise of Islamism in Algeria, see Ahmed Rouadjia, *Les Frères et la Mosquée—Enquête sur le mouvement islamiste en Algérie* (Paris: Karthala, 1990), esp. pp. 197–208.
28. For a detailed discussion of the process of political liberalization, see Yahia H. Zoubir, "Stalled Democratization of an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Algeria," *Democratization* (London) 2(2) (January 1995).
29. Cited in Al-Ahnaf, *L'Algérie par ses islamistes*, p. 30.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 31.
32. For details, see Séverine Labat, *Les Islamistes algériens—Entre les urnes et le maquis* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), pp. 99ff.
33. See also the interesting analysis given by Benjamin Stora, "Algérie: Huit clés pour comprendre," *Jeune Afrique*, 1539 (27 June–3 July 1990): 18.

34. This was admitted by Madani himself; see "Pour une nouvelle légalité islamique—entretien avec Abbassi Madani," *Politique Internationale*, 49 (Fall 1990): 188. In particular, he declared, I am not a doctor in [Islamic] law. My job is political not religious or theological." At least until 1974, Madani was a militant of FLN. As such, he was elected in May 1969 to serve in the Algiers Popular Wilaya Assembly (APW). His term ended in 1974. See "Le savez-vous?" *El Watan*, 7 April 1991.
35. See *Projet de Programme du Front Islamique du Salut* (Algiers: 7 March 1989).
36. For a full treatment of FIS's attitude to the 1989 Constitution, see Lavenue, "Le FIS et la constitution algérienne," *Praxis Juridique et Religion*, 10 (October 1993), pp. 127–43.
37. Declaration of El Hachemi Sahnouni, reported in *El Watan* (Algiers), 4 August 1991.
38. Civil society is here understood in the sense given in Larry Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation," *Journal of Democracy*, 5(3) (July 1994).
39. LaPalombara and Weiner, "The Origin and Development of Political Parties," p. 27.
40. Lavenue, "Le FIS et la constitution algérienne," pp. 130–1.
41. A very good study of the historical, generational, and political differentiation with the FIS is Séverine Labat, "Islamismes et islamistes en Algérie—Un nouveau militantisme," in Gilles Kepel, ed., *Exils et Royaumes: les appartenances au monde arabo-islamique aujourd'hui. Études réunies pour Rémy Leveau* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP, 1994), pp. 41–67. The English translation, "Islamism and Islamists: The Emergence of New Types of Politico-Religious Militants," is in John Ruedy, ed., *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 103–21. See also Labat, *Les islamistes algériens*.
42. Merad, "Ideologization," p. 37.
43. On this point, see Mohammed Tozy, "Les tendances de l'islamisme algérien," *Confluences*, 12 (Autumn 1994): 57.
44. These points are drawn from Abbassi Madani', *Azmat al-fiqr al hadith wa mubarryrat al-hal al islami* (Algiers: Impr. Meziane, 1989). Commentaries on this book can be found in Al-Ahnaf et al., *L'Algérie par ses islamistes*, pp. 77ff.; Sheikh Abu a'bd al-Fatah Ali Ben Hadj (Ali Benhadj), *Fasl al kalam fi muwajabat zul al bukkam* (np: *al jabba al-islamiya lil inkkad* [FIS], nd), 310pp. The book is a goldmine for scholars interested in Benhadj's views. The influence of Qutb and Mawdudi, to whom he frequently refers, is unmistakable.
45. Ali Benhadj, "Qui est responsable de la violence?" *El-Mounqid* [FIS's newspaper], 9, repr. in Al-Ahnaf et al., *L'Algérie par ses islamistes*, p. 136.
46. Ibid., 140.
47. For details, see Yahia H. Zoubir, "Stalled Democratization of an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Algeria," *Democratization* (London), 2(2) (Summer 1995): 109–39.
48. Ibrahim's position is close to that of the Islamists. He tried in vain to get his party, Wafah, to be approved by the authorities.
49. See Louisa Ait-Hamadouché and Yahia H. Zoubir, "The Fate of Political Islam in Algeria," in Bruce Maddy-Weitzman and Daniel Zisenwine, eds., *The Maghrib in the New Century—Identity, Religion, and Politics* (Gainesville, FL: Florida University Press, 2007), pp. 103–31.
50. Respectively, the DPFE, directed by Anwar Haddam and operating from the United States, and CCFIS, a gathering in favor of Ahmed Zaoui, a group of Algerianists based in Geneva and the DPFE.
51. In Article 42, the 1996 Constitution recognized explicitly "the right to create political parties." However, it insisted that this right "should not be invoked to undermine basic freedoms, national unity, territorial integrity, the independence of the country, and the people's sovereignty." Through the revisions, the framers of the Constitution sought to prevent the legal existence of any party whose program was based on Islam, Arab identity, or Berber singularity. The obvious objective was to thwart the emergence of a party similar to the FIS in 1989.
52. Khelladi, *Les islamistes algériens*, p. 139. See also Al-Ahnaf et al., *L'Algérie par ses islamistes*, pp. 37–42; Zebiri, "Islamic Revival in Algeria": 215–17; Lamchichi, *L'Islamisme en Algérie*, pp. 104–5.
53. This author attended the conference in its entirety.
54. See *Movement of the Islamic Society (HAMAS)-Program of Election* (Algiers, nd).

55. Ibid., p. 3. I have edited the passages cited because of poor English in the original.
56. Cited in Zebiri, "Islamic Revival in Algeria": 217.
57. Cited in Khelladi, *Les islamistes algériens*, p. 108.
58. Mahfoud Nahnah's interview in Al-Sharq Al-Awsat in Arabic, repr. In *Foreign Bulletin Information Service-Near East and South Asia-95-214* (FBIS-NES), November 6, 1995, p. 10.
59. Cited in Al-Ahnaf et al, *L'Algérie par ses islamistes*, p. 116.
60. Cited in *FBIS-NES-95-214*, p. 12.
61. *Program of Election*, p. 11.
62. Mahfoud Nahnah, "Human Rights Situation in Regions Affected by Terrorism." Paper Presented at the Conference on Human Rights, Olof Palme Center, Stockholm, June 1996.
63. Ibid.
64. See Khelladi, *Les islamistes algériens*, p. 144.
65. See Al-Ahnaf et al., *L'Algérie par ses islamistes*, pp. 52-9.
66. See Lamari's interview in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram*, reproduced and commented in Hassane Zerrouky, "Dans une interview à Al Ahram-Lamari répond à Bouteflika," *Le Matin*, 18 June 2003. Lamari declared, "Je répète que nous saluons tout choix du peuple, même si c'est Abdallah Djaballah, le leader d'El Islah, à condition qu'il respecte les règles du jeu" [I repeat that we respect any choice made by the people even if it's Abdallah Djaballah, leader of El Islah, on the condition that he respects the rules of the game].
67. On Bennabi's discourse on the relationship between Islam and democracy, see Yahia H. Zoubir, "Islam and Democracy in Malek Bennabi's Thought," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 15(1) (Spring 1998): 107-12.
68. See especially his "Socialisme de la mamelle," *Algérie-Actualité*, 1043 (October 1985): 10-16 in which he warned against the consequences of single-party rule, such as clientelism, clanism, and dogmatism.
69. See "Appel aux citoyens et citoyennes pour la création du Parti du Renouveau Algérien (P.R.A.)," in Soufiane Djilali, *Que veut le P.R.A.? Histoire d'une démocratie refusée* (Algiers: Co-Edition Microedit-P.R.A., 1993), p. 15.
70. Ibid., p. 12.
71. 'Projet de société du PRA,' in *ibid.*, p. 301.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., pp. 302-3.

The Islamic Movement in the Gulf Region

Salem Abdullah

This chapter focuses on the Persian Gulf Islamic movement which generally follows the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. It begins by noting some of the special characteristics of the Gulf region, the different peoples and regions, and the effect and importance of these characteristics when dealing with Gulf Islamic rhetoric. The chapter also discusses the Islamic movement's experience in the Gulf, some of its successes, its methods, and its significant, if not dangerous, relations to the Gulf regimes. Because the United States in particular, and the West in general, are the major policy-makers in the region, the chapter also discusses the West's perception of the Islamic movement in these countries, and what this perception means for the performance of the movement there. It concludes by touching on some of the issues the Islamic movement must keep an account of at this point in time.

INTRODUCTION

The Persian Gulf is one of the important regions of the Middle East for various economic, political, and geographical reasons. This is evident from the way the West deals with events emanating from this region, especially the first Gulf War, which took place after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. It is also evident from the way the US has put pressure on the Gulf states to join peace-related projects with Israel. The Islamic movement has become an intrinsic part of Gulf societies, playing an important role acknowledged by friends and foes alike. The author hopes that this chapter—an attempt to study the Islamic movement's experience in the Gulf, its aspirations and challenges—will assist the Islamists and give a better understanding of the role and future of the Islamic movement in that region.

THE REGION'S CHARACTERISTICS

It is only to be expected that Arab and Islamic societies differ from region to region; these differences are precisely what create different societies, nations, states, and governments. The reason for this major difference might be that the polities that arose in the region at the time of the Islamic Conquest were not able to gain full control even within their own sovereign boundaries. The region's map was constantly changing as the influence of the constituent polities increased or diminished.

The last two centuries have witnessed major changes in the nature of the region. One of the factors was the increased interest of the West in the region during the imperialist incursions, and the desire to do business with the East. The Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English fleets raced to find footholds in the region in order to guard their mercantile routes. Also, the Ottoman Empire was too weak to control the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, and this coincided with the Wahhabi movement, which gave rise to the first and second Saudi states.

So the Gulf region is different from the rest of the Arab world and has the following characteristics.

STATE ORIGINS

Besides Oman, which was always a distinct political entity—though not without its own convulsions and shifting frontiers—the states of the Gulf were established through special arrangements with the British. Great Britain won the great competition of controlling the region. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, it has governed the situations in all the mini-states and emirates there. The Bousaid regime in Oman could not have survived to this day if not for the direct support of the British, whose support has reached the level of direct, heavy intervention against internal dissent and against the Imamate alternative, the historic rulers of Oman. The last British incursion was during the Green Mountain War in the 1950s, when the Bousaid state fought off the Imamate state, and the British were the decisive force in Sultan Said ibn Taymour's victory over his adversaries. The examples in the region are too numerous to list.

TYPE OF GOVERNMENT

The governments of the region remain in the ancient Arab tradition of ruling tribes and families who dominate government and influence. This is a model that has become extinct elsewhere in the world, and if it were not for Western interests and outside support, would have collapsed long ago. This system of government bears its own seeds of destruction. The rule of a family or tribe without a constitution or social contract between the state and society naturally leads to conflict and infighting among those who see themselves as worthy of becoming the ruling class. The conflict in Qatar was based precisely on this problem. There, the son took over from his father in the interests of the country and citizens. But the father demanded that he regain his throne, so the princes and public divided into four camps: with the father, with the son, as neutral, or waiting to jump in as a third candidate.

This model of government puts at its head a particular family chosen from the wider society. There are no objective, acceptable, or legitimate reasons for this selection. So for such a government to survive, the ruling family has to share some of the state's wealth with the citizenry. Another set of privileges and gifts are distributed among the elites to ensure continued popular support

for the ruling family. When people's mouths are stuffed with dinars and riyals, it's hard for them to talk or ask questions about the fate of the state. One writer notes that one of the golden rules of Saudi Arabian politics is that the ruling family prefers to pay off vocal opposition spokesmen rather than confront them.¹

The governments of the region have begun to feel their lack of legitimacy and the international changes favoring political participation. They have created procedures for political participation that look good on paper but have limited effect. Nevertheless, their creation make them look better at home and abroad.²

NATURE OF GULF SOCIETIES

Before the era of prosperity caused by the discovery of oil, the lives of people in Gulf societies were simple and humble. They used to fish, dive for pearls, farm in arid land, and keep livestock. Financial extravagance accompanied the discovery of oil and was arranged by agreements reached between the British and the ruling families of the region.

For the average Gulf citizen, the benefits of oil are perceived to be tied to the ruling family. He feels a sense of gratitude and loyalty to that family, which took his life from one of poverty and ignorance to one of education, development, and fabulous wealth. Besides this, the people of the Gulf share with the rest of their Arab and Islamic brethren a total lack of inexperience in participating in public and social life. Most are apathetic in matters of government and social change.

Many changes have occurred recently. There are now many university graduates. The media work to disseminate knowledge, ideas, and human experiences. The Gulf citizen has become more aware of the world around him. He is aware of issues such as rights and obligations, the responsibilities that fall on governors, and political participation in decision-making. Falling oil revenues and economic recession in these states have had an evident impact on Gulf lifestyles. The citizen is starting to ask where the oil wealth went, how it was spent, what his share in it is, how the state's economy is run, and how he can find the answers. All of these questions are now buzzing in the brains of Gulf citizens. So far, no convincing answers have been given. When the regime allows them to be asked openly, as in Kuwait, it has a negative effect on the regime, and that causes a backlash against the public's elected bodies.

The educated, middle-income sector in the Gulf no longer accepts the standard justifications for their countries' economic performance. They no longer turn a blind eye to the extravagant lifestyles of the ruling families. They have started to insist on their rights to participate in national decision-making in a meaningful way.

These characteristics of the Gulf states—their historic origins, ties to the British, traditional tribal form of government, and the special nature of the societies—require a special Islamic rhetoric suited to them. Since the states of this region are tied to arrangements with or direct support from

imperialist forces, they feel the lack of legitimacy. They are terrified of any voice calling for an Islamic state, and label such a call a "dangerous enemy." The issue of Muslim unity, or the existence of a political entity that can unite Muslims, is beyond question for any committed Muslim. But publicly calling for the establishment of an Islamic state, or a caliphate, places the Gulf Islamic movement in the enemy camp. The regimes are always waiting for an opportune moment to destroy this movement.

The tribal system of government carries the seeds of its own downfall. The chances that these governments will collapse, or that they will be transformed into traditional models with meaningful public participation, are high. It seems that the governments might become constitutional monarchies for the sake of their own survival or at least stability. More Gulf citizens are beginning to realize the backwardness of ancient tribal regimes, and more are becoming educated. As this occurs, the rhetoric on human rights, including political participation and the accountability of the rulers, will become more acceptable.

So the rhetoric of the Islamic movement in the Gulf should not be one of confrontation with the governments. It should flow with the natural, gradual transformation that is already occurring. The rhetoric should be a force that pushes and activates this transformation. It should work to increase citizens' awareness of their role, rights, and obligations, based on building a modern, complete, and fully aware Islamic personality. Islamic rhetoric must be ever-present and best-qualified. Such a policy on the part of the Islamic movement in the Gulf would not be a break from others that chose the path of wisdom and renunciation of violence. The Muslim Brotherhood is full of modern literature affirming the need to renounce violence and terrorism clearly and loudly, participate seriously in political life, and respect human rights, and advocating peaceful means of change.³

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN THE GULF

The experience of the Islamic movement differs from country to country, according to when it was established, when it became effective, the relationship between the movement's leaders and the ruling party, and its success in establishing public institutions to spread Islamic ideas and activism. It also depends on the qualifications of its activists, how well they understand their environment, and how they deal with it. Those are the internal factors. As for external factors, they include the ruling family's relations with the other families in the country, or the citizenry at large, and how open the regime is to politics and the media.

It is notable that the Islamic movement was able to establish a foothold in the modern social structure of Gulf societies. Today it is an integral part of the social structure. It has succeeded in disseminating Islamic thought, increasing Islamic affiliation among Gulf citizens, and producing high-level Islamic thinkers and leaders who enjoy mass support. The movement helped, if not single-handedly, rejuvenate Islamic social activities and worked hard

to combat Westernization, moral decline, and uncontrolled openness to the outside world which accompanied the modernization of the Gulf states.

A positive contribution made by the Islamic movements in the Gulf states is that they were able to make all these major contributions without confronting their governments, and through positive cooperation with their societies. They have been able to adapt to the traditional social structure while planting Islamic ideas, such as solidarity, preservation of virtue and honor, religious affiliation, and rejuvenation of Islamic rites and customs.⁴

The Islamic movement in the Gulf was able to attain this effective presence by using one or more of the following methods.

BLENDING WITH SOCIETY

Islam is integral to the Gulf individual. The only thing the Islamic movement has to do is rejuvenate Islamic understanding and blow the dust off them. By understanding the society and its effective forces so well, the Islamists, and others, were able to enter the minds and hearts of people in the Gulf. Because the Gulf societies are primarily tribal, and because tribal affiliation and social relations are of the utmost importance, the use of these characteristics as keys to these societies has produced positive results. The mosque is still the main social institution, so this gave vast opportunities for communication and influence. The mosque is a major reason for the spread of Islamist thought throughout the Gulf. The Islamic movement used the mosque effectively in all the Gulf states.

ESTABLISHING PUBLIC SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The Islamic movement is a trend that carries a comprehensive Islamic cultural program to face other programs that preceded it or have strong backers. The movement found it necessary to establish an institution that adopts Islamic rhetoric and works to activate such rhetoric in society, like the Reform Society in Kuwait, Bahrain, and the Emirates. Such Islamic institutions succeeded in carrying out major activities and efforts in a short period of time. They helped reinforce Islamic affiliation in their societies and establish an Islamic voice in the midst of calls for competing ideas and principles.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GOVERNMENTAL OR SEMI-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

Being a movement for positive and quiet social change, the Islamic movement used this method by various means according to the opportunities provided by each state. The examples are numerous: student groups, the judiciary, professional associations, academies, and colleges. The clearest example of this method occurs in Saudi Arabia. There, the movement's leaders realized that the institution of scholars, or *ulama*, has an historic role in forming public and official opinion. A natural and effective way to spread Islamic

ideas would be to merge with the institution of scholars, and to adapt the Islamic presentation to that of the scholars.

So there is a new generation of young scholars, students of religious colleges, or mosque speakers. They are tired of the fixed position of the older scholars in supporting the government and ignoring the injustices and violations that the ruling families make.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MOVEMENT-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Over the last two years important developments have taken place in the relationship between the Islamic movement and Gulf governments. Oman attempted to strike at the Islamic movement for well-known external reasons. It launched a wave of arrests in May 1994 and had a series of show trials. The sentencing ended in November 1995 with a Sultanic pardon. But the Islamist dilemma in Oman isn't over yet. It seems the confrontation will continue, albeit in different ways. Sources report that Islamists have been fired from their jobs, and their passports and ID cards are held by the security forces. They cannot leave the country in search of work, and they have an extremely difficult time finding a job with the private sector in the country, because they don't have an ID card. Even if they had one, the Omani private sector is so small and weak that they probably could still not find work.⁵

In the United Arab Emirates the security forces took steps to intimidate the Reform Society in Dubai. The security forces deposed the society's board of trustees and appointed a governmental in its place. The security forces also changed the management and outlook of the society's magazine, *al-Islah (Reform)*. The security measures accompanied the detention of the well-known Islamic thinker Shaykh Abdul Mun'im al-Ali for more than two years. To this day there are no reports on the shaykh's legal status and health.

In Saudi Arabia, the confrontation between the Young Scholars and their supporters on one side, and the government on the other, has reached the level of violent demonstrations, rallies, and strikes in Saudi cities.

These episodes point to a change in the relationship between the Islamic movement and governments in the Gulf. The era of coexistence and mutual tolerance is heading toward attempts on the part of the government to uproot or curtail the Islamists.

A number of observers and writers have pointed to external figures playing a role in bringing about this hostility toward the Islamic movement. Of course, this coincides with a general feeling among Gulf citizens that their governments are not legitimate and that the people lack most political and civil rights. Also, there are the general Arab features, including the inability to bring about peaceful change and the use of political and social movements to express the pent-up concerns of the people *vis-à-vis* domestic and regional issues. All of these factors seem to have forced the governments into confrontation with the Islamic movement in the Gulf.⁶

The indications of the end of the period of coexistence and mutual tolerance between the Islamic movement and Gulf governments can mean one of two

things: either the governments will recognize the need to make gradual internal changes leading to real freedom, political participation, and openness to their people, which would mean treating the Islamic movements differently, allowing them to be active in a democratic system, which is the way things are in Kuwait, Jordan, Yemen, and Lebanon; or the governments will continue to escalate their confrontation, which is dangerous for many reasons, especially that the confrontation could descend into violence. This is the model of the relationship of the government to the Shi'ite opposition in Bahrain, although the motivations and historical background in Bahrain are different.

Naturally, the type of confrontation between the Islamic movement and governments of the region differ from country to country according to governmental policies and methods employed for dealing with Islamism. There is a corollary between the degree to which a Gulf regime is open and accepting of popular movements, and the violence of the confrontations that these regimes are willing to inflict on their Islamist adversaries. The more opportunities there are for dialogue, criticism, and participation, the fewer there will be for violent confrontation. The examples in Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Bahrain illustrate this relationship.

The events of the recent past force the Islamic movement in the Gulf to reconsider its rhetoric, performance, and dealings with the government. Instead of waiting to be caught off guard, as happened in Oman and the Emirates, the Islamic movement should have the foresight to see that the Gulf regimes are ready to cross the traditional lines of coexistence and peace. They are ready to take unprecedented measures against those classed as adversaries. Understanding this change and adjusting the rhetoric and performance accordingly are vital.

WESTERN ATTITUDES IN THE REGION AND THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

The Gulf has become one of the major concerns of US foreign policy. Maintaining the region's stability and supporting its governments are at the heart of US policy and Western policy as a whole. But the fact is that all of this support, concern, and backing can be summed up in one word: oil. The Western presence in the Gulf and everything else that comes under the heading "Desert Storm"—including the Western military assemblage to defend Kuwait and foil the plans of Saddam Hussein—were about nothing but maintaining the flow of oil. The West is not particularly concerned about who is or isn't on the throne at any moment, or very concerned about the nuances of domestic developments or human rights violations—unless any of these issues can negatively affect the flow of oil or the stability of the price of oil. Also, the US would like to continue the Gulf's role as a vast marketplace for its weapons, goods, and companies, which are all living off the income brought by the oil.⁷

Britain, for example, has indicated that it is ready to expel those who oppose the Gulf states if their presence in Britain harms London's economic interests. For this reason, the British government decided to expel [Saudi opposition leader] al-Masa'ari [see his chapter in this volume] and announced

that economic interests were the reason for this. Al-Masa'ari appealed the decision and obtained a ruling allowing him to remain in Britain for a few more years. The position of the US is vaguer and more contradictory, because there are no principles involved at all. Rather, some things are ignored when they have to do with friendly states, while the same things are not when they have to do with enemies. Examples include Egypt and Oman.

The basic elements of US strategy in the Arab world, according to a congressional report, are the following:

1. Maintaining the flow of oil and US control over that flow;
2. Israel's security;
3. Guaranteeing open passage for American commercial vessels and keeping all markets open to American goods;
4. Protecting governments allied with the US, which are called security partners; and
5. Protecting US citizens and their property, and encouraging democratic ideals and human rights.⁸

If we use simple math on the last point (democracy and human rights), we find that it makes up 14 percent of the declared policy goals of the region. In other words, the US's concern with democracy and human rights in the Middle East does not exceed 14 percent of its total concern with affairs there. And even 14 percent might be an exaggeration!⁹

The axis of Western policy, which generally follows US policy, is achieving economic interests and internal change in a way that does not adversely affect basic American goals and interests or the security of its main strategic ally, Israel. Any developments or internal changes that do not directly affect these basic goals and interests are secondary issues. When the Islamic movement gives indications that go against Western interests, it is heading toward confrontation with Western forces. By the same token, the West will support or ignore any policies or measures taken to suppress the Islamic movement. The opposite is also true: the less confrontation on the part of the Islamic movement, the less the West will engage in such a confrontation.¹⁰

The US military presence in the Gulf has become a permanent fixture, based on official defense treaties. That was not the case before the Gulf War. It is expected to be a long-term presence. The justification is the Iraqi threat, but this atypical state of affairs points to one thing: the Gulf states are bowing to US influence. Even domestic policy-making is not independent of US influence, especially when it comes to fighting the fundamentalists.¹¹

The attitude of the West to the Islamic movement has not yet stabilized. The think-tanks, research centers, and thinkers in Western circles concerned with the Middle East are still wavering between their attempts to understand the Islamists and find ways to deal with them, and their attempts to close all channels for dialogue. The latter consider the "Islamic fundamentalists" to be natural and historical enemies of the West and its entire civilization. US policy in particular is closer to the side that rejects dialogue and refuses to recognize

the existence of the Islamists as political players in the Middle East. Thus, the US blatantly disregards the tyrannical way Arab regimes deal with Islamists.

This leads to the following conclusion: any policies taken by Gulf governments to harass or destroy the Islamic movements will be warmly welcomed by the West. It will turn a blind eye to human rights violations in the region. So the Islamic movement must focus on the Gulf citizen and find ways to increase citizens' awareness of political, community, and economic issues.

A NEW POLICY IS NEEDED

The Islamic movement in the Gulf must conduct a deep, comprehensive evaluation of the rhetoric, means, and goals that it has adopted over the past decades. The rapid and dangerous developments that are taking place in the region and the unprecedented attitudes of some of the countries toward Islamic movements demand such an evaluation.

The writer Omar Obeid Hasna¹² points to a number of crises and obstacles that have stood in the way of the Islamic movement reaching its full potential. His points deserve serious, honest, and objective consideration. The relative absence of specialization, planning, and division of labor for a movement that aims for social change and re-Islamization of entire societies is dangerous. So is the lack of concern for political participation and human rights. The sciences of communication, evaluation, crisis management, administration, and labor division are now taught in places of higher education. Should not a movement whose goals are so lofty and far-reaching have better means of planning and managing than as if it were planning the logistics of a field trip?

Hasna also mentions the "excuse mentality" from which Islamic movements suffer. He means by this that excuses are always found for failure to reach certain goals or failures in performance. Rather, the movement should be working hard according to well-organized plans to reach its goals. When one stage is reached, it is evaluated objectively, and then the second stage is carried out in a better way. Mistakes are not repeated. The movement's accomplishments accumulate and rise exponentially.

There are many studies written by members of the Islamic movement, its opponents, its sympathizers, or others that are objective and constructively criticize the performance and methods of the Islamic movement. Some of their criticisms may be bitter, but they must become required reading for Gulf movement leaders and thinkers, to help them make the necessary developments in the movement's performance.¹³

Also, a good understanding of the nature and history of the governments and peoples of the region—and the West's relationship with these governments—is essential because it gives the movement the means necessary to deal correctly with different developments. It seems that the nature of the relationship between the Islamic movement and governments of the region is ripe for change. At least we know that the governments are evaluating their position. The state of peaceful coexistence is not the only model that the movement should expect. It should prepare its members and change its programs

accordingly. The uprooting model is being implemented by Oman. The harassment and “peaceful oppression” model is being implemented by the United Arab Emirates. The movement should be ready for any eventuality.¹⁴

As mentioned above, the West’s concern is maintaining its interests, primarily oil, Israel’s security, and the strategic interests outlined above. The West does not object to the Islamic movement’s progress on the political map as long as Western economic interests are not harmed along the way. US commitment to Israel’s security, and the relentless presence of Israel and the Jewish lobby in the US, will ensure that the Islamic movement will always be in conflict with the West. This is because the policy of the Islamic movement is clear on the liberation of Palestine and equally clear about peace with Israel. In principle, it is impossible for the movement to give any indications that it approves the unconditional US strategy of maintaining Israel’s security. The US can also argue that the Islamic movement is a threat to Israeli security and/or existence. This is an equation that cannot be solved. The movement of the Gulf states toward peace with Israel will have negative ramifications for the Islamic movement. But they are inevitable and must be faced judiciously in order to diffuse their adverse effects.

It is always a good idea to remember some of the basic principles of Islamic thought, so that the leaders and members of the movement can avoid bad decisions and pitfalls. The Gulf communities, being part of the Muslim *ummah*, need “renewal or rebuilding, which means changing people’s beliefs and attitudes, which in turn requires patience and perseverance.” Despite the blessed efforts and achievements of the Islamic movement in the Gulf, the communities there are weak, divided, and far from the practices and principles of Islam. This is due in part to the corruption of the education system and the media. The individual is characterized by irresponsibility and apathy toward social and domestic problems. The reform movement obviously has not gone far, and much remains to be done. Even if the Islamic movement is not able to make political changes, it should not forget its obligations to social reform. The focus should be internal change, within people, and not top-down change.¹⁵

The Islamic movement has reached a stage of maturity and has a presence in the region. It affects and is affected by local, regional, and international developments. It cannot deal with things through decisions made on a whim. There is a pressing need to establish research centers that will study the situation in the Gulf communities, explain what is going on, clarify goals, and monitor changes. All of this must be done within an Islamic framework. The rapidly expanding Islamic movement, which represents the Islamic conscience and identity of the region, works to implement Islam and confront the moves to Westernize, demoralize, and corrupt society. It needs think-tanks, literature, and regular reports to help its leaders and thinkers understand their situation and the events around them. Such centers would also help others—whether Gulf governments or the West—better understand the Islamists, their goals, and their opinions.¹⁶

NOTES

1. Mordechai Abir, *Saudi Arabia: Government, Society and the Gulf Crisis* (London: Routledge, 1993).
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The Islamic Movement in Modern Iraq: The Sunni Dimension

Tarik Hamdi Al-Azami

The 1970s marked the emergence of Islamic revivalism as a major movement aimed at influencing the social and political life of Muslim people. In Iraq, Islamic revivalism gained momentum only after the Islamic Revolution in neighboring Iran in 1979. Then, Shi'ite Islamists started making the headlines as a major opposition group to the secular Ba'athist-controlled government. Many researchers have characterized the Islamic movement in Iraq as a Shi'ite-inspired struggle against a secular Sunni regime. Some have considered it a product of the Iranian Revolution. Research into the origins of the Islamic revivalist movement in Iraq, however, leads to a different conclusion.

Islamists in Iraq, whether Shi'ite or Sunni, were the proponents of the same Islamic revivalism. Both aimed to revive Islamic values, and differed only in their traditions. The Islamic revivalism that they were part of is, in the words of Yvonne Haddad, "the product of the attempt of a variety of Muslims in different parts of the world to mobilize the energies of their constituencies to continue the process of decolonization and the creation of a viable, modern, independent Islamic society."¹

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Contemporary Islamic revivalism is inseparable from the way it perceives the Islamic past, especially the initial period of Islamic history. Revivalism appeals to this past as an ideal phase in history. This ideal continues to inspire the revivalists to create an integrated Islamic society and government.

The modern history of Iraq began with the Ottoman conquest in 1534. With the establishment of the empire, military expansion became the priority of the Ottoman sultans. Before the nineteenth century, the central Ottoman state did not show any serious interest in developing, reforming, or integrating Iraqi society. As a result societal values remained essentially the same as those prevailing in medieval societies.

On the eve of World War I, Iraqi society was more or less divided into four major classes: 1) the bureaucrats or army officials; 2) the deputies of the central government; 3) the religious leadership (*ulama*); and 4) the Sufi orders.

The *ulama*, who controlled intellectual life, represented order and stability and served as the strongest defenders of the status quo. The religious quarters were characterized by stagnation and the decline of independent reasoning

(*ijtihad*). This situation paved the way for the growth of the cultic Sufi forms of popular Islam.

Historians of modern Iraq point out that since the late nineteenth century three major trends have shaped the intellectual life of Iraqi society: 1) the traditional, which was the continuation of medieval Islamic scholarship; 2) the reformist trend; and 3) the secular modernist trend.

The secular trend was deeply influenced by the West, and its rebellion against Islamic traditionalism was a logical consequence of its obsession with Western ideas. It was the proponents of this new secular trend who participated in the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the new Middle East under British and French hegemony.

The separation between church and state that was practiced in Europe and came to be known as secularism was introduced to Muslim lands through colonialism. This exclusion of religion from the affairs of the state went farther by advocating the restriction of religion to private life and its exclusion from the public sphere. The introduction of secularist trends led to the depoliticization of Islam. The process of secularization initiated by the West and supported by the indigenous intelligentsia led to a bifurcation in both the legal and educational fields. The mostly urban secularists, who argued that the restoration of political power in Muslim societies required them to adapt to the exigencies of the modern world, dominated political and intellectual life.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, two distinct groups dominated Sunni religious life in Iraq: the Salafi and the Sufi orders. Despite these tendencies, the official Sunni establishment, which was made up of influential *ulama*, stayed loyal to the religious establishment in Istanbul. As a result, Iraq did not witness an effective, rational reform such as the one initiated by Shaykh Muhammad Abduh [d. 1905] of Egypt.²

A Salafi movement began to emerge in Iraq in the nineteenth century. It is not clear whether this movement was independent or was a product of the Wahhabi propaganda that began to penetrate Iraqi society at the end of the eighteenth century. It is clear, however, that the Salafis of Iraq tried to distinguish themselves from the Wahhabis. There were two reasons for this. First, they wanted to avoid censure by the Ottoman government and its traditional *ulama* allies, and second, there were doctrinal differences between the Salafis of Iraq and the Wahhabis.

These differences are evident in the writing of some contemporary scholars. Abu'l Thana Mahmud Shihab al-Din al-Alusi (1802–54) was the most important Sunni religious figure in nineteenth-century Iraq. An outstanding scholar, whose major work is a commentary on the Qur'an, entitled *Ruh Al-Ma'ani* [*The Soul of Meaning*], al-Alusi received his early education under Mawlana Khalid Al-Naqshbandi, a Sufi scholar. Al-Alusi, who had also been tutored by Ali As-Swadi, a well-known Salafi, wrote, "to be fair, As-Swadi never sullied his heart with the ignorant Wahabi doctrines, on the contrary he was Salafi Ahmadi (referring to the Prophet Muhammad)."

The Iraqi Salafis and Wahhabis differed on the doctrine of *takfir*. Contrary to Wahhabi views, al-Alusi had cordial relations with the Shi'ites of Baghdad

whom the Wahhabis accused of heresy. They also differed in their approach to Sufism. Al-Alusi, who we know studied under the Sufi Master Mawlana Khalid, never entirely rejected Sufism.

Later, the Ottoman government attempted to use al-Alusi in their negotiations with Abdul Aziz ibn Saud because he was on good terms with the Wahhabis. On November 28, 1914, al-Alusi led a delegation that met Ibn Saud to encourage him to ally himself with the Muslim Ottoman government against the infidels. Ibn Saud, a skilled politician, tricked al-Alusi into believing that he was totally committed to the Ottoman empire and would sacrifice his life for the sultan.

This incident only confirmed that the centuries-old tradition of distinguishing *Ahl al-'Ilm* (People of Knowledge) from *Ahl al-Sayf* (People of the Word or Power) still existed. It demonstrated that the Muslim scholars who had devoted their entire lifetime to education, lacked political acumen. Moreover, they were used in time of need by politicians. This is important in the context of contemporary Islamic revivalism because it encouraged Muslim scholars to take a more positive approach to the political life of society in the same way that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (RA) had done.

By the turn of the twentieth century, British intervention in Iraq had developed into full colonialism, which resulted in the breakdown of traditional social institutions, such as the Sufi orders and local religious quarters. The final show of force by the traditional system was the 1920s revolution against the colonizers. In this campaign, the Sunnite and Shi'ite *ulama* united against a common threat, but lacked the alternative Islamic perspective in building a society that could be viable in the twentieth century.

AS-SAWWAF AND THE RISE OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN IRAQ, 1946–59

Muhammad Mahmud As-Sawwaf can be considered the most influential person in the formative years of the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq. From the 1930s, when he was only a youth, until he left Iraq in 1959, he was responsible for initiating and running active Islamic programs.

In 1939 he went to Egypt to complete his studies in *shari'ah* at Azhar University, where he met Hassan al-Banna, founder and leader of the Muslim Brotherhood.³ On his return from his final period in Egypt in 1946, As-Sawwaf established the Iraqi branch of the Brotherhood, an organization he would lead for the next 13 years and on which his inspirational imprint was profoundly felt at this stage.

Born in Mosul in northern Iraq in 1912 (d. 1992), to a traditional family, As-Sawwaf completed his Qur'anic and Islamic studies under several prominent local *ulama*, including Abdul Al-Nima, a renowned Salafi scholar. In addition to his training in traditional scholarship, he attended modern schools in the mornings and accompanied his religious teachers in the evenings.

As-Sawwaf, who became involved in social activism as a youth, joined the Mosul Youth Association, a social welfare organization, in 1935 and was soon made responsible for fundraising. This early experience introduced him to people of varying backgrounds, including military officers. It was these contacts that contributed to his political awareness, and his involvement in prisons and adult education helped to hone his skills in public speaking.

The wave of secularism that had swept through Iraq since the 1920s was soon confronted by the Muslim *ulama* with the founding of several small associations, such as Jam'iat Al-Hidyah Al-Islamiya (Association of Islamic Guidance), Jam'iat Al-Tarbia Al-Islamia (Association of Islamic Education), and Jam'iat Al-Adab Al-Islamiya (Association of Islamic Morals). Some of these associations had their own publications and organized monthly or annual meetings, such as commemorations on the occasion of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.

As-Sawwaf, who found these associations lacking in strategic planning, decided to establish a well-planned organization. The founding of this organization was achieved in several phases. The stage was set in the early 1930s when he and two other prominent Mosulites, Abdul Rahman Al-Sayyed Muhammad and Abdul Rahman Mahmud Al-Reyheim, established the Jam'iat al-Amr bil Ma'ruf wa'l Nahy 'an al-Munkar (The Association of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil). The inspiration for this organization was As-Sawwaf's readings about the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, although at that point he had not met any of its members. As-Sawwaf wanted to call it The Muslim Brotherhood, but the government refused them permission on the ground that there was another organization with that name in Egypt.⁴

At this point in his development, As-Sawwaf avoided politics and emphasized social and educational methods. His call attracted students aged 14–16, to whom he imparted Islamic knowledge. He knew the importance of entertainment and sports for the youth so he would invite them for a swim in the river. There he would add an Islamic lecture to swimming and playing. It was an opportunity to have discussions in a highly spiritual and fraternal atmosphere.

In 1939 As-Sawwaf visited Egypt for the first time as a graduate student with a scholarship from the Ministry of Endowments. During this visit he had his first encounter with his ideal, Hassan al-Banna, who was giving a public lecture. Describing this experience, As-Sawwaf wrote: "I felt as if a sense of honor and responsibility had started moving throughout my body. It was the same feeling that I had while working toward this goal and looking for it when I was young."

This was an inspirational moment and assured him that he was going in the right direction. It would be misleading to say that his experience in Egypt was limited to his meeting with Hassan al-Banna. As-Sawwaf, who had boundless energy, enriched his experience by meeting most of the well-known Islamic scholars of the time. The euphoria was short-lived. Only a year later World War II broke out and his scholarship was withdrawn, obliging him to return to Iraq.

In 1943, Mustafa al-Sabuni, a wealthy Mosul merchant, sponsored As-Sawwaf and ten other scholars to return to Egypt and resume their graduate studies. This would be As-Sawwaf's last meeting with al-Banna. In a public gathering attended by thousands, Muhammad Abdul Hamid Ahmed, an Egyptian member of the Brotherhood who had visited Iraq, presented a report that stated that Iraq was a lost cause. He said corruption was too endemic and, in the four years he had worked there, he did not make any significant achievements. Immediately after, As-Sawwaf took the microphone to respond. He declared his total dissatisfaction with the report, saying that Iraq would follow Egypt's example and the people would work for this Islamic cause.

Upon his return from Egypt in 1946, after completing his religious studies, As-Sawwaf was offered the post of judge in the Islamic Legal Court (Al-Mehkama Al-Shar'iyyah) by Justice Minister Jelal Baban. This was a highly desirable appointment but As-Sawwaf declined the offer. It was clear distinction between the goals of a traditional religious scholar who would accept the offer immediately and an activist like him who thought that it would limit his freedom of movement and contact with the people. Instead, he opted for a teaching post at the new College of Islamic Law in Al-Athmiya. In this academic role, As-Sawwaf would be paid only 25 dinars, while the judgeship carried a salary of 70 dinars. But he sacrificed status and money for the sake of spreading his message and mission. His decision was a result of the change in attitudes inspired by Islamic revivalism.

During this time, As-Sawwaf met Shaykh Amjad al-Zahawi, then the most prominent Sunni scholar in Iraq. A traditional jurist and very pious man, al-Zahawi became the spiritual leader of As-Sawwaf's new organization, al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah (The Association of the Muslim Brotherhood). Al-Zahawi's leadership provided legitimacy to the new Islamic organization. Al-Zahawi was a Kurd, so the movement spread in both Kurdish- and Arabic-dominated areas.

The first members of the new organization were As-Sawwaf's students at the college. Unlike the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the Iraqi organization emerged gradually. Except for the moment that inspired As-Sawwaf in Egypt when he met Hassan al-Banna, all other developments of the Iraqi Brotherhood were strictly indigenous.

Naturally, the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq had a great affinity with their brothers in Egypt, but it would be inaccurate to view the Iraqi Brotherhood as an Egyptian import. Although the two organizations viewed themselves as a single movement, they were organizationally independent. Within a few years, As-Sawwaf had surrounded himself with many dedicated individuals who respected him for his knowledge and piety.

As-Sawwaf insisted that Muslims should understand Islam as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and not as it was interpreted by Westerners or their fellow-travelers. To this end, he emphasized the dynamic nature of the movement in the same way it had been in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He blamed the British for alienating the *ulama* from the masses by controlling the endowment and limiting the amount of money they

received. He said that as a consequence, many mosques and teaching centers had closed and the Islamic message had withdrawn from society.

The Iraqi educational system was totally secularized under Sati' Al-Hussari, someone As-Sawwaf believed had been forced on King Faisal I by the British to be his Minister of Education. Al-Hussari, a pioneer secular nationalist, had a major impact in eliminating the religious influence in the modern school system in Iraq during the first quarter of this century.

During this period in Iraqi history, the country was being influenced by communist propaganda, and many young Iraqis were drawn to this new philosophy. As-Sawwaf considered Communism to be a major threat to Islamic values and set about counteracting this new trend. He considered this challenge the most dangerous and direct one, and declared, "we are confronted with two options not three, either Communism or Islam."

Another factor that propelled the need for an Islamic movement in Iraq, according to As-Sawwaf, was the threat posed by Jewish migration to Palestine. This culminated in the establishment of the Zionist state of Israel in Palestine in 1948, and the resultant injustices against the Palestinian people who were expelled from their lands. As-Sawwaf wrote in his newspaper *Al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah*, "soon it will become clear that the battle of Arabs and Muslims with International Zionism is in fact the battle of all humanity with the worse conspiracy on values, virtues and all morals through the centuries. In fact this historic battle is the greatest Islamic battle of this century." Besides promoting awareness about the issue, As-Sawwaf helped in establishing The Association to Save Palestine and played a leading role in running it.

Finally, As-Sawwaf conceived that the Muslim Brotherhood was a comprehensive movement and not solely a religious one. Thus it was imperative for the Islamic movement to develop the Arabic and Islamic nations, which were in various stages of political, economic, and scientific backwardness and lacked defense capability.

The membership of the Iraqi Brotherhood came primarily from those with no access to the already established secular elite, who had been involved in Iraqi politics since the 1920s. The first and most important category of members were teachers who had studied under As-Sawwaf and had themselves become teachers of Islamic studies throughout Iraq. By the early 1950s, membership had increased dramatically. Most of them, in addition to lawyers, engineers, physicians, and lower- and middle-level bureaucrats, were high school and college students.

As-Sawwaf also tried to reach out to the armed forces. He befriended some military officers who were committed Muslims. They did not go through the training program of the Muslim Brotherhood, but they were full of the spirit of Islam. Although he believed that most of the officers were already secularized, he encouraged numerous high school graduates to enter the military academy. With his encouragement, in one year alone, 20 entered the academy.

The Muslim Brotherhood's primary constituency was the Sunni Arab quarter because the thrust of As-Sawwaf's activities was in Mosul and Baghdad, both considered to be the heartland of Sunni Iraq. It did not mean, however, that

the movement was exclusively Sunni. Although not many, there were some Shi'ite members as well. As-Sawwaf was preaching general Islamic principles and believed strongly in rapprochement between Sunnites and Shi'ites. He visited the Shi'ite heartland in Najaf and Karbala to exchange views with the Shi'ite leadership. However, after his departure the new leadership of the movement did not continue such initiatives.

The new movement was not exclusively male-oriented, but following the Egyptian example, they established Jami'yat al-Akhawat al-Mulsimat (Organization of Muslim Sisters).

The Movement started to establish funds that could support its activities without the need for alternative sources. They purchased a large building in the center of the capital, Baghdad, and established branch offices in the main Iraqi cities. In 1952, the Muslim Brotherhood published its first monthly publication, *Al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic Brotherhood), with As-Sawwaf as its chief editor. He set out five goals for this publication: 1) to instill the right faith in the hearts of the *ummah*; 2) to present Islam to the world as an international and comprehensive order; 3) to promote solidarity and bridge the gap between different segments of the Muslim society, to pave the way to the ultimate Islamic unity; 4) to stand up to Westernization; and 5) to call Muslims to take control of power and all the means that lead to it. The new publication dealt with issues such as Islam as a universal system, critiques of members of parliament, the stance of Islam toward international organizations and international politics, the issue of Palestine, and spiritual and educational matters.

THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION

When As-Sawwaf established the Iraqi branch of the Brotherhood exactly 20 years after the Egyptian Brotherhood's founding, he adopted the already established form of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. During this period (1933–39), al-Banna held five major conferences, thus establishing a tradition of consultation, dialogue, and accountability. It was a good model for the leadership to listen to the concerns of its members. At the same time, it enhanced the administrative and organizational skills of the members.

The problem was that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood had a major leadership crisis following the execution of Hassan al-Banna in 1949. In addition to this, a major conflict was developing between the Nasser regime and the Brotherhood. These two factors prevented the organization from holding any conferences which could influence the other Brotherhood groups, including that in Iraq. This explains the lack of communication between the members and the leaderships which resulted in the emergence of competing groups within the same organization. As a result loyalty became more important than experience and specialization.

This problem was very pronounced in the years preceding the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq. Many in leadership positions left every two or three years. The problem of organization has continued to this day.

According to Hisham Altalib, one reason for this crisis was the lack of consensus among members over major political issues, such as the union between Egypt and Syria or that between Iraq and Jordan. The other issue, he says, was that As-Sawwaf used to solve many problems by saying that we have to unite or that we have too many threats and challenges. In doing so, he did not resolve the problems; he simply deferred them.

Besides this, As-Sawwaf was too open in his relationships. This, according to some leading members, was a weakness. As-Sawwaf, they feel, should have been more cautious in building relationships, because he no longer represented himself, but rather an entire organization.

On July 14, 1958 a military coup in Baghdad resulted in the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy and the establishment of a republic under General Abdel Karim Qasim. At first, As-Sawwaf welcomed the change, but soon turned against the new regime when he found the ranks of Qasim's supporters swelling with anti-religious and communist elements. As-Sawwaf became very vocal in his opposition to the new regime and was imprisoned. Rumors spread that he had been killed by the regime, but fearing for his life and under pressure from the leading members in the organization, he fled Iraq.

As-Sawwaf's openness and his authoritative personality, but lack of ability to build a strong hierarchy, culminated in a major organizational crisis. This was a crisis that was new to the Iraqi Muslim mind about how to organize in modern civil societies. The backbone of traditional society was the *ulama*, but could they provide leadership wedded as they were to their traditional ways? Many members in the organization, who had received a modern education, believed that As-Sawwaf should leave the leadership post and give others an opportunity. This view became stronger when he was jailed in March 1959, and the pressure continued to build over the following six months. Upon his release, he was convinced that he should leave the country, but he still did not resign his post but held on to it until finally the leadership of the organization was obliged to send him a note informing him that he had been removed.

CONTEMPORARY MANIFESTATIONS OF SUNNI REVIVAL IN IRAQ

Despite being an overwhelmingly Sunni movement, the Muslim Brotherhood of Iraq did not hesitate to rise up against a "secular Sunni" regime. This refutes the claim made by many authors that the Islamic movement in Iraq was an exclusively Shi'ite response to the Sunnization of decision-making. One such author, Dekmejian, declared that "the fundamentalist movement in Iraq represents a special genre of Islamic activism in the Arab context because of its Shi'ite coloration. It is the protest movement of Iraq's Twelver Shi'ite majority (55 percent) directed at the Baathist regime centered on the Sunni Arab minority (20 percent)."⁵

Such writing can only lead to the conclusion that the Islamic revival in Iraq is a Shi'ite revival and one merely with sectarian motives. This researcher, however, found that Islamic revivalism in Iraq had its origin among Sunnites with a political system that was dominated by Sunnites. This leads us to the

premise that concern about the decline of Islam was the real motive behind the revival. Even the Shi'ite-dominated Islamic movement, which started in the late 1950s, did not have a sectarian motivation. Their major task at the time was to counter the wave of Communism that had swept across all Shi'ite centers in Iraq. However, over time and with continuous repression of the Shi'ites by the Ba'athist regime, some observers began to sense sectarian elements in the Shi'ite Islamic movement, but this was only a reaction to the brutality of the Ba'athists.

This study has also focused on the role of the *ulama*. As-Sawwaf represented the first traditional religious scholar or *'alim* in Iraq who made the transition to activism after seeing the tremendous challenges of the modern world and modern state. He stands out from his previous generation on two counts: first, his dissatisfaction with the position offered to him by the state, when he preferred a lower-paying job as a teacher but one that gave him greater contact with the people; And second, As-Sawwaf had his own political agenda. Therefore when Prime Minister Nuri Said asked him to go to Syria to examine the possibilities of unification with that country he declined, knowing that he was being used for political ends—an insight that al-Alusi lacked when he went to Ibn Saud under the orders of Ottoman officials.

NOTES

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3. The major source for my information about As-Sawwaf's life is his autobiography, *Min Sijjil Dhikriyyati* (Beirut: Dar al-'Itissam, 1987).
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The Ideational World and its Impressed and Expressed Ideas*

Malik Bennabi¹

THE REALM OF IDEAS

In its pre-civilization stage a human society meets the demands of its everyday life based on a set of motivations and operational modalities that correspond with its modest cultural universe. At this stage, this universe includes certain main ideas (*idées maîtresses*) or archetypes, which each generation inherits from the preceding one and passes on to the next. It also includes some practical ideas modified to a greater or lesser degree by each generation in order to deal with its specific historical circumstances. The main ideas supporting the society's activities constitute its ethos (*éthique*), while the practical ideas guiding that activity constitute its method.

As human society moves on to the second stage, thus becoming involved in a process of civilization, its transformation actually corresponds to a cultural revolution. This revolution would to some degree, though not much, affect its method, but would radically alter its ethos. On the threshold of a civilization, it is not the realm of objects that is altered; rather, it is the realm of persons that undergoes a profound and radical transformation. The technique itself is not object-oriented, but man-centered. It is thus a social method meant to shape the new relations within society on the basis of a new charter, divinely revealed, such as the Qur'an, or manmade, like the *Iassa* of Genghis Khan² or the 1793 French Constitution. Yet, the primary condition for a society to secure the network of its relations is, as we have seen, to set the limits for its vital energy.³

There is a certain hierarchical variation in the realm of ideas between the ideas that transform human beings and those that transform objects. The first category represents the power that conditions the vital energy on the threshold of a civilization, whereas the second embodies the power that conditions matter in the second stage of its cycle.

As far as the level and scope of transformation are concerned, the power of the first category depends on the origins of the cultural universe that has risen in the new society, be those sacred and religious, or profane. In fact, a purely secular cultural universe cannot exist from the beginning as such a universe cannot provide the motivations that can support the early steps of a nascent society.

This is a phenomenon that the founders of a society usually realize. Such was the case with Robespierre⁴ who, after the event, added the idea of a Supreme

Being (*Être Suprême*) to the ideology of the French Revolution. When this idea failed, in 1798 France replaced it with a demiurge embodied in Napoleon.

This aspect of the problem shows that a new order will always seek support in some sacred values. Moreover, history shows that a cultural universe will always tend, even if originally founded on such sacred values, toward desecration and secularization inasmuch as society advances in the second stage, the stage of technical problems and expansion. This phenomenon can be explained in two ways. According to an economist, this phenomenon is progress, whereas a philosopher-historian would see it as a loss of energy marking the beginning of ageing.

These two contradictory interpretations can be reconciled in the law of energy transformation. Governing history and physics, this law implies that in order to generate activity and movement, there must be a degradation or loss of potential (*chute de potentiel*).⁵ The science of mechanics describes as a “moment of strength” the moment at which a lever (*levier*) is ready to move a certain resistance, that is, to accomplish a specific activity. The *idée-force* or driving force also has its “moment,” that in which its projection in our activity exactly represents the integral image of its archetype in the original cultural world. At this particular moment, its control over the vital energy reaches its peak. It thus could allow Bilâl ibn Rabââ⁶ to challenge, if only by raising his finger as a sign pointing to the oneness of God, the entire *Jâhiliyyah* despite the atrocious tortures to which he was subjected. It also allowed the Christian martyrs to defy Roman paganism in spite of the dreadful circus persecution to which they were exposed during the time of the Catacombs.⁷

All ideas, those that concern the moral order and those that govern the material order, have their moment of grace, their Archimedean moment; their entry into the cultural universe is marked by the cry of joy: “Eureka!”

This was the cry of the Prophet Moses when he saw the Burning Bush⁸ of which Pascal⁹ was reminding the Christian conscience in the high French literary style of the seventeenth century: “Fire! Fire! Tears of joy! Bonfire!” (*Feu! Feu!.... Larmes de joie! Feu de joie!*)

It was the cry of Nietzsche too, when he discovered his *Ewige Wiederkehrung* (law of eternal return)!¹⁰

It was also the cry of Christopher Columbus and his sailors shouting “Land! ... Land! ...” as they approached the Antilles in 1492; he was thus announcing to the world not only the discovery of America, but also the decisive introduction into the cultural universe of Europe of the notion that “the earth is round, perfectly round!”

It is usually the cry announcing the victory of an idea ... Shouted by the Parisian population, the notions of Freedom, Equality and Fraternity succeeded to blow away the Bastille¹¹ on 14 July 1789! The waves of that historic day would later, in October 1917, blow away the throne of Peter the Great!¹²

The Archimedean moment of ideas depends on the state of their relationship with the archetypes of the cultural universe. These archetypes constitute the cultural universe’s matrices according to which the ideas expressed through our activities are molded. However, time affects both our psychological and

rational being, in a manner that obliterates the salient traits of that molding, just as the characters of a printing press or foundry are obliterated with the passage of time.

It may happen that the printed forms are only pale images of the archetypes. That is, the expressed ideas (*idées exprimées*) betray the ideas impressed (*idées imprimées*) in the original matrices. This betrayal will reverberate throughout all our activities, thus exposing them to nemesis—a nemesis that is sometimes terrible on the temporal level. For, whenever betrayed, ideas take their revenge. This can be easily understood on the technical level when an ill-manufactured machine explodes or an ill-constructed bridge collapses.

Very often, however, societies, civilizations, and empires fall in the same way. All historical debacles are mostly nothing but the more or less immediate consequences of the nemesis of betrayed ideas. The fall of Carthage as a result of a political mistake committed by its Senate is the tragic but not the sole illustration of such a betrayal.

Therefore, we have to pay due attention to the relationship between ideas and the parameters of human action lest that action falls into absurdity or becomes impossible.

This relationship is manifested at three levels:

1. The political, ideological and ethical level in relation to the realm of persons. Even the physiological level can be included if account is to be taken of eugenics.
2. The logical, philosophical and scientific level with regard to the realm of ideas.
3. The sociological, economic, and technical level in respect of the realm of objects.

Whenever any of the abovementioned relationships of ideas are distorted or affected in any way, we should expect the consequences to manifest themselves in the judgments and activities of society as well as in the behavior of its members. The aforementioned effects are manifested in awkward and sometimes ludicrous forms.

In a painting exhibition in 1957 in Los Angeles, the prize-winning tableau, titled *Café Laos*, was the work of a one-eyed parrot when its owner left it wading in paint near a canvas! A sign of the age of surrealism, this artistic mystification was possible only because the perverted aesthetic canons of surrealism have distorted the jurors' aesthetic criteria. Here, at least, the deception was easily discovered because its author himself—the parrot's owner—later confessed what he had done. In many other cases, the deception can neither be confessed nor denounced either out of hypocrisy when sordid interests are gagging one's opinion, or simply because of lack of conscience.

Be that as it may, any alteration in the relations within the realm of ideas (philosophical and logical order, etc. ...), between the latter and the realm of persons (political and ideological order, etc. ...), or between it and the realm of objects (sociological, economic and technical order) will necessarily generate

more chaos in the social life and many discrepancies in individuals' behaviors. This is especially the case when the rupture with the society's archetypes reaches extreme levels, as the matrices of our impressed ideas are almost obliterated in our subjectivity, and as our expressed ideas molded according to those matrices become shapeless, incoherent, and void of any value.

Ideas thus die, leaving empty brains and even helpless tongues. Then, society falls into a state of infantilism. For lack of ideas, infants express themselves in a primitive way by means of gestures and sounds. A society falling into infantilism would display very curious phenomena as a means to compensate for its lack of ideas. It is then condemned to replace them, especially in its intellectual activities, by *ersatz* ideas.¹³

It is then a gesture that carries on an incomplete sentence because one is unable to complete it: because of the lack of ideas, words are wanting. Nicholas Boileau,¹⁴ the great seventeenth-century French literary critic, accurately expressed this in his *L'Art Poétique*:

What one conceives of well is expressed clearly,
And the words required to express it come easily.¹⁵

When there is shortage of ideas, incoherence looms large and voices are increasingly raised to substitute the want of argument. Moreover, it is rhetoric that gains ground in literature manifesting itself in the excessive use of superlatives and in the pomposity of expressions such as the phrase "the valiant people" inserted in the constitution of an Arab country. In a newspaper of the same country, beneath the photo of a person who has slipped into the Algerian revolution (no one knows how) is the astounding legend "A giant of the Revolution."

It is, then, pure pathos to say that "it is very serious" instead of merely giving a precise idea about the respective situation. It is the maximizing solemnization when one mentions that "everybody knows ..." to support a certain opinion. It is also the minimizing attitude when a person states, "no one believes ..." in order to undermine someone else. In brief, it is verbosity in which every word casts more confusion on the issue under consideration instead of clarifying it. The incoherence and inconsistency in the realm of ideas is then clearly manifested in the most elementary of human society's activities.

For example, in an Arab capital city we read in an advertisement the title of a movie: "Uncertainty and Youth," while it is more appropriate and logical to title it "Youth and Uncertainty"! I am personally convinced that the movie producer did not think for a single moment about the question of the natural order of ideas in such a simple matter.

Likewise, when incoherence in the realm of ideas affects their logical relations, we only have to expect all sorts of confusion of minds; they will not attempt, in the political domain for instance, to distinguish causes from their effects. It is in this manner that Muslim society has dealt with the problem of colonialism, while neglecting that of colonizability.¹⁶

THE IMPRESSED AND EXPRESSED IDEAS

The realm of ideas is a disk carried out by each individual upon his/her birth. This disk varies from one society to another by certain fundamental notes. One may be astonished that Hindu music is not like any other music. I have always enjoyed it without knowing the reason why; all I can say is that it addresses the spirit in a different way for it is differently impressed in India's subjectivity. Each society's disk is impressed differently in its members. Individuals and generations record in it their own notes as harmonics of the basic notes. The realm of ideas is also a disk, which contains its fundamental notes, its archetypes: these are the impressed ideas.

The Greek genius was thus molded according to the essential notes of Homer, Euclid, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Empedocles as well as the harmonics of Plato and Aristotle which were enriched by the subsequent Athenian generations. This has provided mankind with that melody whose echoes can still be found in modern civilization.

In physics, the relationship between the basic vibration and its harmonics is such that the latter vanish as soon as the former ceases to vibrate. The same phenomenon manifests itself at the level of the relationship between the impressed and expressed ideas. When the impressed ideas start fading from a civilization's disk, the expressed ideas start producing false notes, whistling, and crackles then, finally, silence and rest.

Fourteen centuries ago, Muslim society received its impressed message in the form of Revelation. That message was readily engraved in the subjectivity of the generation that was contemporary to the event of *Ghar Hira*¹⁷ which made the world listen to the heroic symphony of a "religion of men," according to Nietzsche's description of Islam. The ideas impressed in that disk have been at the origin of eventful developments in the history of mankind for the last 14 centuries. At the beginning, they had radically transformed a primitive environment by putting its vital energy within the limits of civilization and subjecting it to its rules, norms, and strict discipline.

The Archimedean moment experienced by Arabia while it was receiving its message was incomparably great. On the material level, it generated totally unprecedented events and led to absolutely new social consequences with the same limited means already available, since the realm of objects had not yet undergone any change at least at the moment the *Ansar* and *Muhajirun* were pooling their resources in order to face the demands of the new stage. On the intellectual level, it created many criteria and a new mode of thinking in order to meet the imperatives of a new organization and orientation of the activities of a nascent society.

Finally, on the psychological and moral levels, it created new centers of polarization for the people's vital energies. Around those new centers, one could well witness the rise of incommensurable moments of splendor and greatness such as when the Muslims, following Salman's advice,¹⁸ dug the ditch (*khandaq*) which stopped the last *Jahili* wave at the foot of the walls of Medina. The paucity in the realm of objects could only allow them to make

use of primitive tools to undertake a very strenuous and difficult task. Fully aware of their pain, the Prophet used to sustain them by repeating a scanned wish and promise:

Oh! God! There is no life but the life of the hereafter, Forgive the Ansar and Muhajirun (for their sins).

Echoing him, the Prophet's Companions were singing the hymn that the successive generations have passed on to us:

We are those who have taken [an] oath with Mohammad to remain faithful to Islam forever!¹⁹

The new centers of polarization focused the society's vital energy on the new concepts, ideas, and archetypes of a new and rising cultural universe. It thus converged in an explosive manner and its dramatic explosion was of a novel and different type. A man kissed a woman. This was but a moment in which the vital energy overflowed its new limits. The reminding forces of the new cultural universe were immediately triggered. Consequently, the drama exploded within the conscience of the man who rushed to the Prophet to confess his sin. The answer that was to clear up such a drama was the following Qur'anic verse:

And be constant in praying at the beginning and the end of the day, as well as during the early watches of the night: *verily, good deeds drive away evil deeds: this is the reminder to all who bear [God] in mind.* (Qur'an 11:114)

Then, the man asked: is this [verse] for me alone? The Prophet answered: *It is for all my community.*²⁰

In another instance, a woman came before the Prophet to confess having committed adultery. Adultery was no longer a mere word on people's lips. It rather condensed in it all the terrible things that would deeply disturb the human conscience since *shari'ah* had prescribed the most severe punishment for it: stoning to death. The lady was fully aware of what she had done. Nevertheless, for her the physical penalty on her body was far more tolerable than the effect of the sin on her conscience. Her feeling was so strong that that she had to present herself on three occasions before the Prophet, who had each time postponed pronouncing the verdict on her.

On the first occasion, he wanted to give the woman enough time for reflection. On the second, he wanted to allow her to give birth since she had been pregnant. On the third, he sent her back to wait until she had finished breastfeeding her newborn baby. Then, he had to implement the law for adultery on the sinner as she never ceased to insist that she had committed the sin!²¹

The dramatic events that were knotted around the new centers of polarization, i.e., the archetypes of the new cultural universe, did not concern

their authors only. Their tension and sensitivity engulfed the whole community. This was the case of the *mukhallafun*, those who failed to join the Tabuk expedition. They were three persons: Ka'b ibn Malik, Mararah b. al-Rabi' al-'Amri and Hilal ibn Umayyah al-Waqifi. It was Ka'b who gave a detailed account of the dramatic event.²²

The Qur'an disclosed the explosive tension within the conscience of those who experienced it and cleared it up in the following verse:

And [He turned in His mercy, too] towards the three [groups of believers] who had fallen prey to corruption, until in the end—after the earth, despite all its vastness, had become [too] narrow for them and their souls had become [utterly] constricted—they came to know with certainty that there is no refuge from God other than [a return] unto Him; and thereupon He turned again unto them in His mercy, so that they might repent: for, verily, God alone is an acceptor of repentance, a dispenser of grace. (Qur'an 9:118)

It was a day of joy and happiness not only for the three *mukhallafun*, but also for the entire community.

In such a strained environment, the impressed ideas stamped all the expressed ideas with their sacred note, thus shaping everybody's attitude wherever they were. To this effect, the Prophet used to say: "All the earth has been made a place of prayer for me."²³ Nothing was simply profane. Everything bore the sense of the sacred. The whole world was sanctified. One can easily realize the weight of the slightest sin in such a universe as it scrapes the disk of the cultural universe. Every person is sensitive and would spontaneously react to any discordant tones emanating from the scratched spots. In such blessed moments, there is, in everyone, a melodic sensitivity sensing the sources of dissonances.

When this ethical and aesthetic sensitivity is exhausted, its degree of exhaustion reflects the incoherence of the realm of ideas and the degree of social breakdown in general. This deterioration continues until the moment when the concert of ideas stops, as the disk is obliterated and erased in every person's conscience, up to the moment of complete silence as there is no longer any genuine and spontaneous reaction to the lofty notes, nor any reprobate reaction to dissonances.

When the archetypes are obliterated, one can no longer hear the tone of the soul in the concert. In turn, the expressed ideas, having lost their roots in the original plasma, fall silent, for they have nothing to express. Indeed, they are no longer capable of expressing anything at all. At this point, society is atomized because of the lack of common motivation, as was the case in Algeria after the Revolution. Thus, the individual either commits suicide or gives himself up to egoism as in Europe at the present moment. It is then the advent of dead ideas.

Having experienced the glorious moment of the birth of its civilization, that is, the Archimedean moment of its impressed ideas during the time of the Prophet and the righteous caliphs and that of its expressed ideas during the brilliant

periods of Damascus and Baghdad, Muslim society is now facing the morbid age of dead ideas.

As the Muslim pilgrim lands at the Jeddah seaport, his attention is agreeably attracted by a poster on which he reads the following: "Office of enjoining good" (*al-amr bi al-ma'ruf*)! No sooner has he walked a few steps in the country he realizes a fact against which the previous poster is but mere irony; it is merely a dead idea.²⁴

However, the situation becomes more tragic as a movement is launched to revive a cultural world saturated with dead ideas—by means of deadly ideas borrowed from another civilization. The latter category of ideas, already deadly in their original environment, becomes even deadlier as they are uprooted from that environment. Generally speaking, such ideas leave, together with their roots that cannot be borrowed, the antidote which would temper their pernicious character in their original environment.

It is under these circumstances that the present Muslim society borrows modern and "progressive" ideas from Western civilization! This is a natural outcome of a process determined by the dialectic of things, human beings, and ideas that has shaped Muslim history. Nevertheless, what is unnatural is its inertia and apathy in this stage, as if it wished to stay in this state forever! Starting from the same point, other societies such as Japan and China have, on the contrary, succeeded in pulling themselves out of their state of inertia by rigorously subjecting themselves to the conditions of a new dynamic and new historical dialectic.

Thus, Muslim society at present pays the price for the betrayal for its archetypes. The betrayed ideas, including the borrowed ones, turn against it and take their revenge. This is a painful situation in which the Muslim individual lives a dichotomous situation, thus being divided into two characters: the practicing Muslim who performs his prayers in the mosque, and the pragmatic Muslim who is immersed in a totally different world after leaving the mosque.

NOTES

* The material included here consists of chapters 6 ("L'univers des idées" [The Realm of Ideas]) and 7 ("Les idées imprimées et les idées exprimées" [The Impressed and Expressed Ideas]) of Malik Bennabi's *Le Problème des idées dans le monde musulman*. As the two chapters are published separately as one piece, a slight alteration has been made in their general title in order to avoid repetition. Published almost three years before his death in October 1973, *Le Problème des idées dans le monde musulman* was the last but one of Bennabi's books published during his lifetime. In it he developed what may be considered a sociological study or sociology of ideas in the Muslim world, whereby he analyzes their genesis, development, dynamics, and destiny. Civilization constituted the basic unit of analysis in his sociological thought. – Translator.

1. Tr. Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi.

2. Genghis Khan (1162–1227 AD), Mongol conqueror, born in Deligun Bulduk on the river Onon, the son of a Mongol chief. Called at 13 to succeed his father, he had to struggle for years against hostile tribes. His ambitions awakening with his continuous success, he spent six years subjugating the Naimans, between Lake Balkhash and the Irtysh, and in conquering Tangut, south of the Gobi Desert. From the Turkish Uigurs, who "voluntarily" submitted,

the Mongols derived their civilization, alphabet, and laws. In 1206, he dropped his name Temujin for that of Genghis Khan, “Universal Ruler”; in 1211, he overran the empire of North China, and in 1217 conquered and annexed the Kara-Khitai Khanate empire from Lake Balkhash to Tibet. In 1218 he attacked the powerful empire of Khwarezm, bounded by the Jaxartes, Indus, Persian Gulf, and Caspian, and took Bokhara, Samarkand, Khwarezm, and other important cities. Two of his lieutenants penetrated northwards from southern Russia and the Crimea, everywhere routing and slaying, and returned by way of the Volga.

Genghis Khan was not only a warrior and conqueror, but also a skillful administrator who, conquering empires stretching from the Black Sea to the Pacific, organized them, in his own way, into states, which outlasted the short span that usually measures the life of Asiatic sovereignties!

Iassa is an old Turkish word, meaning “social law.” As reported in historical references, when Genghis Khan felt his power and rule secure, he thought about improving his kingdom both morally and socially. To this end, he laid down a set of rules to regulate people’s moral conduct and social behavior and he wanted them to have a religious-like binding character. Thus, *Iassa* stood for the “Great Law.” – Translator.

3. By vital energy the author refers to the basic human instinctive impulses especially and relations network. – Translator.
4. Maximilien de Robespierre (1758–94), one of the foremost leaders of the 1789 French Revolution. He is well known for the absolutist government he established and his bloody dealing with political rivals. – Translator.
5. Degradation of energy: according to the law governing the transformation of energy in physics, this means that an amount of the latent energy in the concerned body has to be utilized in proportion with the movement meant to be produced. For more detail on this central concept in physics, see Rathen Spielberg Bryon D. Anderson: *Seven Ideas That Shook the Universe* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), pp. 169–70. – Translator.
6. Bilāl b. Rabāā, of Abyssinian (i.e. present-day Ethiopian) origin, he was a slave of one of a Makkan notable, Umayyah ibn Khalaf. He was amongst the early people who embraced Islam for which his master subjugated him to severe torture and persecution. Abā Bakr, who paid a ransom to Umayyah, liberated him. Bilāl is well known for endurance and patience for the sake of Islam. It is also reported that he was the first to have used his voice to call for prayer. – Translator.
7. Catacombs (or Roman caves), subterranean Jewish or early Christian cemeteries found in certain parts of the Roman world—notably Rome itself—where soft rocks made the tunneling of passages and carving of burial niches easy. The practice is believed to have been derived from ancient Jewish cave burials. – Translator.
8. The Burning Bush, referred to in the Qur’an as the “Fire” (Qur’an, 20:10; 27:8; 28:29) and in the Bible as the “Burning Bush”, refers to the period of Prophet Moses’ wanderings subsequent to his flight from Egypt. “According to some of the earliest commentators, as quoted by Tabari, ‘the ‘fire’ (*nār*) is ... synonymous with ‘light’ [*nār*], namely, the illumination which God bestows on His Prophets, who—one may presume—are a prior ‘near it’ by virtue of their inborn spiritual sensitivity.” See Muhammad Asad, *The Message of The Qur’an* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1984), p. 577, n. 7. – Translator.
9. Blaise de Pascal (1623–62), French mathematician, physicist, theologian, and man of letters. He formulated the theorem of the aconic function of six vectors. He collaborated with his father in experiments to confirm Tovicelli’s theory, unpalatable to the schoolmen, that nature does not, after all, abhor a vacuum, which led to the invention of the barometer, the hydraulic press, and the syringe. Pascal was very influenced by his sister Jacqueline who was leading a monastic life as well as by many events in which he felt the interference of the Providence, which led him to retire into seclusion in an abbey in Port-Royal.
10. He was severe in opposing the Jesuits in their interpretation of the Divine grace and the concept of Salvation in Christianity.
10. *Die Ewige Wiederkehrung* or the law of the eternal return or recurrence: some primitive societies believe that the time of the origins of the universe is the genuine and creative time in which the archetypes of everything came into being and that this paradisiacal time can be experienced time and again by means of religious rituals performed in honor of the deities.

Nietzsche (1844–1900), the famous German philosopher, ended up believing in the idea of eternal recurrence as a joyful interpretation of ultimate reality. He had planned to write a systematic and definitive book to prove this idea and delineate its implications in rational and scientific terms, but a fatal illness in 1889 prevented him from fulfilling his plan. For further details on this, see H. James Brix's introduction to Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (New York: Prometheus, 1993), pp. 20–6. – Translator.

11. The Bastille was a fortress in Paris turned into a prison until its destruction, in 1789, at the beginning of the French Revolution.
12. Peter the Great, also Peter I (1672–1725), emperor of Russia from 1682 to 1725. He is credited with leading Russia from the Middle Ages to the modern world and making it a major European and world power. He laid down the foundation for the Czarist regime which ruled Russia until the advent of the Communist Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917. – Translator.
13. Inferior ideas used as substitutes for original ideas.
14. Nicholas Boileau (1636–1711) was a French poet and literary critic. He was a contemporary of Louis XIV and the great classical writers and artists of his time. He is recognized as one of the eminent theorists of French classicism thanks to his book *L'Art Poétique* (Poetic Art), which consists of four *chants* or melodies.
15. This is a rough translation of Boileau's following couplet:

que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement,
Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément.

– Translator.

16. Colonizability (Fr. *colonisabilité*): a term coined by Bennabi to denote the state of a society that is susceptible to be colonized and dominated by others. Thus, he considers colonialism a consequence and not a cause of the internal conditions and structures of Muslim and Third World countries. For more elaboration on this, see the author's *Les Conditions de La Renaissance* (Algiers: Société d'Édition et de Communication, 1992), pp. 717; Arabic translation: *Shurut al-Nahdah* (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1407/1987), pp. 149–60. – Translator.
17. This is a reference to the Prophet Muhammad's first encounter, in Mount Hira near Mecca, with the Archangel Gabriel. Through him he received the first Qur'anic revelations consisting of the following verses: "Read in the name of thy Sustainer, who has created—created man out of a germ-cell. Read—for thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One who has taught [man] the use of the pen—taught man what he did not know." (Qur'an 96:15). – Translator.
18. Salman al-Farisi (d. 655) was an Iranian Magian and truth-seeker. He had been attracted by Christianity and thus, while still a boy, left his father's home to follow a Christian monk and, having changed his teachers several times, arrived in Syria. From there he went to the Wadi al-Qura in Central Arabia seeking the prophet who was to restore the religion of the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), the imminence of whose coming had been predicted by his last teacher on his deathbed. He was betrayed by some Bedouins and sold as a slave to a Jew. He had the opportunity to go to Yathrib (old name of Medina) where soon after his arrival the migration of the Prophet Muhammad took place. Recognizing in Muhammad (peace be upon him) the mark of the prophet described to him by the monk, Salman embraced Islam and purchased his freedom from his Jewish master. The name of Salman is associated with the siege of Medina by the Meccan polytheists (*mushrikun*), on which occasion he advised the digging of the ditch (*al-khandaq*) by means of which the Muslims managed to defend their city from falling into the hands of the enemy. Salman al-Farisi is one of the most prominent Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as one of the most important figures of Muslim history; may God (glorified He be) be pleased with him and bless his soul. – Translator.
19. Reported by al-Bukhari on the authority of Anas ibn Malik. – Author.
20. Reported by al-Bukhari on the authority of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud. – Author.
21. The story of the Muslim lady (i.e., al Ghamidiyyah) who asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to implement the *hadd* punishment of adultery on her is reported by many traditionalists, amongst whom are Muslim (No. 16950), Abu Dawud (No. 4433 and 4449) on the

authority of Buraydah. It is also reported by al-Tirmidhi (No. 1435) and Imam al-Nasa'i (vol. 4/63) on the authority of 'Imran ibn Husayn. – Translator.

22. *Al-mukhallafun* or “*al-thalathah alladhana khullifu*”: those who “had been left behind” at the time of the expedition to Tabuk; the commentators of the Qur'an “assume that it is a reference to three persons—namely, Ka'b ibn Malik, Mararah ibn al-Rabi', and Hilal ibn Umayyah (all of them from among the *Ansar*)—who abstained from the campaign and were therefore ostracized by the Prophet and his Companions until the verse clearing their case was revealed (Surah al Tawbah, verse 118). Commenting on this verse, Asad said: “In its wider implication—as contrasted with a purely historical allusion—the above verse relates to all believers who temporarily deviate from the right path and then, after having realized—either spontaneously or in consequence of outside reprobation—that they had “fallen victim to corruption,” sincerely repent their sin. Muhammad Asad: *The Message of the Qur'an*, pp. 283–384. – Translator.
23. Reported by Al-Bukhari and the authors of *Sunan* except Abu Dawud. – Author.
24. This remark concerning the situation in Saudi Arabia goes back, of course, to the 1950s and 1960s when the author was developing the ideas expressed in the book from which the present material has been taken. To what extent it still holds true remains to be checked. However, this does not bring into question the soundness and validity of his analysis regarding the question of dead and deadly ideas that have been affecting Muslim life and institutions over the last century. – Translator.

List of Contributors

Abdallah, Salem is an independent researcher based in the Gulf.

Abdel Rahman, Shaykh Umar (b. 1938) is a blind Egyptian Muslim leader who is currently serving a life sentence at the Butner Medical Center which is part of the Butner Federal Correctional Institution in Butner, North Carolina. Abdel-Rahman was accused of being the leader of Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyyah, a militant Islamist movement in Egypt that is considered a terrorist organization by the US and Egyptian governments. He worked in Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan before moving to the US in the early 1980s.

Abu Sway, Mustafa is Professor of Islamic Studies at al-Quds University in Jerusalem, Palestine.

Abu al-Majd, Ahmad Kamal, vice-president of the Egyptian Council for Human Rights, is one of the most important Muslim thinkers in contemporary Egypt. In 1989, he published a major book entitled *Hiwar la Muwajaha* [*Dialogue without Confrontation*] which reflected the debates within the Islamic movement then on such notions as *jihad* and extremism, the state and youth.

Ahmad, Zaki is a Lebanese Islamist who writes on the Islamic movement in both Lebanon and the Arab world.

Anas, Abdullah was born in Algeria and, under the influence of Shaykh Abdullah Azzam, Palestinian founder of the Afghani Jihad, he went to Afghanistan in 1983 to fight the Soviets. Anas is married to Azzam's daughter and now lives in London.

Aryan, Sami al- (b. 1958 in Kuwait) is a civic activist and a former professor of computer engineering at the University of South Florida. On February 20, 2003 the US Department of Justice announced that Al-Arian had been arrested as "alleged leader" of the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in the US and Secretary of the "Shura Council," or worldwide governing group of PIJ. Al-Arian has written and lectured widely on the Palestine and Islamic activism in the Occupied Territories.

Awdah, Abdul Qadir, a famous Egyptian jurist, was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Egypt. He was executed by the Nasser regime in the 1950s after the failed attempt on Nasser's life in 1956.

Azami, Tarik Hamdi Al- works in the Foreign Ministry of Iraq in Baghdad. He studied at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut.

Azzam, Abdullah (1941–89) was born in Palestine and is considered to be one of the founders of the Islamic Movement in Palestine, Hamas. After teaching for several years at the University of Jordan in Amman, he moved to Pakistan in the late 1970s and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, he began to raise funds, recruit, and organize the international Islamic volunteer effort of Afghan Arabs until his assassination in 1989. He is also famous as a teacher and mentor of Osama bin Laden who persuaded bin Laden to come to Afghanistan and help the *jihad*, although the two differed as to where the next front in global *jihad* should be after the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan. He was assassinated by a bomb blast on November 24, 1989.

Bayanuni, Shaykh Ali Sadr al-Din al- is the head of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. He has lived in exile in England for over two decades.

Bennabi, Malik (1905–73) was a prominent Algerian thinker who wrote about human society and the reasons for the decline of the modern Muslim world. His writings have been translated from French into leading Islamic languages.

Bin Yousuf, Ahmad is a leading Palestinian Islamist and intellectual. Currently, he serves as an advisor to the Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyyeh. He lives in Gaza, Palestine.

Buti, Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al- was born in Turkey in 1929. He migrated with his family to Syria in 1933, where he has lived ever since. He studied Islamic theology at al-Azhar University

and has held academic positions in many Arab and Muslim countries. Currently, he is professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Damascus and he is considered the most important Muslim thinker in contemporary Syria.

Fadlallah, Sayyid Muhammad Hussain (b. 1935), who carries the title of Grand Ayatollah, is a prominent Lebanese Shi'ite Islamist thinker who is considered to be the spiritual father of the Lebanese Hezbollah. From a Lebanese family, but born in Najaf, Iraq, Fadlallah studied Islamic sciences in Najaf before moving to Lebanon in 1952. In the following decades, he gave many lectures, engaged in intense scholarship, wrote dozens of books, founded several Islamic religious schools, and established the Mabarrat Association. Through that association he established a public library, a women's cultural center, and a medical clinic. Fadlallah has written on various Islamic issues and has supported interfaith dialogue in Lebanon.

Farhan, Ishaq al- President, Al-Zarqaa University, Jordan, is a major Islamist thinker and the founder of the Islamic Action Party in Jordan.

Faruqi, Ismai'l Raji al- (1921–86) was a prominent Palestinian-American Islamist and professor at Temple University, Philadelphia. He was recognized by his peers as an authority on Islam and comparative religion. He spent several years at al-Azhar University in Cairo, then taught at several universities in North America, including McGill University, Montreal. He was Professor of Religion at Temple University, where he founded and chaired the Islamic Studies program. Faruqi wrote on such topics as Arab nationalism, the Islamic movement, Islamic monotheism, and Palestine.

Ghannoushi, Rashid al- (b. 1941) is a Tunisian Islamist who contributed to founding the Hizb al-Nahdah, the Tunisian Renaissance Party. He received his certificate of attainment degree, equivalent to the Baccalaureate, in 1962 from the University of Zaytuna. He entered the school of agriculture at Cairo University in 1964, but following the expulsion of Tunisians from Egypt due to the dispute between Gamal Abdel Nasser and Habib Bourguiba, he left for Syria. He studied philosophy at the University of Damascus, graduating in 1968. While in Damascus, Al-Ghannoushi initially joined the European Socialist Party, but later adopted a more religious viewpoint. He spent a year in France at the Sorbonne before returning to Tunisia and, along with many other Tunisians, established an organization devoted to the reform of Tunisian society based on Islamic principles. He has lived in exile in England since the 1980s.

Ghazali, Muhammad al- (1917–96) was a major Islamist thinker whose writings "have influenced generations of Egyptians." "The author of 94 books, Ghazali attracted a broad following with works that sought to interpret Islam and the Qur'an in a modern light. He is widely credited with contributing to a revival of Islamic faith in Egypt over the last decade." He joined the Muslim Brotherhood Movement at an early age in his life; however, in 1956, he left the Movement and became a minister in the Nasser regime in Egypt. After Nasser's death in 1970, he reclaimed the ideology of the Brotherhood and began to teach in different universities in the Muslim world, most notably in Algeria.

Habib, Kamal is a leading Islamist thinker in Egypt and a former member of Egyptian Jihad. He writes frequently for the al-Jazeera network in Arabic.

Hamami, Jamil teaches Islamic Studies at al-Quds University, Jerusalem. He is a member of the Higher Islamic Council of Palestine and writes on Palestinian society and politics.

Kopanski, Ataullah Bogdan is a Professor of Islamic History at the International Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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Masseri, Abdul Wahab al- (1938–2008) was an Arab Islamic intellectual and professor Emeritus at the Department of English Language and Literature, Ain Sham University. Born in Damanhour, he obtained his primary and secondary education there. In 1955, al-Masiri joined the English Department of Alexandria University, graduated in 1959 and was appointed as a teaching

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