

Chapter 1: Contemporary Religious Movements

Contemporary Religious Movements

In the last decade, the Muslim world has been the most restless part of the world and most of the news has been related to it. This has included not only Iran but the entire Muslim world, although Iran has been the center or, rather, the source of inspiration for this movement and restlessness.

What is nowadays construed as the revival of Islam and Islamic fundamentalism encompasses the westernmost part of the Muslim world, i.e. Tunisia and the Arabic Morocco to its easternmost part, i.e. Indonesia and parts of the Philippines settled by Muslims. No doubt, all these countries and other places where Muslims, whether natives or not, constitute a minority compared to the entire population, are affected by this new wave although the degree to which they are affected is different throughout and varies according to the conditions.

Such developments and restlessness did not begin in the recent decade. Most likely, the restlessness in the Muslim world in the recent century has been elevated and more serious compared to the other parts of the world. At least one can say that, from among all the faiths that exist today, Islam as a religion and also as a civilization and culture—the civilization and culture that it has created and the protection of which it has undertaken—has witnessed more movements, struggle and conflicts than any other faith.

No other religion has reacted to such an extent against the full-fledged hegemony of the new culture. Although they may have conflicted or struggled with it positively or negatively, in the end they submitted to it and settled for a peaceful coexistence with it, i.e. they adapted themselves to the status quo at the cost of giving up their own principles and fundamentals since, contrary to doing so, they could not survive and could not stop their children and followers from abandonment. [1](#)

Among all religions, only Islam was firm on its principles and identity, was not absorbed into the modern civilization and supported a face-to-face conflict so as to maintain its sovereignty at least within its own territory, a sovereignty that had been denied or at least limited by the modern civilization and its advocates. The story of the struggles and conflicts of this religion in the last decade and even the last

century is nothing but the sociopolitical realization of the insistence, conflict and confrontation; and this goes back to the very essence of this religion. The internal structure of this religion is so that it calls its believers to a constant attempt for realizing their own identity and rejecting all that is not part of this.

A Muslim, as long as he is a Muslim, is bound to abide by his/her own fundamentals and principles. This is an essential element of his/her belief and essential for his/her eternal salvation and worldly pride and dignity. This is a necessary religious and ideological necessity and an unchangeable, non-negotiable duty. Although, in practice, for a short or long period of time this duty may not be fulfilled for certain reasons, such as weak faith or inappropriate social conditions, it cannot be completely forgotten. As long as there is Islam or Muslimhood, this duty is to be performed and the religion is likely to adopt a position according to the present circumstances and based on the claim of coordinating itself with the same.

To put it in a few words, the conflict of this religion with whatever that is unknown goes back to its nature and essence rather than being a temporary or emotional condition that will soon go away and end. Although the entire external conditions have a basic role in its emergence and in the quality of the emergence, the main factor is from within and the external factors only provide the proper conditions. The history of Islam is the history of an endless constant fight between 'tradition' and 'heresy'. History is a constant attempt for reinforcing the tradition and rejecting heresy.[2](#)

No matter what the form and dimensions of the heresy are, the fight will persist as long as it exists. Indeed, there has been no time without such heresy and, consequently, there will be no time without such struggle, although it may not have a severe political form. The form of the struggle determines the conditions but the substance is determined by religion. [3](#)

Throughout the history of Islam and especially in the recent decades we have witnessed the struggle and strife between Shi'ism and Sunnism. The struggle by the Shi'ites and by Sunnis to consolidate and stabilize the laws and precepts of Islam and to reject anything other than these is similarly motivated while it originates in the very substance of Islam and cannot be two-pronged. This is why the story of religious struggles in a country like Iran is not essentially different from those in other countries such as Syria, Egypt and Pakistan. The contemporary history has narrated these stories in the same way.[4](#)

Despite all these, however, one should admit that there are differences and failing to take them into account may entail problems and misunderstandings. Unitive tendencies have prevented a proper understanding and evaluation of the differences. This is a great problem and can be solved only if dealt with impartially and bravely.

The differences relate to the different socioeconomic, political and historical conditions in Shi'ite and Sunni territories on the one hand and to the ideological features of the two schools and the role that such features have played in forming the social, psychological and belief structure of their followers on the other. This is important point that should not be ignored. The problem is not just that these two differ from each other.

More important than this is that, in the light of their way of understanding and beliefs in the course of history, they have grown into two differing series of features. They have lived in two different social, political and cultural backgrounds and, therefore, they have two different psychologies, religious characters, religious thoughts and sensitivities.⁵

In order to study the ideological features that contribute to a better and deeper understanding of the present situation of the Islamic movement, a study of the political thought of these two schools are of the utmost importance, therefore we will first deal with there.⁶

Fundamentals of Shi'ite and Sunni Political Thought

First, one has to see how these principles and factors, whether they are historical, jurisprudential or theological, have formed the religious political understanding of the Shi'ites and Sunnis, why so and what reflections this way of thinking had on their religious political developments in the past and in the present. There is also the question of whether the courses of sociopolitical and even cultural developments of these two, when coming into conflict with religion, were the same or different and, if they were different, how far were they affected by their theoretical fundamentals in religion and the quality of such a relation; also, how did this understanding affect the psychosocial structures of the followers of these two schools.

It is important to carefully study this subject not because the past of the Shi'ites and Sunnis would be better understood in the light of it. But rather, because, without paying due consideration to it, the present condition of the Islamic movement cannot be well understood. Although it may be said that the present Islamic movement has similarly covered the Shi'ite and Sunni territories, it would be a mistake to presume that the movement was formed and went on based on similar theoretical backgrounds and fundamentals. The effect of the sociopolitical and economic conditions as well as the historical background and the more or less common colonial experience of the believers in these two schools were so strong and critical in forming the present conditions that it would be difficult in the beginning to evaluate the importance of the belief characteristics and the religious, political structures of the two based on two different realizations of the Islamic movement.

This indeed should not be interpreted as ignoring the numerous common grounds of the two in various fields such as the political thought. The problem is that there are important distinctive differences despite all the similarities and even the common grounds. Such differences have emerged because of the complex conditions that exist today. A proper impartial understanding of these misleading differences would help understand more deeply the other party and remove any problem and suspicion. Therefore, they have to be set forth for discussion rather than be hidden.

The fact is that the Shi'ites and Sunnis have two different ways, especially in their political outlook, and religious political movements in their societies have occurred in two different ways. Is it not a fact that any sociopolitical movement is formed by the psychosocial facts and the historical experiences and

beliefs in its territory? Now, if the facts become different, the movement will surely be affected. The psychologies of a typical Shi'ite and a typical Sunni differ as their religious social structures do. When it is so, the results, inspired by the difference, will unavoidably be different as well.⁷

For example, there is a general tendency in Iran to consider the lack of a religious political leadership among the Sunnis as a great weak point in the contemporary Islamic movement. Such a belief is based on an undue comparison between the Shi'ites and Sunnis, ignoring the fact that this arises from the jurisprudential and theological structure, the historical tradition and the psychosocial structure of their society and do not have to exist among the Sunnis as well.

The Shi'ites, because they are the Shi'ites and not because they are Iranians or live in the present time, have a tendency towards being guided by a leader and even being leader-makers, which is based on religious requirements while such requirements do not necessarily exist among Sunnis; neither the theoretical foundations nor the historical experience exist for it; neither their psychological structure has grown and been formed so that they would refer to a religious authority for any problem nor their religious social structure is so as to put such a person at the apex of the decision-making power.

Different Views

Because of the importance of this discussion, it would be better to quote part of the intelligent criticisms of the author of the book *Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi'i* from Muhammad Jawad Mughniyah. In his book *ash-Shi'ah wa'l-Hakimun*, Mughniyah says,

“The majority of the Sunnis necessitate obeying a tyrant sovereign and being patient upon his tyranny while denying the right to revolt against him. Shi'ism, however, necessitates encounter and revolution against tyranny and corruption. In this respect, Shi'ism opposes Sunnism and stands against it. According to the majority of Sunnis, revolting against the oppressive sovereign is revolting against the faith and against Islam while Shi'ism provides that such revolt would be within the context of the faith and being patient with oppression is revolting against the faith. Here lies the basic reason and the true interpretation of what Ahmad Amin and others say, to the effect that, “Shi'ism is an umbrella for he who seeks the destruction of Islam.”, because in the logic of Amin and his descendants, Islam is manifested by and personified in the person sovereign, no matter if he is an oppressor or a just person. Therefore, whoever stands against him has deserted Islam. However, in the logic of Shi'ism, it is the tyrant who has deserted Islam... and, therefore, it is not surprising if he calls Shi'ism ‘the destroyer’; true, but the destroyer of aberration and corruption.”

“It was Hasan Basri who said, “It is necessary to obey the Umayyad although they may be oppressors... I swear by God what they make good is more than their corruption.” Then, he adds, “The Shi'ite Imams, *faqih*s (jurisprudents) and literary scholars have always stood against oppressive sovereigns and refused to cooperate with them, as they deemed this a sin to do so. Shi'ism by nature advises standing up against the falsehood and altruism for achieving the truth. It would have not been

wise for those in power to ignore this point, which is why they always kept the Shi'ites followed and persecuted them anywhere. They bribed the wrongdoing clerics and these two united to kill the pure believers in God and the Prophet and the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's Household). They welcomed the slaughter and issued a *fatwa* that the believers had deserted the faith."⁸

What Mughniyah says is the general perception that the Shi'ites have of their school as well as of the Sunni school and their clerics. Although this is in turn a right theory, it is not yet an inclusive one. It is part rather than all of the reality. One has to see why these are so and those are like that. Is all this due to personal and moral matters or is it far from these? To evaluate the position of each of these two groups, in the first place one has to take a look at the doctrinal, intellectual, social and historical backgrounds in which they have acted and figure out what the obligations and limitations of each of them have been.

They could, however, not go beyond their doctrinal, jurisprudential and theological frameworks. One who follows his/her doctrinal rules and obligations not only cannot be blamed but also has to be praised if he or she does it sincerely and with goodwill. If there is a criticism, it has to be directed towards the choices rather than towards commitment to the accepted principles and standards. Accordingly, expecting things beyond the principles and obligations is a vain, unreasonable expectation.

The critic, after quoting Mughniyah, says, "Without wanting to arouse prejudice in this respect and while appreciating Mughniyah, we have to say that we cannot agree with him in this analysis without considering his special romantic approach. One feels that he has a double standard when it comes to the attitudes of the Shi'ites and the Sunnis towards the sovereigns. These two groups lived under different circumstances after the Prophet died and under the rule of the sovereigns."

Then he adds, "The opinions issued by Islamic jurists were personal as well as public. *Fatwas* issued were not limited to the issuing jurist. They covered his followers, disciples and advocates as well. Therefore, no issue has to be considered in this way although it contains some traces of the truth as well. It is true that we have to be brave and straightforward in our stances, but we should not forget the limits and boundaries. It is a means rather than an end. Otherwise, the end will be the victim of the means. Nevertheless, the position of the Shi'ites before the tyrant is based on some deep fundamentals, which are rooted in the attitude of the Infallible Imams towards the sovereigns, which is followed by the Shi'ites."⁹

Again, this is one side of the matter. The other side is the people. It is not that the jurisprudential and theological structures as well as the historical experience and consensus of the Sunnis have somehow entailed limitations for the sociopolitical activities of their clerics.

A cleric among the Sunnis is a pious believer who specializes in Islamic sciences and, therefore, referred to concerning religious problems.¹⁰

According to Shi'ism, a cleric is far from this. He is a safe shelter for people. They refer to him in

religious as well personal matters. They even ask his advice in various sociopolitical matters. The answer is not to be sought in the social environment. An important part of it, which is the source of the different social environment, has ideological reasons. One of the most important of such reasons is that Shi'ism is open to interpretation by jurists (‘*ijtihad*’ is open to further analysis) and Shi'ites are bound to follow (imitate) a jurist, which is quite contrary to Sunnism.

The natural and logical consequence of this is that the people have to update themselves with the religious obligation as to ‘incidents’ and whatever that happens for the first time in any matter, by seeking the Islamic legist’s (*mutjahid*’s) response and his personal opinion because that is valid and has to be obeyed. A Sunni cleric is at its best a speaker of the *fatwa*, and a *fatwa* of that which is older than a thousand years.

A Shi'ite cleric either expresses his own opinion or that of a living Islamic legist. Both the psychological structure and the personality structure of one who has reached the level of the legist (*ijtihad*) or issuing *fatwa* are different from those who relate the *fatwa* at the highest level while also the psychological structure and the personality structure of those who refer to these also differ.

If in the past, because of the closed Islamic societies, especially the religious communities within Islamic countries and the slow pace of social, cultural and economic developments, this difference could not be dealt with, but it has now emerged. The point is that the difference is not new. It is a difference more or less as old as the two religious schools, but it has recently emerged from sociopolitical dormancy.

Apart from these, many affairs that the Sunnis think of as deserving to be dealt with only by the rulers and refer to the latter are referred in Shi'ism to the *faqih* (Islamic jurist). This is not merely for political reasons. Its social aspect is quite stronger and more important. Because of this, on the one hand the Shi'ite cleric thinks of himself as having the necessary powers and, on the other hand, the people refer to him in their own affairs. Therefore, the cleric expects to be obeyed while the people also accept it as their religious duty to obey him. Such things have never been and could never be experienced by the Sunni society in history and also seem very unlikely to be experienced in the future. [11](#)

Religious Leadership

The concept of religious leadership and the need to follow the full-fledged religious legist [*mujtahid jami' ash-shara'it*] is one of the fundamentals of Shi'ite jurisprudence and theology. These fundamentals, as they put the Shi'ite legists at a top position, makes the people obey them as well. This is not just to say that the Shi'ites refer to religious legists in their own problems. Basically, the Shi'ite school is so that it can educate such legists. Again, the problem is not that, for example, the Shi'ite clergies have throughout history been more struggling and braver than their Sunni counterparts; rather, it is that the theoretical fundamentals of Shi'ism reinforces and even creates such characteristics. [12](#)

Emphasizing his beliefs, a Shi'ite cleric can stand up, without any doubt or fear, against the ruling system in cases in which he thinks fit and proper while also calling the people to join him. However, based on what part of his beliefs can a Sunni scholar do so? It is true that the collection of Sunni jurisprudence and theology provides examples of struggles in which standing up against the oppressive Sultan is advised and even necessitated.

However, firstly these examples are not typical, i.e. there are more and more valid cases in opposition to such thought. [13](#) Secondly, it can at least be said that the texts on Sunni jurisprudence and theology do not show such an attitude so clearly and explicitly as the texts in Shi'ite jurisprudence and theology do, and this is the point. In such a background, how can one expect the emergence of clerics who have a defiant attitude and at the same time be committed to the jurisprudential, theological and ideological fundamentals?

Looked at from this angle, it is not a personal matter anymore and cannot be attributed only to the personal characteristics of Shi'ite or Sunni clerics. It is the jurisprudential and theological structures of these two schools that nurture their clerics and followers in two different ways in terms of their stance in important political issues. Accordingly, these theoretical fundamentals have, throughout the history, resulted in the formation of psycho-sociopolitical foundations appropriate to their own characteristics and in practice put the Shi'ites, the Sunnis and the clerics of these two schools on two historically, socially, intellectually and ideologically different paths. [14](#)

It would be a gross mistake if we want to compare these two without considering their differences. Indeed, a number of committed dynamic young Sunnis may gather together in such groups as Islamic parties and choose an individual as the political and religious leader. Yet, such an action can hardly succeed and last without any religious foundation or obligation and without it collapsing in confrontation with hard realities. Apart from this, such a limited action cannot be generalized to the entire society. Each society goes forward according to its own specifications rather than according to what a certain group desires. [15](#)

Nevertheless, it is not expected to fully explain the goal here. Rather, it should be considered that these differences exist and they have roots as deep as the history itself in the two schools. They have to be studied scientifically and without prejudice so that each can be studied better and we will not expect anything beyond the ideological capacities and characteristics of each other. The failure to do so has been the source of some problems, especially in recent years.

In order to find out what the effect of the political thought of the Shi'ites and the Sunnis are on the Islamic movement, the characteristics of this movement have to be clarified. Much indeed has been said and written in this respect. Without a doubt, in the recent decade, nothing in the world has gained more attention than this movement. This book is not for repeating or evaluating these analyses. Rather, it is a study by considering the historical and social aspects in contemporary history throughout the Third World, part of which is the Muslim world.

From a more inclusive and comprehensive perspective, the present Islamic movement is the dawn of a new era in the history that has covered almost the entire Third World. Although the manifestations of this era are not the same throughout the Third World, they still exist anywhere and, for certain reasons, they have emerged in the Muslim World more strongly, but the strength with which they have emerged in the Muslim World varies depending on the historical conditions, the depth of religious influence, the degree of creativity brought about by Islam in that region throughout the history, and the volume of economic, industrial, social and political developments. It cannot be denied, however, that its scope has expanded to cover every where and has had a comprehensive influence. Now let's see what the story is.

Since the Third World countries entered the modern era, while their entry varied depending on which part of the world they were in, a new historical period began that more or less continued to the late 1960's and early 1970's. This was the time that marked the beginning of a new period (both in terms of culture and sociopolitical tendencies) that differed from the previous period in some significant ways. It is quite natural if the latter period does not have the same origin in all countries. It begins earlier or later, strongly or weakly, depending on the historical, economic and political characteristics of the country.

From the early 1960's to the late 1970's and the early 1980's, the new period is politically marked with unrest in the Third World and especially the Muslim World¹⁶ as the political manifestation of this new period, which is either entirely formed by the historical period or is under the influence of its characteristics.

The modern period for the Third Worlders began when they first came into contact with the modern civilization and history, whether through colonialism or by ordinary non-colonial contacts. Before such contacts took place, they lived their own way of life, from China and Japan to India, Iran, Egypt and other African countries—Latin American countries are outside the present discussion because of historical and demographic reasons. This discussion is about those countries that had a civilization and culture and lived according to them while they suddenly evolved by coming across the modern world, without the historical course to be suddenly cut off by massive immigration, as it happened to Latin America, where the immigrants had a sharply different culture with that of the native inhabitants, thus imposing the developments.¹⁷

Before contacts, changes and developments in such countries were limited to their historical and cultural characteristics. However, when contacts occurred and gradually expanded and deepened, the modern period began. This period had characteristics that will be mentioned as far as they relate to the present discussion.

The Reign of the Elite

The important characteristic of this period has been the influence of modern culture on the educated powerful elite of these countries. Despite this influence, which was occasionally very deep and sometimes reached a degree of being fond of it or alienation, the masses of people until the early 1960's

and 1970's, depending on the pace of the socioeconomic developments or their society being open or closed, had not yet been directly, effectively and comprehensively influenced by this culture. They lived in a traditional environment and in special conditions dating from the old times. The values and their lifestyles were those of the old times as well as their aspirations and ideals.

Although some elements of modern culture had penetrated their lives whether through the educated elite or through daily living necessities, which were constantly under pressure of technology, this was not yet an evolving influence. The social, cultural and economic foundations either survived in their traditional forms or the new developments were not so extensive as to cause a general metamorphosis. [18](#)

This historical period in the Third World and in Islamic countries has two important characteristics. One is the same as was said, i.e. the deep influence of modern culture on the powerful educated elite of these societies and the latter's being more or less alienated from the native culture—which indeed varied depending on the individuals, conditions and regions—and the continuation of the past culture and heritage by the masses of the people. The second characteristic is the unrivaled and forceful domination of modern culture and its value system on the decision-making system and general planning of the society, which was indeed manifested by the same elite that were influenced by modern culture.

This hegemony was, on the one hand, due to the dogmatic belief of the elite of absolute superiority of modern culture [19](#) and, on the other hand, to some form of implicit admission of the masses to the effect that, although they kept living in the traditional atmosphere of their own society, they somehow admitted such superiority. The admission was made at least by making no permanent explicit objection to it. Although there were occasionally objections, these were occasional, unsystematic and temporary. Undoubtedly, the colonial powers also had a critical role in making modern culture and its value system dominant. [20](#)

Briefly, this is the nature of the period of the contemporary history of Third World countries in general and Islamic countries in particular. The mass of the people and their culture was marginalized in the active sociopolitical and cultural life. The modern-class elite reigned absolutely as the pre-modern dictators had reigned, the difference being that they had a modern appearance and, by the way, it was this appearance that further consolidated their position. The goal was to lead the society towards values and characteristics promoted by modern culture while all this was done thanks to the apparent consent or at least the silence of the children and protectors of the old heritage. [21](#)

Indeed, this did not mean that the past culture and heritage was entirely forgotten and the modernist elite that were in power did not pay any attention to it. It was not so, rather it was also emphasized. However, the problem was that the past was looked at and judged from beyond the value system and attitude of modern civilization. Therefore, it was less similar or conforming to the reality the way it was and the way it existed among the masses. Such an image was in harmony with the identity, needs, inclinations and goals of the same ruling culture and the ruling class. [22](#)

This is exactly why the people were marginalized from the active sociopolitical life. They were usually working for those in power or those fond of power in the society, both of these groups either had modernist tendencies or were modernists. They did not have any opinion of their own and looked at the events indifferently or probably with some sort of fear or worry. They neither had reached a certain degree of intellectual or cultural maturity that they could adopt new viewpoints nor could say something against the unrivaled hegemony of modern culture over their society. The dazzle of the civilization and its heralds and supporters had captured the eyes of all. It is against for this reason that the sociopolitical developments in this historical period are mainly formed by statesmen or elite thinking differently from the ruling system.

It should be borne in mind, however, that there was no difference in the essence of these two. Both those in powers and their political opposition, who were entirely or partially from the modernist elite, had already considered modernism and the new civilization as the ideals. Their difference was about who should rule or about variety of tastes, quite contrarily to the subsequent period, in which the developments are formed by the youth rather than by this group.[23](#)

As we mentioned, the sociopolitical and even the intellectual and cultural developments of this period were formed by the modernist westernized elite. The mass of the people are in the margin of the active social developments and life and are either indifferent witnesses or the means for the realization of the same. During this period, both the power and the leadership of the opposition political currents were in the hands of the elite. It was as if the sociopolitical interactions took place in a space beyond that of the practical life of the mass of the people.

[The Youth Come on the Scene](#)

As the socioeconomic developments accelerated and the political and cultural pressures increased, from early 1950's onwards, the ground was prepared for the emergence of another historical period, which will now be discussed. This is a period which is different from the previous one in terms of its intellectual and cultural tendencies, social origin, political claims and leadership system. The accelerated economic and industrial developments penetrate the more or less traditional and introverted societies of the masses of the people.

The opened society exposes them to new intellectual, philosophical and scientific currents while also sensitizes and outrages them by directly or indirectly insulting and humiliating their heritage, culture and religion. Population concentration around big cities, expansion of the mass media, universal education, widened class gap, loosening and even destruction of institutions and factors that determined an individual's position in a society result in a new situation that finally entails the loosening of the apparently unshakable position of the ruling modernist elite and their thoughts and ideals.[24](#)

Nevertheless, such questions as 'How did the creeping transition take place?', 'How did the next period begin?', 'How was the social and cultural ground for the absolute domination removed?' and, principally,

‘Why such a tendency was formed?’, and ‘Where in the society was such tendency stronger?’, can be answered by providing further elaboration separately. What is important is that this period began two to three decades ago. It has had ups and downs and its signs appeared sooner or later in different regions. Its important characteristic is ‘seeking original values (radicalism)’ and ‘individualism’. In other words, its goal is going back to the true tribal, national, religious, racial, linguistic, cultural origins, and the historical distinctions, even if it requires some form of disintegration.[25](#)

The signs of the formation of this period can be seen in many Third World countries. Sociopolitical unrests in many Third World states, where they relate to their social, cultural and political conditions, are mainly caused by the formation of this new period. The Islamic movement of the last century can also be traced within the same classification.[26](#)

The new period has significant differences with the previous one whether in terms of its nature or its sociocultural background, goals or trends. The formation of the new period is a consequence of the clash with the modern culture, deviating from the past historical policy and attempting to adapt the society to the modern culture, at least where it related to those in power and the planners, while here, it is a reaction to such a passive attitude which deems unconditionally following and adaptation. It seeks to return to its origins although it may be ready to pay a heavy price to achieve the same. There, the power lied in the hands of the westernized elite and the people were practically pushed to the brink and were simple observers while here the power lies in the hands of the young people who have turned away from the modern standards, and the mass of the people have entered the sociopolitical life more actively.

Despite the numerous differences of these two historical phases, the formation of the second phase is a natural and logical consequence of the rule of the first one. The modern civilization, when entering the Third World territory, was too dazzling to resist. A small group was attracted to it while the mass of the people stayed watching it without any strong reaction and chose to be silent before it. However, this did not imply their final submission, especially in regions inheriting a bright culture and civilization. They somehow entered a period of latency, which they did not come out of until the last two or three decades. Their leaving this condition assured the second phase.

At any rate, time had to pass for developments to take place and experiences to be acquired, along which a morale for fighting the undesirable reality and the courage to stand against the ruling current be formed for such a great development to take place. However, the fact is that the heavy socioeconomic developments in many Third World countries provided the best ground for the appearance of the second historical phase. The youth, having emerged out of the traditional society, lacked the necessary characteristics to challenge the ruling power, culture and power system. His faith and belief might simulate him to take an action but such action could not be turned into a course to bring about a new historical period.

An example is the movement of the Sikhs, who have risen against and fought the central government since the early 1980’s. More than anything else, this movement is indebted to the great developments of

the Indian society in recent decades and the quality of programming of those in power there. Certainly, if all the factors other than the last one existed, such a movement would either basically not exist or at least it would not be on such a scale and would not have such solidity.[27](#)

The present Islamic movement can also be analyzed according to the above-mentioned points. It is the political-religious manifestation of this second historical period in the Muslim world although this movement is deeper and more inclusive than the similar political movements in the non-Muslim part of the Third World and, indeed, such characteristics relate to Islam and the Islamic civilization.

As the religion of the Islamic civilization, Islam, a glorious heritage to be proud of, which at the same time made up the historical and the present identity of the Muslims, has been constantly criticized, attacked and even violated since the Muslim societies met with the modern civilization. Although Muslims showed reactions to the attacks according to the present requirements, these reactions did not go so far as to deny the rule of thought and the westernized policy reigning in the Muslim societies. If there were such cases, they were limited and insignificant and were mainly fed by religious dogmatism rather than by intellectual, cultural or social maturity at an optimum level. It is interesting to know that, in the meanwhile, the West had such uncontested hegemony that even defending Islam was done with its help. The content of the arguments was that Islam is right and true since it agrees with the standards of the modern civilization and is even the same as the latter. Meanwhile, almost all attempts were dedicated to proving the similarity of Islam and the modern civilization so as to prove the truth of the former.[28](#)

Such conditions persisted nearly into the 60's. Yet, a set of factors, which it would be too lengthy to mention, made the Muslims and especially the young people and the students to rebel in a similar fashion to their counterparts in the Third World although more strongly and at a faster pace. The second phase thus began. This phase emerged sooner in countries where the socioeconomic as well as the intellectual and cultural developments were faster, more forceful and deeper and the Islamic faith and culture were attacked more frequently and under more pressure. Through these countries, the other regions were influenced depending on how much they were aware of the new phase based on their social, intellectual, religious and psychological background.[29](#)

The Developments in the Eastern Bloc

It would be appropriate here to mention the present developments in the Eastern Bloc, which is influenced by the cultural, tribal and religious realities and claims and by the nations residing therein. Although this Bloc has been led towards its origins for reasons different from those leading the Third World towards its national, cultural and religious origins, it cannot be denied that right now these two are pursuing more or less similar goals and, most likely, the success of each of them in achieving their goals stimulates and motivates the other. The individualistic and autonomous claims of some tribal and racial groups residing in this Bloc, which sometimes goes as far as separatism and seeking independence, certainly will further encourage radicalism and individualism by Third Worlders. Now we will examine the

problem and how it began.

As the changes and developments within the Third World are mainly caused by the formation of the new historical period in these countries, the rapid deep developments of recent years in the Eastern Bloc is also one of the manifestations of the new history that has begun for some time and will continue. The basic difference between these two is that the first historical period belongs to the Third World and its history and, for various reasons that are mainly rooted in its industrial, political and military weakness, will remain within the same limits, while the recent historical period, although it is presently within the borders of the Eastern Bloc, will have results that will go far beyond its borders to turn into a vast deep development in the entire contemporary history because, firstly, some of the causes of its formation are globally motivated and relate to the rapid industrial and ultra-industrial developments—whether in military or non-military technology—in the 1970's and 1980's in developed countries³⁰ and, secondly, because this Bloc is one of the two big stakeholders in international politics.

At any rate, what is important is to find out about the characteristics of this period and why and how they appeared. As we have already said, numerous factors were involved in the formation of this period. Here we intend to study them where and so far as they relate to the cultural realities and culture in its general sense.

In order to know what the characteristics are and what were the causes of their formation one has to clarify how the modern civilization and history began and how it penetrated into countries—i.e. countries later forming the Eastern Bloc—that had no share in its development, how it was absorbed and functioned there and what changes it underwent. Also how it encountered the traditional cultures and civilizations and tribal, linguistic and religious heritages and, in general, what constitutes the historical, national and tribal identity of the people in these countries. More importantly, what was the position that the ruling power of the society adopted and how it dealt with the industrial, economic and social development and renovation. Finally, did it entirely ignore the traditional culture and did it cater to nothing but the modern culture and its necessities or did it leave some space for the living and flourishing of the native culture rather than looking at it as a rival and enemy.³¹

The study of this point clarifies the root of many developments of the present and future. Although the developments in the Eastern Bloc began for more tangible reasons that were mainly political, economic and industrial, the problem is that these developments and principally the potential to seek change and development, which is somehow a cause of those developments, had to be led to its natural path, and one of the best paths indeed was radicalism. It is mainly under the cover of this claim that the developments, where they relate to the people, are manifested and, most likely, this cover, which has an effective share in the present sociopolitical developments, will retain its importance in the future as well.

Let's put it more clearly. The modern civilization first developed and thrived in Southern Europe and later in Western Europe. This civilization was the natural product of the diverse developments that encompassed Western European nations in the post-Renaissance centuries. Therefore, apart from the

fact that in these regions it had undergone various phases of its history, it had not only adapted itself to the historical, social and political conditions of these lands, but also adapted itself the new conditions. This civilization was the fruit of that tree and both of these two were actively in full harmony with each other.

Noncreative Inharmonious Development

On the other hand, this proportion and harmony and the various phases did not exist in the other regions, including Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the way it existed in Western Europe, although some Eastern European nations, such as Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, to some extent Hungary, and Poland belonged to Western Europe, were within its cultural domain or were directly and gradually influenced by it in the last and the present century or before the domination of the Communists. However, the fact is that the other Eastern European nations neither belonged to this geographical domain nor to this cultural domain.

This is truer about the Soviet Union. This country is like a continent of its own by encompassing a major part of the two continents of Europe and Asia and including diverse nations, tribes and cultures. The non-Russian western parts of this country have culture and characteristics similar to Western Europeans and the Balkans while the people in the Asiatic parts have characteristics to the Central Asian, far Asian or even Western Asian people.[32](#)

Although the entry of the modern civilization into these lands was not as problematic as it was coming into the Third World countries, particularly nations with the capable, long-standing living cultures. However, the entry of this culture and especially the way it entered were not without complications. More than being rooted in the contradiction between the value and the nature of the culture prevailing in these regions and those of the modern culture and civilization, these complications were rooted in the nature of renovation and reconstruction of the society in various industrial, economic and social backgrounds for achieving the new civilization.

The Marxist regimes ruling over these countries took responsibility for industrially developing and renovating and for modernizing their societies as pioneers of the new civilization. Their being armed to the modern values, which, in their view, were fully crystallized and manifested in Marxism, and their centralized military, political and economic power prevented the emergence of the reality of the local, tribal and religious cultures the way they were. The latter either had no chance of expressing themselves or, ultimately, if they were given a chance, it would be for providing an interpretation of their culture that would be in agreement with the Marxist dialectic logic, so as to accept such interpretation as the truest possible and to act upon the same, i.e. considering Marxism as absolute and setting it as the criterion for knowing the reality while at the same time deeming it the best and the ultimate solution and publicizing and enforcing it with threats and force, moving the present living cultures to a state of latency by using force without defeating them absolutely or even weakening them.[33](#)

The feel that some Eastern Bloc nations had not had a general active, creative share in the development and prosperity of the modern civilization, their probably being alien and contradictory to this culture, lack of any useful constructive experience in this respect and that this culture was made dominant in the form of Marxism—which is itself a manifestation of the modern culture in a form that the conditions in Western Europe in the mid-1900's required or rather necessitated³⁴—by the military and political dictatorships made the regional and native cultures choose to be or forced them to be silent without having a chance to express themselves or to find out about the present conditions to adapt themselves to it.

Sensitivity to the Heritage

The pressure of the central governments on one hand sensitized the members of these cultures to their heritage and, on the other hand, the present industrial and economic developments provided and encouraged the background for thinking about themselves and their identity, which were manifested in such sensitivities—As we have already mentioned, the industrial and economic developments, contrary to what is often considered, in many causes make the people more interested in their heritage, be it religious, historical or cultural, in the long run.

Before these countries, generally, could experience modern history in the light of the modern civilization and to learn coexistence and thinking about the national interests in a healthy open environment without the pressures of the ruling dictators who were armed with an ideology that claimed to create the promised paradise on earth, were forced to reconstruct themselves, and do this on the basis of an ideology with Marxist characteristics. Their economic and industrial development was not in line with some sociocultural development that could further strengthen the tribal heritage and the national understanding and unity.³⁵ This problem indeed did not find an outlet so long as the iron fist continued to exist. However, once the pressure was reduced, reality showed its face.

This is one of the most important reasons that accounts for the lack of tribal unrests in the more developed and industrialized countries in Eastern Europe. The development and industrial nature of these countries are indebted to the pre-Marxist era. This means that they experienced the modern civilization in the freer pre-Marxist environment and achieved a desirable national and social unity in the process of this experience. This indeed does not mean that we should ignore the role of the other factors. Rather, what we are saying is that their industrial and economic growth is more deeply rooted and more significant since it was realized in a freer and healthier environment and could bring about a more powerful social and national unity and coherence.

The reverse of this current can be seen in the separatist tendencies of the Soviet republics, the Yugoslav states and the tribal unrests in Romania and Bulgaria. The tendencies in the southern Soviet republics are subject to the same rule. Although the mechanism of action in the tendencies in these republics, since their residents are generally Muslims, is different from that of the Baltic republics, this difference is, on one hand, due to Islam as a religion with values different from or rather contradictory to the values of

the modern culture and the Marxist heritage and, on the other hand, to the cultural essence that has been created and developed by this religion.[36](#)

The present Baltic culture has grown and been formed under the influence of Christianity, mainly Catholic Christianity and partly Orthodox and Protestant Christianity. Therefore, it is more similar to the modern culture than the culture prevailing in the southern republics. Despite the fact that the separatist and independence-seeking developments in the southern republics are more of a tribal and cultural nature than religious, they are still different in certain ways from the radicalistic and individualistic trends in the Baltic region since they are Islamic rather than Christian culture.

What was said does not mean that such other factors as the political, international, economic or other factors such as seeking freedom and welfare at the same level as that of the Westerners did not have or hardly have a role in this respect. Rather, it means that one of the most important and sensitive ways through which the changing and epoch-making developments are manifested should be considered and that one has to know the causes and quality of its formation and what differences it had with the causes and quality of emergence of similar tendencies in the Third World. Now let's return to the main discussion.

Towards the Original Values

Thus, the tendencies towards the original values (radicalism) or, rather to say, rushing towards them began and, since this thought was the most progressive, the best justified and the most supported sociopolitical thought in this historical phase, many other persons who were somehow incompatible with the political ruling were attracted to it. It is exactly because of this reason that presently various forces have gathered around this sort of thought that have revolting and adventurous attitudes. These attitudes are commonly found in societies that have been rapidly modernized and lack an ethical, upbringing and familial consistency. Such problems are well to be expected when the volume of economic, industrial and social developments are beyond the capacity of a society.[37](#)

In order to properly understand the present situation of the political movements across the Third World as well as the Islamic movements, it is necessary to consider the abovementioned point. It is not so that all the forces within these movements believe or are committed to their goals. They have joined the movements because they did not find a more appropriate way to respond to their internal needs, the core of which is fighting the present conditions.

This current has numerous causes. However, all of them return to Islam itself or its exceptional characteristics. In the contemporary era, Islam was attacked and violated not only as a religion but also as the creator of the Islamic civilization, culture and identity. Therefore, the modern Islamic movement not only seeks to return to Islam as an ideology and a value system, but also emphasizes the Islamic heritage. The Third World radicalism and individualism in the contemporary history has manifested itself in the form of returning to the Islamic heritage, characteristics and identity.

Throughout its history, Islam was never under so much pressure so as to withdraw from the active social, political and cultural life. However, such pressure existed in the new period. This pressure not only was new and unprecedented, it was also contradictory to its inherent and internal characteristics. As other religions are not as extensive and radicalist as Islam is, they can better cope with the pressures of the new era and adapt themselves to it. However, this religion cannot and will not be able to do so. The great mistake of the Westernized Muslim analysts or the Westerners observing the events in the Muslim world was that they attributed the Islamic resistance of the last century only to blind dogmatism and blind religion, which would gradually fade away. They were unaware of the very essence and substance of this religion and had failed to note that what is incompatible with the pressures of the modern era is the very essence and substance of this religion rather than their so-called reactionary dogmatism.[38](#)

What misled these Westerners and Westernized Muslims was the reformist path that Christianity had gone and the other religions to a certain extent as well. They assumed that Islam as a religion would have to go on more or less the same path. Islam had an identity different from that of Christianity and had expectations from its followers that were appropriate for such nature. The condition of faith was faith in this religion and its entirety while it was an important point that this entirety could not be decomposed as in Christianity. Also, the time or the consensus of the followers at any period of time would not have any effect on its principles and limits as in Christianity. As this is an important issue, let's briefly examine it.

Islam, Christianity and the Modern Civilization

Concerning the clash of Islam and Christianity with the modern civilization, the problem is not just that this civilization was formed and grew within the Christian territory and, therefore, has been and is more compatible with it than with Islam. The basic thing to be considered is that Christianity as a religion could somehow adapt itself to the developments that arose out of the growth of this civilization and the new necessities that it had created in the various scientific, social, political and cultural and even moral and educational grounds. This adaptation was initially indebted to the inherent characteristics of this religion.[39](#)

Christianity consisted of a core, i.e. the message and verdicts of Jesus and the Bible and the Old Testament, which was later recognized as part of Christianity and its peripheral parts that had been developed and added thereto by the Church authorities and the ecclesiastical scholars so as to make Christianity a perfect and comprehensive religion that would take charge in all the material, spiritual, individual and collective affairs of the followers throughout the Middle Ages.

The Christian society governing Europe in the Middle Ages was like Islam governing the Muslims in that time. The two similarly responded to the various needs of their followers and actively participated in the various dimensions of their individual and collective lives, the difference being that the entirety of Islam originated from its substance, i.e. the Qur'an and the tradition, while only part of the nature of Christianity

at that time related to the pure original Christianity. In fact, it was the consensus of the Church authorities and the ecclesiastical scholars that compensated for the gaps and shortages to make it a perfect and comprehensive religion.

Naturally, these two religions reacted in two different ways to the pressures that sought to fight them and force them to retreat. Here, it was religion itself that defined its principles, fundamentals and limits while, elsewhere, part of this whole was explained and determined by the prime religious legislator rather than by the others who, although they were sacred and reliable, but yet could not be as important as the prime religious legislator. A more important point is that the validity and authority of such people, more than rising from within the religion, rose from the consensus of the believers. It was the consensus of the Church authorities that put the saints and the clerics in such a position as to be deemed part of the law and of the religion.

In practice, these two reacted in two different ways to the modern civilization, which were in fact their competitor and even opponent. Christianity resisted for a while but it was a resistance that was against the natural course of the history and in vain, while finally it collapsed due to various causes.

Undoubtedly, however, the most important cause was its vulnerability. It was this characteristic that gave rise to Luther, Calvin and the other founders of Protestantism. They provided a different interpretation and, despite all hardships and difficulties, they penetrated and went forward.

Is it not true to say that what they claimed was returning the pure original Christianity and truncate everything that had been gradually added by the Church authorities and ecclesiastical scholars? They stepped on the scene with this claim while the conditions were appropriate for the progress of such a thought. Therefore, it expanded rapidly and bypassed all the barriers. Such a phenomenon could not be formed and progress within the Islamic territory.

Although there have been many within the Muslim World that have followed more or less the same goals in the last century while directly following Christian Protestantism or without considering it, they failed from the very beginning or they did not end up being successful.⁴⁰ As we said, the main cause was the differing natures of the two religions. Religious reform in the sense of rejecting part of the beliefs and even the fundamentals of Christianity could occur in Christianity but not in Islam. A Christian could be a devout believer while putting aside the additions on the grounds that they were not from the prime religious legislator. This would not contradict his faith and purity of belief but a devout Muslim could not do so because the entirety of what existed and he believed in and committed to was from Islam rather than from Islamic scholars having reached a consensus thereon.

Islam, like any other school of thought during its history, had acquired many additions and there were many common interpretations of its principles and concepts that differed from what Islam itself had defined and provided. Many people rose to remove these additions and to reform these false interpretations in order to introduce it the way it had originally existed. However, this is different from the reforms that took place in Christianity or the other religions and was required by modern history and

civilization.

This civilization sought the decomposition and retreat of religions more than it required their reform and modification. It wanted religion to put aside all its non-personal claims and to submit. This was its goal and Christianity and the other religions responded to it, to a great extent, positively. However, Islam could not and the reformist Muslims who had, as they claimed, worked for such a goal, failed. The present radicalist movement is itself the reason that reformist movements with such a claim and goal failed and their failure was more for ideological than political reasons.[41](#)

The difference in Islam and Christianity and their specific attitudes towards the modern civilization is not simply because, for example, Christianity can have Luthers and Islam cannot or because a movement such as Protestantism can occur within Christianity and be victorious while it cannot be in Islam. Even the more radicalist branches of Christianity have a different attitude towards the modern civilization than that of Islam and this is all because of the internal natures and structures of the two. The comprehensiveness of Islam and its emphasis on the necessity of full and precise implementation of its orders and that the otherworldly salvation and even the worldly respect of the Muslims are subject to implementing the orders, unlike other religions or at least unlike their present interpretation, maintains its authenticity against the increasing and crushing pressures of the modern history.

This is explained by Johnson from another angle, “Nowadays, Islam and the Western world have begun to clash with each other and are opposing each other. No other great religions have entered into such a struggle. Neither Christianity, which is part of the Western world and has been exhausted by modernism nor Hinduism or Buddhism, which are deeply spiritual and think of spiritual salvation nor Judaism, which is a small tribal religion. None of these religion leaders had such an effect on the West that could be compared with the influence of the caliph, Mahdi or the Ayatullah. The reason for this is that Islam has been clashing militarily with the West for 1500 years and the present situation is the continuation of the same.”[42](#)

Although his analysis and interpretation relate to the political and military clashes of Islam and the West, it is still clear that this is a clash of Islam as a religion that emphasizes its original values and the modern civilization that requires its adjustment and even withdrawal.

Further Return

Therefore, considering the inherent characteristics of this religion, one has to ask why it left the scene of history for such a long period or rather why it has actively come on the scene today. What we are witnessing today is in agreement and harmony with its inherent characteristics and what we used to see was an unstable, temporary complication, especially because no religion permeates the society and history so extensively and deeply and is capable of mobilizing the force of its followers for realizing its goals as Islam, and is, while its opposition to the West and to the outside of itself is, deeper and more serious than any other religion or school.[43](#)

The present Islamic movement is in fact a manifestation of the resistance of this religion against the globalization of the modern civilization. Its first goal is to reject this globalization within its borders. This is a natural current. Lack of such a current would be unnatural and questionable. If the other religions and cultures did not have such a move, or theirs was not so deep and strong, it is because they have not inherently opposed the globalization of the modern civilization or because they did not have binding values and standards for their territory or because they could coordinate their values and standards with the value system of the modern civilization.[44](#)

Indeed, one has to add that the internal developments of the Islamic society within the last century were so as to provide the necessary material force for realizing such a conflict. The events of the recent periods and the constant blows that the Muslims received from the modern civilization formed their thoughts, beliefs and personality so that they could employ themselves for such a huge movement.

The best way to investigate this is the study of Islamic thought in the recent era. In the first decades of the confrontation of Islam and the modern civilization, the Muslims were so terrified that, in order to defend their religion, they did not think of anything other than proving its similarity to the modern civilization. By the apologetic approach these people wanted to prove the existence of that similarity. The next generation expressed its beliefs more confidently. Its goal was not defending Islam by proving its similarity to the standards of the modern civilization, the way its ancestors had done. Its goal was to explain it independently. The understanding and expression of today's generation is principally different and does not consider and is not satisfied with anything less than the full-fledged rule of its ideal and religion. In its view, it is Islam which is the criterion for truth or falsehood and it is the others that have to be compared to it rather than the opposite.[45](#)

This development itself indicates a development in the mentality and psychology of Muslims, especially the Muslim youth and students. The important thing is that this set of intellectual and ideological developments was simultaneous and even in harmony with the social, economic and political developments of Islamic countries and, therefore, they increasingly reinforced each other until late '70's, when it reached the point of explosion and created a fresh current that continues to date. As we said, this movement is the politico-religious and sociocultural manifestation of the new period that encompasses the entire non-industrial world other than Latin America. The new period is mainly the product of its previous period, i.e. the period in which the dazzle, power and technology of the modern civilization terrified and threatened the civilizations in non-European regions and made them retreat while gaining a full-fledged hegemony. The new situation, which was accompanied by the hegemony of the modern civilization, was adventitious and unstable rather than natural and stable. The stability was due to the fact that the old heritage had been forgotten without any reason and its inheritors had been forced to remain silent.

This state of being forgotten, which was often accompanied by humiliation, could not last for long. Yet, its termination required some backgrounds to be prepared. The backgrounds were prepared in the last

century and matured and culminated in the recent two or three decades, thus the entrance of the Third World into a new historical period. This new period encompassed the Muslim World as well, but more intensely.

Now, it is another problem what factors and forces the new period is influenced by and what its strong and weak points are, and how far it can maintain its stability, creativity and growth. If the radicalist ideology of the new period, of which the new period is a creation, can respond to the various needs of the Third World, especially within the Muslim World, in a way that radicalism, modernism and respecting the original values, while seeking reform, none is sacrificed for the other, it can then be said with certainty that this ideology will emerge the victor. Resorting to the original values without considering the various needs of the fast developing world today cannot guarantee such victory on its own. This is truer of our period, i.e. the '80's and the next decade, than of any other period in the past. Considering this principle not only guarantees victory for radicalist ideologies in the battle they have entered into, it can also be said that the stability and continuation of the new period is indebted to the same success. The failure of these ideologies and their inability to respond to the needs and necessities of the new period will more or less coincide with the end of this period.[46](#)

The discussion that will be dealt with in the coming parts of the book has to do with the study of the political thought of the Shi'ites and the Sunnis. One must understand both these schools and what their characteristics and differences are.

Roots of the Ideological Differences

The basic problem in this respect is that the difference in these two religious branches is considered to be limited only to the caliphate of Imam 'Ali ('a). It is not the problem whether 'Ali ibn Abi Talib was the immediate substitute of the Prophet (S) or being the fourth caliph. The difference goes beyond this.

Basically, the argument is not about a person and who he was. It is about stature and about what the stature is and who can be given such a status. In other words, rather than being about applications, the argument is about concepts. The discussion is primarily what Imamate is rather than who the Imam is. It would be a mistake to reduce the problem to a set of historical events. The truth is that this concept affects all the dimensions and angles of religious Shi'ite and Sunni thought.

To put it more straightforwardly, the ideological, jurisprudential and theological structure of the Shi'ites and, consequently, their historical experience and psychological and social structure on one hand, and those of the Sunnis on the other hand, have been formed and grown under the effect of two different series of factors. The main cause of this difference is that the Sunnis understand, view and interpret Islam according to the version of Islam that was realized at the time of the Senior Caliphs [*khulafa-ye rashidin*], the Companions [*sahabah*] and the Followers [*tabi'in*] while the Shi'ites determine Islam according to the recommendations of the Prophet (S) concerning his substitution. One considers Islam based on the early Islam while the other evaluates early Islam according to the Islamic criteria and rules.

In the one place, religion is looked at and understood according to history while in the other place according to religion. These are two absolutely different attitudes and understandings. It can be said that the main differences between the Shi'ites and Sunnis and the distinctions of these two as two jurisprudential and theological schools result from the same current.⁴⁷

When the early Islam history, especially the history of the Senior Caliphs is attached an importance equal to that of Islam itself, such Islam would indeed be different with the version of Islam provided by another group who, not only do not believe in such importance and value, but also have a critical attitude towards it. Now we see that the issue is more serious than it seems at first glance. The difference of these two is the difference in the interpretation of Islam.

In one place, Imamate, caliphate, the Imam and the caliph are understood different from the way they are understood in the other. In one place, the stature and characteristics of the Prophet (S) is lowered to the level of the following caliphs while, in another place, the stature and characteristics of the Imam are raised to the level of the Prophet (S)—which is indeed natural except in the issue of revelation and prophethood. These two attitudes entail other issues that are mainly manifested in political thought. In other words, the political thought of these two sects more than any other discussion are influenced by their varying attitudes in their understanding of Islam.

Here it should be said that such discussions should not result in misunderstandings such as 'What does Islamic unity mean when there are such differences?', or 'Unity is a principle and, therefore, one has to avoid setting forth such discussions.' Firstly, these two sects and the general public within the Islamic sects, despite all the differences, have some essential commonalities due to the potential and the stable fundamentals of Islam, which makes it possible to stand in unity. Secondly, the religion itself has emphasized unity as a duty. Therefore, such doubts cannot be raised in the first place.

The problem is that, in order to have a proper analytical understanding of the past history of these two religions and their present conditions, one has to examine them very carefully and to systematize their diverse elements and factors in order to develop and determine their political thoughts. What was and will be said will be in the employment of and will be targeted in this important task.

¹. For what Christians did in this respect, see Vatican Council II, the Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents, pp. 903–911.

². For further explanation, see *Al-'Aqidah wa'sh-Shari'ah fi'l-Islam* (The Belief and the Shari'ah in Islam), pp. 250–260; *Al-Bid'ah: Tahdiduha wa Mawqif al-Islam minha* (Heresy: Its Limits and Stance of Islam on It).

³. Further explanation can be found in chapters 3, 4.

⁴. For example, see *Islamic Movements in Egypt, Pakistan and Iran*, Asaf Hussain.

⁵. To clarify the discussion, one has to study the effect of Islam on the society and history and its role in social and historical developments as well as its other features as a faith. In this regard, see *Idi'uluzhi wa Inqilab* (Ideology and Revolution), pp. 111–149; *Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi'i* (Shi'ite Political Thought), pp. 37–115; *Al-'Aqidah wa'sh-Shari'ah fi'l-Islam* (Belief and Shari'ah in Islam), pp. 133–177.

⁶. To find out about the differences in the mutual impact of Shi'ite and Sunni ideologies on the Shi'ite and Sunni society throughout the history and in the contemporary era, see *Faith and Power*, pp. 31–55, and *Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi'i* (Shi'ite Political Thought), pp. 37–180. The latter is one of the few best sources on the subject.

[7.](#) One of the best sources according to which one can find out about the differences in the intellectual, psychological and religious structures, the motivations and emotional sensitivities of Shi'ites and Sunnis and their attitude towards history and especially the early history of Islam, are the books written by Sunnis who converted to Shi'ism. An example is *Muhakimeh-e Tarikh-e Al Muhammad (Trial of the History of Muhammad's Dynasty)* by Qadi Bihjat Afandi, *Li-Madha Ikhtartu Madhhab ash-Shi'ah*, by Amin al-Antaki, and especially *Thumma Ihtadayta*, by Muhammad at-Tijan as-Samawi, a Tunisian intellectual converted to Shi'ism. Also see *Nazariyyah al-Imamah ash-Shi'ah al-Imamiyyah*, by Ahmad Mahmud Subhi, pp. 15-68.

[8.](#) *Ash-Shi'ah wa'l-Hakimun (Shi'ah and Rulers)*, pp. 26-7.

[9.](#) *Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi'i (Shi'ite Political Thought)*, pp. 64-5.

[10.](#) This is well explained by 'Abdu'l-Karim al-Khatib in his *Sadd Bab al-Ijtihad wa ma tarattaba 'alayh*, especially pp. 3-8.

[11.](#) The fact is that the clerics in both Sunnism and Shi'ism develop under the influence of two different types of ideological, historical, intellectual and sociopolitical conditions. This is especially true of the last two centuries, particularly the contemporary period. The clerical institution in Shi'ism is an independent institution. Some have said that, throughout the history, this institution has been recognized both by the people as well as the state as an independent institution and this is believed by the institution itself as well as the Shi'ite society. At least in the Iranian society, this cannot be ignored.

The Iranian society, at least from the Qajarid era onwards, especially where it relates to the mass of the people, has been formed as if it were constantly required to refer to this institution. One can go so far as to say that the people, for different reasons, needed this institution more than the latter needed the people. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the clergy as an institution is in fact the material realization of the affective, psychological and religious needs of our people. This is why the relation has endured to date, despite the many domestic and international problems. This institution has been the affective and moral support of the people for at least the last two or three centuries.

Not only were the people willing to refer to them for matters relating to their personal and private lives, but also they referred to them to seek solutions for their problems in times of hardship and disaster.

A complete study of these issues would be lengthy. However, when it comes to the Shi'ite clergy and leadership, the aforementioned is true. Nevertheless, none of such facts and experiences can be and perhaps could not be seen amongst the Sunnites. They had other ideological fundamentals and different individual, collective and historical experiences. A cleric among them means a specialist in Islamic and jurisprudential issues, like with any other job in the society. Others had their own jobs and the clergy are busy with regular prayers and Friday communal prayers, and studied religious and jurisprudential issues, for which they could be referred.

Unfortunately, the recent developments and the reforms in their educational system have given them a more official governmental position and have westernized them and, consequently, the people.

In one of his sermons (on 19 April 1981), Shaykh Kashk, the most famous and the most popular preacher in the Arab World, thus addressed the clergy at al-Azhar: "In 1961, al-Azhar received such a strong blow under the name of 'reforms' that it was actually destroyed. O', the members of al-Azhar, tell me, which part of the Qur'an and how many surahs can you quote verbatim when you graduate with your degree? Nowadays, al-Azhar graduates cannot even read the Qur'an. Al-Azhar has been hit so hard that its shaykh was a specialist in philosophy. When was it decided that the al-Azhar shaykh should be a specialist in philosophy? One shaykh had a PhD from Germany and his predecessor had one from France. Are Muslims so inefficient that they have to go to France to get a doctorate degree? I don't know who is going to be the next shaykh. Perhaps an army general will take over al-Azhar.

Who knows? However, I know that, since the reforms, the al-Azhar leadership has abandoned serving Islam." He adds, "The new approach of the parvenu thinkers is acquiring knowledge without an educator or shaykh. They directly refer to books but do not understand anything. Pious preachers who are typically of an old age of about 70 have now been substituted by adult boys who have read a couple of pages of Ibn Taymiyyah or Ibn 'Abdu'l-Wahhab and can protect the faith. What a funny show! Oh you, the Shaykh of al-Azhar and all those who have sunken into a deep sleep and turned

Islam into a pasture where everyone can graze.” Payambar wa Fir’un (The Prophet and the Pharaoh), pp. 219–222.

Despite all such criticisms and the other criticisms that have been and are being made, however, one has to say that they have unintentionally distanced themselves from the sociopolitical life, and this has brought about numerous problems, especially in Sunni religious societies and thus, being the main cause of the deviation of Islamic movements in these societies. Indeed, it must be emphasized that such distancing has been the inevitable natural consequence of their previous position rather than their conscious or irresponsible will. This is an issue of their history rather than their present and is rooted in distant pasts rather than in recent history.

It is interesting to know that a person like Rashid Ridwā, who has strong anti-Shi‘ite tendencies, openly appreciates the effective, active role of the Shi‘ite clergy and their efforts in maintaining the line of Islamism in the society. He even emphasizes to his fellow clergy on having a role similar to that of the Shi‘ite clergy. See *Andisheh-ye Siyasi dar Islam-e Mu‘asir* (Political Thought in the Contemporary Islam), pp. 141–2.

Concerning the position of the Sunni clergy and their role throughout the history of Islam, see the article ‘Ulama’ (the Clergy), in the book *Islamic Society and the West*, by Gibb and Bowen, pp. 81–113. Also see *Al-Islam bayn al-‘Ulama’ wa’l-Hakimun* (Islam among the Clergy and the Sovereigns), by ‘Abdu’l-‘Aziz al-Badri.

For criticisms by modernists and progressivists against the clergy, for example take a look at the criticisms by one of the most influential religious thinkers in the Arab World, Khalid Muhammad Khalid, in the book *Ash-Shi‘ah fi’l-Mizan* (Shi‘ah in al-Mizan), by al-Mughniyah, pp. 375–8, and also those by one of the most accredited non-religious Arab thinkers in *Al-Islam wa’l-Khilafah fi’l-‘Asr al-Hadith* (Islam and Caliphate at the Age of Hadith), by Ahmad Baha’uddin, pp. 18–34. For a more impartial and empathetic examination of the role of the clergy and especially their effective share in the protection of the Arab literary heritage, see *Min Hjadair al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah*, pp. 24–5.

[12.](#) A clear example of what was just said can be witnessed in the relations of Shaykh Ja‘far Kashif al-Ghata’ and Fath ‘Ali Shah. See *Nokhostin Ruyaruyiha-ye Andisheh-garan-e Iran ba do Rawiyyeh-ye Tamaddun-e Burzhuwazi-ye Gharb* (The First Encounters of Iranian Thinkers with the Two Sides of the Western Bourgeoisie Civilization), pp. 329–32. Numerous other examples are provided by Cole in *Roots of North Indian Shi‘ism in Iran and Iraq*, pp. 113–204.

[13.](#) See *Ma‘alim al-Khilafah fi’l-Fikr as-Siyasi al-Islami* (Worlds of Caliphate in the Islamic Political Thought), pp. 125–6, and also *An-Nazariyyat as-Siyasiyyah al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic Political Theories), pp. 71–2.

[14.](#) McDonald thus quotes from Goldziher, “Among the Shi‘ites, absolute legists exist today. This is because they are considered to represent the Absent Imam [Imam-e Gha‘ib]. Therefore, their position is completely different from that of the Sunni clerics among the Sunnis. They freely criticize and even control the Shah. However, the Sunni clerics in general are considered as individuals who follow the government.” *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 158.

[15.](#) In the absence of such an institution, the clergy and other institutions such as religious communities and missions, which have been protecting Islam in such countries as Iran, some religious Sunni intellectuals have suggested establishing Islamic political parties. Their primary goal in the first days of the formation of such an idea is to create legal and social institutions for protecting Islamic values and laws rather than resorting to political activities.

In the Iranian society, what controlled the central governments against the unbridled Western modernism, antireligious and antinationalist actions was the clergy as well as the socio-religious institutions and even the traditional economic institutions in the bazaar. However, these institutions either did not exist in other Islamic countries or they lacked sufficient ability and independence. In such countries, what controlled the regimes, or what the latter, was afraid of was the public opinion. However, this factor, firstly, could not react promptly and, secondly, was easily affected by propaganda and threats of the ruling regimes. Therefore, committed religious intellectuals and clerics thought of establishing Islamic political parties.

For Example, the author of *Ma‘alim al-Khilafah fi’l-Fikr as-Siyasi al-Islami* (Worlds of Caliphate in the Islamic Political Thought), thinks that the formation of political parties that “call to the goodness and prohibit the evil” is obligatory, saying, “Then, if a political party acts according to what has been mentioned in the verse, the remaining Muslims will not face the sin of omitting the action because it is an obligation for the community and the religion does not allow impeding the

formation of other political parties. This would be impeding the action according to obligation and is unlawful according to the shari'ah." He then adds, "As acting according to obligation does not require the ruler's permission and, rather, subjecting such action to the ruler's permission is unlawful according to the shari'ah, therefore, for the Muslims to form political parties, it is not necessary to obtain the ruler's permission." *ibid.*, pp. 273–4.

According to another author, "The right to criticize is among the rights recognized by Islam for the citizens of the Islamic society. Therefore, if some people want to call the public to their thoughts and opinions by this means, they can form political parties and communities."

Nizam al-Hukm fi'l-Islam (System of Order in Islam), p. 92. For further explanation, see *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun wa'l-Jama'at al-Islamiyyah al-Hidayat as-Siyasiyyah al-Misriyyah* (Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Communities of the Egyptian Political Life), pp. 19–48, 31–132; and also *Ma'alim fi't-Tariq* (Worlds on the Way), p. 173.

[16.](#) See *Payambar wa Fir'un* (The Prophet and the Pharaoh), pp. 283–95.

[17.](#) As to Latin American revolutionary thought and how much its characteristics are different from those of the revolutionary thoughts in many Third World countries and especially the Muslim World, see *Fidel and Religion*, by Ferri Betto, and especially the collection of views and speeches Che Guevara in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution* to learn about Che Guevara's left thought and, for example, its twin left thought in Iran, which is the policy of Fada'iyan-e Khalq (the People's Devotees) before the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

Compare this book with the greatest books of the latter group's theoretician, Bizhan Joz'i. For further explanation, see *Idi'uluzhi wa Inqilab* (Ideology and Revolution), pp. 214–20 and *Iran, Dictaturi wa Pishraft* (Iran: Dictatorship and Progress), pp. 37–243; also *Islam and the Search for Social Order in Modern Egypt*, which studies the intellectual and sociopolitical developments of the Egyptian society in the light of the biography of one of the most important and most effective early 20th-century intellectuals, Muhammad Husayn Heykal.

[18.](#) For example, see *An Ruz-ha* (Those Days) translated by Husayn Khadijiam.

[19.](#) For example, see the views of Taha Husayn in his controversial book *Mustaqbil ath-Thiqafah fi Misr* (Future of the Revolution in Egypt), which was written in early 1940's, in which he says, "The path of the movement is clear and direct and there is no doubt or deviation in it. The path that we have to follow is that of the Europeans and go their way so as to be like them and be their partners in the modern civilization, whether in the good or in the evil, in the sweet or in the bitter, in the obligations or in the undesirable, in the advantages or in the disadvantages. One who thinks otherwise is either deceitful or deceived." Quoted from *Mu'allifat fi'l-Mizan*, p. 19. You can find a summary of his views and their critique in E. Von Grunebaum, *Islam*, pp. 208–16.

[20.](#) See *Al-'Alam al-Islami wa'l-Isti'mar as-Siyasi wa'l-Ijtima'i wa'l-Thaqafi* (Muslim World and the Socio-political Revolutionary Colonialism), especially pp. 158–9.

[21.](#) Muhammad al-Mubarak provides a description of this period in his birthplace Syria in the elaborate introduction to his book *Al-Fikr al-Islami al-Hadith fi Muwajjah al-Afkar al-Gharbiyyah* (Islamic Thought of Hadith in Confrontation with Western Thoughts), a description which is full of pain and suffering caused by the aggressions towards this culture, language, customs and all their religious and cultural manifestations. Specially refer to *Islam in the Modern World*, Kant and Smith, pp. 114–61, which provides a sympathetic account of the wounded religious feelings of Arabs and Muslims in the modern era.

In the *International Journal of the Middle East Studies*, no. 4, 1981.

[22.](#) Examples of such an understanding can be seen in *Turkish Nationalism and the Western Civilization*, by Diya' Gukalep, the spiritual leader of modern Turkey. Also, see the scholarly introduction to *'Ilm wa Tamaddun dar Islam* (Science and Civilization in Islam), by Sayyid Husayn Nasr, which criticizes such an outlook and interpretation. And also *Idi'uluzhi wa Inqilab* (Ideology and Revolution), pp. 64–93.

[23.](#) To find out about the intellectual and ideal characteristics of Muslim intellectuals in this part of history, especially see G.E. von Grunebaum, *Islam*, 1949, pp. 185–6, which also provides a critique of it.

[24.](#) Unfortunately, there is little serious study about how religious societies in Islamic countries responded to modernism and what the psychological consequences were on Muslim youth. In this respect, see *Idi'uluzhi wa Inqilab (Ideology and Revolution)*, pp. 169–78, *Payambar wa Fir'un (The Prophet and the Pharaoh)*, pp. 273–95, and researches by Sa'duddin Ibrahim, the well-known Egyptian sociologist, who mainly worked on the social backgrounds of religious movements in Egypt. For a summary of his article and introduction to the author and his activities, especially see his article *An Anatomy of Egypt Militant Islamic Groups*, in *International Journal of the Middle East Studies*, 1981.

[25.](#) Concerning the effect of the socioeconomic developments on radicalistic and individualistic tendencies of the youth in the Third World, see *Hind wa Pakistan (India and Pakistan)*, pp. 141–91, and also Sa'duddin Ibrahim's book *The New Arab Social Order*.

[26.](#) For further explanation, see *Islamic Future, the Shape of Ideas to Come*, pp. 47–59.

[27.](#) See *Hind wa Pakistan (India and Pakistan)*, pp. 91–141.

[28.](#) This and its complications are well explained by Hamilton Gibb in *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 124–7.

[29.](#) For example, see *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, pp. 39–58; also, *Idi'uluzhi wa Inqilab (Ideology and Revolution)*, pp. 150–84.

[30.](#) For further explanation, see *Mawj-e Sewwom (The Third Wave)*, especially pp. 3–27, 431–53, 574–611.

[31.](#) The fundamentals and structure of Marxist ideology was so that its advocates would call its advocates to forcibly reject anything that was contrary to the fundamentals. Their history is full of violent actions and pressure against those that did not think the way they did. For example, see *Dar Zirzamani-ye Khoda (In God's Basement)*, and also *Qadiyyah-ye Turkistan ash-Sharqiyyah (The East Turkistan Affair)*, which gives an account of the crackdown on the Muslims in the Turkistan region by Chinese and Russian communists.

For a better example, see *Qiyam-e Basmachiyan (The Basmachiyan Rise)*, especially pp. 51–131.

[32.](#) What maintained the stability and unity in this country was in fact the iron fist of the central government, the concrete and steel civilization and the Stalinist period, the October Revolution generation and the World War II generation, the bonds between the anti-suppressive idealist elements of the existing tribal cultures and the similar elements in the Marxist thought, which brought Marxism close to them, failure to realize huge industrial and economic and, consequently, the political and intellectual developments that mainly occurred in the late 1970's and the 1980's, all of which have undergone changes in the present days. For example, see *Goftogu ba Estalin (Talk to Stalin)*, especially pp. 243–87.

[33.](#) Especially see *Impiraturi-ye Forupashideh (The Collapsed Empire)*, pp. 247–95.

[34.](#) See *Farasu-ye Marxism (Beyond Marxism)*, pp. 30–49.

[35.](#) See *Tabaqeh-ye Jadid (The New Class)*, pp. 130–2.

[36.](#) On the subject of harmonizing Islam and Marxism by Muslim propagandists in the Soviet Union and its short- and long-term results, see *Impiraturi-ye Forupashideh (The Collapsed Empire)*, pp. 261–78.

[37.](#) This problem is the one of all ideologies that goes on for reasons other than being understood or loved. Marxism faced such problems in many Third World countries. For further explanation, see *Idi'uluzhi wa Inqilab (Ideology and Revolution)*, pp. 215–6.

[38.](#) See the final chapter of the precisely written small book *Muhammedanism* by Hamilton Gibb, who, a long time ago, expressed the impossibility of the absolute retreat of Islam in the new period.

[39.](#) The best example of such correspondence can be found in *Vatican Council II*, pp. 903–1014. The difference in Islam and Christianity before the modern civilization had its effect on their followers as well. In this respect, especially see *Rowshanfikran-e 'Arab wa Gharb (Arab and Western Intellectuals)*, pp. 14–7.

[40.](#) In his book *The Future of Islam*, London, 1882, Blunt believed that the future belongs to liberal Muslims; *Islamic Futures*, p. 25.

[41.](#) In the last century, the problem was not only that progressive and modern thinking individuals rose while being inspired by or without considering the Protestantism movement so as to take a similar action. The more important problem was that some of these individuals were introduced by a group of people as being like Luther and said that they, like him, would achieve victory while we saw that this did not happen. One of the best examples was 'Abd ar-Razzaq. Although his book *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm (Islam and Fundamentals of Order)* is mainly based on historical and scientific facts, he could

not find a proper position because of contradicting the fundamentals of Sunnism, as these fundamentals were not so as to fade away and be forgotten through time.

It would be appropriate if I quote one of the best-known and most reputable periodicals of that time, i.e. the magazine *Al-Muqtataf*, on his book and the position of its author, "... The fury that this book aroused against its author, who is an al-Azhar cleric and a religious court judge, reminds us of the fury against Luther, the leader of religious reformation in Christianity, one whose deeds had the most effect on the religious, literary and material progress of Christian countries.

In our opinion, what 'Abdu'r-Razzaq has written will face the same that Luther's writings faced, not because Luther and his companions were right in all that they said and did and again, not because we believe that what 'Abd ar-Razzaq and his likes have said are right and devoid of any error, rather because the critical and skeptical position of some thinkers results in discussion and research, will draw the curtain aside and reveal the truth. We have not forgotten how they rose against Muhammad 'Abduh, but they gradually calmed down until he was entitled an Imam and everyone followed him on his path." *Al-Muqtataf*, October 1925, p. 332, quoting the introduction by Muhammad 'Ammarah to *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm (Islam and Fundamentals of Order)*, p. 24.

[42.](#) Johnsen, *International Islam*, *The Economist*, 3 Jan. 1980, quoting Asaf Husayn, *Islamic Movements*, p. XII.

[43.](#) These facts have been hostilely and vindictively said by many Westerners. See *Islamic Futures*, pp. 43-4; *The Dagger of Islam*, pp. 4-9, 69-82, and *ibid.*, pp. 27-35, in which the author gives a good account of the difference in Christian Westernists and Muslim materialists in the Arab World in the encounter with the modern civilization. Also see *The Dagger of Islam*, pp. 27-35.

[44.](#) Concerning the encounter of Christianity with the industrial civilization and what message this religion has and can have for today's humankind see the book of one of the greatest Christian scholars of the present time, i.e. *On Being a Christian*, pp. 25-51, 89-112, 554-601.

[45.](#) The best example of this is the book *Ma'alim fi't-Tariq (Worlds on the Way)* by Sayyid Qutb. One of the primary important goals of this book is the final and at the same time bold and powerful rejection of those who, according to the author, are the weak-kneed failures trying to ruin the epical spirit of Islam by depicting it as modern and fashionable. Although the book was written as instructions for a pioneering group that was responsible for creating an Islamic society—pp. 50-1—its main mission appears to be a serious full-fledged opposition to whatever that seeks to ignore Islamic radicalism.

Also see the introduction to the fourth edition of *Al-Fikr al-Islami al-Hadith Wasalathu bi'l-Afkar al-Gharbi (Islamic Thought of Hadith and its Connection with Western Thoughts)*, whose author explicitly says, "The attempt by orientalists when they advise Muslims to adjust their religion to be compatible to the modern civilization is indeed no less dangerous than Marxism. It is interesting to know that the author says this when Marxism haunted everywhere. To find lively and more revolutionary examples, see the various issues of *Ad-Da'wah wa'n-Nadhir*, by the Organ of *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* in Egypt and Syria, and especially the Organ of *An-Nadhir*.

[46.](#) It is necessary to mention an important, although brief, point about the future of the present Islamic movement. Unfortunately, little has been said about this in a serious or realistic manner, which is one of the weak points of this movement. At any rates, we will try to elaborate on some points.

One of the basic problems with the present Islamic movement is that it seeks to solve all the problems in the light of mere faith and devotion while almost ignoring the inevitable necessities of living in today's world and often fails to separate these necessities from the Western culture and civilization. The Western culture—it would be better to say the modern culture because it does not just belong to the West anymore, it is a global civilization and all have a share in it and its developments—is one thing and the means of living in today's world something else. No devout Muslim or any other devout person believing in the One God can support this civilization in its full form. This is too clear to require any discussion or argument.

However, one has to bear in mind that living in the world today requires the consideration of certain principles without which

one cannot live or live a respectable life.

Order and precision, hard work and perseverance, sense of responsibility and disciplinability, working conscientiously, manageability and obeying the law and not justifying it, taking responsibility and not irresponsibly interfering in others' affairs, being content with one's limits and not expecting beyond one's capability and capacity, adaptability and collective working and, finally, thinking based on science and reason and deciding based on calculations—indeed where one has to use science, reason and calculation—are among such means. If it was possible in the past to run a society without these, it is not possible anymore. It is strange that Islam has clear explicit orders in all these respects. However, Muslims have lived in the past centuries in a way that shows that they are committed to them less than any other people or nation. This lack of commitment has many historical, social, moral, educational and psychological reasons that have to be studied.

One of the most important reasons is a deeply individualistic interpretation of Islam by Muslims. A good person according to the past customs was one who, apart from regular worships, would do benevolent things as well. He would build a mosque, school, water reservoir, bridge and the like and endowed them to the public. Presently, having been influenced by social and revolutionary trends, people think of a good person as one who perseveres in the various fields of fighting the irreligious, the violators and the oppressors. Undoubtedly, these are indications of a true faith.

However, the problem is that, other than such indications, the other manifestations of religious faith are basically not taken into consideration. According to them, criteria of being good is not, for example, doing one's duty carefully and patiently, with perseverance or trust or closely cooperating with one's colleagues in collective cooperation, which is a requirement of today's industrial life, and listening to one's superior or not avoiding doing one's work with different excuses and avoiding the interference in affairs that are not one's business.

The fact is that such concepts are unknown among us and have nothing to do with religion or religious duty. One can even say that not only they are unknown, but, in practice, their opposites prevail and are considered as values. For example, if the concept of "cleverness" in our customs is analyzed as well as who its applications are and what and who are the opposite concept and applications, it will clearly be seen how far the concepts prevailing in the minds, thoughts and spirits, whether individual or collective, are contradictory to the means required for living in the world today. Worse than this is that these applications have found religious positions for themselves and there are few people who would see them as contradicting the religion, faith and religious purity.

Unless these problems are solved satisfactorily, the society will not be on the path of progress. As it was mentioned earlier, this is not just our problem. It is more or less a problem in all Islamic societies and for the present Islamic movement. Our problems will not be solved only by individually motivated devotion in the sense that is common today. No doubt, this is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. The devotion needs somehow to be related to the principles and values required by living in this part of history.

In order for us and the Islamic nation to have a proud future, this relation is necessary, in a way that neither the religious fundamentals are distorted nor the concepts are degraded so much that any law-breaking, lack of sense of duty, disorder, laziness, carelessness, lack of knowledge and aimlessness is justified or legalized by any person. In the vast realm of the Muslim World, one can almost say that Islamic countries to the east of Iran suffer less from this problem and the more we go towards the east, this problem will be less noticeable. For certain reasons, Turkey and principally the Turks face this problem less seriously whether in Iran or outside Iran.

In the Arab World, this problem is serious, complex and deep, as in Iran although this problem may be weaker or stronger in each of these countries, depending on their situation in the past, the solidity of their national unity, colonial experience and type of the present government. For further explanation, see *Africa: the Past Heritage and the Future Situation*, pp. 81–6, and also two books, one by the most prominent specialist in social, economic and cultural issues in the Muslim World, i.e. Diya' ad-Din Sardar, entitled *The Future of Muslim Civilization and Islamic Futures*.

[47](#). Some scholars in the past and some writers today have intentionally paid attention to this difference. From among the

past ones, refer to *Al-Fasl fi'l-Milal wa'l-Ahawa' wa'n-Nahl*, Ayn Hazm, J.E., p. 94. He says somewhere, "It is not right to argue with them—the Shi'ites—by relying on our own stories because our stories are not acceptable to them and they cannot rely on their stories to argue with us because we do not think they are true. Both parties have to argue based on something else which is acceptable to both sides whether the one who argues accepts it or not..." From among the new writings, see *Ma'alim al-Khilafah fi'l-Fikr as-Siyasi al-Islami* (Worlds of Caliphate in the Islamic Political Thought), pp. 131–8; and *Al-Fikr as-Siyasi ash-Shi'i* (Shi'ite Political Thought), pp. 116–80.

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