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The Islamic movement: setting out to change the world again

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For the first time in modern history, the Islamic movement is in control of a territory and is trying to establish an Islamic State there. This change is significant enough for the prevalent 'international system' of nation-States to feel threatened.

The contemporary 'world order' has been created by the west through two hundred years of imperialist rule and many wars, including two world wars, among competing imperialists. This 'world order' has been created largely at the expense of Islam. The world of Islam has been parcelled into small nation-States. These nation-States have been awarded a dubious 'independence' and a fraudulent 'sovereignty'. In fact these nation-States are neither Muslim nor 'Islamic'; they and their rulers, as well as their political, social and economic systems, are creations of imperialism and serve the purposes of the imperialist powers. These nation-States do not belong to the mainstream of Islamic history. They are a symbol of our decline, defeat and dismemberment. They are a product of the era of our humiliation and subservience. 'Independence' and 'sovereign equality' in the international system, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in fact mean permanent

dependence. For Muslims the entire world order as it exists today is unacceptable. It must be changed.

The Islamic movement is the traditional instrument of change. It is not a political movement with a manifesto written by a committee or with an ideology strung together by a motley collection of philosophers, historians, dreamers and activists. The Islamic movement, in its purest form, is the manifestation of the Divine Will. As such, the first complete Islamic movement was none other than the movement which was led by the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, in the Arabian peninsula just 1,400 years ago.¹ The primary roots of the Islamic movement, therefore, go back to the Prophet's movement and the Islamic State in Madinah. The labyrinth of secondary roots is spread throughout Islamic history and deeply embedded in the political culture of the Muslims.

It is appropriate, therefore, to view the Islamic movement as an instrument of change. Change is endemic in the human condition. It is not possible to prevent change. No 'progress', however defined, is possible without change. No society is exactly the same on any two days. No individual is the same on any two days of his life. No relationship between individuals, or groups, or societies, or nations, is the same from moment to moment. Change takes place on an on-going basis. Change is a process of growth and development as well as a process of decline and fall. Change is essential to attain *taqwa*, to attain happiness, to attain knowledge. To set goals and to struggle to achieve them is to engage in bringing about change. Individuals, families, groups, collectivities, companies, cooperatives, nations, all engage in activities to bring about desirable change or to prevent unacceptable change. War is the most intense form of struggle to bring about or to prevent change. Aggression may be defined as an attempt to impose change. Imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, communism, exploitation, uneven exchange relationships, class differentiation, 'dictatorship of the proletariat', etc., are all organized attempts to bring about, manage, maintain, and control change to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others. When the struggle to control, divert,

1. All earlier prophets were also bearers of the message of Islam and therefore leaders of the Islamic movement.

impose, manage, maintain, resist or otherwise manipulate change takes place in the interest of some and against the interest of others it leads to secular political, economic and social behaviour. In this framework of the pursuit of gain at the cost of others, man becomes a Machiavellian animal. All modern human behaviour at all levels, at the international level as well as the inter-personal level, takes place in this framework. Indeed, this is precisely the hallmark of the western civilization.

The western civilization's highest value is the 'standard of living' of western man. The western civilization has no other value. It recognizes no other value as worthy of consideration. In a sense it is a complex civilization fairly representing the enormous advances made by man both in technology and in organizational skill. One has produced the technological wonders of the space age and the awesome power of modern weapons, the other has produced the complex human organizations of the modern nation-States and the business acumen and 'efficiency' of the 'multinationals'. The genius of the western civilization has made everyone 'equal' while in fact it has made inequality permanent. The so-called 'sovereign equality' of nation-States has already been cited as an example. The unequal exchange relationships between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, have been made a permanent feature of the human condition. When 'aid' is given to the poor it is only to allow the rich to export more at higher prices, ultimately making the poor poorer and the rich richer. When protection is extended to the weak it is to prevent the weak from trying to overcome their weakness. A 'democratic' oligarchy is created to confine the use of power and management of resources in the hands of the same people, the rich, organized into 'competing' parties. An 'education' is given which first makes the individual feel insecure and then equips him to pursue selfish goals in a controlled 'system'. The resultant commercialism has been given the values of 'freedom' and 'competition'. This has created a culture of institutionalized greed for high mass consumption. Profit maximization by the company has been made respectable by economic theory, but the same economists hold wage maximization by trade unions to be 'immoral'. Companies can 'regulate' supplies to raise prices, but labourers must not withhold labour or else they are causing 'disruption'. Women must be sex objects at home, in the streets, in the world of entertainment, and at work, but

they must not forget to take the pill or else they are being 'irresponsible' by bringing into the world unwanted children. The west now has a thriving abortion industry to meet the needs of a sexually greedy civilization which, at the same time, does not want too many people to share in the goods and services they produce. 'The poor are poor because they have too many children', is a commonly held aphorism. 'There are too many poor because they breed like rabbits', is another. It follows, therefore, that the poor must not be helped or else they will have even more children while the world is already suffering from 'over population'.

The western civilization only believes in change which serves the west. The rest of the world is told to 'catch up' while the west also insists on its right to 'pull away' as a reward for its superior technology and organizational skills. The west's real motives for keeping the poor poor, or making them even poorer, are now widely recognized by many in the west itself. The 'left' and the 'third world' lobby has produced a good deal of literature on the themes of exploitation, neo-colonialism and imperialism. But the 'left', the 'liberals', and those who set up such cosmetic operations as Oxfam, War on Want, Christian Aid, and the Third World Foundation, etc., are quite ineffectual and succeed only in giving the west an undeserved image of caring for its victims. They operate on the fringes of the symptoms, while themselves being part of the disease.

The position that has to be taken now, and only the Islamic movement can take it, is that the western civilization is in fact a plague and a pestilence. It is no civilization at all. It is a disease. It feeds upon itself to its own detriment. The west today is qualitatively no different from the *jahiliyyah*, the primitive savagery and ignorance, that prevailed in Arabia and the rest of the world at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace. That *jahiliyyah* also called itself a 'civilization'; it had its 'values', it had its centres of knowledge and gave education to its children. It was strong in its trading relations and had a rich culture. The people of Makkah were renowned for their hospitality and poetry, and other forms of art also thrived there and elsewhere. That *jahiliyyah* even had its 'gods'.

In that setting Islam came as the instrument of change, indeed of transformation. Islam was not revealed to the Prophet in the seclusion

of a monastery. Revelation forms only a part of Islam and consists of the actual words of the Qur'an. The rest of Islam is the actual method of change applied by the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and the Islamic movement that he led. This is known as the *Seerah* (life) of the Prophet, and his *Sunnah* (everything the Prophet said, did, caused to be done, allowed to be done, and ordered to be done). The Islamic movement that the Prophet led also included all those who accepted Islam: a handful in Makkah, then the many thousands in Madinah, and finally almost the entire population of the peninsula. The Qur'an called for the total commitment and participation of Muslims with all their resources in the struggle of the Islamic movement.²

At the end of the 23 years of Muhammad's prophethood and the struggle of the Islamic movement, the peninsula of Arabia had been transformed from the state of *jahiliyyah*, primitive savagery and ignorance, to the state of Islam. To bring about the total transformation of an established order is in the very nature of Islam; this is the very purpose of Islam. Islam changes all existing relationships into a new set of relationships. But unlike ephemeral social change sought by other ideologies, which is often change for the sake of change, or for the benefit of a 'class' or imperialist power, Islam posits a set of constant values. All change takes place around a well-defined and generally known set of constant values. This set of constant values is the belief system of Islam. These beliefs are the boundary conditions, the parameters, around which change is organized. The constant values of Islam also control and guide the process, method and purpose of change. The new social relationships established by Islam are dynamic and flexible, and provide for the growth of the human personality through experience and knowledge within the given parameters. The end result of the organized struggle for change is the establishment of the Islamic State. It is no accident, therefore, that the first Islamic State in history was established by none other than the great exemplar himself, Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah, upon whom be peace for ever and ever more.

The point that has to be understood clearly is that the Islamic State and the Islamic movement are parts of a whole; Islam is incomplete

2. Al-Qur'an 2:208; 3:142; 8:74; 9:16; 9:111.

without the Islamic State. In the sense that the struggle of the Islamic movement to establish the Islamic State is at the very heart of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, participation in the Islamic movement is a duty obligatory on every Muslim. Thus, while the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad are the constant values in Islam, the Islamic State and the Islamic movement are the dynamic, growing, developing, changing, acting, reacting and retroacting variables. This unique combination of constant values and dynamic factors makes Islam a most versatile and effective instrument of change.

As such, on its dynamic wing, the Islamic movement accepts the possibility of retreat, frustration, or even defeat. This can be illustrated from some of the well-known incidents in the life of Prophet Muhammad and in the course of the Islamic movement in Makkah and Madinah. In Makkah there came a time when the human cost to the small Muslim community there became too high. The Quraish of Makkah were resisting change and imposing unacceptable costs on the fledgling Islamic movement of the earliest days of Islam. The Prophet advised the Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia until the conditions in Makkah improved. After the *hijrah* to Madinah, the Muslims first experienced victory at Badr, followed a year later by defeat at Uhud. A few years later came the Treaty of Hudaibiyah when the Muslims had to return to Madinah without performing the *umrah*. But all these retreats, migrations, victories and defeats were part of an ongoing Islamic movement which ultimately triumphed over the forces of *jahiliyyah* and established the Islamic State. Some of the most beautiful verses of the Qur'an were revealed to the Prophet in the hour of the Islamic movement's greatest adversities.³

It is possible, therefore, for the Islamic State to be defeated and dismembered by enemy action. It is also possible for the Islamic State to deviate so far from the norms of Islam that it becomes unrecognizable as an Islamic State. In both cases it becomes the duty of the Islamic movement to reverse the defeat or to overcome the internal forces of deviation. It must be noted that it is possible to lose the Islamic State, but it is not possible to lose the Islamic movement altogether, because no matter how great the defeat or deviation, there will always

3. See, for example, Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Ahzab.

be Muslims who will struggle for the restoration of the Islamic State. The entire history of Islam can be written in terms of the progressive deviation of the Muslims from the original Islamic State of Madinah, until now when we find ourselves parcelled into small nation-States. These nation-States bear no resemblance whatever to the Islamic State. The rulers of these nation-States are Muslims who look like us but who are not of us. They have emerged during a phase in history when we have been dominated by a largely hostile civilization.

The Islamic movement may be defined as the struggle of the Muslims to establish, maintain, develop, defend, extend or re-establish the Islamic State as an instrument to 'enjoin good and forbid evil'⁴ for the welfare and happiness of all mankind in this world and in the Hereafter.

There are three partners in the Islamic movement—Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*, the Prophet, and the general body of the Muslims.⁵ Allah is an active partner and participant in the Islamic movement. First, by being ever present in the consciousness of the individual Muslim as well as the *Ummah*, Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* makes an active contribution to the strength and commitment of the Muslims. The awareness of His constant presence removes the fear of death or of material loss. Martyrdom becomes the highest prize life has to offer.⁶ In cases of extreme danger to the Islamic movement, He actively and directly intervenes.⁷ He reminds us of this in Surah al-Fil of the Qur'an.⁸ He cites the incident when, in the year of the birth of Muhammad, an army that included elephants approached Makkah with the declared purpose of destroying the *Ka'bah*. Allah intervened to drive the army of the elephants away. When a crestfallen American President made a nationwide television broadcast in April 1980 to announce the fiasco of the mission he had sent to rescue the US 'hostages', the faithful throughout the world interpreted this humiliation of the 'superpower' as a direct intervention of Allah to protect the

4. Al-Qur'an 3:104, 110.

5. Al-Qur'an 63:8.

6. Al-Qur'an 2:154.

7. Al-Qur'an 59:11; 40:51.

8. Al-Qur'an 105:1-5.

fledgling Islamic State. Nothing else can explain the failure of so many helicopters to fly; the loss of nerve on the part of the commander; and finally the collision on the ground in the scramble 'to get the hell out of here', as one officer of the US task force described it. The US can send man to the moon and bring him back again; the technology of the west can introduce a 'shuttle' service in space; they can make and perfect the most deadly machines and weapons; but without faith and commitment there are some goals they cannot achieve. Power that cannot be applied to perform specific tasks is quite useless. The goals of the Islamic movement lie mainly in the area where 'superpowers' have repeatedly been proved to be quite impotent. The active participation of Allah takes care of the extreme dangers that might otherwise create fear in purely 'rational' minds. It is not that the Muslim in the Islamic movement is 'irrational'. Many western commentators have complained of the 'irrational zealots' of the Iranian army and the Revolutionary Guards in the war of Iraq's aggression. Iran's refusal to accept ceasefire terms with a hint of 'compromise' to save Saddam Hussain's face has also been regarded as an 'irrational refusal to face facts'. The fact is that our Faith is an integral part of our reason. The knowledge that Allah is an active participant in the Islamic movement gives the Islamic movement a metaphysical dimension and quality which is unique. But the metaphysical dimension is not in pursuit of some spurious spirituality, it is also applied to the physical world, to the solution of real physical problems and to the attainment of goals in the physical world.

The *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, is also a constant value but it, too, has a dynamic, on-going role in the Islamic movement. The Prophet is in a very real sense an active partner in the Islamic movement. The Islamic movement must always relate with the *Seerah* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. In particular, the Islamic movement cannot pursue goals not pursued and achieved by the Prophet; the Islamic movement cannot use any method of operation that was not used by the Prophet; and the participants in the Islamic movement cannot take up behaviour patterns and lifestyles not approved of by the Prophet. To put it in its positive formulation, the Islamic movement must pursue the goals pursued and achieved by the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace; it must only use methods

used by, or derived from the methods used by, the Prophet; and the Muslim *Ummah* and all its members must conform to the standards of personal and collective behaviour and participation in the Islamic movement established by the Prophet and his companions. This constant concern of the Islamic movement to identify itself with the Prophet, his mission and his method, makes the Prophet an active partner in the Islamic movement. This partnership with the Prophet, upon whom be peace, is not a guarantee against error or failure to achieve short- or long-term goals. The partnership of the Prophet ensures that error is detected sooner than it would otherwise be, and failure should not cause frustration that might persuade the movement to abandon its goals. Indeed, the closer the Islamic movement's concern is to the *Sunnah* the greater will be its overall effectiveness.

A review of the contemporary world situation and the nature of the *neo-jahiliyyah* clearly shows that every problem that the Islamic movement faces today is a problem that also existed at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace. There is no problem that we face today which did not exist then. Of course, the form and scale has changed. To take some obvious examples, tribalism has become universal in the form of nationalism; slavery has become institutionalized as labour in capitalism and communism; immorality has become respectable in the philosophies of 'liberalism', humanism, rationalism, 'freedom of the individual', secular 'education', scientism and democracy. But qualitatively the problems remain the same. It follows, therefore, that the methods of the Prophet, if followed by the Islamic movement today would yield the same spectacular results achieved fourteen hundred years ago. But spectacular results follow sustained effort over long periods of time. There is a long sequence of partial success and occasional failure in pursuit of major goals. The contemporary Islamic movement has to approach civilizational change in this framework. It will have its Badr, its Uhud, its Khandaq, its 'Fatah Makkah' and its Hunain. Thus we see that the Prophet, his example, his life, his methods, the goals he set, the goals he achieved, are all active in the Islamic movement.

We have now considered the active and direct participation of Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* in the Islamic movement as well as the dynamic participatory role of the Prophet and his *Sunnah*. The third

partner in the Islamic movement is the general body of the Muslims, the entire *Ummah*. We know that in the first Islamic movement led by the Prophet all Muslims participated. In the early phase in Makkah, the size of the *Ummah* grew only slowly and for a long time remained relatively small. Yet the cohesion and commitment of the Muslims, however small their number, was total. Though some had to take refuge in Abyssinia for a time, their cohesion and commitment was not broken. This total commitment, cohesion and mobilization of the Muslims remained a feature of the *Ummah* throughout the lifetime of the Prophet, upon whom be peace. Upon his death there was a danger that the cohesion would break. The cohesion was immediately tested by some tribes who had entered Islam towards the end of the Prophet's life. They took the view that their commitment to pay *zakah* was only for the lifetime of the Prophet. The first Caliph, Abu Bakr, immediately took up arms against them and brought them in line with the rest of the *Ummah*. This initial cohesion built by the Prophet lasted throughout the Caliphates of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman.

In the final years of Uthman's Caliphate, cracks emerged in this cohesion. These led to the Caliph's murder as well as prolonged strife and civil war during the Caliphate of Ali ibn Abi Talib, and in the reigns of Amir Mu'awiyah and his son, Yazid. Islamic history, in a sense, has yet to recover from the deep wounds inflicted by these events. The subsequent history of Islam and the Muslims became a history of progressive deviation from the norms established by the Prophet. Nevertheless, Muslims went on to establish a world civilization which achieved great feats in all fields of human endeavour at different times and at different places: for example, the conquests of Spain and India. They established great empires and seats of learning which sent forth philosophers, theologians, historians, mathematicians, scientists, astronomers and others whose contributions provide solid foundations to all branches of knowledge. In short, for over a thousand years, the initial thrust of Islam made Muslims the masters of their destiny at home and in the world outside. Temporary failures, such as the loss of Jerusalem (1099-1187AD), were rectified in good time.

The allegiance to the Caliph has been the traditional symbol of the cohesion of the *Ummah*. So central was the principle that the *imamiyyah* group among the Muslims, who later became known as the

Shi'a, though in fundamental disagreement with the course the succession to the Prophet's political authority had taken, took great care to give allegiance—*bai'ah*—to the Caliphs.⁹ Thus, Ali ibn Abi Talib himself accepted the three Caliphs before him and served under them. He acted as their close confidant and took part in military campaigns ordered by them. Imam Hasan ibn Ali, though he succeeded his father in the Caliphate, eventually accepted his father's old adversary, Mu'awiyah, as Caliph and gave his own and his followers' allegiance to him. Husain ibn Ali, quite rightly, refused allegiance to Mu'awiyah's son, Yazid, and was martyred at Karbala. But all subsequent *imams* of the *imamiyyah* tradition offered their own and their followers' allegiance to the Umayyad and Abbassid Caliphs until the twelfth Imam who went into occultation in 329 *hijri*.

The sentiment of allegiance to the Caliph has always remained strong among the Muslims. Though the *Ummah* had been on a course of progressive deviation for so many hundreds of years, the commitment to cohesion and unity were not broken while the institutions, however corrupt in themselves, remained. Even after the collapse of the institutions and the great States that Muslims created over a wide span of the globe, the idea of a single *Ummah* has remained central to the political consciousness of the Muslims. Though the institutions have for the moment disappeared, the Qur'an, one of the constant values of the Islamic movement, is there to remind the Muslims of the essential unity of the *Ummah*.¹⁰ The western colonial powers, having at last conquered the homeland of Islam, took care to destroy the institutions of the Islamic civilization. They then used their political patronage to create among Muslims a group of 'liberals' and nationalists who accepted the secular basis of European history as relevant, indeed desirable, for Muslim societies. The European powers then parcelled the world of Islam into small nation-States and, gradually, handed them over to the local secular nationalists. These westernized elites gratefully accepted the commission they received from their colonial patrons to turn their traditionally Islamic societies into replicas of the west itself.

9. See Al-Kulayn, *Al-Kafi*, vol 1, Kitab ul-Hujjah.

10. Al-Qur'an 3:103; 8:63; 21:92; 23:52; 49:10.

The colonial period changed the historical situation in a fundamental way. Whereas before the colonial period the Muslim civilization had been on a course of progressive deviation from the norms set by the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and the *khulafa al-rashidoon* and the *imams*, it was still possible to trace their tracks back to the origin. Even in their most deviant and corrupt forms, the Muslim social, economic and political institutions attempted to derive their identity, if not inspiration, from the earliest history of Islam. The colonial period led to the destruction of the institutions as well as the men and traditions that had sustained them. A new brand of institutions was now created and there emerged a new breed of rulers. Neither the post-colonial institutions nor the new rulers belonged to the mainstream of Islamic history. Perhaps it is true to say that the mainstream of Islamic history, greatly muddled by both lust and dust, in fact dried up at the beginning of the colonial period. The new nation-States and their institutions and the ruling classes we now have are part of another mainstream of history; this stream flows from the fountainhead of the western civilization, culture, norms and values.

The mainstream of Islamic history remains dry and barren, at least on the surface. Below the surface there remains an *Ummah* that is now a thousand million strong. This solid mass of humanity that forms the *Ummah* retains its direct links with the mainstream of Islamic history and threatens to break open the dry and barren surface that is now represented by the nation-States, their alien institutions, and the post-colonial regimes. In Iran alone has the Islamic movement succeeded in cutting through the dry and barren surface of imperialism to mobilize the Muslim masses and overthrow the post-colonial regime, its imperialist masters, and the institutions of the nation-State.¹¹ It is perhaps true that the Islamic Revolution in Iran has also cut through a great deal of Iran's own deviation from its Islamic origins. Imam Khomeini's insistence that the issues that have traditionally divided the Shi'a and the Sunni schools of thought are 'no longer relevant' opens the door towards the healing of the wounds of the *Ummah*.

11. This is not to deny that Islamic Iran has emerged from a deeply nationalistic background and still retains traces of nationalism to an unacceptable level.

Nevertheless, the third arm of the Islamic movement, that is the level of participation of the general body of believers, remains greatly weakened. The commitment, cohesion and mobilization of the *Ummah* is a prime condition of the Islamic movement that can only be attained over a period of time and in the process of the pursuit of a set of long-term and short-term goals. The invincibility of the Islamic movement once it has achieved the commitment, cohesion, and mobilization of even a part of the *Ummah* has been clearly demonstrated in Iran. This unambiguous demonstration of the Islamic movement's invincibility in modern conditions had become essential because many Muslims had come to believe that the Prophet's methods would no longer work against the 'superpowers' and their 'technology'. The bogies of the 'superpowers' and their 'technology' have been laid. The fact that the post-colonial regimes in Muslim nation-States are still running to the 'superpowers' for 'protection' only confirms the point that they are a creation of imperialism and have no place in the Islamic movement. They are in fact opposed to everything that Islam stands for.¹² The temptation to accept the present 'reality' as permanent and to seek Islamic 'solutions' within the framework of the *neo-jahiliyyah* is considerable. It removes the need to confront the *neo-jahiliyyah* and defeat it. Once the 'reality' of the post-colonial nightmare is accepted by the Islamic movement, however reluctantly, all that remains is a matter of organizing political parties, holding rallies, contesting elections, joining coalitions, pursuing 'reconciliation', and otherwise persuading the generals, colonels and monarchs to 'establish Islam'. The temptation is even greater because it removes the need to mobilize the Muslim masses in the Islamic movement. Islamic 'politics' is then reduced to the neat, recognizable, 'national' boundaries. The global role of the Islamic movement is reduced to a narrow 'national' scale. What is even more convenient is that the goal of establishing the Islamic State then becomes merely a question of getting an 'Islamic Constitution' accepted by the 'national assembly' of a nation-State.

This initial compromise has led, as was to be expected, to the emergence of 'national Islamic movements'. In this framework Islam

12. In a paper written in 1976, the author was prepared to accept the Muslim nation-States as sub-systems of the Islamic movement. This was clearly an error. See the author's *The Islamic Movement: A Systems Approach*, Slough: The Open Press, 1976.

becomes part of the forces that divide the *Ummah*. Indeed, it is not uncommon these days to find 'national' Islamic parties pursuing mutually exclusive goals. In the 'national' parameters, the Islamic 'party' also becomes an elitist activity. The elite that then becomes the platform of the Islamic 'party' is in fact the same dry and barren top soil of the social strata which has been laid over our Islamic past and our Islamic consciousness by the colonial masters and the post-colonial regimes. Worse still is the resultant wholesale importation of the west's social philosophy and political theory into what is presented as 'the political theory of Islam'.¹³ A whole range of social, economic and political behaviour that should really be rejected and eradicated from Muslim societies becomes acceptable. The pursuit of narrow national interests, or the defence of established social parasites, becomes part of the 'manifesto' of the Islamic 'party'. The divisive nature of western political behaviour becomes the accepted or even the desirable norm of 'Islamic' goals pursued in 'national' politics.

The point that has to be made is that the level of commitment, cohesion and mobilization of the *Ummah* that is required to bring the Islamic movement to its prime condition of invincibility cannot be attained in the framework of the boundaries that now divide us. The original Islamic movement, led by the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, in practice remained confined to a relatively small geographical area, but it proclaimed a worldview without frontiers. The worldview of Islam proclaimed the Unity of Creation and gave all Creation a Unity of Purpose.¹⁴ The Islamic movement emerged from the peninsula of Arabia but 'Arabism' as such has never been a part of Islam, the Islamic movement, or even the Islamic State. Indeed, the worldview of Islam is so compelling that even today when divisive forces of all kind are at the peak of their power and influence, the consciousness of belonging to a global *Ummah* is as strong among Muslims as at any time before. So much so that even the secular, post-colonial nation-States have found it necessary to pay lip-service to the idea of belonging to the *Ummah*. They have set up 'international

13. The author first expressed his doubts on the efficacy of this literature in a paper presented at the First World Conference on Islamic Education held in Makkah in April 1977. See the author's *Beyond the Muslim Nation-States*, Slough: The Open Press, 1977.

14. Al-Qur'an 3:191; 6:73; 21:16; 23:115; 38:27; 44:38; 46:3; 51:56.

organizations' such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (the Islamic Secretariat) and its affiliates. They hold annual conferences of 'Islamic' Foreign Ministers and, less frequently, 'Islamic summits'. They promote 'Islamic solidarity' but are careful that the 'solidarity' they seek is among the 'Islamic States' and not among their peoples. Their mutual co-operation is based on 'sovereign equality' of member States sanctified by the 'Charter of the United Nations'. Recently a Muslim diplomat complained to the author that the Islamic Revolution in Iran was 'interfering in the internal affairs' of his country.

This is precisely the point. The nation-States, the post-colonial regimes, and their superpower protectors cannot stop the *Ummah* from pulsating as a single body. It is this body of which the Islamic movement is the soul. Thus the Islamic movement and the *Ummah* form an indivisible unity. The *Ummah* as a functional whole lies dormant, superficially divided, and cut up by such forces as nationalism and sectarianism, but the moment strength returns to any part of the body a wave of exhilaration and invigoration runs through the entire *Ummah*. It is the strength of this exhilaration caused by the Islamic Revolution that the diplomat described as 'interference in our internal affairs'; it is the prospect of a global Islamic movement becoming effective in the heartland of Islam that has sent the regimes in the area running to the United States, the Great Satan, for cover.

The exhilaration and invigoration that ran through the *Ummah* was proof that despite dismemberment and imposed paralysis, the body retains the ability to respond to the Islamic movement. But, sadly, it is also true that lower level loyalties, sectarian prejudices, nationalism, and national 'Islamic parties' have acted together to reimpose their supremacy, at least for the time being. For the Islamic movement, therefore, the prospect of securing the commitment, cohesion and mobilization of the entire *Ummah* remains problematic.

As always, the problem has to be tackled with a deep insight into the methods of the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace.

At its most basic the method remains unchanged from the days of the Prophet to our own situation. This requires relentless presentation of the worldview of Islam at all levels. If in this process the Islamic movement has to demolish cherished 'norms' of contemporary Muslim

behaviour, then so be it. Cutting corners and accepting, even for the time being, any position that is otherwise unacceptable is an option of convenience that must now be abandoned. It matters not how few are immediately attracted to the core of the Islamic movement. What is important is that the Islamic movement is not contaminated by the *neo-jahiliyyah* that now prevails. The Islamic movement, being the soul of the *Ummah*, now has to revive the body. Slowly the *Ummah* will return to its optimum health, itself destroying the parasites and foreign bodies that now invade it. Once this point is clearly understood, it is easy to see why the so-called short cuts, such as democracy, socialism, capitalism, monarchy, national 'Islamic parties', and others do not really exist. They are the disease and can form no part of the cure. The Islamic movement must not become contaminated by any of these pillars of the *neo-jahiliyyah* or else it will cease to be the Islamic movement. Instead, the Islamic movement must carry on with a relentless expose of the *neo-jahiliyyah* and its pervasive influences.

While the 'slow' process must be relentlessly pursued, the Islamic movement must also choose and develop areas of rapid advancement. The Revolution in Iran has managed to send signals to all parts of the *Ummah* on a continuous basis ever since the dramatic events of 1978-79. The holding of the US spies and personnel in Tehran by the revolutionary students of the Islamic movement and the open humiliation of the US also filled the *Ummah* with hope and pride in their own confidence, capability, and performance. The failure of the US military mission to free the 'hostages' sent another wave of the cry of '*Allah-o akbar*' (God is Greatest) through the consciousness of the *Ummah*. The failure of the Ba'athist invasion, supported by such pillars of the *neo-jahiliyyah* as Saudi Arabia, has had a similar effect on the *Ummah*, though the feedback loops have been blocked by the agents of the *neo-jahiliyyah*. This Revolution appears destined to go on giving strong signals to the *Ummah* far into the future. We need new Islamic Revolutions in other parts of the *Ummah*. At the time of writing (June 1981) there is much hope that the *jihad* of the Islamic movement in Syria, against the Ba'athist and Nusairi regime there, may well lead to a revolution. At the same time, there is reason to fear that the Islamic movement in Syria may not be totally free of the influence of such sources of reaction as the monarchies in Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The

overthrow of a regime is not success enough. Anybody can overthrow a regime. At some stage the CIA may also be willing to give advice, or even a helping hand, in the overthrow of the Saudi regime. What is important is that the Islamic movement, *before* it overthrows a regime, has itself developed a clear worldview and an independent capability based entirely on the commitment, cohesion and mobilization of at least the Muslims living in the immediate area. The Islamic movement operating in a local situation will invariably have strong links with other parts of the global Islamic movement. The almost total isolation in which the Islamic movement in Iran had to operate should not again be necessary.

This brings us to the consideration of the role of the Islamic State in the Islamic movement. Quite clearly the Islamic State is the goal the Islamic movement must pursue. Once an Islamic State has been established it, by definition, becomes part of the Islamic movement. When another part of the Islamic movement succeeds in converting another geographical area of the *Ummah* into an Islamic State, the Islamic movement will be correspondingly strengthened. Then there will be two Islamic States as parts of the wider Islamic movement. And then there will be three... four... five... How many we do not know. But the number of Islamic States will certainly be far fewer than the number of Muslim nation-States of today. These Islamic States will pursue not only compatible but also broadly identical goals. The goals will be those of the single Muslim *Ummah*. The Islamic movement will be the framework within which the Islamic States will establish functional institutions serving the entire *Ummah*. These institutions will lay the foundations for the eventual unification of the Islamic States under one *Amir al-Mumineen*. These are stages of growth and development that may occupy many decades, or even centuries. The *Ummah's* deviation, decline and dismemberment has occurred over many hundreds of years and will not be remedied in a short time.

Unlike the present nation-States, the next generation of Islamic States will be neither 'sovereign' nor 'nationalistic'. The time has come for the global Islamic movement to start thinking about a whole range of institutions that are needed now to service the movement through all stages of its growth and development. These are the institutions that should begin to unite the *Ummah* and the Islamic movement above the

divisions that now exist. A few years ago it was possible to conceive, or at least hope, that a first generation of *Ummah*-wide institutions would emerge out of such experiments as the Islamic Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The conduct of the OIC members and of the OIC itself towards the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic State puts that possibility beyond reasonable hope. The 'international organization' as a model is as obsolete as nationalism and the nation-State. The 'international organizations' established by Muslim nation-States form no part of the Islamic movement and must be explicitly excluded. Similarly, the organizations created by nation-States to serve their narrow interests in the name of Islam must also be excluded. The obvious candidates for exclusion in this category are the Rabitah al-Alam al-Islami and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth of Saudi Arabia, the Council for Islamic Ideology of Pakistan, the Arab and Islamic Peoples' League of Egypt, and many others. Most Muslim nation-States have created front organizations whose primary purpose is to deceive their own people and the world in the name of Islam. But we must take care not to exclude the vast network of lower level, non-official organized Islamic activity that goes on throughout the world, even if some of this is financed by such centres as the Rabitah. Some of these are now controlled and run by sycophants, careerists, charlatans or just simpletons. These community and student based organizations will gradually move out of the sphere of influence of the reactionary regimes and their agents and will become extremely useful pillars of the Islamic movement. The hard core of the sycophants, careerists, charlatans, 'Islamizers', nationalists, and 'democrats' will have to be closely watched, but the vast majority of the Muslims, young and old, are extremely genuine workers in the cause of Islam.

What is new in the present situation is the relationship between the Islamic State and the Islamic movement. The new Islamic State in Iran is a small but important part of the Islamic movement. The relationship between them has to be carefully developed. Some of the obvious pitfalls to avoid can be easily identified. For instance, Islamic Iran must not become the 'Saudi Arabia' of the Islamic movement, financing and controlling a worldwide network of 'Islamic workers', '*imams*', professional 'preachers', mosques, societies, youth groups, and other

organizations. The Islamic movement outside the Islamic State must develop its resources from the *Ummah* outside Iran. This elementary precaution is necessary for the good health and sound sense of both the Islamic State and the Islamic movement. Indeed, in some respects it is the Islamic movement outside that should come to the assistance of the Islamic State. Let us not forget that at present a mere 35 million Muslims, out of a total of 1,000 million in the *Ummah*, actually live in the Islamic State. At the same time it is true that the Islamic State represents mobilized resources committed to Islam far greater than the resources of the non-State sector. These resources have to play their part in the Islamic movement. There should be close contact and collaboration between the State and non-State sectors of the Islamic movement. Perhaps a range of institutions can be developed to oversee these relationships.

In the years that lie ahead, perhaps the Islamic movement outside Iran has to play a major role in keeping a close watch on developments within the Islamic State. For instance, it is already clear that not all traces of nationalism, liberalism, and westernism in general have been eradicated with the speed and despatch that was necessary after the Islamic Revolution. The retention of the old Pahlavi State's bureaucracy may yet prove to be the Islamic State's undoing. Many of the immediate hazards have been avoided or overcome more by chance than by design. The revolutionary students' action in occupying the US 'embassy' was a stroke of revolutionary genius and came from the depth of the people's revolutionary commitment. The Revolution's leadership was made to follow the Revolution. This is the hallmark of a true Islamic Revolution. And the fact that, with few exceptions, the entire leadership followed the students, also proved the true revolutionary nature of the leadership itself. Then the fiasco of the US 'rescue' mission and finally the war of Arab and Ba'athist aggression have saved the Islamic State from both internal and external enemies. In a very real sense the actions of the Islamic State's enemies have saved the Islamic State perhaps more than the conscious decisions of the new post-revolutionary State. Those who are caught up in this kind of situation usually have little experience of it and even less as to what to expect and how to react. Revolutionary decisions are often instinctive, snap decisions. The normal processes of State decision-making—slow,

deliberate, cumbersome, ponderous, cool, calculating, logical—either do not exist or are bypassed or suspended. The instinctive decisions overlook ‘cost’ factors and are largely based on the values of the Revolution and, therefore, carry the confidence of the Muslim masses.

In Islamic Iran the void was filled first by the *Sepah-e Pasdaran* (the Revolutionary Guards) and then by the *Jihad-e Sazindagi* (the Jihad for Reconstruction). These and other arms of the Revolution ensured the survival of the Islamic State through the most critical early phase of intense counter-revolutionary activity. Perhaps the Islamic movement outside Iran needs to create its own Revolutionary Guards and *Jihad-e Sazindagi* on a worldwide scale. In this field the experience of the Islamic State needs to be studied and transferred to the Islamic movement outside.

Equally, the Islamic movement outside has the time to take a cool and perhaps a little detached view of the developments inside the Islamic State. The Islamic State is bound to be erratic in many areas for a number of years. The Islamic movement can monitor these areas, study them, and create a body of literature and a body of men capable of learning and applying the lessons to the Islamic Revolutions that are to follow. This is important in the period leading up to new Revolutions, in the critical phase following the Revolutions, and in the long-term struggle to take apart and rebuild the entire fabric of social relationships in the Islamic States. The contemporary Islamic movement, both inside and outside of the Islamic State, is very short of experience. The experiences of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic State in Iran have to be gathered, processed, and internalized throughout the Islamic movement. The manpower and ‘expertise’ required must be internally generated. The ‘expertise’ of bureaucrats, businessmen, industrialists, bank managers, accountants, army officers, and other ‘professionals’ in the pre-revolutionary period is hardly relevant. Their so-called expertise is the wrong kind of expertise. If given a chance, they will re-establish the Islamic State in the image of the *neo-jahiliyyah*. This element is also largely mercenary. It works and performs for money. Anyone who works primarily for money, however good, is the wrong person. The Islamic movement as well as the State will have to learn to do without the ‘professionals’ inherited from the nation-States and the post-colonial nightmare.

But the bulk of the student population in the pre-revolutionary struggle is acquiring qualifications to join the ranks of the professionals. The Islamic movement has a major task of remotivating the students as well as the 'professionals'. In any case, the 'intellectual' in the Islamic movement has only a peripheral role. Islam is not an intellectual 'ideology' written up by scholars and intellectuals. The Islamic movement has to be a mass movement or it is not Islamic at all. In the Islamic movement those who perform 'leadership' roles are unaware of being 'leaders'; they do not seek leadership roles. Leadership in the Islamic movement is not a function of class, wealth, or power. It is perhaps not even a function of competence alone. Men do not find leadership roles but leadership roles discover men. The Islamic movement usually seeks out the most humble among the faithful for its most critical areas of performance. In the Islamic State or the Islamic movement men who perform leadership roles do not have a 'constituency' of traders, feudal lords, labourers, or intellectuals; they do not owe their 'rise' to a group that then demands reward and patronage. These are the common everyday concerns of the political process in western political systems of the *neo-jahiliyyah*. Even the modern national 'Islamic parties' have used such slogans as 'the students of today are the leaders of tomorrow' to attract participation in their youth and student wings. These 'Islamic parties' have made no attempt to remotivate the Muslim youth and students. Such parties and movements have bestowed respectability on the pursuit of 'career' and 'professionalism' for personal gain. Many senior members of such Islamic parties and movements are today earning fat salaries in the service of the Saudi King and the Shaikhdoms of the Gulf. During the hot summer of those regions these worthy sons of Islam can be seen serving Islam in Europe and North America, effectively on holiday on full pay. Islam and the Islamic movement have been reduced to a professional activity to be pursued at no personal cost. Some other professionals also find a little Islamic work a useful appendage to their careers in, for instance, law, medicine, or business. Many Muslim millionaires have acquired formidable reputations for their 'love of Islam' through well-placed and suitably publicized patronage of 'Islamic work'.

The Islamic movement has to emerge from this quicksand of self-deception and this nightmare of history. The Islamic Revolution in Iran has been little more than a flash of light in darkness. But even in that instant we have seen enough not to accept darkness as our permanent condition.