

# THE WAY OF ADAM'S UPRIGHT SON

THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE IN  
THE ISLAMIC WORK

By

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**IN THE NAME OF GOD, MOST GRACIOUS,  
MOST MERCIFUL**

Jawdat Said's General Introduction to his  
project:  
The *Sunan* (i.e. Laws) of Change

Praise be to God. Peace be to those of His servants  
whom He has favored.

To write this preface to my book, *The Way of Adam's Upright Son*, a third of a century after its first publication, I reviewed my recollections of the tumultuous experiences of Muslim life – I once more wondered what good, if any, it can do for Muslims' progress?

I may mention, for instance, how a Muslim brother asked me not long ago: "Anything new?" And I replied, "Only that the children are getting older," by which I meant that the ideas, when they are born, are fragile and delicate, as a newborn; but, with time, they are more robust, like trees when they send out new branches, and their roots also spread and are firmer. But then, I do not claim to have come

upon new approaches to the Muslim diseases, nor do I have new analyses of their problems.

I seem to have a feeling like that of Muhammad Iqbal, when he felt that, for one little idea to be brought to fruition, one needs to write a thousand pieces.

I did put forth such an idea, decades back: it was the idea of 'Adam's Upright Son'.

But what about this idea? How is it relevant to the problem of the Muslim world, or, more accurately, to the human problem? What was it that Adam's son established at the very outset of the human history? He did lay down a first brick, an attitude that may be adopted in human history. And what does it mean, anyway, that one puts forth an idea which expresses their conception of the human world? Then what terms should one choose for this conception – for the terms will enormously influence what is perceived by others? There is no doubt that a concept has its first birth: no concept indeed comes into being without precedent, without its history. One needs to do the required research to trace the atmosphere, the events, in which the idea came into being.

I do feel that I am coming closer to the barrier, the stumbling block. Since the last wave of revelation from God (i.e. the Message of Islam) came to a stop, there was a new stage, a turning point, in human history. Before that turning

point, humanity had been in the embryonic phase. And the revelation of the first word of the last Message – the word 'Read', was a proclamation of the birth of a new form of life: the human had emerged from the womb of history.

But well, have we, in the Muslim world come out into the world? Have we left the embryonic phase? Or are we perhaps in terror about coming out?

For my part, I feel that I have gone through such experiences, experiences of both the written word and the personal encounters of life, as compelled me to emerge from the womb. But what kind of womb?

It is the womb of the practices and values of our fathers -

The womb of recognizing right and wrong with reference to individuals ...

The womb of the world of human beings as reference ...

Nothing indeed compelled my eyes to open, and to break free from the world of individuals like history – though I admit that I have only succeeded in attaining the dimmest perception of facts. But can we help others to employ their brain for perceiving things, to breathe like humans?

We can notice how a human newborn starts to breathe without any preparation; but then, it needs to undergo gradual progress towards ingesting food like others. But what about the brain? How to prepare it to be receptive to

thought and ideas? How to help an individual issue from the world of "Truly they found their fathers on the wrong path; so, they too were rushed down on their footsteps!" (the Qur'an, 37:69-70)?

It looks much like a process of weaning. In the same way as the baby needs to have gained some strength before it is ready to give up its mother's breast, a human needs some strength of the brain to gain the right information about the human history.

When the Qur'an was being revealed, humankind knew almost nothing about their past, how the human species came into existence, nor how history was progressing from one stage to the next, a quite long process.

We have this review of the long march repeated with the development of every child: you see how it suffers, and so do its care takers, for it to understand how it came into the world, the stages it went through. The child keeps pouring its incessant questions, and some families just evade the questions or lie.

It is vital to think of the physical separation from the womb, and the life as an individual, to have a better conception of the need for the other independence – for it is not automatic, this breaking free from a blind mimicking of fathers and ancestors. We need in this acquiring of

independence the same ability as the baby physically acquires from the moment the umbilical cord is cut.

But how can this intellectual birth be brought about? How can the human be convinced that it will not be his/her death to break free from the bondage to fathers; that, unless he/she acquires the intellectual independence, they will live their life as a handicap.

But the human is capable of winning his/her independence, of walking well on their feet, intellectually, of not holding on to the fathers like a drowning person. He/she is capable of being born, intellectually, and learning from history, and adapting to the stage he/she happens to live in, and to have the past, the present, and the future, included into their perspective.

Let us think again of the progress of humankind: how, by entering the stage of agriculture, it was like being born anew. It needed a huge process of adaptation to the new circumstances: the division of labor, the distribution of products – all the measures designed to prevent the human from exploiting his/her brother human, and so that money should not circulate only among the rich. And then humankind went on from that to other stages, the age of industry, and then the age of information. But that does not apply to us, Muslims, for we live outside history: since we



are not yet born, what possibility is there that we enter the industrial age and then the age of information?

We can think of those turning points and changes in the progress of humankind as earthquakes in their effect on life. But for us, Muslims, to accept those new stages and changes and adapt to them, we need to understand the nature of life – and that through observing the actual events, to understand the world, and to see ourselves as one constituent of things. Does not the Qur'an teach us to view the world as not just a one-time creation – to view it, rather, as in a state of continuous creation, as in Verses of the Qur'an like: "He adds to Creation as He pleases;" (35:1) "and He creates other things of which you have no knowledge;" (16:8) and "Soon will We show them Our Signs in the regions of the earth and in their own souls, until it become manifest to them that this is the Truth;" (41:53)? Those who have practiced the observation of things will respond to a Qur'anic Verse like, "Say: 'Travel through the earth and see how Allah originated creation; so will Allah produce a latter creation;'" (29:20): we may perceive in "a latter creation" some other creation that the commonly perceived Resurrection of the Last Day. By reviewing how, about ten thousand years back, the human was just an insignificant creature on the face of the earth; and reviewing the later developments – learning

agriculture, learning to read and write, and learning how to subdue energy and put it to use: by reflecting on all the past experience, we may be able to imagine how the human would be in ten thousand years from now.

The Muslim does not consider these facts seriously. The kind of culture that descended to us from the Muslim legacy had no way of reflecting on the human's humble beginnings. The historical and anthropological knowledge was just not developed at that time.

It is only the new expansion of modern exploration that has unearthed the picture of the ancient life of humankind. It is as if the earth has opened up, and is still opening up, to reveal some of the hidden secrets of the most ancient existence.

And the Muslim world will have to accept to go through the rebirth which enables it to enter the modern life more realistically. When we learn what modern science reveals about our past, the Muslim must learn not to see in that a contradiction with his/her faith, since the Qur'an itself asserts, "and He creates other things of which you have no knowledge;" (16:8). The Muslim should rather feel confident that it was Islam that was the first to put forth this fact, that the world is still in the process of being created, before anyone considered this possibility.

It is right not to find fault with the past people for taking life to be still and unchanging, for they had very little information to enlighten them – Muslims did not for instance imagine that it was in their hands to set up an upright system of rule. They let the Upright Caliphate slip from between their fingers, and were strangely passive towards what took place after that. They also failed to draw from the Prophet's life the right lessons, since they took every thing he did to be miraculous, not a *sunnah* (or law) to follow and put to use.

But if our fathers may be excused when they saw no way of changing conditions except through bloodshed, we are not – the age in which we live has brought under our very noses so much knowledge, God's Signs in the world and in human life have accumulated, so that many nations benefited by that, and have set up better systems of rule than Muslims ever had, or have until this day.

I do realize that our problems are so numerous ... I do not take a rigid view of life, taking creation to be a one-time event when I consider any serious problem.

Let me point out that Muhammad Iqbal was among the very few who awoke to this problem – he was indeed among the rare Muslims who went through this intellectual rebirth – issuing from the very limited womb to a very wide world. It

was in this way that he succeeded in having a vivid view of the principle of development and the history of rigidity in the Islamic intellectual structure: how Muslims, though they conceded, in theory, the possibility of *ijtihad*, or endeavoring to reach the right Islamic rulings through intellectual effort, they in practice rejected it. He did realize the many elements that brought this on: the schools of jurisprudence, the ruling systems, the many catastrophes that befell the Muslim world, like the Mongols' invasion and their destruction of Baghdad, and the Sufi trends.

He observes how the reformers had focused on protecting society from dissolution, and on the need for a homogeneous social system that included everybody ... "They rejected any kind of innovation in *fiqh* rulings that introduces any change to the legacy of the early Muslim scholars. However, it was the social edifice that was their concern. One must admit that there was some justification for those endeavors of holding things still and unchanging, for this does realize some resistance to dissolution. They failed to realize, however, that the destiny of societies depends not on the system but on the kind of the individual, that an excess of discipline in a society effaces the individual: for he will be all the product of the social element, but loses his own soul ...

It is in producing individuals to be strong, and capable of starting new ways that nations may resist dissolution."

(Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 171-174, (Arabic version). Dar Asia, 1985.)

I attach much hope to such individuals with strong individuality: it is they who may perceive that our culture deserves nothing of the sanctity that is conferred on it. But such individuals do not appear out of the blue – they are the product of long and diligent and thorough and profound study with an open mind: it is in this way that they come up with the general laws that dominate the development of societies, as pointed out in the Verse of the Qur'an, "Such was the *sunnah* (i.e. law) of Allah among those who lived aforetime: no change you will find in the *sunnah* of Allah; " (33:62) for the same laws apply to their own societies.

When one that follows a certain school of thought confines his/her study to his/her doctrine their conception will be limited; by extending their vision to a second school, their scope will be wider. By studying a new religion, and new philosophies, he/she will add a much better ability to penetrate to the general laws

It is inconceivable for an individual whose vision is confined to one culture to come up with creative thought – no creative thought comes without a comprehensive view of

the experiences of societies; and the Qur'an does bring this to notice when it says: "and you be witnesses for mankind;" (22:78). Civilization emerges as a result of being present, a witness of what happens in the world. To be absent will not enable an individual to be civilized.

I hope our young men and women will reflect on this fact, that not to be present on a daily basis in the world, one will be backward.

The other topic which Muhammad Iqbal took up for discussion was in relation with the Verse of the Qur'an, "and He creates other things of which you have no knowledge;" (16:8). He observed how Muslims, in their jealousy not to see the revealed Scripture and the *fiqh* rulings laid down by the ancients tampered with, they denounced any attempt to reconsider such rulings and adapt them to the requirements of a different age.

It is not that Muslims will be in conflict concerning the basic conception of faith and Islam. They have always held, and still hold tightly, to these fundamentals of faith and Islam as taught in for example the widely-quoted authentic Tradition (see *Riyadh al-Salihin*, Tradition, no. 60), when Gabriel came to the Prophet, peace be upon him, to inquire about the fundamentals of the Islamic faith.

No, it is not about that that disputes arise, but about the efforts of scholars – since rulings there refer to realizing justice: whenever justice is realized, then God's religion is realized; and the nearer to justice the nearer to God's religion. We may refer in this to the Verse of the Qur'an: "and when you judge between man and man, that you judge with justice;" (4:58). It may be noticed in the Verse that it is justice among people, not only among believers. And for justice to be established, we need to refer to humans. It is right here to notice how 'unanimity' had long been established by Muslim jurists as a source of *fiqh*, i.e. jurisprudence, and this is so in matters of political issues, in economics, and in the penal law.

This must remind us of the concept of *shura*, "consultation", which is mentioned twice in the Qur'an, (3:159; 38:42), once as a direct command to the Messenger, to keep asking believers' consultation, and once describing believers as maintaining consultation for any issue of moment. Now, should Muslims have only acted on these two principles, holding to what is unanimously agreed upon, and keeping up the principle of *shura*, much of what causes discord among them would disappear.

Jawdat Said

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## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

"Behold, your Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.' They said: 'Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? - while we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your Holy Name?' He said: 'I know what you do not know.'" (The Qur'an, 2:30)

I write these words twenty-five years after the appearance of the first edition. So much has happened during this time, and I had to debate the ideas of this book with many persons, and some have been really hot in their attack of it.

But it is right to say that the events of these twenty-five years have greatly supported the truth and realism of the ideas presented here: for what has happened in this short period is perhaps more dense than what had accumulated during the whole Islamic history, since that time when Mu'awiyah captured the rule by force and had it inherited in the family.

One admires the Muslim public when they reserved the designation "The Upright Caliphate" to only the first four caliphs: it was those four who held the position of ruler with people's choice and consent, not by forcing themselves on people. It was an advanced designation, this 'Upright Caliphs', new to the world, but it was vivid enough that those four merited this honor. And it must alert us to stop calling something brought into use without precedent as '*bid'ah*, a sinful innovation in religion' for you see how Muslims did not hesitate to introduce this new concept and designation – the Qur'an indeed condemns adhering to what is inherited without a critical analysis of it. Muslims may concede that a ruler may not accede to rule without people's consent, but they still cannot imagine how an unsuitable ruler may be deposed save with force. To imagine that it is only by resorting to force that one becomes ruler and stays as ruler really clashes with the Islamic principle, and also contradicts one major achievement of humankind. In the present culture, those who feel capable of grabbing the ruler's position may hurry to do it without scruple – as long as their plans are sound. So, it is incumbent on us to introduce the way of legitimacy, no matter how absent it might be from the minds – for by just having it brought to notice and to consciousness it will no longer be said to be

without precedent. Therefore, we may start with this question: What is the difference, what is the principle that distinguishes legal *jihad* from *khawarij jihad*, (*khawarij* were dissenters, opposers to rule, who usually resorted to arms to resist the Muslim rulers'?)

This question must really be held as central, to be put in focus. It is not comfortable for Muslims to raise such question, for it exposes their being rather *khawarij*-minded, not *jihad* fighters. To question this has remained completely outside Islamic discussion – as if it were no sin to confuse being *khawarij* with performing rightful *jihad*. But you see it is too urgent and crucial a thing to leave undiscussed.

Do I have to remind Muslims of the very high place *jihad* occupies in the *Kitab* and *Sunnah* (i.e. the Qur'an and the Prophet's Traditions)? It is really ranked as the very peak of Islam. But everybody knows enough about that. It is less known that the *khawarij* are, in the Prophet's Traditions, those who, though they are so diligent in prayer and fasting to shame the rest of Muslims, do not care to behave in a way that puts them outside the pale of religion. You do find the *khawarij* represented with all emphasis in the books on *Sunnah*, but no Muslim scholar has cared to lay down the principle for distinguishing the *jihad* of *khawarij* from the

legitimate Islamic *jihad*. I do not claim to have seen all that has been written by Muslims, but I have not seen this topic discussed anywhere. It may be fair to say that Muslim scholars did not see the point of making this distinction because Muslims had fallen into this trap: they are, practically speaking, all *khawarij*, though the majority are *khawarij* only potentially, and only some are practicing *khawarij jihad*. In principle, we adopt the *khawarij jihad* and faith.

It is no wonder, then, that we do not like a research that brings out into light the fact that we are immersed up to the ears into this doctrine of *khawarij*. Maybe one earns people's hostility by discussing this.

I did raise this point before, though rather in passing. But I still feel the need to raise the topic again, to bring to the notice of all concerned the difference between the Messenger's, peace be upon him, *jihad*, and that of the *khawarij*. It is an achievement to bring a topic of this importance from the unthinkable domain to the domain of the undiscussed but is thinkable. The facts of history, or, in Qur'anic terms, the signs of the world out there and the signs of human life keep accumulating – the recent events really press hard to be analyzed, and for this topic to be brought into the lime-light.

Now some unheard-of-ideas, once they are put forward, win for their originator high acclaim – they are ideas which, though undiscussed before, are within the capacity and comprehension of people.

But some other ideas are so inaccessible to the common understanding that they seem terrifying and deeply shaking, as if they would explode all the foundations of our thinking. We would be keen to hold fast to our present mind-set, no matter how brittle and debased. But we do not seem to realize that, for our condition to improve and be replaced with a better one, we need the concepts and values behind our failure to be corrected – for no physical situation continues to exist without corresponding ideas that justify it and perpetuate it. The Qur'an gives great importance to the concepts in the souls and the minds, since it is there that change must be realized before changes may be realized in the physical and moral world. Why, for instance, do we sometimes say: "We are no longer Muslim except as a designation!" (what is sometimes called 'geographical Muslims')? Though many common Muslims say this, to take up this seriously scandalizes people, and they may charge the thinker who dares to discuss that of being a heretic. But let that not dishearten us, for by raising such points as the relationship between a people's condition and what exists in

their souls, though it will face great resistance, will slowly turn into an idea that has its place in the Muslims' attention – and we do notice that this particular idea begins to grow and develop. It is right, then, to ask again: What is the difference between *jihad* as advocated and practiced by the *khawarij* and *jihad* as put forward in Islam? This is an urgent thing in itself to discuss; but will also be a practice in transferring what is in the sphere of 'impossible to discuss' to the sphere of 'unheard of' – which is a significant achievement. So, let us try to shed some light on this topic:

#### HOW TO DISTINGUISH LEGAL *JIHAD* AND *KHAWARIJ JIHAD*?

It is a fully legitimate inquiry, though not yet clearly handled by either Sunni or Shiite scholars. But to probe this topic, one will have to think of another related issue: how creation keeps expanding and changing, as the Qur'an itself reminds us, and the need to walk around in the world to understand the origin of things, and this again is to be traced back to the Qur'an, as in the Verse, "Travel through the earth and see how Allah originated creation;" (29:20) and we are reminded in the Qur'an (as in 41:53) that those who move about will learn not only about the world, but also about the

Qur'an itself. Let us mention here when Ali was asked whether some special legacy was left by the Messenger to the Prophet's family '*Ali l-Bait*', and he replied, "By God no! Except some power of comprehension that God grants some of His servants in perceiving His Book." Now, even the conception of language expands and develops with the expansion of human knowledge, for we know now about the development of meanings what was impossible to suspect in the past: a Verse of the Qur'an like "Then, by the Lord of heaven and earth, this is the very Truth, as much as the fact that you can speak intelligibly to each other;" (51:23) has depths of meaning which keep coming to light with our new discoveries (about the mechanism of hearing and perception). We know much more, and much more is coming to light about a verse like "and forgot a good part of the Message that was sent them;" (5:13) and we know much more about the creation of senses and their passing out of use, and all that will have its significant effect on words of the language and new meanings of existing words.

Many Verses of the Qur'an assert that new meanings will come to light that were not known before – like "And you shall certainly know the truth of it all after a while; " (38:88) "and He creates other things of which you have no

knowledge;" (16:8) "but say: 'O, my Lord! advance me in knowledge;" (20:114).

And back to the Verse, "Then, by the Lord of heaven and earth, this is the very Truth, as much as the fact that you can speak intelligibly to each other;" (51:23), we may notice the deep sense of 'you can speak intelligibly to each other', here used as a simile, for it is a meaning that keeps expanding and deepening. Even words like 'the earth' and 'the sky', though they remain as Qur'anic terms, cannot have to our minds the same confined sense they had to ancient Arabs.

So, let us go back to our question: What is the difference between *jihad* as enjoined in Islam and the *khawarij jihad*?

The rule suggested here is this: A *khawarij* way is to employ force and violence to secure rule;

While *jihad* is not to employ force unless one has acceded to the position of rule with people's agreement; and to carry out *jihad* for preventing those who use compulsion to convert people to religion, after prevention of such compulsion without resort to force has failed.

I am using the simplest terms in order to bring this issue within the comprehension of the average Muslim. Therefore, let us not engage in technical discussions and the many shades of meanings. We learn such approach from the



Prophet's life – a researcher who reviews the Prophet's life will find unequivocal evidence that the Prophet's *jihad* was confined to inviting people to the way of the Lord, "with wisdom and beautiful preaching," and arguing with others "in ways that are best and most gracious;" (see the Qur'an, 16:125). He most staunchly adhered to this way through debate and addressing people in the best language, trying to win them to the doctrine. That went on until he was received most favorably by the citizens of al-Medina. It was after that that *jihad* in the sense of fighting was used, to resist any violent ways of getting people to change their faith; fighting those who compel people, in accordance with a Verse like "And fight them on until there is no more turmoil or oppression;" (2:193). So, let it be clear: the Messenger never used fighting until he was chosen to rule without any resort to force – and it was a most adverse environment in which he worked, without any resort to force, until he was the ruler.

The problem is still present in the modern world, the problem of accepting the principle expressed in this Verse of the Qur'an, "Let there be no compulsion in religion;" (2:256); Russia now does concede it, but it was only because it had to concede, for human awareness had developed to a point that the pressure increased until this power had to

admit the principle. It is evident that the principle of "Let there be no compulsion in religion" will be the principle to follow everywhere in the world. It is the force of the idea that must prevail, the idea in itself, and that was the Messenger's, peace be upon him, way. After one has been chosen to rule, then, yes, the use of force is legitimate to prevent oppression, and to protect free choice. Oppression is what is demonstrated in the story of '*ukhdud*, the pit of fire', as referred to in the Verse "Those who persecute (to force out of faith) the believers, men and women," (85:10): it is subjecting someone to persecution until they change their religion, or putting them to death if they fail to convert.

Justified jihad is carried out to prevent any force from compelling people to embrace any religion; they, the compellers, are argued with, and, if they insist, then the employment of force is the right way to stop this compulsion; no one may force people to convert, as the Qur'an teaches us, "Shall we compel you to accept it when you are averse to it? " (11:28).

To sum up, for rightful *jihad* there are two conditions,

One related to the one who carries out *jihad*: to have secured rule with the consent and agreement of people.

And a condition related to the party to be fought: that they compel people to enter a certain religion, or to abandon

their own religion. This compulsion was common at the time Islam emerged, practiced by Quraish and almost all those with some authority. Islam was introducing a new principle, freedom of conviction - Toynbee noticed this, and he added that it was quite late that Britain started to adopt this principle. He said that a civilization that employs violence will have started on a way that will lead to its demise; he vehemently and at length denied, in his *Study of History*, that Islam resorted to violence to spread.

Once the two conditions are met, then *jihad* becomes not only justified, but enjoined. I feel that it is clear enough, but maybe it will be a long way before the principle takes root. And we must tolerate differences of opinion, as long as that does not lead to physical conflict, and without compelling someone to adopt our view. Disagreement is condemned once it implies intolerance and employing violence only because of different views and ideas. To debate and show the faults of other views is right, but without bad language or humiliating the other or subjecting them to torture. This is one way of understanding a Verse of the Qur'an like, "but they will not cease to dispute, except those on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy: and for this He created them;" (11:118-19). Indeed, differences of opinion will bring out the truth most vividly, and bring it to fruition. You find

in our history those who are happy with somebody who points out their slips and drawbacks; you will find a great leader of *fiqh*, i.e. jurisprudence, who swears he would rather see the truth revealed by another rather than by him – this is when you love to see the truth come to light, more so than the personal prestige and claiming of credit. On the other hand, we have seen those who try to eliminate someone, physically, for being closer to the truth than them: forgetting that in this they prove their failure and intellectual inferiority.

God has willed in His eternal law that what is false must go out of existence – you find this for instance in the Verse of the Qur'an, "Thus Allah shows forth Truth and Vanity. For the scum disappears like froth cast out; while that which is for the good of mankind remains on earth; " (13:17).

Ibn Taimiyah has put forth a very well-phrased formula: "If the Book occupies its place above the sword, then that is Islam; but if the sword comes to be above the Book, that is aberration." What Ibn Taimiyah is saying here is that when rule depends on the sword, it is jungle law, or what is designated here as the doctrine of *khawarij*. When the Book, or the law, is deemed as above the sword, this is Islam, and this is the rule of law. What the Messenger, peace be upon him, teaches us in case there is a dictator holding the rule, is

that the way to overcome this situation is not by assassinating or murdering the dictator, but by not obeying him – for the Islamic rule is: "No obedience is due if commanded to do what is sinful."

The Islamic way is not yet appreciated, neither in the West nor in the Muslim world. The kind of freedom of speech and freedom of thought that the Prophet practiced was not by pleading the Quraishi people to allow him to believe and to invite to Islam: they would definitely not give this to him. He rather went ahead and practiced his freedom: he did what was his duty to do rather than begging for his rights. The idea here is that by doing one's duty, one's right will descend to them from the sky. It was Malek Bennabi who taught us this principle.

Another great idea of Ibn Taimiyah is: "Fighting in Islam is not for disbelief, but for injustice." It is so since the right to survive must be guaranteed to disbelief, even after being defeated in a battle; and injustice is mostly displayed in suppressing opinions and compulsion in religion. Let's read about this in the Qur'an, "And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated and oppressed? - men, women, and children, whose cry is: 'Our Lord! rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from You one who will

protect; and raise for us from You one who will help!" "  
(4:75).

It may be noticed that at the time the human was about to be created, the angels objected that he would be involved in much bloodshed and injustice, as the Qur'an reports, "Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?" but God told them, "I know what you do not know;" (2:30). The implication here can be that though the human will be involved in much bloodshed and injustice, he/she has the potential for something else, by learning from the outcome of past behavior. But has the human gone beyond the worry of the angels? Not yet, I suspect: God orders that no compulsion is allowed in thought and faith, "Let there be no compulsion in religion;" (2:256). He enjoins on humans to move about in the earth and learn from the human progress – there is the right source of learning right behavior. But let us be sure that the truth will come to light, at least as the following Verse of the Qur'an teaches us: "Thus Allah shows forth Truth and Vanity. For the scum disappears like froth cast out; while that which is for the good of mankind remains on earth;" (13:17). We see in this a great law of God's: that conflict will bring truth to light – conflict which does not deteriorate into physical fight. At

least, people have awakened to the benefit of the contact of the different cultures.

We still need to wonder what it is that has prevented Muslims from observing the difference between the meritorious *jihad*, praised in the highest terms in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, and the *khawarij jihad*, condemned to the degree of deeming it as passing out of the pale of Islam? Perceiving the difference is not harder to understand than the difference between martyrdom and committing suicide. We must understand the wars waged in vain as akin to the ancient offering of human sacrifices as a religious ritual.

We need not wonder too long on how humans are driven by illusions that they hold about the way to a good life – we may learn from the conviction held for many millennia about the movement of the sun and the earth. For their erroneous idea of their movement, many people were willing to die and to send others to death. But many an illusion still linger in people's minds: they should really learn from the lesson about the sun and the earth – for if people can be mistaken about the sun and the earth, then let us be cautious about all the convictions we hold to be absolutely true. A human must learn some humbleness and reflection from this lesson: that one might be mistaken, and we need to perceive our mistake before it is too late. It is a sign of good belief to

be able to review and correct one's behavior and mistakes: for if past peoples failed, as described in the Qur'an, to see or hear or to declare the truth, then we, too, may fail. A *hadith* (Tradition) of the Prophet's asserts that Muslims will follow in the steps of the peoples before us, step for stop. But such bad fate may be avoided – for the Qur'an is there to learn the outcome of past people and keep wary of their fate. We need in this to avoid giving ourselves a special place in the universe – a fault committed by the Jews and Christians before us, as the Qur'an warns us: "The Jews say: 'The Christians have nothing to stand upon'; and the Christians say: 'The Jews have nothing to stand upon;'" (2:113).

The rest of the world begins to take note and try to avoid taking one's people or nation as immune from the pitfalls of history: though Muslims still put themselves apart and above the rest of the world, assuming that they themselves cannot go astray. But why not ask themselves as the above Verse urges them to think why it is that God does punish them for their sins? Why is their place perhaps the very most humiliated and base? Indeed, unless we develop the habit of reviewing and criticizing our culture, we will not be among those who open their eyes, as the Qur'an teaches. We cannot proceed with scales over our eyes and our ears blocked, though the Qur'an did not leave us without warning,



repeatedly, against those failings. We need to learn from Abraham his sense of wondering: 'the Abrahamic sense of inquiry' we may call it. He observed the idols his people worshipped and wondered, as the Qur'an reports, "Behold, he said to his father and to his people: 'What do you worship?' They said: 'We worship idols, and remain constantly in attendance on them.' He said: 'Do they listen to you when you call on them, or do you good or harm?'"(26:71-73). This is the right spirit, to keep wondering and inquiring – the opposite is the condition presented in another set of Verses of the Qur'an, following blindly in the steps of fathers, even when, "What! Even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance?" (2:170).

I do not say that people have not started examining the facts of the world to find out the causes of human crises and problems, why the human still commits mischief and bloodshed. Let us say that, as the physical diseases took time to develop into the advanced sciences of medicine that we now have, the moral and intellectual diseases begin slowly to attract the efforts of researchers. In the same way as many physical diseases are now under human control, like the epidemic diseases that used to kill many thousands or millions in no time have been controlled, the moral and intellectual diseases will follow suit.

It is good to notice that those who are hit with famine are counted as ignorant, in need of education, not that those disasters are beyond human control: why are wars and violent conflict are not examined in the same way? As not a thing of fate that must only be accepted and endured: they stem in the same way from ignorance and intellectual failure. The culture, the worldview, the conceptions of society need to be reviewed and put right.

All this will remind us again of the Qur'an, for it ascribes the disasters of people to the failure of vision, hearing, and thinking. The intellectual system can be protected from diseases, in the same way as the physical organism can be protected; we need individuals and organizations that observe, with the assistance of all the necessary devices and statistics, to sort out the system of ideas and thoughts and concepts.

The very best studies of human affairs do now preoccupy the best minds in the world, which is a good sign: People begin to sense that healthy bodies are not enough for a healthy nation – it must be coupled with a sound intellectual system, for the individual to grow in.

It may be concluded from the above that the talk about good breeding and good education is not enough: there must come, prior to that, the sound intellectual atmosphere, the

sound intellectual environment in which individuals grow up. The Messenger, peace be upon him, teaches us that it is the parents who give to the baby its religious faith.

Another insight we may learn from physical health: we know that the body refuses the implanting of a foreign organ, even when life depends on it, and the receiver of that organ may die unless successful measures are taken to overcome this difficulty. Now this immunity has affinity to what happens when the immunity system of the intellectual environment refuses new ideas: a healthy intellectual environment needs the right approach to its immunity system to let pass only the right influences.

Indeed, the kidneys systematically rid the body of harmful stuff; the heart and the lungs likewise purify the body, and the immunity system resists harmful bacteria. Without all such systems, the body would soon die of course. The community needs a similar system which lets no harmful concepts or values penetrate to the community's intellectual system. Without such filtering, the community will be unable to live a healthy life.

The task of the intellectual body of a people is twofold: it needs to accept what is beneficial and keep out what is harmful. Without such allowing and protective system, the society will be subjected to all kinds of harmful material

thriving in its intellectual system. This protective group is something like the soul or the mind of the community. You see how a society that has failed to protect itself from harmful influences and materials is enfeebled, and it does not occupy an honorable place among nations.

I am of course thinking of the Muslim *Ummah* in all the above discussion: how for instance the sacred gets mixed up with the filthy. We keep witnessing how much mischief this lack of pure vision brings upon the *Ummah*. I am alluding particularly to the confounding of Islamically-sanctioned *jihad* and the *khawarij jihad*. It is strange how this difference never attracted the attention of anybody. My task is to bring this out into the light, so that the new generation acts more responsibly in dealing with *jihad*. And, of course, the topic bears a lot of repetition and elaboration until it is ingested into the intellectual system.

And in this endeavor of elucidating this distinction, I may venture and suggest what it is that makes us behave in a way like the *khawarij*: What seems to lead us into this error of behaving in a *khawarij* way is saying: "It is true that the earliest *khawarij* committed a grave sin by assassinating Ali, for Ali was a legitimate ruler, a caliph who may not be murdered. That of course was a great sin. But we are killing people who are heretic and non-Muslim, and therefore our

behavior is not like the *khawarij* way." Those who say this forget, however, that those who killed Ali said something similar to what is being said at present; they said that Ali was an apostate, and to kill him was a service done to Islam. The point, then, is that when you deem somebody to be a non-believer, it is your own judgement. Indeed, many others in the world take us to be non-believers, and may think it is legitimate to have us slain, that it is a service to Islam to see us out of the way.

It is on this basis that I said at the end of an earlier edition of this book: The Prophet had established this principle – attaining rule without any resort to violence – to cut short this vicious circle: It was to say that the way to correcting an error is not through error. Indeed, those who have too little patience to understand such facts will not realize something more unpleasant than the tyrannical rule: that that rule is no more than a reflection of the society which is under that rule, that the drawbacks and faults of the community will be reflected in the system of government. Those who rise with violence to depose their adversaries will find in the *Ummah* some who do not approve of their own style – even if they happen to be as just as Ali and as merciful as Uthman. To get out of this maze, we need to understand the true reason the Qur'an forbade violence in

Verses like this: "hold back your hands from fight but establish regular prayers;" (4:77).

But you will not find this reading of the texts in the books of *tafsir* 'commentary on the Qur'an'; they do not state this first condition for carrying out *jihad*: that the party who start *jihad* must have attained rule through the society's approval and choice. You see that those who ignore this condition first allow themselves to call people disbelievers, and add to that that they permit themselves to kill those they deem to be disbelievers.

I have no doubt that this topic will attract much more attention in the future. And it must occupy great attention, so that Muslims stop charging each other with disbelief, and justifying the killing of other Muslims. In fact, one must tolerate the others even when he/she thinks they are disbelievers; they must abstain from permitting themselves to kill others who hold other opinions or convictions. The right way is to argue with those we deem to be in the wrong, and to try to bring them round to what we take to be right. By adopting this policy, we will have gone out of the vicious circle, a circle that Muslims have long been trapped in, since when they failed to declare the truth as clearly as they can, and preferred rather to resort to the sword, the way of darkness.

Since the Muslim world fails to explore such issues, and fathom them with some depth, it is left behind all nations in failing to realize the necessity of a system of no one being ruler except through the consent and choice of people, what is called democracy in the modern terminology. I am not saying that democracy is the panacea to solving human crises, as long as human societies are ignorant – as long as, for instance, people believe that real democracy can thrive when the right of Veto is still permitted in the highest organization of the world.

The Qur'an does teach us that it is knowledge that raises our status, and that ignorance is the mother of all evil. When the Qur'an commands that we walk around and see the outcome of past and present peoples, it is pointing to the surest source of knowledge. Those who fail to seek such knowledge will pay the price with more and more catastrophes, and with often the same catastrophes. You see how our best minds seek to help people get over the physical suffering – but is not the suffering of societies, when we fail to study the laws that control our lives, equally important? The Qur'an does alert us that God's laws of the rise and decline of nations are true of us as well as others - as in the Verse of the Qur'an: "Nay, you are but men, - of the men He

has created; " (5:18). Humankind can have healthy relations and can proceed safely to a better life.

Let me finish this Preface on a happier note: for wars begin to lose their luster, and people begin to perceive that the war is not the way to a better life, that it is incompatible with the progress of humans, that war can be abandoned for a better human life. It is indeed the weapons themselves that brought this lesson under the very noses of people, when humans realized that the entire human species can be destroyed with weaponry: it is a terrible ritual, the war. I take the year 1988 C.E. to be an occasion that deserves our annual celebration – it was the year when a declaration was passed to start destroying the nuclear arsenals. I do not say that the war has ended, but it is breathing its last.

I do feel that the dawn of the Way of Ibn Adam's Upright Son has arrived.

In the same way as at the hands of Abraham an end was declared to human sacrifices, the Qur'an introduced a new era when war may not be declared except for protecting freedom of thought: the era of "Let there be no compulsion in religion;" (2:256).

Jawdat Said Muhammad

22.11.1990 C.E.



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It is a full decade since the First Edition was issued. No main change can be observed in the Muslim world in connection with the issue of the book. This teaches me that we need to do more research in that direction.

Let me, however, express my hearty pleasure at the articles written by Abdul-Halim Abu Shuqqah, which were published in *Al-Muslim al-Mu'aser*, and the rather timid debate they attracted. The good thing about his articles is his focusing on self-analysis and self-criticism. It is a definitely positive sign that criticism comes from within, for it marks a much better hope of correcting one's progress.

I may also mention the book *Crisis of Political Thought*, by Dr. Abdul-Hamid Mutwalli, which appeared in 1970 and a second edition appeared in 1974. The Fifth Chapter of this book discussed the problem of resorting to violence by religious and political groups.

Mention must also be made of an article by Dr. Muhammad al-Talibi, entitled "History and Today's and Tomorrow's Problems", published in the June, 1974 Issue of the Journal: *Alam al-Fikr*, a journal which appears in

Kuwait. There may be many more studies, however, that I have not seen.

But we may say with assurance that very little appears on this topic to lift the mist. I may say that the Muslims' diseases of thought still enjoy immunity that prevents facing them – in this atmosphere people may commit mistakes inadvertently, like adopting the *khawarij* thought, and acting on that.

The confusion lingers even in the minds of the leaders of opinion and thought in the Muslim world – and that is the real crisis. Many, for instance, confuse those *hadiths* (Prophet's Traditions) which assert that "To die in defense of one's property is martyrdom;" and the *hadiths* which command that when there is armed turmoil a Muslim should break his sword rather than be involved in the uproar.

As long as such issues remain confused in our minds, and as long as we do not devote the necessary time and effort to discussing them, the confusion and the chaos will persist: no change may be hoped to our ailments without diligent work.

But things will come to be clarified once open minds begin to handle these issues: analyzing, fathoming, searching – there will be then a setting free of all of us.

Praise be to God

Damascus, Sha'ban, 1396 A.H. 1976 C.E.

Jawdat Said

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Praise be those of God's servants who He has favored.

The problem of the Muslim world is the problem of one fifth of humanity. It is worth being handled by anyone who is capable of going some step towards lifting this condition of backwardness. And there have been some who tried to do their best in that endeavor. Let me mention just some.

One, maybe the first, is Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. He devoted all his life to considering this problem. He summed up his conclusion in his book *Khatirat* "Reflections".

Another is Abdul-Rahman al-Kawakibi, whose book *Um al-Qura* was devoted to diagnosing the Muslims' diseases: He imagines in his book different delegations from the Muslim world each presenting their viewpoints concerning the dilemma and backwardness of Muslims. He did put his finger on some effective cures of the problems. It is a book worth the attention of the Muslim world.

Muhammad Iqbal had some really profound reflections on the human dilemma. He described the importance of Muslims and their expected part. His immense intellectual

and literary talents were devoted to fathoming the Muslims' problem. One finds his ideas in his several poetry collections, and in his philosophical book *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. He tried to delve at the problem to its psychological roots.

We next come to Malek Bennabi, the Algerian thinker. He brought out his ideas in a series of books, under the common title 'Problems of Civilization'. He had digested much of previous research, and so he wrote very well about the laws of establishing civilization. He succeeded in penetrating to the essential elements of our problem and reform; and he took into consideration insights from psychology and sociology, and the *sunan*, or laws, of history.

But little has the Muslim world benefited from the above writers, though some contributed some vital and practical measures for the necessary change.

Many others had something little or big to say and many shed some light on this problem – and some contributions were more harmful than constructive. No contribution, however, may be neglected: to be a Muslim, one must be concerned with the Muslim affairs.

I view this problem of the Muslim world as being closely related to our concept of the human being, especially

to the way to producing change in the human. The Qur'an teaches us to start with the human soul. We need to consider and search for the way of bringing change to the human soul. We may not have much disagreement about ends, but the means is where disagreement arises. Everybody would agree that certain changes must be realized in the human soul. But some would hasten to immediate results, like resorting to violent means, to compel people to behave in the desirable way, while others would prefer to effect change through persuasion.

In the Muslim world, the most superficial ways have dominated for quite some time, even in the domain of changing human behavior: compulsion is the chosen way rather than persuasion. This is because the value of ideas is ignored, and force is preferred to persuasion in bringing about change. One may express this in other terms – that the political aspect is given priority in effecting change, and the political change is taken in the Muslim world as inevitably dependent on securing physical force.

I am not thinking here of any one Muslim land or country, for what we have here is common to the whole Muslim world.

Another relevant problem is that the Muslim feels he/she needs to work for his/her religion – but, at the same time,

he/she feels that the way to that service is blocked. That causes the Muslim much conflict and trouble.

We need to put in effort to bring balance to the Muslim to overcome this conflict between forces which push forward and forces which pull back. The Muslim potentials are there, but we need to work on how to reveal to the Muslim the way to putting the potentials to use.

And the crux of the problem lies in this assumption that the surest way to seeing the Islamic doctrine implemented and observed is through force.

That the Prophet's practice reveals clearly that he resorted to persuasion and nothing more, never to violence or force, to establish a Muslim society – all that did not prevent Muslims from choosing the other way. One may examine what factors led to taking force and violence to be the way to establishing Islam, and feeling great pride in the use of fighting in establishing this faith.

The experiences of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries really deepened this faith in the employment of force – the many armed campaigns everywhere in the world only served to intensify the Muslim's belief in violent means.

The imperial powers were not unmindful of this attitude of the Muslims': they were clever in conditioning the

Muslim to resort to wild uprising, and, consequently, in justifying their suppression of the violence with violence, in a way not unlike the bull's rage and suppression. Malek Bennabi has done well in shedding light on this in his book *The Intellectual Conflict in the Colonized Countries*. The colonial powers simply deflected the Muslims from his/her real goal, by having them believe that no reform could be brought about except through holding political authority.

God is always there to support His sincere servants, but those who ignore God's *sunnah*, or law, are not helped because of their good intention. The way of violence also justifies the other's condemnation of Muslims' effort: they claim that it is all illusory: that talk about a great Message and the Straight Way.

This conflict and this withdrawal are basic things that need all the effort for bringing change. We need to do our best to change the Muslim's attitude to problems, to perceive that it is not the nature of the problems which blocks the way, but the way we perceive them.

It is this which makes me take up the pen to write this book.

May God guide us to what is right.



Damascus. Ramadan, 1385 A.H.

Jawdat Said

## SOME TEXTS

You see in the following texts from the Qur'an how a human may sacrifice himself/herself for giving guidance to others.

About Adam's Upright Son: "Recite to them the truth of the story of the two sons of Adam. Behold! They each presented a sacrifice to Allah: it was accepted from one, not from the other. Said the latter: 'Be sure I will slay you.' 'Surely,' said the former, 'Allah accepts of the sacrifice of those who are righteous. If you stretch your hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against you to slay you: for I do fear Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds. For me, I intend to let you draw on yourself my sin as well as yours, for you will be among the companions of the Fire, and that is the reward of those who do wrong.' The selfish soul of the other led him to the murder of his brother: he murdered him, and became himself of the lost ones. Then Allah sent a raven, who scratched the ground, to show him how to hide the shame of his brother. 'Woe is me!' said he, 'was I not even able to be as the raven, and to hide the shame of my brother?' Then he became full of regrets." (5:27-31).

About Noah: "Relate to them the story of Noah. Behold! He said to his people: 'O my people, if it be hard on your mind that I should stay with you and commemorate the Signs of Allah, – yet I put my trust in Allah. You then get an agreement about your plan and among your partners, so your plan be not to you dark and dubious. Then pass your sentence on me, and give me no respite;" (10:71).

Here are some hadiths (Prophet's Traditions) about The Time of Tribulation (from *Mukhtasar Abu Dawoud*, by al-Munthiri, pub: al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, (1369 A.H., 1949 C.E.) numbers 4090, 4091, 4093, 4095, respectively):

- Muslim bin Abu Bakr reports from Abu Hurairah that he said: the Messenger, peace be upon him, said: "There will be a time of tribulation, when to lie is better than to sit up, and to sit up is better than to stand, and to stand is better than to walk, and to walk is better than to run." "So, what do you command me to do?" Abu Hurairah said. "Let that who has camels," he said, "be with his camels; let that who has sheep be with his sheep; let that who has a land, stay on his land." "But what about that who has none of that?" Abu Hurairah said. "Let him strike with his sword at a rock," the Prophet replied, "until it is

blunt, and then try to escape the best he can." (the above hadith was reported, in similar words, by al-Bukhari and Muslim, narrated by Ibn al-Musayyeb and Abu Salamah.

- Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas narrates the same *hadith*, adding that he, Sa'd, said: "But what if the other enters in to me, raising his hand with his sword to kill me?" "Be the better of Adam's two sons;" Yazid bin Khaled al-Ramli explains: "He is referring here to the Verse from the Qur'an: "If you stretch your hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against you to slay you ..." (5:28)
- Abu Musa al-Ash'ari says: the Messenger, peace be upon him, said: "There will happen, before it is the Last Day, tribulation as dark as black night, when a man may be a believer in the morning, and a disbeliever in the evening; or a believer in the evening and a disbeliever in the morning. To be sitting during such time is better than to be standing; and to be walking is better than to be running. Break away then your swords, and cut the string of your

bows; hit your swords at a rock. If one's place is broken into, and is likely to be killed, let him behave like the better son of Adam's,".

- Abu Dharr narrates that the Messenger, peace be upon him, said, (a similar text to the previous one,) and then, "What about the time, Abu Dhar," the Messenger said, "when a grave is as cheap as a slave [for the great number of the killed]?" "So, what do you direct me to do?" Abu Dharr asked. "Have patience," the Messenger answered. Then he added: "How about when the stones of al-Medina are soaked in blood?" "So, what do you order me to do?" Abu Dharr asked. "Be with your people," the Prophet said. "Should I not bear my sword?" Abu Dharr asked. "You will then be one of the aggressors," the Messenger said. "So, what is your command?" Abu Dharr asked. "If you are scared of the glitter of the sword," the Prophet said, "then throw your *thobe* (ankle long shirt) across your face. The aggressor will bear then both your sin and his." Reported by Ibn Majah.

### **Pledge to utter the truth:**

Ubadah bin al-Walid reports from his father and then from his grandfather, that the latter said: We pledged to the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, to:

"Hear and obey,

"In adversity and in good times,

"When feeling like obeying and when reluctant,

"Even when unfairly treated;

"Not to challenge those with authority,

"And to declare the truth, not being scared of any reproach in the way of God," (Reported by Muslim).

### **The noblest *jihad*:**

Abu Said narrates that the Messenger said: "The noblest jihad is to declare the truth in the face of a tyrannical ruler." (Reported by Abu Daud and al-Tirmidhi).

## **SOME REMARKS**

### **1. Putting the Idea on Record**

The present topic has been published before it came to maturation, so that the reader must not expect completeness

and streamlining. I decided to bring it out and put it on record. I felt that it was too serious to be put off. I felt driven to lay down this landmark to help in pointing the way.

## **2. I write to declare, rather than to persuade**

I did not work on this issue well enough to persuade those who have a different view. But I decided to make it known that this is the way I adopt.

I felt that those who are equipped to write are not taking the issue with the seriousness it deserves. I pray God to help me therefore to do my bit.

## **3. It is growing**

It is worth noting that this way is growing -- not that it is quite crystal clear. Many in the Muslim world begin to sense the value of this method, though neither clearly, nor to a point that they proclaim it to everybody. At least, I feel encouraged to go ahead in declaring what I have.

## **4. I believe in the idea more than I can express it**

I may assert that the idea has reached in my mind a high degree of assurance and vividness, though my expression of it falls short. No harm! Things will develop and grow, and the idea will take shape, and better and more integrated writings will appear.

I hope this incompleteness of any piece of writing alerts readers not to take any work as perfect, that they must be seen as part of ongoing development.

Nevertheless, I feel confident that the workers for the Islamic cause will come around sooner or later to the soundness of the method I am putting forward in this book.

#### **5. Is it clear to the Muslim what to live for and die for?**

A good life is that in which there is something dearer than life. I mean there must be in a human's life something so dear to him/her that, should that thing be endangered, then one would be ready to sacrifice anything to keep that thing safe.

A Muslim should direct this question to himself: what is there that to undergo any amount of harm would be welcome rather than to see that cause harmed? Life itself must be less dear than that thing.

Would the Muslim live for, and die for, tempting a young man to assassinate somebody, or explode some building? Would he/she be willing to be jailed and persecuted for the sake of a political leader?

Would he/she be willing to be taken into custody for distributing propaganda folders the writer of which would not come out into the light? Or to collect weapons in any of the above enterprises?

Let the Muslim be clear what life is worth living for or sacrificing for.

It is right to have a clear mind in all this, so that one is not disappointed in the end.

For my part, none of the above I would die for, nor approve it for any Muslim.

Here is then another set of questions:



Is it right in the Muslim's conscience to be imprisoned while declaring God's Message, to the best of his/her knowledge? Trying to bring to people's consciousness the full meaning of what is required of them by their Lord?

Would the Muslim work for that, without minding what he/she goes through in that endeavor? Would the Muslim accept whatever he/she may undergo for declaring "God is my Lord,"? For it is this that we are instructed to live for in Verses of the Qur'an like: "Those who preach the Message of Allah, and fear Him, and fear none but Allah. And enough is Allah to call men to account" (33:39).

If some count this kind of endeavor a crime, then it is a crime that a Muslim would accept to commit; if some command the Muslim to hide away and conceal the truth, then he/she may ignore such order with contentment. For he/she finds in the Qur'an: "Those who conceal the clear Sign We have sent down, and Guidance, after We have made it clear for the People in the Book – on them shall be Allah's curse, and the curse of those entitled to curse – except those who repent and make amends and openly declare the Truth: to them I turn; for I am Of-Returning, Most Merciful;" (2:159-160).

A Muslim does not care if it is counted illegal to believe in God, Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise, for this is what the Qur'an teaches him/her, in the Verse: "And they ill-treated them for no other reason than that they believed in Allah, Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise;" (85:8).

It seems that many Muslims do not realize the power of this declaration of 'There is no god but God,' which was described by the Messenger as the best utterance made by him and all the prophets before him. Many Muslims do not perceive how this statement is impossible to be endured by those who enslave and persecute people.

I am saying here that it is right for the Muslim to suffer and be persecuted and imprisoned for bringing out into light what has been suppressed for long: the Message of Islam; to put things right. For long have Muslims concealed what may not be concealed waiting for first having power in their hands, or for the right circumstances to dominate. But no! To declare the Message of Islam, no force behind our back is necessary, nor the right circumstance.

In a word, it is that a Muslim's charge as I perceive it is to be the same as that of Adam's Upright Son: to put forward the message of truth, and to reject any false message. This is the honorable attitude, for which one may live or die. We learn this from Verses of the Qur'an like: "If you stretch your hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch out my hand against you to slay you: for I do fear Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds;" (5:28).

## **6. What is this Way of Adam's Upright Son?**

- a.) It means that a Muslim's guilt should not be conspiring to kill or assassinate, or instigating others to do that.

- b.) It means that a Muslim's sole guilt should be that he/she believes in the One God, Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise; for only saying: "My Lord is the only God."
- c.) It means that a Muslim's only guilt should be that he/she seeks to get people to accept the invitation to the Faith.
- d.) It means that one does not dictate his/her opinion to others under compulsion, nor that he/she changes his/her opinion dreading violence.
- e.) It means that a Muslim does not choose as a way of spreading his/her religion except that of the prophets, one and all.
- f.) It means that one accepts to suffer for his/her ideal, not to inflict pain on others for the sake of his/her ideal.
- g.) It means that it is right to sacrifice oneself in the way of guiding others and pointing the right way to them.
- h.) It means that to present the idea of adhering to one's faith, one should apply it first.
- i.) It means that one does not embrace anything as his/her faith unless he/she is prepared to adhere to it all the time and before everybody.

To sum up, the only charge that may be levelled against us must be that levelled against the prophets, as the Qur'an reports, their saying: "Our Only Lord is God."

**7. There is a necessary and fundamental remark** concerning work for constructing the Muslim community.

Some would say: What are you doing with the Verses on *jihad* and fighting in the Qur'an? Do you only believe in parts of the

Scripture? Or are you abrogating the Verses of fighting in the Qur'an?

No, of course not! I am not trying to abrogate any Verses of the Qur'an, nor trying to deactivate the Verses of *jihad* and fighting. God forbid! All I am trying to do is to distinguish between two situations:

1. The situation of those trying to establish a Muslim society, to reform it, or to safeguard it from decline.
2. And the situation of those who represent the Muslim society, which is already there, and submits to Islam.

It is only the first category that falls under our attention in this book, so do not look for the strategy for the second here.

You may notice that the '*hudud*, penalties specified in the Qur'an', are not enforced at present, nor is it our duty to think of enforcing them. This shows that a Muslim must know that his/her efforts belong to the first category at this stage.

Ibn Taimiyah has relevant things to say about the enforcement of *jihad*, in his book *Al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyah* 'the Enforcement of Sharia Law'.

It is strange how many seem to cling to fighting, which is not their obligation at present, and neglect the declaration of truth, which is their obligation all the time.

It is true that, once the Islamic Society is already there, and a Muslim is commanded to participate in *jihad*, it is a grave sin not to obey. How else, when the Qur'an says: "If any do turn his back to them on such a day – unless it be in a stratagem of war, or to retreat to a

troop of his own – he draws on himself the wrath of Allah and his abode is Hell – an evil refuge indeed;" (8:16).

It transpires from the above that, should a group of people meet in secret, and issue a sentence of death against somebody, or make a decision of a coup d'état, they will not be doing a service to Islam; for it is not for ordinary persons to take decisions like this, without the society's authorizing them to do. Think of the seriousness of spilling human blood.

It is not that I mistrust the good intentions of those people, nor their sincere love of Islam. It is merely a lack of the technical know-how of doing things.

It is very useful that we reflect on the difference between the above two situations.

## **8. Another Important Remark**

Some prophets were unable to go beyond the stage of preparation. Jesus Christ is an example. He did not reach the stage of establishing a state. Moses and Muhammad, peace be upon all three, succeeded in reaching the next stage. It is good to remember that especially when you come across the kind of injunctions Christ directed to his followers, such as: "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that takes away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also;" (Luke, 6:29); and, "love ye your enemies;" (Luke, 6:35).

The other stage is represented, too, in the Bible, as in, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me;" (Luke, 19:27) and, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father;" (Matthew, 10:3435).

The same mistake may happen if one only reads in the Qur'an Verses like, "Repel evil with what is better" (41:34), and "bear with patient constancy whatever betide you; for this is firmness of purpose in the conduct of affairs;" (31:17) without looking at Verses about the other situation.

**9. Fighting is not forbidden in all cases**, nor enjoined in all cases.

I am not saying that there is no occasion when fighting must take place. I am not an absolute pacifist. Fighting is an Islamic ruling, and there will often rise occasions when it must be engaged in. I am saying, however, that a Muslim must examine when fighting is to happen and when not.

I may say with assurance that we find, from reviewing history, that Muslims have not less committed the mistake of engaging in fighting when it was unwarranted as they failed to fight when it was necessary and enjoined.

**10. Muslims have never adopted** a coup d'état, though they do not declare it

Muslims do realize that things may not be changed through compulsion; and so they do not adopt the use of force to attain

rule. They do realize at some level that this is not the way, nor does one come across any coup d'état arranged for establishing Islamic life.

They did not do, however, what is necessary: to make it clear and plain that they do not resort to such means. In fact, many Muslims seem to consider employing violent means for establishing the Islamic life, though that remains at the level of reflections: it does not translate into action.

Let me add that many Muslims begin to realize, though still vaguely, that it is in vain to engage in such activities. But yet, they have no real way of bringing change to the souls of people though that is the beginning for any real change in any domain, political, economic, etc.

## EXAMPLES FROM THE PROPHETS' LIVES TO ILLUSTRATE THEIR SUFFERING HARM WITHOUT RETALIATING

### **What to do for establishing Islamic life?**

I quoted in the Preface examples from the Qur'an concerning the kind of work the prophets carried out in the way of establishing an Islamic society.

The general trend of the following texts is that the prophets' conflict with their peoples was never on account of their conspiring to assassinate or engage in any violence - it was merely that they declared: "Our Only Lord is God." Here are some texts:

"Has not the story reached you of those who went before you? — of the people of Noah, and 'Ad, and Thamud? — and of those who came after them? None knows them but Allah. To them came messengers with Clear Signs; but they put their hands up to their mouths, and said: 'We do deny the mission on which you have been sent, and we are really in suspicious doubt as to that to which you invite us.' Their messengers said: 'Is there doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? It is He Who invites you, in order that He may forgive you your sins and give you respite for a term appointed!' They said: 'Ah! You are no more than human, like ourselves! You wish to turn us away from the gods our fathers used to worship: then bring some clear authority.' Their messengers said to them: 'True, we are human like yourselves, but Allah grants His grace to such of His servants as He pleases. It is not for us to bring you an authority except as Allah permits. And on Allah let all men of faith put their trust. We do not have any reason why we should not put our trust on Allah. Indeed, He has guided us to the ways we follow. We shall certainly bear with patience all the hurt you may cause us. For those who put their trust should put their trust on Allah.' And the unbelievers said to their messengers: 'Be sure we shall drive you out of our land, or you shall return to our religion.' But their Lord inspired this Message to them: 'Verily We shall cause the wrong-doers to perish! And verily We shall cause you to abide in the land, and succeed them. This for



such as fear the Time when they shall stand before My tribunal – such as fear the Punishment denounced;" (14:9-14).

You see how what the prophets bore to their peoples was 'Clear Signs – *albayinginat* in Arabic' and the peoples' response was their saying: "We do deny the mission on which you have been sent"; and then the prophets replied: "We do not have any reason why we should not put our trust on Allah. Indeed, He has guided us to the ways we follow. We shall certainly bear with patience all the hurt you may cause us. For those who put their trust should put their trust on Allah.;" (14:11-12). And, again, the disbelievers replied: " Be sure we shall drive you out of our land, or you shall return to our religion.' But their Lord inspired this Message to them: 'Verily We shall cause the wrong-doers to perish!'" (14:13).

So, what we are doing is no more than to follow in the steps of prophets.

**Let us see this in Noah's work**, which he describes quite openly, as the Qur'an reports:

"Relate to them the story of Noah. Behold! He said to his people: 'O my People, if it be hard on your mind that I should stay with you and commemorate the Signs of Allah – yet I put my trust in Allah. You then get an agreement about your plan and among your partners, so your plan be not to you dark and dubious. Then pass your sentence on me, and give me no respite;" (10:71). Is it not clear that he had no intention or plot to overthrow the political situation? His only guilt was his calling to God and to His Message.

Rather than think of killing anybody, he was prepared to receive death at their hands in the way of his cause.

**And so it was in the case of Hud,** as the Qur'an reports:

"To the 'Ad people, We sent Hud, one of their own brethren: he said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him. Will you not fear Allah?' the leaders of the unbelievers among his people said: 'Ah! We see you are an imbecile!' and 'We think you are a liar!' He said: 'O my people! I am no imbecile, but I am a Messenger from the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds! I but fulfil toward you the duties of my Lord's mission: I am to you a sincere and trustworthy adviser;" (7:65-68) Hud is not offering to be slaughtered yet, because there was still hope.

It must be clear from the above that the religious missions needed for their success full and perfect delivery of God's words. You may not go beyond conveying the message and trying to bring people round to accept it – and if they do not, you may not go to compulsion, for you want people to believe not to pretend. For they might conspire to overthrow you one day.

**Here is the case of Moses.**

"Of old We sent Moses, with Our Signs and an Authority manifest; to Pharaoh, Haman, and Qarun; but they called him 'a sorcerer telling lies!' Now when he came to them in Truth from Us, they said: 'Slay the sons of those who believe with him, and keep alive their females,' but the plots of the unbelievers end in nothing but in errors and delusions! Said Pharaoh: 'Leave me to slay Moses, and let him call on his Lord! What I fear is lest he should change your

religion, or lest he should cause mischief to appear in the land!' Moses said: 'I have indeed called upon my and your Lord for protection from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Account!'" (40:23-27).

After the above argument, there intervenes a believer from Pharaoh's family – to put in the most succinct way Moses' message, and to show that this is Moses' only guilt - though it is not really a charge that should lead to his death:

"A believer, a man among the people of Pharaoh, who had concealed his faith, said: 'Will you slay a man because he says: "My Lord is God?" – when he has indeed come to you with Clear Signs from your Lord? and if he be a liar, on him is the sin of his lie; but, if he is telling the truth, then will fall on you something of the calamity of which he warns you: truly Allah does not guide one who transgresses and lies! O my people! Yours is the dominion this day: you have the upper hand in the land: but who will help us from the punishment of Allah, should it befall us?'" (40:28-29).

This believer put forward the essence of Moses' message - all summed up in giving up the worship of Pharaoh for the worship of God.

And it goes without saying that, had Moses had any secret plans, this believer would not have intervened by challenging the most tyrannical of rulers.

This may be further supported in Pharaoh's saying, as the Qur'an reports: "'Leave me to slay Moses, and let him call on his Lord! What I fear is lest he should change your religion, or lest he should cause mischief to appear in the land!'" (40:26), for you see here that no

charge against Moses was in Pharaoh's hands. His peaceful message had made a great impact on people's minds, and even Pharaoh's: you see how he had nothing to support his putting Moses' to death, and therefore he pleaded for people's permission to execute him.

Moses' way defied Pharaoh, despite all his arrogance and pride: Moses had nothing hidden to weaken his position – and Pharaoh did perceive that this call would not fail to stir the human conscience. Hence his charging Moses with having dangerous ideas that will usher society into a different way. Pharaoh was aware that his system, in all its corruption, could not survive the new system; that the Divine system put forth by Moses will get to the conscience of people. Things seemed to point to that, and Pharaoh felt anxious that things can escalate until his ruling system would collapse. Hence his request that people approve his putting Moses to death.

You will notice that Pharaoh would have liked to see Moses' resorting to force, for that would have easily justified his slaying him: that is the way with other dictators – all tyrants wish to cut things short by destroying the carriers of the true message.

Another thing to notice: that Pharaoh was trying hard to find in Moses history some sin to charge him with and defeat his call. Therefore, he reminded everybody that Moses was guilty of such sin; the Qur'an reports the scene like this, "Pharaoh said: 'Did we not cherish you as a child among us, and did you not stay in our midst many years of your life? And you did a deed of yours which you know you did, and you are an ungrateful wretch!'" (26:18-20).

In all this, Pharaoh was not so different from other tyrants. Do not modern dictators say to the leaders of opinion: "Have you not eaten

from the bounty of this land? How do you dare to challenge our system? Have we not been your benefactors? And now you forget all that?" Very similar to what Pharaoh said!

Many systems seem to take it as a given that to live under the shade of a system, one is enslaved by that system, and must obey blindly - but the prophets did not accept this principle. Therefore, Moses' reply was decisive, when Pharaoh charged him of repaying bounties with evil; and that even the event of killing a man by mistake, has nothing to do with this call; as the Qur'an reports: "Moses said: 'I did it then, when I was in error. So I fled from you all when I feared you; but my Lord has since invested me with judgment and wisdom and appointed me as one of the Messengers;'" (26:20-21).

As the examples indicate, it is crucial for the believer bearing a message of guidance to try the best he/she can to establish a pure condition for their mission. He/she must leave nothing to be punished or executed for but his/her faith: for that he/she would be happy to die.

We may find this in Shuaib's call, as the Qur'an reports:

"The leaders, the arrogant party among his people, said: 'O Shuaib! We shall certainly drive you out of our city — you and those who believe with you, or else you and they shall have to return to our ways and religion.' He said: 'What! Even though we do detest them? We should indeed invent a lie against Allah, if we returned to your ways after Allah has rescued us therefrom; nor could we by any manner or means return thereto unless it be as in the will and plan of Allah, our Lord. Our Lord can reach out to the utmost recesses of things by His Knowledge. In Allah is our trust. Our Lord! you decide between us and our people in truth, for You are the best to decide;'" (7:88-89). No reason did Shuaib leave for his people to banish him if

he does not revert to his people's religion - nothing but his adopting a different doctrine. You may see with what courage he said: " We should indeed invent a lie against Allah, if we returned to your ways after Allah has rescued us therefrom; " (7:79).

We have a similar situation in the case of Jesus Christ; let's read about that:

"And Allah will teach him the Book and wisdom, the Law and the Gospel, and appoint him a Messenger to the Children of Israel, with this message: 'I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave: and I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by Allah's leave; and I declare to you what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you, if you did believe; and I have come to you, to attest the Law which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was before forbidden to you; I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear Allah, and obey me. It is Allah Who is my Lord and your Lord; then worship Him. This is a Way that is straight.' When Jesus found unbelief on their part, he said: 'Who will be my helpers, to the work of Allah?' Said the Disciples: 'We are Allah's helpers; we believe in Allah, and you bear witness that we are Muslims,'" (3:48-52).

At this stage, Jesus would not allow the use of arms, as we read in the Bible, Matthew, 26: "And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, 'Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword,'" (Mat. 26:51-52).

And now we come to **the example of Muhammad**, peace be upon him. Of course, we have the fullest detail about Muhammad among all prophets. Also, the Messenger had occasion to illustrate the right way to spreading the Message, both before he had authority and after.

It may be noticed that before there was an independent Muslim society, the Prophet did not direct his Companions to engage in any kind of violence or fighting. Never before Muslims had their independent and distinctive society. Only after he was ruler through Muslims and over Muslims.

Let me add something, too. Even after the establishment of an independent and distinctive Muslim society, killing is not an open affair. For instance, no one may be slain after he/she declares their embracing Islam, even when it is out of lip-service alone. Many *hadiths*, Traditions, exist concerning this point. Once the Prophet was very stern with Usamah, who had killed an enemy in battle after the latter uttered the statement of Islam – "Why not cut out his heart to see whether he said it from heart?" he said. We have also Verses of the Qur'an like: "O you who believe! When go abroad in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully, and do not say to any one who offers you a salutation: 'You are not a believer!' coveting the perishable goods of this life: with Allah are profits and spoils abundant. Even thus were you yourselves before, till Allah conferred on you His favors: therefore carefully investigate. For Allah is well aware of all that you do;" (4:94). It may be noticed in the above Verse that the Lord is charging those who kill someone after hearing a declaration of Islam from him/her that they do it for worldly benefit.

And back to the time before the Muslims had their own society, Muslims were explicitly ordered to restrain themselves from any aggressive move, not even in retaliation. One Verse of the Qur'an says about that: "Have you not turned your vision to those who were told to hold back their hands from fight but establish regular prayers and spend in regular charity? When at length the order for fighting was issued to them, behold! A section of them fear men as - or even more than - they feared Allah;" (4:77).

Ibn Kathir comments on the above Verse as follows:

"While believers were in Mecca at the beginning of the Islamic call they were commanded to pray and pay zakat .. On the other hand, they were commanded to forgive and overlook the idolaters' ill-treatment, and to be patient for the time being. The believers were impatient and anxious to be allowed to be even with their enemies .. [then he says] A number of Companions of the Prophet said: "Abdul-Rahman bin Auf among others came to the Prophet in Mecca and said: "We were in a respected position while we were idolaters; but here are we Muslim and without respect;" but he, the Prophet, replied:

"I have been commanded to forgive, so do not fight them."

"It was after he migrated to Medina that the Prophet was commanded to fight."

Sheikh Rashid Rida says this concerning the same Verse:

"It was definitely against the inherited habits of Arabs, who were accustomed to raid and fight, and to take revenge, that God ordered the believers to hold back their hands and abstain from aggression: instead they were commanded to pray and pay zakat, which develop the sentiments of compassion and humanity. Some longed to be permitted to fight .. To them, not to retaliate was submissive .." What we have in



the above commentaries is a decisive command to Muslims to abstain from fighting in the period prior to establishing the independent Muslim state.

This goes with a law that must be binding in all human societies: that persuasion comes first - only later, once the state is established and the law has been approved and endorsed by society, it becomes compulsory to obey it. No compulsion may take place before approval.

It may be helpful in this context to refer to an event in which a conspiracy took place to assassinate Liaqat Ali Khan, the current Prime Minister of Pakistan [at the time this book was published], and Abul-Ala al-Maududi commented:

"Nothing is more ill-omened in any state than that the right of justice and giving a sentence is issued away from rationality, knowledge, and the public opinion. No nation behaves more against its own advantage, in really a mad way, than when the rule and judgment are not up to the judge but up to the sword, which is literally blind. Unless we wish our future to be black and grim, we must stand most decisively and with all the power we can muster against the country's sliding to that dangerous abyss, which threatens the very texture of the country." (*The Crisis of the Muslim Society of Pakistan*; pp. 32-33 (in the Arabic translation).

As you see from all the supporting references that the dividing line is quite decisive between the situation before a legitimately installed ruler and after that installation. The Messenger, peace be upon him, never tired of offering to join a tribe that can ensure Islamic rule for him, and never engaged in a violent action before he attained that status.

And the permission did come after the Islamic society was firmly and independently established – as we see in the following Verse of the Qur'an: "To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged - and verily, Allah is Most Powerful for their aid – They are those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right - for no cause except that they say: 'Our Lord is Allah'" (22:39-40).

It was clear to everybody that the Muslims did not give the idolaters of Mecca any pretext to penalize them for engaging in violent action.

You may notice how they, the Quraishi idolaters, jumped at the event of the killing of Ibn al-Hadrami (after the Badr Battle), pointing out that Muslims killed him in a non-fighting month. We find that the Qur'an did not justify the killing; let's read: "They ask you concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: 'Fighting therein is a grave offence; but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Month, and drive out its members.' Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter;"(2:216). Let us especially focus on " Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; " which emphasizes that the persecution the Muslims were subjected to was more trying than that much publicized killing. The Muslims was subjected to so much persecution that some did revert to their disbelief.

In fact, the average Muslim does know many instances of the torture the Muslims were subjected to at the hands of the Quraishi arrogant dignitaries. Bilal might be the most celebrated case:

His master, Umayyah bin Khalaf, used to bring Bilal out at the hottest time of the day, and stretch him on his back on the hot sand; then he had a huge rock placed on his chest. Then he said, "You will be like that until death - or you disbelieve in Muhammad, and declare your belief in al-Lat and al-Uzzah (their main idols)." Under all the torture Bilal said: "One God! One God;" while in this ordeal, Waraqah bin Nawfal used to pass by and say: "Yes, Bilal! It is One God! One God!" Then he turned to his tormentors and said: "By God! If you put him to death, I will celebrate his name!"

As you see, it was pure faith and call to God in the Muslims' case. No one was able to charge the early believers of more.

The Servant of God 'i.e. Muhammad,' as asserted in the Qur'an, had no guilt but his call to his Lord; he sought no support beyond putting forth his Message in the best expression; we read: "Yet when the Devotee of Allah stands forth to invoke Him, they just make round him a dense crowd. Say: 'I do no more than invoke my Lord, and I do not join with Him any false god.' Say: 'It is not in my power to cause you harm, or to bring you to right conduct.' Say: 'No one can deliver me from Allah if I were to disobey Him, nor should I find refuge except in Him, unless I proclaim what I receive from Allah and His Messages: for any that disobey Allah and His Messenger - for them is Hell: they shall dwell therein for ever.' At length, when they see with their own eyes that which they are promised - they will know who it is that is weaker in his helper and least important in point of numbers;" (72:19-24).

As a conclusion to all the above we may say: the work of a caller to any faith is distinct from the work of a judge.

As it is manifest in the Qur'an, the caller to the way of God should follow the way of the prophets, and their method was to focus on proclaiming the clear Message: it is indeed the only way to God at any time: the only way to having people join the way of God.

### **The charge levelled against the prophets**

It has been shown vividly enough above that the prophets' opponents could not come upon another charge but their call to God Alone, without an associate. It was the same, too, in calling the pre-Islamic society. One obstacle for the callers to the way of God at present is their difficulty in determining whether the society they are dealing with is a non-Muslim society, quite disbelieving? Or a believing society? To what extent?

## **Guidance of A Disbelieving Society and A Deluded Society**

I am aware of some writers' defining this society as a '*jahiliyyah*, i.e. disbelieving' society, or an apostate society, etc. I will not enter into that dispute - for the remedy is indeed the same in all cases: the remedy is really the same - nothing is required of us but to give advice, to call to the Way of God, to undertake what the Qur'an describes as the clear proclamation the Message. Let us mention some Verses of the Qur'an concerning this 'clear delivery of the Message':

"If you do turn back, you should know that it is Our Messenger's duty to proclaim the Message in the clearest manner;" (5:92)

"But if they turn back, your duty is to convey the Message; "  
(3:20)

"The Messenger's duty is but to proclaim the Message" (5:99)

"But what is the mission of the messengers but to preach the clear message? " (16:35)

"The duty of the Messenger is only to preach publicly and clearly;" (29:18).

And, in the same manner as the prophets carried out 'the clear proclamation of the message' we find that, even with any slackness in observing the commands of God, the method is the same: "And our duty is only to proclaim the clear message;" (36:17)

"O Messenger! Proclaim the Message which has been sent to you from your Lord. if you did not, you would not have fulfilled and proclaimed His Mission;" (5:67)

"It is the practice of those who preach the Messages of Allah, and fear Him, and fear none but Allah. And enough is Allah to call men to account;" (33:39)

"Say: 'No one can deliver me from Allah if I were to disobey Him, nor should I find refuge except in Him, unless I proclaim what I receive from Allah and His Messages;" (72:22-23).

### **The necessity of not suppressing the truth**

We recite in the Qur'an:

"Those who conceal the clear Signs We have sent down, and Guidance, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book – on them shall be Allah's curse, and the curse of those entitled to curse – except those who repent and make amends and openly declare the

Truth: to them I turn, for I am Oft-Returning, Most Merciful;" (2:159-160)

"He has only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name has been invoked beside that of Allah. But if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits – then is he guiltless, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Those who conceal Allah's revelations in the Book, and purchase for them a miserable profit -- they swallow into themselves nothing but Fire; Allah will not address them on the Day of Resurrection, nor purify them: grievous will be their Penalty. They are the ones who buy error in place of Guidance and torment in place of Forgiveness. Ah! What boldness they show for the Fire! Their doom is because Allah sent down the Book in truth but those who seek causes of dispute in the Book are in schism far from the purpose;" (2:173-176).

It may be noted that to suppress the truth is treated in the Qur'an as one of the gravest sins; not even is the threat for failing to pray equal to the suppressing of Truth.

And, let it be quite clear, that both in the case of calling people to enter Islam and in warning Muslims not to commit sins, it is the clear conveying of the truth which is the means, as we have seen in the Qur'an.

For even preserving a society from decay and decline, the way is this call with words - as the Qur'an says, "Let there be no compulsion in religion;" (2:256). Violence is not the way, neither in calling to Islam nor in preserving Islam in its best shape. Such penal measures as *hudud* and *jihad* are not part of the call to Islam, but for eliminating injustice.

So, we have three situations, all remedied with 'Clear Proclamation of the Message':

1. Work to establish a Muslim society, to convert it from a deluded situation to an Islamic situation – the way is 'Clear Proclamation of the Message'. It is evident in *Surah 21*, especially in the case of Muhammad's, peace be upon him, mission.
2. Work to reform a perverted society: the way is again 'Clear Proclamation of the Message';
3. Work to preserve and maintain the Muslim society – the way is here also 'Clear Proclamation of the Message': Indeed, had the scholars and preachers not neglected this duty, the Muslim society would not have collapsed.

When Muslims fail to resist the false way with 'clear proclamation of the Message', they turn to force as the remedy; but indeed, the way of violence has led to only impeding the call to Islam.

It is especially in connection with the third situation, where the Muslim society is there, when the executive authority is in the hands of a certain power, that the Muslim should not consider any means of bringing about some desired change except through the 'clear proclamation of the Message'.

#### THE NECESSITY OF THE MUSLIM'S BRINGING HIMSELF/HERSELF TO REVIVING THE METHOD OF 'CLEAR PROCLAMATION'

As you see, unless those concerned with seeing Islam revived do their share through conveying the Islamic Message, unless they adopt the 'clear proclamation' as the right approach, they will choose one of two alternatives:

1. To be in ambush, in waiting for the right opportunity;
2. To wait, perhaps for ever, to see reform taking place without their own contributing anything.

The right attitude of the Muslim is to declare what he/she knows to be right, fearing none and nothing in the Way of God. And in that endeavor, he/she must accept no alternative but either triumph or martyrdom. It will be noted that this kind of battle can continue for all time, for it requires no weapons. Also, an individual can decide to work without waiting for anybody's support.

To support the above arguments, about the right policy for the future of Islam, we have quite an abundance of *hadiths*. Here are some:

1. Abdullah bin Amr bin al-'As narrates (as reported by Muslim):  
"We were once with the Messenger, peace be on him, on a journey, and were scattered everywhere, when a summoner called, on behalf of the Prophet: "You should come for a speech of the Prophet's!" Then the Messenger, peace be upon him said: "No Prophet before me but was bound to point out any good for his people, and warn them of any evil he knew of. Now, this *Ummah* of yours will have its best time early on; later generations will be suffering hardships, and some will be involved in behaviors that you feel quite against what you have learned. There will be a *fitnah* (a time of troubles and



tribulation) that will drive the *Ummah* to be shattered; then a second that is so severe that the believer will say: "This will certainly be my destruction;" then there will be another, then another, and every time the believer will say: "This, definitely this, will be the end of me." So, let him/her who wishes to be kept clear of Hell and to enter Paradise, meet their death believing in God and the Last Day; and let them do to people what they would people do to them. And if one has given fealty to a ruler, and then another comes to dispute the first ruler's position, then strike off the claimant's head."

2. Another *hadith*, also in *Sahih Muslim*.

Ubadah bin al-Walid, reported from his father, and then his grandfather, that the latter said: "We vowed to the Messenger of God, to adhere to hearing and obeying, in good times and adverse times, when we like it and when we dislike it, and when we are discriminated against; not to be in dispute with those in a leading position their authority; and to speak out what is true, wherever we might be, not fearing in the Way of God any censurer's censure."

3. Junadah bin Abu Umayyah narrates: I visited Ubadah bin al-Samet when he was sick, and we said: "Will you, God bless you, tell us a *hadith* you heard from the Messenger of God, peace be upon him?" "We were summoned by the Messenger, peace be upon him," he said, "and we gave him fealty. One of the things he had us pledge was to hear and obey, whether we felt like or not, in good times and in adverse times, and when

we were discriminated against; and not to dispute the authority of those in a ruling position - and he added - unless you see open disbelief, you can prove before God."

4. We also find in *Sahih Muslim*, narrated by Um Salamah, that the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said:

"There will be rulers; and they will do things that agree with what you know to be right, and things that disagree with what you know to be right. To know is to be innocent; and to denounce is to be on the safe side. It will be otherwise with those who approve and follow." Some said: "Should not we fight them?" "No," he said, "as long as they observe prayer."

5. In *Sunan Abu Dawud* and *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* we have:

Abu Said said, the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said: "One of the greatest ways of doing *jihad* is to declare what is right before a tyrannical ruler."

6. In *Sahih Muslim*, we have:

Hathaifa bin al-Yaman says: People used to inquire of the Messenger about what is good, while I used to ask about what is evil, lest I get involved with it. I said once: "O Messenger of God! We used to be in *jahiliyyah* (pre-Islam aberration), an evil situation; and here has God given us this good 'i.e. Islam'. So, will there be evil after this good?" "Yes," he said. "Well," I said, "and will there be good after

this evil?" "Yes," he said, "but with some adverse element."

"And what is that adverse element?" I said.

"It is people," he said, "who choose a way other than mine, who give guidance other than mine; people who put forth what you agree with and what to disagree with." "And will there be evil after that good?" I said. "Yes," he said, "There will be callers calling people to Hell's gates; and anyone who heeds them, they will hurl him into it." "Will you," I said, "Messenger of God, define them for us." "Well, they look like us, and talk our tongue," he said. "So, what do you, Messenger of God," I said, "command me to do if that caught up with me?" "You adhere," he said, "to the Muslim congregation, and to their leader." "But what if," I said, "there is no congregation and no leader?" "Well," he said, "in that case, you keep aloof from all those factions, even if you need to hold, hand and teeth, to the base of a tree until death overtakes you like this."

In another version, mentioned by Muslim, about defining and identifying those people, one finds: "they are people who do not observe my way; people with hearts like the devils" he said. "So, what should I do, Messenger of God, if I catch up with this?" "You hear and obey the leader," he said, "even if he lashes at your back and confiscates your money; you just hear and obey."

From the above *hadiths*, we may deduce:

1. The Messenger, peace be upon him, was careful to point out to his *Ummah* whatever good he knew of, and whatever evil he knew of;
2. He was keen to point out how to behave if one had given fealty to a leader, and then another came to dispute the position of the earlier;
3. The Prophet's Companions had the principle clear: no obedience in defiance of obedience to God, and to obey in contradiction with God's obedience is a disobedience of God;
4. Not to challenge the position of those who are in authority;
5. It is permitted to dispute the position of those in authority if they commit an act of disbelief which one is ready to prove when they meet their Lord;
6. No fighting of the ruler, if at least he keeps up prayer;
7. One of the greatest forms of *jihad* is to say a word of truth before a tyrannical ruler;
8. A Muslim is to hear and obey, anything that does not clash with disobedience of God, even if one receives lashes in the back, and their money is taken away.

And to sum up, we have two most serious things:

One is accepting truth without any conditions, and taking it upon oneself to hold to it;

The other is that it is permissible to dispute with those in control of the political power, with a very strict proviso - that we see utter disbelief, which we may prove before God.

But I may add here that Muslims have reversed these two rules: they view the first rule with great reservation, as if it is as serious and delicate as the second rule. They treat the two things as equal.

At the same time, Muslims only evaluate the second issue from a subjective point of view.

They might not be aware that things actually happen not according to our personal views, but they have their neutral and objective laws, and they will have their outcome according to those laws.

#### THE MUSLIM'S ELUSIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS PLAIN DISBELIEF

We need to focus more on this 'plain disbelief', for I am aware that people have many varied ways of viewing it. One may observe the contradictions, too: when we say in some connections, that we are not Muslim except as appears on our official ID; and, in another connection, we say that Muhammad's *Ummah* is all right.

But I would urge the Muslim youth to look a little more deeply: I would like them to notice how the same person permits himself/herself to charge someone with disbelief, but, when asked publicly, they would not commit themselves to charge with disbelief persons who, no matter how nominally, assert their being Muslim.

And that is why the Prophet's *hadith* warns that when you charge someone of disbelief, it must be a charge which you can defend before

God. That such charge is not publicly announced is an indication that we do not know exactly where to stand.

Let us notice two phenomena:

One is that disbelief is not publicly declared in the Muslim part of the world - and you see how, no matter what a ruler's real beliefs are, he does not dare to declare his disbelief: the norms of the region are too binding.

The other phenomenon is the converse of the first, that a person who wishes to proselytize to Islam in non-Islamic parts has great difficulty declaring their Islamic faith.

In all the above, we have the commonly quoted aphorism: "Your rulers are a reflection of you." This must teach the young Muslim that the rulers do not just strike on their own way independently of the Muslim community – they really keep closely to the road expected by the community: not more and not less. Even when you say of someone that they keep firmly to the revealed faith, this must be understood to be the faith as the environment dictates it.

From this we go on to say that the real adversary of Islam is the Muslims' conception of Islam.

For instance, if we had a clear rule for marking off the area of disbelief, as may be deduced from a Verse of the Qur'an as: "But no, by your Lord, they can have no real faith, until they make you judge in all disputes between them;" (4:65) we would have changed the rules of the game: not the bitterest tyrant will be able to overstep a limit commonly understood to be the dividing line between belief and disbelief. By just seeing this, the Muslim will realize that it is not the physical power that they seem to crave that is the great point of strength, but realizing that the dictators dread our accepted concepts

more than we dread their power. But, as in every sector, the Muslim is not aware of the great points of strength in their hands.

It is such hard work before us, to reveal to the Muslim the real source of power, especially this ability of declaring truth, the words of justice, which the Prophet asserted that it is the greatest form of *jihad*. One feels the weight of an iceberg that needs to be moved before such simple truths settle firmly in the Muslim mind.

I hope we can analyze our attitudes and values, as the Qur'an teaches us to do when it says, to those who inquire: wherefrom originate our catastrophe? "It is from yourselves;" (3:165).

#### THE SOURCE OF THESE TWO ATTITUDES

The above two attitudes: the charge of terrorism; and the Muslims' positions concerning this charge, both stem from not understanding Islam, or misunderstanding Islam: The behavior of many Muslims shows, though without their perceiving it, a kind of finding fault with Islam, in a way that the Muslim often has another doctrine as his/her ideal.

#### THE CHARGE OF TERRORISM AND MUSLIMS' REACTIONS

The charge of terrorism is one of the most serious charges levelled against the workers for Islam. Of course, those who level such charge, all kinds of enemies to Islamic work, are careful to present the

Islamic activity in the way that seems to them most effective in debilitating the Muslim. And it is the Muslim workers who need to rise up to the challenge.

That will happen through their adopting an open and clear attitude, in both declaration and action, in a way that they make it crystal clear to everybody that they do not embrace acts of violence – that their policy is confined to conveying the truth, and that this is the way for establishing this great religion.

The Islamic workers have three reactions to the charge of terrorism.

**One group** take it as right, and maybe obligatory, that they carry out acts of violence. And the adversaries of this group suppress it with the utmost severity, claiming that these people are *khawarij* and terrorists. They often can enlist the support of traditional Muslims, and it is really a most fierce and costly war.

**Another group** are those who do not embrace violence, but it can be brought up against them. This second group do not really believe in resorting to violence, for the time being at least, but are not brave enough to declare that they adopt nothing but peaceful work, that they do not need violence to call to Islam.

This group, though they are not involved in any act of violence, have not been keen to keep the atmosphere clear. In this way they keep it possible for those who would like to crack down on them to prepare the charge of violence. It happens that the Islamic workers are most good-hearted, often to the point of naivety, and so it is possible for the other to take advantage of that to level the charge of violence.



**The third group** are those who neither adopt violence, nor can they be charged of it.

That is because they leave no doubt as to their position: they neither hold the ideas of the first group, nor are they as naive and vague as the second. They proceed with their eyes open to facts. They have established their way and made it well-known through acts and declaration. This was so with the first generations of Islam.

I do realize that this development of a pure atmosphere for the Islamic worker is not an easy task: it will require a lot of courage, in first declaring the principle and then adhering to it through thick and thin. Those who choose this road must have a lot of forbearance. But then, it is the way, and it is how the battle with falsehood must be waged. But, yet, I guess that most Islamic workers do not imagine this way to be even possible - that is the result of the many negative experiences behind us.

Maybe the most clear-said about this in the modern age is Abul Ala al-Maududi – he declared his position clearly enough and boldly enough. Nor did he seem to dread any risk as a result of his declarations.

Let me sum up what has been said in this chapter.

Those who wish to charge Islamic workers with all evil charges will not find all those workers equally easy to convict or to blacken their reputation.

A Muslim worker for Islam must not only be good: he/she must not be ignorant of how things happen – he/she must not leave a chance

for others to level any charge against them except their belief in God and disbelief in the evil powers.

But what happens at present is that Muslims may be divided into three divisions:

1. Those who adjust themselves to any situation that occupies the scene; their idea in this is to just accept what comes their way;
2. Another group adhere to truth without compromise; but these have not really stood on their feet;
3. A third group may be said to be in between, a hesitant group, who are too uncertain of anything to settle on a road. They have no perception of the kind of events that pushed them out of the field. They are not happy with being idle; they are anxious and in pain, but are torn between different powers.

# SOME DOUBTS CONCERNING THIS METHOD AND THEIR REFUTATION

FIRST DOUBT:

THAT IT IS A SUSPENSION OF *JIHAD*

This is really the major doubt levelled against the Way of Adam's Upright Son; it is also the most serious.

But I hope to demonstrate that this doubt is based on illusory preconceptions; that it is still common because of the erroneous legacy that has accumulated over centuries. I hope the reader remembers the distinction I made between the effort to establish a Muslim society, and the tasks of a Muslim state after it has been established. In the former stage, it is not legitimate *jihad* to bear arms and rise against the authority, and in the latter, it is *jihad* within the right conditions.

It must be clear by now that, for some individuals to decide to issue a sentence of death against somebody is not *jihad*. It is most unfortunate that some workers for Islam assume that this religion will not be accepted except through forcing it on people. Are we saying that no evidence may be put forward to win people to Islam? Is this how God created humans?

It is silly, at the same time, that for Islam to be established, it is enough to utter some nice words, some rosy speeches and writings. I am far from calling Muslims to give in to the powers of falsehood - but there is a big difference between submitting to the powers of disbelief

and tyranny and plotting against them in secret - what we are advocating here is this: to declare your disbelief in false ways and beliefs, to be proud of declaring that only God is your Lord, most plainly and unequivocally – before the whole world.

It is this last group, those who have shown the necessary courage to declare their faith, as vividly as they can: it is these that will attract the support of free souls and consciences: it must be made most clear that their only guilt is their belief in the only Lord. And a society will rise on that basis.

The Muslim must feel content that *jihad* will continue to the end of life on earth. *Jihad* in the sense of bearing arms and fighting is however not to be engaged in except after the Muslim society has been established. Before that, the way to follow is that of all prophets. And let us remember that, as asserted in an authentic hadith, a brave word before a tyrant is counted as the best *jihad*.

It is as the Qur'an teaches us, once truth comes, falsehood will disappear; we read: "Say: "Truth has now arrived, and falsehood perished: for falsehood is by its nature bound to perish;" (17:81) and "Nay, We hurl the Truth against falsehood and it knocks out its brain, and behold, falsehood perishes;" (21:18).

## THE SECOND DOUBT

THAT THIS SUPERIOR MORALITY IS USELESS WITH  
THOSE WHO DO NOT ADOPT IT

Some do argue, that: "Yes, it is superior morality what you call to: but it is of no use in this life, a life full of unprincipled people."

Well, for a reply, I would refer the Muslims to such a Verse of the Qur'an as: "Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel Evil with what is better: then will he between whom and you was hatred, become as it were your friend and intimate!" (41:34) It is the hard way, to have this patience, but the reward is great, as we read in the next Verse: "And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint – none but persons of the greatest good fortune;" (41:35).

This second doubt cannot be true, for how would you distinguish who is good and who is wicked if you insist that people must be compelled: do not humans have their intellect?

So, let us not follow the ways of falsehood, by believing that people will not submit to truth except through coercion. For we are calling to Islam, which does not accept opportunistic ways: it has its most clear principle, and let only those who believe join it.

### THIRD DOUBT

THAT TO INVITE TO TRUTH WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF  
FORCE WILL BRING IN NO FRUIT

We hear some people say: "To declare the truth without force behind you will only lead to people's ignoring you completely – people will only listen to that who has the whip in his hand. It is no use trying to call to the Way of God with only words: force is vital to your success."

But this is not what we find in the Qur'an and its narration of the experiences of the prophets. You had better consider this statement about Abraham: "There is for you an excellent example to follow in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people: 'We are clear of you and of whatever you worship beside Allah: we have rejected you, and there has arisen, between us and you, enmity and hatred for ever - unless you believe in Allah And Him alone;" (60:4). It is as you see a most decisive declaration.

And see the Messenger Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the effect of his words:

"Yet when the Servant of Allah stands forth to invoke Him, they just make round him a dense crowd. Say: 'I do no more than invoke my Lord, and do join with Him any false god.' Say: 'It is not in my power to cause you any harm, or to bring you to right conduct;' Say: 'None one can deliver me from Allah if I were to disobey Him, nor should I find refuge except in Him, unless I proclaim what I receive from Allah and His Message: for any that disobey Allah and His Messenger - for them is Hell: they shall dwell therein for ever;" (72:19-23).

It is only that many Muslims treat force as a divinity, and they deem the conveying of the message of truth as of little worth in comparison. They are mistaken on two counts:

One is assuming that some honeyed words uttered to win the favor of the advocates of falsehood is working for Islam;

The other is assuming that verbal declaration of the truth of religion is not in itself sufficient to produce great effects and bring about a transformation of conditions.

Let us recall that, as soon as Waraqah bin Nawfal heard of the kind of Message the Messenger bore, he concluded that his people will banish him from their town. And he added: "No one who bore a message like that but was met with enmity."

Abu al-'Ala Almaududi was one who understood what it meant to call to the way of God with words. He wrote (p. 107 of his *Theory and Guidance of Islam*):

"You see the azan-callers raising their voice in azan, five times a day, and they declare: 'I testify that there is no god but God,' and you see people in all their races and classes pass by, caring nothing for that call. It is so since neither the caller realizes what he is calling about, nor the hearers realize the noble and far-reaching call. But it would be otherwise if the world realized the truth behind this call, and that the caller calls it with resolution, the world would be in great turmoil. Imagine how the world, which has long been fed with the stuff of non-belief would react if they perceived the full significance of what the azan-caller is proclaiming - he is virtually saying: 'No ruler do I acknowledge but God, no King but God. I surrender to no government, nor to a constitution, and no law, but God's; and no court has authority over me - not one command do I listen to but that of God. Nor do I adopt any of the inherited traditions that contradict the doctrine of Islam, nor do I recognize any private privileges, nor do I concede any

lordship or sacredness, nor do I bow down before any of the haughty and arrogant authorities of the earth, rebellious against truth. I am a believer in God: I surrender to Him; and I declare my disbelief in all evil-mongers and false gods.' Do you think that the world would hear that, if they had fathomed its full significance and keep silent? No, no.

"They will be a bitter enemy of the caller; their faces will be grim with malice, just at hearing these words. Even when they know for sure that he has no intention of bearing arms against any party, they will be sure to fight him, and plot all kinds of mischief against him. The whole world will be like scorpions and snakes against this caller of azan."

#### FOURTH DOUBT

#### THAT ONE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CALL TO TRUTH WITHOUT FORCE BEHIND THEM

Some will say: "If you insist on adopting this way, and persist in declaring truth and calling to the way of truth, without force behind your back - you will just be captured most silently. No one will hear of you any more. You may be forced to deny your call, and you may be given a death sentence; with false charges levelled against you. And this means you will have wasted your efforts." And they will cite perhaps some instances to support their position.

This doubt of course complements the previous one. And I may add that it is jealous young people who declare these doubts, young



people who are keen to see Islam spread and have control – which indicates how deep the vagueness runs in our midst. Though their objections are only based on illusions and false concepts.

I hope it is clear by now that to call to the way of truth will not leave the world as it is: there will certainly be a great uproar and concern. And the caller can expect all kinds of retaliation.

And I would like to remind the reader of my previous listing of the three categories of Islamic workers: this must indicate how inadequate our efforts have been so far in purifying the atmosphere, and leaving no doubt as to our cause. We really can keep declaring and expounding things until we leave no doubt, and those who wish to charge us with false charges fail in staining our names.

## THE FIFTH DOUBT

### THAT THIS METHOD KILLS THE SPIRIT OF *JIHAD*

We hear some say: "Do you not see that not much of the spirit of *jihad* remains; and your method will really stifle the little remaining of the spirit of *jihad*."

It is true that, according to this way, there is no *jihad*, in the sense of fighting, until after the Muslim society and the legitimately elected ruler are there. But have they not noticed that to call Muslims to *jihad* before that is calling them to the impossible: why have them cling their craving to something that is not possible at the moment? This really

kills the spirit of *jihad* more than the other. Let us instead urge the Muslim to do what he/she can do. And this is what this book is trying to do.

Many can, though very few do, adopt the principle of calling to the way of truth as individuals, and accept the consequence. The outcome of this way is a purely win-win situation. Our right way is to bring truth to the notice and understanding of people, until a society is established on this basis, and any fighting may come after that.

#### THE SIXTH DOUBT

##### THAT IT IS FEAR WHICH IS BEHIND THIS WAY

Is it not out of fear, some say, that you adopt this way? Is it not weakness?

No one would say this, indeed, unless they have perceived nothing of this way. It is really a most positive way, and a most efficient way.

It is after one has studied what is a human, and what is truth, that they will perceive how fruitful and efficient this way is.

#### THE SEVENTH DOUBT

##### THAT IT IS AN EVASION OF ONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

This is not very different from the previous doubt.

One thing to say in reply is that yes, it is true that we do not wish to be exposed to injury – but it is when injury is inflicted as penalty for acts which might be said to be acts of aggression. To fear committing such aggressive deeds and receive retaliation for that is the right kind of fear.

Another reply is that for him who works according to this way it will not go without difficulty and hardship – this does not go with accusing such person of being cowardly. It may be admitted, however, that the hardship here is much less than when it is the way of violence that some advocate.

## THE EIGHTH DOUBT

### THAT KA'AB BIN AL-ASHRAF WAS ASSASSINATED

That the Messenger, peace be upon him, arranged for and approved of the assassination of Ka'ab bin al-Ashraf. But I think those who have read the material of this book cannot but realize that the situation in which that man was killed is different from that we are discussing here.

Let us remember that the Muslim society was a standing fact when the Messenger, peace be upon him, ordered that: There was a

Muslim state, with the Prophet at its head. We do not attack the arrangement of sending commando soldiers to the enemies' camp for some dangerous action: this must be when it is the legal state who commands them, and there is a state of war. Not the society before it has taken its identity as an independent entity: not under the most adverse conditions. You may recall how the Messenger, peace be upon him, and his Companions suffered in Mecca.

## THE NINTH DOUBT

### THAT THIS WAY WILL SEND TERROR AMONG MUSLIMS

They also say that this method sends terror into people's hearts and drives them away from their spiritual leaders.

Yes, it is quite our duty to take care of people and not to leave them outside the conflict – it is indeed the problem of problems that the Muslim masses remain outside the conflict: it is far more beneficial to have them share in the Islamic work. So, yes, it is vital to have the common people contribute to the work, but the way to this is to overcome the ignorance of people – you see how helpless the elite seem in connection with trying to stimulate and educate those masses.

The point is, then, that there is no enemy worse than this intellectual stagnation, and its visible result of inertia. So there, in that direction, must all our efforts be directed.

One may add that a main element of increasing the oppression of Islamic workers is that they are without the support of the main body of the *Ummah*; they go out by themselves to face the struggle. All that they receive from the common people is some half-hearted sympathy. It is as was said long ago: Those people's hearts are with you and their swords are against you.

Nor does it avail to say: "We work for God, sincerely for Him, and that is enough." No, it does not avail, for sincerity is necessary, and *in addition* work must be in accordance with God's laws.

Indeed, this, the doubt raised here brings us face to face with the pivot of the whole issue: It is that what has brought people to feel terrified and to choose to distance themselves from the Islamic missionary work is that this work has failed to affirm, in the most coherent terms, that it is free from any violence or coercion: it is this that caused all the hardship, and it is really the crux of our discussion.

What this book is trying to affirm is that the Muslim can adhere to his/her Islam, can show all the necessary patience and forbearance and endurance: by just leaving the others no way of charging him/her of anything but their being Muslim – this will give them a much stronger position than a charge of plotting for a coup.

THE TENTH DOUBT

THEIR SAYING HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF FOR NOTHING

I was once expounding things in a meeting, and I quoted an authentic hadith which says, "The best form of *jihad* is to declare a word of truth before a tyrannical ruler." I started to explain that the Prophet, peace be upon him, is not saying that the person is carrying a sword or a spear – he/she is rather going to the tyrant with his/her chest exposed to declare the truth. One of those present said: "Are you saying that he goes to him to be slaughtered like a sheep?"

You see how little good Muslims attach to the moral strength of uttering the truth: the utterer is deemed to go so cheap. But is not the Prophet, peace be upon him, taking such a person to have done the best *jihad*? Is not there something wrong when the modern Muslim takes the same person honored by the Prophet as selling himself/herself for nothing, like a sheep?

It is like this, that we have concepts which keep letting us down. And we allow such concepts to survive, not doing our best to uproot them.

We seem not to realize that offering one's life to affirm the true cause is not for nothing: it is this really that which will rally people around the work for God. The Qur'an alerts us to this when it narrates how a relative of Pharaoh said, "Will you slay a man because he says, 'My Lord is God?'" (40:28).

## THE ELEVENTH DOUBT

## THAT THIS WAY REFLECTS THE ADVOCATE'S RASHNESS AND PRECIPITATES MATTERS

You sometimes hear contradictory doubts concerning this work - no wonder, since our life is replete with contradictions. About this point, we do hear those who assert that this kind of work is reckless and risky and leads people to disasters. But this doubt is usually quite temporary.

For it is evident that if people are still not familiar with the notion that "truth is protected by God": they assume that God will not protect the truth unless we have enough force to protect it, unless we resort to physical force,

The truth is that to be reckless is not when one declares the truth, embraces it, and will not hide it - it is instead reckless to resort to using force: reckless as far as the individual himself is concerned, and as far as the community is concerned. To approach work on this basis involves two errors:

- The mistake of compelling others to embrace one's idea;
- And the error of submitting to force as long as we have no force equal to the enemies of Islam.

I find that such a position contradicts a Verse of the Qur'an like, "In Allah is our trust;" (7:89).

## THE MERITS OF THIS WAY

1. It establishes a healthy atmosphere: I know establishing a healthy atmosphere is not our objective, but it is the means, the tool, for permitting ideas to come out into light; and their coming out will put right many of our misconceptions which govern our endeavors.

And especially at this juncture of our progress, this notion is essential: it is a safety valve to prepare a breathing space free from antagonism and the charge of aggression. It is a great achievement to have a situation in which viewpoints may be exchanged without the threat of arms - with nothing but proofs and supporting evidence; a situation in which the reference is to God's *sunan*, i.e. laws, and history. You do not expect any clear reflection in a situation full of the spirit of malice and a desire for vengeance. Without such peaceful atmosphere, we cannot expect the right ideas to thrive.

Let us hope for a tone of exchanging advice and guidance to replace the tone of accusing each other of ill-intention. The truth is that not many have really wicked intentions against the *Ummah*.



2. Any single individual can undertake to adopt and apply this method, even in the face of all opposing powers in the world: Did not the prophets all start as individuals? Did not each endure all the afflictions and oppression, just awaiting God's resolution?
  
3. It is a win-win situation, since all parties will benefit through this method. As for its disadvantages: these are borne by only the person who adopts this method. It really does not involve humiliation for anybody: truth has its luster which will attract many people, for the love of truth is inherent in the humans.

When the caller is working not in the dark but openly, he/she is accepting responsibility for their work. This implies that it is a mistake to say or write something that one does not embrace, and is ready to defend. Any hardship or torture the advocate receives when applying this method will not be for trying to compel anybody, but for embracing truth.

It is a noble situation this, to see one individual standing for truth, even with the whole world against them!

4. It does give one a strong position when it is a straightforward and open position that he/she upholds and embraces.

One feels when he/she adopts this way that he/she is being frank and candid; they have no internal struggle. This is very different from the position of those who adopt force, for the latter must necessarily deny what they are about; they must be clandestine in their plotting. And this means it is only the former that have the necessary balance in their character.

5. It removes the fear of imprisonment

Yes, prison involves suffering, but an advocate of this way need not be worried that his/her oppressors will force out any secrets through their tormenting: All he/she has to say has been declared before everybody. That is why those who embrace this way feel content even under the most trying experiences.

6. Also about prison, one does not fear prison as prison. One

dreads not the imprisonment, but the causes behind the imprisonment. It is in the human's nature to offer sacrifices: but it is for us to put up for him/her an ideal to sacrifice for.

7. This method strips the adversary of their argument. It also

renders their arms as useless, for we are challenging them in a way that arms have nothing to do. If they are real enemies of Islam, they will not come out into the open, for they no longer may hide behind charges of terrorism or similar words.

Since our target is just to raise the banner of Islam, why put in the hands of our enemies any other cause for their hostility? Since the call to the Way of God is sufficient in itself to reveal the real position of the enemies of God '*taghoots*', why help them justify their position by saying "We do kill Muslims and banish them, but just for the reason that they are intent on killing us."

Let us rather have the battle be only on the basis of this Verse of the Qur'an: "Nay, We hurl the Truth against

falsehood, and it knocks out its brain, and behold, falsehood perishes!" (21:18).

8. Winning to the side of truth the noblest human souls. This moral approach, which addresses the human conscience, rather than having him/her accept what we advocate under threat; there will join this way individuals who seek no reward from people, and will accept to undergo all kinds of suffering for the idea.

This way will be a great help to expose the adversaries, for at present so many good Muslims can be duped by them. But when the truth stands out, clearly opposed to the way of falsehood, it will be plain for every one that they will have to choose between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, the Way of God, and that of the Devil. It will certainly show the way, and leave no excuse for some to be supporting the enemy on the assumption that they are the good party.

I hope this brings out the great power of being an advocate of truth, even though the caller is without any supporting force. Indeed, no amount of weapons, and no army in the world can resist this simple and straightforward call. All the seeming power of the advocates of evil at present comes from our failure to bring out the way of truth most clearly, in a way that leaves no chance of confusing it with falsehood.

9. Reviving the spirit of diligence and intellectual vigilance. For this way will not go ahead without overcoming the spirit of

blind imitation. It will compel the other to come face to face not with the individuals but with principles - and this task is one of the most vital of tasks.

Islam has in itself such a huge force that no one may accuse it of error or treason or siding with the enemy. Its sacredness and holiness are above anything in the world. No one can say: Islam is false, though some have this attitude in their heart. And so, when the Muslim holds up Islam and nothing else, he/she will be in the attacker's position: the adversaries will be self-defeating when they try to convict the Muslim - given that he/she knows how to cling to their religion from first to last. The battle must always be with Islam in the forefront, and let anyone choose to challenge Islam itself: let the infallibility not be for individuals or groups; but only for Islam. Individuals or groups can always be charged and convicted.

Not so Islam; for it has its immunity which can never be shaken. It can defend itself, and never to be found false. And those who hold fast to it will share in this immunity, and will gain some of this invincible force.

It is unfortunate that the Muslim does not know how to draw on this huge force. It is a grave mistake that he/she derives their power from saying they are followers of this person or that group.

It is otherwise when it is Islam and nothing else that the Muslim refers to. If the enemies charge or convict some Muslim worker, he/she will say: "Suppose it is true that this person is guilty – what does this have to do with Islam?" Do you see how great this position is?

It is a position in which each new voice will add to the strength of the whole, and no elimination of any individual can convict the rest. Only Islam is infallible, but let the clever Muslim know how to put that to use, and that is what I have tried to explain in this book.

It will be right now to make a survey of some concepts about work for Islam

## SOME CONCEPTS ABOUT THE WORK FOR ISLAM

God's *sunnah*, i.e. law, for changing human conditions goes through a change of what is in the souls.

We conclude that from the Verse of the Qur'an: "Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change what is in their souls;" (13:11) and "Because Allah will never change the Grace which He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their souls;" (8:53).

This says that any blessing that people are enjoying will continue as long as people hold in their souls or minds values and concepts that go with such blessings. This is vital when we are considering the

Muslims' condition at present: It really is perfectly compatible with the concepts, assumptions, and ideas that they hold to; that no change may be brought about to their condition without a corresponding change to their values and concepts before they may expect the change in their tangible situation.

To separate between a change of what is in the souls and the tangible situation will lead to errors. Muslims do fall in this error – it is some psychological sin that leads them to deceive themselves, by assuming that their disagreeable condition has nothing to do with what is in their souls – the ideas, beliefs, and values.

To elaborate about what is in the soul, it encompasses all what lies in the soul and is the source of a human's endeavors and behavior and responses to his/her actual life. This is the purport of the Verses of the Qur'an.

It is true that the Muslims' condition is something that satisfies no one; but we need to firmly move to the next conclusion, by not holding the Muslims' ideas and conceptions as sacred or highly revered - we need to be strict about this logic, for if the tangible condition is definitely unpleasant, we need to be clear about the relationship between this and what is in the Muslims' minds and souls.

## THE RESULT OF CONFUSING THE MUSLIMS' IDEAS AND ISLAM

Another distinction must be made, for failing to make this other distinction is also a main cause of the Muslims' problems dragging on

and being without solution. They often defend falsehood, on account of this confusion, more vehemently than they defend truth.

It is when a Muslim confuses what has been revealed from God with what emanates from Muslims' minds – it is enough for refuting this position, as must be manifest so far, that what the Muslims hold to does not lead to positive results, and this can in no way be the outcome when we are applying the notions that proceed from God.

What is in the Muslims' souls need not be defended; on the contrary it is what should be taken up for criticism and analysis – for all the crises of Muslims originate in what is in their souls. Unless we make this distinction most definitely, the problem is in no way amenable to solution. Any mistake here will leave the problem unsolved and unsolvable. But when we have it clear in our minds, we need not defend Muslims in whatever they do.

#### IQBAL AND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN A REVEALED ISLAM AND A MAN-MADE ISLAM

Iqbal had his original way of approaching this issue. He wrote of an Islam revealed by God, and an Islam invented by some foreign Muslims, who had it infiltrate to the Muslim minds in order to get rid of such Islamic notions that did not suit them. That was an act of revenge for their military defeat before Muslims - they knew that the secret of the Muslims' hegemony lay in Islam: Islam made of Muslims an *Ummah of jihad*; they realized that the Qur'an's teachings and beliefs breathed life into the souls. Therefore, they plotted to replace

that Islam with a non-Qur'anic Islam: an Islam that does not inspire Muslims with bold movement ahead, but with despair and surrender.

Iqbal saw it as his mission to bring about a declaration of the death of this non-revealed Islam and the rebirth of the Qur'anic Islam. (see Iqbal's *Darbul Kalim*, Introduction.)

As he put it in a pithy couplet, the Muslim strayed away from the way of the Prophet; his Haram is by now an idol.

### THE PROBLEM OF SHARING THE ADVERSARY'S APPROACH

It may be noticed that all those living in our culture, Islamist or non-Islamist, though they all are dissatisfied with the way things happen, they all share in not seeing a way out except through an armed coup.

But what I contend in this book is that this approach is erroneous, though it happens to be a common denominator of all who seek to bring about change – both those who actually adopt it and are ready to engage in dangerous action for seeing its fruition, or those who though they believe in this method are not bold enough to adopt ways of pushing it ahead.

### WHEN FORCE IS PUT FORWARD AS THE WAY OF CHANGE, THE ROLE OF IDEAS RECEDES

I do realize that some Islamic workers say they are not of this persuasion. But when you watch them and see how apathetic they are, you find that, even though they no longer adopt this approach of



violent change, they have not really got rid of it; they still feel its pressure and are unable to go ahead to a more fruitful work.

### WHY IS THE MUSLIM INCAPABLE OF ENCOUNTERING THINGS FACE TO FACE?

A Muslim feels that, to declare his/her disbelief in resorting to force in supporting Islam, openly and decisively, is to let Islam down – as if he/she is no longer proud of their religion and its loftiness: in a word, to adopt this method of adopting violent ways is synonymous in the Muslim mind with manliness and courage, with dignity and self-confidence, etc..

The truth is that Islam has the ability to survive and thrive under all circumstances. When it does not, then there is something odd, something in the circumstances, and not something in the essence of Islam. In other words, any slackness in the spread and success of Islam must be accounted for by our drawbacks.

### THE MUSLIM'S FAILURE TO PUT HIS/HER BEHAVIOR RIGHT

It may be observed that a Muslim does not have the habit of self-analysis; he/she has not been trained to look back at their history and past behavior in a way that draws lessons from human behavior. In the absence of this analysis, the factors that had led to their failure persist; and they will persist and survive unless we learn to deal with examining mistakes seriously: Is not that the meaning of repentance?

How can people put right their behavior unless they realize their errors?

## TAKING CRITICISM TO BE EQUAL TO HUMILIATION AND DEFAMING

As Malek Bennabi has observed (in his *The Major Issues*, p. 113. Dar al-Fikr Pub., Damascus, 1991) observed that criticism of activities and attitudes is the civilized and constructive approach to dealing with errors. It is absent from the life of society when they fail to perceive how things go when a society is in an ascending phase.

If we wish to live the way God's prophets lived, then it is not their way to connive at mistakes and sins. Any attempt that deflects from the right way must be taken up and analyzed.

## WE CHOOSE THIS WAY OF ADAM'S UPRIGHT SON NOT TO AVOID ORDEALS, BUT TO MAKE ORDEALS FRUITFUL

Ordeals, hardships and challenges are sure to come in the way of Muslims; and this is also true when they give up the violent ways. Does not God say: "Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe', and they will not be tested?" (29:2).

Instead, what I am saying is that, though hardships and ordeals will happen, their outcome will be different. It is just that we need to be sure we are using the right ingredients to have the right effect on the human soul. The less correct the ingredients the less efficient the

method. Since there is no evading the conflict, then let it be on the basis of the Verse of the Qur'an: "And they ill-treated them for no other reason than that they believed in Allah, Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise;" (40:27).

It is the way I see as the right way, and it is the way I like to share with Muslims, hoping to find many reflect on things. I myself declare my dissociating myself from acts of violence, and from any way that may provoke a charge of resorting to violence. It is, on the other hand, our right to declare what is true, until we find the Muslim society come true.

#### TO DECLARE RENOUNCING ACTS OF VIOLENCE DOES NOT IMPLY RENOUNCING THE MUSLIM

It is vital to assert that to reject a certain attitude of Muslims does not imply a renunciation of Muslims. We read in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, sent Khaled bin al-Walid to the Tribe of Jadhimah. Khaled called them to Islam. They agreed, but did not use the usual term of "We accept Islam;" they said instead 'we renounce' (i.e. we renounce our former faith to enter Islam); and Khaled killed a number of them. When the Messenger, peace be upon him, was told of this, he raised his hands and said: "I declare to You [God] I renounce what Khaled has done." As you see, the Messenger, renounced not Khaled, but what Khaled had done.

## MAKING USE OF EXPERIENCE

When someone undergoes pain, it is not in vain: it really points the way. If we know how to turn our experience to account, it will be an enlightenment. It is an indication of our respect for someone to examine their experience and to benefit by that. Not to learn from our predecessors is a lack of respect.

## WHAT EXACTLY IS WRONG

It is not for me or anyone else to issue charges and to condemn. All I am concerned about is to be sure not to leave this vital issue without examination and analysis; it is not to leave this problem undiscussed. At least, let us declare our frank view, and bring it before the eyes of the leaders of opinion, and before the public, especially the younger generation: it is deplorable that these latter are not taught the truth about this. They still imagine that the right way is that of violence - indeed they are the first to adopt it. We need to have the elite adopt this, for this will ensure its being accepted by everybody. Abul al-'Ala al-Maududi was one of the leaders who did not leave this point without explanation, and on various occasions. In his message addressed to the workers of Islam, which he wrote from Mecca, he wrote:

"Look here, brothers! Let me end my address with this advice: Never try to form secret societies to realize your objectives. Never seek to adopt violence and arms to change conditions; this also is rushing matters and trying to take shortcuts.

"Which will have worst results and will do more harm than any other way.

"The right change of scene that succeeded in the past and will succeed in future will be at the hands of open and public societies, whose activity is as overt as the sun in midday: activities that no one will fail to notice.

"So I say: choose this public and open way for your mission, for putting right people's hearts and minds, at the widest scale. This is the way to having people enlist their potentials for fulfilling your objectives: it is through noble morality and virtue that you win them over; and it is the way to facing all kinds of hardship and ordeals that you may come across. This is the way to the deep-rooted revolution; with solid foundations and fundamentals; a way that is most fruitful - for this unhappy *Ummah*. It is in this way that your effort will not be thwarted by any hostile force.

"I am saying that to see this *Ummah* thrive, no way will avail but the way it thrived at its earliest stage.

"But if you choose to ignore this and follow the way of violent upheaval, and if you see some success: it will be like air that enters through the door to leaves through the window." (This speech of al-Maududi's was given at al-Dahlawi Mosque, Mecca, and published in the *Magazine of Pilgrimage and Islamic Civilization*; and it was republished in the book *Today's Mission of the Muslim Youth*; also included in the book *The Ordeal of the Islamic Society*.)

#### WHY ALL THIS INSISTENCE?

My insistence and feeling of urgency in this book in connection with this particular issue stem from what may be expected during the coming decades - that the conflict will widen and grow more bitter. This will happen as a result of the Muslims' failure to meet the challenges, and their helplessness in coming upon real solutions. The Qur'an orders patience in such conditions and turning to God for help.

#### THE LEADERS OF THOUGHT

Modern Muslims do have some leaders of thought, and these have pointed out the real responsibilities and have removed much of the vagueness which used to blur our way. But their ideas have not spread among the targeted Islamic public – and that is our next task.

It is from such pioneers of thought that I have learned to analyze the Muslims' behavior – though I realize that such analysis is not familiar among us.

#### WHAT IS THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TO THEIR PRODUCTION?

Let it be mentioned here that the trust we give to those intellectual leaders must follow the Qur'anic rule: "Produce your proof if you are truthful;" (2:111).

Unless one is vigilant in how they give trust to someone, and insisting always to examine evidence and proof, our admiration will transfer from the idea to the person himself/herself.

But will words like these produce an effect? Maybe not, for it is through a change in environment that people will move on from refusing the approach of proof and evidence to accepting it.

## THE PARANOIA OF FORCE AND THE FORCE OF IDEAS

We read the following in a book by Malek Bennabi (*The Problem of Culture*, p. 5):

"In the nineteenth century, the relationships of nations relied on force: a nation's position referred to the number of factories, cannons, fleets, and stock of gold.

"But things changed in the twentieth century, for ideas have acquired a global value.

"Many backward nations, however, have not felt this development; for the complex of their backwardness itself has put in their way a kind of meaningless fondness for the criterion of force: since it is tangible thing that control their minds."

It is hard for the Muslim to perceive that the tangible things draw their value from ideas; and that to view things reversed will only complicate the situation. Unfortunately, the Islamic attitude about this is quite deep – Did not Abu Tammam, the poet, say more than ten centuries back:

It is the sword that has the true answer, rather than the words;

It is it that which will set the limit between a resolute stance and a frivolous one?

And other poets said something in the same spirit.

We must keep this in mind when we read in Bennabi the following in the above quotation: "You see the backward people have

a meaningless fondness for force, while we see that those who have the atomic force are incapable of spreading their ideas through force."

We may also refer to another book, (al-Aqqad's *What They Say About Islam*. P. 187):

"We see nowadays those who have the atomic force less dominant than their fathers and grandfathers used to be: they do not seem to have the potent weapon or the efficient ways. There is in this a message from Heaven: for our human logic would say that the West must have all the means of controlling the east: for we have seen over the last centuries how the stronger team have supremacy over the weak. But here is the most potent of all weapons seen to be less efficient than the stick.

"It is really the extreme force that has forced the powerful to return to their humanity."



## EPILOGUE

# EXTREMISM AND THE EBBING OF KNOWLEDGE

It is heartening nowadays to see the issue of extremism put forth for debate: it gives one hope that this problem can be overcome, or maybe that the solution is not far-fetched.

I say this to be on the optimistic side – although this does not of course diminish the hardships in the way of accepting this premise. It indeed compels us to review and examine many of the preconceptions which have lingered and persisted too long among us, and are still engulfed in vagueness. It will also require that we give up concepts and values that we cling to most tightly.

What happens with new ideas is that they seem to be born in some minds, and some pioneers begin to reflect on them in silence; then they begin to be whispered to some intimate persons; and then they begin to infiltrate to the public debate, for they are no longer so unfamiliar. Indeed, those who hasten to declare some idea that is too strange to the atmosphere may have to pay dearly.

I do not claim to be up to the standard of expressing the biggest issues. But seeing that some do raise this issue, I take heart, and put

this issue to the public notice, on the premise that unless we do that it will stay buried for perhaps a much longer time.

Let us appreciate in the meanwhile the risk and hardship the writers and thinkers have undergone until they succeeded in tackling the thorny issues, like this one, and until the issue is discussed in a refined and civilized way. And once you put forward your idea publicly, you can be sure of hearing all kinds of comments and discussions, which are bound to develop the idea.

At the same time, the researcher may often commit the mistake of claiming all the credit of originating the idea, or ascribing it to some ingenuity or objectivity that he/she has rather than others. This is a grave error, for it does not help the youth in observing God's Signs, and how things originate and evolve, as we are alerted to think in the Verse of the Qur'an: "See how Allah originated creation;" (29:20).

Taking our cue from the above Verse, we need to revise our view of things, to try to go beyond the traditional ways, and to rearrange our cultural references, on the basis of which we formulate our worldview.

Nor do I take this to be an easy task, nor has it been smoothed out in our cultural environment - indeed, radical changes will have to take place in relation to our sources of knowledge, before we translate into a tangible reality a Verse of the Qur'an like, "Because Allah will never change the Grace which He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their own souls;" (8:53).

#### WHEN TEXTS ARE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF KNOWLEDGE

We often seem to quote the Verses of the Qur'an in a way that the Qur'an itself does not approve: while the Qur'an itself urges and commands us to move about and examine the ways of previous peoples and ascertain their outcome through observation, we pass this by and take it as unnecessary as long as we recite the Sacred Scripture.

It stems from our not having a firm basis when tackling this issue, when the more enlightened among us have not succeeded in bringing within the comprehension and study of the public the Scripture: they have not done enough to convey its facts. They do not have the examples that can be readily appreciated. For a proper handling of knowledge, one should refer to both the revealed Word and the tangible evidence of God's Signs in the world and in human life. It is then that God's law will be effective in our hands in a way that it will respond positively to our demands. It will help in training the present generation, or at the latest the next generation, to accept this enlightened approach. Indeed the Verses of the Qur'an give us ample hope in that direction – as for example the following Verses: "Allah has decreed: 'It is I and My Messengers who must prevail;" (58:21) and: "And you shall certainly know the truth of it all after a while;" (38:38).

It is those who have been acquainted with how God started creation that can appreciate a Tradition of the Prophet like: "God will give such assistance for being gentle that He does not give for violence - nothing approached with gentleness but is made the better, and nothing devoid of gentleness but is the worse for it."

But it may be added with assurance that the above Tradition will not bring about its favorable outcome unless one puts it in its place in

the universal system. Most of its effect will be wasted when it is confined to small matters.

More generally, we may notice how little the sacred texts will have bearing on our life unless they are supplemented with the Signs of God in the world and in human life – which is especially true when we come to the present predicament. Let me try to shed more light on this concept by quoting another Tradition of the Prophet's, peace be upon him. Ibn Kathir mentions this Tradition when he comments on the Verse of the Qur'an: "Why do not the Rabbis and the doctors of law forbid them from their habit of uttering sinful words and eating things forbidden?" (5:63). He reports from Ziad bin Labid that the Messenger, peace be upon him, mentioned something that would take place in the future, and then commented: "That will be when knowledge has receded."

"How can that be," I [Ziad] said, among others, "when we have learnt the Qur'an, will teach it to our children, and our children will teach it to their children?"

"Shame on you, Ibn Labid," the Messenger said, "I took you to be one of the most comprehending persons in Medina. Do you not see how the Jews and Christians read their *Torah* and *Injil*, but benefit nothing by them?"

This above Tradition would be a very suitable starting point for tackling the Muslims' dilemma - and even any community's: those who keep pulling at texts in every direction and bandy them about. Muslims pour most of their torrents of words on how authentic or unauthentic a Tradition is; but do not give any reasonable attention to the discussion of the purport of the Traditions.

In the absence of genuine knowledge — and knowledge and science have no definition among Muslims — the cure seems to be beyond our reach; not through the sacred texts anyway. Let us then look again at the above Tradition of Ziad bin Labid, and let us reflect on the way the Messenger, peace be upon him, saw the situation, and how his Companion did.

You see how the Messenger is discussing a problem which may befall any society in which knowledge has declined to a very low level. The Companion, on the other hand, cannot perceive how that can be when they have the texts in their hands, and will pass them on to their children. Let us further notice how the Messenger, peace be upon him, does not put Ziad right by citing a text from the Qur'an, nor by reminding him that it was not pious to object when it is the Prophet who was speaking. Instead, he directs him to take a lesson from reviewing the social and historical events — and he points out a particular situation: This is learning from God's Signs in the world and in life; it is a reminder of the importance of seeking guidance for attaining truth through reviewing the facts of history.

This is not the kind of knowledge that prospers among Muslims: learning from precedent. You will notice in contrast how we usually insist that the Verses of the Qur'an have all the enlightenment we need; and will not fail to find texts that urge us to hold tightly to the revealed material.

The truth is that those who are little acquainted with God's Signs in the world and human life will show their helplessness in going about the business of proper living — and when you put in their hands the *Kitab* and *Sunnah* (i.e. the Qur'an and the Prophet's Traditions),

they will be equally incapable of benefiting from them. It is as a certain poet aptly put it:

They [the Muslim nations] have the two lights of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* –

So why is it that they grope in black darkness?

The Muslims really fare no better than the peoples cited in Ziad bin Labid's hadith: for they do have revealed texts in their hands, but they fail to find guidance in them. Let us notice how often the Qur'an directs us to learn from historical events.

The *sunnah* in the Qur'an, i.e. the law [a different sense from *Sunnah* as the Prophets Traditions], should attract our attention to ponder upon, and it is what the Prophet, peace be upon him, was referring to in his reply to Ziad. Ibn Taimiyah did notice the importance of *sunnah*, and defined it as: "Doing on a later occasion what was done on an earlier occasion."

It may be noticed that this failure to draw better results from the sacred texts is not new. We may refer to a story in which Ali warned Ibn Abbas not to refer to the revealed texts in the latter's debate with the *khawarij*; and to refer rather to the practical *sunnah*, or the Prophet's actual application of religion - in the latter case it would be more unlikely that people would be evasive: when it is the revealed text that you quote, you will find that each faction and group have their own interpretation and conception of the '*Kitab* and *Sunnah*'. This was most clearly shown when it was the camp less observant of the *Sharia* (the camp of Mu'awiyah ) who lifted copies of the Qur'an on spear tips, to indicate that the two sides must come to a solution through referring to the Qur'an. It is commonly known that these were not the

more pious camp or the camp nearer to abiding by the commandments of God.

One can find enough support in the writings of the more enlightened of Muslim scholars, concerning this literal reference to text without having enough wisdom from actual experience to see one's way among texts. Ibn Taimiyah, for instance, gives this rule for sorting out what is obligatory in religion and what is prohibited: "The prohibited in religion is that which is harmful – invariably or mostly; and the obligatory is that which is beneficial – invariably or mostly." And, referring to this principle, Ibn al-Qayyem applied it to rebelling against rulers, since, as he said, it is mostly a harmful decision to rebel against them, and so it would be prohibited.

Ibn Khaldun, too, had his perceptive observation when he blamed those who rebelled against rulers for their failure to adhere to the commandments of religion – commenting that such people, though pious enough, were too naive to perceive God's *sunnah* in establishing states and taking measures for their survival.

The idea in all the above is to conclude that such principles could not be established without fathoming history's events - that it is such keen observation that leads us to perceive what the holy texts are driving at, and puts right our comprehension of such texts. It is by having an abundance of historical observation, from observing God's Signs in the world around us and in human life that people stop wrangling and bickering about revealed texts.

But we still find this topic of perceiving the progress of creation not at all developed or prospering among us: our conception of issues

like this are still too general and misty, since we have not developed a rich background to refer to for issues like this.

We may apply this observation of the tangible reality by reviewing people's conception of the movement of sun – though people thought that nothing was as clear as the sun: even so, they assumed that it was the sun which orbited the earth. What their eyes showed them was actually that: that it was the sun which orbited the earth. But then, with some innovation in science and scientific inference, it was seen that it was the earth which orbited the sun. What people clung to over endless centuries, depending on what they took to be so in sacred texts, and for which many were prepared to die or to send others to death, was found to be erroneous.

Now, this must be a very big lesson for all humans: if this biggest of 'facts' was discovered to be erroneous, it must teach us that to hold on most tightly to sacred texts is not enough, unless one keeps open to the ever-expanding revelation of the facts of the world and human life.

If we were diligent enough in learning the facts about the life of societies, in the same way as our knowledge of astronomy has expanded, then there would be a revolution in perceiving human behavior. Such Verses of the Qur'an as we take to be clear to us will be seen to mean other than what we took them to mean: those who are quite ready to sacrifice humans or to offer their own life as sacrifice, on account of concepts that they ascribe to God would change their stance - things would have taken a very different direction. The phenomena would have worked at our beckoning: for truly and as the Qur'an says, the laws work at your beckoning once you know how to address them. But as it is, things work against the Muslim world, and



we have no one and nothing to blame but ourselves, again as the Qur'an declares, "Say: 'It is from yourselves;'" (3:165).

The idea here is that we have gone a long way in fathoming the laws of God as they pertain to the sun and the moon and the earth — but little has been done pertaining to the factors that raise nations and bring them down. It would be ascertained that the main source of disasters lies inside, among us: we do little good by humming on the tune of the conspiracies of enemies, their plotting and their agents. The Qur'an teaches us otherwise.

Indeed, no Scripture has asserted as emphatically as the Qur'an that for putting right the society's woes it is the complaining party itself that should look inside for the sources of their suffering. What we find among our people is quite unlike this: for they are prepared to find one scapegoat after another — so that only their own sacred soul should be exempt from blame.

Adam won this privilege of being chosen as to be the viceroy or agent in the earth by not concealing his responsibility for the sin, he and his wife had committed, when they said, as the Qur'an reports, "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls;" (7:23) — especially when we contrast that with Iblis's failure, for the latter ascribed his sin to God, saying, as the Qur'an reports, "Because You have thrown me out of the way;" (7:16).

It was not an easy test, that of Adam, but he and his wife did succeed, and you see just around the same time the angels were ordered to prostrate themselves before him. But it seems that the Devil's way tempts us more. We have no patience with those who point out our slips and faults.

## THE APPROACH OF 'I WILL SURELY KILL YOU'

What I am trying to bring to the notice of the readers is that by learning the Signs of the world and human life we would be in a better position to perceive the Verses of the Qur'an and the Prophet's Traditions. We would have in hand alternative ways to realizing objectives. And people must be excused if they do not listen to us unless we offer them tangible solutions. Imagine someone at the brink of a dangerous cliff, nothing holding him from falling but a very weak branch that he clings to with all his strength. No one in their senses can order the person in such fatal danger to let go of his branch on the hope of some firmer support. The alternative must be within his reach, and within his capacity to shift to before we can hope to see him transfer to it.

And this is what happens in the case of those who seem to imagine that by killing the tyrant truth will replace him. But a person of such persuasion has not been shown how people have been killing and killing from the day Adam's son killed his brother to this day, and that has not brought them nearer to the dominance of truth.

It seems that opting for the approach of 'I will surely kill you' is more within reach than reflecting on the efficient way of analyzing the means and ways which will bring objectives to fruition.

So, let us not blame people, but offer them instead the alternative in language that they can comprehend. And let me add that the alternative can often be under our very nose without our noticing it. Does not the Qur'an say about that, "And how many Signs in the

heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn their faces away from them!" (12:105).

You see how, even a man like Ziad bin Labid needed the admonition of the Prophet (his saying to him: 'Shame on you, Ibn Labid, etc.') for not observing a social situation that stood before their eyes.

So why not use our own intellect and inquire: Have not Japan and Germany succeeded in getting over their crisis, one of the cruelest crises? They really did not choose to be banned from again having any substantial arsenal of destructive weapons; that was imposed on them after they had to surrender unconditionally. But the point here is that within only one generation they were able to occupy a very respectable place in the world – and without any weaponry. They offered in practical terms a lesson that with science, and without the resort to violence, they not only solved their problem, but rose to a very high place in the world.

So, here is another lesson for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see!

And if some say let us not seek guidance but from our Prophet, we may remind them that the Prophet, peace be upon him, himself used no violent ways at all to secure rule in his hands. It was through people's choice of him, voluntarily and willingly.

#### *JIHAD AND THE KHAWARIJ WAY*

But this will not be the whole answer to our problem. We still seem not to have got the key to this door: how to define what is rightful *jihad*, and what is the way of *khawarij*?

Let us at least lay a very basic foundation: for someone to be entrusted with carrying out '*hudud*, i.e. penalties determined by God for certain sins,' and practicing *jihad*, they must be qualified to do that, to be entrusted with the heavy task: that they have reached their position of rule without violating the conditions. Let us remember the excruciating suffering of the Messenger and his Companions in Mecca, when he would not permit any oppressed person to retaliate or to extract by force what was theirs. He trained them the hard way – and they surrendered to his directions, by not defending themselves: every one of them obeyed that.

It was the suitable training, so that they have the necessary will when they have power in their hands.

As I see it, it is no use trying to put limits to distinguish a Mecca period and a Medina period, and when rebellion is legitimate and when it is not. Indeed, solution is not through rebellion, and as for texts, we can cite many to support the prohibition of the *khawarij* way, which is practiced when people go out in rebellion: and the texts in this connection represent a balance to the other texts urging one to do *jihad*.

We shall not get over this conflict and confusion of those texts exhorting a Muslim to do *jihad* and those warning of the *khawarij* way of *jihad* until we perceive God's Signs in the world and the human life.

Otherwise, we shall stay like this, ignoring the texts, especially the hadiths related to '*alfitan*, or great upheaval, great time of tribulation', one of which is so clear that the Companion asks: "Now, Messenger of God, should the enemy enter my own home, threatening to slay me, what should I do?" And the Messenger, peace be upon him, replied, "Choose the way of Adam's Upright son." Commenting on

this, a man in the line of reporters quoted the Verse of the Qur'an, "If you stretch your hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against you to slay you;" (5:28). And, in another hadith, another Companion inquires, "And if he enters my own home?", and the Prophet replies, "If you suspect that his sword's glitter would dazzle your eyes, throw your cape over your head, and he will bear both his sin and yours."

It may be noticed also that this way, which is the way followed by the first generation of Islam, puts an end to the cycle of misguided ways: for those who believed they would be the party who would bring peace and justice fell into the same trap as those who they were trying to pull down. They did not observe in time that any drawback in the ruling system was no more than a reflection and a product of parallel drawbacks in society. They may find out that the way their condemnation of their adversaries will backfire, for there will be some sectors of society who disapprove of their behavior, even if they were as just as Ali, and as compassionate as Uthman.

I am not predicting on the basis of some magical knowledge: it is just that I believe in God's laws, which tell me that the same causes will lead to the same results.

I am equally sure that what I have had the chance to study is quite little, that those who have had the chance to read more and know more will come up with more effective and comprehensive solutions to our social problem; they will be in a better place to bring healing to society - in the same way that for quite some time the world has succeeded in finding cures to many physical diseases.

## VIOLENCE AS THE DISEASE OF THE AGE

Let us not assume that violence is the disease of young people, though of course they have more courage than others to act on it.

It is that the world has this virus, and you will find the virus has hit the leftists as well as the rightists. Go to the furthest cells of Sufis and you will find that they have the gene that bears that intellectual disease.

What is needed is a complete overhaul in human behavior – for at present it is still true of us what the angels had predicted at the time of creating Adam, that the humans will be involved in doing mischief and bloodshed, as the Qur'an puts it: "They [the angels] said: 'Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? - while we do celebrate Your praise and glorify Your Holy Name?' He said: 'I know what you do not know;'" (2:30).

It is the virus which Adam's misguided son, Cain, bore: his solution to the problem was: "Be sure I will slay you" (5:27).

And when people imagine that the main problem is in removing that who is in authority, we discover that it is not so. When the Children of Israel challenged Moses, as the Qur'an reports, "We have had nothing but trouble, both before and after you came to us;" he replied, with much pain at their short-sightedness, "It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you inheritors in the earth; so that He may try you by your deeds;" (7:129).

This is to make it clear that the problem is not whether we replace a pharaoh or any ruler. It is rather how we behave after we have ousted somebody and occupied their place.

If we just decide to bring this sacred duty to the notice of our young generation – who are so impatient to see an honorable and respectable life – we shall see them rise to uphold this sacred work, and such huge responsibility will not be realized without the youths' strength and liveliness and honesty.

They will show more aptitude for action than us.

It only remains for me to turn to God with the words Adam used when he prayed, after his sin, "Our Lord! we have wronged our own souls: if You do not forgive us and do not bestow upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be lost;" (7:23).

To conclude, here are some take-home points:

1. This book has tried to put forward a way of solving the problems of reconstruction in those lands where people have fallen short from perceiving God's *sunan*, i.e. laws.  
It is true that it uses an approach of referring to traditions, to address religious-minded Muslims and lead them on the way - but it is really intended for a wider public: any group can find in it some enlightenment about the issues it raises.
2. It also emphasizes the way God has praised in the way of Adam's Upright son, in the first conflict in human history: in this way humanity has this beacon to indicate the way over its long history.

3. And this way teaches the human to do what is due on him/her regardless of the right that may come as a reward.