



ISLAM: WHAT IT IS

By

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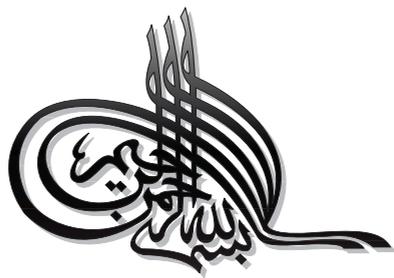


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Foreword

The call to Islam is a noble, lofty mission, indeed a serious responsibility that can only be discharged through the adoption of a wise and sound discourse, founded on unmitigated reason, crystal-clear discommend, full-fledged maturity and unblemished conduct. Such discourse must address people in a way perfectly suited to their reasoning, using the language they most understand, the concepts they can assimilate, and the style likely to elicit their positive response.

Aware of the essential underpinnings of any fruitful call to Islam in modern times, and seeking to honour its obligations toward the dissemination of the Islamic Message through befitting, elegant means that might convey the essence of such message in a comprehensive, elaborate way, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) is pleased to publish this book, prepared by Prof. Hassan Karmi, the illustrious broadcaster, and one of the sturdy pillars of BBC Arabic Section ever since its inception. The author -may Almighty God grant him excellent health and long life- has devoted this fruitful stage of his life to lexicographic work, which made it possible to bring into being such jewels as "Al-Mughni", a two-volume English and Arabic bilingual dictionary, and "Al-Hadi ila Lughati al-Arab", an Arabic language dictionary published in four volumes.

The author boasts a vast, in-depth culture, heightened by a masterly command of English, the language most suited in the current epoch to addressing non-Muslim intellectuals and learners throughout the world with a view to expounding the true facts of Islam and clearly illustrating its tolerant, righteous principles. No doubt that this is a cardinal condition for writing a book on Islam for non-Muslims, using such elegant style.

As it presents this book to readers worldwide, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) wishes to thank the esteemed author for his good cooperation, expressing deep appreciation for his praiseworthy efforts and his entrusting ISESCO with the publication of his valuable book. We hope this book will benefit readers and achieve the goals aspired.

Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri

Director General of ISESCO

Introduction

This is a small book on Islam: what it is. The choice of the title was deliberate, in the sense that the book deals with Islam in its essence to show its roots rather than its branches. The attempt, I think, is unprecedented, and therefore the treatment is hardly dependent on previous books. This is not to draw my long bow, but it is the truth, as the reader will see for himself, except, of course, the Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam, which was mainly my guide, together with the traditions of the Prophet. For the subject of Islam in the West I am indebted to R. W. Southern.

The word "Islam" has been given various interpretations. The current generally accepted interpretation is that Islam means "submission to the will of Allah, the only and unassociated god". Another interpretation, equally valid, is that "Islam" means "holding on" to peace. The justification of this interpretation is that one of the major aims of Islam is to do away with the turbulent tribal system in Arabia and the chaotic state of affairs under the banner of Islam, which calls for unity in everything and for egalitarianism.

Islam has been discussed and written about by various writers: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. Their views were inevitably coloured with the prepossessions and prejudices, and they were hardly impartial. The Christian writers were most prejudiced and ignorant, as I have shown at various junctions of the book. The Qur'an, when translated, was sometimes translated by a Christian priest who naturally distorted the views on certain cardinal beliefs. Rodwell, for instance, translated a Qur'anic verse in a way that would not contradict a principal tenet in Christianity, namely the original sin. He also mistranslated another verse which urges Muslims to

emancipate their slaves. Christian writers described Islam as a warlike religion which spread by the sword, and which called for plunder and forcible conversion. This hostility to Islam continued in all forms throughout the Middle Ages and onwards. Recently, in the United States of America, Paul Harvey, a prominent broadcaster from 1200 radio stations accused Islam, in one of his broadcasts, of being a fraudulent religion. Another broadcaster, Mark Goldsmith, on National Public Radio, told a story that the Prophet Muhammad was once offered coffee by the angel Gabriel, which made him capable of making love to forty women in one night and for forty nights in a row. Currently, even for political and perhaps religious reasons, Muslim countries are branded as supporters of terrorism. For this unfounded charge, those Muslim countries are punished by bombardments, air strikes and economic sanctions. This hostility to Islam must have a psychological reason, and that reason must stem from the fact that Islam is fundamentally different and therefore represents a challenge and a foil to both religions, Christianity and Judaism.

Islam is now charged of fundamentalism, a new mode of attack, and consequently reproached for being uncivilized. Islam is absolutely innocent of this charge. On the contrary it is a religion which has the welfare of all creatures, human and animal, at heart, as may be clearly seen from reading this book.

Islam is distinguished further by being free from myth or fiction, and by being not man-made. Islam does not rely on mythical or fictional explanations but, like science, on demonstration. This is an undeniable fact, proved by the Qur'an itself.

The present chaos in international affairs is the result of blind hurry to make money without regard to consequences and without any thought for humanity as a whole. It was a mad rush, absolutely

free from any constraint and consideration for those trampled underfoot or those who fall by the roadside. The world is split apart into Chosen and Gentile, with millions of people massacred by lethal weapons and people dying of starvation.

One should always bear in mind that Islam is the classical Islam and not popular Islam, and that Islam is not the Muslims. In many cases now, Muslims very often turn against Islam in its essence knowingly and unknowingly, under the influence of a variety of sources, political or otherwise. There is a call for dialogue between Islam on the one hand and Judaism and Christianity on the other. The Qur'an anticipated such dialogue by saying: [**O people of the book, let us rally to a common formula to be binding on both us and you that we shall worship only God alone and associate no one else with Him, nor shall any of us take on others as lords instead of God**] (*Al 'Imran*, 64). The significant condition in this verse is that we shall have no clergy to rule over us instead of the rule of God. Islam has no papacy, no institutionalized religious system like the one in Judaism and in Christianity.

Islam is an egalitarian religion, and all members of an Islamic society are united in equality under the rule of God alone. Even the elected head of an Islamic community or state loses his mandate to rule or reign if he disobeys God; and his subjects should not obey him. This is a major criterion for unity in an Islamic organised society. God cannot be but Just. He commanded that Islamic society should be based on social justice and unity. The universe is a unity and the family, founded by Islam, is a unity. This rule of unity is immanent in creation, and it is so because it is reasonable. Even globalization, the new trend in western civilization, is very divisive and far from being socially just. It is basically un-Islamic. It is inspired by the doctrine of "chosenness" which has split human

beings into sheep and goats, into "chosen" and outcast, and perhaps inspired the drift of the Europeans into the practise of colonialism and slavery. The mastery that money has over the minds of the civilized people is thought to be originally a result of this doctrine.

Ernest Gellner, in his book *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (Routledge, London, 1992), speaks of fundamentalism as a purely modern religious movement as opposed to secularism, and the two are in conflict. Fundamentalism rests on the religious doctrine, and secularism rests on science and technology, both opposed to fundamentalism. Gellner thinks that this opposition is strongest in Islam. This conflict is always an essential aspect of every revolution in the world, be it religious, cultural, intellectual or scientific. It is endemic and ingrained. I remember, in this connection, the Chinese idea that the world was created by two conflicting forces ying and yang, and the Hindu religious creed that there is a balance between two gods, Siva and Vishnu, one is destructive and the other constructive.

The doctrine in any religion is one of the two poles of conflict. The conflict in its intensity or its laxity is dependent upon whether the doctrine is rational, semi-rational or irrational. I believe, to start with, that the Islamic doctrine is rational and, as such, is not in conflict with science. Therefore, I disagree with Gellner who thinks that fundamentalism in Islam is the same as it is in the other two religions, Christianity and Judaism. The doctrine in Islam is rational. It has nothing religious which conflicts with science. It even conceded the possibility of dissidence. It seems to me that it says: if you believe that there is god, that god could not be rationally other than one only God.

I recall, in this connection, a saying by Tertullian, a church father, to the effect that he may believe in something because it is

absurd. The Danish theologian, Soren Kierkegaard, says that the essence of religion is not to persuade its followers of the truth of the doctrine, but a commitment to a position which offends because it is absurd. These two sayings, strange as they are, reflect a mental attitude inherent in the West called ambivalence, exemplified in the belief in two contradictory things, like Cromwell who is said to have held the sword in his right hand and the Bible in his left hand during his campaign against the Irish, in which he killed forty thousand. The West is also known for being schizophrenic.

Ancient peoples used to believe in things that did not exist, in myths and in fables. A notorious example is the ancient Greek religion and the Olympian gods. The ancients believed in the existence of mermaids, sphinxes, gorgons, sirens, fairies, Amalekites, griffins, witches, etc. The West seems to be more interested in its early history of myths and fables and in matters opposed to reason, but in its later history it is prone to be ambivalent. It also tends to be hypocritical and schizophrenic particularly in religious matters.

Karen Armstrong, in her book, *Battle for God* (Harper Collins, London, 2000), distinguishes between two ways of thinking, especially in the sphere of religion: the myths-oriented way and the logos-oriented way. The former was the way of the past peoples who understood the world mostly in terms of myths and fables, and logos way refers to understanding the world through facts and reason. The two ways are antithetical: a religion which is more mythical is less reasonable, while a religion which is less mythical is more reasonable. According to this rule, I think that Islam is more reasonable because it is free from myth.

Secularism or modernism is the enemy of mythos, and the first casualty will be the religion which is more mythical than reasonable. By contrast, secularism is not the enemy of Islam except

in marginal matters. Islam is partly secular. It is a philosophy as well as a religion, and the first religion to think of man as responsible with a reasoning mind.

I would like to add that the cult of Chosenness did not spread in the Christian East, nor in the Far East.

Hasan S. Karmi

Islam - a manifesto

This is a manifesto, a public declaration about Islam: what it is, what it is not and what its philosophy is. I believe that now there is a pressing need for such a manifesto on Islam. Islam has been the only ignored major faith and its Prophet the only one most maligned. It is a very strange phenomenon. Prejudice against Islam has always been coupled with irrationalism, with an apriori, out of hand, conviction that Islam is irrelevant and is not worth knowing much about. The onslaught against Islam is not fair; Islam is sinned against rather than sinning. Ignorance about this faith, before now, is really curious. Islam is not a man-made religion, as is the case with most of other religions. It is the only historical religion, with a historical prophet and a historical holy book. Islam did not arise from a myth or idolatry. It is the only truly monotheistic religion. For a religion to be monotheistic, it must believe in one only God and in no other. This is what Islam urges.

The prejudice against Islam is still increasingly virulent. It has not abated with the advance of learning and the increase of respect for rationality and science. This kind of prejudice seems to be of the sort that dies hard; and minds seem to be closed against curiosity and the desire to find out. In the West, minds seem to be more inclined, in matters of religion, to believe in fable, superstition, myth and hearsay evidence than to believe in facts.

To change this fierce prejudice in a short time by appealing to reason is difficult. Reason in the case of an illusion or a psychosis is ineffective. Perhaps this is not the only illusion or psychosis under which the West is labouring.

Why Islam is hated:

Perhaps Islam is hated because those who hate it find it a challenge to their beliefs. The main challenge lies perhaps in the fact that Islam is unitive and not divisive. They therefore believe that Islam, if allowed full play, will cut the ground from under their feet and restrain them from running amok to play hare and hounds with the world, inflicting, in the rush, wars, devastation and miseries, as has been the case so far with human conduct. Islam calls for a halt and nobody seems to heed such call. Men in general seem to be like a lion which is told not to prey on antelopes in the jungle.

This manifesto is not essentially polemic, nor is it an attack on any religion, nor is it an apology for Islam. Its purpose is to show that facts are stronger than fiction; and it is hoped that the exposition presented in this manifesto will help correct current jaundiced views about Islam and stultify irrational hostility against it.

Islam - a philosophy

Islam, among the three so-called monotheistic religions, has a philosophy of its own. A philosophy, to be true to its name, must have a comprehensive vision, vast enough to cover almost all cases, like a mathematical formula, rather than restricted to isolated cases. This is what the Islamic philosophy is. It covers the whole universe and is not concerned with one nation or race and not attached to a certain place or a certain period of time.

The Islamic philosophy appears to have devoted itself to the formidable task of solving problems that escaped the attention of former reformers in the religious field and correcting certain misconceptions established therein. But the main point is that such philosophy is concerned with:

1. What God is,
2. What the universe is,
3. The relationship of man to the universe,
4. The relationship of man to man,
5. The relationship of man to God.

These all constitute one unity; they are interconnected and mutually interrelated. In Islam, all entities and events are regarded as a manifestation of a basic oneness. The cosmos, for instance, appears to be a web of interconnected parts and events all in the grasp of God's right hand. It is a network of interconnected relations, where these relations interact with one another, and the whole combines into one unity, with order and design.

Mankind is also a network of mutual interactions, but even this, with its phenomenal manifestations of strife, constitutes a unity.

Islam in this respect is unitive, in contradistinction with Judaism or any other religion, which is divisive and exclusive.

God is one, and there is no other god.

The universe is one. In spite of the paradoxes, dichotomies and contradictions, the universe is one, subject to the pervasive principle of unity, with an order which holds the universe together. This order is known in Islam as qada and qadar.

In the welter of worldly contradictions and conflicts, man is commanded by God to steer a middle course. This middle course is illustrated in the Qur'an by the allegory of balance.

Justice is the pivot of human society. Human society is one, and should always be an integral unit, not to be divided on any account. Therefore, a divisive religion is hostile to humanity.

Justice should always be subject to the principle of taqwa in Islam, which, through the pious fear of God, ordains restraint and condemns high-handedness, or taking the law into one's hands.

The universe is a unity and seems to have a centre towards which every thing seems to tend. Some peoples, nevertheless, stray away from the centre as if repelled by a centrifugal force. Muslims, on the other hand, always tend towards the centre. The centre is always shifting; however, the guiding social principle is the Qur'anic command: **[Do always good, and forbid evil.]** (*Al 'Imran*, 110).

What Islam is and what Islam is not

- Islam is not Mohammedanism. By contrast, Judaism is the religion of the Jews, and Christianity is the religion reputed to be founded by Christ.

- Islam is a universal religion meant for all nations without distinction. It has no colour or racial prejudice.
- Islam refutes the idea of "chosenness", and regards all peoples as alike.
- Islam does not regard the Arabs or Muslims as superior or regards the Prophet of Islam as a special kind of prophet, favoured by God.
- Islam has no idea of a "covenant" with God and no idea of a "testament", old or new.
- Islam is not based upon a myth, nor is it an outgrowth of idolatry.
- Islam is not a man-made religion, in the sense that it has been evolved or developed by rabbis or by ecumenical councils.
- Islam, with regard to the conventional idea of revelation, is the only revealed religion.
- Islam is the only truly monotheistic religion, considering that true monotheism is belief in one only God and disbelief in any other god.
- Islam did not develop by stages into monotheism, but was monotheistic from the start.
- Islam does not believe in astrology, divination, sorcery, magic, miracles or miracles worked by the agency of saints. Islam is simple in its creed. God is one, the Holy Book is one. The Holy Book of Islam is a historical document and the Prophet is a historical figure.
- Islam does not consider tradition as a criterion for authenticity. Popular beliefs and traditions handed down from the past are not on par with the revealed word.

- Islam is not an institutionalised religion. It has no papacy, no church and no clergy.
- Islam rejects the idea of original sin, which was conceived by St. Augustine, but denied by Pelagius.
- Islam rejects monasticism for men and women and rejects celibacy.
- Islam had no inquisition, no burning on the stake, no index, and no pious fraud. (sec 2.a)
- Islam was not in conflict with science or learning. Islam was first to establish colleges of learning in the world, especially in Cairo, Morocco and Baghdad.
- Islam was a medium for civilization, but civilization grew outside Judaism and Christianity.
- Islam involves no racism, apartheid, or discrimination on account of belief, colour or race.
- Islam, as set out in its holy book, is meant for the whole world, for the white and black alike, for Arab and non-Arab, and for all mankind.
- Islam has no confessional, no agape, agapemone or agapetae.
- The Holy Book of Islam is not the life story of its Prophet, in the same way as the Gospels are, nor is it the story of a particular people, as the Old Testament is. It is not the life story of Muhammad, nor, is it the story of the Arabs. Muhammad is mentioned only twice by name, and the Arabs as a people are scarcely mentioned.
- Islam had no witches, no witch hunting, no superstition about cats, no Satanism, black magic or black mass.

- Islam is the religion of mercy to all, especially to the poor, the needy, the wayfarer, the handicapped, the sick, the orphan, and the underdog.
- Islam is the religion of mercy to animals, to women and old parents. It asserts that animals have souls as man and women have souls. Women and animals were thought to have no souls.
- Islam condemns slavery, forced labour, exploitation, greed and accumulation of wealth.
- There is no divine right of kings, no infallibility and no aristocracy.
- Islam is the founder of the family in its present form.
- Islam is based on social justice.
- Islam is against "classes" in society
- Islam condemns injustice, oppression, aggression and unprovoked aggression, in the strongest terms.
- Islam prohibits the killing of women, prisoners and children.
- Islam is a religion of "balance" and moderation, with the idea of retribution which involves just punishment and just reward.
- Islam is the classical religion and not the popular one.
- Islam spread over the whole of Arabia in ten years and spread over a vast area of Asia, Africa and Europe in less than a hundred years.
- Islam established a civilization equal if not superior to the Greek and Roman civilizations in less than two centuries, while the Dark Ages in Europe extended over one thousand years.

- Islam has been a religion of learning for men and women, and a supporter of schools, colleges and seats of education. Illiteracy was comparatively rare. No Muslim khalif or ruler is known to have been illiterate, and illiteracy for a Muslim ruler was a shame.
- Islam protected religious and racial minorities against persecution, forced conversion, massacres pogroms, expulsion and the like. There has been no genocide like the one practised now by the Serbs pogroms, Bosnia and Kosovo, and before by the European settlers.
- Islam has no prejudice against employing Jews and Christians in the state to help in administration, professions and universities. The Jews in Spain under the rule of Muslims developed a civilization of their own in security from any molestation. The Norman rule in Sicily was a shining example of peaceful civilized cooperation between Muslims and Christians.
- Islam enjoined Muslims in their conquest not to kill women and children, not to cut down a tree, not to disturb worshippers in their places of worship, not to destroy synagogues or churches.
- Islam is the only religion that lays down rules for the protection of religious minorities and for ensuring freedom of worship for them.
- Islam has no history of massacres on the grounds of religion. When the first Crusaders conquered Jerusalem they massacred the Muslim inhabitants in a blood bath. In contrast when the Muslims re-conquered it later they spared the Christian inhabitants and did not massacre them in return.

- Islam had no such bloody crusades as the crusades against the Albigneses and the Waldensians, and no authorised massacres such as that of Bartholomew's Day, no religious wars like the wars between Protestants and Catholics, no extermination of natives as in America and Australia, and no expulsion of inhabitants as in Spain, Ireland, Palestine and elsewhere. It is true that the Abbasids massacred the heads of the Umayyad dynasty, but not on religious ground.

The onslaught on Islam

The Jews have what they call the "holocaust", but the Muslims have the "onslaught". The word means in essence "a violent attack to destroy" and this is exactly its meaning when applied to the Jewish and Christian onslaught on Islam.

This onslaught started as early as the seventh century, with the rise of Islam. It started in earnest in the eighth century during the reign of Charlemagne in the West and the reign of Haroon Al Rashid in the East. Charlemagne is said to have sent an expedition into Spain to fight the "infidels". His troops were defeated by the Muslims at Roncesvalles, a village in North Spain in 778 A.D. In the east the Byzantine Empire was locked in a series of bloody campaigns with the Muslims until the Byzantine Empire was conquered by the Turks. The Spanish wars of re-conquest in Spain lasted nearly a century, and culminated in the occupation of Grenada in 1492, followed by the expulsion of Muslims. Then came the corsair forays in the Mediterranean, the Balkan Wars, and finally the wars of colonization. In the meantime the Church was active against everything Muslim, relative to both religion and culture.

Of the chief religions of the world, none has been exposed to a venomous constant hostility as Islam. Normally hostility is directed against some movement known to be really nefarious and savage, bent upon destruction, murder and devastation. Islam was not like that, in word or in deed, and therefore the cause of this dread hostility should be sought elsewhere. It should be sought in the hearts of those who are hostile, and it is true to say that Islam is sinned against rather than sinning. Islam seems to be like Bulaiq, a famous Arab horse, which was always a winner and yet it was always

dispraised. It was not the fault of the horse that it was always a winner, but the dispraise was because it was always a winner. Islam has been dispraised and will continue to be dispraised. It has been condemned without trial, and the dogged refusal to give it a fair trial, especially in the Jewish and Christian quarters, can only mean bigotry and blind cussedness, even in the days of enlightenment and supposed supremacy of reason.

When Islam rose early in the 7th century, it rose in an explosion which took the area by surprise and made the peoples around sit up and listen. It was a stunning challenge to all, carrying with it a call to look round and see if everything in life and in belief is right. It was a reasoned negation of all beliefs as being inchoate or erroneous. The belief in one only god was not yet solidly formed, and social relations were not regulated yet. The poor and the needy were given scant thought. The relationship between the ruler and the ruled were still unformulated. Women were degraded and excluded from society, and were deprived of an identity of their own. The family in its present form was then unknown. Those and many other conditions were then ripe for reform. Islam, when it arose, had all those in mind.

But Islam leaders generated for it the hatred of all Christians and Jews in the West. They thought of Islam as an enemy, and not just another religion which could be treated with indifference. They shunned Islam as they would shun an infectious disease. The hatred turned into a will to destroy, to kill without mercy, with venom. Muslim peoples under colonialism were either exploited or trampled upon. Those who refused to submit were made to submit with unmitigated cruelty. A Muslim, the colonialists would say, is different, and he must be set upon. The Jews' fault, in the eyes of the Christians, was twofold. They did not see the Light, and when they saw it they did not believe in it. The Muslims, in the eyes of the Jews and

Christians are worse; they saw the Light, but they refused to believe in it. Therefore, they were regarded as fanatic, obdurate, inflexible, inconvertible, wrong-headed, uncivilized, indomitable, strong-headed etc. This venomous attitude never abated, but only camouflaged. Muslims are attacked by word and deed everywhere in the West. The fault of a Muslim country is magnified ten times, compared to that of the non-Muslim one; Iraq, Libya, Iran and the Sudan are being punished severely for no genuine reason. The Bosnians are being annihilated in Yugoslavia alone, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese are falling victims of murderous attacks. The Sudanese are being attacked from the south and east. Muslims are still in refugee camps. They number about 70% of all refugees in the whole world. By contrast, Israel is regarded as sinless and viewed as the apple of the World's eye.

There was a plan agreed upon, consciously or unconsciously, by the colonists to the effect that the Muslims on the Mediterranean coast should be pushed back to the hinterland. After the expulsion of the Muslims from Spain and Portugal, the Spaniards and the Portuguese thought of pursuing them into their new homelands and attacking

them. The Portuguese had it in their mind at one time to lay siege to the Muslim countries and then invade them. They began their siege in the Gulf, where they built fortresses along the Arabian Coast. The Portuguese seized the Canary Islands from Morocco, which later passed to Spain. The Spaniards occupied the southern strip of the Moroccan Atlantic Coast and part of the Moroccan Mediterranean coast. Tangiers in Morocco was an international zone. Algeria was seized by France, and later turned into a French province. Tunisia was seized by France as well. The Tunisian Mediterranean coast was appropriated for French settlers.

The Mediterranean Coast in Libya was dotted with Italian settlements which had the effect of barring the Libyans from the sea and pushing them in consequence into the interior. The native Libyans were prohibited from entering Tripoli, the main city in Libya.

In Egypt, Alexandria was hardly an Egyptian city. Port Said was subjected to the same fate. And farther eastwards, Palestine was colonised by the Jews, with the result that Muslims were pushed back from the sea into Transjordan as refugees. Lebanon in the north was turned by and large into a Christian dependency under the French mandate, and there was an intention to carve a Christian state therein. Syria in the east was deprived of Alexandretta and thus deprived of access to the sea in the North West. In the settlement after World War I, Turkey was partitioned in such a way as to give Cecilia on the South east coast to Italy, and western coast to Greece. Constantinople was occupied by the Allies. Mustafa Kemal of Turkey was forced to agree to the abolition of the Caliphate, the use of Latin characters in writing instead of Arab ones, and the secularisation of Turkey. The shift to Latin characters was intended to prevent Muslims there from reading the Qur'an. A most sinister measure for the same purpose in Algeria by the French was to propagate a local Algerian dialect to replace Classical Arabia. The Berber language was promoted in both Algeria and Morocco as a rival to the Arabic language in order to drive the Berbers at least away from reading the Qur'an.

This rabid campaign against the Qur'an and Islam was also waged in Indonesia, the Philippines, Nigeria and Somalia, apart from French speaking countries in Africa. In the Sudan, the campaign took a different form. The British cut off the south from the rest of the country, and disallowed the teaching of Arabic and Islam, on the

plea that the south was not Arab like the north. The British allowed thousands of Christian missionaries (12 thousand in 1950) to roam about in the south preaching Christianity. The Sudan was a condominium, ruled by both Britain and Egypt. The result of that proselytising scheme is the armed conflict going on now between south and north that has led to miseries and loss of life on both sides.

More recently, to put the lid on it, Islam has been accused of fundamentalism, and the Muslims are accused of being terrorists. The dating of the birth of this charge coincides with the rise of Israel. But the charge is also music to the ears of the Christian powers, especially the United States, due to the active and dominant Jewish lobby. To add insult to injury, the Arabs and the Muslims in the United States are subjected to a virulent campaign of vilification and false misjudgements. This is not conducted in relation to any crime which can be laid at the door of the Arabs and Muslims, who were humane during their rule in treating religious and racial minorities. This is not the fault of the Arabs and Muslims, but they are now punished for their innocence.

Fundamentalism, as a divergent form of religiosity, originated in the United States early in the 20th century, as a Protestant movement to combat modernism. The main tenets of this religious movement are as follows:

1. The inerrancy of the Bible in all matters, along with its literal and historical truth, is unchallengeable.
2. The virgin birth of Christ is literally true.
3. The resurrection of Christ from the dead is a physical act.
4. The atonement by the death of Christ is literally true.
5. The second coming of Christ is a fact.
6. The Bible, the Old and New Testament, is inspired and therefore true.

7. The story of creation as set out in the book of Genesis is historically and scientifically true.

These tenets obviously raise many historical doubts and questions.

The strange thing in the charge levelled against Islam in the West is that Islam is equated with Protestant Fundamentalism. Therefore Islam is unreasonable, fanatical and a social threat to civilization. This is of course a lie, as is the allegation that it is terrorist. The whole thing is hatred-driven, politically undeserved and therefore evil. Fundamentalism in Islam, if any, is simply adherence to the creed, the moral teachings of Islam and Islamic law. In all this, there are no fables, no myths, no miracles and no legends.

With regard to terrorism, one would like to distinguish between two kinds of terrorism: defensive and offensive. The defensive one should be regarded as lawful, while the offensive one should not. Defence is carried out peacefully, with sympathy and a desire for redress. Offence, like organised crime, should be countered with force. The resistance movement during World War II was legitimate, a kind of freedom fighting. Resisting occupation, aggression, expansionism, colonization, oppression, racism and the like is legitimate. It follows that it is legitimate to fight colonization conducted by colonial powers or conquest, occupation and oppression perpetrated by Israel. Strangely enough, Reagan, the former president of the United States, used to call the Africans in South Africa terrorists. The American government still brand the Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians and Iranians as terrorists, indiscriminately, while they support the Israeli acts of aggression and terrorism. Perhaps this double standard reflects the measures in the law of the jungle prevailing worldwide at the time. Or is this measure partly in compliance with

the rule of the Gospel stipulating that those who are not with us are against us? The other injunction of the Gospel in this respect is that those who have will be given more and those who do not have will have to give some of what they have. The Iraqis are punished for something they do not have, but the Israelis are rewarded by giving them more of what they have (weapons of mass-destruction).

What are the Muslims doing to counter this unjust onslaught? The struggle is unequal, and forces from all sides are joining in the onslaught against Islam, with sophisticated means and sharpened teeth, all motivated by a determined venomous desire to kill. The Muslims watch on, aghast at the ferocity of the attack, wondering why. They feel that this unprovoked aggression is the work of the devil. They have no resort but to seek refuge in their God, in their religion, in their traditions, which they regard as the sole bulwarks for defence. The evil forces are now laying siege to these bulwarks to pull them down. The Muslims are now barricaded behind the walls looking for means of protection and a way out in desperation. They are blamed for barricading themselves and they are blamed for their desperation. Their choice is worse than Hobson's choice, because even if they surrender, the killers will not spare them, and their cries for mercy will fall on deaf ears.

This picture may be deemed too sombre. It may be so, but in fact this is the situation where the Muslims find themselves for no fault of theirs, hemmed in as they are by murderers, thirsting for blood.

But why? The answer seems to be obscure to the Muslims themselves. The lie has been evilly repeated so often that even the Muslims believed it. They believed it because they have been robbed of the ability to refute it. The infrastructure is being shrewdly undermined. The purpose is to reduce the Muslims to automatons, quite apathetic to what is being done to them.

And what is "infrastructure" in this context? It is the basic structure of a society, which comprises its religion, language, literature, history and folklore. This basic structure of a society determines its identity, and the identity of a society distinguishes it from any other society. A society must have identity; otherwise it will be a collection of separate dissociated individuals. A race, tribe, community, people, nation or race is a society with an identity. Without identity, a society has no objectives or aspirations and has no will to fight, and no distinction between friend and foe. For a colonial power to govern a country without trouble in the long run, it has only to undermine its infrastructure. This is exactly what the colonial powers have sedulously and purposely tried to achieve in the countries under their control. The attempt was met with active resistance in Islamic countries, thanks to their identity. This lesson was not lost upon the neo-colonialist powers, and they shifted to more subtle ways so as to exploit Muslim countries wealth, such as oil. The Americans and Israelis, nevertheless, part ways in this matter, with the Americans being very crude, holding to their method of suppression, either the carrot or the gun. The Israelis are teaching them another classical method, namely the destruction of infrastructure, with or without the collaboration of the victim country.

This is the new refined method of neo-colonialism. Muslim countries will have to resist that before it is too late, and must be warned of the peril. The way is to wake those countries up and then reinforce their identities and strengthen their infrastructure. An example of the implementation of this policy of infrastructure destruction is the secularization drive forced upon the Turkish people, with the help of collaborators recruited from many Turkish army generals.

There is another sinister method of drawing Muslims away from their identity, namely making them less enthusiastic about

their religion, language, history and tradition, through a system of education designed to achieve such evil purpose. Those who are used as tools for this scheme are carefully chosen to fit the design. They are normally obtuse, venal, thoughtless and indifferent; and their superiors are unscrupulous puppets, completely ignorant of the job they are appointed to do. The principals of universities, colleges or schools are carefully vetted to suit the purpose, and the whole structure is based upon the intention to destroy the personality, mind, soul and identity of the target people.

The indifference to national identity thus created engenders an indifference to morality, honesty and honour. The youth, for frustration, fall into vice or resort to alcohol or drugs, quite unchecked. There will be no sense of honour and no restraint from stealing, fraud or debauchery. One might say, however, that this is happening in many countries in the world.

However fierce the onslaught against Islam is, nonetheless, it will never dent this religion. It is not easy to convert a Muslim to Judaism, Christianity or any other religion. Missionaries, missionary schools and missionary hospitals, together with various inducements, failed to convert Muslims. There must be something in Islam which makes Muslims immune against conversion. Muslim students at missionary schools or at European or American universities have held on to their religion and nothing could induce them to change their faith or to slacken their hold on Islam. On the contrary, the students develop a closer attachment to their religion and culture and become more ardent in defending their national identity. Nationalist leaders were in many cases graduates of Christian colleges or universities.

There have been attempts by missionaries to weaken the belief in Islam by using certain hostile misconceptions about it, such as the

idea that Muslim nations are backward because of Islam. By this trick they mean to shake belief in Islam or at least to instill doubt in their minds about the truth of Islam. However, this has also failed to achieve its goal.

The charge of backwardness of Muslim countries is not fair in so far as it attributes backwardness to Islam. I agree that Islam has something to do indirectly with this phenomenon in the sense that belief in Islam has the effect of making Muslims inclined to be more conservative and more attached to their heritage. They belong to their country, to their history and to their culture, so much so that they fear that adopting another allegiance will have the effect of cutting the ground from under their feet or cutting their umbilical cord, so to speak. It is difficult to make a Muslim accept a foreign civilization, especially when the creed of such civilization is different from that of Islam. This is not peculiar to Muslims. Jews, Christians and the followers of other faiths practised a similar insularity. The communists in Russia at the beginning of the revolution regarded with aversion everything that came from the West, including science. It was regarded with suspicion. Religious authorities in Europe until the 18th century set their faces against learning in general, especially infidel learning; and people were sometimes reprimanded for seeking knowledge, even mathematics, from a Muslim. The Jews were hostile to the Hellenistic influence for a long time. The Pharisees were singled out in the Gospels by Christ as fanatics for their bigotry and their resistance to Greek civilization.

Another case in point is the Muslim attitude to God, which is different from other attitudes, notably Jewish and Christian. The Muslim attitude to God makes a Muslim less self-reliant and averse to seek wealth in a hell-for-leather fashion. Wealth for a Muslim has not been a first desideratum. The law of inheritance has the effect of

making Muslims less interested in wealth. Struggle in the history of Islam has not been for wealth as is the case in the West; and since wealth is an aspect of modern civilization, Muslims are not in line with this civilization. Hence they are backward.

Muslims are now accused of being fundamentalists, and thus fanatics, and of being terrorists. This is a lie. Muslims have never been fanatics, especially against Jews and Christians. On the contrary, Muslims are enjoined to protect them. The terrorism that Muslims are accused of recently is a fake. Muslims have incessantly been the aggrieved party and the target for onslaught for centuries. They have to defend themselves in some way. They are being despoiled of their land and resources, and to add insult to injury, they are being accused of terrorism if they raise a finger in defence. The double standard used in dealing with Muslim countries is just, but defence against aggression and state terrorism is terrorism itself. It is very curious that only Muslim countries like Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya and the Sudan should be accused of terrorism.

With regard to fundamentalism in its religious sense, all Muslims are fundamentalists. They believe in the oneness of God. They believe that their Holy Book is a revealed, historical and authentic document, and their Prophet is a historical figure. This is fundamentalism in Islam. The essence of this fundamentalism is the belief that there is one and only one God, who is the maintainer of everything in the universe and the supreme judge. Muslims are enjoined not to take the law into their hands, always refer cases to this supreme judge, always defer to Him, think of Him as the final arbiter in all cases and fear His displeasure.

This pious fear of God, called *taqwa*, is unique. The concept does not exist in any other religion. A Muslim is supposed to look over his shoulder and always bear in mind that there is a censor, or

monitor, watching. This serves as a check on all actions and intentions so that one can refrain from evil deeds even at the last moment. Fear of God and His displeasure should always be present in the mind of a Muslim.

To illustrate the concept from modern history, one would evoke the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. The President of the United States then did not have any idea of the pious fear of God (*taqwa*) when he ordered the dropping of the atomic bombs. He would otherwise have hesitated to give the order and would have shaken in fear of God, the Supreme Judge.

Another example is the granting of a promise to the Jews by Balfour to establish a Jewish home in Palestine. Balfour, who was a devout Christian, had nothing of the fear of God (*taqwa*) in his heart when he offered that promissory letter to Rothschild. He had only venom and callous indifference to the face of the indigenous population.

One might multiply such examples from the history of the colonialist West, together with instances of extermination and forced enslavement, physical and spiritual, to show that such inhumane actions would have been averted if those responsible had had only a spark of *taqwa* or the vaunted claim that Christianity was the religion of love and mercy.

This bond of *taqwa* between God and man, like the umbilical cord, brings man closer to God and makes him always fearful lest his actions may be unfair and irresponsible. In a world of anarchy, lawlessness and brutality, such as ours, this pious fear of God will serve as a balance, a norm, a measure and a standard against which all actions and intentions would be judged as to whether the Supreme God would approve of them or not.

This is exactly the spirit of Islam, and this religion, if taken as a way of life, would rid the world of its awful miseries. Fundamentalism in Islam is the solution if it hinges on the belief that man is not to take the law into his hands, not to forget *taqwa*, to remember to submit to the will of the Supreme Judge and to seek his pleasure. This is what is meant by the word Islam. Islam is the regulator.

Islam and the West

Islam today appears to be counter to the West and the West appears to be counter to Islam. Both cases are historically correct, but for different reasons. For one thing, the crusades and Zionism originated in the West and not in the East. The West appears to be distinct from any other part of the world, due primarily to its being Judeo-Christian. Christianity as it was actually preached by Jesus is not known, and its various versions that were given by the apostles and evangelists have continued to be at variance with one another, but through these versions ran two streams, or trends; Pauline and Petrine, after St. Paul and St. Peter. The Pauline trend was generally anti-Jewish. The Paulines are thought to have been responsible for the construction put on the word "testament" in the New Testament. More specifically, the covenant with the Jews was revoked and the Jews are no longer the chosen people. The chosen people are now the Christians instead. During the crusades in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, the Christians justified their wars against the Muslims and Jews by claiming that they were the chosen people.

The bishops of Rome, the Popes, accepted this Paulines construction and the Western or Catholic Church acted on it notwithstanding that the church in Rome was Petrine in origin and was responsible for putting the Old Testament and New Testament together, apparently under the Jewish Petrine influence, into one holy book, the Bible.

The Popes started to wage campaigns against heretics, non-conformists, Jews and Muslims. Apparently the church or churches in the East showed less concern about those problems, especially after the Great Schism (1054), and less enthusiasm about the new

Pauline idea of "chosenness". This may explain that the religious landscape was less turbulent and less divisive.

On the contrary, the division in the West between Christians and others, the Gentiles, including the Jews, was sharp and bloody. Such division was in the name of religion, but the infection spread to the secular side. The whole West was plunged into violence, conflict, intolerance and tension. This state of affairs persisted until the second schism, now between the Catholics and Protestants, with bloody consequences. Protestantism is thought to be more Petrine than Pauline, and probably less inimical to the Jews, although the Calvinists regarded the Protestants as the new chosen people. As revolutionists, the Protestants thought that their God was not so meek as Christ but so strong as the God of Israel, and this idea was expressed in a declaration by the Founding Fathers.

Throughout all this turmoil one doctrine stood out as dominant: that mankind is sharply divided between "chosen" and "gentile". The gentiles continued to be the Jews and Muslims, but the Jews in Protestant countries felt relieved. They gradually established themselves in Russia, Germany, Britain, North Europe and North America after World War I. The Nazi rule persecuted the Jews together with others. But this was a blessing, for it drew sympathy from the Christians and gave impetus to the Jewish migration to Palestine, where the British, under the mandate the League of Nations, were establishing a national home for the Jews as promised by the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The Jews, with the help of the West, got their state in 1948, for which they had worked for nearly two centuries. In the meantime they established centres of power in the Protestant countries, where they were no longer regarded as "dirty Jews". On the contrary, the Jews turned round and started to revive their claim to "chosenness", and in consequence, the Jews got so arrogant as to dare openly to look down even upon the Christians.

The cult of chosenness has considerably shaped the history of Europe and the world for many centuries. The geographical discoveries, starting from the fifteenth century, opened an outlet for the exercise of such cult. The newly discovered territories encouraged emigration from Europe to the Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia. The immigrants to these parts of the world behaved as colonizers and conquerors. They were imbued with the spirit of chosenness and with the idea that the conquered peoples in those regions were gentiles. Slavery was one of the results of colonization. The resources of those regions were plundered, and the local peoples were impoverished, leading to the division of mankind into poor and rich, strong and weak. Power was concentrated in the hands of the chosen leaving the gentiles helpless. This new power is twofold: military and financial. The military power was imperialistic, and the wealth and power were combined in the hands of a small number of nations, especially after World War I, and the rest went under. Self-interest and lust for power, with a cut-throat competition for profit, turned the greedy nations into instruments for plunder and enslavement. The world was split into master and slave, into robbers and victims, into rich and poor and into superiors and inferiors. The superiors were again the "chosen" people and the underdogs were the "gentiles". History repeats itself.

Now, in the twentieth century, the world is ruled by systems inspired by the old doctrine of "chosenness". Even the United Nations is infected with the disease. The permanent members are the "chosen" members. There is a fierce competition among the super powers as to which one is more "chosen"; that is more tyrannical through wealth might or both. The nuclear powers have the upper hand; the nations which possess greater stock piles of lethal weapons are predominant and meet the description of "chosenness"; they are thus more capable to destroy humanity. This is not the end of the

story; the worst is yet to come. But one thing is significant: Israel is emerging as a super-power and a "chosen" power.

If one surveys what is currently taking place on the international arena, one will find that the situation is a replica of the situation when the Hebrews conquered Palestine. The same drama is enacted now by Israel, but the victims are the Arabs this time round.

Chosenness presupposes the existence of a counterpart, and entails favouritism, partiality on the part of God. God, according to this doctrine, has likes and dislikes. The doctrine also presupposes double standard, and in consequence leads to anarchy, and encourages everyone to take the law into their hands. Therefore, so many individuals or societies can get away with it. International law and resolutions by the United Nations will go by the board. The only criterion to go by now is "chosenness", as illustrated by the discrimination exercised in the implementation of international law or the United Nations resolutions on the Middle East and in the world as a whole. Those who are "chosen" or "semi-chosen", like the Israelis, go scot-free, but the others who are "gentiles" like the Iraqis, Iranians, Libyans and Sudanese, get it hot. They are all Muslims. History repeats itself.

Take the market economy, for instance. This is based upon gain or profit for both the seller and buyer. Each one tries to maximise his profit or gain, like the usurer, or like the Merchant of Venice. This lust for gain was something alien to the Christians before the 17th century. Christianity prohibits money lending and the church taught that no Christian should be a merchant. To the Pilgrim forefathers in America, profit was considered as a doctrine of the devil. The Jews were money lenders and merchants all the time. Gain, after the 16th century, came gradually to be regarded as a mark of distinction, like wealth. Wealth and military power joined hands to

become the essentials for superiority or, in other words, for "chosenness". The market economy of today is inspired by the spirit of "chosenness".

The spirit of "chosenness" is a spirit of hatred rather than love; it breeds arrogance and contempt for the others, the "gentiles". It is a spirit of cruelty, war and enmity. It will continue to disturb the world, unless the course that the world is taking is reversed. Otherwise, everything will be thrown into chaos, and results in ruin.

Who are the "gentiles"? They are those who are not Judeo-Christians. They are the victims of "chosenness." They deserve to be annihilated or held in bondage. Their property can be seized with impunity and their wealth can be plundered with equanimity. They are the Amalekites, the Canaanites, the Moors, the Red Indians, the Aztecs, the Turks, the Australian Aborigines, the Maoris as well as Muslims everywhere, in Algeria, Palestine, Bosnia and Kosovo. The Christian powers which played into the hand of the Jews and helped them to create a state for them in Palestine, turning a fiction, a fable into a fact, were motivated by the Jewish doctrine of "chosenness". Before that, the Moors in Spain met the fate of expulsion and the despoilment of their land. The Algerians were persecuted and were in danger of losing their language and nationality. Muslims in Bosnia were about to be liquidated, and now it is the turn of the Muslims in Kosovo. Muslims in the Philippines were constantly despoiled of their property, like Muslims in Palestine, and were all the time pushed back until they ended up cornered in an Island in the South.

Muslims in the Middle East are accused unjustly of being "fundamentalists"- fanatics- and of being terrorists. The Jews in Israel or even in the world are fundamentalists to the core and also terrorists. However, the Judeo-Christians do not see the difference, because they are blinded by the spirit of "chosenness".

The Americans waged a war against Iraq, ostensibly because it occupied Kuwait, an Arab country. Israel is still occupying parts of Lebanon, parts of Syria and parts of Arab Palestine. This occupation is approved of and financed by the United States. Iraq has been severely punished for the allegation of possessing weapons of mass destruction. Israel has been in possession of the very same weapons, with the help of the Americans and the Judeo-Christians in Europe, but nothing has been done about that. There must be a reason, and the reason is that Iraq is "gentile" and Israel is "chosen".

The doctrine of chosenness is divisive and racist. It is exclusive and unjust. It breeds arrogance, hatred and defiance. It presupposes the existence of a superior race, which has the right to enslave the inferior races to achieve this superiority. The chosen people must have superior capability, either through wealth, deadly weapons, or both. Now, the world is in the grip of a ferocious competition for nuclear or mass destruction weapons. It is also in the throes of a struggle for wealth in the market economy. This is the devil-take-the-hindmost competition. The weaker and poorer nations will have to go under. The law of the jungle is reigning supreme. History repeats itself.

This doctrine, divisive as it is, classifies nations or races into superior and inferior categories, into weaker and stronger, into poorer and richer, into friendly and unfriendly, and above all, into chosen and gentile. The weaker, the poorer, and the gentile are despised and regarded, like the Lilliputians, as fit only to be trampled on. They must try to feed themselves and defend themselves as best as they can, and should expect no mercy from the chosen peoples.

The idea of neutrality or non-alignment is ridiculed by the chosen peoples, and looked upon as a waste of time. Nations have to be friendly, and in actual fact, subservient to their chosen superior, or

run the risk of being trampled underfoot. In the Old Testament, all nations are to be regarded as gentiles if they do not succumb. But as gentiles, they must expect the worst. It is stated in the New Testament that a nation "which is not with us is against us". There is no middle course. It is like Hobson's choice. History repeats itself.

Strangely enough, this aggressive and exclusive attitude has a counterpart, fear. The two things that man dreads in life are fear and hunger. Hunger may be appeased, but not fear. Fear arises from a feeling that everything around is hostile. But this fear also arises in one if one is aggressive, and the more he is aggressive, the more he is afraid. It is like someone who hates everyone else. He thinks that he is hated by everyone else, and hence he is always on the alert. He has only himself to rely upon, and he always fears for his life. This phobia takes hold of those who have no confidence in God, because God can be bound by a contract or covenant.

The idea that God is ineffectual induces man vaguely to believe that God does not exist, and that he must fend for himself, alone. Jean-Paul Sartre describes this feeling in the following terms:

"He finds it extremely embarrassing to think that God does not exist, for there disappears with him the possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven. Everything is permitted if God does not exist, and man is, in consequence, forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon. We are left alone".

The covenanter is afraid of anything unknown. The covenanter makes it his business to discover this unknown thing and conquer it, because it poses a threat to him. He may conquer it, or do away with it. Thus he is both a constructor and destroyer at the same time.

A case in point is geographical discoveries. Such discoveries were made under a feeling of fear: fear from the unknown. Man

discovered mysterious lands inhabited by mysterious peoples. The lands must be seized, and the peoples must be subjugated or done away with. This was what actually happened. The loss counterbalances the gain.

Likewise, nature harbours many secrets. They constitute a threat. They must be known to be controlled. But these mysteries are endless, and so is the struggle, the worry or the rush. Man seems to be doomed to live in travail. He builds and destroys in his hurry to rid himself of fear.

The atom was discovered, and its constituents such as the electron, neutron, proton, positron, etc. were also discovered. What then? What followed was a scenario of gloom, chaos, uncertainty and nothingness. Man was left with nothing but the nuclear weapons which threaten mankind with extinction. So why is the rush?

There are benefits and there are perils. The balance is zero. What about man-made diseases, the extinction of species of birds, animals or fish, the trouble with the ozone layer of earth's atmosphere, the deforestation of vast areas on the globe, the encroachment of the desert on arable lands, widespread pollution, social disintegration, poverty, unemployment, the cutthroat competition in the present market economy with the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer nations and concentrating poverty in more and more nations, the spread of crime, prostitution, drug addiction, corruption, the scarcity of drinking water, etc.? Who is responsible for all these evils? Of course the civilized nations are responsible, especially the "chosen" ones, not the Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians or Muslims. It seems that everyone is impelled willy-nilly towards their own destruction. Is man doomed? Is it true that civilization carries within it the germs of its own destruction?

There remains another evil side-effect of "chosenness." It is the split personality of the "chosen", schizophrenia. It is well known

now that the West alone is schizophrenic, double-faced. This could be explained along the falling lines.

Believing in something unbelievable causes tension in one's soul. This tension is peculiar to the West alone, probably because of the conflict between faith and reason, which means that faith in the West is contrary to reason. The tension rising from this conflict is resolved in the majority of cases in a trauma, a split in one's personality or in schizophrenia. "The West is known to be schizophrenic. Double talk, double-standard, duplicity, hypocrisy, pious fraud, ambivalence, double-face are all characteristic of the West exclusively. This is very significant, especially if we take account of Watergate, Iran-gate, and Libya-gate in this regard.

We may look upon "chosenness" from yet a different angle: "chosenness" may have arisen from man's need to protect himself, and his desire to have a guarantee to ensure this protection. According to the Old Testament, the Jews satisfied the need by "chosenness" and got the guarantee through a contract (the Covenant) with their god. This, however, deepened their fear, and gave them no sense of security. They relied upon themselves, and had a feeling that God was not to be trusted, for they were able to bind Him. He was ineffectual. But self-reliance breeds fear, and fear breeds self-reliance - a vicious circle. They had to fend for themselves as best as they could. Self-reliance may lead to resorting to chicanery, dissent and fraud on a national scale.

The main point is that man in this situation will never feel secure. The Israelis are running after security. They want to be reassured. But they are suspicious, nervous and jittery all the time. The Palestinians, though weak and disarmed, constitute a threat. The Syrians are a threat. The Iranians are a threat. The Pakistanis are a threat. The Chinese are a threat. Even the North Koreans, thousands

of miles away, represent a threat. By the same token, even the moon poses a threat. The security that the Israelis seek cannot possibly be given to them. In fact the security they seek will be a source of insecurity. Such was the case with "chosenness" and with the covenant. It is a vicious circle.

Now an Israeli in his state of fear must have an enemy. This enemy is the Palestinians in particular and the Arabs in general. But this security is a figment of fancy because it exists only in the Israeli's mind. He is the enemy of himself, and such is the dilemma.

Before leaving the topic of bifurcation in Western behaviour, one or two side issues may not be out of place in this context, namely the rise of capitalism and the demise of intellectualism. As regards capitalism, the motive, even on a national scale, is a keen desire on the part of the individual to maintain life. But there lurks in this desire an urge to protect oneself against poverty or need. Therefore it is a fear of some sort which impelled individuals late in the Middle Ages to seek gain for gain itself. The period was congenial for the birth of this urge. Individuals as well as groups felt insecure about their present and future. But a cure was not far to seek; the Jews, the chosen people, gave the lead, and the wave rolled on. Therefore the rise of money, power, and even capitalism may be traced to Jewish influence. On this basis the market economy grew, and one can understand who was behind all this. Marx described the Jews as "capitalists". Capitalism has been the cause of misery to millions in the West as well as in the colonies. And so is the case of the market economy, with one difference: misery is global.

Now intellectualism is on the wane, if not already defunct. This is one of the many victims of capitalism. Intellectualism is an outgrowth of the age of reason and Enlightenment of the 18th century, especially in Europe. Its essential doctrine is that reason is the

measure, and as such it is implicitly antithetical to capitalism. The greater majority of intellectuals were leftists, and that is enough to make them a target of capitalists' attacks. They were destroyed. The stage is now clear for the gadgeteers.

After all this survey, Islam seems to be irrelevant to the whole discussion. In reality, however, it is not so. To start with, Islam is not divisive, unlike Judaism and Christianity. There is no room for "chosenness" in Islam. Islam does not believe that power of whatever source should be monopolised by man alone; for man is by nature inclined to go astray, and that is the reason for the enactment of laws in a society. In Islam, hegemony, on the basis of wealth or power, is disapproved of. Hegemony on the basis of wealth rests on robbery, and hegemony on the basis of power is tyranny.

In Islam, everything is subject to unity. The universe is a unity and human society is a unity. The interrelatedness of the universe is matched by the interrelatedness in society. The poor and rich are correlated in the sense that the rich have an obligation to fulfil towards the poor, and the poor have the right to demand help from the rich. This assistance is not charity as much as it is a duty. This amounts to saying that the state has a duty to maintain the poor, the underprivileged, the needy, the handicapped and the sick. This is the welfare society in Islam.

The objection to this system may be that it encourages disinclination to make money, but money-making was not one of the major and most impelling desire of man. Not until the doctrine of "chosenness" came into play was man gradually seized with the frenzy to make money, and in consequence, developed indifference towards the underdog. Even worldly philosophers began to speculate as to whether the poor are eligible for social security or not. Even welfare state has been dismantled and, for lack of intellectuals to

defend it, the field has been left clear for the wolves to play their dirty game. Again, the same drama began to be enacted: the haves against the have-nots, or the chosen against the gentiles. The underlying, unconscious spur is that the "chosen" refuse to accept the idea that they constitute with the gentiles an integral part of one and the same social unit. They insist on being superior and separate. They are the masters, and that is all there is to it. The fellow feeling is dead. The divisive spirit, rooted in their religion, is reigning supreme again.

Basically, Islam is dead against superiority or hegemony on the grounds of wealth or power. The system of inheritance in Islam is against any aspirer to be the ruler or master in the community, on the grounds of wealth. In the whole history of Islam, there have been no tycoons, croesuses or gnomes. There were no bankers like the Fuggers or the Rothschilds. The idea of a world bank was unknown.

The World Bank is a money lender. But it is more than that. It is a power, with a rope, a stranglehold. As such, it is immoral. It is an instrument of subjugation, in the last analysis. It represents usury. The profit that it gets from money lending is not its own. The world outside it has a share in it just as the poor have a share in the wealth of the rich, according to Islam. The World Bank should render that share by providing assistance to poor countries and/or lending loans to those countries without profit. This can be achieved through the *Zakat* system in Islam, applied internationally.

The objection to this arises mainly from the stipulation, originally religious, that it is unfair and compromises enterprise, which would make the whole world poor. But why should the world be rich and why should wealth be in fewer hands? The reply may be that those who are few are the only enterprising part of the community and they deserve to be rich. Islam does not quarrel with that. It only says that the rich have an obligation to meet towards the poor, and this duty can be fulfilled through the *Zakat* system.

One subject remains to be considered, namely, why is Islam shunned in the West? In the West, they know a lot about Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism; and about the Veda, Zend Avesta, Mahabharata, Upanishad, but they know very little about Islam. They rather do not want to know. Instead, they show deliberate and venomous hostility to Islam, most undeservedly, and its Prophet is maligned at every turn. The Qur'an, the Holy Book, is dismissed as a hodgepodge of incoherent rhapsody. When one thinks of that, it strikes one as something odd hodgepodge that Islam was a major factor in promoting learning and creating a civilization worthy of note, at a time when Christendom was plunged in darkness. Europe owes a heavy debt to the Muslims in Spain and elsewhere as well as to their Arabic language.

In the West, they appear to prefer matters which are mythical, fanciful, legendary, superstitious or even absurd, to matters that are concrete and crystal clear. They love the stories of the Olympian gods, because they are not true. Tertullian, a church father, used to say about belief in Christianity that he believed in it because it was absurd. The "leap of faith" of Kierkegaard is of the same sort. In Catholicism, a Christian is taught to believe in order to understand. Belief here is not the belief that results from reasoning, but the implicit acceptance of the truth as enunciated by religion. This truth is always presented in a mythical form to be understood, as in the case of the birth of Christ and the Athanasian creed. Myth had a big role in the popular folklore in the West. Perhaps man, by nature, likes it that way, and does not take kindly to cases presented in a matter-of-fact way, which makes them dry and unconvincing. For instance, Islam, when presented to the West, looks too factual and devoid of any mythical lubrication or embellishment. It is perhaps for this reason that it is disrelished.

The same is true of the Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam. The Qur'an is not a story book, unlike the Bible. One may say that the Zionists were able to convince the West of the validity of their case because the case itself is mythical. The Arab case, on the other hand, was true; and that is why it has been increasingly losing ground. There is yet another side to the case: a "chosen" people, by virtue of being "chosen", claims a kind of divine right to dispose of the life, property and destiny of a gentile people, high-handedly. The Palestinians are "gentiles". A crime perpetrated by the "chosen" is pardonable if it is against the "gentile". The Israelis in this respect are the "chosen" side.

Having said all that, the question why the West -Christian, Jewish and Judeo-Christian- is prejudiced against Islam leaves various issues unanswered. It is true that there have been many suggestions to answer the question, but to my mind they remain inconclusive.

Calling somebody an "upstart" implies that he is presumptuous, claiming for himself a rank which he does not deserve. He is a commoner claiming to be of a noble descent. Not everybody can claim to be a scientist, a doctor, a saint or a prophet without credentials. But a man descending from a tribe known to have a prestigious title to nobility or sainthood may lay claim to such qualities. This was the case with the people of Israel with regard to prophethood. As a "chosen" people, they claim to have a monopoly for producing prophets, or even to have semi-prophets. This is the reason why the Jews refused to recognize Jesus as a prophet when he or his disciples claimed that he was not a Jewish prophet. He was described as a heretic, an upstart.

When the Christians claimed to be the new "chosen" people, the old and new "chosen" peoples denounced the Prophet Muhammad

as a heretic, a pretender and an impostor. He was denounced by Jews as well as by Christians, and his denunciation by the Christians was worse. He was the most maligned prophet. He was even regarded as a piece of dirt, a bogey and a gentile, together with any one who identifies himself with such a person or his religion. Hence, prejudice against Islam in the West is based upon a delusion. And this is why it is deep-rooted. It is psychological and, therefore, it is morbid. It points markedly to the belief that the West in matters of religion tends to credit affection more than fact, and this has been in operation throughout history, unfortunately. The Soviet Union was regarded as the "focus of evil", Iraq, Syria, Libya and the Sudan are regarded as the focus of terrorism, simply because they are not Jewish or Christian countries, or even Abyssinian Gentiles.

Arguing with a Jew or Christian about such delusions would be a waste of lime. Their minds are made up. But what is really strange is that the Jews and the Christians who lived in close contact with Muslims and Islam seem to have known very little about Islam and the Prophet. They could not have learned so many misconceptions and so many misrepresentations about Islam, and conceived a wrong and horrid picture of the Prophet. Therefore one would be inclined to think that the campaign of vilification, especially against the Prophet, must have been prompted by venom. But why the venom? Is it because Islam was a foil to Christianity and hence a threat? This looks to be very likely. It is prejudice founded on self-deception. Hence it is a psychosis, a delusion which is not easy to eradicate. This prejudice is chronic, and is now more virulently active than ever before. Islam remains the most unheeded major religion, and Muhammad remains the most maligned prophet. Islam has been under attack, without let-up, and the Prophet has been given all sorts of derogatory names, such as pretender, impostor, charlatan, magician, lecher, beast, epileptic, demon, Mahound, schismatic,

heretic, false prophet, wicked, crafty, apostle, etc. etc. The whole West did not have a single good word to say about the Prophet. He was condemned blindly, and without trial. The church insisted on all authors and writers to add the word "impostor" after his name.

Islam fared no better. Islam was not to be regarded as a religion in its own right. It was branded by the Christians as heresy, a great apostate, idolatry, break-away form of Christianity, religion of vermin, religion of the sword, faint version of Christianity, religion of fanatics, mere imitation of Christianity, a cult that was an enemy of civilization, etc... .

Bibliothèque Orientale d'Herbelot (1697) contains the following entry under "Mohamet", quoted by Karen Armstrong:

"This is the famous impostor Mohamet, author and founder of a heresy which has taken on the name of religion."

Islam was regarded as an imposture. In a book by Prideau, "Mohamet the true nature of imposture", there is the following statement about the Prophet (as quoted by Karen Armstrong):

"For the first part of his life he had a wicked and licentious course, much delighting in rapine, plunder and bloodshed, according to the usage of the Arabs, who mostly followed this kind of life being almost continually in arms, one tribe against another, to plunder and take from each other as much as they could."

"His two predominant passions were ambition and lust, the course he took to gain empire abundantly shows the former, and the multitude of women he had to do with proves the latter."

The same charges were repeated by Simon Ockley in 1708. In 1741, Voltaire wrote that the prophet was "an example of all the charlatans who enslaved their people to religion by means of

trickery and lies". Even as late as 1810, Chateaubriand wrote that the Holy Book of Islam "*was neither a principle for civilization nor a mandate that can elevate a character.*"

Such judgements on Islam and the Prophet spring mainly from the cult of "chosenness" which is a source of prejudice and fantasy, coupled with crass ignorance. The Europeans who are Judeo-Christians (and they don't know it) see the straw in the eye of the gentile and do not see the stick in their own eyes. Their religious hatred of women because of the dubious doctrine of the original sin, their emphasis on celibacy and monasticism, their witch hunt, their belief in sorcery and black magic and their familiarity with mountebanks and quack doctors, together with many other distorting delusions have moulded the European thinking and the Judeo-Christian character, in a most virulent way, stamping it with indifference to the woes of the gentiles, unreasoned prejudice, hypocrisy, arrogance, aggressiveness, and love of power. These diseased qualities have been till now the blight of humanity, so much so that one may be induced to think that they will by and by become ruinous.

Each of the accusations that the West levels against Islam is in fact a characteristic of the West itself. Western writers accuse the Prophet of being ambitious and a lover of women. With regard to ambition, it is not wrong to be ambitious as long as ambitions are fair and lawful, but what about the Western empires which have been built by force and on the shoulders of enslaved peoples? The Prophet's love of women, if it is love, is not lust. Christian writers, before the 20th century had a phobia of talking about any relationship with women. It was indecent, and smelled of lechery and concupiscence. In practice, however, the case has been different, even in high religious circles. This is religious hypocrisy. But in the Qur'an polygamy is not ordained, and getting married to more than one

wife is hedged round with restrictions. But if these restrictions are met, man, by marrying another wife legally, becomes immune from promiscuity. An American lady writer, Brigid Brophy, wrote that the solution for the present chaos in marital relations is to legalize polygamy. If this happens, Christians will be doing what Muslims do. They now divorce, like Muslims. And the civil marriage in the office of the marriage registrar is an Islamic practice.

There is a big difference in marriage between Islam and Christianity. Marriage is a civil contract of partnership entered into outside the mosque. It can be dissolved at will by either party. In Christianity marriage is entered into at a church and is indissoluble by divorce. It has a religious nature. This proved to be unworkable, and the religious character was abandoned, then and the Islamic system of civil marriage and divorce was adopted.

In Christianity there is also a link between marriage and the original sin. Marriage remained frowned upon by Christians for many centuries. Women were not to be praised for their charm in songs or poetry. The Troubadours inspired in Spain and South of France by Arabic romantic poetry broke down the barriers, and soon minstrels, good men and lyric poets swept over Europe from the 11th century to the 13th century, paving the way for romantic poetry in Europe late in the 18th century. Romantic poetry in Arabic literature goes back to the dawn of the present world era, and Europe is indebted for it to the Troubadours.

Again, the question of marriage to more than one wife is a social question, not necessarily linked religion. In Christianity and Judaism, marriage is a religious function, with sanctity. This sanctity has been under pressure from the beginning of the Christian era, and perhaps the first crisis of libido versus credo was represented by the adventure of Heloise and Abelard in the 12th century. The crisis was

long-lived, causing a psychological tension which was frequently relieved by wreaking the spleen long-lived, imaginary adversaries. When the Christians criticise the Prophet of being licentious, they do so with the religious consideration at the back of their minds, along with a feeling of frustration. It is like Tertullian inveighing against concupiscence.

Let us now turn to the Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam. As Islam and its Prophet are unique, so is the Qur'an. But what does this uniqueness consist of? Well, it consists of its being the only authentic, historical scripture. It is not man-made, based on tradition or hearsay evidence. There are no myths, fables, miracles, stories, fictions or superstitions. The creed of unity is the most striking element in the Qur'an. The idea of social justice permeates every Chapter of the Book. Its insistence upon peaceful coexistence and compromise is unmistakable. The style is of course unique, the discussion of problems, religious or secular, is more philosophical and discursive than just mere talk. Its appeal to logic and demonstration is typical. It urges understanding before belief and not the other way round.

Now, those who can judge the merits or demerits of the Qur'an are those who studied it impartially in its original Arabic texts, or the Western translators who transferred its meanings into their native languages. I chose for this purpose the translation of the Qur'an by a Christian theologian, the Rev. J. M. Rodwell. His opinion can be seen along the following lines, as stated in his preface to the first edition of the translation in 1909.

Rodwell begins by trying to separate the chaff from the grain or the original ideas from the borrowed ones in the Qur'an. The first assumption by a Christian or Jewish theologian is that the Qur'an was borrowed from the Old or New Testament. Consider his statement:

"The sources whence Muhammad derived the materials of his Koran are over and above the more poetical parts, which are his own creation, the legends of his time and country, Jewish traditions based upon the Talmud, or perverted to suit his own purpose and the floating Christian traditions of Arabia and South Syria. At a late period of his career no one would venture to doubt the divine origin of the entire book. But at the commencement the case was different. The people of Mecca spoke of it as the work of a poet, as a collection of antiquated or fabulous legends, or as palpable sorcery. They accused him of having confederates, and even specified foreigners who had been his coadjutors. Such were Salman the Persian, to whom he may have owed the description of Heaven and Hell, which are analogous to those of the Zendavesta, and the Christian monk Sergius, or Baheira as the Muhammadans term him. From the latter, and perhaps from other Christians, especially slaves naturalized in Mecca, Muhammad obtained access to the teaching of the Apochryphal Gospels and to many popular traditions of which those Gospels are the concrete expression. His wife Khadijah, as well as her cousin, Waraqa, a reputed convert to Christianity and Muhammad's intimate friend, are said to have been well acquainted with the doctrines and sacred books of both Jews and Christians. And not only were several Arab tribes in the neighbourhood of Mecca converts to the Christian faith, but on two occasions Muhammad had travelled with his uncle Abu Talib, as far as Bosdra, where he must have had opportunities of learning the general outlines of oriental Christian doctrine, and perhaps of witnessing the ceremonial of their worship."

Now, obviously Rodwell has obviously attempted to show, without any tangible proof, that Islam is either a Christian or Jewish

heresy. The attempt has failed for obvious reasons; Christianity was not yet solidly formed and the Talmud was written by Rabbis, and would not be believed by Muhammad.

The Reverend then continues:

"It has been supposed that Muhammad derived many of his notions about Christianity from Gnosticism, and that it is to numerous gnostic sects to which the Koran alludes when it reproaches the Christians with having "split up their religion into parties". But for Muhammad to have confounded Gnosticism with Christianity itself, its prevalence in Arabia must have been far more universal than we have any reason to believe it really was. In fact, we have no historical authority for supposing the doctrines of those heretics were taught or professed in Arabia at all. It is nevertheless possible that the gnostic doctrine concerning the crucifixion was adopted by Muhammad as likely to reconcile the Jews to Islam, as a religion embracing both Judaism and Christianity, if they might believe that Jesus had not been put to death, and thus find the stumbling block of the atonement removed from their path. The Jews would in this case have been called upon to believe in Jesus as being what the Koran represents him, a holy preacher, like the patriarch Enoch or the prophet Elijah, who had been miraculously taken from the earth."

Then the Reverend asserts that *"it is quite clear that Muhammad borrowed in several points from the doctrines of the Ebionites, Essenes and Sabides."* And he goes on to give other sources such as the Talmud from which the prophet is supposed to have drawn his material in the Qur'an. The writer starts by assuming implicitly that the Prophet must have known Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic and other languages to have been able to understand his borrowings. His

other presupposition is that the Old and New Testament, written by ordinary men, constitute the major source of inspiration for Muhammad.

In one of his remarks about the Prophet, the Reverend says:

"And, whatever Muhammad may himself profess in the Koran as to his ignorance even of reading and writing, and however strongly modern Muhammadans may insist upon the same point - an assertion by the way contradicted by many good authors - there can be no doubt that to assimilate and work up his materials, to fashion them into elaborate suras, to fit them for public recital, must have been a work requiring much time, study and meditation, and presumes a far greater degree of general culture than any orthodox Muslim will be disposed to admit."

In this, the Reverend made a significant concession, but it fell short of conceding originality to the Prophet. He further says:

"The evidence rather shows that in all he did and wrote, Muhammad was actuated by a sincere desire to deliver his countrymen from the grossness of its debasing idolatries. That he was urged on by an intense desire to proclaim that great truth of the Unity of the Godhead. The more insight we obtain from undoubted historical sources into the actual character of Muhammad the less reason do we find to justify the strong vituperative language poured out upon his head by Maracci, Prideaux and others."

On the Qur'an he says: *"It must be acknowledged too that the Koran deserves the highest praise for its conception of the divine nature."* But in a note, appended to the Preface, he says: *"A line of argument to be adopted by a Christian missionary in dealing with a Muhammadan should be not to attack Islam as a mass of errors, but to show that it contains fragments of undisputed truth, that it is based on Christianity and Judaism, partially understood."*

Here is where the Reverend blundered. Islam is not in any way based upon Judaism or Christianity. It is totally different, and there is nothing in the narratives of the scriptures of both religions that would seem to be fit for borrowing and incorporating into the body of the Qur'an. It should be noted that the basic mission of the Qur'an is as follows:

- 1- to show where things have gone wrong;
- 2- to show how the error can be corrected;
- 3- to lay down rules for a course along a straight path, sirat mustaqim;
- 4- to urge Muslims to commit themselves to this path, and never go astray.

This commitment is Islam. This system, with the philosophy behind it, could not have been contemplated by Judaism, Christianity or, for that matter, any other religion in the area then and before. What distinguishes Islam is that it is truly monotheistic and truly original. The stories in the Qur'an about Adam and paradise, Noah and the Flood, Jonah and the Fish, the Exodus as well as Jesus are true in so far as they were believed to be true by the people of the time. Islam does not believe in myths, miracles, legends, fictional stories or romances, especially with reference to religion.

This is a major difference in favour of Islam. There are others, equally major, which should distinguish Islam as the only authentic civilized religion when put to the real test. The greatest wonder is that the so-called civilized nations ignore this henotheism and prefer to accredit what is mythical and dubious. Islam is the only monotheistic religion, Judaism is a monolatry and Christianity is trinitarian. Other religions are either polytheistic or pagan. If monotheism is the highest stage in the evolution of religion, then Islam is more advanced than any other religion.

Islam is authentic in the sense that its Prophet is a historical figure and its Holy Book, the Qur'an, is a historical document. Other religions do not have this historicity. There are now doubts about the historicity of Moses and Christ. The books of the Old Testament are not historical, nor are the books of the New Testament. The Jews consider the Talmud, though written by the rabbis, as a more credible source. The gospels are not historical nor are they synoptic.

Islam is a universal religion, meant for all mankind. The Old Testament, however, is for the Jews and about the Jews. The Gospels are about Jesus.

The Islamic creed is very simple, and is not peculiar to one particular nation, as the Jewish creed is, or peculiar to one single person, as the Christian creed is.

The idea of unity in Islam is unique, by virtue of which Islam is unitive. The doctrine of chosenness in both religions is discriminatory. The whole Western civilization, in its genesis, is indebted to this doctrine. The geographical discoveries of launched in the 16th century opened a new alien world of gentiles and provided a vast field for the exercise of chosenness. The new discovered countries and peoples had to be exploited to the utmost and their resources had to be plundered. The natives had to be enslaved and prevented from developing their capacities. They were condemned to be ignorant and to live segregated as foul swine. The role assigned to them was that of a second class citizen.

Meanwhile, in Europe, as a result of these discoveries, the Europeans were girding up their loins to provide the conquerors with instruments so as to tighten up their grip on the colonies, to enable them to deplete the resources of the gentiles. The impulse to subjugate was motivated by the urge to invent and industrialize. This is the origin of the industrial revolution in the 18th century. Morally,

that revolution is reprehensible. The advances in science that followed were first tainted with the same infection. The need to tighten the grip on the gentiles entailed dwarfing the potentialities of the natives and blocking every path towards improvements. This was a crime.

The sharp division of mankind into Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians, inherent in Judaism and Christianity, was still active with vengeance in the 20th century, practiced by the "chosen" powers in many fields. Take self-determination, for instance. The Muslims in Palestine are denied self-determination, while the Jews, who in actual fact had nothing to do at all with Palestine, were granted self-determination. The Muslims in the Philippines were despoiled of their land, driven into a corner, and denied self-determination. Cyprus was originally a Turkish Island but eventually the Greek Cypriots, who were originally immigrants, obtained self-determination. The Muslims in Georgia and the Caucasus, fought for independence for so many years, but they got nothing for the suffering they endured. Similarly, the Bosnians and the Kosovan Muslims are denied self-determination after so many years of struggle. It will be remembered that Kosovo in Serbia is almost totally Muslim and is ethnically almost totally Albanian, yet the Serbs insist on its remaining under their rule. If the Kosovans refuse, they will be expelled from their land, they will have their property confiscated or they will be "cleansed" out. Muslims were massacred in Montenegro in 1711 because they refused to be converted to Christianity; Bosnians Muslims were systematically liquidated by Mikailwitch early during the Second World War; Bosnians were recently "cleansed" out by the Serbs. The genocide was exercised against the Muslims because they were Muslims, gentiles and Lilliputians. East Timor was given independence from Indonesia but not the Muslims in the Philippines. Frederick Barbarossa (123-90) is said to have systematically killed all the Muslims in Sicily.

The Israelis in Palestine, with the connivance of the West, and the Serbs are taking a leaf out of the same book, the book of "chosenness". The Literary Digest dictionary states, under "Armenia": "*Between 1894 and 1915 the Turks massacred most of their Armenians subjects because they were Christians*"; this is of course a lie. But what is dead true is that the Muslims massacred in Montenegro, in the Caucasus, in Palestine, in Bosnia, in Kosovo and anywhere else were and are massacred because of their religious identity. Islam and Muslims do not deserve this.

Islam and Muslims have a case against the West. In trying this case, logic and truth should be set aside because they are not the criteria for judging the case. The refractory point in the psychology of a "chosen" is the stumbling block, unaffected by logic, facts or any sense of justice. The case will lose at any rate. The defence should base the plea on something other than justice, in the same way as when a weak nation has a case in the Security Council against a super power. A typical example is when for instance Libya, Iraq or Iran has a case against the United States.

Well, then, what is to be done? It looks as if the weak nations, the gentiles, can only have the carrot or the gun, slavery in either case. This is the norm in the world of the 20th century. The Muslims have to decide whether to succumb or resist. Islam tells them not to succumb to injustice, and this is the true fundamentalism. Muslims are fundamentalists only because they resist injustice and this drives them into conflict with the West. Chosenness breeds injustice and when Muslim fundamentalists fight injustice they really fight "chosenness", and indirectly fight the West. The source of "chosenness", enshrined in Judaism and Christianity, is the classification of humanity into sheep and goats, into superiors and inferiors, into elects and outcasts, into Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians, and into Jews and non-Jews. There can't be any justice in this classification.

Fundamentalism in Islam is not terrorism; far from it. Nor is it fanaticism. When the West accuses Muslims of being fanatics and terrorists, it is only trying to cover up. Nay, the whole history of Western civilization has been a panorama of wars, bloodshed, enslavement, plunder, extermination, injustice, domination, and chosenness. Even logic and science has been coerced into subservience to this inhumane attitude. To be tied to the principle of justice is a curb on human waywardness. This has not been the case throughout the history of Western civilization. And if one dares to say that Islam in this respect is antithetical to the West, there will immediately be a violent storm of denials. The storm will be like the storm raised by Jews all over the world if one dares to deny any claim by the Jews relating, for instance, to the holocaust or the number of Jews killed in the German Nazi concentration camps. The Jews, like the Christians, are supposed to say the truth, and contradicting them is an invitation to trouble. This preposterous attitude is the order of the day. Any documentary proof of any claim by Muslims to the virtue of justice, for instance, is met with derision and scorn. A corollary of this is that a falsehood may be the truth and that the truth may be a falsehood. This is what is actually happening in the world now. The Jews in Palestine are the lawful owners and the Palestinian original owners are intruders. Such overt breach of justice can happen only in the West. It is an integral part of Western civilization.

Justice in Islam is fundamental and constitutes one of the pillars of this religion. It springs from the principle of unity, which is basic in Islam. Human society, for instance, is a unity; its sections are interrelated, like a corporate body. This conception of human society is far in advance of any other in any religion, at any time. The welfare state was a purely Muslim idea. The idea is a negation of injustice which, even now, could be regarded as the hallmark of Western society, based as it is on "chosenness", apartheid and discrimination.

Islam, as ordained in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Tradition, is unitive rather than divisive.

This is only one example where justice is the norm. There are others based on the same principle, especially in international relations, where justice merges with non-aggression. "Chosenness" is inevitably aggressive and consequently unjust. Aggression takes many forms, especially those invented and practised by the West. Those include expulsion, extermination, enslavement as well as the suppression of any endeavour to improve. These crimes were perpetrated callously against the helpless gentiles, under the aegis of the most-glorified civilization.

Two more things should be added to further emphasise the contrast between what Islam enjoins and what "chosenness" dictates. The first, stated in the Qur'an as the general principle of morals, is that every Muslim ought to do what is good and to refrain from what is evil. This principle alone negates injustice and aggression. But, if you are a "chosen", injustice and aggression are permissible. The proof is that "chosenness" has been responsible for so many wars of aggression with so much savagery and bloodshed till now.

The second is the view that mankind, though composed of various tribes and peoples, should learn to live in peace and mutual recognition. The view is given in a verse of the Qur'an. It explicitly negates the doctrine of "chosenness", but stresses the idea of peaceful coexistence as a *modus vivendi*.

These two Islamic injunctions are intended to deal with a global social problem, namely "chosenness". This problem seems to have been neglected by sociologists and philosophers of all ages in the West, perhaps for religious considerations. "Chosenness", nevertheless, is undeniably an important factor in the formation of one's character. Man in the West does not work to live; he works to live and compete to be rich. As an urge to competition, it creates

problems, one of which is an increase in the number of the poor. To deal with this increase requires measures to remedy the situation, but these measures will create their own problems, and such problems will create new problems, and so on indefinitely. It looks as if there is nothing stable except perhaps "chosenness".

The rule of peaceful consistence referred to above is inadmissible in the West, because it implies equality, and equality is anathema to the West. A gentile should not aspire to be a chosen. If he does, he will be suppressed. This is the case with Pakistan, Iraq and Iran, especially in trying to be strong to defend themselves. They should not have the right to defend themselves because they are gentiles. Defending themselves is an aggression. The Kosovan Muslims in Yugoslavia, who are trying to live in peace, independent of the Serb oppressors, are regarded as rebels and should be quelled by eviction or massacre, as the Jews did to the Palestinian Muslims and Arabs. What prompts the Serbs to do what they did in Bosnia and what they are doing in Kosovo is simply the doctrine of "chosenness".

One may justifiably think that the doctrine of "chosenness" may be responsible for more than that in many areas. It may be generally responsible for the global destruction of human life, plants and animals as well as the widespread pollution everywhere, in the air, water and the environment. Lynn White finds a rationale for environmental destruction in the Christian view of mankind as separate from the rest of nature (Social Problems, p. 423, published by Little Brown and Company, 1980). This is very significant. It stresses the element of separateness in the two religions: Judaism and Christianity, and this is exactly what is meant by statement that the two religions are divisive, in contrast with Islam which is unitive, as explained in many junctions of this book. The result of it all is, as Perrucci and Pilisut put it, is that the present culture in the West is a death culture (Social Problems p.5).

The attitude of Islam towards nature, including plants, animals and the environment, is that of solicitude. Islam forbids the destruction of animals or plants. Animals have souls, like human beings. Water, plants and energy should be publicly owned, and should be preserved. In the Qur'an those who compromise these natural resources are condemned. The principle in Islam is cultivation rather than ruination or destruction.

The test of a system as to whether it is beneficial or detrimental lies in the amount of attention it pays to the means which ensure contentment to individuals as well as society and to the degree of harmony between the two. More specifically, the individual should feel that he is an integral part of the community and the community should feel that individuals are integral parts thereof, in the sense that the destiny of the individual is tied up with that of the community. The Prophet, in one of his Sayings, encapsulates this idea as follows: Muslims are bound together in a compact and interrelated structure. This means that the Islamic community constitutes a unity, and not, as in the Western society, a binary, dichotomous and disconnected entity. It is interrelated because it is interdependent, and Muslims are pulled together towards a focal point, as if by a centripetal force. The human society as a whole with its peoples and races is similarly interrelated and interdependent, with no discrimination on the basis of colour or race, all united in the sight of God, the only God. In contrast to this unitive view of Islam, Judaism and Christianity stress the sharp division of human society into "chosen" and "gentile". Here is an example of this inhuman attitude. The Book of Education, in current use in Israel, states the following exhortation:

"And at the roof of this religious obligation (to keep a Gentile slave) is the fact that the Jewish people are the best of the human species, created to know their Creator and worship him, and worthy of having slaves to serve them."

This Jewish spirit inspires all what the Jews do to the Palestinian Arabs: oppressing them, despoiling them of their lands, expelling them and even killing them. How could the civilized world connive at such a savagery? How could the United States have the heart to lend support to a regime of this sort?

Western culture is based fundamentally on conflict. In the Western society everyone is against everyone else. This is the trend in everything. Even in science, this divisiveness is basic. Nature is seen as composed of "building blocks", with separate entities, unrelated to one another and not as a single unity in which every element is complementary and interdependent. The conflict in the Western idea of nature and society gives rise to strife between the "building blocks" and the ethnic or religious groups. The doctrine of the "chosenness" will compound the strife, because the doctrine was anterior to the compartmentalised view of nature.

The Western culture of death breeds hatred among nations - hatred to death. It is a sort of pervasive venom not only against men, but also against animals, plants, water and air. This is apparent in the destructive wars, devastation of nature and dissolution of society. To save man from this destructive tendency, a radical change in attitude is essential. The compartmentalization of nature and society should be abandoned, in favour of a new scientific philosophy and the dismantling of the doctrine of "chosenness". The doctrine of unity in Islam may be the remedy.

The West, for no rhyme or reason, holds a negative attitude towards Islam and Muslims. One may feel inclined to think that the source of such grudge is religious. Islam, as is well-known, states that Jesus Christ was killed by the Jews, as the Jews claim in the Talmud; it also states that Jesus Christ was crucified by the Romans. This denial balks the Jews of their major aim, namely to punish Jesus Christ by death for his apostasy, as a Jew, from Judaism and to cut across the roots of Christianity by rejecting the doctrine of

rejecting the Original Sin, together with the doctrine of Atonement and the claim that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer or Saviour. Recall that, the doctrine of the Original Sin was framed by St. Original of Hippo. However, it was denied by Palegius, and Anatole France described it as a childish idea.

It will be remembered that the theory advanced here is that the feeling in man of being left alone without support is the genesis of self-reliance, which in turn is the source of fear which generates aggression. This view may not have been accepted by writers with regard to fear in Judaism and Christianity, perhaps to avoid linking up this kind of fear with the doctrine of "chosenness".

There is, however, a well-known book on the subject of fear in Judaism and Christianity, entitled "Christianity and Fear" by Oscar Pfister, a pastor in Zurich. The sub-title of the book is: "A Study in History, Psychology and Hygiene of Religion". In this book the author attempts "*a historical study of Judeo-Christian religion*", which is "*bound to reveal a large number of neurotic aberrations in the emotional and doctrinal spheres, and numerous distortions in the religion and practical ethics taught by Jesus Christ. Many readers, including myself, have expressed grief at the monstrous volume of anti-Christianity discoverable in the history of Christianity. The history of Christianity which ought to unite men in competing in the realization of the love of Jesus in every walk of life, in fact revealed innumerable instances of savage and uncharitable disputes about dogmas, sacraments and ecclesiastical powers. It shows how numerous heretics were tortured and killed, allegedly in the name of Jesus; how hundreds and thousands of witches were burnt to death by men who thought themselves to be God's champions and how murderous wars were waged with hate and savagery about the 'eucharist'*".

These questions and many others posed by the author need answering; and that is the task he took upon himself to perform. He

provides an analysis of the character of every founder of Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Calvinism, showing how each was affected by fear, fear neurosis and fear compulsion. In this entire endeavour he assumes that the Bible is a historical document, an assumption which is challenged by Biblical criticism, which has gone so far as to cast doubt on the historicity of Moses and Christ.

In his analysis of the characters of the religious leaders, he begins with Moses, the putative founder of Judaism. The new religion, the author says, can be expressed by the formula: "Israel is the people of Jahveh, the god of Israel. Jahveh is, above all things, a god of war, helping his elect people. Moses was not a monotheist. He believed in other gods besides Jahveh, and monotheism in its normal usage always denotes the belief that there is one god and one god only. Jahveh's love of Israel does not exclude the existence of sinister and cruel traits. He is sometimes described as the "Supreme Demon". At one time, Jahveh turned his furious wrath against the worshippers of the golden calf and, through the mouth of Moses, commands the Levites to slay them, *"every man his brother and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour, so that about three thousand were killed."* The author quotes Freud's statement that Jahveh was *"the savage, cruel and warlike national god of Moses"*. The author then goes on to speak about the harsh god of Deuteronomy, and later he quotes the following commandment from Deuteronomy: *"And thou shall consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall not deliver them; thine eye shall have no pity upon them."*

But the author turns apologetic, and believes that *"God's wrath is no more than the converse of His holy love"*. He says that *"despite His strictness, He is just."* Then he sets out his theory of fear - fear of God and fear of previous sins.

While talking about Jesus Christ, he begins by saying that *"a growing number of the Lord's sayings as begins as recorded in the Bible have been challenged as spurious"*, and *"many of the most*

important texts, formerly keystones in the historical development of dogma and even in the formation of the churches and denomination, are vigorously disputed by modern scholars. He quotes Albert Schweizer as saying, *“The Jesus of Nazareth, who came into the world as the Messiah, taught the moral nature of the Kingdom of God, founded the kingdom of heaven upon earth, and died to sanctify his work, never existed.”* He also quotes Rudolf Butnan as saying: *“In my view it is virtually impossible today to know anything about the life and personality of Jesus.”*

Nevertheless, the author relies upon tradition, and thinks that such destructive sayings, maybe invalidated tomorrow. He regards Jesus as different from Moses, and says that *“if we study the conflict of Jesus with one part of the Mosaic Law, we easily find that it took place solely but also uncompromisingly when his own merciful and ministering love conflicted with the rigorous harshness of the Old Testament Law.”*

Jesus, according to the author, was compelled to claim an authority superior to that of Moses. He felt within himself a divine mission to serve humans as a helper, deliverer, saviour and redeemer, as well as to execute a far greater work than that laid upon Moses. People then required a leader and he felt himself divinely called to assume the leadership. By adopting this attitude, the author says, Jesus was able to overcome the fear and compulsion neuroses of Judaism. It is the love of God and man, not as a doctrine but as an experience, a form of life, and an urge sending him on his mission.

Then the author contrasts the harsh God of Israel with Jesus Christ, the embodiment of love and mercy. Fear is caused by punishment of sinners and by the terrifying picture of hell, where *“their (the sinners’) worms dieth not and the fire is not quenched”*. This view about sinners and their terrifying punishment in hell arises from the consideration in Christianity that man, though he is the child of God, is evil by nature.

Subsequently, Oscar Pfister speaks about St. Paul who is reputed to be the founder of Christianity, the enemy of the Jews and the enemy of women. But, according to the author, one of the main worries that exercised Paul's mind was fear - fear from divine wrath, from sin, from the carnal nature of man - and how to get rid of it or alleviate it. Paul thinks that Christianity is the religion of love and consequently of overcoming fear. He believed that sinfulness was the face of mankind. He also believed that the human body was sinful flesh.

Later leaders of Christianity, such as Luther and Calvin, were also affected by the same sort of fear. The Jews had a fear peculiar to their religion in which God is the antithesis of Christ, who is assumed to be the God of mercy and love.

This talk about fear in Judaism and Christianity implies an idea of divisiveness, in spite of the concept in Christianity that God is the father and we are all His children. The struggle against fear, real or imaginary, in both Judaism and Christianity, has bred the notion that a Jew or Christian has an enemy of some sort and that this enemy, actual or fictitious, must be sought out and overcome. Therefore, a Jew and Christian must be ready with money or power to overcome the enemy. The whole history of Judaism and Christianity is characterised by this aggressive spirit. Even today, the world is always divided into warring camps, as it was in the days of the "Chosen" and "Gentiles", the days of "Christians" against infidels, heretics and schismatics, and Catholics against Protestants, in bloody long religious wars. Now the division is between Socialism and Capitalism, between the north and south, between the Chosen and Gentiles, between the Judeo-Christians, represented by the United States and Israel, and the rest of the world. The United States has decided to build a strategic net against missile attacks. This is because of fear, fear of an enemy.

Islam - its philosophy

Islam was born at a time when, in Arabia and in the surrounding areas, religious belief was mostly unformed, and suffered from lack of uniformity or uncertainty. Religious belief was multifarious, ranging from paganism, idolatry, hero worship, worship of man-god, to semi monotheism. Pure monotheism was still unknown.

In Arabia, the situation of religious belief was part and parcel of the general situation in the whole surrounding area. Paganism was well-entrenched, and almost every tribe had its own idol. At the social level, the tribes were engaged in constant warfare, which spread murder, destruction, deportation as well as seizing women and carrying them off into captivity. Judaism and Christianity, together with Persian and Indian beliefs, were marginal and in conflict with one another.

The whole religious and social situation was in turmoil. People of various races and creeds were fully engrossed in religious and social strife, and perhaps there was a dire need for something fortuitous to happen to ameliorate such hardship.

At that juncture, Islam was born. Apparently, the birth of Islam was, by a divine dispensation, a response to that dire need. As such, it shouldered the task of improving the situation, by trying to think of a religion that would solve the conflict in belief and deliver a social order that would bring harmony for all.

This is the nucleus of the Islamic mission. It is a tough task, but it is well worth doing, and the Prophet of Islam was determined to do it. It is fair for anybody appraising Islam to bear this in mind, and to be careful not to be sloppy in his appraisal; for the subject requires very serious thought.

The pivot of the whole system is unity. God is one. The universe is one and mankind is one, just as this God of Islam is one, its Prophet is one, and its Holy Book is one. Even things which are thought to be opposites or dichotomous in pairs are one. Night and day, life and death, good and evil, and many other pairs of dichotomies are, in relation to God and in reality, the same. For instance, life and death can interchange in the same way as life can grow out of dead matter, and death can happen to living matter. The same applies to dark and light, night and day, sleep and awakening, etc.

Moreover, Islam had to combat the dualistic and divisive tendencies around. Some of those tendencies were normal, such as the tendency in man to feel that a world of spirits exists apart from the world of matter, or that life exists side by side with death. But the dualistic belief is fraught with danger. It is this attitude that divides man against man. This discrimination, which has pervaded human history for thousands of years, is responsible for the splits in almost every walk of life. If you deem yourself to belong to the chosen people, you can take the law into your hands and do whatever you like, including crimes, without turning a hair. Nay, you feel that you are doing the right thing, even if you kill a gentile or exterminate a gentile people, as the Israelites did against the Amalekites, the Canaanites, Edumians and the Ammonites, or as the European Christians did against the Red Indians, the Aztecs, the Aborigines or the Maories. The gentiles have been persecuted, massacred, expelled or dispossessed of their property with impunity, and with no voice raised in protest. In recent history, this barbaric onslaught is exemplified glaringly by what the Jews have been doing to the Arabs of Palestine under the nose of the civilized nations and with the full knowledge of the so-called Security Council of the so-called United Nations.

This is what Islam has been trying to guard against. But this is not all. This Islamic cyclic view of things is pervasive, and what underlies it is the assumption that man knows what is apparent by ignores the underling invisible facts or the occult reality. Man knows, or may know, the phenomenal world, but the noumenal world is hidden from him. These two worlds are really one. Man, in his search for truth, is groping in the dark, labouring, in fact, under illusion, hoping to see the light bursting forth on him at the end of the never ending tunnel.

One of the main dichotomies is that of good and evil. What is good? What is evil? People ascribe evil to Satan, and good to God, thus placing Satan on par with God. This is anathema to Islam. They are the same. What is good for you may be evil for another. Shakespeare says for instance: "*There is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so.*" God alone determines what is good and what is evil; and man must abide by this determination.

The dilemma of good and evil, when one attempts to resolve it, is similar to the dilemma faced by the philosophers about the presence of evil in the world, who said that God wanted to remove evil but He could not, or He could remove it, but He did not want. It is also similar to the dilemma of Descartes about mind and body.

The rule of "balance" in Islam and that of "retribution" are related to this dilemma. The norm is the middle course, when the beam of the balance is level, and the tongue of the balance points to the centre of the scale.

The norms are decided by God, and not by man. They are just and binding. Any disregard of these norms is wrong, and is either aggression or injustice, both of which are condemned in the Qur'an in the strongest terms.

The problem of other pairs of opposites which Islam addressed is that of rich and poor. Islam makes society responsible for helping the poor, the needy, the cripple, the disabled, the handicapped, the blind and the wayfarer, if they can not fend for themselves. It is laid down as a duty that the rich should cede a share of their wealth for those disadvantaged human beings. This proportionate share should be exacted by law, and paid into the public treasury. This payment by the rich is called *Zakat*, an obligatory rate (about one fortieth) on one's property set apart as God's due, and religiously dispensed to the poor. This is part of the social justice, or social security in Islam. The practice was maintained throughout, with periods of intermission, especially during the early centuries of the Islamic State. Al-Walid ben Abdul-Malik, an Omayyad Caliph, used to appoint guides to the blind and servants to the cripple and the handicapped. There were always shelters and houses for the accommodation of wayfarers, and soup-houses for the hungry. Religious endowments are originally instituted for the help of the poor and the needy. If one wants to label Islam, one would hit the bull's eye by calling it "the religion of social justice".

But all this needs a radical change in society. Islam was born in the middle of a society that was marked by chaos in everything. It was a society of dissensions, tribal wars, tribal feuds, superstitions and promiscuity; it was sunk in idolatry, with so many shamans, witch-doctors and religious charlatans. The society was bursting at the seams and was an easy prey for freebooters. It was especially a prey for the Abyssinians, Persians and Byzantines, who easily carved chunks of the Peninsula for themselves. The task for Islam, under these circumstances, was to regenerate society, by ensuring the reorientation of its course. The remedy consisted in creating a new infrastructure, a new loyalty, and a sense of nationalism.

The tribe had to be replaced by the family. The founding of the family is an exclusively Islamic innovation. Loyalty shifted from the tribe to the family. Then the creation of a feeling of nationhood was the next step, with the idea that the Arabs should have an identity of their own, quite distinct from the Abyssinians, Persians and Byzantines, not only in terms of nationality, but also in terms of religion. The tribal system was destroyed and the Arab national identity was established. The Arabs became one nation, with a distinct identity. They were thus able to free themselves from foreign rule to rise as one block seeking a place in the sun. Hence, the Arab empire, Islamic religion and Arab-Islamic civilization gained ground.

Social justice, to be firmly established, had to be based upon a solid foundation. This new solid foundation is the principle of *taqwa*, pious fear of God. This is, in common parlance, somehow similar to self-restraint on pious grounds, or giving the benefit of the doubt conscientiously. It especially amounts to saying that a man in power should always remember that the judge on earth does not have the last word, for the last word resides with the Supreme Judge in heaven. This consideration acts as a brake or a check against precipitous or high-handed measures, particularly when taken against the poor and the weak.

A ruler should always abide by this rule. He should follow the norms and piously fear God. Even if he happens to be a dictator he must fear God. By adhering to the norms and piously fearing God, he may not be regarded as a tyrant or a despot. An illustration of this is the verdict passed by a conference of Muslim jurists and judges held in Baghdad, following the conquest of the city by the Tartars under Hulago (1258). The conference was convened to debate the question whether a Muslim should submit to a non-Muslim ruler, (Hulago was not Muslim). The verdict was that a Muslim could submit to a non-Muslim ruler provided that the ruler is just.

This obsession with justice, *taqwa*, and the rule of the balance has made a Muslim optimistic, but has driven him, on the other hand, to be less self-reliant than a Christian or a Jew. He feels unafraid and trusts matters to chance. He takes it easy, he is not in a hurry to plunge into the maelstrom and he is not keen to join the caravan stampeding towards the abyss or certain self-destruction. This holding-back and holding fast to his roots have given the chance to his enemies to call him a stick-in-the-mud or backward.

A Muslim is commanded not to leave his home, either willingly or unwillingly. If he leaves his home, it is as though he is killing himself. This extra sense of belonging is another plank in his fast adherence to his heritage. It may be considered a drawback, but a Muslim thinks that, drawback or not, it is worth taking the risk when the outcome is the maintenance of one's identity. This attitude runs counter to the tribal system. Islam goes beyond this point. It commands Muslims not to make friends with those who forced them out of their homes, nor with those who were involved in conducting such act. This applies especially to the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees languishing as they are in camps for decades.

A Muslim is not a fatalist in his orthodox belief. He is called fatalist perhaps because he expects justice from all, and because he has faith in the mercy of God. To be sure, this feeling of trust in God has worked against him in the worldly hectic rush for wealth and power. That the Muslim is not involved in this rat race, however, may very well be better for him in the long run, since the rush will certainly lead the world into ruin.

This apparent trusting mood is different from the wrongly understood belief in fate. The question in this respect is the classic dilemma as to whether man is a free agent, or that his actions are predetermined. Islam tackled this problem and offered a solution of

its own. The idea that God is omnipotent would probably induce people to think that man cannot escape from the grip of God, and he cannot be free to do whatever he likes. On the other hand, if his actions are controlled by God, he should not be accountable for them on the Day of Judgement. This of course is unacceptable and hence the dilemma.

Islam does not deny that God is omnipotent, but gives an explanation to this omnipotence in this respect. God is omnipotent through the laws He laid in the universe. These laws are described as predetermined, free from any outside influence, and man can only discover them, without altering them. This fixedness of cosmic laws is denoted by the term qada' in Islam. It refers to those original and predetermined laws. Man cannot escape through the net; therefore, he is not free. He is only free when he acts within these bounds. The word for this in Islam is qadar. In the end, man is free, but not really free, and his acts are within certain bounds, and yet he is free.

If we assume, as it is held in Islam, that man is born in a world hostile to him, and that man is required to make the best of a bad job, then man's life should be a life of toil, struggle and conflict. One of the verses of the Qur'an states that man is born in a world of travail (Al-Balad, verse 4). If that is so, how can man steer his own course? Islam holds the view that man is created with a course cut-out for him in advance. But how can he be rewarded or punished for what he is not responsible for? Here we have to differentiate between the act itself and the intention to perform the act. Man, in Islam, is sane and can reason things out and form intentions. Therefore, he is responsible, and if he performs a good, or a bad act, he is rewarded or punished. This is the Islamic point of view.

There is a verse in the Qur'an to the effect that God does not change a nation unless its members change their minds (Al-Ra'd, verse 11), or what they have in their minds. This verse is very

significant because stress is laid on the importance of what one has in one's mind as the mainspring of action. Intentions are singled out.

What gives rise to, intentions is belief based upon conviction, and the strongest conviction is the one rooted in religion. Therefore, to understand why a certain people behave in a peculiar way, we have to examine his religious beliefs. Let's see, for example, what a Muslim believes in.

A Muslim, as is well-known, believes in one only God, the God of all, without discrimination. All are equal before this Only God, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and others. He also believes that the universe is a unity.

A Muslim is commanded to do good and to resist evil. He is urged to be just, to refrain from aggression and to be merciful to the underdog. He must follow a middle course and always abide by the principles of balance and *taqwa*. Hegemony on the basis of wealth and power is rejected. Authenticity is highly commanded, and no tradition, myth, legend, or apocryphal writing should be given any credence, including hearsay evidence. Islam permits no discrimination on account of colour, race or religion. There is no exclusiveness or chosenness in Islam. Nothing in Islam is contrary to reason. There are no miracles.

The Old Testament is a narrative about the Jewish people, quite unlike the Qur'an, which does not speak about the Arabs. Therefore; the Old Testament concerns the Jews alone. The Jews have a Sabbath; unlike the Muslims. The idea of the Covenant is not fair to God, because it limits His Freedom to act. He is made to serve the selfish interests of a single nation.

The Jewish notion of chosenness has set the Jews apart from the rest of mankind all over the world. The hands of the Jews have been against the nations and the hands of the nations have been

against the Jews. This is a very peculiar situation calling for wonder. If what the Jews are like is wrong, where does the wrong lie? Or is it the fault of all nations throughout history?

Be that as it may; the main point is that a religion fails to do its duty if it is divisive. For, if it is divisive and claims to be of divine origin, it is blasphemous against God and may be harmful to humanity.

Dualism actuated by divisiveness

A religious conviction is more effective than an instinct because it is a property of the mind, not the body. As such, it is more harmful when it is misdirected. The commandment “do not kill” does not mean “do not kill any body”, but only “do not kill a Jew”. A Canaanite, Egyptian, Edumite, Ammonite or Amalekite may be killed by a Jew with impunity.

In the Jewish law, an adulterer is to be killed only if he commits adultery with a Jewish woman. But if he commits adultery with a gentile woman, the latter is to be killed and not the Jew. On a Sabbath day, if a man falls ill and needs immediate help, a Jewish doctor is allowed to help if the patient is a Jew, but not if he is a gentile or a goy.

These are only a few examples of this spirit. The horror inherent therein is that it has been carried over to Christianity. The Jews used to call Christians and Muslims 'gentiles'. The Christians started to call Jews and Muslims 'gentiles'. Muslims are thereby doubly condemned, and such joint condemnation has been practiced throughout history. The "New Testament" of Christianity is meant to replace the "Old Testament" of the Jews; the Christians have become the chosen people. This notorious spirit of prejudice has persisted to mar human history. The Jews were in conflict with many ancient peoples: the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, Romans, the Europeans and now with the Arabs.

The Christians took on this attitude, inherited from the Jews, and held the same degree of hatred against the gentiles. They staged crusading campaigns against heretics, and then against infidels, notably Muslims. They also turned against the Jews, the infidel Muslims and the pagans, as they used to call them, in America, Africa, Asia and Australia. Under colonialism, the so-called "white man's burden", the natives of those lands, had to suffer humiliation, despoilment, pauperization and, in many cases, expulsion or genocide. Their lands were confiscated on the pretext of being terra nullius and their numbers were decimated in favour of the white man, who came to civilize them. The Red Indians, the Aztecs, the Maoris, the Aborigines in Australia, and many others, then and before, were the victims of this civilization. Later, in consistence with this savage onslaught, the South African negroes, the Turks in Cyprus, the Arabs in Palestine, the Algerians and many others were expelled, partially or totally, from their lands, to make room to the new settlers. The settlers were the "chosen" people, and the natives were the "gentiles", and, as such, they deserved the brutal treatment to which they were subjected.

This divisive religious attitude gave rise to discrimination, bias, ambivalence, prejudice, apartheid, double standard, hysteria and schizophrenia. All these evils are symptomatic of Western civilization. Such schizophrenic civilization is problematic. It is good and bad, cruel and kind, fair and unfair, democratic and tyrannical, destructive and constructive, capitalistic and socialistic, and so on. It is not consistent. The outcome it generates can only arise from a split personality. But why is the split?

Let us first give some examples from recent history. Marxism, after the American, French, and British revolutions, attempted to remove a form of injustice, though not the cause of it. It only sharpened the conflict, and was partly responsible for the arms race

and the invention of atomic and nuclear bombs as well as weapons of mass destruction. A wave of anti-communism developed and was about to unleash a nuclear world war which would have destroyed humanity. When the atomic bomb was produced, its production stirred up the divisive trend, and the slogan was: those who are not with us are against us. The middle course of restraint was flung to the wind. Only the two extreme courses gained ground.

The atomic bomb was dropped on Naga Zaki and Hiroshima, and was about to be dropped on China and the major Soviet cities. The Japanese, the Chinese, who were not Christians, and the Soviets who were atheists and a threat to Judeo-Christianity had to be punished. The Zionists, who first supported the Russian revolution, later turned against it, when it proved to be egalitarian in certain respects. They joined the "chosen" people camp, the Europeans first and then the Americans. The Europeans gave them the Balfour Declaration as well as arms and helped them to establish their state. The Americans later stepped in.

Now, on what grounds was the Balfour Declaration given and on what grounds were the Europeans instrumental in creating Israel? The main plea by the Europeans was that the Jews should have a home of their own. This is acceptable. But then there were many other peoples crying for a home of their own and nobody cared for them. Nay, there were at the same time scores of peoples crying for freedom in their own homes. They were neglected.

Let us suppose that the Europeans were right; why should the Jewish home be inflicted with force on the Palestinians who were in possession of the country? The first thing that comes to mind in answer is that the Muslims and Arabs there are gentiles. The Jews are therefore preferable. When they go into Palestine they will find it a desert, terra nullius, sparsely populated by Bedouins. The Jews

will be able to seize the land easily and settle on it, and will be able to expel the wandering nomads therein. Did the Europeans not know that the whole story was a bunch of lies? Yes, they did, but a schizophrenic personality, as every Judeo-Christian was, is prepared to believe that a fiction is a fact and vice versa. The Jewish claim to Palestine is a piece of fiction and yet it was believed. The consequence was wars and eviction of the rightful owners of the land. The same tragic drama was perpetrated by Judeo-Christians in other parts of the world on the pretext that the peoples therein were gentiles belonging to pagan races which are, as the Brobdiningingyan said, only fit to be trampled on. This is the double standard. It may be exemplified in recent history by the behaviour of certain countries, such as the United States and Israel. Both countries have the same origin. They invaded a country, put it under their control by force and expelled or exterminated its original inhabitants. In so doing, both of them acted under the influence of a deep-seated religious prejudice, under a misconception, and under an impulse of plunder. The religious prejudicial argument was that the Red Indians were gentiles and that the Founding Fathers' slogan was. "*Our god was not but the god of Israel*". The misconception was that the land which the immigrants captured from the Red Indians was terra nullius. These three elements are a replica of the Israeli action in Palestine. The Americans, therefore, sympathise with Israel just as the other European colonial powers did. The case of the Arabs of Palestine is doomed in advance, and the judges have already made up their minds. From this flowed the Balfour Declaration, the British mandate and the help given to Israel. Financially, morally and militarily, they were all against the Arabs for no fault of the latter. The reason for it all was that the Arabs were gentiles and, like the Lilliputians, fit only to be trampled on. And so was the fate of the Aborigines in Australia and the Maoris in New Zealand. They were practically exterminated

and their lands were seized. And so was the fate of the Aztecs and other peoples in South America.

One of the most puzzling phenomena in any cultural history is the gross indifference with which Islam in its essence has been treated in the West, and the deliberate disregard amounting to contempt. This attitude, persisting till now in the West, reflects badly upon the West in the Middle Ages as well as in modern times. In the Middle Ages, the West was plunged in darkness, and in modern times it is plunged in blindness. This may be an excuse, but an excuse which calls for an explanation.

Islam arose in the Arab peninsula early in the 7th century A.D. It soon spread in the whole peninsula in ten years time, and in the surrounding countries in fifty years, culminating into well-entrenched political and religions systems. The area that was conquered in an amazingly short time consisted of the centres of civilizations, and one could say that Islam did not spread in vacuum, nor did it spread where there were no long-established religions and civilizations to challenge. Therefore, its spread, which appeared to be a walk-through against formidable obstacles, looks like a miracle.

In the early period of Arab conquests, one aspect stands out as significant, namely the fact that Islam was acceptable to peoples of ancient civilizations and in an area known renowned for knowledge and learning. The second significant aspect is that when the Arabs conquered the countries of the Middle East, they were not barbarians. They were civilized, in the sense that they introduced a religion based upon strict monotheism, tolerance, and egalitarianism: a social system to regulate the family, property and morals, and a system of government based upon public suffrage, headed by a supreme ruler with religious and secular powers, who is neither a pope nor an emperor. The Qur'an was the source of all these systems.

A more significant and amazing relevant aspect is the fact that in spite of the conspicuous presence of Islam in the Middle East, the Far East, and the West, particularly in Spain, Portugal and Sicily, as well as during the Crusades, there seemed to be little knowledge of Islam among the Jewish and, the Christian minorities as well as gross misconceptions and misrepresentations of this religion, sometimes deliberately. The onslaught against Islam and the Prophet was conducted mainly by Christians.

The Bible was regarded by Jews and Christians as the infallible book which contained an answer to every question. The Arabs who started the Islamic movement are described in that book as second-class humans by virtue of their descent from Ishmael and Hagar, and not from Isaac and Sarah. They are described as coarse, uncouth and even savage. This damning image, not only of the Arabs but of Muslims at large, was indelibly carved upon the mind of every Christian and was responsible for the close-minded attitude to Islam. Muslims were dismissed as gentiles who were beneath contempt, and unworthy of being thought of. Anything they produced, even their Qur'an, was anathema. Islam was an upstart, a heresy and a threat which must be warded off. This view has always been vivid in the mind of virtually every Christian. Even today, Islam is branded as a terrorist religion, just as it was called as a religion of the sword. This is very unfair, and it springs only from ignorance, prejudice and passive self-defence. No Christian wants to know the truth about Islam. He is afraid to know it. Thus Islam remains sinned against rather than sinning.

Perhaps the first serious attempt to learn about Islam was made by Venerable Bede (673-735). He had no original and reliable sources to rely upon; hence he fell back upon Byzantine stories, current at his time, and upon the Bible. A specimen of the Byzantine stories is

that Muhammad was killed by pigs during one of his epileptic fits. Another story was that Muhammad was a magician and he managed to conquer many lands by magic. Such stories were current in Byzantium, which was close to Muslim countries in the East, and one would expect the Byzantines to know better.

Another sort of false stories are those which originated in the West and were current roughly during the reign of Charlemagne (768-814). One of those stories, included in the Song of Roland, was that Muslims worshipped idols and believed in three gods: Termagant, Muhammad and Apollo. The Muslim trinity was the same as the Christian Trinity, but the Muslim one was believed to be absurd. The Muslim gods, one of the stories claimed, multiplied in time until they numbered 30, and included Lucifer, Jupiter, Diana and Plato. These funny stories were current in the West at a time when Muslims were ruling in Spain. Bead, who relied on such stories and on the Bible in his study of Islam, did more harm than good, especially in his emphasis on the doctrine of Hagarism set out before.

This state of utter confusion and falsification persisted down the ages until the 12th century. There occurred a shift from fable to fact, thanks to the Crusades and to the influence of the Arabs in Spain. The first fact that eventually dawned upon the minds of the Christians was that Islam believed in only one God, and that Muhammad was a Prophet. By the middle of the 12th century there emerged among the Christians in the West a clear image of Islam and its Prophet closer to the truth than before. The Qur'an was translated, perhaps for the first time by Peter the Venerable of Cluny in 1143, and the translation provided a credible source for the study of Islam away from fanciful and false stories. The reason Peter the Venerable translated the Qur'an soon appeared to be different from what was expected. His true aim was to find points of weakness in

the Qur'an and to use them against Islam. The aim, however, was not attained, and there came over Europe a feeling of despondency because of their successive reverses in the Crusades and because of the Muslim Mohades in the West. The view that prevailed in the West towards the end of the 12th century was that Islam was an enemy inside Christendom, and Christendom was torn between this enemy and an unbelieving Pope.

The 13th century in Europe appears, in so far as Islam is concerned, to be somewhat objective, having been influenced by the new spirit of research and the acquaintance with the Greek learning passed on by the Arabs. The philosophy of Islam had reached Christian theologians and had left its marks on their beliefs. A typical example is Roger Bacon (1214-1294). He was aware of the Greek Aristotelian philosophy through the works of the Arab philosopher Averroes (1126-1198) and his philosophy. His emphasis was on the truth, how to find it and how to show it to those who were in error. The Muslims, in his opinion, were in error, but the Christians were unable to show them the truth because they did not know how, and they were disoriented. He wanted, by the new ways of philosophy and logic, to prove that Islam was wrong. He failed to do so. His failure may have been due to his premise that Christianity was the standard against which Islam should be measured.

Bacon's successors on the whole adopted the same standard. William of Tripoli, for instance, wrote in 1272 about the Muslims of his day, claiming that their beliefs were couched in falsehoods and ornamented with tales, but they appear to be nearer to the Christian truth. He also thought that Islam was on the way out.

This optimistic frame of mind was to be found in the 14th century. But the opposite point of view began to show itself later on. The image of Muhammad, for instance, was slightly improved. He was

a magician before, but then lie was a cardinal. He wanted to be a pope, but lie was frustrated, which drove him to be an enemy of Christianity. On the whole, the 14th century was slightly less dependent on the Bible or Christianity in Its judgement but more dependent on fictitious stories of travellers.

John Wycliffe (1320-84), like Roger Bacon, wanted to use reasoning to fight Islam, or to defend Christianity against Islam. His knowledge of Islam was deficient, as it was based solely upon fanciful narratives of travellers and pilgrims. He, however, read the Qur'an in translation and used to quote from it when necessary. In his attitude to Islam, he complained that Islam favoured philosophy and intelligence rather than the revealed word of God, in the same way as the Western Church. Islam in his view was a worldly religion, advocating temporal power and wealth, like the Western Church, and the only way to defeat both is to go back to the life of poverty and hardship. But in following that line of thought, he seemed to be contradicting himself in saying that Muhammed prevented his people from inquiry and argument, like the Pope. Christianity had to fight two enemies, an external one represented by Islam, and an internal one represented by the corrupt Western Church. This recipe for improving the chances of Christianity against Islam was judged to be ineffective by Thomas Gascogne of Oxford later in the middle of the 15th century, who wrote that he learnt that Muslims had no desire to convert to Christianity (1) because of the disagreement among Christians about several cardinal subjects and of the plurality of the Christian sects, (2) because of the sinful life of Christianity, (3) and because of the untenableness of the Christian creed.

In the turmoil of ideas on how to curb the surge of Islam, among Church leaders and theologians, there was no agreed strategy. John of Segovia, for instance, in his search for a strategy, urged that the

problem of Islam could be tackled with the help of a right method, and that was to tap the original sources and get the right conclusion. He therefore began his study by producing a new translation of the Qur'an, which he thought to be nearer the original and free from misrepresentations, often deliberately made. But he admitted that the absence of a correct translation of the Qur'an, which was a fact, would make the investigator come out with wrong impressions about Islam, and would make him think that the Qur'an was not the word of God.

John of Segovia was of course interested primarily in saving Christianity from danger and was casting about for ways and means to achieve that. He had no faith in the method for that purpose suggested by his predecessors, and he proposed that conferences with Muslims would be the right procedure, as an alternative to war.

His supporter in this endeavour was Nicholas of Cusa (1401-64) a contemporary philosopher, mathematician, and a German Cardinal who anticipated Copernicus in asserting that the earth revolved around the sun, and who proved that the Donations of Constantine were a forgery. Nicholas approved of his friend's idea of a conference which John of Segovia called "Contraferentia", and gave instructions as to what kind of members should be called to it.

His major work in this direction was his book "Cibratio Al-Choran", 1460, in which he studied the Qur'an in detail to sift out the main elements therein. His study resulted in that the Qur'an consisted of three chief elements: (1) Nestorian Christianity, (2) anti-Christian sentiments introduced into the Qur'an by a Jewish adviser to Muhammad, and (3) other insertions into the Qur'an by Jews after the death of Muhammad. These conclusions were of course false. But how could a man of such a stature with his methodology arrive, after a long research, at such ridiculous findings?

Jean Germain was the bishop of Chalons, with John of Segovia and Nicholas of Cusa, one of the clergymen who were devoted to finding a solution to the problem of Islam. Instead of adopting peaceful measures, he advocated a military solution, a holy Crusading war, especially against the Turks. At the same time, he turned his attention to the apathy prevailing in Christendom, and to the Christian indifference to Christian traders who returned from Muslim countries with ideas antagonistic to Christianity. All these Christian measures under discussion were witnessed by the year 1455. Constantinople had fallen to the Turks in 1453.

The other correspondent of John of Segovia on the question of Islam was Pope Pius II, who was known also by his literary name Aeneas Silvius (1458-64). He was famous, among other things, by his message to Muhammad II, the Turkish Sultan, conqueror of Constantinople, sent in 1460, in which he advised the Sultan to convert to Christianity and thus become the mightiest monarch in the world. The whole message was a series of arguments put forward by the Pope with the aim of proving that Christianity was a better religion than Islam on the grounds of its being more reasonable and more authentic. The message fell on deaf ears, and in the end the efforts in the direction of solving the problem of Islam so far proved to be futile.

Even Luther's attempt after the end of the 15th century met the same fate-failure. The reason is believed to be twofold. First, the charges levelled against Islam were figments of fancy prompted by sheer prejudice. Secondly, those charges were not based upon true knowledge of Islam, acquired through direct acquaintance with its original sources. Lack of Christians who knew Arabic well enough to be able to translate the Qur'an and other standard sources was the main handicap, coupled with the stumbling block that the Muslims were ignorant of any foreign language for religious considerations.

Luther (1483-1546), like Jean Germain, used to believe that Muslims were dead against conversion to Christianity by any means, and therefore it was useless to make the attempt. He, however, in his old age, translated into German an anti-Islamic book of the 13th century, written by Ricoldo de Montecroce, called "Confutation Alchoran". The title of the book reveals the nature of its contents.

Luther believed that the defence against Islam can be made through a regeneration of Christendom. Muhammad was not the Antichrist, but the Pope was. In his opinion, as Wycliffe thought before him, the external enemy could be overcome by first getting rid of the internal one, the Pope.

The net result was that Islam was not defeated intellectually, but physically, as from the beginning of the 16th century, by force. Since then the real onslaught against Islam has been conducted in earnest.

Islam - what it is

The idea of pious fraud is something most discreditable to any religion; it is abhorrent in Islam. Its sanction in the Catholic Church has unfortunately led to the deliberate falsification of history through forgery, interpolation and lies. The holy scriptures were not immune. Suppression of facts comes under the same category, together with misappropriation of literary, religious or scientific heritage of other nations or peoples. For instance, the Arabs developed a philosophy of their own during their rule in Spain. This was known as the Islamic Philosophy in Spain. This Islamic philosophy was called later the Islamic-Jewish Philosophy, and finally the Jewish Philosophy. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that, according to Joseph Campfle in his *Creative Mythology*, the Arab philosopher Averroes (1125-1198) influenced Maimonides (1155-1204), the Jewish philosopher and physician, who in his turn influenced Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).

The Troubadours in Provence and in Europe, from the 11th to the 13th century, were singers, minstrels and lyric poets in the Arabic romantic poetry. Even the name is derived from Arabic *terrab ad-door* or *ad-dar* “domestic singer”, originally a version of a style of singing in Baghdad known as *ghina ad-daar*, “domestic singing” which was later exported to Spain, where they changed the word *ghina* to *tarab* “singing accompanied by musical instruments”. This kind of lyric poetry is one of the main genres of Arabic poetry from antiquity. Therefore, the Troubadour poetry in its style and theme is modelled on Arabic lyric poetry. But Prof. Stern, a Jew at Oxford, claims that it is an offshoot of Hebrew lyric poetry.

Another form of falsification has the aim of depriving a nation of its cultural achievement by denying it. The Arabic numerals have

been known by this name so far in the West for many centuries. They were known in Spain by their Arabic name "the ghubari numerals". A Jewish author, whose name escapes me now, called these numerals in his book, Higher Algebra, the Indian-Arabic numerals.

Another book by a Jew, "Names of Stars," had the only objective of claiming that the names of stars and constellations, which are in fact mostly Arabic, are not necessarily Arabic. A similar falsification is represented by the attempt of Jewish writer to refute the well-known fact that the horse in Europe, especially in Britain, descended from the Arab horse.

A notorious example of the pious fraud is the presumed grant by the Emperor Constantine I (306-337) to Pope Sylvester and his successors in perpetuity, consequent upon the baptism of Constantine in 326, of the temporal jurisdiction over Rome and Italy. The document is now accepted as an 8th century forgery.

There is also the false or forged set of decretals issued by the Pope on matters relating to decisions in ecclesiastical law. These were aimed at enhancing the position of bishops and papacy and strengthening the Church against inroads by the temporal power. The collection contains many spurious letters and documents ranging from the 1st to the 7th century including the pretended Donations of Constantine. They appeared in the mid 9th century and were issued under the name of Isidore Mercator. They were seriously challenged in the 15th century and finally discredited by the Protestant Minister David Blondel in 1620. They are also known as the Isidorian Decretals. They were probably compiled in France and accepted by Pope Nicholas I. Since their forgery became manifest, they commonly came to be called pseudo Isidorian Decretals. Many dictionaries and encyclopaedias avoid mentioning them and even mentioning "pious fraud," for obvious reasons.

One curious instance of deliberate fraud is what a 7-volume English encyclopaedia, published in the United States fifty years ago, said about the Prophet Muhammad. The encyclopaedia, as far as I remember, said that Muhammad managed with force to establish a vast empire, which on his death splintered into small states as a result of the quarrels that erupted among his many children by his many wives.

In *Readers Digest Great Illustrated Dictionary*, under the entry "Armenia", there is a sentence, added at the end, which says: "*Between 1894 and 1914 the Turks massacred most of their Armenians because they were Christians.*" This is of course a lie. What has this got to do with a dictionary? I mentioned this before.

Another lie was that of Mr. Runciman in his book on the Crusades, in which he says that the first Crusaders massacred the Muslim population in Jerusalem to match the fanaticism of Muslims. The author, as a Christian, failed to remember that when Saladin reconquered Jerusalem, the Muslims did not kill a single Jew or a single Christian. Nevertheless, Muslims must be accused of fanaticism.

This spirit is very evil. It has pervaded the whole history of the Jewish and Christian literature, not excluding the Holy Scriptures, or semi-holy scriptures like the Talmud. What the Jews are doing in Palestine is the way of creating facts motivated by this spirit.

The Jewish idea of chosenness infected Christianity. The word (testament) in the New Testament and the Old Testament means the same. It is a 'covenant', and as such it is analogous to the Jewish covenant with their god Jahveh, which implies chosenness. Christian writers in speaking of the New Testament describe it as the second group of sacred writings in the Bible, the first group being the Jewish scripture. The religion of Israel is regarded as a covenant between Jahveh, the god of Israel, and his chosen people and in due time a

new covenant was promised by the prophets. This promised covenant is a new chosenness to replace the old one, and hence the New Testament. The Christians are promised to be the new chosen people, and the promise is a confirmation of the Jewish divisiveness and a deepening of the split in human society.

The new covenant with the Christians was established by the life and death of Christ, and towards the end of the 2nd century a generally accepted collection of new scriptures, worthy of complementing the Old Testament, was evolving. This merger was established by the Council of Carthage in 397, and Judeo-Christianity was thus confirmed.

The infection of chosenness spread in every direction in Christendom and in the church itself. The first Christian manifestation of chosenness was by dividing Christian society into clergy and laity, and dividing power or authority into spiritual and temporal, religious and secular. The split extended to those who were faithful and to those who were dissenters, especially the heretics. On the theological side, there arose heresies questioning the truth of certain assumptions in the creed about the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, notably the famous heresy of Arius (250-336) and the controversy about the Original Sin between St. Augustine (334-430) and Pelagius (360-420). The ecumenical councils, from the Council of Nicea (325), struggled to fix the creed and create a new religion to be separated from Judaism and Judeo-Christianity. This aim was not achieved, for the new religion inherited the doctrine of chosenness. And when the papacy, the guardian of the new religion was firmly in the saddle by the end of the 5th century, the onslaught was turned against any group or individual who did not conform.

The Church itself was the first manifestation of the split inherent in the religious idea of "chosenness". The Christian society

was split into laity and clergy. The Papacy was another split, dividing allegiance between God and Mammon, and leading to the struggle between the Papacy on the one hand and kings, princes and emperors on the other. The Great Schism came to a head in 1054. The crusade, now against the heretics, started about this time against the Waldensians, and against the infidels, Jews and Muslims. The Inquisition, to fight heresy, was established in 1232. The struggle between the Church and the Kings then followed, exemplified by the deposition of Henry I (1084) and the Papal captivity of Avignon (1309 -1377). In the meanwhile, reason, which had been suppressed, reared its head, and intellectuals began to question the validity of many assumptions or creeds held by the Church. Even the Bible was not spared under the movement of modernism. The sixteenth century in Europe witnessed the intellectual revolution and the Protestant revolution, both of which started waves of unrest and a series of bloody conflicts. The division was deepened along many lines. Finally, Europe was falling apart in every respect. There were splits in religion, culminating in the Protestant revolution which erupted in 1517.

It seemed that the crumbling structures and bitter conflicts had only one way out of the maelstrom, and that was to look for a common enemy, a gentile. The enemy was eventually found. It was in the newly discovered lands, where there were gentile peoples to be conquered, despoiled of their property and proselytised. As gentiles, they were, as the Brobdingian said to the Lilliputian, fit only to be trampled on. The era of colonisation and systematic enslavement of gentile peoples began with a vengeance.

On the intellectual side, the divisive spirit continued to invade the human mind. Perhaps one or two examples might suffice. In philosophy, the question of Being and Becoming came to the fore with a new guise or rather in two separate and sharply divided compartments. René Descartes (1596-1650), a churchman, came out

with the dichotomy of mind and body on the human side and with the dichotomy of man (with a soul) and animal (without soul). This dualism was a new confirmation of the split, initiated by Judaism, and was a distinct divisive mark of Western civilization. This was beneficial to science, but detrimental to human society. In this latter field there has been no room for hylozoism: the organic view of the universe, by the cyclic interplay of opposites, leading to unity, or the principle that any pair of opposites is, in the last analysis, a unity. This is, by the way, the Islamic unitive view, and as such it is, especially in the social context, diametrically opposed to the Judeo-Christian view.

On the animal side, Descartes was equally divisive. This is not surprising, since Judaism and Christianity, for instance, regard animals as mere things. Animal torture has been regarded by both Jews and Christians as something not to have qualms about. This is not what Islam says. Animals are creatures like us. Everything about animals follows from this assumption. To see the contrast, one should read Salt's book "Animals Rights". In this book the Cartesian doctrine on animals claims that animals are devoid of consciousness and feeling, and that, in consequence, we have no duty towards them. This revolting, gross and barbarous doctrine is peculiar to the West and has its roots in Judaism. G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936) said that *"The man who breaks a cat's back breaks a cat's back; the man who breaks a man's back breaks an implied treaty. The tyrant to animals is a tyrant. The tyrant to man is a traitor."* This saying is the roof of all cruelty to animals, which is endemic to Western society. By the same token, perhaps, the negroes and the other gentile races may be regarded till now, along with cats, as mere objects.

Cruelty to animals in the West has its roots in the Judaic attitude towards the gentiles who are regarded as next-door to animals. The persistence of cruelty to animals as well as to gentiles, including

negroes, Red Indiana, Australian aborigines, Maoris and other colonial peoples, is a blot on the so-called western civilization. The slave trade which extended from the 10th century to the beginning of the 19th is a worse blot. Slavery epitomised cruelty, and it is no less cruel in its present form. Neither this nor the other has abated, and even in these days cruelty to human beings and animals is still in full swing everywhere; and there are people who still die of hunger, wars and disease. Animals are still being imprisoned in cages or zoological gardens, subjected to vivisection, shot and killed, like pigeons in Spain, or hunted, like foxes in Britain, and fought, like bulls in Spain. The cult of cats as witches, and their association with black magic, brought butchery on them for centuries.

The history of Europe, roughly from the 4th century, has been a scene of turmoil, characterised by a conflict of opposites, resulting from an undercurrent of divisiveness inherited from Judaism. Every movement, doctrine, creed or dogma had a counterpart, or an opposite. The Christian creed itself had many form and heresies. There were schisms and splits culminating first in the Great Schism. There were crusades, bloody struggle against secular rulers, and free thought, together with conflict between religion and science, the rich and the poor, lords spiritual and lords temporal, aristocracy and commonalty, intellectuals and obscurantists, fundamentalists and reformers, liberals and conservatives, papacy and imperial power, individual and society, conformity and nonconformity, economic freedom and mercantilism, credo and libido, toleration and narrow-mindedness, democracy and dictatorship, liberty and colonization, freedom and slavery, the faithful and the infidels, humanitarianism and inhumanity, the chosen and gentiles, etc.

These pairs of opposites, characteristic of the Western civilization, based as it is on Judeo-Christianity, have had the effect of

tearing the Judeo-Christian personality apart. The psychological tension in this personality throughout the years has caused a split, schizophrenia. This is why the West is schizophrenic, ambivalent, double-standard oriented, and discriminatory; even today, hypocrisy is the hallmark.

The policy of the West has been inspired by the spirit of divisiveness. It seems that the Western powers can only function within an atmosphere of tension. To be relieved, tension needs a certain discharge, either by war inside, by war outside, or above all by hypocrisy. The war inside is that which is waged between parties of the same religion such as Catholic, Protestant or Greek Orthodox, or between parties of the same ethnic group. This has been the pattern of wars in the West. The wars outside have been between nations or peoples. This kind of war is made possible by the operation of the British system of “divide and rule” or by the United States system of “creating hot spots all over the world”, one of which is the Israeli-Arab conflict.

What characterizes all these wars inside and outside is the brutal, general and wanton destruction of life, as well as the outspread devastation, with complete callousness and venomous disregard for mercy. The dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan is a notorious and cold-blooded example. The West seems to be itching for such wars, egged on by the divisive spirit in their blood. The Western powers do what is wrong, knowing it to be wrong and having no qualms about it, thinking that they will explain it away with their method of double-talk.

Middle course

The question of the middle course advocated by Islam needs further explanation. This, it will be remembered, is illustrated in Islam by the idea of balance. But it can be illustrated otherwise. Aristotle in his third law of thought said that any proposition could either be true or false, but not in between. For instance an object can be red or not red. Here, according to the law, an object cannot be, for instance, half-red. Then any half-red object is excluded.

In human relationship, the tendency is to regard things as opposites, or pairs of opposites, such as good and evil, good and bad, just and unjust, free will and determinism, God and Satan, heaven and hell, Jew and gentile, dark and light, mind and matter, and so on. But if you regard these pairs of opposites as a unity, then the problem becomes a dilemma, and you have to pick your way carefully, and in this case you choose the middle course. Those who contend that the world is absolutely spiritual or absolutely material are wrong, like those, after Descartes, who divide man sharply into mind and body. Another example is that Christ is reported to have said: *“he who is not with us is against us.”* This means that nobody can be neutral. This rule adopted by Jews and Christians throughout history, and recently by the Americana in the cold war, has been a disaster to humanity. The idea is divisive. By contrast, the Prophet said: *“Work for your fortune in life as though you would live forever, and work for your fortune in the hereafter as though you would die on the morrow.”*

Therefore, the case lies between two extremes; and if you choose one of the extremes, to the exclusion of the other, you will be wrong. Judaism and Christianity chose to see the world as a series of dichotomies or pairs of opposites. Western civilization, in deciding

between matter and spirit or mind and body, chose matter to the exclusion of spirit. Therefore, Western civilization is one-sided, and as it goes deeper and deeper into exploring nature alone, it will upset the balance and it will carry within it the germs of its own destruction, and along with that, the destruction of the human species.

There is also the dichotomy of Being and Becoming, The Greek philosophers, especially in the fifth century B.C. tried to reconcile the idea of change (Becoming) of Heraclitus with the idea of unchangeableness (Being) of Parmenides, but they failed and spirit and matter remained as diametrically opposed as ever until the rise of Western civilization where matter gained ground.

Islam, which is essentially a religion of the middle course, has something to say about this. Dead matter in Islam has life, and is not dead. Living matter has death within it. Therefore life and death are interchangeable.

Now the idea of changelessness, of Being, in nature is not acceptable in Islam. Everything, even dead matter, changes. Islam leans towards changeableness, and what is thought to be changeless is really changing, in relation to an ultimate truth only known to God, but gradually knowable by man.

This looks to be a puzzle, but it is not so. The word for Being in Arabic is *qadha'*, and the word for Becoming is *qadar*, and both are in the hand of God. *Qadha'* is the universal rules of nature and *qadar* is the rules of nature when varying. Modern science admits that there is uncertainty in nature, which leads to the belief that nature is not invariant. At the same time, science assumes that the laws of nature cannot be discovered and cannot function unless they are invariant. It is cyclic, or like a point on the circumference of a circle, which is the beginning and the end at the same time. Shakespeare has a saying about one of his characters: "*He has a system in his madness.*"

There remains another important pair of opposites, namely that of male and female, or men and women. The discussion of this pair is important if only to refute the characteristic prejudicial charge brought against Islam that it treats woman as chattel. This is malicious. Islam is the only religion that raised the status of women. In proof of that, a brief survey of the attitude to women in the various religions will serve the purpose. Socrates is reported to have said: *“the woman is the source of all evil: her love is to be dreaded more than the hatred of man. The poor men who seek women in matrimony are like fish that go to meet the hook.”* Almost at the same time, the Buddhists believed that *“a woman is a creature with the look of an angel on the countenance, but with a diabolical spirit in the inmost.”* Confucius, the Chinese greatest thinker says: *“Man and woman should never sit in the same apartment after they reach seven years of age.”*

In Judaism, a woman has an inferior status. But her status is worse in Christianity. The doctrine of the Original Sin damned women forever, and even before that St. Paul was the greatest enemy of women. In the Middle Ages, to praise a woman for her beauty in prose or verse was thought to be blasphemous. The Troubadour from Arab Spain introduced the art of minstrelsy and good men, and women for the first time began to be praised in songs.

Libido versus credo was finally triumphant, and eventually Christians forgot about Eve and her part in the Original Sin. The cult of celibacy and that of monasticism were discredited. Islam, of course, never believed in the Original Sin, celibacy or monasticism for men or women is taboo. Men and women are partners in fertilization, like the partnership of male and female in nature. This is, I think, the first time that the concept of fertilization in nature was ever mentioned in a holy book other than the Qur'an.

Islam - what it is not

Agape or love feast was one of the early church festivals. Originally it was a sort of charity festival for the poor, accompanied by a rite called kiss of love, which developed later into something immodest. The whole festival began to be perverted into acts of sensuality and licence. Father Tertullian in the year 217 very severely condemned those acts which he deemed as occasions "for men to sleep with their sisters". The festival eventually turned into a licentious orgy.

A much later off shot of this love festival was the Agapemone sect of men and women in the 19th century in England. The protagonists of this sect established in 1849 an abode which they called the Abode of Love or Agapemone. But their licentious conduct led to trouble with the authorities, and the sect was suppressed. There was later an attempt to revive it, but it failed in 1908.

Another form of this love festival existed earlier in the 3rd century A.D., called Agapetae. It was started by ascetic women who, under vows of virginity, contracted spiritual marriage with monks. The practice soon spread and became a scandal. It was suppressed by the Lateran Council in the 4th century.

Witchcraft was older than the rise of Christianity. It was found in Biblical times and practised by women. The Jews believed in it, and it continued to be believed in until the 18th century and alter. Islam, of course, did not believe in it. The Witch of Endor in the Old Testament was a woman who had a familiar spirit through whom Saul sought communication with the dead Samuel. Samuel was brought out of the earth by the familiar spirit on condition that Saul would not take action against her for being a witch.

The Christians, until the 18th century, used to believe firmly in witchcraft. Divination is a major aspect of witchcraft, and Islam is dead against it. St. Augustine used to believe in witchcraft. Pope Alexander issued in 1258 an order to the Inquisition condemning witchcraft, and Pope Sylvester VIII issued in 1484 his famous bull, *Summis Desirantes*, which forbade witchcraft under severe penalties. Hundreds and perhaps thousands suffered death, especially women because of witchcraft in Europe alone. The practice through the ages brought about a number of rites and a number of terms to describe them such as witch-hunting, witch broom, witches' Sabbath, etc. Among the superstitions that were prevalent, like witchcraft, in the Christian Society, mainly in the Middle Ages, was the cat-cult. Satan's favourite form was said to be a black cat. Witches were said to have a cat as their familiar. Along with the cat-cult, there were the devil-cult, magic and black magic. Black magic was a sort of magic invoking the powers of the devil. Black Mass was a sacrilegious mass in which the devil was invoked in place of God. This brings to mind the Mend Mendomenham monks or the hall-fine club in the 18th century.

Conclusion

This book now presented to the reader has, as its object, the exposition of Islam from a new angle, namely its relevance to the modern world. For anything to be relevant in this world, it must answer its needs and be compatible with its trends, including secularism. To me, Islam is both theistic and deistic, and both religious and secular. To explain that, I should state at the outset that Islam is not mythical or primitive. It is not idolatrous, anthropomorphic, henotheistic, polytheistic, but purely monotheistic, quite different from any other religion. Secularism is not a threat to Islam, as it is to other religions.

Man is influenced in his thoughts by the fact that he is born in a world hostile to him. He always thinks in opposites; perhaps because he is confronted from birth by a situation fraught with dangers to his life, and he must live his life in fear. He grows up in fear, and his main concern is to know how he can get rid of this fear. In this attempt, man divided things and people into friends and foes, into those with us and those against us. The world is split into what is constructive and what is destructive. This way of thinking in opposites took a turn towards seeing people as good or bad, as elect or damned, Chosen or Gentile. Those who are elect in Calvinism are divinely preferred for salvation, and those who are Chosen in Judaism are the ones who are divinely preferred to others. They are therefore by divine dispensation the masters, the cream of humanity, while the others are slaves and scum.

The division into chosen and gentiles tends to create tension in the human society, without any restraint to contain it. Here the direction is one-sided. In the Hindu religion, the conflict between

Siva and Vishnu is under control by Brahma, and in the Chinese philosophy, the conflict between Ying and Yang is under control by the fact that the two are functioning as a team. The control in Islam is that human society, although constituted of different sectors, works as a team like a beehive, and every sector has its pace set by the other sectors. In this interrelated society, there is a drag, but this compassionate drag is thought to be better than a hell-for-leather rush into nowhere.

The intellectual and technological revolution in the West is unique. I think it started as a secular movement against the kind of religion presided over by the Papacy with its Inquisition and penalties on opinion. The two-fold theory of Averroes, which spread in Europe from France as from the 13th century, paved the way for this anti-religious movement, thanks to its insistence on the division of truth into science and theology and that the two should be kept apart. This intellectual revolution was given another boost by the Protestant revolution. It marked a breakaway from Catholicism, the seat of traditional and dogmatic way of thinking. The aversion to Catholicism made the Protestants feel lonely and eager to take any adventurous course. The only course that was open to them was colonisation, taking the same previous course of the Spaniards and the Portuguese, motivated by religion. Christianity had already been imbued with the Jewish cult of "Chosenness." Colonisation created a need for trade and trade needed industry, and industry in its turn needed technology. Therefore, the Western intellectual and technological revolution must have been motivated by anti-religious ideas, but also by religious ideas derived mainly from the Bible before anything, else.

The question that comes to mind in this context is why the East did not go the same way as the West. Why the Muslims, for instance, did not do the same or initiate a movement of innovation to be an

example for the world? To answer that, one should remember that Islam is egalitarian. The idea of Chosenness is anathema to Islam. Secondly, Islam holds the view that the various peoples on earth are created to live peacefully together. Thirdly, supremacy or hegemony on the basis of wealth or worldly power is taboo. Fourthly, Islam is the religion of middle course. Fifthly, Islam regards Muslims as part of the universe, in unity, and this does not allow a people to behave independently, under the rule of one only god for all, with no prejudice on His part. Belief in fatalism may be an impediment in the way of progress, but in the case of Islam, the constriction put on this belief by religious interpreters caused a great harm because it was wrong. The question of authority and innovation constitutes another handicap.

Here, at the crossroads, one is forced to think whether the course taken by the West is better for the welfare of humanity. In the discussion of philosophy, scholars sometimes judge the West as partial to "becoming", in contrast with the East which is partial to "being." This means, I think, that the West tends always to be dynamic, always changing or developing, whereas the East is static. I must say here that Islam is neither dynamic nor static, but it is both, in conformity with the principle of "middle course". I must also say that the Christian West, as from the 16th century, has been in constant development, changing all the time. The constant change in the West is creating a new civilization, entirely materialistic, every time, and very useful in innumerable ways. This Western civilization, however, has proved to be double-faced: constructive and destructive at the same time. It has also proved to be a drift to nowhere, without orientation. Some writers think that the West in its headlong rush has no time to think of the consequences to human beings, to the environment and to the world as a whole. It has no consideration for the backlash, very often catastrophic, like the nuclear and chemical weapons. In balance, the net result is that, like the ancient Chinese

philosophy, to which reference was made before, the world was created by two twins, one of whom is constructive and the other destructive. This may lend colour to what C.E.M, Joad says about the present civilization: it carries within it the germs of its own destruction.

The present civilization is said to be a kind of open-ended marathon race in which every nation is taking part at top speed. Some nations fall by the roadside, others collapse from exhaustion, and others with stamina carry on until they collapse. This picture may be thought to be arbitrary, but it may not be so, considering that so many nations are already unable to cope because they are growing poorer and weaker. The present trend towards globalization points to that result. The trend is iniquitous and the call for a halt has so far fallen on deaf ears. Perhaps, a call for a slow-down looks more likely to be heeded, even though the world has gone too far and, in the inertia, is too precipitate to be retarded. Therefore, the original speed in the race should be moderated, if possible, neither quick nor slow and the middle course from the start seems to be the best option.

The human body and mind have a limit to their capacity to sustain pressure or stress. The present civilization weighs very heavily upon both body and mind, with the result that both will in the long run be impaired, or perhaps be compelled to accommodate themselves to every new situation in the long race. Again, the capacity to accommodate is also limited, as testified by the extinction of many creature, like the dinosaurs. Perhaps the human species is no exception.

The rate of the incidence of mental disorders is on the increase. This is partially shown in the erratic aberration of behaviour of man in his daily life. Man is less attached to morality than before, and is more lax in matters of sex. He is squeamish about honesty, and is more callous to the condition of poverty and misery afflicting other

people. He is likely to be corrupt and less interested in practising justice and giving every one their due. He is shamelessly double-faced, ambivalent and far from being fair-minded, especially towards the underdog. Man is not inclined to abide by any law, and nations, especially the superpowers, defy international law and flout United Nations resolutions. Man is now so unmindful of the horrors of wars that he has considered nuclear war acceptable.

There appears to be a gradual increase in the number the unemployed, of those dependent upon social security and of those who suffer from various diseases, curable and incurable, with a large proportion of man-made diseases. Food of all sorts, like vegetables and fruits, is no longer safe to eat because of contamination. Water is becoming in short supply, and not really safe to drink, unless chemically treated. Floods, earthquakes and eruptions of volcanoes have lately played havoc with cities and nature. There is a real danger to the whole globe from gases rising into the atmosphere from industry. This does not bode well for humans and other creatures, and it may be the last straw.

If we take all these eventualities into consideration, we shall see that the future is grim, and that the whole humanity upon earth is being exposed to a deadly danger. The West then must have taken the wrong course, with no return.

But what is to be done to save the situation, before it is too late? The ancient Greeks used to warn heroes and monarchs against hubris - excessive pride or self-confidence. The ancient Greek gods used to be jealous, and if the hubristic hero or monarch persisted in his excessive pride, he was struck down. The punishment was inflicted on those excessively proud because of wealth or power. This is hegemony, and it is condemned in Islam.

Nowadays, a nation which is hubristic must be most powerful militarily and most wealthy, such as the United States. The American hubris will perhaps bring about the jealousy of other nations, and bring about a new arms race, which may trigger off another world war. The horrific danger may be averted by moderation in building up an arsenal of mass destruction weapons and in amassing wealth. This moderation cannot be attained because of fear. Fear is at the root of the international situation of rivalry and hatred. But how can we root fear out of the hearts in the West? It is deep-seated, and originally religious. A Jew, for instance, is always afraid, and wants always to be rich, which is demonstrated in Israel's hectic rush to possess all sorts of lethal weapons. I recall in this connection a verse in the Qur'an which says: [**Let them worship the Lord of this House who hath provided them with food against hunger and secured them against fear**] (*Quraysh*: 1-4). This verse is very relevant to the present world situation where nearly half of the world population is starving and the other half is cowering in fear.

There is another very important aspect of Islam which deserves consideration, and is really relevant to the present world situation. In Islam there is a tendency to think in opposites. But this opposition is checked by the principle of unity and by the principle of the middle course. Let us take egalitarianism as one of the tenets of Islam. This does not mean that all should be equal in all respects in a society, but it means that there should be no discrimination in that society on any account, such as poverty, colour, race, or status. Wealth and poverty are to be accepted as natural occurrences and wealth should not give a wealthy man the right to dominate a poor man. Both are members of the same society just as the organs of the one and the same body, each is doing its function in one unity, with no discrimination. The problem arises when discrimination sets in, which is the hallmark of Western civilization.

Take capital and labour in an industrial establishment. The establishment is the unity in which capital and labour cooperate. This cooperation becomes confrontation when capital becomes political capital in capitalism and labour becomes proletarianism. Islam accepts capitalism and labour equally as two forces working together in unity, not as two distinct and hostile forces. One can say that Islam is unitive. In the West the rule is divisive, and a distinct tendency to split into pairs of opposites in everything. This situation of opposition will create confrontation, tension, turmoil and wars.

