

Politics: An Islamic Perspective

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Muslim societies in all of their social and cultural variety are, as Donald E. Smith points out, 'organic' societies characterized by organic religious systems. In these societies, religion tends to permeate all institutions rather than to be differentiated and/or autonomous.¹ The vast body of literature produced since the departure of the colonialists from the Muslim lands suggests, however, either the implicit existence of the dichotomy or at least the feasibility and advisability of radical separation between the spiritual and temporal realms. The seriousness of the issue, evidenced by an outpouring of studies, calls for an examination of the linkage between the two realms through textual (Qur'an and Hadith), intellectual (ideas of Muslim thinkers) and historical evidence. Only in such a manner can the dynamics of the relationship between Islam and politics be understood and a determination made of what has changed and what has remained unchanged. This entails, first, an understanding of the meaning and nature of politics from the Western perspective to facilitate a comparison.

Politics Defined

The word politics, originating from the Greek word 'polis' meaning a city and confined to the study of the state, has acquired a bewildering variety of meanings. This has led E.E. Schattschneider to call political

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science 'a mountain of data surrounding a vacuum'.² There are many who question the wisdom of defining politics, arguing that its definition is contextually determined. They adhere to the view that politics is what the political scientists say it is, a position well summarized in Bernard Crick's trite comment that 'politics is politics'.³ Despite this tradition of disinterest, many definitions have been offered which throw some light on the core meaning of the political scientist's subject matter.

Plato and Aristotle viewed politics primarily in terms of the moral purposes that the decision makers ought to pursue. The polis, for both, existed to seek its common good, civic virtue and moral perfection. Aristotle saw 'the highest good' as 'the end sought by political science'.⁴ Although focusing on the moral purposes that the leaders ought to pursue, Aristotle did not ignore the importance of political structures. He paid particular attention to the ways in which officials were selected to govern the state, the manner in which their authority was determined and the nature of ends or interests they pursued.⁵ Many political scientists, in recent times, hold the same position and identify political activity with moral beliefs. They consider the conflict about the nature of the good life as constituting the 'core of politics'.⁶ Though their conceptualization of the good life varies from the realization of freedom to a combination of freedom with goodness,⁷ they subscribe to politics as the art of living and working together.

Robert A. Dahl considers Aristotle's definition of politics as too restrictive since it is tied to state organizations. He, therefore, reformulates it to read 'any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves, to a significant extent, power, rule or authority'.⁸ Dahl criticizes the idealized Aristotelian notion of the self-sufficiency of the state for pursuing the good life. His definition broadens the political relationships to include patterns of behaviour that are not co-extensive with national societies. He does follow Aristotle, however, in defining and observing 'offices' or 'roles' in complex political systems.

What Dahl implies is made explicit by David Easton. Easton's identification of 'political acts' as those that 'authoritatively allocate values in a society' has provided many political scientists with what he calls, a 'conventional guide' for political analysis.⁹ Like Dahl, he sees politics as a set of human interactions, but limits it by emphasizing 'authoritative allocations' for an entire society. Furthermore, Easton focuses attention not only on the goals of policy-makers trying to alter the distribution of scarce resources or values in a society but also on the authority or power relationships involved in it. As pointed out by Alan C. Isaak, this is 'a compromise position which is neither too restrictive nor overly broad'.¹⁰

The stress on the value allocation process and policy outcomes reappear

in the writings of Harold Lasswell who defines politics as being concerned with 'who gets what, when and how'.¹¹ Lasswell's definition is wide in scope, enabling the enquirer to look for politics in many social settings, including that of state organizations. It contains both authoritative relationships and the implication of power and conflict in the distribution process. The difference between Easton's and Lasswell's conception is largely in emphasis: the former focuses attention on the entire political system while the latter zeroes in on individuals with power. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find Lasswell describing politics generally as the 'shaping and sharing of power'.

Clearly, the subject-matter has undergone a transformation from an emphasis on state structures to a set of human interactions concerned with the allocation of scarce resources which are considered desirable. Additionally, the 19th century positivist and empiricist tradition has replaced the classical or medieval preoccupation with the search for a good society with a search for the laws of behaviour. Even the notion of power and/or conflict, which binds the classical and modern definitions of politics, has changed its meaning. The ethical, normative content of power which characterized classical political philosophy has been made irrelevant and redundant by the triumphant march of materialism and behaviourism. Defined as "the ability of its holder to exact compliance or obedience of other individuals to his will on 'whatsoever basis'" (emphasis mine),¹² power has been made absolute and omnipotent. Such power could hardly co-exist with the possibilities of human freedom and dignity. Consequently, state power has grown on an unprecedented scale, leading, in most cases, to the subjugation of peoples, the manipulation of their thought and culture, and the erection of fascist, totalitarian states.¹³ Politics, therefore, came to be seen, in the words of Isaac Disraeli, as 'the art of governing mankind by deceiving them'.¹⁴

Politics in Islam

The pejorative image of politics resulting from Western conceptualization has no relevance to politics as conceptualized in Islam. However, if the essence of politics is the striving for the 'good life', a life lived in worship and in seeking the pleasure of the One and only God, then politics is central to Islam. Four of the five fundamental pillars of Islam, i.e., prayer, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage are, 'perfectly suited to promoting *esprit de corps* and group solidarity among its followers'.¹⁵ These pillars of Islam are not meant for purely spiritual upliftment, but have socio-economic and political significance as well. They are closely related to human behaviour

and activity. Thus, in the prayers, which are incumbent upon the faithful to be conducted at appointed hours (Al-Qur'an, 4:103), preferably in congregation, a believer executes a variety of actions which combine rational reflection, emotional stimulation and physical movements. The believers stand shoulder to shoulder with each other, elect one of them to lead the prayer (the *imam*) and obey him for its proper performance, draw his attention to any impairment, and having first glorified the Lord, ask Him, individually and collectively, to 'Guide us to the straight path'. Inherent in the prayer, therefore, are the principles of the good life: of social solidarity and equality; of leadership and obedience; responsibility and responsiveness; and of universal brotherhood. The same goes with the other pillars of Islam and they are in the nature of a course of training in societal living. 'The more assiduously we follow the training,' wrote Sayyid Mawdudi, 'the better equipped we are to harmonise ideals and practices'.¹⁶

Politics is also central to Islam if it is defined in its narrow sense to mean the art of government. Qur'anic exhortations of 'enjoining the good and forbidding the evil', of upholding justice and other Divine values and criteria, require the participation of all members of society in the affairs of government towards ends laid down by Allah (SWT). The Qur'an condemns anarchy and disorder (2:205), and the Prophet (SAAS) stressed the need for organization and authority in society. Similarly, 'Umar, the second Caliph, considered an organized society impossible without an imam, and added that there could be no imam without obedience.¹⁷ The Khulafa-al-Rashidun (the rightly guided caliphs) and their companions recognized that the divinely mandated vocation to realize the will of Allah (SWT) in history was communal as well as individual. They held an organic, holistic approach to life in which religion was intimately intertwined with politics, law and society. This is well expressed by Ka'ab as quoted by Ibn Qutaybah, saying,

Islam, the government and the people are like the tent, the pole, the ropes and the pegs. The tent is Islam; the pole is the government, the ropes and pegs are the people. None will do without the others.¹⁸

Politics is even more central to Islam when it is defined in the realistic perspective as a struggle for power. To profess faith in Allah and to proclaim *tawhid* (the unity and sovereignty of Allah) is to call unequivocally for the repudiation of *taghut*, i.e., those who claim absolute right and power which is due only to Allah (SWT) and, therefore, to banish *zulm* (oppression and injustice) from the face of the earth. The *tawhidi* society Islam desires can brook neither a rival nor a compromise. The Qur'an enjoins the believers to shatter the absolutism of demi-gods and false deities; to divest them of any leadership roles; to wrest power for the righteous; and to reinstate

good in place of evil. It was on the urging of the Qur'an that Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) came out of his seclusion and fought all those who rebelled against the prophetic guidance. One of the major objectives of his *hijrah* (migration to Madinah) was to establish political authority in accordance with the Divine will. Similarly, all the earlier Prophets were engaged in conveying the Divine guidance, and reminding the faithful to eschew *taghut* (16:36). Islam is thus actively concerned with power, a power through which the world would be transformed to be in accord with Islamic tenets and principles to benefit humanity as a whole. *Jihad fi sabil-Allah* is but another name for the attempt to establish the Divine Order. The importance of securing power for the righteous is so fundamental that the Qur'an declares *jihad* (utmost exertion in the way of Allah) to be a touchstone of belief.

Power is sought in Islam, then, not for its own sake nor for personal or collective aggrandizement. Islam puts power in an active moral framework. It is not an end but a means to serve Allah (SWT); to earn a blissful eternal life and thus a source of mercy and justice for humanity. Such a conceptualization totally transforms the nature, scope and purpose of power as conceived in Western theory and practice.

The foregoing points to the fact that the fusion of religion and politics is the dictate of Islam and cannot be disregarded. The choice between the Creator and Caesar does not *simply* arise. For Islam, there is no Caesar, there is only Allah (SWT) and His Messenger. The *shari'ah* (the Islamic Law) incorporates the temporal with the spiritual. In Islam, ethics sets the tone for politics and the rules of political behaviour are derived from the ethical norms of Islam. Thus the major concerns of politics, i.e., striving to control the state structure, to wrest power for the righteous, to root out evil and bring about the good life are all relevant to and encouraged by Islam. Islam accords centrality to these activities with the difference that the political life has to be situated within the larger frame of the religious and spiritual life. Religion and politics, as such, are not 'two sides of a single coin in Islam'.¹⁹ Neither can they be rank-ordered making one the independent and the other dependent variable in the relationship. The truth, as 'Allama Iqbal puts it, is that 'Islam is a single, unanalyzable reality which is one or the other, as your point of view varies'.²⁰

Islam and Politics: The Historical Perspective

The intertwining of religion and politics in its perfect form is exemplified by the last Prophet of Islam whom the Qur'an describes as

the noble paradigm (*uswah hasanah* 33:21). One of the momentous events of his life is the migration to Madinah (*hijrah*) undertaken, inter alia, to restructure power relationships and make them subservient to the Divine will. Here was established the first Islamic polity of which Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) was the spiritual and temporal head. He led public prayers, commanded the army, acted as a judge and formulated public policies. The rightly guided caliphs, *Khulafa-al-Rashidun*, who headed the four successive polities, emulated him in every detail. They, as leaders of the community, executed the *shari'ah* defended the religious doctrine and maintained its purity. By the time of the third caliph, 'Usman, Islamic civilization had extended from the 'Trans-Oxus' to the 'shores of the Atlantic' in the West.²¹

There is unanimity among scholars that the political system established in Madinah is a model (defining the principles to actuate an Islamic polity) for all Muslim societies to adopt and follow. With the emergence of the 'Umayyads, however, there ensued a new variant in Muslim history - dynastic rule which sometimes degenerated into unbridled monarchy.²² Their authority for all practical purposes was arbitrary. Yet, they were considered to be the defenders of the faith, protectors of the honour of Islam, and warriors against forces hostile to Islam. They were bound not to flout the *shari'ah* with impunity.

The movement which transferred the caliphate from the 'Umayyads to the 'Abbasids rested mostly on the close kinship ties which the latter had with the families of the Prophet (SAAS). On assuming power, they wore the cloak that was thought to have been once worn by the Prophet (SAAS) and kept his bonnet and sacred relics whose possession was considered a powerful element of their legitimacy. For a variety of reasons, they inflated the religious aspect of the caliphate and in public statements expressed their wholehearted adherence to the *shari'ah*. To prove their regard for religion, most of the ruling heads of state suffixed the words of Allah and *din* (religion, way of life) to their names and titles such as Muntasir bi-Allah, Qahir bi-Allah, Salah al-Din, Muhi al-Din, and so on. Thus, although the later Caliphs ruled without reference to *shari'ah* and practised separation of Islam from their politics, they were never allowed to rule unreined, and, publicly at least, confirmed the close connection between faith and power. In any case, the de facto separation practised by Muslim rulers cannot form the basis for arguing that Islam permits the separation. The Islamic stand should be understood and evaluated by its principles rather than by deviations perpetrated by its practitioners.

Barring a few exceptions like the 'Umayyad Caliph 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, who subjected his rule to *shari'ah* and lived frugally and simply

like a saint, power during most of Muslim history has not always been subject to the Divine will and has been exercised for ends other than establishing justice among the people. This situation gave rise to three major trends in Muslim intellectual history. Some, like certain *sufis* (mystics) and others, disengaged themselves from public affairs and withdrew into quietist shells. Thus Abul Layth al-Samarqandi, a Hanafi theologian, quotes Anas saying that '*ulama* (the religious scholars) are the depositories of the prophets; yet when they draw near to the rulers and take part in the dealings of the world, they betray the prophets'.²³ Withdrawal, in effect, meant spiritual renovation carried out by a host of sufi orders which emerged around the sixth and seventh century of the *hijrah*, (the migration of the Prophet (SAAS) from Makkah to Madinah; the Islamic era begins from this event) and which have existed right up to the present day. Their beliefs, moral attitudes and rituals of different types conformed to Islam but there also crept in non-Islamic practices which eventually subverted everything from top to bottom. Yet, it must be admitted, they helped preserve many precious values and saved the faith from caving in under the impact of alien world-views.

The second trend is represented by those thinkers and jurists who extended a type of de facto recognition to the prevailing order, on the plea of preserving the unity and stability of the *ummah*, the community of believers. Paradoxically, most of these jurists distanced themselves from the seats of power, refused to accept public offices, disqualified oaths under compulsion and supported the rebels who defied public authority in the name of Islamic ideals. The founders of the four schools of jurisprudence (*madhahib*) kept contact with the authorities, but their relations were much less than cordial. They followed, to borrow Manfred Halpern's terminology, a policy of 'antagonistic collaboration'²⁴ for which they suffered persecution, harassment and, one of them, Imam Shafii, narrowly escaped execution. Muslim thinkers did justify the status quo, not because these regimes reflected the ideals of Islam but because the alternative was chaos and civil disorder. Hence, they advised obedience to a ruler as long as their orders did not lead to sin. Such an attitude is tantamount to accepting secularism in practice and did cause confusion among the believers, but it also shows their abhorrence of secularism in theory, their sense of realism and their concern for minimizing suffering and the disruption of the community's peaceful existence.

The third trend is represented by the *ulama* who shouldered the burden of 'carrying Islam in the absence of state support and through the vicissitudes of social upheaval'.²⁵ They were content with reforming individuals, hoping that this would lead eventually to the transformation of society along Islamic lines. Most of their efforts concentrated on rituals

and on the original purity of the faith by reference to the Qur'an and Sunnah. They propagated spiritual values, like sincerity, truthfulness, love and brotherhood, respect for parents, and indeed patience.

Admittedly, the role of Islam in politics has become increasingly complex, reflecting the growing complexity of Muslim society subsequent to the period of Khulafa-al-Rashidun. It also reflects the rapidly changing world in which the jurists, the sufis and the *ulama* have had to operate. The seeming separation of the realms, spiritual and temporal, never meant a divorce in the sense that each went its separate way. Although some sufi teachers disengaged themselves from politics, the great ones have always combined contemplation and action. They practised asceticism, but they were also actively engaged in politics, often came into conflict with the rulers, and eventually generated powerful socio-political movements. The intellectual disciple of al-Ghazali in the sixth century, A.H., Muhammad ibn Tumart, is a case in point.²⁶ The doctrine he preached formed the basis of the al-Muwahhid empire (524-667 A.H./1130-1269 A.C), which embraced the whole of the Maghreb and enjoyed 'for two generations a peace and well-being it had not known since Roman times'.²⁷ Their predecessors, al-Murabitun, the inmates of *ribat* (a place where warriors of faith live and worship), waged a successful *jihad* and founded the al-Murabit empire (448-541 A.H./1056-1147 A.C.), which extended from Senegambia to Algeria.²⁸ Examples could also be cited of the Naqshbandis in Turkestan, the Mahdiyya in the Sudan, and many more in the recent past.

Similarly, the *ulama* who accepted the status quo never did so *de jure*, as the true fulfilment of Islam. Their generally held concept of temporal and spiritual unity was eloquently expressed in al-Ghazali's saying that 'religion and temporal power are twins'. To him, politics aims at 'man's welfare in this world and bliss in the next'.²⁹ The ideal state, whether of jurists (like al-Mawardi and al-Ghazali), of philosophers (e.g., Nasr al-Din al-Farabi and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi) or of writers of mirrors for princes (such as Nizam al-Mulk and Husayn Waiz Kashfi),³⁰ remained one that provided opportunities for all its citizens to 'live the good life', - a life 'as would fit them for participation in the future life, by due performance of their religious and ethical duties, by mutual cooperation in their respective functions according to the ordinances of the *shari'ah*, and by the development of their moral personalities on the lines ordained by God'.³¹ Even Ibn Khaldun, who has been extolled by orientalists mainly for the secular aspects in his writings, attached great significance to the intertwining of religious and political aspects of the ideal Islamic polity. Like al-Mawardi, he defined *khilafah*, as 'a substitute for Muhammad' for the protection of religion and administration of the world.³²

Thus there has never been any disjunction in thought between faith and political action. Islam being an all-inclusive system of temporal and spiritual percepts cannot and does not leave societal and political life outside its jurisdiction. Yet, the various trends discussed above gave rise to paradoxical notions about power and socio-political goals which were aggravated by the Western domination of Muslim lands.

Encounter with the West and Muslim Politics

Islam's encounter with the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries shook the confidence of Muslims in their own civilization. Their analyses of historical reverses and their prescription for remedial action produced three different perspectives referred to by Khurshid Ahmad as modernists, traditionalists and *tajdid*.³³ Yvonne Haddad prefers to call them acculturationists, normativists and neo-normativists.³⁴

The modernists, according to Cantwell Smith, are either Westernized Muslim thinkers groping for a veneer of Islam to legitimize their alien views, or they may be Muslims tied to their traditions yet desirous of importing certain Western ideas, which they justify by constant reference to Islam.³⁵ Modernism's able representatives include Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1232-1316 A.H./1817-1898 A.C.), Jamal al-Din Asadabadi alias al-Afghani (1254-1315 A.H./1839-1897 A.C.), and his intellectual disciple, Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh (1260-1323 A.H./1845-1905 A.C.). They denounced *taqlid*, (blindly following tradition), advocated adoption of Western scientific knowledge and technical know-how, and placed reason at the crux of Islamic thought. Their notion of reason was highly secular, positivist, and divorced from the intellect as traditionally understood in Islam.³⁶ Modernism eventually became the fountain-head of secularism among certain Muslim intellectuals.

The most vocal representative of secularism among Muslims was Sheikh Ali Abd al-Raziq (1304-1384 A.H./1888-1966 A.C.), a graduate of al-Azhar University, who, for some time, also studied law and economy at Oxford. His *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* (Islam and the Principles of Government) is extolled by E.I.J. Rosenthal as providing 'the theoretical basis for the radical separation of Islam as religion ... from the affairs of state which are the exclusive concern of man'.³⁷ Abd al-Raziq conceived of Islam purely as a religion to the exclusion of all political affiliations and pretensions. The Prophet (SAAS), he argued, was a *rasul* (messenger) with a purely religious message untarnished by any inclination to rule or by any summons to organize a state.³⁸ Islam is the perfect universal religion

for people as a whole and Muhammad (SAAS) is the undisputed religious or spiritual leader whose political activity, 'for the sake of state (*mulk*), and towards consolidating the Islamic polity', was merely incidental and not related directly to his prophetic mission.³⁹ The Qur'an repeatedly warns the Prophet (SAAS) not to act as the agent (*wakil*), guardian (*hafiz*) or holder of absolute authority (*musaytir*) over the Muslims, for he was assigned to admonish and to communicate the divine message through wisdom, beautiful sermons and logical argumentation.⁴⁰ In short, Islam and politics are worlds apart and must, therefore, be kept apart.

The corollary of the above contention was to nullify the theory of the caliphate as having any religious sanction either in the Qur'an, the Sunnah or the *Ijma*, (consensus of the community). The caliphate was founded on 'brute force' and maintained by oppression. The caliphs denied Muslims the freedom, 'in the name of religion', to do research 'in the science of politics ... for fear it might assail the very foundation of [their] rule'.⁴¹ Abd al-Raziq acknowledged the necessity of government for implementing Islamic ideals and for promoting people's welfare, but he argued that religion does not prescribe any particular form; it could take 'whatever form', be it 'despotic, democratic, socialist, or bolshevist'.⁴² 'All political functions are left to us, our reason, its judgements and political principles'.⁴³ Muslims must participate in politics and organize their state on the basis of most modern achievements in statecraft.

The fierce opposition which *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* provoked resulted in its condemnation by the Grand Council of al-Azhar. The Council stripped its author of al-Azhar diploma and unceremoniously terminated the judicial appointment he held. One may question the severity of the punishment meted out to Ali al-Raziq. There is no mistaking, however, that he misconceived, under the impact of secularism, the prophetic mission which included not merely the creation of a just society but also the founding of a state. Rationalism, behaviourism and scientism, which formed the foundation of modernist and secularist thought, were direct challenges to the whole notion of faith and the inviolability of the tenets of religion which have constituted the very definition of belief in Islam.

Current Trends

Modernism rejected the absolute authority of religious doctrine while its off-shoot, secularism, sought to ostracize the power of religion in the politics and life of society. Based upon Western norms and values, the entire acculturationistic package was exogenous to Islam and the cultural system

associated with it. To justify this innovation (*bid'ah*) through a reinterpretation (*tawil*) of the doctrine was, in the eyes of the *ulama*, nothing short of heresy. Given such denunciation, and devoid of the popular support which lay behind the *ulama*, acculturationists could not become a salient intellectual force in Muslim societies.

Hamid Enayat, referring to Abd al-Raziq's emphasis on the exclusively religious character of Islam, lamented that the issue was not allowed 'to develop in a free and honest debate' and thus missed an opportunity for 'an overdue analysis of ... the question of self-subsistence of moral values'.⁴⁴ He blamed the modernists for their over-confident, intemperate mood which

lent plausibility to the traditionalists' charge that what the modernists sought was not a simple modification of religious attitudes, but the very eradication of Islam as an all-inclusive system of moral, social and political guidelines.⁴⁵

The *ulama*, i.e., the normativists, did not merely find acculturationists hostile to their institutions and ideas, but worse still, they found them too primitive to be worthy of a serious intellectual dialogue. Compared to great Muslim Orientalist scholarship, the works of Sheikh Muhammad Abduh and others suffered from a poverty of thought. Indeed, they seem to display a superficial knowledge of the heritage of Islamic social, philosophical and political thought. Rosenthal, who otherwise applauds Abd al-Raziq's treatise, notes its inconsistencies and incoherences and finds its author to be 'obviously unaware of the political treatises of al-Farabi, ibn Sina and ibn Rushd in particular, and of others among the Falasifa, the Muslim philosophers'.⁴⁶

Malcolm Kerr's verdict about the acculturationists' knowledge is unequivocal: 'they had no sufficient ideological basis on which to build new doctrines, other than a dimly understood Western one'.⁴⁷ They could not formulate an Islamic response to the challenges of the West, nor could they conceptualize complex contemporary problems within the framework of their own culture.

The richness of thought necessary for providing such responses is present in Islam and this hinders the acceptance of Westernization and its value system in toto. The need was to accept the challenge which was shouldered by the neo-normativists, who

responded with new zeal, interpreting Islam for modern man. The literature they have produced evidences assimilation and integration of some new tools of hermeneutics and explication, but the content of what is affirmed is the eternal message of Islam, the same message given to man at creation, valid for today and forever. What is being advocated is a new articulation of the faith relevant for modern challenges, but not a new Islam.⁴⁸

They are referred to by Fazlur Rahman as neo-fundamentalists. He criticizes them for their failure to engage in the systematic interpretation of the scripture and the *shari'ah* needed to relate Islam to the modern world. He, however, was not oblivious to the intensity of neo-fundamentalism: 'It is vibrant, it pulsates with anger and enthusiasm, and it is exuberant and full of righteous hatred. Its ethical dynamism is genuine, its integrity remarkable'.⁴⁹ They are the ones in the forefront of the on-going Islamic movement in the Muslim world. Their point of departure is *Tawhid*, the unity and sovereignty of Allah, *Risalah*, the messengership of the Prophet (SAAS), and *khilafah*, the vicegerency of man. In their approach to social, economic and political problems they begin from the fundamental premise of spiritual and temporal unity. 'The religious ideal of Islam', Iqbal points out, 'is organically related to the social order which it has created. The rejection of one will eventually involve the rejection of the other'.⁵⁰ Basing his ideas upon a hadith, 'The whole of this earth is a mosque', Iqbal asserts that in Islam: 'All that is secular is therefore sacred in the roots of its being' for 'All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of spirit'.⁵¹

The Western theoretical distinction between God's domain and that of Caesar does not exist in Islam. In Islam, there is no Caesar, there is only Allah who is the Creator, the Cherisher, the Sustainer and the Lord of the entire universe. The emphasis in Islam is on unity: the unity of Allah (SWT), the unity of the community of the faithful, the *ummah*, the unity of life as a totality, and the unity of the temporal and the spiritual. Contemporary trends in Islamic political thought, as in the past, gravitate around this idea of unity. This is the predominant trend. This is the *ijma*, the consensus of the Muslim *ummah*.

Conclusion

Islam is not a religion, in the sense commonly understood, which is no more than the sum of several beliefs, rituals and sentiments - but rather a system of life that deals with all aspects of human existence and performance. It is a well-ordered system, a consistent whole, comprising a set of universal principles and pan-cultural values for the socio-economic, political and moral guidance of humanity. The Qur'an teaches, as Sayyid Mawdudi points out, not simply 'to preach' Islam but 'to act upon it, promote it, and actually enforce it'. Politics, no matter how it is defined, is part and parcel of Islam; the two form one indivisible realm. This is precisely the reason why

Traditionally, Muslims rarely studied politics in isolation from related disciplines. Problems such as the nature of the state, the varieties of government, the qualifications of rulers, the limitation on their power and the rights of the ruled were discussed as part of the comprehensive treatises on jurisprudence and ideology - all securely within the unassailable walls of the *shari'ah*.⁵²

This interlocking of the spiritual and the temporal was exemplified in the roles donned by the Prophet (SAAS) and by his successors - the *rashidun* Caliphs.

The Madinah model exemplifies the principles of an Islamic state in its pure and perfect form. Since then, as ibn Khaldun argues, on the basis of historical evidence, a radical change took place which caused a deviation from the true Islamic governance decreed by the Qur'an and the Prophet (SAAS). Starting with the Umayyads, the governments throughout Muslim history embodied only some aspects of Islamic doctrines. Yet, the dynastic rulers publically recognized the supremacy of the *shari'ah* and sought the legitimacy of their political rule in the doctrines of Islam. During those turbulent years, Muslim thinkers grappled with the onerous task of fostering in believers an authentic religious spirit, and in conjunction with this, an insistence on the implementation of all the injunctions of the *shari'ah*. Their lives exude a mutually enriching togetherness of spiritual striving and effective socio-political reform activity.

During the nineteenth century, Islam experienced a particularly grave crisis. The Muslim world succumbed militarily, economically and politically to Western Christendom, which challenged the very meaning of Muslim history. As a way out, one group, the normativists, advocated holding fast to Islamic tradition and its legacy and a total withdrawal from the processes of Westernization. The Westernizing Muslim modernists, even if they meant well in their desire to defend Islam, in fact presented a truncated and deformed Islam. The interaction between the two has spawned a vibrant and modern interpretation of Islam by the neo-normativists, who emphasize the totality of Islam as the divinely mandated alternative to the materialism and secularism of the West.

The call for a return to the original message of Islam, to discover its relevance to the existing milieu and to strive to change the status quo to conform to the tenets and principles of Islam is not something new but a perennial phenomenon in Islamic history. What distinguishes the twentieth century Islamic movements is the geographical spread and consistent and vigorous championing of Islam in the politics of the Muslim world. There is an almost continuous chain of Islamic movements operating in all parts of the Muslim world. Their call, which is integral to the Jamaat-e-Islami of Pakistan, the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and other Islamic movements,

is for a comprehensive reform along Islamic lines in all aspects of life including politics.

Religion, which under the impact of secularism lay dormant for a while, has re-emerged in Muslim politics and society. This has been so vigorous that even those Muslim leaders who long championed the cause of secularism and modernization, like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan, have had to retreat and are forced to pay lip service to the popular aspiration for an Islamic socio-political order.

Such was the strength of this aspiration that it destabilized the governments of Muhammad Raza Shah of Iran and Z.A Bhutto of Pakistan. Subsequently, it is Islam which gave legitimacy to their successors, the Ayatullah Khomeini and General Zia al Haq. Under Zia, Pakistan came to be regarded by the Muslim world as the most Islamically-oriented polity after Iran. Brunei, attaining independence in 1984, proclaimed itself as the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam, declaring thereby its identity as part of the Muslim *ummah* in its official designation. Even in Turkey, which drastically broke its spiritual bond with the Islamic world in 1924, there is evidence of a modest reawakening of Muslim identity.

There are, nevertheless, varying degrees of constitutional espousal of Islamicity as well as differences in the degree to which values enshrined in the Qur'an and the sunnah have penetrated the interstices of the Muslim social fabric. The basing of legislation on the *shari'ah* will, however, have no magical effect unless a total transformation of society takes place. This requires of Muslims their active participation in politics, making it serve Islamic purposes. This is also the guarantee to prevent 'politicisation' of Islam, that is, to prevent the use of Islam by those trying to legitimise the prevailing socio-political set up, irrespective of the subordinate role assigned to the *shari'ah*. The most reliable defence against the influence of corrupt politics is to bring politics within the fold of Islam, such that people's political life is always situated within the larger frames of their religious and spiritual life. Islam being a complete way of life abhors any disjunction between the faith in Allah (SWT) and political action.

NOTES

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4. Aristotle, *The Ethics*, tr. J.A.K. Thompson (England: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 44.
5. See Ernest Barker, *The Politics of Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 154-56.
6. Julius Gould and William L. Kolb (eds.), *A Dictionary of Social Science* (New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 4.
7. William T. Bluhm, *Theories of the Political System* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978), p.4.
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14. Quoted in Bernard Crick, *op.cit.*, p. 16.
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16. Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, tr. Khurshid

Ahmad (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1980), p. 88.

17. Yusuf ibn Abd al-Barr al-Qurtubi, *Jami' Bayan al-Ilm wa Fadluh* (Madinah: Al-Maktabah al-Ilmiyya, n.d.), Vol. I, p. 62.
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19. G. H. Jansen, *Militant Islam* (London: Pan Books, 1979), p. 17.
20. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1965), p. 154.
21. See Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), Vol. I.
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27. J.J. Saunders, *A History of Medieval Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 171.
28. See Jamil M. Abun Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 92-103; C.E. Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1967), pp. 28-31.
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30. The three-fold classification of Muslim thinkers is suggested by A.K. S. Lambton, 'Islamic Political Thought' in Joseph Schacht with C.E. Bosworth (eds.), *The Legacy of Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 404-424.
31. H.A.R. Gibbs, 'Constitutional Organization' in Majid Khadduri and H. J. Liebesney eds. *Law in the Middle East: Origin and Development of Islamic Law* (Washington D.C., The Middle East Institute, 1956), pp. 12-13.
32. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah; An Introduction to History*, tr. F. Rosenthal ed. N. J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 155.
33. Khurshid Ahmad, 'The Nature of Islamic Resurgence' in John L. Esposito ed. *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) pp. 219-20. Tajdid means renewal, an effort to regenerate the authentic Islamic spirit, to return to the fundamental principles of Islam as found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.
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36. See Seyyed Hossain Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966)
37. E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Islam in the Modern National State* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), p. 89.
38. Ali Abd Al-Raziq, *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* (Beirut: Al-Hayat Library, 1966), P. 83.
39. *Ibid.*, P. 118.
40. *Ibid.*, P. 143.
41. *Ibid.*, P. 12-17.

42. *Ibid.*, P. 82.
43. *Ibid.*, P. 201.
44. Enayat, *op.cit.*, p. 68.
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46. Rosenthal, *op.cit.* p. 100.
47. Malcolm Kerr, *Islamic Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 208.
48. Haddad, *op.cit.*, p. 11. She identifies members of the Muslim Brotherhood as neo-normativists. To this may be added Mawlana Mawdudi and members of the Jamaat-e-Islami. Late Ismail R. Al-Faruqi, Syed Hossein Nasr, Khurshid Ahmad, Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi and others also fall in this category.
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51. Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p. 154.
52. Enayat, *op.cit.*, p. 3.