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## **Integration and disintegration in the politics of Islam and *kufr***

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Muslim political thought is moving towards a new stage of consolidation. In the last 200 years the Muslims' attempt to come to grips with the political world may be compared with the parable of the blind boys attempting to describe the elephant. Having described their own 'parts' of the elephant, the boys are about to discover the whole reality; the Muslims are about to consolidate their groupings of the new political world into a new paradigm of Muslim political thought.

A new paradigm of knowledge comes into being when a number of models, hypotheses, theories and other attempts at explanation fall into place and are consolidated in a single framework. It is also my understanding of history that the long chain of Prophets, from Adam to Muhammad, peace be upon them all, were carriers of updated paradigms of Revealed Knowledge. The final version of the Revealed Paradigm consists of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and *Seerah* of the last of all Prophets, Muhammad ibn Abdullah, upon whom be peace.

The Revealed Paradigm provides the constant core around which the much larger totality of human knowledge, based on man's quest, reflection, speculation, experience and experimentation, constantly takes shape. That part of the larger knowledge paradigm that man

develops for himself may be called the ‘Science Paradigm’. In the epistemology of Islam, the Revealed Paradigm controls and directs the Science Paradigm. This may be called the epistemological role of *tawheed*. The Science Paradigm under-goes constant change and revision in line with man’s increasing capabilities. The Science Paradigm may also help man to a deeper understanding of the Revealed Paradigm. And a deeper understanding of the Revealed Paradigm should in turn extend and broaden the horizons of the Science Paradigm.

At the present time, however, almost the entire Science Paradigm is dominated by an epistemological tradition that denies the very existence of the Revealed Paradigm. This puts the Science Paradigm, as controlled by the west, in revolt against Allah *subhanahu wa ta’ala*. Let us call it the Western-Science Paradigm. It is not that there is no ‘truth’ in the Western-Science Paradigm; it is only that the scientist working in the Western-Science Paradigm claims too much for his science. The scientist claims that his science alone is valid and that nothing that lies outside the scope of his experimental/empirical method can be either scientific or form any part of ‘truth’ or ‘knowledge’. Religion, according to the scientist in the Western-Science Paradigm, is beyond science, and neither has anything in common with the other. In particular, the modern scientist holds that religion cannot direct, control or guide the Western-Science Paradigm. Such axioms as the scientist needs must be provided by the Western-Science Paradigm itself. The axioms of the Western-Science Paradigm therefore can rarely be more than methodological and mathematical formulations of pure logic. The Western-Science Paradigm is therefore limited by the outer reaches of human logic. The area of its comprehension is also limited by the capability of the human mind and the machines it invents to process complex and infinite dimensions of human experience.

Besides, in a single-paradigm system in which the Western-Science Paradigm is the only paradigm, all parts of the paradigm are under actual or potential threat of transformation through successive scientific revolutions.<sup>1</sup> This makes for uncertainty within

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1. See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962.

the paradigm and about its future. Even the ‘history’ of the paradigm is suspect because its development becomes a matter of chance as much as of choice. Even when the matter is of choice, who can say that the right choices have been made or are being made?’ In any case, the choices that determine the growth and development of the Western-Science Paradigm are often, or nearly always, made by non-scientists.

For instance, the Western-Science Paradigm’s direction of growth and development has been almost entirely determined by the politicians’ need to deter, wage or win wars, or the need to land on the moon before anybody else. These priorities are determined by such factors as sentiments of national pride, prosperity and economic profitability. Thus the scientist in the Western-Science Paradigm has to accept control and direction from ‘politicians’ outside the scientific community. At this point the claims made on behalf of a value-free science become untenable.

Clearly the epistemology of Islam, with a Revealed Paradigm at the centre of human knowledge and behaviour, provides a far superior integrated system of knowledge. The same Revealed Paradigm guides and directs everyone—the scientist and the politician—in a single Grand Paradigm. Indeed, this Grand Paradigm is nothing but Islam itself. It is also the most complete, all-inclusive, open system in which all knowledge and behaviour is simultaneously controlled, directed and set free to seek the highest goals of excellence compatible with all parts of the Grand Paradigm.

The essential point we must note here is that while the Western-Science Paradigm claims to be ‘autonomous’ and ‘value-free’, the same body of knowledge in the Grand Paradigm of Islam would be related to the Revealed Paradigm and integrated with all other branches of knowledge and human behaviour. Thus, in the epistemology of Islam, ‘science’ and ‘social science’ are essential and inseparable parts of the Grand Paradigm. It should also be noted that the totality of Creation is an integral whole and only an all-inclusive paradigm can explain it.

This preliminary epistemological discussion leads me to propose that we view the historical situation that confronts us today in the

context of the Grand Paradigm. In my submission there are two parallel trends in history: one is a disintegrative trend that divides, the other is an integrative trend that unites. The disintegrative trend is the one that has produced the exclusivist arrogance of the Western-Science Paradigm; the integrative trend is the one inherited from the chain of Prophets and consolidated in the Grand Paradigm of Islam. The presence of the Revelation at the core of the Grand Paradigm leads to integrative processes, whereas the denial of the existence of or the need for such a core leads to disintegration.

Integration and disintegration are opposite processes. It is not possible for either to lead to the other. *Tawheed*, the central organizing concept of Islam, is the chief integrative mechanism; whereas the multiple, overlapping, competing and often contradictory conceptual jungle of the Western-Science Paradigm provides it with its awesome disintegrative drive. It so happens that we live at a time when the disintegrative trend in history has been ascendant for about two hundred years. It is not my purpose here to show how the integrative drive of Islam was partly overcome by the disintegrative forces in history. It is sufficient to note that the power of the disintegrative trend was first developed and perfected in Europe. In its first phase, the forces of disintegration broke up Europe itself; one of the first victims was Christianity. We may note here that Christianity, as a partial Revealed Paradigm, had played an integrative role over a considerable period of European history. The conflicts in Europe between the secular, national emperors and the Pope were conflicts between the integrative and disintegrative trends in the history of Europe that gave rise to the modern European civilization. It is in the very nature of the forces of disintegration that they are divided among themselves: hence the wars for supremacy among Austria, Germany, France, Britain and Russia, and among various coalitions sponsored and led by them. The forces of disintegration break up not only lands and peoples; they also lead to the fragmentation of the human body, mind and soul.

The secular European civilization, therefore, when it acquired ascendancy in Europe, became the most powerful combination that the disintegrationist trend in history had ever achieved. Europe thus became the continent that took upon itself the task of breaking up the

world. For the European civilization, the breaking up of the world meant a number of things. It meant, above all, that all integrative trends, whatever their origin, had to be destroyed. For instance, if African paganism united Africa, paganism had to be destroyed; if tribalism united the people, the tribes had to be destroyed; if agriculture and a system of land distribution was integrative of the family, then agriculture, the agrarian system and the family unit had to be destroyed; if moral values were integrative, then moral values had to be abolished; if religion was integrative, then the world had to be turned against religion. It is no accident that the European colonialists and the colonial system cut across all the political, social, economic, moral, religious and other systems that existed in Asia and Africa before the coming of European colonialism. Wherever the Europeans came across a locally integrative system, they destroyed it, no matter what it was or to whom it belonged. Those systems, such as some value and belief systems, that could not be destroyed, were damaged in other ways. In India, for instance, the British created the Qadiani movement in an attempt to damage the Muslims' belief in the finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad, upon whom be peace. Through the Qadiani movement the British also tried to diminish the role of *jihad* in Islam. Similar attempts were made in other parts of the world.

The Europeans also established departments of Islamic studies in their universities, with heavily endowed chairs in Orientalism. The scholarship of the Orientalists launched a broad frontal attack on Islam, and especially on the person of the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace. Later these non-Muslim scholars of Islam began to teach Islam to the Muslims themselves, and their pupils began to fill the faculties of 'Islamic studies' created in secular universities established in the colonies. At the same time, the Orientalists created a whole range of new issues of debate and controversy among Muslims. The Orientalists' primary task was to present Islam as 'medieval' and an obstacle to 'progress'. They concentrated their attacks on polygamy, on the place of women, on 'barbaric' punishments, and on the use of the sword to explain the spread of Islam. They have, of course, not succeeded in causing any permanent damage to Islam in any meaningful sense. However, the European civilization, now better known and described as the western civilization, has made significant

inroads into traditional and old-established Muslim societies. One of the great challenges facing the *Ummah* now is to assess the extent of penetration into our societies achieved by the western civilization.

The non-Muslim scholars of Islam also brought their partial paradigm to bear on the study of the Grand Paradigm of Islam. It is not possible to penetrate the Grand Paradigm with a partial paradigm. The result of the overall effort of the Orientalist scholars is, therefore, disastrous for standards of scholarship in the west itself as well as for those Muslims who have joined the Orientalist tradition as students and teachers. Few Muslims who have studied or taught Islam under the Orientalists' influence have achieved more than superficial excellence. Most have been diverted into obscure issues of little relevance to the main thrust of Islam and its global role. Through Orientalism, the west has created Muslim scholars of Islam who have viewed Islam largely through western eyes. This has achieved two major goals of the west: it has set up 'modern' Muslim scholars of Islam in direct competition with the *ulama*, and it has created Muslim scholars who will support the political systems created by the west in Muslim areas of the world. In this way it has been possible for the western civilization to introduce, at the very least, a measure of disorder in the otherwise integrated Islamic heritage.

The west was quick to realize that the weakened state of the political systems of the Muslims opened up an opportunity for it to introduce disintegrative information into societies that had remained firmly within the integrative influence of Islam. Thus a process of disintegration was introduced to Islamic societies. However, the disintegrative processes could not be left alone to take their course. This is because the Grand Paradigm of Islam has the capacity to identify, absorb and eventually overcome partial attempts at disintegration. This was a chance the west was not prepared to take. Any likelihood of the Grand Paradigm's survival as a functional system had to be removed. At the same time, the west realized that to eliminate the Grand Paradigm of Islam altogether in the time for which the west expected to remain in direct control of the processes of disintegration was beyond its power. This difficulty was overcome by giving order to disorder over short periods of time. Thus the disordering of the traditional

society's educational system was presented as the 'new order' of westernized universities. The new universities were to consolidate the disordered parts of the society and then use their consolidated intermediate state to extend the area of disorder. This point is even clearer when we apply this insight to the understanding of the new political systems imposed by the western civilization upon traditional societies once under the influence of the Grand Paradigm of Islam.

The political systems introduced to our societies were to consolidate the gains of disintegration achieved by the west. The disintegrated parts of our societies, such as the western-educated elites and the 'modernized' economic sectors, were firmly linked with the west's own political and economic systems. Their orders were to extend disintegration to the remaining parts of the traditional society through political, social, economic, educational and cultural policies. To achieve this the westernized educational systems, particularly the universities, produced 'intellectuals' who questioned all traditional values of the Grand Paradigm. The new intellectuals became the bearers of a 'mixed' culture: half western and half Islamic. The presence of these half-culture bearers gave the process of disintegration an appearance of respectability. In some instances the political leadership promoted by the disintegrationist policies of the west was able to use the values and sentiments of the traditional society for mass mobilization to achieve its short-term goals.

In my view, this is what happened in British India when the Muslim League used the vocabulary and slogans of Islam and the concept of the State in the Grand Paradigm to mobilize the Muslim masses behind its demand for the partition of British India and the creation of Pakistan. The bone of contention in the last days of the British *raj* was merely the division of India between the 'Hindu' disintegrationists (the majority) and the 'Muslim' disintegrationists (the minority). The 'Muslim' disintegrationists wanted their own area of dominance, where they could continue the disintegration of the Muslim areas of British India to their own advantage. Having secured Pakistan, the rulers of that country have done precisely this, under the direct patronage and guidance of the western powers. The people of Pakistan have had to suffer greater disintegration of their traditional

society in 36 years of 'independence' than they did in more than a hundred years of colonial rule.

Another important precaution taken by the western civilization to achieve disintegration has been the drawing of political frontiers where none existed before. A glance at the political map of the world shows that the present boundaries and frontiers are, for the most part, less than a hundred years old. In Africa, 'national' frontiers cut across tribal populations. In some cases, a single tribe has been divided into several 'nations'. Virtually every frontier that exists in the Muslim world today has been created since the First World War. The creation of the Muslim nation-States that divide the *Ummah* today is part of the western civilization's drive towards achieving the disintegration of traditional Muslim societies into small subservient societies. At the same time, the west created identical but competing 'national' leaderships in these areas. Thus a people with a long common history and, like the Arabs, even a common language and culture, were given mutually exclusive and conflicting 'national interests'.

Progressive disintegration has led to progressive subservience to the west. One of the major characteristics of the Grand Paradigm of Islam is that it does not allow for the subservience of itself or any part of it to any partial paradigm outside Islam. Islamic societies have to be self-dominant: in other words, Islam creates its own system of authority, and all Muslim individuals and social systems must be organized according to the system of authority of Islam itself. When the Qur'an calls for obedience to Allah, the Prophet and 'those in authority from among you' (4:59), it also excludes obedience or subservience to any authority outside Islam (2:208). The westernized and disintegrated parts of our societies are comprehensively subservient to the west. They are subservient as individuals, their centres of learning are subservient, their economic units of production, distribution and exchange are subservient and, above all, their political systems are subservient. The most subservient of all are the nation-States that now clutter the world of Islam. Their subservience is not even 'voluntary' for short-term expedience; they were created in subservience in order to perpetuate the master-servant relationship established during the colonial period. The westernized ruling classes who control the nation-States have no



conception of the Grand Paradigm; they belong to the partial paradigm, the Western-Science Paradigm, and accept its view of Islam. The inevitable result is that not a single post-colonial nation-State has escaped subservience: it is probably true to say that each one of them is now more subservient than at the time of its creation or 'independence'. Even worse is the fact that not one of them has made a serious attempt to escape from subservience to the west.

The subservience of the nation-States, after more than a generation of 'independence', is a phenomenon that requires closer examination. The fact is that the traditional society of Islam has proved highly resistant to the disintegrative policies of the colonial powers. During their years of direct rule, the colonial powers managed to break up only small parts of the Muslim societies. The greater part resisted westernization, and has continued to do so. The local westernized elites were too small and too alienated to achieve political legitimacy. The fact that every one of the Muslim nation-States is governed by an alienated minority is evidence, if evidence were needed, of their inability to relate with the vast majority of the Muslim people. In every one of the nation-States the elites have failed to establish political institutions. Usually they have not even tried, but where they have made any attempt they have failed completely. The result is that the world of Islam presents a panorama of oppressive regimes. The instruments of oppression—weapons, training in techniques of torture, and other related expertise—are provided by the west. All the major western nation-States have agencies and industries financed expressly to provide this equipment and expertise to the regimes of Asia and Africa. The nation-States in the former colonial areas, therefore, are agents of the western civilization. They are charged with the task of disintegration and destruction of the remaining traditional Islamic societies. These nation-States and their regimes accept subservience to the west in return for the means of their own survival.

This would suggest that the hold of the Grand Paradigm on the bulk of the Muslims of the world has not been broken. The Muslim masses may not have heard of the epistemological formulations of the Grand Paradigm, but the awareness that Islam has given them is sufficient for them to know when they are being asked to give up their

value-systems. This is a characteristic peculiar to the Grand Paradigm of Islam: even the most elementary knowledge of any part of it makes the Muslim aware of all parts of it. The opening declaration of the Grand Paradigm—*there is no god but Allah*—is so powerful and all-inclusive that it leaves the Muslim in no doubt about what is required of him. For a total commitment to the Grand Paradigm what was needed was a simple and yet a comprehensive axiom of belief. The second part of the same declaration—*and Muhammad is His Prophet*—has the same quality of explaining the whole of the Grand Paradigm. Individually a Muslim may be ignorant, but collectively the entire *Ummah* cannot be persuaded to accept what the western civilization has to offer. This explains why the west's massive effort to disintegrate our societies has made little impact beyond the glitter of the inner urban centres. The Muslim masses everywhere continue to be informed and directed by Islam. This political awareness of the Muslim masses is a feature of the Grand Paradigm that has received little attention. Recent scholarship, both modern and traditional, has neglected this vital area of research and conceptualization.

The entire area of political populism among Muslim masses has been almost entirely neglected by scholars and political activists alike. This is partly attributable to the predominance of *malukiyyah* for the greater part of Muslim history. Such scholars as al-Mawardi (d.450/1058), when they dealt with the subject at all, approached it from the point of view of allegiance to an *existing* authority among Muslims. By and large such scholars recommended allegiance on the ground that rebellion would cause greater *fitnah* than the rulers represented. Al-Mawardi appeared to have feared 'disintegration' from within and viewed the continuity of *malukiyyah* as the lesser evil. Perhaps some of us, with hindsight, would wish that such *ulama* had taken a different course. If they had, perhaps the Muslims of the time might have acted to return the leadership to rightly constituted and guided *khilafah* and *imamah*, as required by Islam.

This failure of the *ulama* to lead the Muslim masses against the established dynasties of their time has created another problem for us today. Because they did not defy the sultans and other rulers, the *ulama* came to be identified with the established order. The *ulama* as a whole

did not claim the leadership of the Muslim masses, and many of them served as courtiers of the shahs and sultans. However, when Muslim areas began to fall under colonial rule, some *ulama* waged *jihad* in various parts of the Muslim world and many were martyred.<sup>2</sup>

This, however, proved to be little more than token resistance after the victory of the colonialists had become assured. Having turned the masses into passive spectators, *malukiyyah* facilitated the penetration and takeover by colonialism. Once the colonial States had become established, the *ulama* again failed to offer meaningful opposition to the colonial order. Some *ulama* offered resistance to such apologists and compromisers with colonialism as Sayyid Ahmad Khan in British India and others elsewhere. This resistance, too, proved to be little more than token. However, the influence of those leaders who were promoted by the colonialists remained small. The Muslim League in British India, for instance, was founded in 1906 and until 1940 remained an obscure body attracting fewer than five percent of the Muslims' votes in elections arranged by the British. Once the Muslim League had formulated the Pakistan proposal and promised to establish an 'Islamic State', the Muslims of British India flocked to it. Indian *ulama* who opposed the Muslim League on the ground that its leadership was not Islamic were ignored.

Once the nationalist emotion was stirred by parties working under western influence, the *ulama* again failed to challenge the new political order that was being created to take the processes of disintegration even beyond the point achieved by the colonialists themselves. When the nation-States were set up to serve the west's interests, few *ulama* challenged the legitimacy of these illegitimate States. So much so that such rulers as those of Saudi Arabia have found no difficulty in securing the support of a sufficient number of *ulama* to give a spurious legitimacy to their totally illegitimate State and dynasty. Even such men as Abul Ala Maudoodi and Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi have identified themselves with rulers whose support of imperialism has been open and blatant. In return, these nation-States have treated the *ulama* with contempt. Their *dar al-uloom* have received very little financial

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2. For the *mujahid ulama* in the Indian subcontinent, see I. H. Qureshi, *Ulama in Politics*, Karachi: Ma'arif Ltd, second edition 1974.

support, though these same regimes spend millions on secular institutions and on 'Islamic universities' that they themselves establish. Graduates of such institutions usually enter loyalist 'Islamic' services set up by the regimes themselves. The result of all this today is that, outside Iran at any rate, most *ulama* are either loyal to the secular regimes or poor and ineffective. In all cases their political role has lacked imagination and conviction, and has failed to inspire confidence.

The Shi'i *ulama* were protected from all this by the very nature of their theology. They were under no compulsion to participate in the political process because their theology held that all authority in the absence of the *Imam*, was illegitimate. In the meantime their role was limited to providing religious guidance only through the doctrine of *taqleed*. They collected *khums* and used it to build prosperous centres of religious learning without arousing the wrath of the rulers. Shi'i *ulama* also used some of the enormous sums they collected in *khums* to alleviate poverty. In this way they remained close to the people. Because they were politically neutral and not competing for patronage and other rewards directly, they also retained greater respect. It is less than a hundred years ago that the *ulama* in Iran began to express views openly hostile to the kings. It is also true that many of the leading *maraje* collaborated with the Safavid, Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties. However, in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 in Iran, the *ulama* there secured a greater say in the government of the country than the Sunni *ulama* elsewhere could secure 50 years later. The remaining gap has been bridged by the *ijtihad* of Imam Khomeini in Shi'i political thought that allows for the establishment of an Islamic State under the leadership of the *ulama* in the absence of the Imam. Once this theological barrier had been passed, it was a short step to the Islamic Revolution.

By contrast, the Sunni *ulama*, who had never suffered from any theological barrier to participation in politics, chose to remain largely subservient to the sultans. They did not develop independent institutions of the type that exist in Iran. In the Sunni world the religious institutions depended largely on grants and other forms of patronage by the State. Once these States were destroyed by the colonial powers, the religious institutions also went bankrupt. The *ulama* were left to scratch

their living from private charity and other donations. In many areas this reduced the *ulama* to complete impotence; a handful even received financial support from the colonial powers.

Once the colonialists had begun to transform their colonies into nation-States controlled by those whom they had succeeded in detaching from the Grand Paradigm, the *ulama* did not have the political vision to realize that the ‘fathers of the nation’ and the ‘monarchs’ were essentially no different from the former governor-generals and viceroys. They did not realize that these kings, presidents, prime ministers, field marshals, generals and colonels, though bearing Muslim names and often even managing to display personal piety, were in the political field operating outside Islam. This is the point that escaped Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi and the Jama‘at-e Islami in Pakistan; the political vision of the Ikhwan al-Muslimoon was sharper, but not sharp enough to realize that the ‘national question’ in Egypt, for instance, was not an Islamic cause.

The true nature of the post-colonial order has been totally exposed by the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the reaction of the rulers of the nation-States to it. Those *ulama* and others who became part of the nation-State system, though at the same time trying to ‘Islamize’ it, today stand in opposition to the Islamic Revolution. They also deny the necessity of overthrowing the nation-States and their regimes. The net result is that some Sunni *ulama* have become as alienated from the Muslim masses as the westernized, disintegrated elites and their political, social and economic systems. This has left the Muslim masses in the Sunni world with the problem of leadership within the Grand Paradigm. So critical is the situation that even Saddam Hussain was recently able to hold an ‘Islamic’ conference in Baghdad, attended by many *ulama*. Among those who attended were a number of Shi‘i *ulama*. A few weeks later, Saddam Hussain showed the contempt in which he holds them by having the entire family of the late Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Mohsin al-Hakim, a total of 70 persons, arrested. On June 6, six of them, three sons of the late Ayatullah and three grandsons, were summarily executed. The ‘world of Islam’ did not stir. The ‘Islamic conference’ in Baghdad and the subsequent arrests and executions

demonstrated that Shi'i ulama are also divided over the issue of the true nature of the nation-States and their rulers.

Whatever reasons al-Mawardi and others had for not calling for the overthrow of the rulers of their time, no such considerations apply today. *Malukiyyah* in its various forms was allowed to continue until it could no longer defend the lands and societies of Islam. The result was that a rival and hostile power from outside Islam swept away the *malukiyyah* and set about the task of disintegrating the world of Islam. This new power, the western civilization, has imposed the political fragmentation of the *Ummah* into nation-States. However, it is not widely realized that the Muslim masses have not allowed more than a very superficial disintegration of their traditional societies. The disintegration represented by the elites and the political systems of the nation-States is restricted to the periphery of our societies. The question that arises is: what is it that makes the Muslim masses resistant to westernization and disintegration? In the first place, it would appear that just as the *ulama* of old failed to take into account the political potential of the Muslim masses, so in recent times the *ulama* and other Muslim scholars have allowed such secular movements as those of democracy, Marxism, liberalism and socialism to claim that they alone care for the masses. In this area the conduct of the recent 'Islamic parties' is even more perplexing. We must consider the failure of these 'Islamic parties' to become mass movements.

The historians of Islam have not written of Islam as a mass movement. The literature on the earlier period of Islam is totally dominated first by the personality of the Prophet himself, upon whom be peace, and then by the powerful personalities of the first four *khulafa* and the household of the Prophet. This is a pity, because the period was also the golden era of Islamic populism. From the beginning, the established institutions of Makkah and of the Quraish opposed Islam, though the Prophet personally enjoyed the protection of his clan, Banu Hashim. The Prophet had to approach the people directly, in Makkah and beyond, bypassing the established order and hierarchy. An all-inclusive belief, simply expressed, heralded the final era of Revelation. Everybody did everything—soldiering, trading, 'statesmanship', counselling and spreading the message itself. Islam

was an instant ‘revolution’ in that all those who entered it were immediately reduced to the same, simple and ‘popular’ level. Early Muslims, when they entered Islam, instantly lost their established social status, class privileges and intellectual pretensions. Again and again we see the ‘popular’ will or ‘public opinion’ of the *sahaba* asserting itself and being encouraged by the Prophet, upon whom be peace. Perhaps the most famous example of the Prophet’s acquiescence with the dominant opinion in Madinah against his own view is on the question of whether the Muslims should stay inside the city or whether they should go out and meet the invading army at Uhad. There are many instances recorded in history when the Prophet was politely asked whether a certain opinion was his own or his directive as a Prophet and Leader of the *Ummah*. This tradition of grassroots populism remained a feature of early Islam, especially during the period of the *khulafa al-rashidoon*. Perhaps the greatest change that came about with the coming of the Umayyads was the loss of this populist, classless culture of Islamic society and polity. The introduction of kinship preferences in the political system of Islam opened the door to the emergence of exclusivist structures and other social differentiations. Yet the populist ethos of Islam ensured that, outside the power-based structures required by the kings, sultans and other rulers to ensure their own survival, Islamic society at large remained remarkably moral, egalitarian and open. It was this open, dynamic and morally cohesive nature of Islam’s social order that made Islam so attractive to such large numbers of people in such distant lands and in such a short time.

The sociological origins of modern and contemporary ‘Islamic parties’ has acted as a major obstacle in their approach and appeal to the Muslim masses. The moral cohesion of old-established Islamic societies meant that little ‘structural-functionalism’ was required to hold them together.

A decrease in social cohesion because of moral behaviour leads to a more than proportionate increase in the ‘structures’ required to perform ‘functions’. The lower the moral content in a social order, the greater the number, size and complexity of organized ‘systems’ required to maintain cohesion and functional efficiency. Modern post-Renaissance and post-industrial societies are good examples of

‘corporate’ growth caused by dilution of the traditional moral fabric. It is evidenced by the emergence of State services to replace functions previously performed by families. Juvenile courts, local authorities and schools have taken over the disciplinary roles previously performed by parents and neighbourhood elders. Sexual permissiveness has been underwritten by liberal divorce laws, free and easy access to contraceptive devices and State-financed abortion on demand. Even the Welfare State does not regard welfare as a moral duty. What appears to be the concern of the State for the welfare of the people is in fact the concern of the State for itself and its political and economic systems.

The European States took up welfare functions in order to take the heat out of revolutionary labour movements inspired by Marxism-Leninism and the Russian revolution. Now that that danger has passed, Europe and North America are returning to high unemployment and low wage economies. The welfare benefits paid to the unemployed, the sick, the widows, the old and others are being gradually cut back in real terms, while taxes are being adjusted to benefit the high income groups. Thus ‘welfare’ and ‘progressive taxation’ are political decisions with no moral content. Even the ‘democracy’ they practice is arranged to give wildly disproportionate representation in parliaments to established parties. Thus the Conservative Party in Britain secured a majority of 150 in the House of Commons from a share of only 45 percent of the popular vote in the general election of June 1983. To achieve ‘representation’ is not a ‘value’ of democracy; the purpose is to go through the ‘democratic’ motions in order to secure results acceptable to the political elites.

The western civilization is fundamentally an amoral civilization. Its ‘values’ are free of moral constraints. Indeed, such moral values as survived the Christian experience were systematically eradicated. Such a civilization, when it acquired physical control over traditionally Islamic societies, set about eradicating the moral values of Islam as well. Those parts of our societies that the west has succeeded in disintegrating from the highly integrated Islamic social order all display the same symptoms of corporate selfishness and a shift away from moral behaviour. The nation-State is the ultimate instrument of corporate immorality, followed closely by the political party. The



nation-State's claim to 'sovereignty' is the most fundamentally immoral claim. The political party is an instrument primarily for dividing the people. Competing political parties are set up as means of competition for power among groups within the same political elite. In Muslim countries, political parties are primarily supportive of the nation-States and of the preponderance of the western civilization's influence in Muslim societies.

Another factor which needs careful consideration is Muslims' lack of experience in dealing with the penetration of the Islamic civilization by another civilization. They had in its earliest phase found that Islam quickly became dominant over its environment. The power and dynamism of the Islamic movement swept all opposition away. The successful penetration of the Islamic civilization by the western civilization was a new experience, unique in history. It was inevitable, therefore, that the Muslims should take time to come to grips with the new situation. Early attempts were likely to be partial, tentative and inconclusive, and have proved to be so. At first, after losing the initiative to the western civilization, Muslim thinkers naturally concentrated on the causes of their decline. The earliest attempts at revival were of the kind led by Sayyid Ahmad Khan in British India. The cornerstone of this type of new leadership was compromise with the new rulers. This type of leadership understandably emerged from among the middle classes who had done well under the rulers who had been displaced. Every new political order creates its own middle classes. The colonial system was no exception. The moment men like Sayyid Ahmad Khan raised their heads, they were given full support and patronage by the colonial administrations. The nation-States and their rulers today are the direct political and intellectual descendants of men like Sayyid Ahmad Khan. This type of leadership represents the disintegration of Islamic societies achieved by the western civilization.

The *ulama* in the meantime kept their heads down and awaited the emergence of a great figure who would rescue the *Ummah* from the evil designs of the infidels. This is the reflection of the view that history is largely made by its 'great figures'. Because early Islamic history was dominated by the great figures of the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and the *khulafa* and the *imams*, the *ulama* again looked for the

emergence of such powerful figures. The Muslim *Ummah*, betrayed by the compromise and sycophancy of the new middle classes, was equally desensitized to the challenge of history by the lack of imagination of the *ulama* and others in the traditional Islamic sector. The *jihad* movements in West Africa were among the few exceptions.

The colonial powers went on to defeat and dismember the last remaining vestiges of Islam's political power, the Uthmaniyyah State. Thus it is not until history, as prescribed by the west, had moved to the violent, nationalistic and self-destructive stage that we witnessed the emergence of 'Islamic parties'. The best known of these are the Ikhwan al-Muslimoon in the Arab world and the Jama'at-e Islami in the Indian subcontinent. However, it is important to note that, though neither of them started as a political party, both ended up in the party mould. It is also important to note that neither Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Ikhwan, nor Abul Ala Maudoodi, the founder of Jama'at-e Islami, was an *alim* in the traditional sense. Both men, nevertheless, emerged from deeply religious family backgrounds. They were ideally placed to challenge the secular, nationalist order in its entirety. At the beginning of their respective movements, they appeared poised to challenge the Wafd in Egypt and the secular Muslim League in British India. What in fact happened was that neither managed it; both were swept into the mainstream of nationalist emotions unleashed by events, and ended up as political parties operating within the framework of secular politics in a nation-State system controlled and manipulated by the compromising elites.

It is also true that the Jama'at failed to secure the support or allegiance of the *ulama*. The bulk of the 'popular' support for the Jama'at-e Islami came from the ranks of the same compromising and sycophantic elites who also owed allegiance, careers, and future prospects to the nation-State order. The 'Islamic party' in this situation could do little more than become a political pressure group. The Ikhwan in Egypt and in other British-created Arab nation-States acquired a wider base but eventually it, too, ended up in a similar role, failing to mount a credible challenge to the post-colonial order. Men like Sayyid Qutb attained martyrdom, but the Ikhwan as a whole could not detach itself from the mainstream politics of Arab nationalism. In short, the

Ikhwan and the Jama'at originated in or close to the still consolidated, integrated Islamic parts of their respective societies but were blown across the social divide and ended up in the secular jungle of the politics of disintegration. In the process, each has become exclusivist, elitist and secretive. Both have acquired 'leaders' who serve the chief charlatans of secular politics—the Pakistan army and the Saudi 'royal' family. The conclusion that it would be wrong to regard the Jama'at and the Ikhwan as comprehensive Islamic movements is inescapable, though each has contributed to a degree of partial Islamic awakening among the youth of the westernized elites in all parts of the world. The Muslim masses, however, have remained largely unmoved. It is probably true to say that the entire Grand Paradigm has not been activated into a 'populist' movement since the earliest days of Islam. All attempts since, including those of the recent 'Islamic parties', can only be regarded as partial.

The Muslim masses have thus withstood two major attempts on their integrity. The first by those who chose to make common cause with the western civilization in the latter's attempt to disintegrate the world of Islam. The hold of the westernized elites on Muslim societies today grows increasingly precarious. Their political systems survive only with brute force and superpower support. The second attempt has been by the well-meaning but ineffective 'Islamic parties'.

We need to take a closer look at the Muslim masses to discover their true strength. Until now, the western view of the Muslim masses as ignorant, superstitious, lazy, fatalistic and over-committed to meaningless ritual has been too readily accepted. This is also the view of the present-day rulers and the secular and 'Islamic' political parties in the nation-States. The political elites have blamed their inability to acquire legitimacy for themselves or their system on the 'ignorance' of the masses. The use of coercive methods to secure compliance is also justified in much the same way as a horseman justifies the use of the whip. The true situation would appear to be opposite. The Muslim masses are the true repositories of the political culture of Islam. It follows, therefore, that even if the leadership becomes corrupt and the political systems are corrupted, the Muslim masses as a whole will not

accept the corrupt ways of the political elites or of the political systems as a permanent condition of the Muslim societies.<sup>3</sup>

This is a very significant point. It means that the Muslim masses are the sociological counterpart of the epistemological Revealed Paradigm. The Grand Paradigm allows the *ulama* and others leadership roles but does not allow them the freedom to lead the Muslim masses in whatever direction they wish. The consciousness of the Muslim masses has an in-built safety device in their behavioural and sociological preference which ensures that deviation will eventually be corrected. But the Muslim masses by themselves cannot correct the deviation. They need leadership and an Islamic movement. So far, neither has provided the global framework in which the entire *Ummah* could be reactivated into a populist movement.

In recent years I have argued that the *Ummah* as a whole remains an indivisible unity despite its apparent break-up into nearly 50 nation-States.<sup>4</sup> This unity is based on the political culture of Islam. It seems to me that all Muslims everywhere share certain common perceptions that give meaning to their political consciousness. Once again, the most strongly held of these political perceptions originate from the Qur'an and from the memory of the struggle of the Prophet, upon whom be peace, the Islamic movement and the Islamic State of Madinah against the *jahiliyyah* of the time. This is reinforced by the conduct of the State by the *khulafa al-rashidoon* and the struggle of Imam Husain and the *Ahl al-Bait* to restore the system to its normal state. A similar attempt was made by the Umayyad *khalifah* Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz. It may be said that this is also the solid political core of the Revealed Paradigm. The ordinary Muslim appears to be over-committed to ritual, but his commitment to this part of the political faith of Islam is no less. However, while daily, weekly and annual ritual has a timetable, the opportunities for the expression of political faith are

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3. Anas ibn Malik narrates that the Prophet said: 'My Ummah will not agree on going astray. If you see difference (of opinion), go with the majority'. *Sunan ibn Majah*, Kitab al-Fitan, Bab al-Sawad al-A'azam (hadith no. 3950). It has also been narrated in *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*.

4. For example, see speech delivered at the International Islamic Unity Week Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka, December 30, 1982—January 2, 1983. Summary in *Crescent International*, March 1-15, 1983.

at present few and far between. The least the Muslim masses can do is to withhold support from illegitimate rulers.

This act of withholding legitimacy is a positive act of political defiance. It forces the rulers to resort to oppression, and oppression in turn brings about their eventual downfall. Any political system that caters for the needs of only some of the people cannot be legitimate. Modern nation-States are invariably class societies in which urban and westernized elites control the State, and all the State's resources are utilized for their benefit. Everything, from the mineral wealth of our countries, the labour of our working classes and the agricultural output of our peasants to our freedom itself, is turned over to the foreign supporters, allies and sustainers of these illegitimate regimes.

It appears that the political culture of the Muslim masses performs the same stabilizing role as the Revealed Paradigm does as part of the Grand Paradigm. It seems that it is not possible to lead the Muslim *Ummah* as a whole in a direction away from Islam. This means above all that what has happened to the erstwhile Christian societies at the hands of unbridled science supplemented by the philosophical outpourings of Marx, Freud, and Darwin cannot happen to the world of Islam. It also means that the present state of political disintegration of the world of Islam is a passing phase, and that the political culture of the Muslim masses will ultimately reintegrate the *Ummah* and expel and eliminate those who are responsible for its disintegration, defeat and humiliation.

There are unmistakable signs that the processes of the reintegration of the *Ummah* have begun. I have argued elsewhere that Islam is not a movement by choice of the Muslims or of the 'Islamic parties'.<sup>5</sup> Islam does not need manifestos written by politicians, and Islam does not need to be justified at the hustings by political parties and their candidates. Islam is a movement by the Will of Allah; it is Allah's prescription for stability, peace, plenty and happiness. Islam is also a most effective instrument of change through *da'wah*, challenge, *jihad* and revolution. The essential starting point of all political thought

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5. See, for instance, my 'The Islamic movement: setting out to change the world again' in Siddiqui (ed), *Issues in the Islamic Movement 1980-81*, London and Toronto: The Open Press, 1982.

among the Muslims today must be that at the present time the highly desirable values of stability, peace, plenty and happiness are deliberately and forcibly denied to the Muslims, indeed to all mankind, by the western civilization. We are faced with a situation in which almost every political structure that exists in the world of Islam today, with the sole exception of the new political structures now being created in Iran, has been created by the enemies of Islam in an attempt to distort and damage our existence permanently and irrevocably. From past experience we know that the western civilization and those acting for it do not yield to reason and persuasion. The *Ummah* today has no option but to seek to change the world order through *da'wah*, challenge, *jihad* and revolution. The total domination of the course of history by the western civilization is a situation that is intolerable to Islam and the *Ummah*. The *Ummah* must act as a movement to reverse this situation and to restore the history of Islam and Muslims—of all mankind, indeed—to its proper course.

How is this to be achieved?

This is the central question that we face at the present time. The answer, in a sense, is simple and clear: follow the Revealed Paradigm, the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. However, for the *Ummah* as a whole, or any part of it, to follow the Revealed Paradigm there has to be a leadership. The Grand Paradigm of Islam is also more than only the Revealed Paradigm. It includes the history of Islam and Muslims. It also includes vast areas of learning and experience explored by Muslims down the ages. It includes the enormous *hadith* literature, the emergence of the various schools of *fiqh*, the studies of the Qur'an, the philosophical formulations, and the advances in physical and behavioural sciences. Above all, the Grand Paradigm includes the political culture of the Muslim masses. It is this political culture that has refused to yield to all the pressures exerted upon it by the onslaught of the western civilization. The political culture of the Muslim masses is probably the *Ummah's* greatest asset today.

Political culture on its own without a leadership is an instrument of effective passive resistance against alien influences. But once the political culture of the Muslim masses acquires a leadership (*imamah*)

it becomes the Islamic movement.<sup>6</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the political culture of the Muslim masses will not accept or respond to a leadership that does not emerge from within that political culture. This means that those *ulama* who are not part of the political struggle of the masses cannot provide the leadership. The leadership of the Islamic movement cannot come from those of the *ulama* who have cooperated with the secular rulers, such as the kings, sultans, presidents, generals, and colonels. Similarly, the 'Islamic' and other scholars of secular universities can play no part in the leadership of the Islamic movement. The 'Islamic parties' and their leaders of recent times have already failed to evoke the confidence of the Muslim masses by becoming part of the nationalist and 'democratic' political systems and processes of the nation-States. The case of Iran would seem to indicate that the Muslim masses of today will respond only to a leadership that:

- a) rejects completely the existing order of nation-States, and calls for its overthrow;
- b) commits itself to the elimination of all the political, economic, social and cultural influences of the western civilization;
- c) commits itself to the establishment of an Islamic State;
- d) declares its belief in the *wahdah* of the *Ummah*; and
- e) has no class or other interests of its own and is clearly, unambiguously and demonstrably *muttaqi*.<sup>7</sup>

In Iran the leadership met all these conditions and emerged from the ranks of the *ulama*. This is not to say that there were never any Shi'i *ulama* who cooperated with the dynastic rulers of Iran down the centuries. But in the peculiar conditions of Iran there also existed a large body of *ulama* who had remained close to the political culture of the Muslim masses. The Shi'i *ulama* were also handicapped by their theological position, which forbade the emergence of a lay *imam* in the absence (*gha'ibah*) of the Twelfth Imam.<sup>8</sup> Imam Khomeini's

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6. For a definition of the Islamic movement, see my paper *The Islamic Movement: setting out to change the world again*, *op. cit.*

7. Abul-Fazal Ezzati, *The Concept of Leadership in Islam*, London, The Muslim Institute, 1979.

8. See Hamid Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution*, London and Toronto: The Open

contribution is that through *ijtihad* he overcame the Shi'i theological inhibitions; that through positive leadership he transformed the political culture of the Muslim masses of Iran into a powerful and invincible Islamic movement; that through *jihad* he defeated and abolished the nation-State of Iran; and that through populist consensus and participation he has laid the foundations of an Islamic State and its institutions. It is evident that the Islamic movement of Iran and the new Islamic State, both led by the Imam, have also defeated their internal and external enemies. Power has not corrupted the leaders, and sacrifices have not diverted the Muslim masses of Iran from the path of Allah.

It is often argued that because an equivalent class of *ulama* does not exist in the rest of the Muslim world, the Islamic Revolution in Iran is 'Shi'ite' and cannot be repeated in the Sunni areas.

This argument, not surprisingly, comes from those who, under the influence of their western education and upbringing, are used to thinking of the political processes in terms of political parties promoting their manifesto through an 'active core'. In the case of Islam, the populist political culture and the Prophet's Islamic State emerged long before the emergence of the *ulama* as we know them today. Secular political movements have moderate, revolutionary, radical and militant 'active cores'. Lenin had to invent the doctrine of 'democratic centralism' to give unlimited power over the workers to his full-time bureaucratic party machine. The political culture of the Muslim masses gives us at the present time a huge, indeed global, 'core'. The active core in Islam is not the party but the political culture of the Muslim masses. The Islamic Revolution in Iran is also unique in that it was not brought about by a party. The leadership in Iran activated the entire political culture of the Muslims of Iran and the reaction was instant and powerful.

In at least two other parts of the world we have seen that even secular leaders have succeeded in activating the political culture of the Muslim masses. The first modern instance of this phenomenon was in British India, when the totally westernized leadership of the Muslim



League, under Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah, activated the political culture of the Muslims of British India by promising them an 'Islamic State' in Pakistan. The *ulama* in British India tried to point out that Jinnah and his party could not be sincere in their Islamic pretensions. The Muslim masses ignored the *ulama* and followed Jinnah into Pakistan, where Jinnah's successors are still trying to prevent the emergence of an Islamic State.

The second instance of this strange phenomenon occurred in Algeria, where the FLN, a Muslim League-type party, except that it also declared war on the French, activated the Islamic political culture of the Muslim masses there. In Algeria, too, the secular leaders, having got 'independence', have proceeded to establish a secular, 'socialist', nation-State. In both these instances there existed powerful anti-colonial factors to secure the desired reaction from the political culture of the Muslim masses. It should be noted that this trick works when the Muslim masses are persuaded to regard their secular nationalist leaders as the lesser of the available evils.

The point that we have to note is that the political culture of the Muslim masses reacts to stimuli from any part of the social spectrum. When the reaction required is against a powerful external enemy, the response is total, as in Algeria and the Pakistan movement in British India. When the stimulus is applied by 'Islamic parties' as a manoeuvre within a secular political system (as in the case of the Jama'at-e Islami in Pakistan), the response from the Muslim masses is negligible. If Maulana Maudoodi had stayed out of the secular politics of the post-colonial system in Pakistan and had challenged the 'new order' in its entirety, the response of the Muslim masses of the country might have been as strong as the response of the masses of Iran has been to the call of Imam Khomeini. Thus the response of the Islamic political culture of the Muslim masses does not depend on whether the masses or their putative leaders are Shi'a or Sunni; it depends on the extent to which the leadership, *ulama* or not, fulfills the conditions expected and demanded of them by the Islamic political culture of the Muslim masses. Any tendency by the Islamic 'leaders' and 'parties' to retain a foothold outside Islam, such as their links with nationalism, monarchy, socialism, capitalism, democracy, superpower clients and so forth, is

disliked intensely by the Muslim masses. It is also safe to postulate that the standard of leadership of the Islamic Revolution in Iran has already become part of the global political culture of the Muslim masses. Any future leadership that does not come up to these standards will not succeed in leading the Islamic movement. It is even doubtful whether parties such as the Indian Muslim League and the Algerian FLN can succeed in using Islamic rhetoric to mobilize the masses in short-term anti-colonial efforts in the future.

The Muslim masses are likely to ignore attempts to do so, and wait instead for the emergence of a totally Islamic leadership before responding. Sensing this change, the secular regimes in Muslim nation-States are strengthening their programmes of 'Islamization' by setting up 'Islamic banks' and 'Islamic universities'. Such regimes are also offering cabinet posts to 'Islamic leaders' from 'Islamic parties' and from 'Islamic youth movements'. They are giving 'awards' to each other for their 'services to Islam'. All this, and much beside, is being done in an attempt to distort and divert the direction and thrust of the new energy in the Muslim political culture that has been released by the Islamic Revolution. It is quite possible that the new energy injected into the Muslim political culture globally is far greater than realized. The gravitational role, traditionally performed by the distant memory of Madinah, has been greatly reinforced by the Islamic Revolution. Conversely, the pull exerted by such modern movements as Marxism and social democracy on some Muslim 'intellectuals' will weaken and fade away. We have already seen that in Iran Islam has recaptured virtually the whole of the youth of the westernized elite. The small part of this elite that offered active or passive resistance has been overcome. The Grand Paradigm of Islam, enriched by a successful revolutionary experience, is more than ever capable of reintegrating the entire *Ummah*.

It would appear that the forces of disintegration have reached the end of the road; that the long, hard road to the reintegration of the *Ummah* has begun. Henceforth the 'disorder' in the system will not be at the expense of Islam and the Muslim masses; henceforth the Islamic movement will 'disorder' the structure of secular 'order' and 'authority' created in the *Ummah* by the colonial powers. The process

of disintegration of the Islamic societies has come to an end. The political culture of the Muslim masses will assert its power and collective will through a populist movement that will itself be completely integrated. The return of the world of Islam to the original and intended course of history will be the largest single transformation that history has undergone. We are fast approaching an upturn in which the Islamic civilization will re-emerge as the only civilization for mankind.