Calligraphy as an Art in the Architectural Inscriptions of Muslim Bengal[*]

MUHAMMAD YUSUF SIDDIQ[**]

Abstract: "Islamic calligraphy forms an important theme in Islamic architecture. Like elsewhere in the Islamic world, Muslim rulers in Bengal also paid special attention to architectural inscriptions as they built numerous mosques, *madrassahs*, bridges, palaces, castles and forts. Most of these monuments had some kind of calligraphic inscriptions on them since Islamic culture considered calligraphy a powerful medium to convey visual, cultural, and spiritual messages to its people. These inscriptions were rendered in various styles such as *Kūfī, thulth, naskh, riqaʿ, rayhānī, muḥqqaq, ṭughrāʾ* and *Bihārī*.

The overall cultural continuity of the Muslims of Bengal and their counterparts elsewhere in the Muslim world reminds us of the importance of beauty and aesthetic perception in Islamic tradition of architecture as reflected in Islamic calligraphic heritage. Thus, in spite of their many distinctive local cultural features, one soon discovers in these wonderful epigraphic treasures the most vibrant message-- unity within diversity-- that is prevalent everywhere in Islamic culture.

This paper aims at analyzing the inner dynamics of the social, intellectual, and religious transformations of Bengal using its rich Islamic epigraphic heritage".
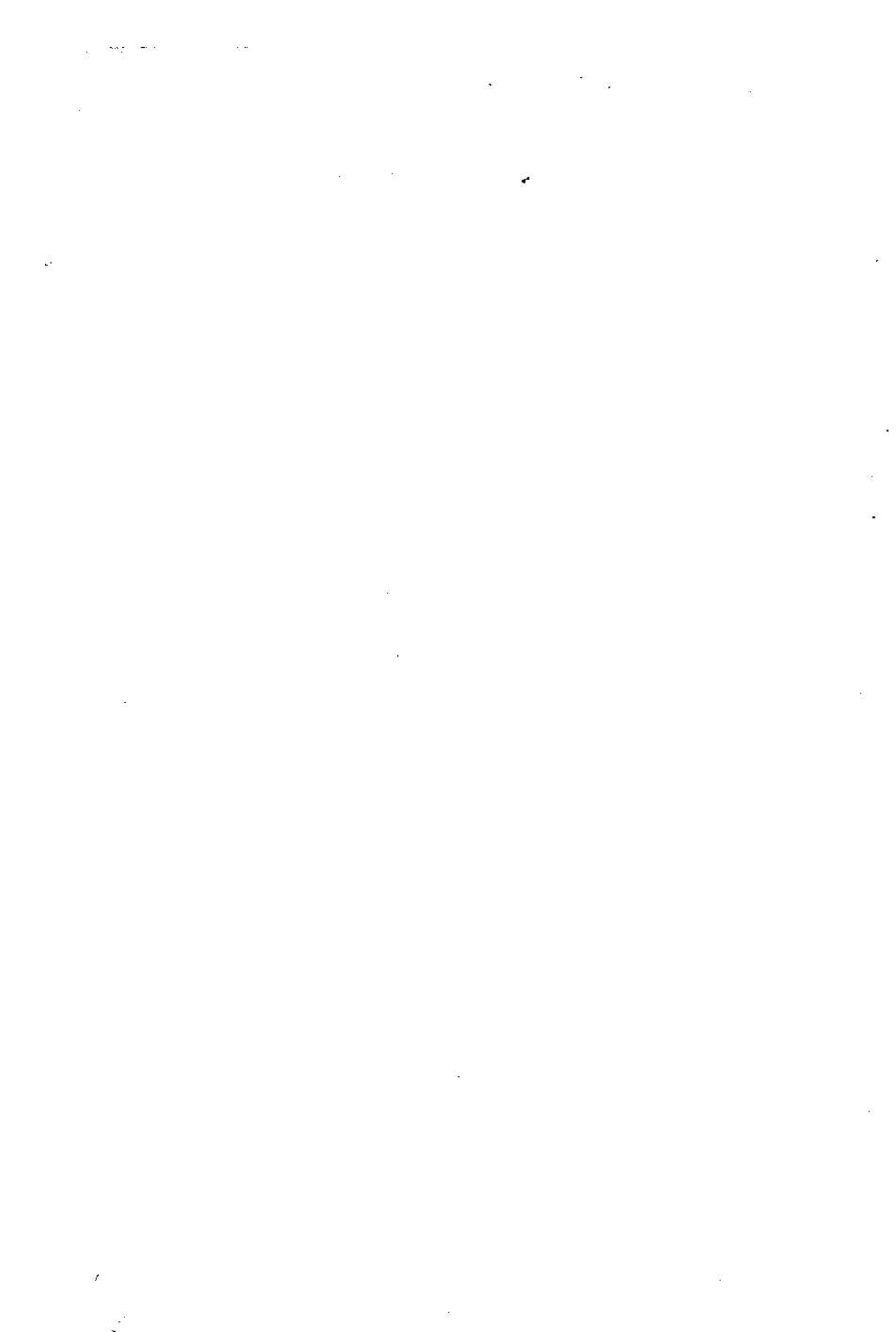

رأيت شخصك في نومي يعانقني
كما يعانق لام الكاتب الألفا

I saw you in my dreams embracing me
As the *lām* of the scribe embraces the *alif*[1].

Fig. 1. Shape A:
Letter *alif* (الألف) in *thulth*.

[31] W. Hall, "Western Education in the Muslim World: Forces, Purpose and Result", in *The Muslim World of Today*, edited by Mott, J.R., Hodder and Stoughton (London, 1925), p.179.

[32] *Al-Qur'ān*, 2:256.

Notes and References

[1] Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* (London: University of California Press, 1983), p.40; also see E.G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge, 1910), pp.28-29.

[2] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1994), p.159.

[3] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p.163

[4] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p.163

[5] Abdelwahab M. Elmessiri, "Features of the New Islamic Discourse", *Encounters*, vol. 3 no., 1 (March 1997),p. 50-51.

[6] Elmessiri, p.51

[7] Elmessiri, p.50

[8] William Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity* (London: Rutledge, 1988), p.64

[9] Watt, p.69

[10] Muhammad Asad, *Islam at the Crossroads* (Islamabad: Da'wah Academy, 1990), p.46.

[11] Asad, p.48

[12] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. vi.

[13] Murad Wilfried Hofmann, "Backwardness and the Rationality of the Muslim Word", *Encounters*, vol. 2 no. 1 (March 1996), p. 79.

[14] *New Strait Times*, 7th July 2003, p.13.

[15] Ibid, 14th June, 2003, p.5

[16] A. Karim Gaye, "The Muslim World and the international Islamic Perspective" in *The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order* (London: Islamic Council of Europe, London, 1979), pp.353-335.

[17] Gaye, pp. 353-355

[18] Abdullah al Ahsan, *OIC- The Organization of the Islamic Conference* (Herndon: IIIT, 1988), p.19.

[19] See: *Al-Qur'ān*, 22:78.

[20] *Al-Qur'ān*, 3:110.

[21] Khurram Murad, ed. And trans. *Witnesses unto Mankind-The Purpose and Duty of The Muslim Ummah* (Dehli: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1986), p.62.

[22] Murad, *Witness unto Mankind---*, p.22.

[23] See: *Al-Qur'ān*, 2:61, 159-161; 22:77-78.

[24] Muhammad Umar Sani, "The Role of European Imperialism in Muslim Countries", *Islamic Quarterly*, vol.32, no. 2 (1988), p.83.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Khalid M. Ishaque, "The Islamic Approach to Economic Activity and Development", in *The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order* (London: Islamic Council of Europe, 1979), p.75.

[27] Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "Arab Cultural Consolidation: A Response to European Colonialism?", *Islamic Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 3 (1979), p.34.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ishque, "The Islamic Approach to Economic Activity", p.75.

[30] Umar, "The Role of European Imperialism---", p.94.

will remain only a dream. In this respect the sole responsibility goes to the leaders and intellectuals, if they fail to lead the *ummah*, then no one can save the *ummah* from self-destruction. The following *hadith* illustrates this point:

> Zaiyād Ibn Hudayr says: 'Umar said to me: "Do you know what will destroy Islām?" When I said that I did not, he said: "It will be destroyed by the mistakes of scholars, the arguing of hypocrites using the Book, and the government by leaders who are in error." [Dārimī]

Allah's Messenger, blessings and peace be on him, said: "There are two classes in my *ummah* –if they are right the *ummah* is set right; if they go wrong the *ummah* goes wrong: they are the rulers and the Scholars.[Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Kitāb al- 'Ilm* and Abu Nu'aym in *Hilyah al-Awliyā'*

What is right and wise is presented. Now it is upto the leaders and intellectuals to take any lesson from it. The principle outlines by the Qur'ān is clear.

<div dir="rtl">

لا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ³²

</div>

The problem of unity of the Muslim world has to be tackled within the framework of its Islamic commitment, a commitment not confined merely to some aspects of worship, but to a total world-view in which educational, cultural, political and economic activities have a concrete and definite place and purpose. To a large extent the Unity of the Muslim world rests on the commitment of the Islamic *ummah* to Islām as a complete system of life. It needs to be emphasized that there is a radical difference in the vision of a good and successful life in the world-view of Islām and that of the capitalist or the socialist world-views. In the former it consists in fulfilling one's covenant with God and in living the collective life in line with the Divine guidance for peace and success in this world and hereafter. Not enough importance is given by the foreign advisers or the existing ruling elites to this fact of life as far as the capitalist and the socialist models are concerned, they failed inherently due to their world-views which are essentially materialistic and power oriented. The total picture of the good life painted with a mix of hues provided by Freud's vision of a 'Sexual Man' and Marx's vision of an 'Economic Man' does not coincide with that of Islām. One must be able to observe that the systems of capitalism and socialism have failed so far to create a society of peace and stability whether it be for the individual or for the people at large; whether in individual communities, or on a wider international plane. All secular "isms" and "ideologies" with varying philosophies and strategies are still unable to bring the world a better understanding of the problems of the contemporary world, and do not provide final solutions for the welfare of mankind. They all bitterly failed. Leaders, statesmen, politicians, scientists, academicians and many others are still searching for new strategies, ideas and systems to solve the complex problems facing humanity.

Finally, our contention is that the Qur'ān explains in great detail the nature and various essential attributes of the social life and leaves little room for ambiguity, misunderstanding or doubt in this regard. Therefore, we conclude that from the point of view of Islām the life is essentially spiritual and the essence of Islām is also spiritual. It is this spirituality that is indispensable for a meaningful social life. There is no social life without spiritual understanding of life as such. Spiritual understanding of life is a pure psychological foundation of human unity and human unity becomes possible only with the perception that all human life is spiritual in its origin. Secularism, therefore, has failed to unite people, particularly Muslim people. One should realize that there is an integral relationship between spirituality, human organization and unity. All those who aspire for Muslim unity must understand this fact of life otherwise their dream

be a true means for the production of a committed and qualified leadership.

Existing Social System as an Obstacle Towards Muslim Unity

The misuse of resources and power by the ruling elites is another obstacle towards unity. Abuse of resources and power create resentment and frustration in a society. People lose faith in the objectives of the society and get disenchanted with the leadership. When power is shared it becomes a blessing otherwise becomes a bane if used as a monopoly by a person or a group of persons. It takes the form of tyranny. It is a source of oppression, and breeds jealousies and prejudices which collapses solidarity of human beings. In a society where authority is used as an instrument of exploitation, bonds of unity are completely wrecked. Society is divided into several groups and they come into conflict with one another. Misuse of power corrupts and demolishes the social system, and produces a climate in which sense of unity cannot be maintained. The net result of all this is the rise of injustice, double –dealings and hypocrisy. Deceit, treachery and selfishness are the features of this type of society. This way the bridge of trust and confidence between the rulers and the subjects is shattered. The leadership becomes ineffective and remains unconcern with the welfare of the people and gives way for disintegration of unity. When such a stage is reached the feeling of togetherness disappears automatically. Other than this, the accumulation of wealth by a few in the society also weakens the sense of unity. The accumulation of wealth by itself is not bad but it is the uneven richness and its manifestation of misuse which creates social and economic strains in society. Once the sense of unity is destroyed, the foundation of social life of a community becomes weak. Under this situation an alien authority dominates and people tend to become slow and slavishly subservient. Rulers prefer seclusion. They isolate themselves from the people and tend to conduct the affairs of the society unilaterally. It is a well known fact that this kind of isolation of authority is always a source of annoyance and frustration among the masses, and in the end becomes one of the major causes of political chaos and administrative disorder. One can witness this phenomenon so often in the Muslim world. People are deprived of basic facilities. They are kept uneducated and unskilled and poor and majority of them live in unhealthy environment. How come we can expect from this people to stand with the rulers. They are already distanced from them.

Conclusion

solidarity, and the sense of belonging is weakened to such an extent that it loses its effectiveness and the whole edifice of the mutuality of interests between the rulers and the ruled collapses. Inter-group rivalries multiply and in the midst of endless squabbles, the society becomes ripe for dramatic changes. The most dramatic of them could be the change in the ruling and intellectual groups. The political leaders consolidate their power without the consent of the people. To maintain their power and wealth they support the corruption and exploitation. They get at this stage the help of those intellectuals who want to maintain status quo. The rulers and intellectuals with the help of one and other, suppress all others who differ with them. The despotic and authoritarian rule fails to acknowledge the services and contributions of those who possess credentials and qualities but differ with the policies and strategies of the ruling elites. They are neither recognized nor awarded for their sincere services. The rulers depend not on the support of the masses but on those opportunists who accommodate and adjust with the ruling authorities. All such factors lead to division in the society. Gradually they lose the support of the masses and depend on external factors. This finally creates gap between the rulers and the masses. The Islamic *ummah* at present demonstrates the same phenomena. The rulers and subjects have different aspirations; they do not represent the views and opinions of one and other.

This state of affairs requires a change in the pattern of existing leadership both at political and intellectual levels as this leadership suffers from internal weaknesses. The role of leadership is decisive and sensitive for the survival and development of all groups and organizations. The qualities of leaders, and of scholars, their ability to inspire confidence and prudence in guiding the society determine to a large extent the unity and solidarity of the people. The leadership must be able to comprehend and mobilize the feeling of unity and they can do this only if their own feeling of unity is higher than every other member of the society. The prime responsibility of leadership is to maintain and prolong unity as much as they can. Shāh Walī Allah says that the leadership is needed because it not only protects *ummah* from external attacks but also from internal divisions.

Our problem today is that a unified leadership on all these fronts is not available. Independent thinking, moral orientation, and economic enterprise are not being sponsored by the same leadership. We are divided into several groups. We are, therefore, under stress to develop a committed and qualified leadership. A morally and spiritually designed system of education completely independent from the influences of ruling elites can

the barriers of power, politics, selfish interest, exploitation and hypocrisy. It signifies social and organizational cohesion. The spiritual and ethical paradigm cultivate the culture which guarantee the 'sense of solidarity', *ummatic* feelings', 'loyalty to *ummah*', and 'public spirit. But a close look into secular paradigm shows that it fails to create a culture of sacrifice and commitment as it inherently lacks spiritual foundation. Associative sentiments, unity of purpose, and oneness of feelings and emotions are all essential factors of spirituality. When spirituality which is the life-blood of associative and communal solidarity, and which is strongest inspiration for life as such starts disappearing and in the end when it is completely gone, societies or civilizations break into conflicting groups and finally lead to the culture of power-politics and hypocrisy. The scholars of our time who are trying to find some rational justification for the secular model of political system in the name of realism and pragmatism are unable to see that the secular paradigm has not only failed in the West and everywhere but it is inherently contrary to the spirit of Islamic political system which emphasizes consensus, consent and consultation as the cardinal principles of the political organization of community, the main goal of which is the welfare of the people, that is, peace, harmony and prosperity. Absolute authority is, therefore, rejected but unfortunately the present political culture in the Muslim world does not demonstrate that this ideal is sincerely practiced. The concept of *shūrā* [consultation] is admired and adored in our academic circles, but as an instrument of practical mechanism it ceased to exist in our culture. The yawning gap between the Islamic ideal of *shūrā* and the reality disturb people in general and consequently affect the sense of togetherness. Ultimately, they lose their confidence in social organization.

Existing Political and Intellectual Leadership as an Obstacle Towards Muslim Unity

It is evident that the communities who reject spirituality lose their social organization and is vanquished by a superior force. They develop the most humiliating attitude of emulating the superior masters. They lose self-respect and develop apathy, and their will to struggle and survive is completely eroded. They become ease-loving and comfort-seeking. Material affluence corrupts their mind and soul, and the sense of hardship, excellence and dynamism are replaced with indolence, slowness of thought and sluggishness in action. The ceaseless struggle against all kinds of odds that sustain communities disappears, and they spend their energies in needless and useless things and pursue a course of luxury. In the end, a stage is reached when injustice and corruption destroy the foundations of

indoctrinated on how to separate the secular from the sacred. They really learn their lessons very well and emerge as advocates of secular ideologies and continue the mission of secular orientation. It is the secular system that produces the *ummah*'s intellectual, political and social leaders. As a result of this, the system of education became a means of dividing the *ummah* and draining its energy. In reality, education should be a means of bringing Muslims together and providing them with a unified cultural perspective, directing them towards progress and development. It should create harmony and provide a common purpose, thus directing all efforts towards developing the righteous Muslims whose mind and soul, culture and behaviour, help to develop sense of unity and loyalty to the *ummah*. Many of the manifestations of division and fragmentation bear the traces of the negative aspects of this system. Now we can see traditionalist, secularist, modernist and Islamist Muslims whose loyalties and destinies are different from one another. [30]

Those who received secular western education in and abroad most of them demonstrate western outlook in their life style unless they are influenced by the Islamic movements or Muslim culture. Rev William Hall observes:

> The government systems of education are modeled on this pattern [western and secular]. Many young [Muslim] men and women have been sent to the Universities of Europe and America and are returning to their home with the method and spirit of the West. Extended commercial and political relations are rapidly aiding in spreading this Western Method as opposed to the unquestioning acceptance of traditional dogma and dictum. [31]

Existing Secular Culture as an Obstacle Towards Muslim Unity

Education is being used as a more effective instrument of cultural subversion. The modern Western model of education largely succeeded in subverting directly the Islamic culture and the Muslim Unity. In the Muslim world the secular paradigm has created the culture of power, politics, selfish interest, exploitation and hypocrisy. Muslim masses, in spite of their ignorance and illiteracy understand very well that the Islamic perspective of life is basically based on ethical considerations. The existing secular system and culture in the Muslim world is not in any way a source of creating a Muslim personality with an Islamic character. A detailed examination of all these problems and of human social organization reveals that when personal, racial, national and sectarian sentiments take the place of universal values and dictate all the policies and strategies, people neglect their responsibilities. It is through the spiritual and ethical and universally accepted values that the sense of unity and oneness is created. It is a spiritual and ethical force, which transcends

bold. Western theories and models gave more weight to individual personal gains. The idea of state control and intervention was considered universally accepted panacea for all the ills of backwardness. It was a pleasing idea to most ruling elites in the Muslim world. It provided justification for acquiring absolute power over men and material by the mere promise of bringing about a new order of peace and plenty. As a result every leader of a developing Muslim country assumed that it is his right to consolidate his power and suppress everyone else.

In response to the fourth question, what we observe is that the so-called liberal, enlightened, and moderate intellectuals and academicians either sullenly sit on the fence, uncommitted, uninspired and refusing to participate creatively or they prefer to share all the benefits at the governmental level.

Existing Education System as an Obstacle Towards Muslim Unity

The above analysis has shown that the path chosen by the rulers did not create confidence among the masses rather it became a source of division and distrust and finally created unbridgeable gulf between them. This only indicates that the struggle for freedom in the Muslim world is not yet completed. Liberation has been limited merely to ridding lands of foreign elements albeit in a less than satisfactory fashion. Liberation has not been carried to its logical conclusions. Observing the response of Muslim leadership to various challenges in the past, however, one cannot but be optimistic about the end results of the new challenges. The rival systems to Islām, the various forms of capitalism and socialism, continues to exist in the Muslim world. The introduction of modern secular educational system, for example, was identified by several Muslim thinkers correctly as a source of division and disunity among Muslims. In spite of serious reminders the secular educational system still continues to operate. The individuals and institutions that promote a break with Islamic traditions are rewarded. The present educational institutions have become useful and powerful instruments with which effectively the Islamic culture—the source of unity---is subverted. Modern secular education serves the purpose of indoctrinating Muslims with heavy doses of Western cultural norms and values; it also cast doubt in the mind of Muslims on the authenticity of Islamic culture. It develops the low and middle level manpower lacking courage and confidence in their own sources. It creates not only the sense of the superiority of the West and the western civilization but also the sense of loyalty to the West. Education today is the most effective weapon through which the sense of unity and togetherness is completely uprooted from the Muslim heart. Muslims are

The same observers raised some other related questions. For example:

> What are the characteristics that can make us consider these countries as a distinct community held together by goals and ideals peculiar to it alone, which all its members following the same laws and moving in the same direction?[26]

Another observer expressed the following:

> Though in their slogans leadership in most under-developed countries has attempted to combine the ideals of liberal democracies with the proclaimed egalitarianism of socialism, in practice the trends have been distinctly in the direction of bureaucratic, centrally planned totalitarianism.[27]

A close analysis of the above discussion reveals that the Imperialist's designs are still continuing in the Muslim world by the existing ruling elites. The Imperialists developed distinct economic institutions, a distinct educational system, and other institutional structures to create divisions in the Muslim world. They gave rise to a duality of institutions and structures that now can be easily discerned clearly. Some institutions are created as the products of 'modernity' and all others are associated with 'traditionalism'. For example, a modern educational system was established to train a small indigenous elite disaffiliated from its religious and cultural traditions and background to serve the needs of the European masters. A modern urban system was developed to serve the needs of the colonial functionaries and settlers. A modern economic system tied to the global economic system of European capitalism and so forth.[28] The European powers very well understood the factors which foster in the *ummah* its distinct identity and unity. Hence, these powers launched their major attack on those elements, which had given the *ummah* its fundamental cohesion, *ummatic* identity and world-view.[29]

On the political, economic and social fronts Muslim rulers were advised constantly that if they want to overcome the problem of backwardness, un-development and poverty, they must adopt liberal democratic or socialist ideology. As a result of this by and large the *ummah*'s cohesion and unity based on Islamic world-view has suffered further decline and the desire for increased economic well-being and power has become dominant. We observe today that the rulers and elites give more and more emphasis to western theories and models. Those Muslim scholars who oppose these policies were considered enemies of the people, reactionaries, or foreign agents. Rulers were determined to destroy such 'enemies' of people. They were convinced that a total destruction of an opposition does not suffer from any moral stigma. The capacity to silence criticism and political protest made rulers defiant and

pushed down the Islamic *ummah* to this edge of degeneration? Khurram Murād identified the root causes of this decline:

> The Muslim societies remain as indifferent to their duty as ever. Instead, they are dedicated to the pursuit of the same ideals, as are non-Muslims. Modernization and economic progress are the goals on which all their efforts and energies are concentrated. These have become the new gods whom they worship. The results are there for all to see. They remain ridden by bitter internal strives and divisions, poverty and backwardness. Muslim states, from one end to the other, are plagued by autocratic and despotic regimes, which suppress the Muslim masses and their aspirations, deny them even fundamental human rights, even a share in governing themselves. Muslim blood still flows like water. Large Muslim minorities, as in the Russia, India, China, and Israel, still live as second-class citizens, constantly in fear of life and honour. In short, the Muslim *ummah* remains afflicted by degradation and humiliation, ignominy and powerlessness.[24]

No doubt it is the realistic description of the present conditions of the Islamic *ummah*. Unfortunately, under the influence of modernity Muslim political leadership also started thinking in terms of power-politics only to continue their power for its own sake in general. Whereas, we as an Islamic *ummah* stand for the welfare of humanity in its true sense. This reveals the fact that Muslim political leaderships have tended to go against the universal mission of the Islamic *ummah*. Hence, as a matter of fact, if they fail to perform their mission they invite the curse of God and would lose their legitimate identity

Coming back to the second and third questions that are raised above, what we observe is that those who have adopted the goals of power-politics, they believe in and demonstrate different perspectives other than the Islamic perspective of life in their systems and activities. Here we are not concerned with the legitimate rule of authority of the country i. e., on the basis of universally accepted rules of democracy and even we do not want to raise the question of legitimacy of those who adopted these resolutions on the basis of strict Islamic criteria of selection and election as the head of the state and government. It is not the part of our analysis here. We are interested only to investigate who are those who have adopted these goals and where lies their loyalty. In this connection one observer raised the following question:

> The individual countries within this area are different from one another in a number of ways. For example, some follow monarchial system of government, while others are republics, some are officially secular while others have adopted the *Sharī'ah* …. some are revolutionary, while others are not…, some are socialist oriented and others are capitalist inclined…So, in view of these differences, can we justifiably refer to these countries under one common term as if they are one homogeneous whole? [25]

so because our **ummah** *is subject to certain specific and universal social laws. A specific social law related to the Islamic* **ummah** *is this: If we submit in totality we acquire strength and power and if we follow our own desires and give to it the name of rationality we loose our strength and power.*

Let us now understand what is the source of and goal for Muslim unity in the light of God's guidance? It is very clearly said in the Qur'ān that the Islamic *ummah* is created to perform the universal mission of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong in human society.[21] It implies that the sole aim of the creation of Islamic *ummah* is to guide mankind to the path of God —the path of peace, prosperity and development. Here, at least two important points can be deduced: firstly that the Islamic *ummah* cannot assign any other purpose to itself other than that which is designed for it by its Creator; secondly, that it is the Islamic *ummah* which is responsible for the fall of the human civilization as a whole if it has failed to present and warn the human society about the Divine laws of the rise and fall of human civilization. In other words, if we collectively fail to perform this basic and sublime responsibility we would be on one side subject to punishment and on the other responsible for the fall of societies. This is the Divine law of the rise and fall of nations Khurram Murād observes:

> The Qur'ān points out the single common denominator of all those nations, which met their doom in the past. All those nations had formerly been favoured with God's blessings. But drunk with affluence, they resorted to mischief on earth. Their collective conscience was also completely vitiated. The result was that no righteous was left among them to prevent them from committing evils. And if any such person did exist, their number was either too small, or their voice too feeble to prevent evils from predominating.[22]

This passage further strengthens our argument that the whole rationale for raising the Islamic *ummah* is to guide mankind to the path of peace and civilization. Therefore, the Islamic *ummah* cannot take the liberty of neglecting this magnanimous responsibility other wise it declines and degenerates unless it repents and follows and presents the Divine guidance to mankind. For this reason the Qur'ān has repeatedly reminded to the Islamic *ummah* to guide and invite mankind to submit and surrender to the guidance of God.[23]

Can we deny the fact that although a number of Muslim states achieved independence and became the masters of their own destiny but the state of Islamic *ummah* has been continuously worsening? Today we complain that in spite of a large number of Muslim states neither we enjoy honour nor dignity and respect. What are the main causes, which have

Fundamental Questions Regarding the Goals of Muslim Unity

One can easily see that in the above mentioned quotes some lofty ideals and goals are desired and cherished. But a careful analysis of all these statements, reveal that this is the most problematic area, which resulted in the failure of the efforts of Muslims for unity. To appreciate the problematic of these goals and ideals, an in- depth examination is required this examination raises at least four basic questions which need for serious reflections. Firstly, are the goals, which have been identified as the goals of Muslim Unity are based on the perspective of Islām and the criteria of rationality? Secondly, those who desire these goals and adopted them are really legitimate representatives of Islām and Muslims? Thirdly, are those scholars and leaders who cherish these goals practice them as a living reality? This question also requires an answer from the Islamic and rational perspectives.

Other than these questions, there is another pertinent question, which helps us to understand the root causes of the failure of the efforts for Muslim unity. This important question is related to the heirs of the Prophets (P.B.U.T.) and the custodians of Islamic thought and scholarship i.e. the scholars. Did they challenge those who are responsible for the failure of our lofty ideals and goals? Did they provide a workable blue print for Muslim unity based on the Islamic world view exclusively?

The Constituent of the Islamic *Ummah* and Its Mission

To answer these questions first we need to remind ourselves about the following facts regarding the constituents of the Islamic *ummah*. We are concerned here for the unity of the 'Islamic' nations or countries or communities who are scattered and divided all over the world. What is imperative for us here is the need to note that it is the adjective 'Islamic', which is integral to these nations, countries or communities. It is not a unity of different nations, countries or communities with several backgrounds. We are certain that it is 'Islām' which is the basis of our existence as a distinctive *ummah*. Islām is, therefore, central to the life of the Muslim world. Islām means peace and submission to the Will of God. Submission should necessarily be willingly and whole-heartedly. It implies that one who submits to God cannot go against the Will of God. For Islām stands for a commitment to surrender one's will to the Will of God. And it is through this submission that peace and prosperity is brought about. Because of this submission we are named as 'Muslim' by God Himself. [20] *The Muslim world is, therefore, under obligation to seek guidance and surrender to the Will of God. We are not, therefore, free to think by ourselves and decide anything for ourselves independently. It is*

> *understanding between them*. Resolve *to preserve the spiritual, moral and socio-economic values of Islām, which remain one of the essential factors for the achievement of progress by mankind*. Affirmation of their unshakable faith in the precepts of Islām, which proclaim the equality of rights among all men.[17]

Declaration of the Second Islamic Summit held at Lahore, February 22-24, 1974.

> The Kings, Heads of States and Governments and the Representatives of the Islamic Countries and Organizations proclaimed:

1. The Conviction that *their common Faith is an indissoluble bond between their peoples*; that the solidarity of the Islamic peoples is based not on hostility towards any other human community nor on distinctions of race and culture, but on the positive and eternal precepts of the equality, fraternity and dignity of man, freedom from discrimination and exploitation and struggle against oppression and injustice.

2. Their identification with the joint struggle of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America for social and economic progress and prosperity of all nations of the World.

3. Their desire that their endeavours in promoting world peace based on freedom and social justice will be imbued with the spirit of amicability and cooperation with other Faiths, in accordance with the tenets of Islām.

> Their determination to preserve and promote solidarity among Muslim Countries, to respect each other's independence and territorial integrity, to refrain from interference in each other's internal affairs, to resolve their differences through peaceful means in a fraternal spirit and, wherever possible, to utilize the mediatory influence or good offices of fraternal Muslim State or States for such resolution.[18]

In the same Second Islamic Summit the main goal of the Charter of the Islamic Conference was announced in the following words:

> To consolidate cooperation among member states in the economic, social, cultural, scientific and other vital fields of objectives, and to carry out consultations among member states in international organizations.

Finally it was further declared by the heads of state of the OIC member states that:

> Strict adherence to Islām and to Islamic principles and values as a way of life constitutes the highest protection for Muslims against the dangers that confront them. Islām is the only path that can lead them to strength, dignity, prosperity, and a better future. Islām is the pledge and guarantee of the authenticity of the *ummah* safeguarding it from the tyrannical onrush of materialism. It is the powerful stimulant for both leaders and peoples in their struggle to liberate their Holy Places and to regain their rightful place in the world so that they may, in concert with other nations, strive for the establishment of equality, peace and prosperity for the whole [of] mankind.[19]

The Existing Aims of Muslim Unity as the fundamental Obstacle Towards Muslim Unity

Why do the past strategies fail to bring about unity among Muslims? The correct answer to this question demands a thorough examination of the general aims of Muslim unity commonly aspired by scholars and political leaders. It is generally argued that there is an urgent need to rebuild the strength of Muslims. Everyone should delve into the rebuilding of a strong Islamic world. It will help to improve the capability of Muslims to deal with the challenges of globalization and the information technology. Islamic world in alliance "had suffered humiliation when Iraq and Afghanistan were invaded by foreign powers with Muslim countries incapable of doing anything. Muslims should be in a position where they are safe from threats, be it internal or external, including from other Muslims who can weaken the Islamic community, causing them to be controlled by others." [14] Disunity among Muslim countries had weakened them and as a result, Iraq and its people became the victim. Under the uncertain political situation in the world currently, it is wise and crucial for Muslim countries to unite and work together in facing current challenges. [15]

There is a strong desire of all that the Muslim countries should set a tradition of co-operation and co-ordination of Islamic communities in political, social, economic, cultural and Islamic issues. One of the former secretary generals, Amadou Karim Gaye, in his inaugural address as the chief guest to an international conference on 'The Muslim World and The Future Economic Order' held in 1977, outlined the objectives of Muslim unity as follows:

> Nevertheless, we cannot help noting that on the world scene today various dimensions of the world situation, and the decisions affecting them, have come to be identified with a few major powers. This cannot be allowed to go unchallenged, for in the new situation *the Muslim world can have an effective voice in political and economic forums.* In the UN and its specialized agencies, in the International Monetary Fund and other policy-making organs, *we must have an effective say* in matters concerning the betterment of the developing world in general and the Muslim world in particular. [16]

Earlier the OIC issued several Declarations and adopted several resolutions which give some idea about contemporary Muslim thinking on the issue of Muslim unity and its objectives. Below we reproduce some parts of two Declarations and resolutions. Declaration of the First Islamic Summit held at Rabāṭ, September 22-25, 1969.

> The Islamic Summit is convinced that *their common creed constitutes a powerful factor in bringing their peoples closer together and fostering*

Unfortunately, all these advices were neglected by the Muslims. Several misunderstandings and assumptions were developed. For example, there is a mistaken assumption among Muslims that there are external challenges, which have caused problems to the Islamic *ummah*. These challenges must be addressed. This misunderstanding is the consequence of another basic misunderstanding, that is, the decline and decadence is caused by the masters of colonialism and imperialism. Whereas, the truth is that the Islamic *ummah* had been in decline for centuries before it faced the modern challenges of modernity and modern civilization. According to Murad Wilfried Hofmann, "its decline was not the consequence of colonialization but colonialization was the consequence of the Muslim world's pre-existing decline and decadence". [13]

The main factors which led to the decline and decadence of the Islamic *ummah* were the result of the negligence of the Islamic *ummah* of its universal mission of Islām; lack of the spirit of consultation in the Muslim political culture; lack of confidence in the open mindedness; lack of empirical understanding and scientific spirit. All these were further supported by the self-created images of Islām and it's civilization. The most important mechanism of Islām, *ijtihād* for the development of Islamic thought and *ummah* was first confined only to the *fiqh* (Islamic law) and then it was replaced by another deadly idea, the notion of *taqlīd* (stagnation). Furthermore, under the influence of Western civilization this was followed by another idea of the supremacy of human reason. It was wrongly conceived that everything that is really essential for man's welfare is knowable –and understandable better by human reason alone. Consequently the need of God's guidance in human affairs was rejected. *ijtihād* in its truest sense is not applied anywhere in the Muslim world. Today one can observe that the models of development are not deeply rooted in the Islamic world-view. Several aspects of development in the Muslim world do not reflect the Islamic world-view. As the direct result of the acceptance of the supremacy of human reason, the Islamic world-view was replaced by the world-view of secularism. We seek to develop ideas and models of development within the framework of the secular paradigm. Until and unless we get rid of this slavish mentality and develop our own ideas and frameworks within the parameters of the world-view of Islām we would remain unsuccessful in achieving our noble goals. The worst of all this is that Muslim masses have almost given hope of living respectable and a self-reliant life in the world. The available literature dealing with the issue of Muslim unity is an empirical example of what is said above. It is not free from the influences of the Western world-view. It badly lacks the strong foundation of the Islamic world-view.

Islamic world-view analogous to some aspects found within Western civilization. This inevitably meant the eventual atrophy of those aspects of the Islamic world-view that have nothing analogous to them within the modern Western world-view. But ironically, those aspects constitute the very essence and source of the specificity of the Islamic world-view.[6] In short "it should be pointed out that neither the new nor the old generation of Muslim intellectuals constructed their respective intellectual systems on the basis of the Islamic world-view exclusively".[7] There were and are still several scholars who follow Western criteria and advocate Western civilization. They feel logical when they declare that in our culture they maintain both tradition and modernity. According to William Montgomery Watt what was   presented by Ameer 'Ali in his book *The Spirit of Islam,* " was essentially a presentation of Islam and its founder as embodying all the liberal values admired in Victorian England. Ameer 'Ali saw Muhammad as a 'great Teacher', a believer in progress, an upholder of the use of reason and indeed 'the great Pioneer of Rationalism', in short as a thoroughly modern man".[8] He further says that Sir Hamilton Gibb's criticism of the achievements of Islamic liberals and modernists up to 1945 was right when they did not demonstrate the total imitation of the West but now it is invalid. The reason furnished by Watt is interesting. He contends that the weaknesses Gibb indicated "have largely been remedied by the latest generation of liberal Muslim thinkers represented by Fazlur Rahman and Mohammed Arkoun. They have fully accepted Western historical criticism and are prepared to apply it in the interpretation of the Qur'ān and in a review of the history of Islamic thought".[9]

As a matter of fact this attitude emerges from an inferiority complex, from the belief that we as Muslims can earn no honour or respect unless we are able to show that our religion resembles the modern creeds and it is in agreement with most of the contemporary ideologies. Quite contrary to this defeatist and slavish mentality, Muhammad Asad argued that:

> We must have the wish to learn and to progress and to become scientifically and economically as efficient as the Western nations are. But the one thing Muslims must not wish is to see with Western eyes, to think in Western thoughts; they must not wish, if they desire to remain Muslims, to exchange the spiritual civilization of Islam for the materialistic experiments of the West.[10]

He therefore demanded that we should study and develop our thought but 'without a slavish submission to the intellectual attitude of the West'.[11] Iqbāl provided a universal formula for acceptance or rejection of an idea or thought. He said:

> Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it.[12]

Islām with one or the other systems of thought. They contended that Islām is a democracy. By this they mean that there is no difference between Islām and the democracy. Some others suggested that communism is nothing but the latest and revised version of Islām. For some socialism was in line with the teachings of Islām. Today, there are people who are arguing that Islām stands for civil society and pluralism. There are sufficient evidences on the part of Muslim intellectuals who are more content with importing ready-made Western answers to the questions posed by Western civilization. They either attempt to reconcile Islām with Western civilization, or preoccupy themselves with searching for the points of contrast or similarity between the two. They are also interested to develop the 'image' of Islām by way of developing 'moderate Islām' against 'extremist Islām'. It is often argued that there is an urgent need for the reconciliation with Western civilization and it's modernity. Some scholars even suggest that we should be selective or comparative in our assessment. All these people, in their misguided zeal, are always at great pains to prove that Islām contains within itself the elements of all types of contemporary social and political thought and action. All this was the result of the interaction with Western civilization. It was an important formative factor as contemplated by Abdelwahab M. El-messiri. He said:

> After all, this was a civilization that acquired centrality by virtue of its economic and military accomplishments, put forward its own view of the world as if it were the view of all human beings at all times and in all places, conceived of its knowledge as a precise science applicable to all communities, and set the challenge that everyone else had to respond to responses varied with the type of challenge and its intensity. The early reformists found many positive aspects in Western modernity. One may even go as far as to suggest that they were entranced by it…Consequently, the issue for many of the bearers of the old Islamic discourse was basically how to reconcile Islām with Western modernity, and even how to make Islām catch up with it, and live up to its standards and values……It is interesting to note that, for many in the Muslim world, all the trends and movements, religious or secular, irrespective of their ideological inclinations and social or ethnic backgrounds, had turned the West into a silent and ultimate point of reference. [5]

As a result of this attitude to Western civilization the Islamic world-view retreated, its dimensions shrunk, and it lost its comprehensiveness. *Instead of providing an Islamic framework of reference for Muslims in the modern age, the issue became how to 'Islamize' certain aspects of Western modernity.* The Islamization process, in most cases, took the form of 'omitting' those aspects of Western civilization deemed *harām* [prohibited] by Islamic law, without any addition or innovation, underscoring those aspects of Western civilization deemed *halāl* [permissible] by Islamic law, and searching for those aspects within the

good intentions. It is necessary to take appropriate and specific actions such as a sincere and honest leadership is needed to achieve the set goals. This is an established social law of society. The Islamic *ummah* is not an exception. It is bound, to follow that course of action which is so designed for it by God. This is a fundamental issue of such a great importance that without understanding it we cannot clearly visualize our purpose and strategy to construct Muslim unity.

In the light of this, we argue that the disunity among people is genuinely caused by the negligence of certain basic facts of life. For example, in the case of the Islamic *ummah* the lack of commitment to Islām and Islamic perspective of life on the part of the rulers is the fundamental obstacle towards Muslim unity. Due to the lack of Islamic perspective on life and commitment to Islām, the aims and goals as designed by OIC have themselves become greatest obstacles towards the realization of Muslim unity. Apart from this, some other ideological influences had been working in the Muslim world with greater force than ever which had ultimately, as they were not checked properly and timely, wiped off the broad universal human outlook which *ummah* had imbibed from its *Dīn, al-Islām*. Furthermore, it can be further argued that the Muslim leaders and scholars with their zeal for the so-called 'modern', 'liberal' and 'moderate' interpretations and models of Islām had contributed towards disunity of Muslims.[3] A careful reading of history and those of present realities show that the current slogans of 'globalization', 'liberal', 'modern' and 'moderate Islām' are accelerating Muslim disunity rather than eliminating it since they are essentially politically oriented. slogans. As Iqbāl contended quite earlier that the Reformation was essentially a political movement, and the net result of it in Europe was a gradual displacement of the universal ethics of Christianity by systems of national ethics. He, therefore, reminded to the Islamic *ummah* that it is the duty of the leaders and scholars of the world of Islām today to understand the real meaning of what has happened in Europe, and then to move forward with self-control and a clear insight into the ultimate aims of Islām as a social policy.[4]

A Fundamental Remark

Before making an exploration into and examination of the real obstacles towards the Muslim unity, it seems imperative to make a fundamental remark regarding the attitude of Muslim intellectuals and scholars of our time and their criteria of analysis.

It was from the beginning of the 20th century until 70's that the Muslim intellectuals and scholars were thinking in terms of identifying

Jamāluddīn al-Afghānī, the architect of Pan-Islamism in the modern world at last lost his hope of uniting the Muslim world. He failed to unite the Muslim leaders and nations, in spite of all his sincere and unceasing devotion and efforts. He identified the causes of his failure. He argued that the root causes of his failure lie in the negligence of the some of the social laws related to the rise and fall of civilizations. He contended that every society is subject to some social laws. These laws are created by God for the development of a society. According to these laws every society requires, for example, a committed and honest leadership. It is this committed and honest leadership that adopts a proper methodology for achieving peace, harmony and prosperity of the society. He, therefore, finally concluded that he failed because he did not adopt a proper methodology. Instead of approaching to the Muslim masses for Muslim unity, he approached to the Muslim leaders who were selfish and ignorant.

At around the same time Iqbāl also referred to the same social laws of society. He outlined his strategy of Muslim unity. He thought that first Muslim nations would gradually get independence and then will come together and form a solid solidarity. He said:

> In order to create a really effective political unity of Islam, all Muslim countries must first become independent: and then in their totality they should range themselves under one Caliph. Is such a thing possible at the present moment? If not today, one must wait.

Iqbāl in fact thought that Muslims would take lessons from their past political experiences and would reflect into the laws which work behind the rise and fall of nations and civilizations, but the recent past history of Muslims demonstrates something else. What was thought by Iqbāl and Afghānī was not realized yet. It remained an unrealized dream. Here some basic questions may be raised: Is it not true that the so-called independent modern nation states, instead of becoming the source of Muslim unity have really stood in the way of a reunion of Islamic *ummah*? Is it not the fact that they are far from serving any useful purpose and have become the source of further disunity of Muslims in the world? Is it not true that the so-called independent states have become a source of disintegration of Islamic *ummah*? A careful observation of present realities reveals the fact that the independent nation-states or the division of Muslims in nationalities are not the real obstacles towards the unity of the Islamic *ummah*. However, our contention is that the real obstacles are related to some of the social laws which are working in human societies such as the law related to the attitude of the rulers and their ways of governance as pointed out by Afghānī. In this world everything follows a set course. No human effort can achieve success merely on the basis of pious wishes and

Obstacles Towards Muslim Unity: An Analysis of the Root Causes

MUHAMMAD MUMTAZ ALI*

Abstract: "The unity of Muslim nations as such is not against the interest of any non-Muslim nation. For the purpose of achieving this objective several efforts have been made and organizations and institutions established in the past, but those efforts did not bear fruits as expected.

For the unity or disunity of Muslim nations has a direct bearing on the development and sustenance of the Islamic civilization in this chaotic world, this paper argues that without identifying the real obstacles that lie behind the disunity of the Muslim nations and people, all the efforts for bringing about the Muslim unity would not be fruitful. This paper mainly focuses on the identification of the fundamental obstacles which stand in the way of Muslim unity and argues that with the change of circumstances the nature of the real obstacles has also changed which needs to be seriously investigated by the scholars. In this paper the root causes of Muslim disunity are identified and analyzed.

It is contended here that the real obstacles standing in the way of Muslim unity are not external rather they are purely internal and mostly relate to Muslim culture and the socio-political atmosphere of the Muslim world. These obstacles are multi-dimensional and deeply related to educational, cultural, political and social factors. Finally, an in depth analysis of these obstacles and some solutions to overcome these obstacles are presented which is followed by a conclusion".

Introduction:

Would that I had sown all the seed of my ideas in the receptive ground of the people's thought! Well would it have been had I not wasted this fruitful and beneficent seed of mine in the salt and sterile soil of that effete sovereignty! Or what I sowed in that soil never grew, and what I planted in that brackish earth perished away. During all this time one of my well-intentioned counsels sank into the ears of the rulers of the East, whose selfishness and ignorance prevented them from accepting my words [Jamāluddīn al-Afghānī].[1]

*Associate Professor, Department of Uṣūluddīn and Comparative Religion, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge & Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur.

(Lahore Islamic Publications Ltd., 1960), p.148.

[60] Abul A'lā Mawdūdī, *Jihad in Islam* (Malaysia: International Islamic Federation of Student Organization, 1981), p.6.

[61] S. Abul Ala Mawdudi, *Unity of the Muslim World*, Khurshid Ahmad ed. (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1967), p. 13.

[62] Abu Ala Mawdudi, Process of Islamic Revolution; an address delivered at the Aligarh Muslim University (Delhi: Markazi Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, 1970), p. 22.

[63] Abul A'lā Mawdūdī, *Tafhim al- Qur'ān*, vol. I (Lahore: Idārāh-i Tarjumanul Qur'ān, 1973): 36.

[64] Aziz Ahmed, "Mawdudi and Orthodox Fundamentalism in Pakistan," *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 21, no.3 (Summer, 1967): 378.

[65] *Correspondence Between Mawlana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1973), p. 57.

[66] Sayyid Abul A'lā Mawdūdī, *Tarjumān al-Qur'an* (August 1936): 483.

[67] Kazi Zulqadr Siddiqi, S.M. Aslam and M.M. Ahsan, "A Bibliography of Writings by and About Mawlana Sayyid Abul A'lā Mawdūdī" in Khurshid Ahmad and Zafar Ishaq Ansari, eds. *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in Honour of Mawlana Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1980), pp. 3-14.

[68] See Abdul Rashid Moten, *Revolution to Revolution: Jama 'at-e-Islami in the Politics of Pakistan* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2002).

[69] See Sayyid A.S. Pirazda, *The Politics of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Pakistan, 1971-77* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[37] "Madi al-Umma wa Hadirouha wa ilaaJu ilaliha," (The Past and Present of the Ummah and the Treatment of its Maladies), *al-Urwah al-Wuthqa*, pp. 45-60.

[38] al-Wahdat al-Islami-yah" (Islamic Unity), *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa*, pp. 130-140.

[39] "al-Amal wa Talab al-Majd" (Hope and the Pursuit of Glory), *al-Urwah al-Wuthqah*, pp. 151-162.

[40] Ibid.

[41] N. R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialismh*, pp. 81-84.

[42] Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 114.

[43] Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (London: Unwin, 1907), p. 100.

[44] Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 55.

[45] Sir Dr. Muhammad Iqbāl, the descendant of a Kashmīrī Brahmin family, converted to Islām, was born in Sialkot in 1877. After schooling in the little township, he went to Lahore, England, and Germany for higher studies. Iqbāl had a Master's in philosophy from College. another Master's from Cambridge and a Ph.D. from Munich received for work on Persian metaphysics. He had also qualified as a barrister in London.
'Atāullah, *Iqbal Nāmā*, Vol. II (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1951), p. 231; Sayyid Abdul Vahid ed., *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbāl* (Lahore Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964), p. 278.

[47] Muhammad Iqbāl, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1965), pp.7-8. Iqbāl's use of the term "reconstruction" is meaningful as it denotes an action aims at a new construction in the light of the requirements of the age, without changing the basis.

[48] *Speeches and Statements of Iqbāl*, compiled by "Shamloo" (Lahore: Al-Manar Academy, 1948), p. 224.

[49] The famous speech of Iqbāl reads as follows: "I would like to see the Punjab, Northwest Frontier Province, Sind, and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British empire or without the British empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me the final destiny of the Muslim at least of North-West India." See Jamil-ud-din Ahmad, *Historic Documents of the Muslim Freedom Movement* (Lahore: Publishers United Ltd., 1970), pp. 121-137.

[50] Muhammad Iqbāl, *Letters of Iqbāl to Jinnah: The Political Future of Muslim India* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1956), p. 24.

[51] Jamil-ud-din Ahmad, *Historic Documents of the Muslim Freedom Movement*, p. 123.

[52] Iqbal's letter to K.G. Sayyidain in *Letters and Writings of Iqbal*, B.A. Dar ed. (Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1967), p. 56.

[53] Quoted by Luce Claude Maitre, *Introduction to the Thought of Iqbal*, M.A.M. Dar trans. (Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1956), p 20.

[54] Shamloo ed., *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1948), p. 204.

[55] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 159.

[56] Iqbal to R.A. Nicholson, 24 January 1921 in Bashir Ahmad Dar ed., *Letters of Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1978), p. 144.

[57] Abul Ala Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, Khurshid Ahmad tr. (London: Islamic Foundation, 1980), p. 17.

[58] Abul Ala Mawdudi, *Come Let Us Change this World*, Kaukab Siddique comp. & trans. (Karachi: Salma Siddique, 1971), p.73.

[59] Abul Ala Mawdudi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, Khurshid Ahmad trans. & ed.

consciousness which a genuine rationalism would have necessarily required failed to emerge" (p.37). Instead, he prefers reformism, because, for him, this movement was "tradition-bound"(p. 7).

[20] See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972).

[21] His biographer Altāf Husain Hālī wrote that Sir Sayyid, from the very outset, was moved by the belief in the reality of Islam and a passion for the community of Muslims. Altāf Husain Hālī, *Hayat-i-Jawed* (Lahore: Isharat Publishing House, 1965), p. 293.

[22] L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 95.

[23] J.M.S. Baljon Jr., *The Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid* Ahmad Khān (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1949), p. 88.

[24] Cited in Husain B. Tyabji, *Badruddin Tyabji* (Bombay: Thacker & Co., 1951), p. 204.

[25] *The Pioneer*, January 8, 1877. Sir Sayyid is reported to have said that the "feelings of affection and loyalty to her Majesty have been infused into us with our mother's milk." See Shan Muhammad, "The Muslim Dilemma: Some Misunderstandings," *Aligarh Law Society Review*, Vol. 2 (1971): 62.

[26] Sir Sayyid remarked: "When there were many Muslim kingdoms, we did not feel much grief when one of them was destroyed, now that so few are left, we feel the loss of even a small one. If Turkey is conquered that will be a great grief, for she is the last of the great powers left to Islam. We are afraid that we shall become like the Jews a people without a country of their own." Cited in Theodore Morison, "Muhammad an Movements" in *Political India, 1832-1932*, ed., Sir John Cumming (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 95-96.

[27] A. Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 60-61.

[28] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, p. 334.

[29] Shortly after he was awarded the title, Sir Sayyid wrote: "Without flattering the English, I can truly say that the natives of India, high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners, and uprightness, are like a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man." (*Musāfarān i London*, Majlis-i Taraqqī-i Adab, Lahore, 1961, p.184).

[30] Sayyid Razi Wasti, ed., *Memoirs and other Writings of Sayyid Amir Ali* (Lahore: People's Publishing House, 1968), p. 33.

[31] *The Pioneer*, May 10, 1906.

[32] Hirendranath Mukerjee, *India Struggles for Freedom: A History* (Bombay: Kutub, 1948), p. 97.

[33] See Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamāl al Dīn "al–Afghānī"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

[34] Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (London: Oxford University Press 1962), 109.

[35] Sayyid Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, "Islamic Solidarity," in *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, ed. by John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 20.

[36] Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghānī, "Lecture on Teaching and Learning," November 8, 1882, Albert Hall, Calcutta, as reprinted in Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism; Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 107.

Notes and References

[1] Ismā 'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, *Tawḥīd: its Implications for Thought and Life* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute for Islamic Thought, 1982), p. 112.

[2] W. Montgomery Watt, *Islam and the Integration of Society* (Evansston: Northwestern University Press, 1961), p. 204.

[3] Khurshid Ahmad, "The Nature of Islamic Resurgence" in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, John L. Esposito ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 219-220.

[4] Quoted in Richard Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan* (Lahore: Faber and Faber, 1950), p. 21

[5] Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 351.

[6] See Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982).

[7] Deoband continues to thrive with over 3000 students enrolled. The seminary's web page displays a monumental marble mosque with links providing further information in Urdu, Arabic, Hindi, and English. See Dārul 'Ulooom Deoband, India. http://www.darululoom-deoband.com [Online] accessed on January 15, 2006.

[8] According to one estimate, in 1900, there were forty such schools in North India, and in 1967 nearly nine thousand.

[9] Sayyid Mahboob Rizvi, *History of the Dar al-Ulum Deoband*, trans. Murtaz Husain F. Qureshi, 2 vols. (Deoband: Idarah-e-Ihtemam, 1980), 2:242.

[10] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, pp. 154-155.

[11] Zia-ul-Hasan Faruqi, *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1963), p. 68.

[12] A.M. Zaidi, ed., *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought in India*, vol. III, *Parting of the Ways* (New Delhi: S. Chand, 1977), p. 686; See also Tahir Mahmood, *Muslim Personal Law: Role of the the State in the Sub-continent* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1977).

[13] See Abdul Rashid Moten, *Political Science: An Islamic Perspective* (London: McMillan, 1996), pp. 133-34.

[14] Muḥammad Ayūb Qādrī, *Tablighī Jamā'at Kā Tārīkhī Jā'izah* (Karachi: Maktabah Mu'awiyah, 1971), pp. 92-3.

[15] Godfrey Hansen, "Islam in Asia Towards an Islamic Society," *The Economist*, September 4, 1982.

[16] The Wahhābis are the followers of the Salafiyyah movement of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (115-1207AH/1703-1792CE). Ibn 'Abd –al-Wahhāb preached return to the Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and the *Sunnī* legal positions that were worked out in the first three centuries of the Islamic calendar. He revolted against laxity and corruption among the rulers and the Muslim masses. For a comparative view of the contexts of such movements see William R. Roff, "Islamic Movements: One or Many?" in William R. Roff, ed., *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 31-52.

[17] They called the others "Wahhābi." These orientations, Deobandī, Barelvī or Ahl-i Hadīth, would come to define sectarian divisions among Sunni Muslims of South Asian background to the present.

[18] Faruqi, *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*, p. 36.

[19] W.C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 60. Sharabi objects to using "Islamic modernism" to these thinkers because "the critical

conditions in other places. Lastly, it is necessary to mention the role played by the media and the press in influencing pan-Islamic consciousness. Indeed, there was a symbiotic relationship between the growth of pan-Islamic consciousness and the growth of the press. The more Indian Muslims discovered about the fate of their brethren elsewhere in the Islamic world, the more they wished to know. Each Muslim calamity gave birth to the booming of the press and the flourishing of great newspapers.

leadership, in their struggle for Pakistan, believed that the *'ulāmā'* were not capable of giving a correct lead in politics because of their exclusively traditional education and total ignorance of the complexities of modern life. The *'ulāmā'* remained, by and large, hostile to the idea of a Muslim national state led by the Westernized Muslims for their laxity in adopting Islamic code. In the final years of colonial rule, a minority group among the Deobandī *'ulāmā'* formed the Jam'iyyat-i Ulāmā-i Islām to support the Muslim League and the demand for a separate Muslim state. In independent Pakistan after 1947, they became a minor political party with a fairly simplistic call for the primacy of Islām in public life. Like other Pakistani political parties, the JUI has been subject to factional splits coalescing around personalities more than issues, and there were perhaps a half-dozen factions and reorganizations over its fist half century. [69]

Despite the lack of Muslim unity, from the 1920s onwards, Muslim societies achieved their freedom from direct foreign rule. The end of Western rule, however, did not bring an end to transformative western influences in Muslim societies. In many cases their impact is redoubled. The process of meddling in the Muslim world continues. New elites, Bhuttos, Hoveidas, Bourguibas, continue to emerge to manage the new economic and political structures. Most of them are trained in the West, subscribe to Western values of secularism and nationalism, support Western culture, and happy to see it given substantial freedom to flourish in Muslim societies. Indeed, these new elites enjoy the support of the super powers who see in secularism and nationalism the germs that could disrupt the idea that the Muslims of the world constitute one, united *ummah*. Paradoxically, their efforts did little to erode the profound sense of the distinctiveness of being Muslim. On the contrary, more and more Muslims have developed a Pan-Islamic dimension to their consciousness; more and more have engaged imaginatively and emotionally with the fate of Muslims in far away lands. In South Asia this development was given a particular intensity because of the British colonization of Muslim lands and the consequent loss of Muslim power giving rise to the feeling of insecurity among South Asian Muslims. One development that led to Pan-Islamic consciousness was the increased frequency of travel undertaken by Muslims, since at least 1860, to Britain and to Europe to absorb Western learning and modern skills as well as to Cairo and Istanbul to pick up the latest in Muslim ideas.

Equally important in this respect was the increase in the number of Muslims performing *hajj*. While some settled in the Ḥijāz as scholars or traders others returned home with the stories of Muslims and their

threat primarily as an onslaught against Islām as a religious and cultural entity. They were alike as well in an overriding emphasis on encouraging a range of ritual and personal behavioral practices linked to worship, dress, and everyday behaviour. These were deemed central to *Sharī'ah* and essential means to promote Muslim unity.

The Westernizing modernists, like Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, emphasized the acquisition of scientific and technological knowledge and skills as mandatory in Islām. Muslim unity can be attained if they are educated and if they are powerful. It is their failure in the realm of science and technology that has created an image of Islām being uncaring and unjust. Sir Sayyid equated the interests of Indian Muslims with an unquestioning loyalty to the British; Afghānī believed resistance to non-Muslim aggression and reconquest was the duty of Muslims all over the world. Afghānī pioneered the elite-based pan-Islamic movement in the subcontinent. These Westernizing modernists, even if they meant well in their desire to defend Islām, in effect presented a truncated and deformed Islām. In contrast, Iqbāl, Mawdūdī and others called for a return to the original message of Islām, to discover its relevance to the existing milieu and to strive to change the status quo to conform to the tenets and principles of Islām. Their primary concern was to elevate the principle of *tawḥīd*, the oneness of God and the unity of creation. They built models for distinctive polities that challenged the alternative systems such as nationalism, capitalism, and Marxism. They sought modernity in ways that simultaneously asserted the primacy of Islamic values and avoided the dark side of western modernity. The call of the *tajdīd* is for a comprehensive reform along Islamic lines in all aspects of life. Iqbāl called for a "League of Muslim nations," Mawdūdī, in addition, called for a universal Islamic revolution.

Given these efforts, religion, which under the impact of secularism lay dormant for a while, had re-emerged in Muslim politics and society. These movements have succeeded many Muslim states to declare their identity as part of the Muslim *ummah* in their official designation. Yet, the unity of the Muslim world remains elusive. The most noticeable aspect of the South Asian struggle for Muslim unity was the disunity between various Islamic movements as well as factionalism within each organization. The Deobandīs went their separate ways. The Deoband *madrasah* grew into a more modern school, exhibiting sharp differences with other Muslim traditionalists, and even with its own offshoots in other countries. Sir Sayyid was, of course, disowned by Afghānī. Iqbāl and Mawdūdī championed Muslim nationalism. The Muslim political