

The Quran considers every prophet as a witness to the actions of his *ummah* (people). There is not a single instance in the Quran where the word شهيد (*shahid*) is used for martyr as it is currently today, for one killed in the way of God. The word شهيد was of course used by the Prophet (S) and the Imams (A) in this sense, but not in the Quran. Thus we see how the verses of the Quran have been distorted for the purpose of reconciling the Quranic teachings with an inconsistent philosophy like Marxism.

4. What was the principal aim of the prophets? Was their primary goal to establish justice and equality, or to strengthen the relation of man with God by means of faith and knowledge? Did they combine both the aims together and were dualist in approach? Do we require some other explanation? I have already dealt with this problem while discussing prophethood⁷⁷ and there is no need to repeat what we have said there. Here we shall deal with this subject only from the viewpoint of the prophets' methodology. While discussing the practical implications of *tawhid*⁷⁸ (the principle of Divine Unity), I have already explained that the prophets neither concentrated their efforts on reforming man and liberating him from within by breaking off all bondages to the worldly things—as the Sūfis maintain—nor did they devote all their energies to bringing about equity and reform in external human relations, considering this reform as sufficient for the reformation of man's internal relations (with God and himself)—as advocated by some materialist schools of philosophy. The Holy Quran, in the same breath and in a single sentence says:

..... نَعْبُدُكَ إِلَهًا كَلِمَةً سَوَاءٌ بَيْنَنَا وَيَتَكَلَّمُ إِلَّا نَعْبُدُ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُنْشِرُكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا نَجْعِدُ تَتَضًا
تَضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ.....

..Come now to a word common between us and you, that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords besides God.... (3:64)

But the question is, from where did the prophets start their mission? from within or from without? Did the prophets initiate their work by transforming men from within by means of impregnating them with religious faith and spiritual fervour and after that people had undergone religious, moral, intellectual, and emotional transformation they made use of this change for attaining the aims of social unity, social reform, social justice and equality? Or did they act other way round by first concentrating their efforts to change material conditions by calling public attention to deprivation, backwardness, and oppression and by mobilizing the people to eliminate social disunity, discrimination and injustice, and attending to the task of cultivating faith,

correct doctrine and morals only after this goal was realized?

A little study of the methods employed by the prophets and saints would reveal that they, contrary to the practice of so-called social reformers and the advocates of human welfare, started their work with emphasis on right thinking, correct doctrine, belief, spiritual fervour, love of God, and constant remembrance of the origin of the world (*mabda'*) and the Day of Resurrection. A glance at the chronological order of the *sūrah*s and revelation of the Quranic verses with reference to the problems discussed in them and a study of the life of the Prophet (S) and his approach to the problems he dealt with during the thirteen years of his stay in Mecca and the ten years of his life in Medina, is sufficient to throw light on the methods employed by the prophets.

5. That the opponents of the prophets should have maintained a conservative logic is quite natural. If it could be deduced from the Quran that the opponents of the prophets, without exception, believed in this logic, one might justifiably say that all opponents of prophets belonged to the affluent, privileged, and exploiter class. But what can actually be deduced from the Quran is that this type of thinking is the logic of the leaders of the opponents, the *mala'* and the *mustakbirūn*, whom Marx regards as owners and distributors of the society's intellectual products.

That the logic of the prophets should be a logic of dynamism, rationality, and indifference to custom and tradition is also natural. But it is not justifiable to say that deprivation, exploitation, and oppression of the lower classes have been responsible for moulding their consciousness in this manner, and that their thinking is naturally determined by their deprivations and privations. The prophets have this logic because they have attained to a stage of human perfection with respect to their logic, reason, feelings, and emotions. In fact, the more a human being acquires perfection, the lesser is his attachment and dependence on his natural and social environment and material conditions, and greater is his independence. We shall talk more about it later. The independent logic of the prophets requires that they should not be tied to customs, habits, and traditions. On the contrary it requires of them to liberate the people also from the shackles of blind imitation of decadent customs and traditions.

6. Whatever has been said in the context of oppression (*istid'āf*) is also unacceptable. Why? Because, firstly, the Quran has itself clearly explained the evolutionary course of history and its ultimate goal variously in several verses. These verses explain and interpret the meaning of the above-mentioned verse (28:5) and are complementary to it, as they suggest that its contention is true only under certain conditions. Secondly, contrary to the common belief, the verse of *istid'āf* (28:5) cannot be interpreted as formulating any universal law in

itself. This is so evident that there is little need for any elaborate comparison with other related verses or any detailed interpretation or explanation. This verse is related to the verse preceding it and the one following it. When these verses are read in successive order, we find that this verse does not contain the universal principle which has been inferred from it. I would like to discuss this verse in two parts. The first part of our discussion is based upon the assumption that this verse may be separated from the ten verses preceding and following it, and that a universal principle may be derived from it. Then we compare this verse with other verses which propound another historical principle which contradicts the assumed principle, and see what conclusion can be drawn from this comparison. In the second part, we shall show that this verse basically does not propound the universal historical principle that has been inferred from it.

(i)

In several verses of the Quran the ultimate destiny and fate of history as well as its course of evolution is pictured as the ultimate victory of faith over faithlessness, victory of piety over uncontained lust, the victory of righteousness over corruption, and victory of good and godly conduct over perverse behaviour. The verse 55 of *Sūrat al-Nūr*, reads thus:

وَعَسَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَتَّخِلَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَنَفًا مِثْلَ الَّذِي كَانَ يُخَلِّفُونَ فِيهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
 وَعَسَى اللَّهُ لِيُؤْتِيَنَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَعَلَّ نَحْنُ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

God has promised those of you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed in the earth, even as He caused those who were before them to succeed [others], and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and will give them in exchange safety after their fear. They shall serve Me, not associating with Me anything... (24:55)

In this verse the people who are promised final victory, vicegerency of God, and inheritance of the earth are no doubt the righteous believers. Contrary to verse 28:5 which mentions the condition of being oppressed, deprived, and exploited as the main characteristic of the believers, this verse relies upon ideological, moral, and behavioural characteristics. It proclaims the ultimate victory and domination of a particular kind of belief, faith, and mode of behaviour. In other words, this verse promises the ultimate victory of the human being who has attained conviction of faith, realization of truth and sublimity of

character. One of the implications of the promised victory is 'succession in earth,' that is, wresting of authority from previous rulers and powers. The other implication is regarding the establishment of the rule of Religion, that is realization of all ethical and social values of Islam, such as, justice, chastity, piety, courage, self-sacrifice, love, worship of God, sincerity, purity of soul, etc. Thirdly, it implies rejection of all forms of polytheism (*shirk*) either in worship (*'ibādah*) or in obedience (*'itā'ah*).

In *Sūrat al-'A'raf*, the verse 128 states:

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ •

And Moses said to his people, 'Seek help in Allah, and be patient; surely the earth is God's and He gives it for an inheritance to whom He will of His servants, and ultimately to the God-fearing, [i.e., in the end the God-fearing would be the inheritors of the earth]. (7:128)

In *Sūrat al-'Anbiyā'*, the verse 105 declares:

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ •

We have written in al-Zabūr, after the Remembrance, 'Indeed the earth shall be the inheritance of My righteous servants.' (21:105)

There are other verses also relating to this subject.

What shall we do now? Should we accept the verse 28:5 related with *istid'āf* (oppression) or the verse 24:55 concerned with the matter of *istikhlāf* (succession) and several other verses of its kind? Can we say that these two types of verses though apparently different in meaning express the same fact, that the oppressed are the same as the believers, the righteous, and the pious, and vice versa? Can we say that *istid'āf* (being oppressed) is the social and class character of the same people who are ideologically identified as men of faith, righteousness, and piety? Of course not. As I have already argued, the theory of correspondence between the so-called 'superstructural' characteristics of belief, righteousness, and piety, and the so-called 'infrastructural' characteristics of being oppressed, exploited and deprived is not justified from the point of view of the Quran. From the Quranic viewpoint it is just as possible that a group of believers may not be oppressed, as it is possible that a group of oppressed may not consist of believers. The Quran has introduced both of these groups.

However, as I have pointed out earlier, whenever a monotheistic ideology based upon the Divine values of justice, self-sacrifice, and benevolence is presented in a class society, it is evident that majority of

its followers should belong to the oppressed class; because they do not have to overcome the obstacles which block the way of nature as in the case of the opposite class. But it does not necessarily mean that the class of believers is exclusively comprised of the oppressed class.

Secondly, each one of the above-mentioned verses presents two different mechanisms of history. The verse concerning oppression (28:5) identifies the course and movement of history with class struggle. The mechanism of movement is explained as being due to the pressures created by the oppressors and their reactionary character on the one hand, and the revolutionary spirit of the exploited class on the other hand. This struggle undeniably results in the victory of the oppressed class, irrespective of their commitment to the Quranic ideal of good conduct, and applies also to such peoples, for example, as that of Vietnam and Cambodia. If we try to interpret this verse from the religious point of view, we shall have to say that this verse expounds the principle of the Divine support for the oppressed. The Quran declares:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلًا عَمَّا يَتَّمِلُّ الظَّالِمُونَ....

And deem not that God is unaware of what the wicked do.... (14:42)

This is an affirmation of Divine justice. The verse concerned with *istid'āf* (oppression) containing the notions of leadership (*imāmah*) and inheritance (*wirāthah*) is indicative of Divine justice.

But the verse relating to *istikhlāf* (succession) (24:55) and other similar verses, expound a different mechanism operating in history as a natural process. From the religious point of view this mechanism implies a principle more comprehensive and inclusive than the principle of Divine justice, since the latter is included in it.

The mechanism expounded in the verse 24:55, and other similar verses, can be explained in this fashion: Among the various kinds of struggles throughout the course of world's history, almost all of which have had waged for the sake of some material interest and gain, only that struggle which has been waged for the sake of God (*lillāh wa fillāh*) has been exclusively motivated by sacred values, free of any selfish material interest. This struggle, under the leadership of the prophets and the believers following them, has been instrumental in the advancement of humanity and human civilization. Only this type of struggle is worthy of being called the battle between good and evil. It were these battles which pushed forward history from the humanistic and spiritual point of view. The real motivating force behind these struggles was not the upsurge of a certain class but man's natural and instinctive urge for truth and understanding of the mystery of existence and his craving for justice, which aims at creating an ideal social order.

It was not the sense of deprivation and loss but the natural urge for self-perfection that had been instrumental in man's progress.

The animal faculties in man have remained unchanged from the beginning of history until now; they have neither developed in any way nor can they develop now. But his human aptitudes gradually develop and blossom, so that in future, more than today, he will be able to emancipate himself from material and economic bonds and incline more and more towards faith and spiritual perfection. The ground on which history has developed and evolved was not the battles fought for class interests and material gains, but the ideological and spiritual struggles based on Divine faith. This is the natural mechanism of man's evolution which ensures the ultimate victory of the righteous, the pious, and the warriors of the Divine path.

Let us discuss the Divine view of this victory. Whatever participates in the process of history and undergoes gradual evolution, attaining its ultimate goal as history approaches its culmination point, is manifestation of God's Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) and Benevolence (*rahmah*), which necessitate that creatures attain perfection. It is something more than what is called Divine justice which necessitates only 'compensation.' In other words, what has been promised is issuance and manifestation of the Divine Attributes of Lordship, Benevolence, and Bountifulness, not just His Attributes of Omnipotence and Vengeance [retribution].

Thus, we see that the verse 28:5 concerning *istid'āf* and the verse 24:55 concerning *istikhlāf* (and other verses similar to it), each has a specific logic of its own. They differ in import with respect to the perspective of history, the class which is victorious, the course followed by history to ensure the promised victory, the mechanism or the natural process responsible for the movement of history, and with respect to the manifestation of relevant Divine Attributes. Nevertheless, we see that the verse 24:55 concerned with succession is more comprehensive than the other one in respect of the conclusions it yields. Whatever man obtains on the basis of the verse concerning oppression is only a part of what he attains on the basis of the verse concerning succession. The moral value we derive from the verse concerning oppression is deliverance of the oppressed from the tyranny of the oppressor, which implies that God is the Saviour of the oppressed (thus highlights only one Attribute of God), whereas the verse concerning succession embraces all the Attributes of God including the one designated by the former verse.

(ii)

Now the second part of our discussion regarding the verse concerning oppression. The fact is that this verse is not meant to lay

down any universal principle. It, consequently, neither describes the course of history nor indicates the mechanism of history for the ultimate victory of the oppressed qua oppressed. The erroneous presumption that this verse lays down a principle is caused by separating it from its preceding and succeeding verses and generalizing the meaning of the relative pronoun *الَّذِينَ* in the phrase *اسْتَضَعُوا* to deduce a principle which conflicts with the one deduced from the verse 24:55 concerning succession. Consider the following three verses:

إِن فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا سِيئاً مَّنضُجِيماً طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ يَتَّبِعُ أَبْنَاءَ هَمْ وَيَسْتَحْسِبُ
نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ * وَرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُرَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ آيَةً وَيَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ * وَتُكَيِّدُ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَرَبِّي فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُلُودَهُمَا
مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ *

Indeed Pharaoh exalted himself in the earth and made its people into castes. Abasing one party of them, slaughtering their sons and sparing their women; surely he was of those who work corruption. And we desired to show favour unto those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them leaders and to make them the inheritors, and to establish them in the earth, and to show Pharaoh and Hāmān (his, prime minister) and their hosts that which they feared from them. (28:4-5)

These three verses are interrelated and can be interpreted only when read together.

We see that the clauses ... *وَتُكَيِّدُ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ* ... 'and to establish them in the earth,' and ... *وَرَبِّي فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ* ... 'and to show Pharaoh and Hāmān...' in the third verse are related to the phrase *أَنْ نَمُرَّ*, 'that We shall favour,' in the second verse which is complementary to their meaning. Therefore, these two verses cannot be separated from each other. Besides, the content of the second clause in the third verse, i.e., *وَرَبِّي فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ*, is related to the content of the first verse, and makes an assertion about the fate of Pharaoh whose tyranny is described in the first verse. Thus we cannot separate the third verse from the first verse, as the third verse is related to the second verse and complements it. The second verse, also, cannot be separated from the first verse.

Had the third verse not been there or had it not dealt with the fate of Pharaoh and Hāmān, it would have been possible to separate the second verse from the first, and to consider it as independent, so that a universal principle could be deduced from it. But the inseparable connection of these three verses absolutely excludes the possibility of deducing any principle. What is meant is that Pharaoh indulged in acts of self-aggrandizement, discrimination, repression and infanticide, while God had determined to bestow leadership and inheritance of the earth

upon those who were humiliated, oppressed, and deprived of their rights. Hence the pronoun *الَّذِينَ* in the second verse should be taken in the restricted sense of reference to the people who were promised, not in a general sense applicable to all oppressed.

Moreover there is another point in the verse to be noted. The phrase, ... *وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ آيَةً* 'We shall make them leaders...', refers to the phrase ... *أَنْ نَمُنَّ*, 'that We shall favour....' It does not say, *بِأَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ* which would have been more proper if it was meant that the Divine favour involved amounted to bestowing of leadership and inheritance. This is the general interpretation of this verse. However, the verse means to say, 'We intended to show favour unto the oppressed through a prophet and a revealed Scripture (Moses and the Torah), through religious teaching and training, and through generation of monotheistic faith in them, making them righteous believers, and as a result the leaders and inheritors of the land [their own land]. Hence the verse intends to make this statement:

وَوَرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ (بِمُوسَىٰ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ)
وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ آيَةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ •

We desired to show favour unto those who were oppressed (by sending Moses and the revealed Scripture) and to make them leaders and inheritors....

Therefore, though the verse 28:5 concerning oppression (*istid'āf*) bears a specific meaning, it is quite similar in import to the verse 24:55 concerning succession (*istiḥlāf*), i.e. it partially conveys the general meaning of the verse 24:55. Furthermore, aside from the relation of the phrase *أَنْ نَمُنَّ* with *وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ آيَةً*, basically we cannot presume that the verse intends to say that the Children of Israel would have obtained the leadership and inheritance of their land by sole virtue of being oppressed whether Moses would have appeared as a prophet or not, irrespective of his heavenly teachings and regardless of their following those heavenly teachings.

Possibly, the advocates of justifiability of the theory of historical materialism from the Islamic point of view may raise another point. They may say that the Islamic culture in its essence and character is either the culture of the oppressed or of the oppressors, or it is a blanket culture. If the Islamic culture is the culture of the oppressed, it is bound to have the character of its class: its audience, its message, its alignment, and everything must revolve around the oppressed class. And if the Islamic culture is the culture of the oppressors, as claimed by the opponents of Islam, besides having its class character and revolving around its interests, it should be a reactionary and anti-human culture and so necessarily of a non-Divine origin.

No Muslim would accept this point of view. Moreover, the entirety of this culture bears witness to the contrary. Now the claim that the Islamic culture is a blanket culture. A blanket culture is a neutral culture, a culture of isolation and indifference, without responsibility, and commitment, whose motto is, "Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give back to God what belongs to God." It is a culture which attempts to reconcile water with fire, oppressed with oppressor, exploited with exploiter, by bringing together all of them under the same roof, a culture that neither roasts the meat nor burns the spit. Such a culture is practically a conservative culture which serves the interests of the oppressors and the exploiters. A neutral, indifferent, and noncommitted group, which does not participate in any social conflicts between the exploiter and the exploited, practically supports the exploiting class by not constraining its freedom. Similarly a culture whose spirit is neutral and indifferent should of necessity considered to be the culture of the oppressive class. Taking this into account, it is claimed that since the Islamic culture is neither neutral nor a supporter of the oppressive class, it should be a culture of the oppressed with respect to its origin, its alignment, its message, and its audience, all revolving around the axis of this class.

This argument is totally fallacious. I think, there are two fundamental reasons for the inclination of this section of Muslim intellectuals towards historical materialism. Firstly, they presume that if Islamic culture is to be regarded as a revolutionary culture--or if Islam is to be equipped with a revolutionary culture--the recourse to historical materialism is inevitable. The rest of their talk and their claims that it is an idea inspired by the Quran and specifically derived from the verse 28:5 about *istid'āf* are nothing but excuses and devices to conceal this prejudice. This is the reason for their outright departure from the essence of Islamic logic, which makes them degrade the sublime, natural, Divine and human logic of Islam to the level of a materialistic philosophy.

These intellectuals have imagined that the only way open for a culture to be revolutionary is to identify it with the oppressed and the deprived class, to consider it bound to its interests, and as being exclusively related to it with respect to its source, alignment, and audience. Therefore, they think, all leaders and ideologues should arise solely from this class, the relation of this culture to all the other classes and groups being one of sheer hostility, antagonism, and conflict.

These intellectuals presume that the way to a revolutionary culture should necessarily end in the stomach, and that all great revolutions of history, even those led by the prophets, were the revolutions of the stomach, for the stomach. For the same reason, out of the great Abū Dharr, the wise man of the ummah, a staunch monotheist, a sincere and

honest supporter of Islam, a determined warrior in the way of God, a man who fearlessly fulfilled the duty of *al-'amr bi al-ma'rûf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, they have carved an Abû Dharr of the stomach, a psychopath remarkably sensitive to the pangs of hunger, who, for the sake of satisfying his hunger, considered it not only permissible but obligatory to draw the sword against all men. The highest value attributed to his life, in their view, is his personal experience of hunger, due to which he could understand the agony of the hungry class. His sympathy with the hungry caused him to develop a complex against those who were responsible for it. Consequently he committed himself totally to fighting against them. That's all there is to Abû Dharr. The whole personality of this Luqmân of the ummah, this monotheist seer, this ardent crusader, and one of the greatest personalities of Islam, is degraded to the level of a materialist.

These intellectuals subscribe to the view of Marx according to whom a revolution can originate only in a violent movement of the masses.⁷⁹

They are unable to imagine that a culture, a school of thought and an ideology which has Divine origin and addresses all human beings, and in fact the human nature itself, through a universal and comprehensive message, aligned with the values of justice, equality, piety, spirituality, love, benevolence and struggle against tyranny, is ever capable of giving birth to a great revolution accompanied with profound changes. But it is a revolution guided by the Divine light and the human conscience, and is accompanied with religious fervour, spiritual ecstasy, Divine motives, and humanistic values, similar to those monotheistic revolutions which have been witnessed by history again and again. The Islamic Revolution is a clear example of such a revolution.

These intellectuals fail to conceive that it is not essential for a culture to necessarily originate in the oppressed class in order to be committed and purposive and not to be neutral and indifferent. They presume that a blanket culture is necessarily neutral and indifferent. They are unable to understand that it is impossible for a comprehensive school of thought and a blanket culture to be neutral, indifferent irresponsible, and noncommittal if it has a Divine origin and is addressed to the human nature.

That which creates the sense of responsibility and commitment is not affinity with the oppressed class but dedication to God and human conscience. Ignorance of this fact is the root cause of their misunderstanding regarding the relationship of Islam with revolution.

The other main reason for this misconception should be sought in the relationship between Islam and its social alignment. These intellectuals have observed that there is a clear inclination in favour of the oppressed in the Quran reflected in its historical discourses about the

movements led by the prophets. On the other hand, they have accepted with unquestioning credulity the validity of the Marxist doctrine of correspondence between the social base and ideological base, according to which the origin and alignment of an ideology correspond with each other. Since it has never crossed their minds to question the validity of this doctrine, they have been forced to draw this inference that since the Quran clearly considers the goals of the sacred movements to be in alignment with the interests of the oppressed and oriented towards recovery of their rights, therefore, it means that the Quran regards all the sacred movements as originating from the oppressed and exploited class. This leads to the conclusion that the essence of history from the Quranic viewpoint is materialistic and economic, with economy as the base of the social structure.

From what we have said so far it becomes clear that the Quran believes in the principle of human nature and considers it to be the logic which governs human life. This logic, which may be called the 'logic of the human nature,' is diametrically opposed to the 'logic of profit,' which is the logic of the beastly and degenerate human being. Accordingly Islam does not accept the doctrine of correspondence between the social origin and alignment of an ideology or the doctrine of correspondence between the social and ideological bases. Islam regards it as an inhuman doctrine applicable to semi-human beings who have not received any human education or training, and so are devoid of any sense of higher values. Such stick to the logic of profit only. But it does not apply to human beings who have attained humanhood, having received human education and training; their logic is the logic of nature.

Aside from all this, to say that the alignment of Islam is in favour of the oppressed is a sort of loose statement. Of course, Islam is aligned with the values of equity, equality, and justice. Obviously the people who are benefited by this alignment are the oppressed and the deprived. Those who are adversely affected by it are the oppressors, the exploiters, and the despots.

It means that Islam, even while striving for the rights of a certain class, its principal goal is realization of a value and promotion of a human principle. It is here that the extraordinary worth of 'the principle of nature,' clearly expounded by the Quran, becomes evident in the Islamic culture as the fountain-head of all Islamic teachings.⁸⁰

Much that is said about nature [in other philosophies] fails to elucidate its depth and to comprehend its full dimensions. Even those who often talk about nature, since they do not pay due attention to the various aspects of its vast dimensions, ultimately come up with views which contradict this principle.

Another example of this error, which is more appalling, is the theory regarding the origin of religions. Whatever we have discussed till

now concerns the nature and origin of historical phenomenon from the viewpoint of religion (particularly Islam). Now we shall deal with religion as a socio-historical phenomenon, which has existed from the dawn of history up to present time, and concerns with the origin and alignment of this social phenomenon.

We have recurringly pointed out that the Marxist doctrine of historical materialism believes in a correspondence between the origin of every cultural phenomenon and its class alignment. There is a universal principle generally believed in by Muslim mystics and philosophers, according to which the end of everything is a kind of return to its origin:

النِّهَايَاتُ هِيَ الرَّجُوعُ إِلَى الْبِدَائِيَّاتِ.

The ends return to the origins.

And Rūmī has said:

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| جزنہا را رویہا سوی گل است | بلبلانرا عشق با روی گل است |
| آنچه از دریا بہ دریا می رود | از همانجا کامد آنجا می رود |
| از سرگہ سیلہای تیزرو | وزن ما جان عشق آمیزرو |

*The parts are forced towards the whole,
Nightingales are in love with the rose's face;
What comes from the sea flows back into it,
And everything returns to its source;
Like the restless waves gushing from mountain-tops,
My soul burning with love, is restless to be free from the body.*

Marxism holds a similar view with regard to intellectual, aesthetic, philosophical, and religious matters, and in fact all socio-cultural phenomena. This school claims that all ideas are directed towards the source from which they originate. The end of everything is directed towards its source and origin. There is no such thing as a neutral or non-aligned philosophy, religion or culture. There is also no such thing as a philosophy or religion which seeks social reform that is not wholly to the benefit of the social class from which it arises. According to it, every class has its specific intellectual and cultural manifestations. Therefore, in all societies divided into two classes from the economic point of view, there are two distinct types of emotional, philosophical, moral, artistic, literary, aesthetic approaches, and two different types of sensibilities and world outlooks, and occasionally even two types of

scientific knowledge. Whenever the infrastructure and property relations are of two forms, this division leads to bifurcation in two cultural and intellectual patterns and systems.

Marx personally accepts two exemptions from this principle: religion and the State. According to him, these two are special creations of the oppressive class and are used by it as instruments of exploitation. Naturally, they are aligned with the interests of the oppressors. As for the exploited class, due to its social position, it is neither the source of religion nor the State. Religion and the State are imposed upon them by the opposite group. Hence two systems of government or religion do not exist anywhere.

Certain Muslim intellectuals, contrary to Marx's view, claim that religion can be also divided into two different systems. As morality, arts, literature and all other cultural phenomena in a class society represent two systems and each of them has a specific origin and orientation related to its respective class—one system is related to the ruling class while the other is related to the ruled—so also religion is of two types: the religion of the rulers, and the religion of the ruled.

The religion of the rulers is polytheism (*shirk*), and the religion of the ruled is monotheism (*tawhid*). The religion of the rulers is partisan and discriminatory, whereas the religion of the ruled advocates equity and equality. The religion of the rulers justifies the status quo, while the religion of the ruled demands revolution and condemns the status quo. The religion of the rulers is static and stagnant, and silences all criticism; whereas the religion of the ruled stimulates upsurge, dynamism, and protest. The religion of the rulers is the opium of the society, and the religion of the ruled is a tonic for it.

Therefore, Marx's theory, that the social orientation and alignment of religion is absolutely to the interests of the rulers, is true only for the religion of the ruling class, which is against the ruled and is the opium of the masses. This is the type of religion which has practically always existed and has been in vogue and power. But it is not true of the religion of the ruled, i.e., the religion of the truthful prophets, which was not tolerated by the ruling class and was suppressed by all means.

These intellectuals in this manner reject Marx's theory which considers all religions as an instrument employed in the interests of the ruling class, and presume that thereby they have rejected Marxism itself. They do not realize that what they have said, in spite of its going against the views of Marx, Engels, Mao and other Marxists, is nothing but a confirmation of the materialist-marxist interpretation of religion—something which is far more appalling. After all they accept that the religion of the ruled has a particular class origin. Thus they approve of the principle of correspondence between a religion's class origin and its

class orientation and alignment. In other words, they have unconsciously affirmed the materialistic conception of religion and all cultural phenomena and hence the doctrine of necessary correspondence between the origin of a cultural phenomenon and its objectives. The only thing they have done is that contrary to the Marxist views, they have affirmed the existence of a religion which originates in the oppressed class and serves its interests. They have given an interesting explanation of the religion of the oppressed and its social orientation. But they ignore that this view in itself accepts the doctrine of materialistic-economic character of religion.

Furthermore, what sort of conclusions are drawn from this view? It is concluded that the polytheistic religion of the ruling class is the only religion that has played an objectively significant role in the lives of people throughout history. Due to the determinism of history, which supported it, and the economic and political power vested in its hands, the religion of the ruling class, which necessarily justified its situation, has been always the predominant religion. On the other hand, since the monotheistic religion could not materialize and objectify its social objectives, it did not play any historical role in society, as the superstructure can not precede the economic base or infrastructure.

According to this view, the monotheistic movements of the prophets, being the expression of the aspirations of the oppressed and the defeated, could not play any historical role and were bound to be defeated. The prophets preached the religion of unity of God and justice, but all their attempts proved to be short-lived, because the religion of the rulers under the mask of monotheism and prophetic teachings distorted the true religion and suppressed it. The religion of the ruling class flourished by drawing its nourishment from prophetic teachings while growing in power and using it for exploitation of the deprived class.

In fact, the truthful prophets of God strove to provide the people with bread, but brought disaster upon them, as their religion became a tool of the opposite class for tightening the noose further around the neck of the oppressed and the weak. The prophets could not achieve what they desired through their teachings; rather the outcome was contrary to their objectives, or, to use an expression used by Islamic jurists, *ما قصد لم يقع وما وقع لم يُقصد*, "the intended did not happen, and what happened was not intended."

What the materialists and atheists say about religion, that religion is opium of the masses, it stupefies them, bewitches them, causes stagnation and passivism, justifies tyranny and discrimination, and is conducive to ignorance—all this is true but only for the religion of the rulers: the polytheistic religion of social discrimination which predominated throughout history. But it is not true of righteous

religion, the religion of monotheism, the religion of the ruled, the oppressed, which was always suppressed and was driven out of the arena of life and history.

The only role played by the religion of the ruled has been one of criticism and protest. It was similar to the role of a political party with minority seats in the legislature. The party which obtains majority, forms the cabinet out of its members, carries out its programmes and resolutions. The other party despite being more progressive, because of being in minority, is reduced to the role of a critic of the majority.

The party in majority does not pay any heed to these criticisms. Ruling the society according to its own desires, it may occasionally even utilize the criticism of the minority for strengthening its own position. If it were not for the criticism of the opposition, it may possibly collapse under increasing pressures; but the criticism of the opposition makes it more cautious and helps it to further consolidate its position.

The foregoing statement is not true on any account. Neither is it true in respect of its analysis of the nature of polytheism, nor with regard to its analysis of the nature of monotheism, nor in its treatment of the part played by these two religions in history. Undeniably religion has always existed in the world, be it in the form of monotheism, or polytheism, or both of them existing simultaneously. As for the priority of polytheism over monotheism or vice versa, the sociologists advance different views. The majority of them hold that in the beginning there was polytheism, and religion gradually evolved towards monotheism. Some sociologists hold the opposite view.

Religious traditions, or rather certain religious principles, confirm the second theory. But as to the question how the religion of polytheism came into existence, and whether it was invented to justify the acts of injustice and tyranny by the oppressors, or if there was some other reason, researchers offer other explanations; and one cannot naively accept the view that polytheism is a product of social injustice. The interpretation of monotheism as the outcome of the aspirations of the oppressed classes to uphold the values of equality, brotherhood, and unity, as against the philosophy of discrimination and injustice of the rulers, appears to be more unscientific as well as incompatible with the basic tenets of Islam.

The above-mentioned view presents the truthful apostles of God as "the acquitted failures;" failures, since they failed in the struggle against evil and were overpowered throughout history; their religion could not influence society nor could it play any role comparable to the one played by the false religion of the rulers. Its role was restricted to passive criticism of the religion of the rulers. And the 'acquitted,' for the reason that, contrary to the claims of materialists, they never

belonged to the pole of exploiters and plunderers, and were not agents of stagnation and passivism. Their alignment was not with the interests of the ruling class. On the contrary, they belonged to the pole of the oppressed and the exploited, arose from among them, experienced their agonies, worked in their interest, and strove for the restoration of their rights usurped by the ruling class.

As the truthful prophets are totally exonerated with respect to their call, message and their alignment, they are also exonerated from any accusation of failure; they were not responsible for it. It was the determinism of history arising out of the institution of private property which supported and sustained the opponent, the ruling class. The existence of private property necessarily divided society into two halves: the exploiters and the exploited. The half consisting of the exploiters, by virtue of its ownership of material production, necessarily monopolized intellectual products also. One cannot oppose "determinism of history"—which is a materialistic term for fate and predestination, predestined not by a god in heavens but on the earth, a deity which is material, not abstract, whose power represented by the "economic base of society" operates through the channels of the "tools of production." Therefore, the prophets are not responsible for their failure.

However, though the above-mentioned interpretation exonerates the righteous prophets, it negates the notion of a system of creation which is all good, is governed by truth, and where the good predominates over evil. The Islamic metaphysician optimistically maintains that the system of being is based upon truth and good, that evil, falsehood, and wickedness do not have a fundamental reality and do not exist independently; they are accidental, relative, and transitory. Truth and good form the axis of the system of being and the human society:

.... فَأَمَّا الرِّبْدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُتُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ...

...As for the foam, it passes away as scum [upon the banks], while that which is of use to mankind remains in the earth.... (13:17)

It is also said that in the struggle between truth and falsehood, truth emerges victorious:

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ....

Nay, but We hurl the true against the false, and it invalidates it, and behold! falsehood vanishes away.... (21:18)

It is further asserted that Divine providence has been with the truthful prophets all along:

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَنَوْمِ يَوْمِ الْأَشْهَادِ •

Surely We shall help Our Messengers and those who believe, in the life of the world, and upon the day when the witnesses arise. (40:50)

The Quran also asserts:

وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ • إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَنْصُورُونَ • وَإِنَّ جُنُدَنَا لَهُمُ الْمُغَابِرُونَ •

And verily Our word went forth of old unto Our servants, the envoys: assuredly they shall be helped, and Our host—they are the victors. (37: 171-173)

But the view discussed above refutes these principles because although it exonerates all the prophets, messengers, and reformers of the past, their God is held responsible.

All these conflicting views pose a ticklish problem. On the one hand, the Quran presents an optimist view regarding the general course of the universe by repeatedly emphasizing that *haqq* (truth or right) is the axis of being and man's social existence. Theological philosophy on the basis of its particular principles claims that good invariably overcomes evil, right conquers wrong, and that evil is accidental, relative, and unreal, without any real and independent existence of its own.

On the other hand, a study of the history of the past and the present gives rise to a sense of pessimism regarding the laws governing the universe and appears to affirm that the view held by the pessimists that entire history is a cavalcade of catastrophes, oppressions, exploitations, and violations against right and truth, is not unjustified.

Is there any way out of this dilemma? Either our understanding of the system of reality and human society is wrong, or we are mistaken in our comprehension of the meaning of the Quran by ascribing to it an optimistic world outlook. Or if we are not mistaken with respect to either of them, we have to accept an inherent, unresolvable contradiction between the reality and the Quran.

I have discussed the doubts which arise regarding the system of existence in this context and have solved them by the grace of God in my book *Divine Justice*⁸¹. The doubts which arise regarding the course of history and human society would be dealt with under the title "*The Battle between Good and Evil.*"⁸² God willing, there we shall state our views for the resolution of this doubt. I will be delighted to learn the well-reasoned views of other scholars regarding this problem.

Islam's 'Philosophy' of History

Criteria

IN order to discover the viewpoint of any school of thought regarding the nature of history we may use certain criteria which help us to exactly determine its approach to different historic movements and events. For this purpose, here I offer some criteria which I consider proper for such a study. Of course, there may possibly be other criteria which I fail to perceive.

Before we take up these criteria and before we apply them for determining the viewpoint of Islam, it is essential to point out that, in our view, there are certain principles laid down in the Quran according to which the spiritual and intellectual foundation of society is considered prior to its material bases. The Quran has clearly stated the following as a principle:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ...

...God changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in themselves.... (13:11)

In other words, the destiny of a people is never changed unless they change their mental and spiritual attitudes. This verse clearly negates the theory of economic determinism of history.

Nevertheless, I shall give an account of the criteria I have determined and on their basis evaluate the viewpoint of Islam regarding the nature of history.

1. Strategy of the Call:

Every school of thought that has a message for society and calls the people to accept it, has to adopt a specific method which is related on the one hand to its principal aims and objectives, and on the other to its viewpoint about the nature of historical movements. The call of a school is meant, firstly, to awaken a particular consciousness in the people, and, secondly, to arouse and mobilize them by using certain

specific means of motivation.

An example is the humanist school of Auguste Comte. Comte advocates a kind of "scientific religion," and considers the essence of human evolution to lie in the sphere of the human mind. He believes that the human mind has passed through two stages. The first stage is that of mythology and philosophy. The second is the stage of science. Naturally, he relates all the desirable forms of consciousness to science, and all the means of motivation required for attaining this objective are also related to the scientific spirit.

Another example is that of Marxism which is a revolutionary theory of the working class. The consciousness which it awakens is related to class antagonism. The means of mobilizing the working class lie in stirring its complexes and its feelings of deprivation and victimization.

In addition to their points of view regarding society and history, various schools of thought differ from one another with respect to different types of consciousness they wish to awaken and different types of means employed for bringing about the desired change. Various ideologies, in accordance with their interpretation of history and the course of its development and their outlook of man, also vary with regard to their target-audience, the reliance of their strategy on force and their view regarding its moral justifiability.

Some schools like Christianity approve only peaceful way of confrontation among human beings. Force or violence of all forms and under all conditions is disapproved of and considered immoral. Accordingly, one of its commandments is: "Offer the wicked man no resistance... If any one hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man tries to take your tunic, lawfully or unlawfully, let him have your cloak as well." On the contrary certain other schools of thought, such as the philosophy of Nietzsche, regard power as the sole moral value. To him human perfection lies in power, and his superman is the most powerful among men. According to Nietzsche, Christian morality is the morality of slaves, of the weak and the humiliated and is therefore to be blamed for the arrest of human progress.

Certain other schools of thought associate morality with power and violence, though do not consider every kind of force as moral. According to Marxism, the use of force by the exploiters against the exploited is immoral, because it is intended to preserve the status quo, and causes stagnation. But the application of force by the exploited is moral, for it is used for the purpose of transforming society, leading it to a higher stage.

In other words, there is a continuous conflict in society between two groups: one playing the role of 'thesis' and the other working as 'anti-thesis.' The force acting as 'thesis,' by virtue of its being reaction-

ary, is immoral; the force acting as 'antithesis,' by virtue of being revolutionary and progressive, is moral. It is quite natural that the same force which is now regarded as 'moral,' at a later stage, after coming into conflict with its counter force, would become 'immoral,' as it would then play a reactionary role, and the new rival force would become 'moral.' Hence morality is relative. What is moral at one stage, is immoral at a higher and advanced stage.

From the viewpoint of Christianity, its relation with the opposite group, judged by it to be opposed to progress and salvation, is that of softness and mildness. Only this kind of relation is morally right. According to Nietzsche, the only moral relation is the relation between the powerful and the weak. There is no moral value higher than power, and nothing more immoral than weakness. There is no sin greater than the sin of being weak. According to Marxism the relation between two economically opposite classes is nothing but a relationship of antagonism translated into acts of violence. In this relationship, the acts of violence committed by the exploiting class are immoral for being anti-progressive, and the acts of violence committed by the exploited are morally justified. The relationship between newly emerging forces and old forces is that of continuous conflict, and in this conflict morality is invariably on the side of new forces.

All the above-mentioned ideas are rejected by Islam. Islam does not confine morality to pacifism, persuasion through mild and peaceful manners, cordiality and love, as preached by Christianity. It holds that occasionally force and power are also moral. For the same reason Islam regards struggle against tyranny and injustice as a sacred duty and under certain conditions makes *jihād*, which means armed struggle, an obligation.

It is evident that Nietzsche's view is absurd, anti-human, and decadent.

The viewpoint of Marxism is based on the supposed mechanism operative in the development of history. Contrary to it, Islam regards violent confrontation with the opposing retrogressive group as a second alternative not the first. The first alternative consists of communication through rational persuasion (*al-hikmah*) and moral preaching (*al-maw'idah*):

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْخَيْرِ....

Invite them to the path of God by appealing to reason and moral sense....

Confrontation with the retrogressive forces through acts of violence is morally approved only when the methods of intellectual, moral, and spiritual persuasion have been unsuccessful. That is why the

prophets who waged war against their adversaries had tried initially to convey their message through persuasion and preaching and occasionally through theological debating. Only when they failed in these attempts, or could attain only partial success, they considered the path of violent confrontation, *jihād*, and acts of force as morally justifiable. The main reason of this attitude is that Islam, since its approach is spiritual not materialistic, believes in the wonderful power of rational argument, logical demonstration, and moral persuasion. Just as it believes—to use an expression of Marx—in the power of weapons for the purpose of criticism, it also believes in the power of the weapon of criticism, and makes use of it. However, Islam does not consider it the sole weapon that should be used everywhere. The fact that armed struggle against the forces of reaction is permissible in Islam only as a second alternative not the first, and the fact that Islam has a strong faith in the power of reasoning, persuasion, and moral teaching, both point towards the characteristic spiritual outlook of Islam regarding man, and, consequently, society and history.

Thus, we come to know that the relation of a school of thought with its adversaries—whether it is one of sheer persuasion or of sheer conflict, or a two-stage relation consisting firstly of persuasion and secondly of conflict—clearly reveals the faith of any school of thought in the power of logical persuasion, and moral preaching, their effectiveness and their limits, and also reveals its outlook regarding history and the role of conflict in the course of history.

Now we shall discuss the other aspect. Let us see what kind of consciousness Islam strives to awaken and what means it employs to invite people for embracing its message.

Islamic consciousness attaches foremost importance to the belief in the Divine origin and resurrection (*al-mabda' wa al-ma'ād*). This method of cultivating this consciousness has been used by the Quran and, according to it, also by the prophets of the past. The prophets awakened among the people the awareness of their origin and goal: Wherefrom have you come; where have you come; to where are you bound? From where has the world emerged, which course does it pursue, and in which direction is it moving? The primary concern instilled by the prophets into people's consciousness is the concern and responsibility towards the whole creation and existence. The concern for social responsibility is only a part of the concern for responsibility towards the whole universe and being. It has been pointed out earlier that the Meccan *sūrah*s, revealed to the Prophet (S) during the first thirteen years of this mission, bring into focus little except the issues of creation and resurrection.⁸³

The Holy Prophet (S) started his mission with the declaration:

قُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَعْلَمُونَ.

Say, there is no god except God, that you may be delivered.

This was a religious movement which aimed at purifying human belief and thought. It is true that the principle of *tawhīd* (Divine Unity) has many dimensions—if all teachings of Islam are analysed, they are found to be reducible to the principle of *tawhīd*; in the same way, the whole system of Islamic ideas can be constructed on this principle⁸⁴—but it should be noted that in the beginning this declaration was meant for no purpose except changing the current polytheistic modes of thinking and worship into monotheistic belief and worship; nor if such a comprehensive objective was upheld would it have been comprehensible for the people.

When this consciousness, whose roots go down deep into the human nature, created a feeling of enthusiasm for defending and spreading this faith in a follower, he would not hesitate to sacrifice his life, property, social position, and children for its sake. The prophets started with what in our days is called "the superstructure," working towards what is called 'the base' or 'infrastructure.' According to prophetic teachings, man is more committed to faith and ideology than to material interests. In fact, it is this faith and ideology which is the base, and labour, which is a relation with nature, natural resources or society, constitutes the superstructure. Every religious call, in order to be effective, must be 'prophetic,' that is, it should be accompanied by persistent reminding of origin and resurrection. The prophets mobilized the society by awakening this awareness, and by cultivating this consciousness, by removing all dust from the face of human conscience, and by relying on the notions of God's good pleasure, His sovereignty, His reward and retribution. In thirteen places the Quran makes mention of the *riḍwān* (good pleasure) of God. This shows the kind of spiritual motivation employed by Islam for mobilization of the society of believers. This awareness may be called Divine or cosmic consciousness.

Of significance at the second level in Islamic teachings is man's consciousness of his humanity, and realization of the nobility and honour of man's station. In the view of Islam man is not the animal who in the beginning was like all other primates for hundreds of millions of years, who survives and has attained this stage of evolution by treacherously eliminating others in the struggle for existence. On the contrary, he is a being who carries within him the light of Divine Spirit, before whom the angels prostrated, a being to whom are addressed calls from the Divine Throne. Despite all animal propensities toward lust, sensuality, corruption and evil, his being is endowed with a sacred spark which is essentially averse to wickedness, bloodshed,

falsehood, corruption, meanness, degradation, and humiliation and which resists repression and tyranny. That spark is a manifestation of Divine honour and majesty:

... وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ....

...Honour belongs to Allah and to His messengers and the believers.... (63:8)

The Prophet (S) has said:

شَرَفُ الْمَرْءِ قِيَامُهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَعِزَّتُهُ اسْتِغَاؤُهُ عَنِ النَّاسِ.

Man's nobility is in his nightlong vigils, and his honour lies in his being in no need of people.

'Ali (A) said to his fellowmen during the Battle of Şiffin:

الْحَيَاةُ فِي مَوْتِكُمْ قَاهِرِينَ وَالْمَوْتُ فِي حَيَاتِكُمْ مَقْهُورِينَ.

Life is to die victorious, and death is to survive in subjugation.

Al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali (A) said:

لَا أَرَى الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا سَعَادَةً وَالْحَيَاةَ مَعَ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا أَلَمًا.

I can see happiness only in death, and find nothing but agony and disgust in life in the company of tyrants and oppressors.

He also said:

هَيْبَاتٌ مِثْلَ الذِّلَّةِ

We and disgrace? How preposterous!

All these sayings rely on man's sense of honour and nobility which are inherent in human nature.

Of significance at the third level in Islamic teachings is awareness of one's social rights and responsibilities. There are several instances in the Quran which, by relying on the necessity of fighting for restoration for one's own rights or the rights of others, use this obligation as a means of motivation and mobilization. For an example, we may refer to the following verse of *Sūrat al-Nisā'*:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ

رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَعْلَاهَا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ
 نَصِيرًا •

How should you not fight for the cause of Allah and of the oppressed among the men, women, and children, who say, 'Our Lord, bring us forth from this city whose people are oppressors, and appoint to us a protector from Thee, and appoint to us from Thee a helper'? (4:75)

This verse relies on two spiritual values for motivating towards *jihād*. The first value is necessity of struggling in the way of God; the second, human responsibility to rescue helpless and defenceless human beings out of the clutches of oppressors. In *Sūrat al-Hajj*, God says:

إِذْ لِلَّذِينَ بُعِثْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ آيَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ • الَّذِينَ أَخْرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَغْيًا
 فَإِذَا كَانُوا لِلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قِيَامًا فَقَالُوا إِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ • وَإِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِ
 وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَظَهِيرٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ • وَإِنَّمَا اللَّهُ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الرَّحِيمُ • وَإِنَّمَا اللَّهُ
 يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الرَّحِيمُ • وَإِنَّمَا اللَّهُ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الرَّحِيمُ • وَإِنَّمَا اللَّهُ
 يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الرَّحِيمُ • وَإِنَّمَا اللَّهُ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الرَّحِيمُ •

Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged—and surely God is able to give them victory—who were driven from their homes unjustly only because they said: 'Our Lord is Allah.' Had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches, oratories and mosques, wherein the Name of Allah is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down. Assuredly Allah helps one who helps Him—surely Allah is All-strong, Almighty—who, if We establish them in the land, establish prayers, pay the poor-due, and bid to honour and forbid dishonour. And to Allah belongs the issue of all affairs. (22:39-41)

We notice in this verse that the sanction of *jihād* and defence begins with reference to the rights of those who are permitted to fight. But, at the same time, the underlying philosophy of defence is regarded as a matter over and above and more fundamental than the injustice done to certain people. This philosophy of defence is that if the believers and the faithful do not act and do not rise to wage war against unbelievers, the mosques and other places of worship, which form the heart of the spiritual life of a society, would be demolished, ruined and deserted. In *Sūrat al-Nisā'*, the Quran says:

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ....

God likes not the utterance of harsh speech unless one has been wronged... (4:148)

It shows that God does not like the words of abuse except in the case of those who are wronged. This is an evident encouragement for the oppressed to demand their rights. In the *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'* the Quran after reprimanding poets and condemning them for their illusory excursions, allows for the following exception:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا....

Save those who believe and do good works, and remember God much, and vindicate themselves [by means of poetry] after they have been wronged... (26:227)

According to the Quran and the Sunnah, while it is the worst of crimes to submit to oppression and tyranny, and to guard one's rights is considered one's duty, but at the same time all such rights and duties are basically upheld because they represent a series of higher human values. The Quran never appeals to base psychological complexes. It does not rely on envy, jealousy, or lustful cravings as proper motivation for arousing the oppressed. It never says that such and such a group is enjoying a lavish style of life, eating and plundering; why shouldn't you take their place.

If someone wants to take away one's property by force, Islam does not permit passive surrender on the part of the owner on the pretext that material things have no value. Similarly in the case of assault on a person's honour (wife and daughters), Islam does not allow him to keep silent on the pretext that such sexual acts are natural. Islam regards self-defence as a duty. Someone killed in defence of his honour and property is regarded as a martyr (*shahid*). Even when Islam encourages the defence of one's property, it is not in the form of instigation of the sense of greed and avarice, but for the sake of defence of what is rightful, which is a moral value. In the same way, when it regards defence of one's honour as an obligation, it is not for the sake of highlighting sexuality, but for the sake of safeguarding chastity, which is one of the greatest sanctities of society, for which man has been appointed a custodian.

2. An Ideology's Nomenclature

Every school of thought identifies its followers with a specific name. For example, white racialism regards 'white man' as the mark of identity of those who subscribe to this theory. When they say 'We', it signifies the white race. Similarly Marxism, which is the philosophy of the working class, identifies its followers with the label 'worker,' which marks their identity. 'We' in their jargon means 'We the workers and the labourers.' Christianity specifies the identity of its followers with the

following of a particular individual without bothering about any path or objective. A Christian's identity wholly lies in following Christ, wheresoever he may lead him.

One of the characteristics of Islam is that it does not approve of any racial, class, professional, regional or personal labels for introducing itself or its followers. Followers of this religion are not identified with any of such labels as nomads, Semites, poor, rich, oppressed, white, black, Asians, Westerners, Easterners, 'Mohammadans,' 'Qur'ānites,' or 'Ka'bites.' None of the above-mentioned labels are considered a determinant of the real identity of its followers. As soon as the character of this school and that of its followers is identified, all labels and names disappear, the only thing that remains is a particular 'relationship'—the relationship between man and God. "*Islām*" means submission to God. What sort of community is the Muslim community? It is a community which submits to God, submits to truth, and to Divine Revelation which from the horizon of truth casts the reflection of reality into the heart of the worthiest of mankind for the guidance of humanity. Then what is the real mark of the identity of Muslims, and what is signified by the Muslims' use of the word 'We'? What sort of unity and identity does this religion impart to its followers, and what is their mark of identification? Under what flag does it assemble them? The answer is: *Islām*, submission to the truth.

The criterion of unity that every school approves for its followers is a reliable means of judging its aims and objectives. It also helps us to understand the outlook of a school regarding man, society, and history.

3. Positive and Negative Conditions for Acceptability

I have already mentioned that the mechanism of the movement of history varies according to different schools of thought. One school conceives the mechanism of natural movement as repression of one class by another, one of which is intrinsically revolutionary and the other reactionary. Another school traces the source of mechanism in the nobility of human nature that strives to attain perfection. Similarly other schools have other views. It is evident that every school of thought interprets favourable conditions and obstacles in accordance with its definition of the mechanism of society's movement. The school which regards the pressure exercised by one class on the other as the mechanism of movement, in case such pressure is not adequate, tries to create such a pressure so as to stimulate the society out of its inert state. In some of his writings Marx has remarked that "The existence of a class of slaves is essential for the existence of the class of freemen." At the conclusion of the same study, he says, "Where does the possibility of liberation for the German nation lie? Our answer is this: We must

form a class which is decisively in chains."⁸⁵ Such an ideology regards reforms as obstacles; because reforms reduce social pressures and this reduction eliminates, or at least delays, the explosive conditions necessary for revolution. On the contrary, the ideology which believes in the natural and innate movement of society, does not sanction forging of chains for any class; since it does not consider social pressure as an essential condition for development. For the same reason, it does not regard gradual reform as an obstacle for progress.

What are the favourable and unfavourable conditions from the viewpoint of Islam? The Islamic interpretation of these conditions revolves around the nature of the human being. Sometimes the Quran stresses the condition of adherence to primordial piety (... *هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* "guidance for the God-fearing." [2:2]) Sometimes it mentions anxiety and apprehension arising from awareness of responsibility vis-a-vis the whole system of existence as a condition (... *الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ...* "who fear God in the Unseen," [21:49]; or ... *وَحِجَّتِ الرَّحْمَنُ بِالْغَيْبِ...* "who fears the All-merciful in the Unseen," [36:11]). Sometimes it mentions the condition that the God-given nature within one should have remained intact and alive: ... *لِيُنذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا* "to warn him who is alive" (36:70). Thus the essential conditions according to Islam for acceptance of its call are piety, anxiety and apprehension arising out of a sense of responsibility towards the system of creation, and intact survival of one's God-given nature.

In opposition to these conditions are such spiritual and moral vices as *إِنَّمَا الْقَلْبُ* "sinfulness of the heart," (2:283); *رُتُنُ الْقَلْبِ* "rusting of the heart," (83:14); sealing of the heart (2:7); inner blindness or loss of sight (22:46); deafness of the heart (41:44); corruption of the book of the soul (91:10); blind adherence to the practices of ancestors (43:23); personality cult or hero worship (33:63); reliance on surmise and conjecture (6:116), and so on. Extravagance, affluence, and habitual luxury are also regarded as deterrents, because they strengthen the animal qualities in man and transform him into a beast and even a predator. According to the Quran, these factors impede advancement towards the welfare of the society and are injurious to its development.

According to the Islamic teachings, young people as compared to the aged, and the poor as compared to the affluent, are more receptive to the teachings of Islam; since the youth due to their young age escape psychological pollution and their nature is purer; and the poor also are purer because their souls are not distorted by luxury and wealth.

These positive and negative conditions for the acceptability of Islam affirm that the mechanism of social and historical change suggested by the Quran is more spiritual-psychological in nature than materialistic and economic.

4. Rise and Fall of Societies

Every sociological school usually deals with the causes of the rise and progress of societies and reasons of their degeneration and decline. The viewpoint of a school regarding the main factors of progress or decline, indicates its approach to society and history and their movement towards development and decline.

The Holy Quran, especially with reference to the stories and anecdotes related to these matters, explains its view. We have to see whether the Quran interprets the causes of change in terms of the so-called infrastructure or in terms of the superstructure. To be more precise, we have to know what things are considered by the Quran as the basis and what matters are regarded as constituting the superstructure. Does the Quran emphasize the material and economic factors as being basic, or does it attach basic importance to matters pertaining to faith and morality? Or does it consider all the factors combined together responsible for the rise and fall of a society without giving priority to anyone of them?

The Quran, on the whole, enumerates four factors influencing the rise and fall of a society. In passing, I will give a brief account of these factors.

A. Justice and Injustice:

This notion finds reflection in many verses of the Quran. One of them is the fourth verse of *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*, which I have already quoted in the context of the 'verse of oppression':

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضِعُّ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ يَدْعُوا أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَمَسْجِدِي
بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ *

Verily Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and divided its inhabitants into castes, oppressing one party of them, slaughtering their sons, and sparing their women. Verily, he was of those who work corruption. (28:4)

This holy verse first describes Pharaoh's lust for power and superiority and his claim to divinity, which led him to treat others as slaves. His policy of discrimination had divided them into mutually conflicting groups. He had humiliated a particular group of his people, killing their sons and sparing their women (for serving Pharaoh and his clique). The Quran mentions him as a '*mufsid*' (one who corrupts). Evidently the sentence, "... إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ *", "Verily, he was of those who corrupt," is intended to condemn such offences against society

which demolish its very foundations.

B. Unity and Disunity:

In the *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*, the verse 103 lays down a clear command to unite on the basis of faith and to hold on to the bond of God, and prohibits disunity and division. In a following verse (3:105) the believers are asked again not to behave like their predecessors [Jews and Christians] who quarrelled with one another and divided. Quite similar to it is the verse 153 in *Sūrat al-'An'ām*. In the same *sūrah*, verse 65 states:

قُلْ هُوَ الْعَادِرُ عَلَيَّ أَنْ يَتَّعَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبَسَكُمْ سِيبًا
وَيُؤَيِّقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بِأَمْسِ بَعْضٍ....

Say: 'He is able to send forth upon you chastisement, from above you or from under your feet, or to confuse you in sects and make you taste the violence of one another (6:65)

In the *Sūrat al-'Anfāl*, the verse 46 declares:

.... وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ....

... Do not quarrel with one another for then you will be weak and your power will depart from you.... (8:46)

C. Practice or Neglect of the Principle of al-'Amr bi al-Ma'rūf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar :

The Quran puts great emphasis on the duty of *al-'amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (enjoining right conduct and forbidding indecency). An evident inference that may be drawn from one of its verses is that negligence of this great duty on the part of a nation ultimately results in its destruction and doom. This is verse 79 in *Sūrat al-Mā'idah* which explains that one of the reasons for the denial of Divine mercy and compassion to the infidels of Bani Israel was their nonobservance of the duty to prohibit others from vices:

كَانُوا لَا يَتَّهَوُونَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ •

They forbade not one another any dishonour they committed; surely evil were the things they did. (5:79)

In reliable Islamic traditions there are ample references to the

advantages of observance and perils of abandonment of the duty of enjoining right conduct and forbidding indecency. However, we abstain from quoting them here for the sake of brevity.

D. Moral Corruption and Degeneration:

There are various verses in the Quran in this context also. In a series of verses luxury and opulence are regarded to be the cause of destruction and ruin.⁸⁶ There are also a number of verses in which the word "zulm" (cruelty, injustice, oppression, tyranny) occurs. In Quranic terminology this word does not specifically mean violation of the rights of an individual or group by other individual or group. It also includes injustice to one's own self, as well as injustice of a nation to itself. Actually the word *zulm* is used in the Quran in a general sense. Any kind of deviation from the right path of humanness is injustice, and includes all acts of injustice to others as well as all acts of impropriety, corruption, perversion and immorality. This word is more often used in the Quran in the second sense (i.e., moral deviation). Such verses which consider *zulm* in its general sense as the main cause of destruction and ruin of nations are very numerous. It is beyond the scope of the present work to discuss them here.

Taking in view all these criteria as a whole, we can grasp the view of the Quran regarding the basis of society and that of history. The Quran allots a decisive and determining role to most of the factors which some consider as superstructural.

Evolution and Change in History

WHATEVER has been discussed so far concerns one of the two most important problems of history, i.e., nature of history—whether it is materialistic or not. The other important problem concerns change and evolution in human history.

We know that social life is not confined to man alone. Some other living creatures also have social life to some extent. They organize their lives on the basis of cooperation, division of labour, and sharing of responsibilities according to set rules and regulations.

We all know that the honeybee is such a creature. But there is a basic difference between the social existence of man and that of other animals; the pattern of their social life always remains fixed and static. Any evolution and change do not take place in the system of their existence, or in the words of Morris Metterlink, in their culture, if the term 'culture' can be used for animals. On the contrary, social life of man is ever changing and dynamic. There is not just a movement, but even an acceleration; i.e. the rate of movement increases with time. Thus the history of human social existence has different periods which are distinguished from one another in various aspects. For instance there are different periods according to the means of livelihood: the period of hunting, the period of cultivation, and the period of industrialization. According to economic system the different periods may be classified as the period of communism, the period of slavery, the period of feudalism, the period of capitalism, and the period of socialism. According to political system, we have the period of tribal rule, the period of despotic monarchy, the period of aristocracy, and the period of democracy; according to sex, the period of matriarchy, and the period of patriarchy. In the same way we may have other classifications from the viewpoint of other aspects.

Why isn't such a change exhibited in the social life of other animals? What is the secret of this change, and what is the main factor responsible for transition of man from one social phase to another? In other words, what is that human faculty that propels human existence forward, and which is not possessed by the animals? How does

this transition and advancement occur, what are the laws that govern it, and by what mechanism is it controlled?

There is a question which is usually raised at this point by the philosophers of history; whether evolution and progress are real? In other words, are the changes that have been taking place in the social life of man throughout history actually in the direction of progress and evolution? What are the criteria of evolution?

Some are sceptical that these changes may be regarded as progressive and evolutionary, and their views are discussed in related books.⁸⁷ And some others regard movement of history as cyclic, claiming that history starts from a point and after passing through certain phases returns again to the same point. 'Once again,' in their view, is the eternal cry of history.

For example, in the beginning a coarse tribal system is established by certain venturesome and determined nomadic people, which gradually evolves into aristocracy. The monopoly of aristocrats results in a popular uprising and giving birth to democracy. The chaos and anarchy created by unlimited and unchecked freedom in the democratic system once again leads to the re-emergence of despotism, helped by a tribal spirit.

Here we do not wish to enter an elaborate discussion on this subject and postpone it to some other occasion. However, for the purpose of the present study, we assume that the movement and course of history are on the whole progressive, and proceed accordingly.

Nevertheless, it is essential to remind here that all those who consider the movement of history to be in the general direction of progress acknowledge the fact that by no means the future is better necessarily than the past for all societies under all conditions; neither do they say that the course of societies is always marked by progress without any interruptions or set-back. Undeniably, societies become stagnant, decadent, and retrogressive. They have the tendency of inclining towards the right or the left and consequently are subject to decline and fall. All that is meant is that the human society on the whole is passing through an evolutionary course.

In the books on philosophy of history the problem regarding the dynamics of history and the motivating factors responsible for social progress is usually formulated in a manner which is revealed to be defective on some reflection. In the following sections the views usually advanced on this issue will be discussed.

1. The Racial Theory

According to this theory, certain races are mainly responsible for the advancement of history. Some races have the ability of creating

culture and civilization, while others do not possess such talents. Some races contribute to science, philosophy, arts, crafts, and morality, while others are merely consumers of these products.

It is concluded that there exists some kind of division of work between the races. The races endowed with aptitude for knowledge, learning, and statecraft, and with ability to create arts, culture, crafts, and technology should be engaged in these higher, sophisticated and refined human activities; while the races not endowed with such talents should be excused from these activities and instead be engaged in hard physical labour and menial tasks which do not need refinement of thought and taste. Aristotle, who holds this view regarding racial differences, justifies the enslavement of certain races by other races on the same grounds.

Some thinkers believe that only particular races are able to lead the course of history. For example, the northern races being superior to the southern races have been responsible for the advancement of cultures. Count Gobino, the famous French philosopher who was for three years French ambassador to Iran about hundred years ago, believed in this theory.

2. The Geographical Theory

According to this theory, the main factor responsible for creating civilization and culture and for development of industry is physical environment. Moderate temperaments and strong minds develop in regions of temperate climate. In the beginning of his book, "*al-Qānūn*," Ibn Sinā has elaborately discussed the effect of physical environmental factor on the modes of thought, taste, sensibility and other psychological aspects of human personality.

According to this theory, the factor that directs the advancement of history is not of racial origin or heredity. It is not true that a certain race regardless of its region or environment is the maker of history and responsible for its advancement and a certain other race whatever its physical environment lacks such abilities. In fact, the differences of races are caused by different environments. Moreover, with displacement and migration of races capacities are also redistributed. Thus particular regional and geographical factors are responsible in the main for the advancement and revitalization of civilizations. Montesquieu, the French sociologist of the seventeenth century, supports this point of view in his famous book *De l'esprit des lois* (The Spirit of the Laws).

3. The Theory of the Role of Genius or Heroes

According to this theory, all scientific, political, economic,

technological, and moral changes and developments throughout history are brought about by men of genius. The difference between human beings and other animals is that from a biological point of view all other animals are equal in respect of natural capacities. There is at least no remarkable difference among the individuals of a certain species.

In contrast, human individuals bear vast differences regarding their natural capacities and talents. The geniuses of every society are extraordinary individuals of exceptional abilities endowed with extraordinary powers of intellect, sensibility, will, and creativity. Whenever such individuals emerge in a society they contribute to its advancement, taking it ahead scientifically, technically, morally, militarily, and politically. According to this theory, majority of individuals lack initiative and creativity. They are simply followers and consumers of the ideas and the products of the industry of others.

But there always exists a minority of creative individuals in almost all societies who act as leaders, forerunners, innovators, and inventors, who produce new ideas, new methods, and new technologies. They are the people who steer society in the forward direction and enable it to enter into a new higher phase. Carlyle, the famous English thinker, in his well-known book *Heroes, Hero worship and the Heroic in History*, starting his book with the role of the Holy Prophet (S), holds such a view.

In Carlyle's view, every nation has one or more historical personalities in whom the whole history of a nation is reflected. Or more precisely, it may be said that the history of a nation reflects the personality and genius of one or more of its heroes. For instance, the history of Islam mirrors the personality of the Holy Prophet (S); the history of modern France mirrors the personality of Napoleon and certain other great men, and the last sixty years of the history of Soviet Russia mirror the personality of Lenin.

4. The Economic Theory

According to this theory, economy is the motivating factor of history. All social and historical modes of every nation, including the cultural, religious, political, military and social aspects, reflect the mode and relations of production of a society. Any change in the economic infrastructure of the society totally transforms it and steers it forward. The men of genius, whose role was discussed earlier, are nothing but the expressions of economic, political, and social needs of society; and these needs in their turn are the effects of changes in the tools of production. Karl Marx, and in general all Marxists, and occasionally a number of non-Marxists, subscribe to this view. This is probably the most dominant theory of our times.

5. The Religious Theory

According to this theory, all worldly incidents have Divine origin and are governed by God's consummate Wisdom. All evolutions and changes occurring in history are manifestations of the Divine Will and God's omniscient wisdom. Thus whatever moves history forward and transforms it is the Will of God. The drama of history is written and directed by the sacred Will of God. Bossuet, the famous historian and patriarch, who acted as the tutor to Louis the Fifteenth, supports this view.

These are the main theories that are usually discussed in the books of philosophy of history as the motivating forces or causes of history.

In my view this kind of formulation of the problem is not correct and there is a confusion of issues. Most of these theories are not properly related to the motivating cause of history, which we want to discover. For instance, the racial theory is a sociological hypothesis, which may be proposed in relation to the question whether or not all races have—or at least could have had—the same kind of hereditary talents and are of equal level. If they are equal according to natural talents, all the races have an equal share in directing the movement of history. And if they are not equally talented, only some races have played, and could have played, the role of advancing history. Then it seems proper to mention this theory in this context. Nevertheless the secret of the philosophy of history remains in darkness: it does not make any difference for the purpose of solution whether we suppose that only a single race has been responsible for the evolution of history or if all human races participated in the process of change and advancement, because in both the cases it does not answer the question why man, or a race of men, undergoes this type of change and evolution while no such changes occur in the lives of animals. Where does the secret lie? Whether a single race is instrumental in the movement of history or if all the races participate in this process, makes no difference at all for answering this question.

Similar is the case with the geographical theory. It is useful in the context of the sociological problem regarding the role of regional environment in the development of man's intellectual, cultural, aesthetic and physiological faculties. Some environments hold the human being at or near the level of animals, but in other environments the distinction of man from animals is made more prominent and pronounced. According to this theory, history's movement is confined to the people of a specific region; in other regimes life remains static and unchanged like that of animals. But the main question still remains unanswered, since the honeybee and all other gregarious animals living

in such geographically superior regions and zones remain unaffected by the movement of history. Then what is the main factor responsible for this disparity in the lives of the two different types of living beings, one of which remains static and unchanged, whereas the other type undergoes unceasing change from one phase to another?

The most irrelevant among these theories is the theory of the Divine origin of history, because it is not history alone which manifests the Divine Will. The whole universe, from its beginning to the end, with all its myriads of causes and effects and all positive and negative conditions, mirrors the Divine Will. The relation of the Divine Will is the same with all causes and phenomena of the universe. In the same way as the ever-changing and ever-evolving life of the human being manifests the Divine Will, so also the static and monotonous life of the honeybee manifests the Will of God. Hence this theory fails to unfold the mystery why the Divine Will created and moulded human life in a pattern which is ever-changing and evolving, and why it created other beings according to a static pattern which makes them unable to change.

The economic theory of history also lacks in technical and methodical precision. It has not been formulated in a correct way. The way it is formulated, it merely throws light on the nature of history as materialistic and economic, and all the other social modes are regarded as the accidents of this substance of history. According to it, if any change takes place in the economic foundation of a society, the transformation of all other social modes is also accompanied. But the theory is based on "if". The main question, however, remains unanswered. Supposing that economy is the foundation of society, "if" economic infrastructure changes, the whole society also changes with it. But the question as to when and under what circumstances and by means of which factors the infrastructure changes followed by changes in the superstructures, is not touched. In other words, to say that economy is the basis is not sufficient to explain the dynamic and changing character of society. Instead of saying that society is the base, the advocates of this theory may properly formulate their position in this manner: by stating that economy is the motivating factor of history, which is materialistic in essence; the contradiction between the economic infrastructure and the social superstructure (or between the two tiers of the infrastructure, viz. the tools of production and the relations of production) is the moving force that pushes history forward. There is no doubt that this is what the advocates of the above-mentioned view mean when they say that economy is the moving force of history. What they mean to assert is that all changes in history originate from internal contradiction between the tools of production and the relations of production. But here we are only concerned with proper formulation of the theory, not with conjecturing the inner

purpose and objective of its advocates.

The theory of the role of genius in history, regardless of its truth, is directly relevant to philosophy of history and the question of motivating factor of history.

Thus until now we have arrived at two views regarding the moving force of history. One is the theory of heroes, which considers history to be a product of certain individuals, and claims that the majority of members of society lack creativeness and power of initiative. If a society consisted of such individuals alone, even the minutest change is unlikely to occur in society. But a few individuals with God-gifted genius, when they appear on the social scene, take initiative, draw plans, make bold resolutions, and demonstrate extraordinary resistance and force of will, drawing multitudes of ordinary folk behind them for realizing the desirable change. The personality of these heroes is purely a product of exceptional natural and hereditary processes. Social conditions and material requirements of a society do not play any effective role in creating and moulding these personalities.

The second is the theory of contradiction between the social infrastructure and superstructure, or the theory of economic causation, which has been already referred to.

6. The Theory of Nature

There is a third theory which may be called 'the theory of human nature.' According to it, man is endowed with certain inherent qualities, which account for the evolutionary character of social life. One of such qualities is the capacity for collecting and preserving the experiences of life. Whatever has been attained through experience is retained to provide the basis for subsequent experiences.

Another is man's capacity of learning through speech and writing. Experiences and attainments of others are communicated through speech and, on a higher level, through writing. Experiences of a generation, through oral narration and writing, are preserved for the later generations. In this way, collective experience is accumulated with the passage of time. This is the reason why the Quran gives especial importance to the gifts of articulate speech and the pen by making a prominent mention of them:

الرَّحْمَنُ • عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ • خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ • عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ •

The Beneficent has taught the Quran. He created the human being and He has taught him articulate utterance. (55:1-4)

إِنشَاءً بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ • خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ • وَإِذَا وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ • الَّذِي عَلَّمَ



Read: In the Name of thy Lord, Who created, created the human being from a blood-clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who taught by the pen. (96:1-4)

The third quality of man is that he is endowed with the power of reason and inventiveness. This mysterious quality bestows upon him the powers of creativity and invention which are the manifestation of Divine creativity. The fourth quality is his natural tendency for innovation. It means that man not only possesses the ability of invention and creation which he translates into action whenever a necessity arises, but the urge for creation and invention is ingrained in his nature.

The capacity to preserve and store experiences, in addition to the capacity to exchange and communicate experiences with others, and the capacity for creation and his natural urge for invention and innovation are the forces that continually drive man towards progress. The other animals neither possess the capacity of preserving experiences nor the capacity of transmitting and communicating their experiences,⁸⁸ neither the capacity to create and invent, nor the urge for innovation. None of these qualities which characterize the human intellect exist in the animals. It is because of these qualities that man advances and the animals remain static. Now we shall critically examine these theories in detail.

The Role of Personality in History

Some people have claimed that "history is a battle between genius and ordinariness." It means that common and average people always favour the existing situation which they are used to, whereas men of genius want to alter the existing condition into a more developed and advanced one. Carlyle claims that history starts with the accounts of the lives of great men and heroes.

This viewpoint is actually based on two assumptions. First, that the society itself lacks any nature and personality. The composition of society is not a real synthesis of its members. Individuals are independent of one another. The interaction among individuals does not create any social spirit; any real, synthetic entity which has its own specific nature, personality, and laws does not come into existence. There are merely individuals and individual psychologies. The relation among human individuals in a society regarding their independence from one another is like the relation among the trees in a forest. Social phenomena are nothing but the sum total of individual events in the lives of individuals. According to this view the causes which govern society are

determined by accidents and conflicts taking place in individual lives; there are no general and universal laws of causation.

The second assumption is that human individuals are created with different and divergent characteristics. In spite of the fact that human individuals are social beings or rational animals, almost all human beings lack originality and creativity. The majority are simply consumers of culture and not its producers. The only difference between animals and such people is that the animals cannot be even consumers. The spirit of this majority is one of imitating, following, and worshipping their heroes.

But a very small minority of human beings consists of heroes, geniuses, extraordinary supernormal individuals, who are independent in thought, creative and inventive, with a strong will power, who stand out distinct from the majority, as if they belong to a higher order of beings from a different world. Had it not been for the scientific, intellectual, philosophical, mystical, moral, political, social, technical, and artistic geniuses, humanity would have remained in a primitive state and would not have taken a single step toward advancement.

I personally consider both of these assumptions as vulnerable. The first one is vulnerable for the reason mentioned earlier. In the discussion on society I have proved that society itself possesses its own specific nature, personality and laws according to which it functions. These laws in themselves are progressive and evolutionary by nature. Hence this hypothesis should be discarded. Now we have to see whether an individual can play any role in the development of society which has its own nature, personality and laws and pursues its course of evolution according to them. We shall discuss this matter afterwards. Admitting the differences among individuals, the second assumption is also incorrect, as it is unjustifiable to say that only heroes and geniuses possess the power of creation and the majority of people are merely passive consumers of culture or civilization. All human individuals, more or less, possess innovative and creative talents; on account of these talents all individuals, or at least a majority of them, participate in creative, productive, and innovative activities, however small their share may be as compared to that of geniuses.

Contrary to this theory that personalities make history, is another view which maintains that history makes personalities, not vice versa. It means that the objective needs of a society are responsible for creating personalities.

Montesquieu has said, "Great men and important events are the signs and results of greater and lengthier processes." Hegel said, "Great men do not give birth to history but act as midwives." Great men are 'signs' not 'agents.' Some like Durkheim who believe in the independent essence of society hold that human individuals in themselves have

absolutely no personality. They acquire their whole personality from society. Individuals and personalities are nothing but expressions and manifestations of the social spirit, and in the words of Maḥmūd Shabīstārī, are just as "holes of a niche screen through which the social spirit emanates."

Others like Marx put social labour at the centre of human sociology, and consider society prior to man's social consciousness. They regard the consciousness of individuals as the expression and manifestation of material social needs. According to their view, personalities are manifestations and expressions of the material and economic needs of a society....⁸⁹

Notes to Part Two

1. Raymond Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, vol. I. pp. 85,86.
2. E. H. Carr, *What is History?*, p. 8.
3. Andre Peter, *Marx and Marxism*, Persian translation by Shujā' al-Dīn Diyā'iyān, p. 249, Appendix V.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 37,38.
5. E.H. Carr, *op. cit.* pp. 144, 145.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
7. Raymond Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Andre Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
10. *Ibid.*
11. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Murtaḍā Muṭahhari, *Uṣūl-e falsafeh wa rawish-e riyālīsm*, "Principles and Method of the Philosophy of Realism," vol. I and II. (Translator's note: The term "realism" is used by the author in the specific sense of epistemological realism not metaphysical realism.)
12. P. Royan, *Historical Materialism*, p. 37.
13. Ibn Sinā, in part 8 of his *al-'Ishārāt*, has discussed this subject with great insight.
14. Murtaḍā Muṭahhari, *Qiyām wa inqilāb-e Mahdī*, "The Uprising and Revolution of al-Mahdī."
15. The following definition of the purpose and end of philosophy has been given:

مُتَوَرِّدَةُ الْإِنْسَانِ عَالِمًا فَعْلِيًّا مُضَاهِيًا لِلْعَالَمِ الْعَنَسِيِّ.

(The purpose of philosophy) is to transform man into a rational microcosm analogous to the external macrocosm.

16. Andre Peter, *op. cit.* pp. 40,41.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
19. See Murtaḍā Muṭahhari, *Shinākht*, "Epistemology."
20. For further elaboration see 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Uṣūl-e falsafeh wa rawish-e riyālīsm*, particularly Chapter V, ("The Source of Plurality in Impressions"). Also refer to 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. XVI, (Persian Translation), p. 190, for discussion on 'the Divine Covenant'; also see vol. XXXI, p. 303, for the discussion on the meaning of natural religion. Also refer to other brief comments scattered through this exegesis.
21. Andre Peter, *op. cit.* p. 246, Appendix III. See also Raymond Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 163. See also Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī, *Tajdid-e naẓar ṭalabī az Mārx tā Māo*, "Revisionism from Marx to Mao," p. 153.
22. Andre Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 247, Appendix III.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 248.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
26. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, (Moscow), p. 122.
27. See P. Niketin, *Elements of Economics*, Persian translation by Naṣīr Zarfāshān, page iii, P. Royan, *Historical Materialism*, (chapter on production).
28. Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī, *Tajdid-e naẓar ṭalabī az Mārx tā Māo*, "Revisionism from Marx to Mao," p. 253.
29. Marx, Engels, *Selected Works*, "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy."

30. *Ibid.*

31. Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

32. Fredrik Engels, *Labour in Transition from Ape to Man*.

33. A. Peter, *op. cit.*, 39.

34. Murtadā Muḥabbarī, *Qiyām wa inqilāb-e Mahdī*.

35. Anwar Khāmeḥ'īe, *op. cit.*, p. 223, quoted from Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

41. That is, technology and industry and as a result the social superstructure of the industrialized countries advance on a fixed and determined course. The course of movement of societies is a one-dimensional movement. The industrialized countries in every aspect represent the models of what the underdeveloped countries will become at some time in the future, and have not yet reached that stage. The possibility that the underdeveloped countries may reach this stage of development without passing through the stages covered by the industrialized countries of today, is non-existent.

42. Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

43. By a 'real class' what is meant is a group of people whose economic life, and profits and losses are common. An imaginary class on the other hand is supposed to consist of people leading diverse types of social existence but following a single ideology.

44. Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

45. Karl Marx, *German Ideology*, p. 67.

46. Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 357.

48. Karl Marx, *German Ideology*, pp. 308-309.

49. Anwar Khāmeḥ'īe, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

50. *Ibid.* pp. 319-320.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

52. This book was first written in French and then translated into Persian by the author, Dr. Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī. He has exhibited profound scholarship in the treatment of the subject and praiseworthy capacity for evaluation and analysis of the problems involved. He himself has been once an ardent supporter and exponent of this school for many years.

53. *Publisher's note*: Here the author, Martyr Muḥabbarī, had left a blank space of several lines in the original manuscript to quote a passage from the book *The History of the Ancient World*, which was not accessible to the publishers.

54. Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

55. As the author says, Engels uses the phrase, "production and reproduction of real life," instead of "material and economic production," in his book *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. Engels says that production is dependant not only on the means of subsistence alone, but also on human reproduction. Implicitly, he does not consider the economy alone as the determining factor, but also believes in the role of such factors as sex and family. This is another deviation from the basic position of historical materialism.

56. Here the author adds in parenthesis: "revisionism, plain and simple!"

57. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. II, p. 443.

58. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 444; Apology is worse than crime. In fact it is a kind of obstinacy and, at the very least, equivalent to sacrificing truth for the sake of personal interest.

59. Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

60. Mao Tse-Tung, *Selected Works*, "Four Philosophical Treatises," (London, Lawrence and Wishart Ltd, 1954), vol. II, p. 38.

61. By the means of superstructural factors, such as military, political and

educational....

62. Mao Tse-Tung, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

63. Andre Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

64. Anwar Khāmeḥ'ī, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 348.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

68. Raymond Aron, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 78.

69. The Quran itself does not use these detracting words, but quotes the ruling clique which uses them to refer to the followers of the prophets belonging to the oppressed classes.

70. Also refer to 18:28, describing the followers of the prophets; 11:27, and 26:111 describing the followers of Noah; 10:83 describing the followers of Moses; 7:88-90 describing the followers of Shu'ayb; 7:75-76 describing the followers of Sālih, etc. There are many more verses of the kind, but we confine here to refer to the above-mentioned.

71. Karl Marx, *German Ideology*.

72. In the footnote, the verses 62:2 and 2:129 are referred to, to draw the conclusion that the prophets arise from among the "ummahs", and the word "ummah" is taken to mean "the underprivileged masses." We shall examine this argument later on.

73. In the footnote, the verse 28:75 has been referred to, and it is presumed that it means that the martyrs and those slain in the way of God always arise from among the "ummahs," or the masses, according to the author. This verse shall also be discussed later on.

74. These gentlemen, without expressing their real intention of presenting historical materialism of Marx in an Islamic guise, pretend to have reinterpreted the Holy Quran.

75. The Quran, 66:11.

76. See verses 4:97, 14:21, 34:31-37, 40:47-50.

77. See *Wahy wa nubuwwal* (Revelation and Prophethood), the third book of the series, *Muqaddameh'ī bar jahān binī-ye Islāmi*, of which the present book *Jāmi'e wa tarikh* is a part, pp. 35, 37-43.

78. *Jahān binī-ye tawhīdī* (The World Outlook of Tawhīd), the second treatise of the *Muqaddameh'ī bar jahān binī-ye Islāmi*, pp. 62-81.

79. Andre Peter, *Marx and Marxism*, Persian translation by Shujā' al-Dīn Diyā'iyān, p. 39.

80. *Translator's Note*: The author emphasizes the importance of the principle of nature in the Quranic conception of man, and regards it as being central to Islamic teachings. The term he uses is "umm al-ma'ārif."

81. *Translator's Note*: Martyr Muṭahhari in his scholarly work *'Adl-e Ilāhī* (Divine Justice) has offered a convincing solution of this problem.

82. *Translator's Note*: Martyr Muṭahhari could not complete this book as he had originally planned. There is no such heading in the present edition of the book. See note No. 21 below.

83. Certain so-called Muslim intellectuals, in a number of commentaries they have written on various Sūrahs of the Quran, totally deny the presence of even a single verse in the Quran dealing with resurrection. They say that wherever the word "dunyā" (the present world) occurs in the Quran it always refers to the lower level of social existence, i.e. the system of discrimination, inequality and exploitation, and wherever the word "ākhirah" (the Hereafter) occurs, it means a "superior system of social existence," a system which permits no exploitation and discrimination, and which abolishes the institution of private property. If this meaning of

"*ākhirah*" is to be accepted, it means that the Quran, a thousand years before the emergence of Marx's materialist philosophy, announced the death of religion and closed its file!

84. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, see the commentary on the last verse of *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*.

85. Andre Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 35 (the text and the footnote). Here we come to know that the viewpoint of Marxism which holds that only the acts of violence of the oppressed class are moral, because they accelerate the course of social evolution, while the same kind of acts by the oppressing class are immoral, because they cause stagnation, is not defensible. It means that, in accordance with the views of this school, the exercise of pressure by the oppressors is as moral and effective in the course of social evolution as violence by the oppressed. The only difference between them being with regard to their orientation: one is directed towards the past and the other towards the future—not with regard to their effective role in social development. Evidently the retrogressive or progressive orientation cannot solely determine the morality or immorality of an act, without considering the motive behind the act, for judging its morality; and such a position, in the view of Marxism, amounts to a kind of idealism.

86. Refer to 11:116, 21:13, 23:33, 64.

87. See E.H. Carr, *What is History?*; See also Will Durant, *Studies in History, The Pleasures of Philosophy*, pp. 291-312.

88. Among certain animal species, at the level of routine existence, not at the level of scientific consciousness, a kind of transfer of learning exists. For instance, the Holy Quran refers to the story of the ant and Solomon in verse 27:18.

89. *Note by the publisher of the book*: It is a matter of regret that the manuscript of Martyr Muṭahhari ends at this point. It is obvious that the author had in his mind many other ideas which he could not enter. He achieved this cherished desire to obtain martyrdom in the way of God. We hope, in future, to present a more complete discussion with the help of his scattered notes, adding them to the future editions of the book.



ISBN: 964-6177-95-6

Adresse: P.O. BOX: 14155 - 6187 Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran.