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ISLAM YESTERDAY AND TODAY

It is essential to have an intelligent and sympathetic understanding of the needs and fears, of hopes and aspirations of different human groups struggling, some for mastery and others for bare survival. Only by such understanding can we achieve co-existence, which we so glibly but insincerely talk of and thus avoid the impending doom which will be co-annihilation.

The topic is a vast one both in regard to the span of time between the Islam of Yesterday and the Islam to Today and the wide and far-flung regions where Islam has played a significant role in history in the past and is likely to play a more compelling and determining role in the future. There is a further complication which makes the topic still more difficult to discuss in a short talk permitted to me. A pertinent question may be asked, what is exactly meant by Islam in the context of the present lecture? Islam is a religion, a political system and a civilization. It is a way of life in which its religious aspect encompasses man wholly. In dealing with Islam I will be dealing with all the three aspects of it, which for a Muslim constitutes the different facets of a single whole but which may seem confusing and irrelevant to a Westerner. But all these aspects have to be accepted and understood in order to appreciate the challenge Islam poses and the promise it holds out for mankind in the future.

Islam as a Religion

Islam literally means submission, complete and without reservations, to the will of God, the Creator and the Lord of the Universe. The attributes of God on which stress is laid are Providence (Rabubiyat) or lordship. Providence implies creation, right order, correct measure and guidance. The second attribute is mercy. God is merciful to man—there are over three hundred references to Divine Mercy in the Quran. Man is thus enjoined to show mercy to his fellow beings. The third attribute of God is justice (adl). The punishments to be meted out to man for transgressions are not arbitrary. The essential belief, the bedrock of Islamic

faith, is in one God, the Provident, the Merciful and the Just. Those who believe in and submit to Him are called Muslims. Muslims resent being called Mohammadans or their religion Mohammadanism, as Muslims do not worship their Prophet, for he was a human being and like all other human beings, answerable to God for his acts. The Prophet never permitted his people to make him an object of worship. He never claimed the ability to perform miracles or to have possessed the gift of prophecy. His only claim, which exalted him over other human beings, was that he was the Prophet (nabi) and the Messenger of God whom God, out of His infinite Mercy and Wisdom, had chosen as a messenger to convey the Divine Message to mankind. He was never exalted into deity or a "participant in God's glory". All this is pithily but clearly summed up in one single sentence. "There is no god except Allah and Mohammad is His messenger". In no other faith, it is submitted in all humility, is the affirmation of faith and the affiliation to it so brief, so clear, so logical and so cogent. Acceptance of Mohammad as the Prophet and Messenger of God means accepting his guidance with complete confidence in his ability to guide mankind throughout the ages. Amongst the believers there has consequently been an earnest and sincere desire to so order their lives as to conform and approximate to the life of the Prophet in deed and thought, he being the Perfect Man, the Insan-i-Kamil and so the perfect model to emulate. This idealisation never degenerated into idolisation. Whatever shortcomings one may find in an average Muslim's belief of practice, in deviation from orthodoxy or laxity of life, there has been no decrease or abatement in the ecstatic devotion to or almost childlike emotional, passionate, love for the Prophet. Whenever his name is mentioned by any Muslim of any sectarian affiliation in any part of the world it is followed by invocation of the mercy of God, on the Prophet, members of his family and his companions. This again is a unique feature of Muslim attitude to the Prophet.

Mohammad was born in 570 in the noble family of Banu Hashim in the honoured tribe of Quraish. He was brought up as an orphan by his uncle and as he grew up he built for himself a reputation for honesty, integrity and probity of character. He was known as the Truthful and the Trustworthy. He was probably engaged in trade during his early but won some sort of economic freedom after his marriage with a well-to-do, well-connected lady the name of Khadija. He spent most of his time in solitary meditation in a cave near Mecca away from the madding crowd. The call came to him when he was in his fortieth year after a long period of considerable heart-searching and spiritual anguish. When

it came, he dedicated himself with his characteristic energy and earnestness to propagate the Message he had received from God. At the outset of his ministry the people of Mecca did not take him seriously and he won converts only from amongst the members of his own family and the humbler elements in the city. During these years the emphasis was on the Unity of God, of brotherhood of man, and equality of all human beings, and the rejection outright of numerous family gods and goddesses as false. The Meccan upper classes were now alarmed by the social and political import of his message which assailed their social institutions and their vested interests. Opposition against him grew up steadily.

He was persecuted and humiliated and was forced to leave Mecca and migrate to Medina in 622. This migration or Hijrat was a turning point in his career. The Muslim Era dates from this year. At Medina the atmosphere was more congenial and it was here that Prophet emerged in the diverse roles of a religious guide, of law giver, soldier, statesman and administrator. It was here that the new community of believers transcending the man-made barriers of race, of colour, of language, and of geography was organized and poised for a world revolution. After 8 years the Prophet was able to go back in 630 and recapture Mecca. By the time of his death in 632 nearly the whole of Arabia had accepted this call of the Prophet. The Islamic revolution was well on its way. It was a one-man revolution and urban in its character. It aimed at a classless society in which the status of man was based on what he was and not on the accident of birth. It recognized no privileged class, no priesthood, no distinction of birth or wealth, but everyone had well-defined and obligations.

Mohammad did not contemplate a break with the other well-established world religions, particularly Judaism and Christianity. Like other attempts at syncretism, he did not say that there were some elements of truth in every religion but asserted that all revealed religions were true. These religions had been corrupted by their followers. He did not deny them but reaffirmed and restated them in their original uncorrupted form in the latest revealed religion, Islam. All the Prophets were to be equally respected by all Muslims and their names uttered with due respect. This is in painful contrast with the opprobrious epithets used by the Christians and Jews when speaking of the Prophet. The following verses from the Quran contain injunctions in this behalf:

According to the Quran, God has sent His guidance to all people; says the Quran "And there is not a single people to whom a warner

has not been sent". In another place it says:

"And for every nation there is a messenger. And when their messenger cometh (on the Day of Judgement) it will be judged between them fairly, and they will not be wronged." Again, "Say (O Muslims): We believe in God and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac, and Jacob, and the Tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the Prophets received from their Lord. WE MAKE NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN ANY OF THEM and unto Him have we surrendered."

Islamic Civilization

Islamic civilization is a synthetic civilization combining as it does in a distinctive entity the best elements of all the civilizations to which Muslims, by their conquests became heir—the Hellenic, the Byzantine, the Iranian, the Egyptian, and the Indic civilizations. There is a saying of the Prophet of Islam, "Select what is good and reject what is bad." There has thus been a continuing process of selection, adaptation, adoption, and assimilation. All these borrowings were accepted and covered with an Islamic patina, and in the course of time became part of Islamic civilization. Side by side with this readiness to borrow there went a stubborn desire to eliminate foreign modes of thought and foreign scales of values. Elements of material civilization as well as military and political institutions and administrative techniques were welcome; ideology was rejected. Usefulness remained the ultimate criterion of acceptability. Culture has been defined as "the underlying experiences that give a race or a nation its peculiarities." So conceived, it covers religion, customs, traditions, etc., to be studied in terms of social achievements and the life experience of a social group.

"We recognize (civilization)" says Frankfurt, "in a certain coherence, a certain style which shapes its political and its judicial institution, in art as well as its literature, in religion as well as its morals." It is these various aspects of life which constitute the ingredients of Islamic civilization.

Islam recognizes the inevitability of change from generation to generation. This consciousness of change was strong in the classical age of Islam as change was necessitated by the urgency of integrating heterogeneous populations as expansion went on. It was facilitated by the absence of codified law. The process of growth, of proliferation and cross fertilization went on. Later, intellectual apathy, fear of fragmentation, and the changing adverse political and economic situation

made the Muslims afraid of change and the petrification of Islamic society in the prison moulds of its own making set in.

The Western world is gradually recognizing its debt to Islam for the preservation and transmission of Greek learning to Europe and making valuable original contribution to human thought. Briffault, in his delightful book, *Making of Humanity*, thus summarizes Europe's debt, and indeed of the world, to the Muslim Arabs. I will briefly quote a few passages from it. "Roger Bacon, the apostle of Muslim science and method to Christian Europe...never wearied of declaring that knowledge of Arabic and Arabic science was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge. Discussions as to who was the originator of the experimental method...are part of the colossal misrepresentation of the origins of European civilization...Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world...What we call science arose in Europe as a result of new spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs."

In the early stages the main effort of the Arabs was directed to the discovery and translation of important works in Greek, Sanskrit, Syriac, and Persian. This movement reached its apex in the time of al-Mamun (813-833) who built in his capital a Bait-ul-Hikmah (House of Wisdom) which was a library, and academy and a translation bureau. Scholars were invited from all parts of the world and the dean of translators and director of the Bait-ul-Hikmah was a Nestorian Hunyan ibn Ishaq (803-873). Works of Aristotle and other Greek philosophers and the medical works of Galen were translated into Arabic, Thabit Ibn Qurrah (836-901), a Sabian, translated into Arabic, works on Greek astronomy and mathematics including the works of Archimedes, Appoloniou, and Euclid. These works were later transmitted to Europe, "there to provide an impulse for Europe's intellectual renaissance; a renaissance the blessings of which Europe still enjoys". This was followed by a period of creative activity and original contributions for which Arabic was eminently fitted, "for expressing the finest scientific thoughts and highest philosophic concepts." The Muslim contribution to science, medicine, history, philosophy. Philosophy literature was in many ways incomparable. Hunayn ibn Ishaq is credited with having produced the earliest extant text on ophthalmology. Al-Razi (Latin Rhazes 865-925) was the first to state the distinction between

small-pox and measles; al-Majusi (d.994) presented a conception of the capillary system while Ibn-al-Nafis (d.1285) contributed a clear conception of the pulmonary circulation of the blood. Crushing of the stone in the bladder, operation for cataract, vaccination against small-pox, the use of artificial limbs were practised by Muslim surgeons. Ibn-al-Khatib (1313-1374) recognized the danger of plague by contagion. Similar advance was made in the fields of alchemy and botany. Jabir (10th century) introduced many improvements in the methods of evaporation, sublimation, melting and crystallization. Al-Khawarizmi, in his *Al-Magest* first measured the length of a terrestrial degree. In the 12th century Umar Khayyam, made familiar to the West by Fitzgerald, in his *Rubayeat* produced a more accurate solar calendar than the Gregorian one. His calendar leads to an error one day in 5000 years as against the Gregorian which leads to the same error in 3300 years.

There is no field of human activity in which the Muslims did not interest themselves and make original and lasting contributions. Architecture, painting, music, ceramics, textiles, jewelry and all those minor arts which embellish life and lead to gracious living found expression in the exuberant florescence of Islamic culture. Our collective institutions, political and educational, our code of laws, the elaborate system of ultimate ends or norms of life, those ultimate moral values by which we judge every object, every action, every principle of life, or briefly the "sense of ultimate values" which we have and according to which we Muslims want to shape our lives, constitute the rich contents of our culture. "The culture of Islam," writes Pickthall, "aimed not at beautifying and refining the accessories of human life. It aimed at beautifying and exalting human life". Of all the material coordinates of our culture our architectural monuments in those parts of the world where Islam was once predominant evoke nostalgic memories of the past and constitutes a link with it. Mosques, forts, palaces, tombs, schools and caravanserais (the motels of yesterday) evoke exhilarating memories when one sees them in the glow of early dawn, in the full light of the day, the varied hues of the setting sun, in the silence of the night proclaiming not the transitoriness of human glory but the permanence of the achievements of the human mind. This poetry of brick and mortar, this frozen music, these poems in stone as the great architectural monuments have been styled, give us a history of the state of society in which they were built as architecture has served the purpose of a printing press throughout the ages. It is no wonder then that the Muslims are constantly

looking back to recapture the past glory and at the same time trying to reach the stars in this world of relentless endeavour and competition.

Islam and the West

Dr. Johnson observed, "when the world of Islam was all light and learning Europe was all darkness. When Christianity was Queen of night Islam was shedding the noon-day light." Speaking of Muslim historiography H. E. Barnes observed, "in many ways the most advanced civilization of the Middle Ages was not a Christian culture at all but rather the civilization of peoples of the faith of Islam. Likewise some of the ablest medieval historians were Muslims, And the greatest of them, ibn Khaldun, completely out-distanced any Christian historian of the Middle Ages in his fundamental grasp of the principles of human and cultural development."

Between about 1600 and about 1800 there took place in Western Europe a general cultural transformation with far reaching implications not only for Europeans but also for the world at large. By about 1800 Western Europeans found themselves in a position to dominate overwhelmingly most of the rest of the world and in particular, to dominate the Islamic lands (Hodgson).

The Asiatic world was rapidly caught up in a world-wide political and commercial system, the rules of which were made by and for the advantage of the Westerners. The British conquest of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent presents the classic case of outright European occupation and rule of a major area of Islamic Culture (Hodgson).

The Sixteenth century is a century of great men and great political events—a period of "realignment of political forces" all over the world, of religious ferment, and of cultural, economic and ideological renewals on an extensive scale. New and basic problems affecting the social, political and economic institutions of Muslims were posed and new adjustments made in them to meet the new moods, new tensions, new needs and new aspirations. During this century the Muslim world saw the rise of three great empires which between themselves constituted the most active, the most articulate and the most closely-knit segment of the Muslim world-community. The Osmani Turks established themselves in Western Asia and later penetrated into Eastern Europe. The Safawis occupied the old heartland of Central Asian Muslim world, Iran, while the Chaghtai Turks swooped into Pakistan and India and founded the Mughul empire, which at one time extended from Kabul to Assam and from Kashmir to the tip of the peninsula in South India.

In Europe Islam had suffered reverses in Spain, Portugal and in the Volga basin, along the coast of Western Africa and in the Southern seas during the period commonly known as the Age of Discoveries. These losses were partially compensated by the advance of Islam in Hungary and south-east Asia in what is now Indonesia and Malaysia. These three Muslim empires gave a new form, a new content and new vigour and vitality to "international outreach" of Islamic civilization. In all these empires stable and strong centralised governments were established, peace and security of life and property assured, arts and crafts, trade, industry and agriculture were promoted, education, secular and religious, patronised, and a certain level of prosperity extending to all classes of people was attained. The Osmanis and the Mughuls were throughout this period faced with the perennial challenge of non-Muslim majorities within their empires whom they could neither render fully ineffective nor win their emotional loyalty, in spite of the policy of generous toleration and freedom of religious worship accorded to them. The Safawis hemmed in by their Sunni neighbouring states, in their eagerness to establish a Shia state and to promulgate Shia doctrines, were potentially hostile to the rest of the Sunni world. All the three empires were in course of time drawn into the vortex of European imperial and colonial politics. The prosperity, power and prestige of these empires lasted through two centuries when the Central authority was strong enough to maintain its cohesiveness and meet internal commotions and external threats to territorial integrity of their empires. By the eighteenth century decline and disintegration set in all the three empires. The last vestige of Mughul power was swept away in the tragic holocaust of the rebellion of 1857-58. The Safawis and Osmanis succeeded after many convulsions and vicissitudes in maintaining their sovereignty in truncated and less prosperous and extensive empires. By the beginning of the nineteenth century European powers had come to occupy key positions in the political, cultural and economic life of the people of Asian and African countries. As a result, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Islamic peoples have had to face new challenges in response to which new religious and social revivalist movements came into being. The problems posed by the onslaught have been the same in all these countries but the responses have varied with the resources, the past historical experience and the national character of the peoples who were faced with these challenges.

The eighteenth century for the Islamic peoples, in regions where Islam had once been dominant, was a century of decadence of political eclipse.

of cultural barrenness and of economic impoverishment. Even the expansion of Islam which had been more or less continuous in early centuries had slowed down. "There had been," writes Dr. Hodgson, "no century with such a dearth in the achievement of high cultural excellence as the eighteenth; the relative barrenness was practically universal in Islam." This period of decadence coincided with a period of Europe's creativity which later gave her the leadership of the world. The age of modernity opened with a wide imbalance between Asia and Africa of the past, and Europe and America of the present and the future.

It is not possible here to discuss the causes which gave Europe greater social power in economic life by increased production and control of production, in intellectual life by the new experimental science and philosophic independence and in social life by the breakdown of privileges. This all exploratory happened when the Asia-African countries had slid back into a state of torpor. The age which in the West saw the establishment of the new American Republic, the Industrial Revolution in England, the struggle for liberty, equality and fraternity in France and liberalism in Europe saw the occupation of Islamic lands by the Europeans, some by outright conquest and others by reduction by subtle diplomacy to a position of helpless subordination. That was how Islam was made to face modernity. The onslaught was a new version of the Crusades. It came perilously near completely enveloping and destroying not only the independent existence of various Muslim states but the very soul of Islam—religion, state and civilization alike. Soon the full significance of the new confrontation was realized and the Islamic peoples in different parts of the world felt the need of setting their house in order, of adjusting laws and customs to the needs of the changing world around them and the re-evaluation of their social, economic and political institution. As a result, we see during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, new movements arising within Islam, some merely purist and purificationists and others more activist and revolutionary to revitalize the Muslim society in order to ride the stream of history rather than be carried away by it.

The social, economic and political chaos, and the "psychological disorders and conflicts, dislocation of old loyalties, social stresses and tensions" arising out of Western impact produced three kinds of reactions and schools of thought to meet the challenge. There were some who advocated a complete break with the past and acceptance of Western civilization lock, stock and barrel. A second school of thought advocated going back to the Quran, of ridding Islam of all superstitious accretions which had gathered round it and to ignore or reject secularism, modernism

and Westernism. These were the conservatives and the activists of the 19th century. The conservatives, whose ideology was expressed in action in such movements as the Wahabi movement in the heart of Arabia, the Sanyusi movement in Libya, the Mahdawi movement in Sudan, and the movement of Shah Waliullah in India were not anti-Western. They were merely purificationists and anti-feudal in the initial stages and it was only later that they were drawn into an open conflict with the West. The significance of these movement lies in the fact that they created an awareness of the danger from within and without and emotionally and psychologically prepared the younger generation to face the challenge of the West and modernity, the latter an illusive term for which the West stood.

The third school was that of the gradualists or "the middle of the round group" who without breaking with the past advocated the way of the earlier Muslims to select, adopt and assimilate the best and the most useful elements of Western civilization. They believed that armed with the spiritual force of Islam and Western techniques they would be better equipped to march ahead and recover their position in the modern world. The sanction for their reformist programme they found in Islam itself which, according to the understanding of it, "was equipped from the very beginning with the elasticity to enable the Islamic society to evolve normally without casting aside its basic principles." For every new revolutionary idea or discovery of Western science, the germs of the idea in embryonic form were traced back to the Holy Writ—Darwin's theory of evolution, Pasteur's theory of bacteria, sanction to change a reasonable rate of interest, birth control, the use of contraceptives, monogamy, prohibition of slavery, had all been foreseen and provided for.

The reformers never touched the main theological concepts in their programme of reforms. The fundamentals of Islam—the Unity of God, the Prophethood of Mohammad, of Quran being the word of God, prescribed Praying, Fasting and Haj were not disputed. The discussions ranged round social, political and economic institutions of Islam which could be and had to be modified in the light of new scientific and technological knowledge. The scope and the range of education, the position of women, laws about marriage, divorce and polygamy, laws regarding human affairs and directives in regard to them could be restated, modified and even passout without violating the essentials of Islam. It was realized that it was not mere imitation of the West that could meet the situation but the "grafting of Western sciences and scholars on the tree of national or Islamic society" was a prerequisite of success. It is

the last group which is now dominant in all Islamic countries but the influence of the 'conservative back-looking theologians' is still to be reckoned with. The intellectual rapprochement between East and West and the working out of a relationship of mutuality is hindered by this last group as it is partly by the conduct of the Western politicians, businessmen and missionaries.

When we study the literature of Islam which has been steadily increasing in volume about modernity one notices an agreement as to the causes of the malaise which had overtaken Islam and made it vulnerable to Western influences, and a growing unanimity as to the means to be adopted to deserve the Muslim community from dismemberment and extinction,

1. That Islam is not static or opposed to change or progress. The Ulama or the Muslim theologians had in the past looked at all change with suspicion as any deviation from the strait and narrow path of *Shariat* (Muslim canon law) might lead to heresies and innovations which would weaken and destroy the solidarity of the *Ummat* (Muslim Community), weaken the faith and bring about inner disruption. What they did not see or had not the courage to admit was that change and evolution were implicit in Islam. In the words of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal, "the ultimate spiritual basis of all life as conceived by Islam is eternal and reveals itself in variety and change." According to him "man is enjoined to cope with the vicissitudes of change as an active participant in the revolutionary movement of history".

2. That Islam could provide a solution for all the problems, social, economic and political, if it was interpreted in the light of reason and modern scientific knowledge and principles of interpretation as this was implicit in the teachings of the Quran.

3. That it is not by the rejection of the revealed faith but by the acceptance of it that Muslims could find a new strength and a new inspiration to withstand the bludgeoning of foreign ideas.

4. That Islam supplied the moral basis of life in society with its social ethics which teach charity, peace amongst nations, social service and constructive philanthropic work. Familiarity for the rising generation with the essentials of Islam, and with its past history particularly the life and teachings of the Prophet and his companions and the ethics of Islam are considered more essential than mere ritualistic, mechanistic, formal, hair-splitting theology. For right action and right conduct the source to which Muslims should turn and are turning is the Quran and the Hadith. The following may be cited to give you an idea of the ethics of

Islam. Says the Quran:

"Make peace between your brethren, be pious before God, so that upon you there may be compassion." (Sura IV)

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the east and to the west. But righteous is he who believes in God and the Last Day, and the Angels and the Scripture and the Prophet, who for the love of Him giveth of his wealth to kinsfolk and orphans, to the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask, for it for freeing slaves; he who observes prayer and pays the poor tax; those who keep their promises which they make and are patient in tribulation, adversity and in time of stress; such are the truly sincere and God-fearing." (Sura II)

I will quote three sayings of the Prophet as illustrative of the Islamic spirit of brotherhood.

"All creatures are the family of God, and the most beloved by Him are the most useful to His family". "Do you love your Creator? Love your fellow beings first." And again, "Shall I tell you what is better than fasting, prayers or charity? Peacemaking among the people."

5. That there are more than one threats to which Islam was exposed —Western Secularism, irreligiousness and internal corruption. At some stages amongst some people it was not only the Western imperialism and internal corruption but other religions which Islam revitalises in the case of Muslims of India. The Muslim revolutions in modern times have been negative and positive, defensive as well as offensive. Another reaction has been against the activities of the missionaries whose activities in promoting education, of combating ignorance, poverty and disease are appreciated, but they have also been the advance guard of Western imperialism, colonialism and economic exploitation.

The reactions to these threats mentioned above have been evolutionary. Of the evolutionary movements we have those associated with the names of Mohammad Abduhu, Taha Hasan of Egypt and Sayyad Ahmad Khan of Indo-Pakistan, the founder of the Aligarh Movement. Amongst the revolutionary reactions may be listed activist religious groups v. Western educated youth of Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt.

Turkey started with a violent break with its Islamic past. In 1924 the Turks abolished the Khilafat followed by the abolition of Ministry of Religious Affairs. The theological schools were closed; the wearing of fez was prohibited; a statue of Ataturk was installed, the reference to Islam as the state religion was deleted from the constitution of 1928. The Quran was to be intoned in Turkish and not Arabic as also the call to prayers from the mosques. All these ordinances sent a

wave of horror and protest throughout the Muslim world. The Turks, it was said, had repudiated Islam. But the Turks claimed that it was not Islam that they had repudiated but its ritualistic, mechanistic accretions. In recent years the pendulum has swung back and Islamic spiritual values are again operative in the lives of the Muslim Turks.

In case of Pakistan its creation is an event of great significance in the history of modern world and illustration of how ideals can be actualised. Smith regards it as the most exuberant and brilliant revolutions of the modern Muslim world. Pakistan literally began its existence from trash and through years of trials and tribulations has emerged as a nation determined to take its stand amongst other nations with confidence in its future and pride in its past heritage of Islam particularly in the subcontinent to which it claims to be the heir. Dr. Smith in his characteristically incisive way thus compares the two revolutions—Turkish and Pakistani.

“In one basic way the revolutionary reaction of Pakistan has been just the opposite of Turkey’s. The Turks may be said to have modernity in search of religion. They have a modern state, they are trying now to reformulate Islam in terms that will be relevant to their new life. The Muslims of Pakistan, on the other hand, have religion in search of modernity. They have created their state on the basis of Islam and are now trying to make it a modern state; they are feeling their way, pushing ahead in the face of opposition and cross-currents. The Pakistanis’ problem is how to get modernity without losing their religion. The Turks’ problem, with the new revival of Islam, is how to let religion back in without losing the modernity.”

Islam—Democracy, Communism and Nationalism

To understand the attitude of Islam to democracy, communism and nationalism one has to bear in mind that Islam is not only a religion but a socio-political entity. Islam recognises no dichotomy which the West does, between state and religion, between the individual expressing himself in religious terms to God and his relationship to his family and social and political organization of which he is an active and responsible participant. Theoretically there is no place in Islam for the political tenets of any ideology, Islamic system being sufficient for itself.

Islam and Communism are poles apart. Islam’s beliefs run counter to the principles of dialectical materialism. Communism is the negation of Islam—of the belief in God, of the mission of the Prophet, Quran as a revealed book, the recognition of the right of private property and the

position of the individual in the state. There is, therefore, no danger of Communism as an ideology claiming the allegiance of any large sections of the Muslim community not directly under the political dominance of Communist governments. There are areas where Communist ideology comes near to Islam—the classless society, a society without privileges, the fight against poverty, of equality of opportunity and equality before law of fair distribution of wealth—concepts which are basic to both. But Communism does not come from outside; it is within every society and is born of poverty, ignorance and discontent. For the Communists Islam is a means to an end, “the reserves against capitalism,” as Lenin styled them, as a means of spreading discontent against the “Anglo-American bloc” as the Communists put it. The only thing which can save Islam from the indivious creeping caressing Communist propaganda is the strengthening of the religious foundation of Islam, of raising living standards of the people and the spread of education. If the negative forces in Islamic society get the ascendancy it will be a tragedy for Islam in particular and mankind in general.

In regard to Islam's attitude to democracy of the Western type one must distinguish between democracy as a state of mind, as a way of life as the philosophic and ethical basis of social life on one hand and the institutional forms of democracy. As for the philosophic and ethical concepts of democracy, the same are implicit in Islam. “Islam has been the most successful of religions in eliminating barriers of race, colour, and nationality”. The concept of social justice dominates Muslim outlook both in the private as well as the communal spheres. A profound equilibrium exists between the rights and obligations of an individual in society. In Islam perfect conditions exist for Democracy which is inherent to it. On the other hand, conditions do not exist in many Islamic countries for a democracy the forms of which have been prescribed by the West. In the words of former Prime Minister of Pakistan the remedy for the morden ills of Islamic society “lies neither in communism nor in capitalism, but rather in Islamic socialism with emphasis on democracy, social justice and universal brotherhood.”

The concept of nationalism is something foreign to Islamic thought. Islam envisages a world-wide Muslim community transcending time and space and this unity and universality was achieved in the first century of Islam but later the Muslim society as it became multi-racial and multi-lingual, it began to break up into regional units but the idea of a universal brotherhood of believers was still cherished as an ideal.

though all political unity was lost. The idea of nationality came to dominate the minds of the people in the 19th century. For Afro-Asian countries it was either a great political wrong or a historic tragedy which provided the ground for the idea to be operative in the struggle for self-expression and self-preservation and lifted it to the plane of an ideal. This explosive idea soon captured the minds of the Muslims in spite of the opposition of the Muslim divines. Attempts to found a Pan-Islamic movement proved abortive and between the two World Wars Islam slipped into national groups on the basis of geography, race, languages and past history. There is no possibility of recreating a unified Muslim society on Pan-Islamic basis but if ever it is achieved it will be an event of world importance. In the words of Toynbee:

"Pan-Islamism is dormant—yet we have to reckon with the possibility that the sleeper may awake if ever the cosmopolitan proletariat of a 'Westernized' world revolts against Western domination and cries out for anti-Western leadership. That call might have incalculable psychological effects in evoking the militant spirit of Islam—even if it had slumbered as long as the Seven Sleepers—because it might awaken echoes of a heroic age. On two historic occasions in the past, Islam has been the sign in which an Oriental society has risen up victoriously against an Occidental intruder. Under the first successors of the Prophet, Islam liberated Syria and Egypt from Hellenic domination which had weighed on them for nearly a thousand years. Under Zangi Nur-ad-Din and Saladin and the Mamulks, Islam held the fort against the assaults of Crusaders and Mongols. If the present situation of mankind were to precipitate a 'race war', Islam might be moved to play her historic role once again *Absit omen*."

The Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Middle East Institute while inaugurating the Fifth Annual Conference of Middle East Affairs in 1951 made the following remarks: "You will recall" said he, "John Hancock's remarks at the signing of the Declaration of Independence (American) 'It is too late to pull different ways. The members of the Continental Congress must hang together'. And then Benjamin Franklin's replies: 'Yes, indeed, we must hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang together.'" These remarks if applicable to the world situation in the early days of this country are certainly vastly more applicable to the world situation now.