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Islamic Conception of History

To get acquainted with the Islamic conception of the historical changes and the factors making history, it is necessary to take the following few points into consideration:

The Qur'an pays attention to the usual course of history

We have already learnt that the changes in the natural phenomena are governed –by definite laws and are brought about by certain causes and factors. In short, we can say that nature has definite ways, and that Islam lays ample stress on their existence.

According to Islamic view, in society also there exist specific laws, which constitute the patterns on the basis of which social changes take place. The rise and fall of nations, their strength and weakness, the coming to power of any particular groups, the soundness or unsoundness of a society, are all subject to the laws which govern a society and its relations with other societies. Thus the historical events are not accidental, having no basis. They are not subject to a whimsical fate. Everything in society as well as in nature is subject to a law.

The social laws and patterns do not come into being. automatically or as a result of any inner compulsion.

As a matter of fact, they are all a part of the creative design and `divine ways'. Here are a few examples of the ways to which the Qur'an has referred. (Let us see what role the will of man plays in this field).

"We destroyed many generations before you when they did wrong".

(for their social relations were based on an unjust system). (Surah Yunus, 10:13).

"If the people of these towns had believed and practiced piety, We would have showered on them

the blessings of the heaven and the earth ". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:96).

In Surah al-Fatir, verse 43 and onward the Qur'an speaks of those who, because of their selfishness and arrogance oppose the mission of the prophets and the efforts of those who advocate truth. Such people employ all sorts of unlawful means to expand their power and to gain their selfish ends.

Thereafter the Qur'an says:

"The evil designing recoils only on those who do it. Then can they expect anything other than the punishment meted out to the earlier people? You will not find a change in Allah's ways, nor will you find Allah's ways to change. Have they not travelled across the land and seen the fate of those who were before them, though they were far mightier in power than themselves?" (Surah, al-Fatir, 35:43 -44).

In Surah Ale Imran, verse 137 it says:

"Different traditions existed in the past. So travel across the land and see the fate of those who rejected the Truth ".

The next verse says:

"Do not waver nor grieve, for indeed you will have true dignity if you are true believers".

Continuing the Qur'an says:

"If you have received a blow, the unbelieving people had received the like thereof (earlier). These are only the vicissitudes which we cause to follow one another for mankind so that Allah may know those who believe and may choose those who make supreme sacrifice". (Surah Ale Imran 3:40).

These verses considered together indicate that what brings about a change in the history of a nation, are the qualities of perseverance, sacrifice for a good cause and abstinence from selfishness and undignified actions. This is one of the norms that have always prevailed among the people.

From Surah Bani Israel, verses 70 – 77, we can deduce the following principles:

The nations and the communities are distinguished from each other by their leaders and the guidance which they receive from them. Adherence to one's ideological goal is necessary. If a community, in order to continue its selfish and mischievous activities, falls out with its hard working, selfless and sincere leaders and expels them, it shall not have much respite. Thereafter the Qur'an says:

"Such has been Our way in the case of Our messengers whom We sent before you".

The verse 16 of the same Surah tells us that when a place was to undergo destruction, those of its inhabitants who lived at ease would start indulging in licentiousness and mischief-making. Then a command of Allah would be issued in respect of these corrupt and mean people given to hoarding money and seeking pleasure. The place would be destroyed and its people annihilated.

In Surah al-Fajr, verses 6 – 14, the Qur'an says:

"Did you not consider how your Lord dealt with the tribe of `Aad, who had many-columned buildings at Erum, the like of which was not erected in other lands; and (how We dealt) with the tribe of Thamud who cleft the rocks in the valley; and with Pharaoh, firm of might? All these were haughty in their lands and created much mischief there. Therefore your Lord let loose on them the scourge of punishment. Surely your Lord is ever watchful".

These are only a few instances out of so many in which the Qur'an has referred to the usual course of history.

Violent outburst of desires and emotions

We have already learnt that man has a terrestrial as well as a celestial nature. He has many kinds of inclinations and emotions, and is responsible for guiding and modifying his desires. We also, more or less, know that the passions for self-seeking, self-aggrandizement, licentiousness and lust of power sometimes outburst so violently that they may bring ruin to an individual and society. The Qur'an describes the individuals and factions not controlling their passions as extravagant, mischievous, wrong-doing wicked, haughty and even as diabolic and aggressive. All over history and in all sorts of economic conditions such people have worked for gaining their selfish ends, for expanding their power and authority and for exploiting and subjugating others. To achieve their vicious objects they do not desist from using force, fraudulent means, threats, temptations and persecution. They divide people and terrify them. They create those conditions under which they may impose on the masses such ideas and such a way of life as may facilitate the continuity of their own oppressive authority.

Myths, misconceptions, idol-worship, dirty customs and old and new gods are introduced and revived to stop people from thinking rightly and moving in the right direction, and thus the way for their exploitation is paved. So many wars have been kindled by the flames of the avarice, greed and self-interestedness of the tyrants. How much destruction, misery, bloodshed and suppression have been caused by their lust of power and position!

The Qur'an considers the corruption and tyrannical and oppressive activities of such men to be the cause of the destructive changes of history.

From Surah al-Baqarah, verse 205 we can deduce that: Whenever a self-seeking man comes to power, he creates mischief, tries to ruin agriculture and commits genocide.

In Surah al-Maidah, verse 62 and subsequent verses, the Qur'an speaks of those, who because of their haughtiness and denial of truth are ever ready to commit sins and transgression, to kindle the flames of war and to spread corruption.

In Surah al-Qasas, verse 4 and onward it says:

"Pharaoh grew in power in the land and divided its people into casts. A group among them he suppressed, killing their sons and sparing their daughters. Surely he was one of the miscreants".

In Surah al-Zukhruf, verse 54, Pharaoh has been described thus:

"He suppressed his people to the extent that they obeyed him. Surely they were wicked people".

In Surah al-Nisa, verse 27 Allah says:

"Those who follow their lustful desires, want you to go tremendously astray".

These are some examples of the verses, which show that there are men who, because of their blindly following their desires and making no attempt to modify and guide them in the right direction, create a great deal of mischief and engender unfortunate events of history.

Question of contradiction

According to Islamic conception, contradiction plays an important role in bringing about changes in history, but it is not the sole factor which brings them about. Further, contradiction does not mean merely the contradiction between the productive relationships and the productive appliances.

Within man himself there exist two contradictory forces; devilish insinuation and the guidance of reason. In other words, within man his animal propensities and his higher instincts are in conflict. Side by side with man, that is his divine aspect, there exists Satan, which is the manifestation of all misguiding and insinuation factors. In society there is a ceaseless struggle between truth and falsehood. Since the dawn of history two sons of Adam, representing the two wings of men of history, have been fighting each other. One of them is fighting to satisfy his vain desires and to achieve his selfish ends. He, because of

his jealousy and self-seeking, destroys the other. His selfishness culminates in the first killing and transgression, and establishes the tradition of the hostility of the selfish, lustful and transgressing individuals and factions termed extravagant, diabolic and mischievous by the Qur'an, towards the reformers and the advocates of righteousness and justice. This conflict, in different forms, has continued all over history.

The root of this conflict and struggle going on between the two sides of the oppressors and the oppressed, the exploiters and the exploited and the tyrants and the tyrannized, exists within man himself. It is the outburst of his inner passions and emotions, which causes such a havoc. Of course social and environmental conditions are effective in flaring or checking this outburst.

Anyhow, the outcome of this contradiction and conflict, whether that be within an individual or between the various classes of society, is not always the destruction of one side. In many cases the outcome is the modification, guidance and even the harmonizing of the two opposing forces.

For example, if there is a conflict between reason and passion, its outcome will not be the extinction of the latter. Similarly if there is a conflict between material desires and higher human tendencies, its outcome should not be the extermination of natural and material desires to the extent that man should make no effort to obtain food, clothing and marriage-partner. The object of this conflict is self-moulding so that all these desires should be controlled and disciplined, and all instincts should be exercised with moderation and with no excess.

In society also the conflict often aims at guiding and training people in a peaceful manner by exhorting them to good and restraining them from evil with a view to improve the environment and reform the wicked and the culprits; though sometimes it aims at exterminating the oppressors also, as in the case of punishment for manslaughter and in the case of the holy war. Hence the role of the constructive factors must not be overlooked.

Necessity of augmenting the positive force of contradiction and resistance against corruption In every conflict the side which is stronger, achieves greater success. Hence if the tyrants and the oppressors are stronger, oppression and corruption will prevail, the people will be subjected to persecution and will be deprived of their rights.

But once the side of righteousness and justice becomes stronger, social justice becomes dominant and the oppressor is removed from the scene. Naturally it requires persistent effort and hard work to strengthen the side of righteousness.

"If only there had been among the generations that have gone before you, _men possessing good sense who could warn their people and stop them from spreading corruption on the earth ".

(Surah Hud, 11:116)

"If Allah had not repelled sore men with the might of others, the earth would have been corrupted". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2 :251).

A number of other verses which lay stress on the necessity of fighting against the miscreants, the aggressors, the tyrants and the self-seekers, and promise success to those who work steadfastly and resist the wrong-doers with perseverance, prove this point.

Therefore mere intensification of contradiction and augmentation of the causes of conflict cannot bring the required change closer. Only the awakening and correct guidance of the oppressed, the strengthening of the side seeking justice and promoting the positive inclinations and sentiments can help the truth triumph.

- a. Knowledge of the course of history,
- b. Identification of opportunities; and
- c. Taking advantage of these opportunities.

It is evident that everybody, whatever be the level of his social consciousness and capability of leadership, cannot make history. A sound knowledge of the course of history, insight into the structure of various societies, correct interpretation of the historical events, acquaintance with what happened to the people of the past and clear thinking about the customs, traditions, inclinations and genius of a society are necessary to be able to take a suitable, timely and fruitful action.

Besides knowledge, the ability to mould, guide and organize the thinking of the people and to overcome the forces of opposition is also necessary.

It is also essential to have a firm conviction, a definite aim and the power of resistance and perseverance. That is why we see that history has produced a very limited number of individuals and groups who could shoulder this social mission and with their creative and constructive ideas, boldness, broad-mindedness and extraordinary power of leadership could make a break through in order to change the mind of the people and bring about great changes in the history of a nation. No doubt human history is the history of the great and outstanding men who have played a decisive role.

Great Role of the Prophets in Making History

A study of the prophets' movement shows that they have been the biggest source of intellectual and

reformatory revolution in society. It is they who preached justice, humanity, philanthropy, brotherhood, equality, service to mankind, love, human freedom, peace, purity, piety and other social and human virtues.

Furthermore, it is they who more than anyone else exposed the oppressors, the tyrants, the hypocrites and the self-seekers, and taught the people to resist them boldly and make a sacrifice for this purpose. The main feature of their program was to fight against subjugation and humiliation and strive for liberty and emancipation. Reflect on the following verses:

"Indeed We raised in every nation a messenger, (proclaiming): Worship Allah and shun false gods". (Surah al-Nahl, 16:36).

"We indeed sent Our messengers with clear signs, and revealed with them the scriptures and the criteria for judging what is right and what is wrong, so that the people may establish justice. We sent down iron, in which there is vital power and wherein there are many uses for mankind, so that Allah may know who helps Him though unseen and helps His messengers. Surely Allah is Strong, Almighty ". (Surah al-Hadid, 57:25).

Prophet Ibrahim (P)

Since the dawn of the recorded history Ibrahim has been acknowledged to be the champion of monotheism, iconoclasm and the exploding of myths. It is he who taught to sacrifice one's life, property and children for the sake of the cause which one holds dear; and it is he who fought against the elements of transgression and self-seeking represented by Nimrud. Consequently he was thrown into blazing fire because he continued his struggle against the idols and false gods. He set an example of resistance and self-sacrifice and resumed his struggle as soon as he crossed this ordeal uncurbed. He laid the foundation of the oldest centre of monotheism, namely the Ka'abah. He was the inspirer of all great Semitic religions believing in one God in a vast area of the world.

Prophet Musa (P)

The efforts of Musa for the emancipation of his people, his vast struggle against subjugation and humiliation and his bold stand against those who possessed pelf and power and were the embodiment of oppression and lust of authority, crowned the history of popular struggle and human movements with success.

"Go both of you to Pharaoh. He has transgressed the bounds indeed". (Surah Taha, 20:43).

"So go to him and say: We are two messengers of your Lord. Therefore let the children of Israel go with us and do not torture them ". (Surah Taha, 20:47).

"We sent Musa and his brother Harun with Our signs and a clear authority, to Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they scorned them for they were despotic people. They said: Are we to believe in two human beings like ourselves, whose people are servile to us?" (Surah al-Mo'minun, 23 : – 47).

To counter the demands of Musa, Pharaoh and his aides resorted to calumination, intimidation and brain washing.

"But none believed in Musa except a few o f his own people, who were afraid that Pharaoh and his chiefs might harass them, because Pharaoh was a tyrant in the land and he was guilty of transgression". (Surah Yunus, 10:83).

"When he conveyed them the truth from Ourselves, they said: Slay the sons o f those who believe with him and spare their daughters. But the scheme of the disbelievers was a mere failure. Pharaoh said: Let me kill Musa. Let Musa call his Lord (if he can). I fear that he will alter your religion or he will create disorder in the land. Musa said: Indeed I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning". (Surah al-Mo'min, 40:25 – 27).

"Pharaoh proclaimed among his people saying: My people! Is the kingdom of Egypt not mine, and these rivers flowing under my feet not belong to me? Do you not perceive? I am surely better than this wretched man who cannot even speak clearly. (If what he says is true), then why have bracelets of gold not been put on him or angels not sent alongwith him? "(Surah al-Zukhruf, 43:51–53).

"Pharaoh said to Musa: If you acknowledge a Lord besides me, I will imprison you ". (Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:28). But Musa was firm. He did not give up his struggle, and said to, his companions: "Pray to Allah for help and be patient. The earth belongs to Allah. He gives it to those of His slaves whom He pleases. Happy shall be the end of the pious" . (Surah al-A'raf, 7:128).

Musa encouraged his people and gave them good news saying: "It may be that your Lord is going to destroy your enemy and make you succeed him in the land. Then He may see how you behave". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:129).

As we know, at last Musa was successful in rescuing his people. The enemy despite all his power and grandure was annihilated. Thus a new chapter of history was opened, which set in motion a series of

historical events.

Prophet Isa (P)

For some two thousand years Isa has been recognized in history as a saviour and messenger of peace and justice. He stood right in the midst of selfishness, war-mongering, amassing of wealth and rivalry and bloodshed. At that time the self-aggrandizement and fraudulent dealings were at their height. The unworthy churchmen, who were supposed to be the religious leaders and the bearers of the Divine commandments were themselves involved in rivalry with each other and were committing such heinous crimes as slaying of the prophets, deceitful forgery, usury and hypocrisy.

In such circumstances Isa stood and fought against all the evils of his time. He reformed and reintroduced Mosaic religion which had been distorted and misinterpreted, and preached righteousness, purity, humanitarianism, love and service to mankind. He led his life with utmost simplicity and pursued his mission in right earnest even at the risk of his life.

In the course of history his teachings stirred a great wave of new ideas of moral conduct and fellow-feeling in a large sector of the world. His teachings were the source of many epoch-making movements and revolutions.

The history of Christianity and the Church is full of many good and ugly events and movements. Obviously all that was good was the outcome of following the teachings of Isa and all that was bad and ugly was the result of the misuse and misinterpretation of these teachings and of deviation from his mission.

At last there came the turn of the greatest and the most fruitful Divine movement, that is the message of Islam. We propose to dwell on it at the end of this discussion.

Revelation was the motive force of the Prophetic Movements

There is no doubt that every prophet started his mission at the most opportune time, when injustice, wrong conceptions, undue discrimination, dissensions and neglect of duties were rampant and the situation demanded the beginning of a reformatory movement to dispel darkness and to illuminate the atmosphere with the light of virtue and truth. But in all cases the actual campaign for changing the intellectual and social conditions started only at the behest of Divine revelation.

It is true that Musa from his youth was feeling extremely perturbed and upset by the humiliation and the bondage of his people. He was conscious that power and wealth were concentrated in the hands of one

party and the other was suffering poverty, slavery, pain and torture. But still he had no plans to take any action or to carry out any reforms. Even when he killed a person from the enemy camp during an encounter with him, he escaped from the city in great bewilderment, as he felt that his life was in danger. But years later when he was raised to prophethood and Divine revelation asked him to take action, he returned to the same city, went straight to Pharaoh, the powerful and dangerous enemy of his and his folk and asked him to liberate the children of Israel and stop torturing them. Only then the things began to move.

Till the age of forty the Prophet of Islam lived among an ignorant people whose way of life was unmanly and very unfair. His pure and clear mind perceived the moral perversion of society and felt distressed. As for himself, he never reconciled to the environment, and every now and then made efforts even to prevent aggression and patch up differences. [1](#)

But he took no steps to preach social reform or to launch a campaign for that purpose.

The breakthrough was made only when he received his first revelation in a cave on the hill of Hira. That was the event that heralded the Islamic Movement.

Therefore it may be said that revelation is the main pillar and the foundation stone of the mission of the prophets. But what is revelation and what effects does it produce?

Revelation

Revelation is a sort of sublime knowledge of the realities of the world, their values and the higher goals of human life. This knowledge is unambiguous, direct and clear. It is a special Divine gift bestowed on a pure and holy man.

Revelation is not an ordinary kind of consciousness or perception obtained through senses, observation or experiment. Nor is it a kind of mental awareness based on previous mental data or previously acquired knowledge manifesting itself consequent on the creative efforts of a human mind. It is also different from intuition and mystic illumination. It is pure and decisive knowledge, a transcendental cognition and a Divine gift.

Some effects of revelation

(a) Inner Arousal: Revelation creates an arousal in the soul of the prophet and stirs up his entire existence. It awakens his dormant faculties and powers and directs them towards the performance of his mission. With his contact with the eternal source of revelation, he is infused with a new spirit and zeal.

(b) Clear insight: As a result of revelation a prophet's mind is endowed with clear insight and breadth of vision as if it had been connected with a gushing and pure fountain-head of knowledge. His mind is filled with pure and fruitful ideas.

The Qur'an describes revelation as light, insight, illustration, wisdom, cure, mercy, proof and a source of life and knowledge. Obviously this light and insight first of all should be enlightening the heart of the prophet himself on whom revelation descends.

As a prophet's ideas are inspired by Divine-revelation, they are polluted neither by myths and misconceptions nor by his own self-interest or personal whims. As the Qur'an says,

"he does not speak out of his own desires. (What he says) is only a revelation revealed to him "
(Surah al-Najm, 53:3).

Because of his clear insight and purity of thought a prophet attains infallibility. His missionary ideas are immune from every kind of mistake or slip.

(c) Fruitful orientation of the thinking of people: Revelation guides people and shows them the right way. It brings their inner talents into full bloom, and develops their higher human sentiments and inclinations. It gives a useful turn to their way of thinking and, in the light of the new awakening, leads them to all that is good and pleasant.

After dealing with the misconceptions, false beliefs, wrong practices and other pitfalls that may develop in a society, and emphasizing the need of the prophets, Imam Ali (P) in the first sermon of his, given in the *Nahj al-Balaghah*, explains as under the purpose for which the prophets are raised:

"Allah sent His prophets to people. He sent His prophets one after another so that people might comply with the compact of their nature (might not allow the light of their innate disposition towards worshipping Allah and following what is right to be extinguished). He sent the prophets to remind people of His favours to them and to convey to them the truth so that they could have no excuse".

"He sent the prophets to people to stir up the hidden treasures of their soul and to apprise them of their abundant and useful potentialities".

(d) Lastly revelation is the bearer of the great message of the prophets in regard to bringing about a change in society. In fact, revelation has a social mission, viz. the reconstruction of society, establishment of a just system and reorganization of a nation.

The historically recognized Divine messages have played an immense role in this field. Now we study the universal message of Islam, which is the most important of all these messages.

Islamic Movement – A Manifestation of the Rules of History

We propose to pursue this study in several stages:

Domination of injustice cannot last long

We already know that it is one of the most important laws of history that when injustice and corruption become rampant in an environment, a revolution is bound to follow. The collapse of the elements supporting undue discrimination and tyranny is inevitable.²

Keeping in mind this firm rule of history, we find that in the sixth century of the Christian era, Arabia, the Iranian and the Roman empires and all other well-known countries of those days were ready for an explosion. At that time not only in Arabia there existed discrimination, belief in myths, idolatry, tribal feuds, poverty, tyranny and many other inequities and vices, but even the big, powerful (though decaying) and so-called civilized countries of those days were the victims of so many misconceptions, false beliefs, mutual conflicts of the rulers, cruel laws, deep class differences, massacres, savage wars, undue prejudices, barbaric customs and onslaughts against knowledge: The atmosphere was suffocating. The masses were groaning under heavy financial burdens, whereas some privileged individuals and groups were living in luxury. There were thousands of other evils. The Qur'an has described this condition as manifest error. (Surah al Jum'uah, verse 2)

Imam Ali (P) depicted the world situation prevailing at that time as under:

"Allah sent the Prophet of Islam at a time when there had been no prophet for long. People were in deep slumber. There was utter confusion everywhere. Wars were ranging. The leaves of the tree of life had turned yellow and there was no hope that it would ever bear fruit. Waters had gone dry. The light of true religion had been extinguished. Misery had extended its ugly face and had overtaken mankind. The result of this unfortunate situation could be nothing but chaos and trouble. Fear had overwhelmed the hearts of people and they could find no refuge except in blood-thirsty sword! (*Nahj al-Balaghah*).

This world situation foreboded a big event that could overthrow the cruel and outdated systems.

Awakening of people injustice could not be ended without the intervention of human factors and an ideological movement. It was necessary that people should have better knowledge, and there should be a school to enlighten their thoughts and to lay down a program for them so that their dormant forces could be awakened.

"This is because your Lord was not to destroy any town arbitrarily while their people were unconscious (of the wrong they were doing) ". (Surah al-An`am, 6 : 131) .

"We never destroyed a town whose term of life was not already fixed". (Surah al-Hijr, 15:4).

"We have never destroyed a town unless it had its warners ". (Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:208).

As we know, an intellectual and human awakening usually follows the coming of the prophets.

"If we had destroyed them with some punishment before his (holy Prophet's) coming they would have certainly said: Our Lord! Why did you not send to us a messenger, so that we might have followed your revelations before we were humiliated and disgraced?" (Surah Taha, 20:135).

For these reasons Allah raised Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, as a historical and world necessity.

Arabia provided a favorable atmosphere

If corruption, injustice and belief in myths demanded such a movement, naturally Arabia provided a most favorable atmosphere for the purpose, for it enjoyed less intellectual and cultural progress and less human qualities than its neighboring lands and was submerged in a deeper bog.

The Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (P) says: "Allah sent Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his progeny) to warn the people of the world against the customs and manners they had adopted. He appointed Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his progeny) the trustee of His celestial commandments. At that time you, the Arabs, professed the worst religion and lived in the worst land. You slept amidst the hard stones and biting snakes. You drank of dark water. You did not get wholesome food. You shed the blood of each other. You severed your ties with your kin and fought against them. Idols were set up amidst you, and your sins had tied your hands and feet". (*Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 26).

These were the circumstances when this degraded society and inhospitable land was selected to be the cradle of Islam.

Pioneers – Chosen companions

This divinely popular movement could succeed in overthrowing the corrupt system and making history only if the pioneers were trained on the basis of its ideology and then with general awakening the masses were given the revolutionary training and prepared to proceed on.

The Holy Prophet immediately after having been raised to prophethood, began to preach Islam to the selected individuals and started fostering and bringing them up. In the beginning the preaching was secret and in private. People were selected individually. The teachings were basic: One should worship only one God and should renounce every kind of polytheism. Total submission to what was revealed was necessary. All men were the slaves of Allah, and were required to purify themselves, and be accustomed to good deeds and resistance to evil.

"I swear by the time (which is the time of the birth of true man)! Surely man is in a state of great loss. Except those who believe, do good deeds and exhort each other to truth and exhort each other to be steadfast". (Surah al-Asr, 103:1 – 3).

A few but chosen people accepted the principles of the new school whole-heartedly, and became firm in their faith.

With belief in one God, rejection of all false deities, character-building, piety, knowledge, breadth of vision and submission to truth, gradually in three years the stage was set for open preaching. At the end of this period persistent and powerful attacks were directed against the prevailing system. Idol-worship, the main cause of wrong thinking and the main weapon of the self-aggrandizing aristocracy was condemned. A new wave started. A good number of people from among the slaves, the underprivileged, the homeless and the oppressed along with a few from the aristocratic class joined the new movement. But simultaneously the resistance of the enemy, his threats, torture, siege slandering and rumour-mongering also reached their height.

The Divine verses were revealed in the form of ardent maxims. They also contained the constructive criteria of the faith. The converts to Islam continued to proceed forward firmly and unflinchingly on their way to make future history.

Role of emigration

From Islamic point of view, emigration is one of the elements which make history. Reflect on the following verses:

"When the angels take away the lives of those who are wronging themselves, they ask them: In what circumstances were you? They answer: We were oppressed in our land. The angels say: Was not the earth of Allah vast enough for you to emigrate? It is they whose abode is Hell. What a bad fate! But as for those men, women and children who are weak and have neither the strength nor the means to escape. It may be hoped that Allah will pardon them. Allah is Compassionate, Forgiving. He who emigrates in the way of Allah, will find many places of

refuge in the land and abundant means of livelihood. He who leaves his home, emigrating for the sake of Allah and His Messenger and is then overtaken by death, shall surely be rewarded by Allah. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful". (Surahal-Nisa,4:97 – 100).

If the suffocating environment of a place is not willing to accept the truth, pressure is so high that all values have been suppressed and if there is no possibility of impressing the surroundings and reforming society, one should find out a more congenial place, where faith, independence and truth may flourish, and go there. According to Islam, it is migration in its widest sense, which helps solve the problems and opens up new avenues. Islam enjoins emigration from closed and blind surroundings to open lands ready to accept the truth, from rugged mountains to populated places. It enjoins migration to study the nature and history of men, and migration from self-centredness to Allah, from the straits of self-seeking and self-aggrandizement to the wider atmosphere of honor and humanity.

When the Prophet of Islam found that his companions were under pressure, first he ordered a limited number of them to migrate to Ethiopia. At last by making contacts with the people of Medina and taking firm undertakings from them he secretly made the atmosphere of that city favorable to him and got ready to migrate to it.

All worldly goods and family, relations were sacrificed for the cause of faith, for the promotion of goal and for the continuation of struggle. With the emigration, for the holy Prophet and his loyal companions a new epoch in the history of the Muslims began. We know how effective this big step of emigration to Medina was in the expansion of the Islamic Movement.

A basic condition of the progress of a social movement is the formation of a disciplined and model group or society acquainted with and loyal to its ideology. In Medina a nation was formed, though on a very limited scale, but perfectly conforming to the required standard. In this small society there was no distinction of race, tribe or class. No one was nobler than others. Every kind of discrimination and distinction was set aside.

Each individual, whether *Muhajir* (emigrant) or *Ansari* (original resident of Medina) had to put the principles of brotherhood and equality into actual practice. One *Muhajir* and one *Ansari* were declared to be the brother of each other and were made to share the house, the property and life jointly.

The holy Prophet issued the Medina charter, which was actually the constitution on which the social system of this city state was based. The rights, the obligations and the mutual relationships were fixed precisely on the basis of unity, justice and equity. New members joined the movement which slowly continued to spread.

Guidance of the masses

Masses are generally kept ignorant and are politically and economically exploited by those in power. That has been their usual lot all over history. Either openly or surreptitiously they are enslaved to fight the wars of the powerful and serve the interests of the selfish.

Islam knows this position, and decries³ the ignorance of majority, but it wants the masses to organize their scattered power and work for bringing about basic social changes to improve their lot.

The message of Islam is universal. It wants to bring every one into its fold, and turn all into the virtuous and pious people.

Muhammad say, *"Men, I am the Messenger sent to you all by Allah "*. (Sarah al-A'raf 7:158).

There are hundreds of other verses which exhort all mankind to piety, good deeds, knowledge, worship, purity, service and spending wealth for a good cause. In contrast to other systems which exploit the masses, Islam wants to guide them to the right path and to improve their lot. Every ordinary Muslim can acquire distinction and can join the group of the eminent ones. Incidentally, many outstanding personalities of Islam rose from among the unknown and under-privileged masses. As they remoulded themselves on the lines prescribed by Islam and acquired human virtues, they could attain an eminent position in Islamic circles.

Medina saw a general awakening. The families living in all parts of it showed a great enthusiasm in joining the new movement. Gradually the way was paved for executing the collective duty of *Jihad*.

Element of Jihad

Jihad and violent conflicts are one of the most important factors of bringing about a change in history. When for the sake of freedom a fight against injustice and oppression begins, it provides a new impetus to the revolutionary movement of society, and culminates in a success described by the Qur'an as a great achievement⁴ a great reward⁵ and deliverance.⁶

"Believers, shall I direct you to a profitable deal that will save you from painful doom? Have faith in Allah and His Messenger and fight for His cause with your wealth and lives. That is better for you, if you but knew it. He will forgive you your sins and will admit you to the gardens underneath which rivers flow. He will lodge you in pleasant dwellings in the gardens of Eden. That is the great achievement indeed. And He will bestow upon you another favor which you love so tremendously, (that is) help from Allah and a speedy victory. Give these good tidings to the

believers". (Surah al-Saf, 61 : 10 – 13).

As soon as the Holy Prophet was sure of the preparedness of his companions and the availability of an offensive force, he undertook the task of a general march against the bases of idolatry and oppression. The battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq etc, speedily expanded the sphere of conflict and weakened the position of the enemy. They raised the morale of the Muslims and drew the attention of the neighboring tribes. Thus the way was paved for the quick publicity of the new system and the destruction of the enemy.

Universality of the movement

By giving a warning to the neighboring countries and the big empires, the holy Prophet proclaimed that Islam was a world movement. After achieving notable victories and concluding a short truce with the unbelieving Quraish, the holy Prophet got an opportunity to spread the message of Islam to the foreign lands. He wrote letters to the world leaders and asked them to accept Islam. These letters made it clear that the message of Islam was that of belief in one God and the rejection of all earthly gods. Though there was a varying reaction to these letters, they constituted a firm warning which opened a new chapter in the history of these countries, as was witnessed in the subsequent years.

It may be said here that a number of historic movements have been only of a local or a regional character. Their aims, principles and programs were in conformity with a particular environment, and hence they were confined to particular peoples. Accordingly, the appeal of many of the former prophets was also limited and regional.

But if the program of a movement is of world level and other conditions, such as favorable social conditions, a powerful leadership, a strong and large body of supporters, are available, it can surely permeate other regions and an international wave can come into existence.

Leadership

With the approach of the demise of the Holy Prophet, the sensitive question of the leadership of the Muslim ummah came to a head. During the first 23 years of Islamic Movement the most important cause of its progress was the holy Prophet's extraordinary power of leadership, organization and guidance. In historical analysis, this power appears to be most marvelous and one of the main factors, which contributed to the success of Islam. But after the demise of the Prophet?

The new system had borne fruits while the holy Prophet was still alive. The Qur'an had been revealed.

The fundamentals of the Islamic social and intellectual system had been fixed. Nevertheless, the Islamic teachings required a supervisor and trustworthy interpreter. Otherwise they could be exposed to alteration and misuse.

The Holy Prophet himself devised a solution of this problem. He selected Ali and introduced him as the *Wali* (master) of the Muslims. Ali had received the best training. He had been in the forefront of those pioneers who had made struggle for the success of the movement and made sacrifice for it. He more than others had imbibed and practiced every word of the Islamic teachings.

But the story does not end here. Immediately after the demise of the holy Prophet the situation took a new turn.

Caliphate was captured through a meeting which was attended by a limited number of persons, who hastily appointed a caliph. Thus the question of leadership took a different course. Before long the trouble started and the all-round progress of the movement was adversely affected. In certain fields, especially that of social justice and ideology, the movement suffered a good deal. Anyhow, the new arrangement had many supporters.

Three principles of the effectiveness of historic movements

The effectiveness of any big historic movement largely depends on three primary elements: ideological system, leadership and the existence of a strong band of supporters and other potentialities. At the time of the Holy Prophet's demise a living world system had been set up and comparatively a strong band of trained Muslims was also formed. That is why, though there was a lack of proper leadership and gradually there was a deviation from the original principles, yet the weight of the system and the existence of its well-organized supporters were factors viable enough to push the movement forward. The speedy progress of Islam in the first century and the great scientific and academic movement of the later centuries, as well as the great role which Islam played in connection with the human culture and civilization, were all due to the effectiveness of the system and the efforts of the true and valient Muslims.

Human beings as the agents of Divine retribution

As we have already said the collapse of injustice and corruption is inevitable. In the past ages when for vanquishing the unjust people and those who denied the truth, the intervention of supernatural factors and celestial retribution were usual, but that happened only after a message and a clear warning had been delivered.[7](#)

In the present age man has intellectually matured and has attained a degree of comparative perfection. Now he can realize that social privations, undue discrimination and other calamities are also a sort of punishment. With the help of his common sense and intuition, he can feel the consequences of his evil deeds and can anticipate his future. He can now use his will and determination to fight against injustice and corruption and does not say like the Israelites: 'Go you two along with your Lord and fight; We are sitting here'. Therefore now a natural retribution is inflicted through human beings.[8](#)

This position too is in conformity with the old Divine tradition of removing the hurdles in the way of evolution. That is the reason why the Islamic Movement during the lifetime of the holy Prophet was not accompanied by any celestial punishment,[9](#) and only *jihad* and human effort played a decisive role in overthrowing the corrupt system. Thus we find that the history of Islam is full of wars of emancipation.

Large masses of the people of the countries invaded by the Muslims welcomed the invaders because, firstly, the atmosphere of their countries was suffocating and they were being coerced, and secondly, because they were sure of the justice and the emancipating spirit of Islam. These people knew well that the Muslim campaign had brought them justice and freedom. That is why on some occasions the gates of the cities were opened voluntarily to the advancing Muslim army, and the Muslim soldiers found that the deserters from the enemy ranks had joined them, and were fighting shoulder to shoulder with them against the unjust and inhuman system prevailing in their own country.

Respect of the culture and human values of others

Muslim advance into other countries did not mean that everything was destroyed. It is true that the unjust social system was changed and the false gods and the belief in myths and religious fables had to give their place to the belief in One God and realistic thinking. But the fruits of culture and philosophical thinking and the useful and advanced social organizations were not disturbed. The movement of Islam aims at helping the evolution of history and not at stopping or reversing it. Islam has come for construction and improvement and not for destruction and debasement.

It is interesting to note that Islam played a great role in the preservation and renaissance of the ancient cultures of India, Greece, Iran and Mesopotamia. By encouraging the knowledge of and investigation into the thoughts of others and urging the Muslims to study the history and the historical movements of the past peoples, to travel across the lands, and to pick up all that was positive there, Islam brought about an unprecedented activity of translation, writing, compiling and investigation in the later part of the first century, which further flourished in the second century and onward, and became a landmark in the history of culture. All this was an outcome of Islamic training.

In fact the evolutionary trading of history requires that the achievements of the past nations should be

further developed.. Though human history is full of ups and downs, deviations, pauses and retrogressions, yet generally the reaction of a reformatory and revolutionary movement has always been conducive to good results. There exist many such instances especially in Islamic history. On the whole it may be said that history has been moving forward.

Corruption of leadership

We must not forget that the bearers of the message of Islam (rulers) were men, who somehow or other gained influence in Islamic circles. And as men, they had varied emotions and desires and could sometimes even be disposed to be oppressive and disloyal to the system.

It is the ideological system itself which guides and modifies the actions of the individuals and keeps them on the course of evolution.

But it is necessary that in order to retain its constructive power, the system should be run, administered and interpreted by the leaders who are reliable, aware of the fundamentals and fit to deliver the goods.

If the leadership itself is disposed to corruption and in spite of the teachings of the system, gets involved in hoarding wealth, class distinction, luxurious living and other vices, the system ceases to be effective for lack of sincere supporters.

In _such a case, gradually the main teachings of the system are given a distorted turn, for the rulers try to keep every thing under their control to serve their own interests, though they do not dare to oppose the system direct, because despite their being usurpers, they derive their position and power from the system itself. Besides, they have to take into account the public sentiments and the popular support to the system. Hence, they apparently pretend to be the champions of it and thrust a dagger into its body from behind the back only.

In the history of Islam this tragedy actually occurred. The corrupt Umayyad and Abbasid governments were not genuine products of Islam. They captured the leadership of Muslim society in opposition to all Islamic standards.

Then in order to build the high castle of their own power, they began to distort Islam with the help of their paid agents, whom they employed from among the historians, preachers, traditionalists and the theologians.

In this process they convulsed the man_making entity of Islam.

In fact, the same has been the fate of all the big movements of history. It often happens that after settling themselves, the pioneers fall prey to selfishness and dissensions, and in order to gain power start fighting each other. Gradually the aims and objects of the movement are sacrificed for the sake of the individuals. The system is used to serve the leaders; the leaders render no service to the system.

Internal resistance

This situation demands action from within society. In the face of this tragedy Islam has a brilliant record of internal risings. The agitation against Uthman, the third caliph, the great internal purge during the time of Imam Ali (P), the bold resistance and eventual martyrdom of Imam Husayn (P), the academic movements of Imam Baqir (P) and Imam Sadiq (P) for the rebirth of the system, sanguinary risings of the Alids and the descendants of Imam Hasan (P) and the other events which took place in Iran, Egypt and other Muslim countries during the Umayyad and the Abbasid periods – all were the reaction of the ugly situation and the system forcibly imposed by the rulers. (The details of these internal movements require a separate book).

Anyway, to remedy such a situation Islam has prescribed the principles of vigilance, self-criticism, internal *jihad* and exhorting the people to do good and restraining them from evil.

Invaders influenced

The international wars and conflicts crystallize the epoch making elements. [10](#)

The object of the Crusades was inhuman. They were launched against Islam by those who were suffering from mental rigidity, prejudice, wrong conceptions, class distinctions, intellectual stagnation, educational backwardness and medieval fossilization. These wars were started with a view to oppose a new religion and a world system which believed in human values and had replaced discrimination and inequality by justice and equality and put the firm belief in one God in the place of complex heathenism. The result was tremendous bloodshed, large scale destruction and many ignoble incidents which continued for over a century.

Even in this situation Islam played its constructive role. The crusaders mixed with the Muslims and saw the manifestations of the great and rich culture of Islam with their own eyes. They witnessed from close quarters the advanced social system of the Muslims, their libraries, their educational centres, their social laws and social organizations, their civic facilities and their other social and intellectual achievements. As a result, the eyes and ears of the crusaders were opened. They came out of their blocked environment and the choking narrowness of their social and intellectual systems. Their biggest achievement out of all

this bloodshed and fighting was their contact with the culture and the ideological principles of Islam. Europe awakened after a slumber of a thousand years. The penetration of the culture of Islam into Spain and the French coasts opened the doors of a new culture and a new thinking to the Europeans.

More and more of Islamic works and learned books were translated into European languages. It may be rightly said that in the beginning the industrial and scientific progress and social changes in new Europe during the postrenaissance period, were inspired by Muslim culture.

Three-pronged attacks In order to secure historical evolution, man has to fight on three fronts:

- (a) He must make efforts to discover the laws of nature, to subdue the natural forces and to utilize them.
- (b) He must fight against unjust social relationships and secure justice, freedom and human rights.
- (c) He must control his passions and fight against selfishness, base desires and inner evils.

Islam has urged its followers to take action on all the three fronts. In this connection it has put forward its teachings and plans, made experiment with them and to a certain extent put them into practice.

Islam has also made experiment on the formation of a just and free society, and put forward the true outlines of human rights. What man has secured particularly after undergoing long-drawn wars and tremendous tribulations, had already been taught by Islam.

What is more important than anything else is that Islam has given instructions in 'major jihad', that is character building and self-control. In this respect it has given practical and detailed instructions and laid down a vast program. Islam has also produced model men, who can be an ideal example for others. It may be considered to be the greatest miracle of the history of Islam that it is full of such models.

The contemporary world is gaining speedy success on the first front. A great many scientific and industrial achievements have enabled man to control nature. As man uses his scientific achievements for his material success and for the satisfaction of his desires, progress on this front is likely to continue without a pause.

As for the second front, it cannot be denied that some big social changes have taken place, and the struggle for bringing about other basic changes is continuing. On the whole history has witnessed some success on this front too. But the problem still remains unsolved. It may be said that what has been achieved, is only the beginning of a long journey. Anyhow, the big question is whether the struggle against the bases of power bent on expanding their authority with a view to exploiting people and plundering their natural and human resources, come to a successful end so easily. Will the world devils

who have so many tricks in their bag and who are inventing ever new methods of devouring the nations, leave alone the oppressed and suppressed min?

Journey is long. Sacrifices, suitable measures and many other things are required.

Success on this front cannot be expected without a success on the third front. History is having thirst for real men, and today this thirst has become acute. There is a spiritual vacuum. It is felt that humanity has been forgotten. Human sentiments are being trampled upon. Forbearance, self-sacrifice, humanism, spiritual freedom, purity, and renunciation of selfishness and narrow egoism are the world needs. The acquirement of these qualities is essential so that pure men may be able to utilize the achievements on the first front for the service of man, and not for the service of the devil and the satisfaction of their own lust, and so that on the second front they may find a free and human atmosphere in which earth may be possessed by the righteous men. The Qur'an says:

'My righteous servants will inherit the earth '.

Final triumph of truth

Islam announces as a good news that the last and the highest stage of the course of history is definitely happy. It declares that the historical climax and the final end of human efforts is all-round and comprehensive triumph of truth and justice.

But this stage will come only after:

- (a) The world is full of oppression, tyranny and utmost contradiction and is fully ready for an explosion;
- (b) The extensive and long-drawn regional and world wars result in large-scale bloodshed and destruction;
- (c) The supporters of genuine and final world revolution of history are ready for it.

This final revolution (as prophesied by Prophet of Islam) will take place under the leadership of the greatest, divine reformer and revolutionary, the promised Mahdi, and will culminate in the permanent purification and improvement of the environment, ceaseless development of personality and definite and all-round vigilance.

The result will be the emergence of a balanced and fully developed man endowed with all talents and values in one unit world society.

"We willed to show favor to those who were oppressed in the land and to make them leaders and heir and to give them power in the land and to show Pharaoh, Haman and their host what they feared from them . (Surahal-Qasas, 28:5 – 6).

Final Victory

Islam interprets history as a constant struggle between right and. wrong. This struggle goes on at various levels of society between the forces of right, virtuousness, love of Allah, faith, justice, equality, sacrifice, correct thinking, purity and truth on the one hand, and those of falsehood, egoism, materialism, pragmatism, tyranny, selfishness, injustice, faithlessness, discrimination, corruption, infringement of others rights and wretchedness on the other.

The real source of the struggle between right and wrong exists within man himself. (vide Surah al-Shams 91:7) It is manifested sometimes in the form of the flames of selfishness, venality and licentiousness and sometimes in that of higher sentiments of God-seeking, righteousness and love of mankind.

The impact of these sentiments on society creates power waves which cause a strife sometimes culminating in corruption and wretchedness, and sometimes bringing about changes towards happiness and prosperity of the society. There is no doubt that changes for the better are brought about by Divine help, but the role of human effort and struggle cannot also be denied.

A Prophet is raised. He awakens the hearts potentially ready to accept the truth. Faith of a group of converts matures. They along with him fight against corruption and evil. They continue to make gradual progress and do not falter at any stage till at last the society undergoes a basic change.

Polytheism, myths, injustice and corruption collapse. Belief in Allah, truth and justice takes root. Before long again from within the same society selfishness, licentiousness and aristocratic tendencies shoot forth. Occasionally the same society, though still maintaining the traditional form, so deviates from the way introduced by the reformer that it begins to rot from within and once again returns to its pre-reform ways, of course, in a new garb of hypocrisy and new forms of injustice. and corruption.

Sometimes external factors with the aid of their internal agents effectively work for spreading corruption and disruption. These agents for their selfish ends readily co-operate with the external enemy.

This state of injustice, corruption, myth and fraud stimulates the sagacious and the downtrodden to launch a new movement. Thus a process of struggle between right and wrong continues.

Islam believes that all pomp, show and power of the evil have been transient over history. It regards all kinds of intrigues, frauds, hypocrisy and falsehood as froth of water. They have no roots and are bound to disappear finally. (Surah al-Ra'ad, 13:17, Surah al-Isra, 17:81, Surah al-Anbiya, 21:18, Surah al-Shura, 42:24 and many other verses).

Truth always maintains its positive effect either in individual action or social movement even when it is threatened by falsehood and needs supporters to defend it.

Islam recognizes the need of human efforts, perseverance and faith in bringing about a social change, and regards weakness, lack of faith and licentiousness as the causes of the domination of falsehood.

Anyhow, it is this struggle which makes history. As for the future, it is bright. In the end right will be victorious and justice will prevail. Every form of wrong will be annihilated and oppression and tyranny will disappear finally.

Advent of the Mahdi

Complete and final supremacy of right, and universal victory of justice will materialize during the period of the appearance of Muhammad al Mahdi – the twelfth imam. At that time an ideal Islamic society will be established under the aegis of an ideal government. [11](#)

In the following pages we give a short perspective of the society and the system of that time drawn from hundreds of traditions describing the characteristics of that period. It must be remembered that this society will be a true Islamic society and its system will be in no way different from that prescribed by Islam.

We propose to divide this study under several headings:

At the threshold of appearance

The holy Prophet is reported to have said:

"He will rise at a time when chaos will be prevailing in the world. Various countries will be engaged in the night attacks on each other. Neither the elders will be having mercy on the younger, nor will the strong be showing kindness to the weak".

Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) has said:

"The Mahdi will rise at a time of great anxiety, when people will be deeply plunged into crises, disturbances, disasters and diseases, and when wild massacres, violent dissensions and religious discord will be the order of the day. At that time people will be feeling distressed and dejected, and will be at daggers drawn with each other. They will be wishing themselves dead day and night. He will appear at a moment of utter want of hope".

"He will rise to establish justice at a time when the world will be full of injustice and tyranny".

There is no doubt that he will rise at a time when the whole world will be plunged into injustice and corruption, and to fight against these evils he will have to make awful struggle. He will require faithful and self-sacrificing supporters, possessing all the qualities of a true champion.

Revolutionary leader and his supporters

The holy Prophet is reported to have described the imam of the Day in these words:

"He is an Imam who is pious, pure and delightful. He is an admirable leader, who is rightly guided and who enjoins justice. Allah acknowledges him and he acknowledges Allah".

Concerning the faith and perseverance of his companions, Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) said:

"Everyone of his companions will be so strong as if he had the strength of forty men. Their hearts will be as solid as a piece of steel. If they pass over a hill of iron, they would pierce it. They will not lay down their arms till they have pleased Allah".

From another report we learn that at that time there will be some people who will be faithful, virtuous, sincere, religious, pious, conscientious, tolerant, firm, constant, temperate and God-loving. They will be thankful to Allah who made them heirs to power and wealth in the earth and established their chosen faith therein. They will be worshipping none but Allah, offering their prayers on time and paying zakat when due. They will be exhorting to good and restraining from evil".

About the true followers of the Mahdi, Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) is reported to have said:

"Fear has been removed from their hearts and put into that of their enemy. Everyone of them is more rushing than a spear-point and more daring than a lion".

Undergoing hardships for achieving success

It must be understood that success will not be gained easily. It will be achieved only after undergoing a lot of trouble and discomfort.

Mufazzal, one of the companions of Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) says: "Once we were talking about the Mahdi in the presence of the Imam. I said that I hoped that he would succeed easily. The Imam said:

"No, it will not be so. Success will not be attained except through sweat and blood".

In other words success will be attained after making great efforts and undergoing heavy losses.

A companion of Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) says:

"I told the Imam that it was said that the Mahdi would have a smooth sailing and would not have to shed a single drop of blood". The Imam said: "No, it will not be so. If the things could run so smoothly, by Him in whose hands my life is, the Prophet of Islam would not have been wounded and his teeth would not have been broken in a battle. No, that's not possible. By Allah! there is no way out, but that you and we are submerged in our own sweat and blood".

This means that the leaders as well as their supporters have to make sacrifices before they are successful.

Imam ja'far al Sadiq (P) is also reported to have said:

"I see the Mahdi and his companions as if they are threatened by danger from all sides: their supplies have exhausted; their clothes have worn out; their foreheads bear the mark of prostration; during the day they are as courageous as a lion and during the night they are busy in the adoration of Allah; and their hearts are like solid pieces of iron".

Anyhow, all these sacrifices and hardships will have a happy end.

Imam ja'far al Sadiq (P) has said:

"It is true that the righteous always lead a hard life. But the end of their hardship is not far off".

Nevertheless the success of the Mahdi will be largely due to invisible Divine help. Many traditions bear witness to that.

As a result of these sacrifices and the Divine help real Islamic rule will be established. These are some of the reports which throw light on the doctrinal and social system which will follow.

Explaining the Qur'anic verse, It is Allah who sent His Messenger with guidance and true religion that He might make it victorious over all religions, howsoever the unbelievers might be averse, Imam al Sadiq (P) said: "This verse will come true only during the time of the Mahdi, when the unbelievers will no longer exist".

At present Islam has been surrounded by some people with so many myths and doubts that it appears to be some different religion. This position will continue till the Mahdi rises.

Imam ja'far al Sadiq (P) has said:

"As soon as the Mahdi rises, he will introduce a new system as the Prophet had done in the beginning of Islam".

Imam ja'far al Sadiq (P) is also reported to have said:

"The Mahdi will do what the holy Prophet had done. He will smash the existing system in the same way as the holy Prophet had shattered the pre-Islamic pagan system, and replaced it by Islam".

The new system introduced by the Mahdi will be so queer to some of those who claim to be the champions of religion and to be having full knowledge of it, that they will pick up a row against him, but they will not be able to resist the divine world movement and will be annihilated.

At the end of a detailed talk, Imam Baqir (P) said:

"On an occasion when the Mahdi will be busy narrating Divine commands and speaking about the practice of the holy Prophet and the Imams, an attack on him will be arranged from within the places of worship. The Imam will order his followers to arrest the insurgents and put them to death. This will be the last hostile action against the Mahdi".

When the evil-doers will have been crushed and the correct Islamic attitude popularised, the atmosphere will become conducive to intellectual growth and expansion of knowledge.

Imam Ali (P) is reported to have said:

"I see a large number of tents pitched, and people under them being taught the Qur'an in the same order in which it was revealed".

In the course of a talk about that period Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) said:

"Knowledge will become so common that even women will give decisions on the basis of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the holy Prophet".

Knowledge in various fields will expand. The total of the discoveries of the past will bear no comparison to the discoveries made during that period. According to a report, Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (P) explained the position allegorically. He said: "If the total of possible human knowledge is supposed to be seventy two letters, two letters will have been known up to that time and the remaining seventy will be discovered gradually during that period".

In respect of the intellectual and moral development of the people, Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) has said:

"When our *Qaim will* rise and the people will come under his protection, their intellectual faculties will bloom and their human qualities will be perfected and will bear fruit".

During that period the under-privileged masses will be the masters of the power and wealth of the world. Many reports say that the following verse relates to that period:

"We willed to show favor to those who were persecuted in the land and make them rulers and heirs of the land, and give them power and wealth of the earth ". (Surah al-Qasas, 28:5).

Thus the power and authority of the tyrants and the self-seekers will come to an end and justice will be restored everywhere under a new system.

"He will fill the earth with justice after it had been filled with injustice and tyranny".

"The *Qaim will* enjoin justice. During his time injustice will be done away with. Roads will be safe. Rights will be restored".

Complete equality will be enforced.

Imam Muhammad al Baqir (P) said:

"Immediately on his appearance the *Qaim will* distribute wealth equally, and will restore the rights of the masses".

When the right job will be entrusted to the right man and all-round justice will prevail, naturally the whole world will prosper in every respect.

"Blessings will pour forth from the heaven on the earth. The land will put out its best produce. Trees will bear copious fruit. The atmosphere on the earth will be verdant and fragrant".

It is also evident that in such an atmosphere minerals and natural resources should be exploited to the maximum extent. Reports say: "Allah will reveal for him the treasures of the earth".

At last all the natural forces will be controlled by the people and they will have all the means to use them to their own advantage. Gradually there will be so much wealth that no one will be left poor or needy.

"Double salaries will be paid to the workers. Equality will be observed among all the people. There will be no one eligible to receive zakat. Money will be offered to the people, but they will decline to accept it, because they will not be requiring it. All underground and above-ground natural resources will be at the disposal of the imam. Addressing the people he will say: "This is the wealth for which you were fighting, severing relations with your kith and kin and shedding the blood of each other". Then he will give them money in unprecedented quantities".

In such circumstances there will prevail complete peace and law and order.

"At that time complete peace will prevail all over the world. None will harm anyone. Fear and anxiety will not exist. Even the wild animals will be moving among the people, but will not be harming anyone. People will have love and sympathy for each other. They will equally distribute wealth among themselves. There will no longer exist any poor or needy. No group of people will seek to dominate another group. The elders will show kindness to the youngers and the youngers will respect the elders. All people will be conscientious in their actions and decisions".

Love, kindness, righteousness and brotherhood will prevail. There will be no question of deceiving or ill-treating anybody; complete sincerity and cordiality will exist.

"When the Qaim will rise, such genial sincerity and cordiality will come into being that one will take out whatever one requires from the pocket of another person and that person will not mind it at all".

Every kind of weakness, disease and disability will disappear.

"As regards those who will be living during the time of the Qaim, their sick will recover and their weak will gain strength".

"All the blind and the crippled will be cured and the sufferers will be relieved of their suffering".

"A world government characterised by justice and righteousness will be established. It will extend from the East to the West. All people will live under it in an atmosphere of peace, justice and prosperity".

"Cordial relations will exist among the believers all over the world. It will appear as if from one end of the world to the other they see each other, speak to each other and co-operate with each other".

These relations will be different from the present day relations and peace agreements, which are concluded only to safeguard the interests of the powers concerned and have no stability. All such agreements will be annulled with the appearance of the Qaim and will be replaced by an all-pervasive just system".

At that time there will be no question of hypocrisy, intrigue, mere show of courtesy or any under-hand method. Everybody will have to submit earnestly to the rightful government. All defaulters will be annihilated.

This government marked, with the final and complete restoration of justice and all-round development, will be the last stage of human history. The Divine Government will be established after the failure of all other systems to achieve the desired results. Though it will be of limited duration, it will be the last word in justice and righteousness. It will be the end of history.

[1.](#) His participation in the pact known as Hilf al-Fuzul and the story of setting the Black Stone in its place are two such cases.

[2.](#) "Then their Lord inspired them saying: Surely We shall destroy the wrong doers" (Surah Ibrahim, 14:13)

"Never did We destroy any town unless their inhabitants were evil doers" (Surah al Qasas, 28:59)

Many other verses of the Qur'an such as Surah al-Hajj, verse 45, Surah Yunus, verse 13, Surah Ale Imran, verse 117, Surah al-Kahf, verse 59, Surah Hud, verse 117, Surah al-An'am, verse 47, convey the same meaning.

[3.](#) "But most of the people have no knowledge". (Surah al-Jathiyah 45:26 and many other verses).

"Most of them follow nothing except conjecture". (Surah Yunus, 10:36).

"But most of them have no sense". (Surah al-Ankabut, 29:63).

"Most of them dislike the truth" (Surah al-Mo'minin, 23:70).

"But most of the people do not believe". (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:1)

[4.](#) Surah al-Tawbah, verse 113.

- [5.](#) Surah al-Nisa, verse 98.
- [6.](#) Surah al-Saf, verse 10.
- [7.](#) "We were not to inflict punishment unless We sent a messenger". (Surah Bani Israel, 17:15).
- [8.](#) "Fight them! Allah will punish them at your hands". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:14).
- [9.](#) "Allah was not to punish them, so long as you are with them nor would He punish them so long as they seek forgiveness". (Surah al-Anfal, 8:33).
- [10.](#) "As for the scum it goes waste and what is beneficial to men remains on the earth". (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:17)
- [11.](#) The Awaited Saviour, which is available <http://www.al-islam.org/awaited/index.htm> [1]

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