

to the right path of virtue by providing *Sharia* or *minhaj*. The *Sharias* have been changing to suit the ever changing social structures. Since changes are still occurring and will occur in the future also, God now may be said to continue guidance through the collective conscience of his believers. The Prophetic functioning of keeping the society tied to a moral anchor never stops and is now performed by the civil society through its good intentioned people.

2. A real change of heart is required in the urge of dominance of one civilization over the other. The imperial hubris supported by the belief that a particular religion or civilization has exclusive rights to truth has clogged a real dialogue between the east and the west. Both Islam and the West have to make room for each other, and for all others, to believe that they are in possession of the right path to salvation.
3. The most plausible and workable solution to the problem of value discourse is provided by the philosopher of enlightenment, Immanuel Kant who offers a formal structure which can cope with the diversity of moral values specific to various cultures. Instead of providing a list of values, he shows how value games can be played by providing rules of the game. The rules are neither culture specific nor irrational. They provide enough space for a dialogical and rational interaction to take place between religions and civilizations.

اس وقت علم و آگہی میں آؤ
غرفہ معینی کی روشنی میں آؤ

تجارت کرنا ہونے جو خطی کا
دراغشت سے کہ کینی میں آؤ

طلبہ کے لئے
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موقع

طلبہ خدشاں کیون

خوش خط سہک

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پر نہیں ☆

unless all metaphysics is thrown out of the window by declaring it as antirational. In any case, so long as we are dealing with abstract ideas of value and God, both of them can be a part of a consistent rational system. Neither Islam nor the West is averse to the idea of God. The difference occurs in the role that He plays in the affairs of the world. Here a compromise can only be reached by admitting that talk about God's role in the world belongs to a universe of discourse different from the discourse of science where natural laws govern the world. Scientific propositions have their own rules of validity and adding God's name to a scientific proposition is redundant and a category mistake, i.e. mixing concepts of one category to the concepts of another. That it, in some sense, involves a violation of rules of logic is true. But rules of Aristotelian logic are not the ultimate rules for all types of reasoning.

A scientist can live at peace with his faith, as well as his science, with the understanding that "God plays a role in natural sciences" is a statement that does not belong to the universe of scientific discourse. The West can cope with this multidimensional logic. The situation is more difficult with Islam, but here also it is not the scientific universe of discourse which is at stake because Islamic doctrine does not advocate continuous intervention of God in natural phenomena. Divine interventions are a part of religious history common to Islam and the West. The difficulty arises as a result of making particular societal directives and interventions in the revealed scripture, or otherwise, during the life time of the Prophet, as eternal and universal in nature. Here the Muslim jurists have to develop a new modality to accommodate the qualitative changes that have occurred in the society. It is not possible through the classical concept of *Ijtihad* as Iqbal suggest.

- An alternative theology and methodology is needed to replace the classical, which relies too much on deductive logic. We have to believe that a particular mode of conduct may not be universal in itself, but imbibe within it a universal moral value which is to be guarded, even at the cost of change in a particular pattern of behaviour, if needed.

This alternative theology may require a shift in our understanding of the Prophetic role in society. God has been speaking through Prophets from the very start of human kind and has guided them

The salience of the Western values may be characterized as follows:

1. Values are intrinsic and can be discerned by an application of rational faculty. They have to be obeyed and cherished because they are good for the society as a whole and without them, there will be a chaos. That God commands them and support them are added dimensions and help human beings to transcend themselves from selfish and corporeal pursuits of life and impels them to strive for salvation and bliss. The absence of values from society would be counterproductive and, may even be detrimental to the very existence of human species.
2. The Western value systems, as evolved over a period of time are superior to systems of other civilization and should therefore be the desired objective of all societies. With values like freedom, democracy, and equality and with the states safeguarding equal human rights for all; the West has a moral duty to benefit the human kind with the munificence of western civilization. In carrying out the moral obligation, regimes can be changed, force may be used and the West may coerce and cajole the repressive tyrants of confronting societies to free their people.
3. The code of life is man made and is rooted in human experience and reason. Hundred years of wars of religion has taught the West to abdicate it from political decision making. Human beings can manage the affairs of the state through a social contract or by letting the general will to make decisions. Every individual is sovereign but delegates his sovereignty to elected representatives who manage the affairs of the state on his behalf. Values are common property of religion and reason, but the latter plays a greater role in a proper application of values in the society.

How can these two divergent ways come together and agree on a uniform application of values in their societies? Let us examine the above mentioned points one by one.

1. Is there a possibility of a dialogical reasoning between the two views of the status of values? I think there is a rational space for admitting God to be the guarantor of the universality of values

make their application widely incompatible with each other. Though brevity might create ambiguities, the discordance relevant to our theme may be summarized as follows:-

1. Values in Islam are commands of God and reason can only strive to find out the wisdom enshrined in each value but cannot confer this status to them. Though there is a minority opinion of *mutazilas* which support the view that values are intrinsic and God cannot do otherwise but to confirm their status, yet the stated position of a major part of Islamic doctrine, values ensue from a command from God. It is not only a metaphysical dispute between *ashaira* and *mutazilas*; it has serious implications and effects human actions in a very significant manner. A violation of the command is liable to the wrath of God, not only in the hereafter, but, God being the sovereign of human society, may also be punishable in this world. In some cases, the punishment is also specified or it can be deduced from behaviour patterns of early Islam by converting them into propositional forms. These deductions also carry an equal weight as that of the original command.
2. God wills the values he commanded to reign supreme in the world and it is the duty of all those who contribute to this value order to strive for the realization of this goal. The specific process for this realization is indefinite and has, in the history taken many shapes, depending upon the circumstances and the dispositions of the people involved. Since there is no single Church like structure in Islam the decision making is a function of the civil society, and since there is no authenticated state authority except in case of Iran, the decisions may vary from organizations to organization and would be valid and demand compliance from its adherents.
3. Islam is characterized as a comprehensive code of life both at individual and social levels. Interpreted and understood within a tight system of propositions and deductions it hardly leaves any room for independent judgments and reasoning. The socio-political institutions developed with this modality tend to become archaic than modern, and place unnecessary burden on human mind to find ways to conform to old edicts resulting in no improvement in social or moral conditions of the people.

For any discussion on common values of Islam and the West to be meaningful, it is necessary that it fulfils the following four conditions.

1. Admitting the plurality of the universe of discourse, where value claims of one universe do not exclude the possibility of value claims of another. In so far as value claims are attached to an element of faith, as in case of Islam, one has to understand that by admitting values to be culture specific one is not necessarily renouncing making values relativistic. It is only to provide space for creative forms of negation and an active tolerance of different emotions involved in the exchange of ideas and opinions.
2. Delinking power and knowledge, or at least weaken the linkage by 'spiritual detachment and generosity'. So long as the value programmes are undertaken to dominate or manipulate the other, power would play a decisive role in steamrolling the differences and colonizing the minds of the conquered. The idea of civilizing the world on the part of the West or, Islamizing it on the part of Muslims as a necessary corollary of their beliefs is dissonant and disruptive in nature. It sets off manipulative procedures for gaining controls on knowledge and industry and would generate more conflicts that it resolves.
3. Listing the difference rather than common values and learning to live with them in a pluralistic world. Once the nature of a difference is delineated an attempt to either manage it or resolve it can be found through a dialogic rationalism, because rational disagreement is the path to a good society and makes a good society sustainable.
4. Renouncing rhetoric and admitting the possibility of a dialogic rationalism as an essential requirement for social progress. Dialogic reasoning presupposes that humans are disposed to communicate ideas which are in a sense relative but not necessary relativistic. Dialogic rationalism is a creative mode of activity through which ideas become acceptable to a majority providing the sort of objectivity one requires for common plans of actions.

The list of common values between Islam & the West may be long and impressive yet there are some basic discordant notes between them, which

sceptical of the success of this venture. It is not very difficult to prepare a reasonable list of values common between Islam and the West yet these commonalties are more often than not nominal and have no substantive character. Same words in a similar syntax can be used in a vast number of cases, each having a different meaning. A list of values that may be considered common between different cultures may operate differently in actual practice. In many cases, two persons may be uttering the same sentence yet each having a meaning very different from the other. A list of common values, therefore, serves no purpose at all, neither in the reduction of conflicts nor in entering into a real dialogue with one another. More often than not common value programmes end up in rhetorics from all sides without really creating a common understanding between two contending parties.

Understanding other cultures or civilizations has always been problematic. Quite a major part of it has been manipulative and has been undertaken either to prove the other as deficient or with a purpose to exploit it. Power and knowledge have been intimately connected and imperial powers, which ever they have been, have studied other cultures or religions in order to extend their hold on them or to solidify their power over the conquered nations. This added motivation has compounded the hermeneutical difficulties, which otherwise were also formidable.

Another dimension of the problem of understanding others arises out of the claims to truth as exclusive to a particular culture or an ideology. In case of religion truth claims are also a part of faith and no evidence can possibly be produced which could prove them to be false or wrong. The same is true with evangelical claims and, to a certain extent, of modernity, though the latter is amendable to a rational discourse.

Common value programmes are bound to fail because value concepts acquire meaning from the context in which they are used and though there is a significant area in which commonalties do exist, yet in their application, they are different. Had it not been so, every culture and civilization would look alike because value concepts are vastly common between all of them. For each of these cultures there is a particular universe of discourse and the validity or otherwise of a value is judged within this particular discourse. Picking up a value label common to two cultures would not make the values identical.

☆ جس نے قبل از وقت کسی شی کے حصول کی کوشش کی اسے اس سے محرومی کی سزا دی جائے گی ☆

COMMON VALUES BETWEEN ISLAM AND THE WEST

Manzoor Ahmad

The purpose of this article is to explore the common grounds and to bring them to forefront hoping that the conflicts and tensions that exist today between Islam and the West would be reduced. The terms 'Islam' and the 'West' have been left undefined because any attempt of defining them would lead us to endless controversies. Suffice it to say that Islam is a cluster concept containing ideas and formulations, each different from the other in many significant ways. The core themes are faith, Prophethood, *Sharia* and life hereafter. In the same way, the West also stands for another cluster containing a plethora of ideas, central to which are individualism, democracy and liberalism. Neither the West nor Islam is or has ever been a homogenous socio-religious or socio-political structure. The political power structure in Muslim history and the presence of sects in Islam all taken together constitute as to what Islam is at this moment in time. The same with the West: the occurrence of two world wars and continuous struggle for acquiring power and resources are indicative of inner strife and contradictions. That both Islam and the West have enriched their respective civilizations with knowledge, culture, art and architecture is not denied by either side. With Islam, it is a part of history and with the West, the glory is still continuing.

There is also a sense in which we can speak of the West and Islam representing two world views which are presently, at loggerheads with each other. The question arises as to how this dissension can be lessened. At international political level a few flash points of conflict are mentioned and it is assumed that if these so called 'root causes' are removed the world would become more harmonious. While not denying the importance of these core irritants, it would be too much to expect that once the issues like Palestine and Kashmir are resolved the gulf between Islam and the West would be bridged.

Another popular method proposed for bridging the gap is to look for common values between Islam and the West, bring them to fore, and cooperate with each other in promoting them through joint efforts. I am