

# THE IDEOLOGICAL BASIS OF ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

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Muslims have for about 200 years suffered a period of continuous and rapid decline in all fields of human endeavour-- economic' social' political and intellectual - and have been surpassed by a rival and rather hostile civilization of the west. For the past two or three decades' however' Muslim history has entered a new phase.

The seemingly relentless speed of our decline has been arrested' if not as yet reversed. The post-colonial nightmare is coming to an end and a new sense of direction and destiny is surging. But the processes of recovery and resurgence are going to be as painful as the processes of decline and defeat have been. Notwithstanding' it would be appropriate first to analyze in depth the nature of western political and intellectual domination of the Muslim world and mind.

## **Global Domination of western thought:**

The present age can rightly be described as the age of the predominance of western philosophical thought and knowledge. The western ideas about the nature of man and the universe are strongly upheld all around the world. Having taken shape roughly two hundred years ago' these ideas were continuously affirmed and reinforced by theorists and philosophers. Though politically the present day world may be divided into a number of blocks' one single philosophical point of view prevails throughout. This attitude has coloured all human civilization and culture at the global level. No doubt' there are also found here and there some alternative view points' but they are of marginal importance. The people both in the Occident and in the Orient who really have a say in public affairs' political as well as social and cultural' are adhering to this view point. The dominance of western cultural a philosophical thought is so pervasive and universal than even the point of view of the poeple struggling against i in some countries' turns out on closer examination to itself greatly influenced by the west.

Indeed' they are themselves to a great extent western in their approach and method and even in their purport ideology.

They too think in terms of western philosophy a ideology with the result that they lose their impact a efficacy to oppose it.

The thought pattern which is operative at the basis present-day culture and civilization was not hatched in day' nor is it a simple and abstract phenomenon. Over the past hundred and fifty or two hundred years Europeans philosophers developed a number of schools of though about the nature of man and human life' but one central attitude that persisted all through these variegated philosophical theories and went on gaining momentum 'Was the disregard for ideational and transcendental concepts Concrete fact and physical phenomena became the core and object of human enquiry and philosophical quest. God' soul and the life-hereafter gradually disappeared from t spectrum of thought. Yielding place respectively to discussions about the nature of the physical universe matter and human terrestrial existence. Though at t academic level it was said that we neither affirm n reject the doctrines about God' soul and life after death yet this avowedly agnostic position quite understandably led to the gradual elimination of these ideas from philosophical enquiry and discussion.

God has imbued man with a great many capacities a mental faculties to exploit to his benefit any field domain. Every earnest research worker can explore a new world in the domain of his selected field of enquiry Compared with the vastness and grandeur of the universe the shining sun itself is nothing more than a tiny spec while a tiny particle of dust may open up for a scientist' realms hardly less in complexity and fascination than t shining sun. Similarly' the universe' matter and terrestrial' existence may look extremely trivial in contract to God' the soul and the life hereafter' but if these mundane concerns are made the subject of study and research they may lead to boundless vistas of knowledge.

This was what actually happened in Europe. When the universe • and matter were brought under scientific investigation' man gradually discovered to his utter astonishment a clue to power and energy in apparently deed and inert material phenomena. And this led to a new revolution in the realm of knowledge and technology. A series of scientific discoveries led to greater

control and exploitation of nature' and a wealth of new inventions made Europe an invincible power. The great impact and efficacy of the properties of matter became reasons for focusing attention on physical laws in place of the spirit. As against the age-old discussions about God' His attributes and spiritual entities' the physical universe and its exploitation were given prime importance in human enquiry.

The newly acquired scientific knowledge and technical know-how gave to the west tremendous superiority in arms and military equipment. Its political power swept across the world in a very short time. Eastern nations and their governments crumbled before it like sand castles.

Since the Muslim states of the Near and Middle East bore the brunt of this attack' the onslaught of the west struck Islam and Muslim nations the severest blow. The whole Muslim world was subjugated by western imperialist powers in a matter of a few years.

The west's occupation of the Islamic world was two fold' politico-military as well as ideologico-cultural. But since the European attack was primarily and initially political' the reaction against it in the Islamic world contained in its early stages a sense of revolt against political repression only. The painful realization by the Muslim world of the fact of European domination and the fragmentation of its own strength' either in the form of annexation and direct political rule or in the guise of indirect involvement through puppet governments' was expressed in heart-rending poems. The nostalgic memory of the glorious past and the passionate desire to regain the old strength and solidarity indeed the desire to set the clock backwards -- expressed itself at one time in the volatile personality of Jamaluddin Afghani and at another in the form of Tehrik-e-Khilafat. But power of the west prevailed over emotions' and their political domination became an established fact.

Immediately after consolidating its political hegemony' Europe started disseminating her ideological principles and point of view with a missionary zeal so as to capture and control the ideas and thoughts of Muslim nations. The material and scientific progress of the west had already dazzled the eyes of the world's conquered people. Moreover any superior nation must have some fundamental human qualities which help her to achieve her

expansionist goals. The evidences of Europeans' superiority contributed greatly to infuse defeatism in the minds of Muslims' and a vast majority of them began to appropriate western ideas and values uncritically. Since the Europeans had themselves many schools of thought in the field of philosophy and social sciences' there was some scope of debate' counter-position and selective adoption in these fields. But as the findings of science had an element of absolute certainty' and as its results were practical and tangible' they were not open to dispute Science was therefore received with nearly as much enthusiasm as should be accorded to divine revelation' and a large number of educated men in the Islamic world consciously or unconsciously accepted a secular and materialistic point of view. The entire Islamic world' including its deeply religious core' started giving more importance to material existence and worldly life' and less importance to the religion and life hereafter. A radical change of emphasis from transcendental . themes to material and worldly pursuits occurred not' only in Islamic society in general' but also in its religious leaders and scholars.

As a result of this' religious beliefs were attenuated and their metaphysical concepts were reinterpreted in purely scientific terms. Syed Ahmed Khan in the Indian subcontinent and Mufti Mohammad Abduh in Egypt and their acolytes attempted to formulate modern interpretations of Islam to save it from anachronism and allow believers to make headway on the path of scientific progress like the Europeans. Their motives may have been sincere and their dedication genuine' but through these attempts Islam undeniably lost its very spirit and elan. The influence of western materialism resulted in a non-religious version of Islam. Thus' these attempts served only a negative purpose' as the saving of those who were already completely Europeanised in culture and life-style' from being called 'un-Islamic.' So and so their inclusion in the fraternity of Muslim brotherhood remained unchallenged' and this new versio: of Islam was presented to the West on their behalf as an 'apology'.

### **The Development of Social Sciences and Twentieth Century Islamic Movements:**

The fundamentals of Western philosophy' disguised as suspension of judgment or agnosticism' were in fact based upon denial of God' and the life hereafter. They caused the physical universe to replace the transcendental

concepts of God and soul from the centre of human concern and enquiry. Numerous scientific discoveries and inventions naturally followed from this exclusive emphasis on worldly interests. Eschatological doctrines of life after death were completely rejected as topics of research in favour of the immediacy of worldly existence. As a result of persistent and exclusive thinking about the multifarious aspects of worldly life' a number of sociological and politico-economic theories were conceived and put forward. These theories gradually developed into full fledged ideologies and world-views confined to strictly academic discussion in the earlier stages' these world-views were later made the social' political and economic basis of nations. The age-old political systems based on traditional feudalism were replaced by nationalism' dictatorship and democracy' and ancient economic systems by capitalism and socialism. A number of new political and economic movements emerged in the wake of these changes.

The world of Islam also received the impact of western ideas in the field of social sciences' and Muslims began to propound Islam as a system of life. Islamic teachings were projected as an all-embracing 'system of life" and movements in different lands' were launched to implement and put into practice this system of life.

These twentieth century revivalist movements started almost simultaneously in Muslim countries from Indonesia to Egypt. They were similar in a number of ways. Indeed it would not be far from true to say that they were all animated by a single conception of religion. It must be admitted' in all fairness' that these efforts imparted credibility to Islam as a code of life superior to other ideologies' and have weakened the influence of the West upon the young.

There were other factors which helped to limit the influence of Western ideas and culture. The sweeping military and political victories of the Western colonial powers were checked with the passage of time and in many countries were met with forceful and sustained nationalist freedom movements. Consequently Western countries were forced to withdraw their political hegemony from occupied lands.

Though political influence and economic domination in the form of defense pacts or military and monetary aid programmes are still very much

there' almost the entire Muslim block has got rid of the yoke of direct rule by imperialist powers. In many Muslim countries nationalist freedom and self-rule movements were launched' and these invariably appealed to religious sentiments of the people for sparking off feelings of nationalism. There was no alternative to this' as Muslim nationalism had no anchorage other than Islam. This appeal to religion' however' was more like a slogan than an article of Muslim faith. Yet it did strengthen the idea of the revival of Islam. At the same time' the hollowness of Western civilization has been clearly brought out by the two disastrous world wars' so that even the West has come to consider the foundations of its own culture as ill-conceived' and misguided. Materialistic atheism reached its logical culmination in the forms of socialism and communism' and moral as well as religious values were reinterpreted in purely economic terms. This alarmed Western peoples themselves' and they began to propound a new philosophy of humanism which was quite sympathetic to spiritual values. In the realm of science new physical theories shook the very foundations of Newtonian physics and Euclidean geometry. Matter was no longer considered something known and certain' and the former absolute faith in mechanical laws gave way to less rigid views of the universe. This made easier to affirm metaphysical beliefs' and gave support to religion.

Supported by these factors' movements for 'Islamic Renaissance'" 'establishment of government according to the will of God' and 'enforcement of the Islamic system of life' were started in various Muslim countries. Of all these' the 'Ikhwan-ul-Muslemoon'" which began in Egypt the most prominent in point of quantitative strength emotional fervour. The Indian subcontinent's Jamaate-e-Islami'" however' occupies a distinguished place among these movements' based as it is on a solid and strongly defended thought-system. But it is an irony of history' that practically none of these movements has achieved any remarkable success. One may think that the .1 cause of the failure of these revivalist movements lies the impatience of their leaders. That is to say' they perhaps hastily' without first changing the minds of a considerable number of country's intelligentsia' took part active politics' which resulted in premature clash with the national leadership and the so-called 'progressive' elements. But in truth their failure is a direct resultant of their misconceived notion of faith and the error of their view of Islam.

These movements' understanding and view of Islam' based on the same Western standpoint; preferring material existence and worldly pursuits to spirit and the life hereafter. Though the metaphysical beliefs of Islam which collectively constitute Muslim faith are affirmed in their studies of Islam' they have not been properly stressed. Their gaze has been exclusively fixed on the teachings and precepts which Islam has laid down for the multifarious practical aspects of life and to which they've given the name of 'Islami Nizam-e-Hayat'. Their interpretation of Islam affirms all the religious beliefs but . It lacks the inner state of deep faith in God --- 'iman- billah' --- which alone makes us know Allah as the only absolutely powerful agent and the ultimate initiator within and without. The belief in the hereafter is asserted but is practically devoid of the living faith' which was described by the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) when he commanded:

كن في الدنيا كائنا غريب او حارس سبيل [الحديث]

(Be in this world like a stranger or wayfarer.)

Similarly' the prophethood of Hadrat Mohammad (peace be upon him) is not denied' yet there is no real love or heartfelt attachment to him. For the more progressive elements' the prophet had a role hardly higher than that of a postman or a leader of the social life of the Muslim community. And even those who hold the 'Sunnah' as definitive and fundamentally important in religious matters' have created a loop hole in it by making a distinction between 'Sunnah adat' and 'Sunnah risalat'. This bifurcation has made it possible for its propounders to live freely at least their private lives in harmony with the fashionable trends of the times. In a word' faith is upheld only to the extent which suffices for one to be called a 'Muslim' in the legal sense of the term. The inner experience of faith which truly fulfils and validates the propositions of Islamic belief is not present. Indeed nobody seems to be aware of its importance and indispensability.

It is an outcome of this very standpoint that the practice of the Islamic faith has come to be regarded as synonymous with the State' and worship (عبادت) simply equivalent to obedience (اطاعت). The Prophetic statement that prayer (Salat) is the spiritual ascension of the believer is completely

disregarded. The attachment of the human soul to prayer to the degree that it becomes the only source of inner happiness and peace of mind. Contrary to this' the more progressive elements have identified the canonical prayer with the social order of the community. Some others assign importance to it only in so far as it is a comprehensive method for the organization of the Muslim community. The power of 'Zakat' the annual poor due' to develop and purify the soul is regarded as secondary to its role in the Islamic economic system or national welfare scheme. Fasting is commonly said to be an exercise in self-control but its potency to vitalize the soul by relaxing the tyranny of the corporeal body upon it' is either not fully realized or left unexpressed by religious teachers. The prophetic saying - 'Fasting is like a shield protecting the soul against sins' - is often reiterated in religious writings and sermons and a good deal of time is spent in its explanation. But the Holy tradition - 'fasting is for the pleasure of Allah and He will Himself grant its reward' - is mentioned briefly and cursorily if mentioned at all. Similarly it is common knowledge about pilgrimage that this provides the pivot of worship around which a vast universal brotherhood is organized. But its deeper religious significance and the spiritual blessings it brings are seldom expressed.

This new interpretation of Islam is a direct result of the universal domination of Western philosophical thought which has completely secularized the point of view of Muslims. Consequently the soul and its inner life is wholly discarded in favour of the affairs of worldly life which constitute the sole objects for thought and reflection. This has resulted in a materialistic interpretation of faith and religion. Though at the theoretical level it is said that Islam is a comprehensive system of human welfare; concerned with both this world and the hereafter. But since their eyes are firmly fixed on the problems of this worldly existence' Islam is in the final analysis reduced to a political and social system. Theological beliefs are considered as no more than a 'veil' ' facade' or outer crust. The real mission they have set for themselves is the establishment of this system of life and conduct. The yearning for communion with God' His adoration and humble supplication before Him' which are the real sense of worship' are relegated to a peripheral status.



Even this state of affairs is to be found in rather traditional and conservative Islamic movements. Otherwise the more liberal and progressive elements' under the impact of socialism and communism - the logical consequences of Western thought - have gone beyond accepting Islam as a socio-political system and consider it but only an economic programme. That is to say; for them Islam is co-extensive with a particular type of 'niZclm-erabubiat'. In the explanation of religious metaphysical beliefs and tenets of 'iman' they take their start from where Syed Ahmed Khan had got at through his rationalistic strain. By interpreting paradise and hell in terms of the well-being or otherwise of life here on this earth' and by interpreting 'Qiyamat' in terms of atomic explosions' they have completely deprived Islam of its very spirit. In my view this is only the logical terminus of the materialistic interpretation of Islam. A critique of this view is not my objective here because' even though it is given the label of 'Quranic thought' it is undoubtedly, gross' crass and naked materialism and anti-Quranic in spirit. This incidental allusion to so-called 'Quranic thought' has been made in order merely to show as to what extent secular version of religion can be pressed.

The import of all these movements is more social and political than religious. They are more worldly-wise than other-worldly. They are distinguished from other political and economic movements only in holding the Islamic way of life as a better solution to human problem than the life systems enunciated by capitalistic democracy or communism. And this is tantamount to saying that the task of reviving the real values of Islam has not yet been started.

This is the reason why these Islamic revivalist movements are comparable to ships without anchors drifting to and fro on the waves. Quite often they behave helplessly like a traveller who neither knows his destination nor remembers where from he started.

### **Revitalization of Faith - The Necessary Precondition of an Islamic Resurgence:**

Modern rationalistic and pseudo-scientific interpretations of Islam are quite alien to Islam itself and lack a direct link with the original Prophetic mission. They are devoid of the spiritual message that is the heart of the

Quranic revelation. They fail to appreciate Islam as a spiritual and metaphysical tradition. But since Islam is essentially based on inward faith known in Arabic as 'iman' Islamic revival can never be brought about without first reviving and indeed revitalizing the faith of a large part of the Muslim community. There is no denying the importance of political freedom and the independence of Muslim countries' and these have undoubtedly contributed to generate greater awareness of Islamic values and ideals. Similarly' the idea of an Islamic way of life and confidence in its superiority over other ideologies has been useful to a limited extent and deserves our praise. The movements which have struggled hard in the past and are still engaged in advancing the- case for this are in fact contributing partially and in their own way. towards the revival of the Islamic message. But the most real and fundamental task in this regard still remains to be done. It is imperative for the entire intelligentsia of the Muslim world to pay attention to' and whosoever realises its vital importance should strive for' the cardinal principle that a forceful movement be launched for reviving and revitalizing the 'iman' in the whole of the Muslim community. In this way' 'iman' must be transformed from mere verbal attestation ('qal') to an inward existential faith ('hal').<sup>1</sup>

Iman is essentially attestation of' and inner faith in some metaphysical truths. The. first step towards attaining this faith is to believe more firmly in some truths even though they are not observable or perceptible' and to hold the things heard by the heart to be more trustworthy than the things heard by the ear. Belief in the unseen - 'iman-bil-ghaib'--is the first and foremost condition of iman' and this requires a radical change in the thought system and in the point of view of the believer. According to' this new perspective' the whole order of creation should be taken as nothing more than a fleeting appearance of shadow' whereas the existence of God should be felt as an eternally living Reality. Contrary to the view that the universe is a chain of eternally present and untreated causes and effects or the world of 'natural' forces and rigid mechanical laws' the will of God and His design and purpose should be 'seen'and felt in operation at all times and in all parts of the

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<sup>1</sup> The terms 'qal' and 'hal' are often found in the literature of Tasawwuf or Islamic mysticism Generally speaking' when the avowed attestation of iman' something spoken and verbal' develops inwardly and permeates the entire being and activity of the believer' the 'qal' deepens and enriches into 'halt.

cosmos. Matter is looked upon as insignificant' and the soul is thought to be man's essence. The locution 'insan' is not to be attributed to man's animal and corporeal body' but to that divine spirit the presence of which makes man superior to angels. Worldly life should appear to be transitory and unreal' and life hereafter should' alone be taken as real and ever - lasting. The pleasure of God should be held as more valuable than the attainment of all the riches of this world. And' according to a Prophetic saying' the riches of the world should not be assigned more value than a mosquito's wing deserves. Let it be clearly and distinctly understood that unless and until a major portion of the Muslim community really undergoes this profound transformation' the vision and the fond hope of an Islamic' renaissance can never be realized.

The most effective way to implant and inculcate faith in the hearts of the Muslim masses is the company and fellowship of such deeply religious persons whose hearts and minds are illumined by divine knowledge and by the light of faith' persons whose hearts are untouched by conceit' hypocrisy' rancour and avarice. It was through ceaseless evangelist and disseminating work' teaching and exhortation as well as practical examples protrayed through their conduct of life' that a continuous chain of pious and God-intoxicated people kept the beacon of faith burning after the collapse of 'Khilafat-i-Rashida'. Even though the winds of Western atheism and materialism are blowing high in Muslim lands' yet one can find here and there persons whose hearts and minds are full of certitude ('nur-e-yaqeen') and staunch faith. The need of the time now is that the movement for Islamic faith and 'Iman' be popularized and extended far and wide 'so that each and every inhabited piece of Muslim territory does have a few dedicated and selfless preachers whose sole aim in life is the pursuit of Allah's pleasure; men who' in obedience to the teaching of prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him)' make religious and moral guidance their sole aim and ambition in life.

Fortunately in the recent past there has emerged in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent a mass religious Movement the impact of which is visible on a vast multitude of people. It has led them to firm belief in Islam and the radical change of values that this entails. That is to say' the Creator' spiritual existence' the human soul and the life hereafter are held superior to the

whole order of creation and worldly life. This movement is the 'Jamaat-e-Tableegh'. It is an off-shoot of the movement of Deoband. It was founded and initiated by persons of deep and inner religious conviction. Although more than a third of a.. century has flown past' its fervour and emotional zeal has not abated a bit. Though I do not wholly agree with its approach and methodology' there is no denying the fact that it has brought about a complete change in the thinking of a great many people' people who have started to feel that it is the Creator and not the created objects that should command our attention- and that the uncaused first cause<sup>2</sup> 'and not finite causes' is of prime importance. Similarly they develop a strong belief that it is not food or water but the will of God that mitigates hunger and quenches thirst. Even the minor injunctions and precepts of the faith start appearing to them as of intrinsic worth and goodness without being grounded upon any logical argumentation or considered as part of a system of life or as means to establish it. The smallest details of the holy Prophet's Sunnah appear to these people as pregnant with light - 'nur' - and splendour. They content themselves with the minimum material requirements of life and spend a major part of their time and energy in the propagation of Islam in their own way.

But as this movement addresses the sentiments and not the reason of the people' and its main emphasis lies on action and not on understanding' its influence and efficacy is limited. Those members of a community who hold reason and understanding to be superior to sentiments and action' remain uninfluenced by this type of preaching. The very mental constitution of these people compels them not to appropriate passionately anything that does not satisfy the test of reason and critical enquiry. They cannot attain the deeper levels of religious life without first untying the intellectual knots of their minds. These are the people who constitute the intellectual minority of a society and who command leadership over its ideology and policy. A change and indeed a total revolution in their viewpoint and way of thought is therefore of paramount importance. If 'iman' and belief could not be enkindled in their hearts and they remained in the darkness of unbelief' faith

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<sup>2</sup> This is how philosophers have traditionally conceived of God as the ultimate being existing independently and in its own right.

occurring merely in the lower strata of society could not guarantee Islamization in a real and permanent sense.

### **The Future Imperative:**

For this reason the most essential task to be undertaken is to launch a high-powered academic movement which brings about a real change in the educated elite and intelligentsia of the society' taking them from the darkness of materialism and atheism to the light of faith and belief. This movement should be aimed at inducing in them a God-fearing attitude and a heightened self-awareness.<sup>3</sup> This objective can only be achieved at a strictly academic level through a cogently reasoned presentation of Islamic beliefs and a strong refutation of atheistic and materialistic philosophies. In this connection a point must be borne in mind. Since in our age fast means of communication have considerably increased mobility and the whole world can be looked upon as one human family' the aforesaid academic level of discussion will not be limited to one particular country. Rather it would be required to come up to the highest standard of sophistication found anywhere in the world. This colossal work must be extremely painstaking. But the vision of an Islamic revival which does not fulfill this requirement is a . fool's paradise.

The first thing essential for this movement is to get in its fold such intelligent and gifted young men who have a keen desire' for knowledge and whose minds and souls are burning for the attainment of truth. These young men must experience an inner feeling that the ultimate reality is far from the realm of sensuous objects. The passionate desire in them for acquiring knowledge and discovering truth should be so intense that' paying no heed to petty cravings for worldly comforts and bright professional careers' they are prepared to dedicate all their lives for the achievement of this end.

These young dedicated research-workers will have to take a deep and critical look into the entire history of human thought from its earliest stages to the present day' Logic' metaphysics' psychology' ethics and theology would become the central subjects of their study and reflection' though due attention will also be given to the social and physical sciences. Alongwith this

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<sup>3</sup> According to Quranic psychology' a true knowledge of one's own deeper self necessarily leads to awareness of the ultimate Self or God. There are also Prophetic sayings to this effect.

thorough and critical study of human thought' it would be essential for them to study the holy Quran' the last and most comprehensive divine revelation' in order to discover its truths. And if after a long and labourious study of human knowledge and Quranic wisdom' the beacon-birth message of the Quran becomes crystal clear to them' their minds and souls vibrate with its statements' the Quranic teachings about the nature of the outer world and of their own souls (aafaq-o-unfus) satisfy them completely and they experience an inner contentment as a result of this enlightenment; then the''' will have attained true faith.

Only these men will. possess excellence in true knowledge and wisdom' Instead of Mental disruption and moreal lewdness their knowledge will lead them to greater fear of God's justice and punishment. Their personalities will be embodiments of the Quranic verse' "The fear of God is found only in the hearts of men who have abundant knowledge".<sup>4</sup> Also their personalities and character will bear witness to the truth of a poetic line; 'not merely a reader of the Quran' a true Muslim is the Quran personified'. The essence of the holy Book lies in the particular gnosis which is called 'iman' or faith. No doubt the Quranic laws and precepts about the practical aspects of life are of immense importance in their own right' But Compared with the essence which is constituted by its teachings regarding 'Iman''' the legal aspects of the Quran are of secondary significance. Without the prior acquisition of this inner faith' deliberation upon the Quranic laws is of hardly any value. This point was very aptly conveyed in a statement of the prophet's companion' Hadrat Ibn-Abbas when he said: 'We first learned ' Innun''' and then we learned the Quran'.<sup>5</sup>

The difficult task of refuting Western thought and rooting out its civilization and culture can only be executed in the real sense by those who have drunk deep at the fountains of wisdom and knowledge that flow from

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<sup>4</sup> The Quranic- verse translated above is:

انما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء

<sup>5</sup> The reported statement reads in the Arabic:

تعلمنا الايمان ثمَّ تعلمنا القران

the Quran. It would be possible for these men to write a new ‘Refutation’<sup>6</sup> of the philosophers of today and mount a crushing attack<sup>7</sup> upon modern logicians. In a word’ they will check effectively the flood of atheism and materialism which has been carrying away the human mind for the last two hundred years.

Besides this’ they will have to undertake the positive task of initiating a new Islamic philosophical theology or ‘kalam’. So that the facts discovered in the domains of Mathematics’ Physics’ Astronomy’ Biology and Psychology may be assigned a proper place in the framework of Islamic beliefs.

There is no inherent contradiction between the facts of these sciences and the tenets of ‘iman’. The facts of physical sciences point partially to the same absolute reality which is comprehended intuitively through ‘iman’ Forty years ago’ Doctor Mohammad Iqbal set a precedence for this sort of work through the seven lectures published under the title ‘Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam’ the followers of Iqbal have rather inappropriately concentrated on the nature of law’ ijma and ‘ijtehad’ in ‘Islam’ which are in fact not directly related to the religious and philosophical aspect of his book. In fact his real purpose was the reconstruction and reformulation of the philosophical theology of Islam and his work is highly stimulating and thought-provoking in this regard. He did not claim that his book was final or perfect. He himself observed in the preface “As knowledge advances and fresh avenues of thought are opened’ other views and probably’ sounder views than those set forth in these lectures’ are possible. Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human’ thought and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it”. Therefore if this task had been continued on lines suggested by Doctor Iqbal and some gifted and dedicated men had devoted their lives to Quranic research’ making it the hub of their intellectual activity’ quite valuable and substantial work would have been produced by now. Until and unless a considerable amount of really good work is available in the field Islamic theology or ‘kalam’ the hope of

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<sup>6</sup> This refers to Imam Chazzali’s book ‘Refutation of Philosopher’ in which he tried to refute the rationalistic philosophies of the eleventh century.

<sup>7</sup> Here the allusion is to Imam Ibn-Taimiyya’s book entitled ‘Attack on the Logicians’ in which he criticized and conclusively refuted the arguments advanced by the logicians of his time.

instilling in the intelligentsia a deeply religious point of view can never be realized.

After the development and reformulation of religious' and philosophical thought' the second most essential task would be to elaborate cogently in modern terminology the teachings of Islam regarding the practical aspects of life such as politics' jurisprudence' culture and economics. In this connection' it was mentioned earlier on that during the past forty years or so some commendable work has appeared in Egypt and the Indian sub-continent. Both the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Ikhwanul Muslimoon have made 'Islamic way of life' and 'Social justice in Islam' the central themes of their published work. However' this should only be considered as an appreciably good start in the right direction. It must be pointed out here that the current wave of plagiarism and publishing the old material under new titles will not at all serve the purpose. Pamphleteering by pseudo-scholars and immature writers and sale of publications among a particular group of people may bring livelihood to a few' but surely this will render no positive and lasting service to Islam Itself. In the world of today in which people generally are pressed for time' persons of high intellectual calibre cannot possibly find time and leisure for superficial and second-rate literature. It is' therefore' imperative that whatever material is brought out' it should be of high standard without necessarily being voluminous. For this task' as well' besides critical knowledge of contemporary world affairs and social sciences' a deep and sound understanding of the Quran and Sunnah is inevitably called for.

### **The Modern Muslim's Predicament:**

Modern media and means of administration define individuals as members of groups. In so far as a person accepts this definition of himself' he is not free to surrender himself to God. Modern habit of defining laws for all things and then attempting to control them by these laws opposes sense of direct submission to a law-giver and a worshipful attitude towards time bringing everything to an intermediate level somewhere between law-giver and servant. Here probably the greatest danger is the depersonalization of the modern world-view' Men are no longer related to God in their personality and actions. Despite' this direct personal relation is essentially required in Islam.



The goal of Islam is primarily the salvation of the human soul' and no resurgence which does not aim at this can be Islamic. Social' political' economic etc. reformer are surely needed' but the goal is something quite different. In Islam' fear of God' His love and humility before Him must be felt genuinely and deeply' but modern men' Western-educated Muslim elite included' appreciate them only intellectually' remaining at a distance. Passions are being increasingly directed towards politics and mass movements' and individual religious emotions are considered neurotic... Many Muslim reformers wrongly think that the nation-state must first be established and then the individual reformed. The essential task-'al-jihad al-Akbar' -however remains what it has always been' viz" fighting against the satanic tendencies of one's own inner being. Triumph of a nominally Muslim community is not necessarily the triumph of Islam or God. The community may well be dominated by completely non-Islamic impulses; in fact' it predominantly is. In Islam' it is the human self or soul which is unusually near to God' and receptive and obedient to Him; so it should bear the burden of leadership and the 'people' are simply not qualified.

Unfortunately in most Muslim lands faith seems increasingly declining. Most Muslims living in predominantly Muslim states personally and voluntarily reject much of Islam' such as prayer rite (salat), personal honesty' etc. A person cannot be forced to have faith' though he may be forced to be a hypocrite. Much of the pro-Islamic movements in the Muslim world is merely a search for a cultural identity in opposition to the more dominant western and communist social forces' rather than a genuine relation to God. Because of the pressure of social and political movement in Muslim Asia and Africa. most Muslim reformers feel .they have little time to actually reform the heart of men; and many have almost no idea of how to do it. There is slavish imitation of western and communist models' and parroting of their doctrines . and methodology. On the contrary' according to one Prophetic tradition' it is the purity and health of heart e-hieh guarantees the purity and propriety of the outward mndtmt of a Muslim.

How can a man be educated to have sincere faith and pure and polished heart? A modern government has many techniques for controlling the minds of its citizens. Howmany of these techniques should actually be used? What is the difference between inculcating the faith and brainwashing? Is a sincere

relation to God actually teachable? These are important questions which Muslim philosophers and academicians must answer candidly. Sufi techniques come into the question here. Sufism or 'ihsan' carries with it a strong religious attachment which can override and often has overridden more ordinary concerns. There have been numerous successful entrances of Sufism into political and social affairs even in recent times. Sanusi' National Salvation Party of Turkey' founders of Ikhwan-al-Muslimoon and Tableeghi Jamaat were Sufies. Sufism places emphasis on character and individual spiritual development which is often missed by political parties. No wonder then that Sufism is spreading in the West more rapidly than other aspects of Islam.

Islam is not a novel religion that appeared in Arabia fourteen centuries ago' preached by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It is the religion God made known on the day when man first appeared on earth. He taught those first men the one sound way of living for all the human races. The prophets who are sent at intervals to different places' came with the same summons: to submit to God; and this call' in its perfect form' was crowned by the mission of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Quranic verse' 'Religion with Allah is Islam' embraces all the paths led by the different prophets. It breathes a universal spirit and includes many methods and obligations. A true Muslim' according to the Quran' must be clear of any taint of false regard for other than God he serves. He must be pure in both his beliefs and his actions. Religion that does not have this true character of Islam has been misused by men as a bond of nationalism' or a tool of fanaticism' or even a means of worldly prosperity. Such false religion only adds to corruption. That is why the Quran says that those who do not follow Islam in its purity are permanently at a loss.

In general' the religion of Islam has two aims. First' to free the mind and spirit from involvements --- the invisible bonds that hold them in subjection to material things; and save people from a humiliating servitude: to others who are no better than themselves. Second' to provide the right goal for all man's actions and give him a purity of motive towards God and his fellow men. These are the twin sources of the Islamic spirit. At the present time they are a pointer to the universality of religion and its world-wide character since 'There is no religion apart from Islam'.

## The Quranic Methodology for Islamic Resurgence:

“God will not change the condition of a people they change what is in their hearts”.

This famous verse of the Quran must be pro. adhered to by people who aspire for Islamic resurgent Deep in Muslim thinking should be the conviction progress depends on the straightness of a man’s charst and the quality of his response to the will and purpose God. However complex’ dark and the situation’ interaction of God’s goodness sincerity effort brings hope. The Muslim’: :e committed seeking salvation through comer’:;ial action rath than a surfiet of individual prayers. Moreover’ methodology to be pursued by workers for is resurgence should be identical to the one mentioned in Quran for the Prophet in these two verses:

“Allah verily hath shown grace to the believers sending unto them a messenger of their own who reel unto them His revelations’ and causeth them to grow reform and teach the them the scripture and wisdom although before (he came to them) they were in flagr: error.

(Ale-Imran:16)

“He is Who hath sent among the unlettered ones messenger of their own’ to recite unto them revelations’ and to make them grow and purify’ and teach them the scripture and wisdom’ though there to for they were in error manifest”.

(al-Juma:2)

The above two verses of the holy Quran make crystal. clear that we should follow the following four scheme of Islamic renewal:

- (1) ‘Tilawat-e--Ayat’ or recitation of the holy Book.
- (ii) ‘Tazkia’ or purifying or reforming both self and conduct.
- (iii) ‘Taleam-e-Kitab’ or making explicit Divine injunctions.
- (iv) ‘Ta’ leem-e-Hikmat’ or disseminating the wisdom and philosophy of Islamic faith.

Two things must be implemented immediately in order to launch this programmatic scheme:

Firstly' an organization should be established for the I mass dissemination and exposition of the Quranic message. This organization should work for two objectives. It should strive to revive and revitalize the faith of Muslims in general' to enlighten their minds and chasten their character. It should also provide' through study circles and residential camps' practical training and guidance for the intellectual' moral and religious enhancement of the people who respond to its call. It should convince those who sincerely aspire for an Islamic resurgence of the supreme importance of the academic movement referred to above. This organization; should also earnestly look for such brilliant young scholars who are willing to devote all their lives in the academic task required for them. It is no easy job to get hold of young and dedicated scholars in this age of exclusive pursuit for worldly gains. The problem of earning one's livelihood has become so acutely difficult today that most young men spend all their energies and potentialities in this direction. In our society even when a person is able to manage his basic necessities' he usually embarks on the never-ending process of raising his standard of life. But there are always in the world some pious and God-fearing persons. If some sincere and courageous men start this work with single-minded devotion' they are' with the help of Allah' sure to find a good many intelligent and capable youths' who will in accordance with a prophetic<sup>8</sup> tradition' make the learning and dissemination of Quranic wisdom the sole aim of their lives. The real need for the execution of a momentous tasks is always a strong inner urge for action which follows a particular emotion or idea. Once we have this inner urge' new possibilities of success come up unexpectedly and the obstacles and difficulties are overcome. What needs to be done is to propagate with missionary zeal the necessity of the Islamic resurgence and revival. And if this is undertaken in earnest' there is no reason why this movement should not attract devoted and persevering workers for its noble ideals.

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<sup>8</sup> The Prophetic saying reads:

خيركم من تعلم القرآن وعلمه [الحديث]

(The better amongst you are those who learn the Quran and teach and impart it to others)

Secondly' a Quranic research academy should be established so that it may start a popular movement for learning and teaching the Quran among Muslims themselves' that they may develop a fresh attitude of devotion to the study of the Quran. It is only when they come to cherish true faith and belief with a deep' inward conviction that the light of the Quran will illumine their hearts and their feelings of reverence for the Holy Book will become profound. This Academy should educate and train such young scholars who have fully equipped themselves with both modern knowledge and Quranic wisdom' so 'that they may progress in the academic task before them.

As regards the exposition of Quranic wisdom and philosophy' as I have already mentioned earlier<sup>9</sup> that there is an urgent need to revive a tradition of Muslim scholarship to produce a philosophical framework which is at least as articulate and rationally satisfying as all the other traditions of knowledge that are current today. No meaningful action to reorder Muslim societies is possible without the prior emergence of a new framework of knowledge and the adherence to it and of a substantial proportion of Muslims. That is to say' a prior commitment to Islam as an epistemology is a necessary starting point in the search for social' economic and political systems to be established in all Muslim societies.

***Note:***

*[This paper was presented in the National Inter-university Seerat Conference held under the auspices of U.G.C. at Muzafferabad in June' 1982.]*

(A.J.K)

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<sup>9</sup> See page 19 above