man; and on the other hand, the belief that society, like a living organism, is founded on immutable and scientifically demonstrable laws.

May be this constitutes one of the meanings, from the view-point of sociology, of the well-known saying, "Neither determinism nor absolute free will, rather a position intermediate between them."

We have, then, on the one hand, man, equivalent to will, and on the other, society, equivalent to norm. Norm [sunnat], in its Qur'anic usage is something unchanging, and man is directly responsible for his individual and social life; the combination of these two represents the "median position." Man is free in his deeds and actions - not determined - but obliged to follow the pre - existent laws of nature in order to realize his freedom.

"Personality" is not in itself a creative factor in Islam, Even the prophets are not regarded as persons who have created new norms in the existing society. From the point of view of sociology, the superiority of the prophets to other teachers - apart from the rank of prophethood itself - is that they have recognized the divine norms that exist in nature and the world better than mere reformers, and on this basis they have been better able to make use of their freedom as men to advance their aims in society. It is a truth fully attested by history that the prophets have always been more successful than reformers who were not prophets.

Reformers sometimes set out the best of theses and principles in their books, but they have never been able to change society or to create a civilization. The prophets, by contrast, have built new societies, civilizations and histories. It is not that they have established new norms in opposition to divine law - as the fascists and hero -

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worshippers might say - but rather, through the power of prophethood and extraordinary talent, they have discovered the divine norms existing in society and nature, and through the exercise of their will in conformity with these norms, they have performed their mission and attained their goal.

Accident also cannot exist in Islam in the philosophical sense of the word, for God intervenes directly and continuously in all affairs. Moreover, since accident has no logical cause or ultimate purpose, it cannot appear in society, nature or life.

However, a certain form of accident, understood in a particular sense, does exist in human fate. For example, Chengiz Khan appears in Mongolia, comes to power in accordance with social norms, and assembles a large force around him. But the defeat of Iran at the hands of Chengiz Khan is an accident; it was quite possible for it not to have occurred. Accidents of this type may very well affect the destinies of certain societies.

In short, four factors affect the destiny of societies - personality, accident, norm and people [al - nas]. Among them the two most important are al - nas and norm, because al - nas represents the will of the mass of the people, and norm, the scientifically demonstrable laws existent in society.

Personalities in Islam are those who understand well the divine norms; who have discovered these norms by means of a scripture [in the particular sense accorded to scripture by Islam, that of wisdom and guidance], and make of this the secret of their success.

The proportional influence of each of these four factors on a given society depends on the circumstances of that

society. In societies where al - nas, the mass of the people, are advanced and stand at a high level of education and culture, the role of personalities is reduced; but in societies that have not reached that level of civilization, for example a tribe or a clan, the personality or the leader may be influential. At each different stage of society, with respect to progress or backwardness, one of the four factors mentioned will have more effect than the other three.

In Islam, the personality of the Prophet SAW had a fundamental and constructive role in bringing about change, development and progress, in building a future civilization and in changing the course of history. This was because he appeard in a particular geographical location - the Arabian peninsula - which, from the point of view of civilization, was just like its geographical position. That is, it was a peninsula surrounded on three sides by seas, but thirsting and deprived of water. It was a neighbor to the great civilizations of history: to the north, the civilization of Greece and Byzantium; to the east, the civilization of Iran; to the southeast, the civilization of India; to the northwest, the Aramaic - Hebrew civilization. It was also a neighbor to the religions of Moses, Jesus and Zoroaster, as well as to the totality of Aryan and Semitic civilizations. At the time of the appearance of the Prophet SAW of Islam, all the civilizations in existence were gathered around the Arabian peninsula. But the peculiar geographical location of the peninsula decreed that just as none of the vapors that arose over the oceans ever reached the peninsula, so too not a trace of the surrounding civilizations ever penetrated the peninsula. The Prophet SAW of Islam thus appeared in such circumstances that his personality was -

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from the point of view of a sociologist - the greatest factor in the change and development of society and history. Similarly, a historian looking at the great event that occured in the Arabian peninsula in the seventh [Christian] century will see that it absorbed into itself everything that surrounded it and laid the foundations for a great civilization and a lofty new society. When the historian then studies the peninsula and finds it an absolute vacuum from the point of culture and civilization, with its people existing at the lowest level, he is bound to attribute all these signs of change and development, this most fundamental and greatest revolution in history, to the personality of Muhammad ﷺ the son of Abdullah. The personality of the Phrophet ﷺ thus has a particular, indeed exceptional, status.

In general there are five major factors that build a man. First, his mother makes the structure and dimensions of his spiritual form. The Jesuits say, "Give me your child until he is seven years old, and he will remain a Jesuit until the end of his life, wherever he goes. "The mother rears the spirit of man as something tender and sensitive, full of emotion, and gives each child its first instruction with her own gestures while suckling it.

The second factor in the making of man is his father, who makes the other dimensions of the spirit of the child after the mother.

The third factor that builds the outer and apparent dimensions of man is school.

The fourth is society and environment. The stronger and more powerful the environment, the greater will be its educative effect upon man. For example, if somebody lives in a village, the formative effect upon him of his

environment will be less than in the case of one who lives in an extremely large city.

The fifth educative factor in the building of personality consists of the general culture of society or that of the world as a whole.

There are thus five dimensions which taken together form a mold into which the spirit of man is pured and from which it is extracted once shaped.

Education consists of the particular shape deliberately given to human spirits for the attainment of certain purposes. For if man be left to his own devices, he will develop in such a manner as to be unfit for the purposes of social life. We therefore provide men with certain molds within which to grow and develop according to our desires and the demands of the age.SAW

But in the life of the Prophet of Islam, whose personality must be regarded as the greatest factor in historical change, none of the factors mentioned above affected his spirit. It was, on the contrary, the deliberate purpose of God that no mold or form should be imposed on his spirit, and no artificial or inculcated form should touch his soul, in the way that earns men the approval of their time and their environment. For that great man came precisely in order to break all molds, and if he had grown up within one of them, he would never have been able to complete his mission. For example, he might have become a great physician, but only according to Greek models; he might have become a great philosopher, but only according to Persian models; he might have become a great mathematician or poet, but only according to the models approved by his age. However, he was sent to grow and develop in an environment that was empty of culture and

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civilization, and to remain untouched by the influence of any of the five factors mentioned above.

It is for this reason that when the Prophet SAW opens his eyes, he does not see his father. Even though he has his mother, the hand that would keep him free of all froms and molds draws him into the desert while his mother is still alive. It was then the practice of the Arabs to send their infants into the desert until they were two years of age, so that they would spend their infancy in the desert. They would then return to the cities to grow up in the care of their mothers.

By contrast with this practice, the Phrophet SAW Muhammand went back to the desert after returning to Mecca, and he stayed there until he was five. After some time his mother died. These wise and subtle divine measures preserved from the influence of all forms and molds - Greek, Eastern, Western, Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian - and to create a new mold. Then again the hand of providence and fate removed him from the city to the desert in his youth, on the pretext of making him a herdsman, so that the urban environment might not impose its own approved forms on the spirit that had to develop in freedom. In order that society and the age might not leave any effect on the Phrophet SAW, he was, moreover, created in a society that had no general culture. In addition, he was unlettered - that is, he was unable to read or to write - because it was necessary that the mold of schooling aslo should not be imposed on him.

We see then that the greatest distinction and advantage enjoyed by the person who was to undertake such a mission lay precisely in his exemption from all forms and molds accepted in his age, all the forms that fashion man

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according to a stereotype. For the man who was destined both to destroy all fire temples and to close down all academies and establish in their place the mosque, the man who was destined to destroy all racial, national and regional forms and molds, should not himself be subject to the influence of any such form.

First, his father was taken from him so that his dimensions would not be imposed on the spirit of the Prophet. Then his mother was kept at a distance from him so that her maternal affection and tenderness should not taint with lyrical softness a spirit that had to be stern and powerful. He was, moreover, born in a dry peninsula, far removed from universal culture, so that his great spirit might not be affected by the educative influence of any culture, civilization or religion, for a spirit destined to endure and perform an extraordinary mission cannot be fashioned in any ordinary form. This apparent deprivation was in reality the greatest of advantages and distinctions for the person who was entrusted with the greatest role in the greatest event of history.

Second Lecture

My topic concerns different approaches to the knowledge and understanding of Islam. "Different approaches" constitutes a precise and important scientific concept, and it denotes methodology for the understanding of Islam.

The question of methodology is of extreme importance in history, and particularly in the history of science. The correct cognitive method for the discovery of truth is more important than philosophy, science or the possession of

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mere talent.

We know that in the Middle Aged, Europe spent a millenium in the most appalling stagnation and apathy, and that immediately after the end of this period, the stagnation and apathy gave way to a multi - faceted and revolutionary awakening in science, art, literature, and all areas of human and social concern. This sudden revolution and burst of energy in human thought resulted in the birth of the civilization and culture of today's world. We must now ask ourselves, "Why did Europe stagnate for a thousand years, and what happened to cause a sudden change in direction, so that in the course of three centuries, it discovered truths it had failed to perceive in a whole millenium?"

This is an extremely important question; it may, indeed, be the greatest and most important question that science must answer.

Without doubt, numerous factors caused the stagnation of Europe in the Middle Ages, and various causes suddenly awakened Europe from its sleep, setting it on the course of swift and dazzling progress in every respect.

We must point out here that the fundamental factor in the stagnation of thought, civilization and culture that lasted for a millenium in medieval Europe was the Aristotelian method of analogical reasoning. When this way of looking at questions and objects changed, science, society and the world also changed, and as a result of that, human life too. We are concerned here with culture, with thought and the scientific movement, and it is for this reason that we regard the change in methodology as the fundamental factor in the Renaissance. At the same time, it is true from the sociological point of view that the main

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factor in this change was the transformation of the feudal system into that of the bourgeoisie; this was caused, in turn, by the breaching of the wall that separated the Islamic East from the Christian West, the breaching brouhgt about by the Crusades.

Method is then of far - reaching importance in determining progress or decline. It is the method of investigation, not the mere existence or non - existence of genius, that brings about stagnation and apathy or motion and progress. For example, in the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ, numerous great geniuses existed who cannot be compared with the geniuses of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Aristotle was without doubt a greater genius than francis Bacon, and Plato a greater genius than Roger Bacon. But what enabled the two Bacons to become factors in the advancement of science, despite their inferiority in genius to men like Plato, while those geniuses caused the millenial stagnation of medieval Europe? In other words, why should a genius cause stagnation in the world, and an average man bring about scientific progress and popular awakening? Because the latter has discovered the correct method of reasoning, by means of which even a mediocre intellect can discover the truth, while the great genius, if he does not know the correct method of looking at things and reflecting on problems, will be unable to make use of his genius.

It is for this reason that we see in the history of Greek civilization tens of geniuses gathered in a single place in the fourth and fifth centuries. The history of mankind has remained under their influence down to the present. But the whole of Athens was unable to invent a wheel, whereas in modern Europe, and average technician who

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cannot even understand the writings of Aristotle and his pupils has make hundreds of inventions.

The best example of this is provided by Edison, whose general perception was inferior to that of the third - class pupils of Aristotle, but who at the same time contributed more to the discovery of nature and the creation of industry than all the geniuses who have been trained in the Aristotelian school during the past 2,400 years. He made more than a thousand inventions, great and small. Thinking correctly is like walking. A person lame in one foot and unabled to walk fast, if he chooses the right path, will reach his destination sooner than the champion runner who takes a rocky and winding path. However fast the champion may run, he will arrive late at his destination, if he reaches it at all; whereas the lame person who chooses the right route will attain his destination and goal.

The choice of correct method is the first matter to be considered in all the different branches of knowledge - literary, social, artistic and psychological. The first task of any research and investigation.

We must make full use of the experiences of history, and we must consider ourselves obliged, as the followers of a great religion, to learn and know Islam correctly and methodically.

Today is no time for the worship of what we do not know.

The educated, in particular, have a heavier responisbility for acquiring knowledge of what is sacred to them; this is not merely an Islamic duty, but also a scientific and a human one. A person's character may be judged in accordance with his degree of knowledge concerning his beliefs, for the mere holding of a belief is

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no virtue in itself. If we believe in something that we do not fully know, it has little value. It is the precise knowledge of that in which we believe that may be counted a virtue. Since we believe in Islam, we must acquire correct knowledge of it and choose the correct method for gaining that knowledge.

The question now arises, what is that correct method? In order to learn and know Islam, we must not imitate and make use of European methods - the naturalistic, psychological or sociological methods: We must be innovative in the choice of method. We must of course learn the scientific methods of Europe, but we do not necessarily need to follow them.

Today, scientific methods have changed in all branches of knowledge, and new approaches have been discovered. In the investigation of religion as well, new paths must be followed and a new method must be chosen.

It is obvious that a single, unique method cannot be chosen for the study of Islam, since Islam is not a one - dimensional religion. Islam is not a religion based solely on the mystic intuition of man and restricted to the relationship between man and God; this is merely one dimension of the religion of Islam. In order to study this dimension, a philosophical method must be followed, because man's relation to God is discussed in philosophy, in the sense of general and unfettered metaphysical thought. Another dimension of this religion is the question of man's life on this earth. in order to study this dimension, use must be make of the methods that have been established in the human sciences of today. Then, too, Islam is a religion that has built a society and a civilization; in order to study these, the methods of history and sociology must

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be used.

If we look at Islam from only one vantage point, we will have seen only one dimension of this multi - faceted phenomenon; even if we see it correctly, this will not suffice for a knowlegde of the whole. The Qur'an itself is a proof of this. It is a book that has many dimensions, some of which have been studied by great scholars throughout history. For example, one dimension comprises the linguistic and literary aspects of the Qur'an; the literary scholars have examined these minutely. Another dimension comprises the philosophical and credal themes of the Qur'an that the philosophers and theologians of today would do well to reflect upon. A further dimension of the Qur'an, one which has remained more obscure than all the others, is its human dimension, comprising historical, sociological and psychological matters. The reason for this dimension's remaining unknown is that sociology, psychology and the human sciences are far more recent than the natural sciences. Similarly, the science of history is the most recent science to have appeared in the world; it is something different from historical data or the books of history that are among the oldest books in existence.

Historical passages concerning the fate of nations, their relations with each other, and the causes for their decline and fall, occur frequently in the Qur'an; they must be studied by the historian with a historical and scientific approach. The sociologist must examine them according to sociological method. Cosmological matters and questions relating to the natural sciences and natural phenomena must be examined and understood according to the methodology of the natural sciences.

Since my area of study and specialization is history and

sociology, I assume the right to set forth what has occurred to me in this connection as a plan or design. I will set forth two methods, both of them relating exclusively to the vantage point of sociology, history and the human sciences. In order to make my meaning clearer, I will compare religion to an individual.

Only two ways exist in which to acquire knowledge of a great personality, and both of these ways must be persued simultaneously in order to yield the final result - the knowledge of the great men in question.

The first way consists of studying and investigating the intellectual, scientific and written works of the individual, his theories, his speeches, his lectures and his books. Knowledge of the ideas and beliefs of a person is an indispensable preliminary to understanding him. But our investigation of these will not suffice for a complete understanding of the person, because many things will exist in his life that are not reflected in his works, his writings and his pronouncements, or, if reflected there, they may be difficult to discern. The second way, which complements the first and makes possible a complete understanding of the person, is to study his biography and to seek and answer to such questions as: where was he born? to what family did he belong? what was his race and what was his country? how did his childhood pass? how was he educated? in what environment did he grow up? where did he study? who were his teachers? what events did he confront in the course of his life? what were his failures and his successes?

There are, then, two fundamental methods for gaining knowledge of a person, and both must be followed: first, the investigation of his thoughts and beliefs; and second,

the examination of his biography from beginning to end.

A religion is like a person. The ideas of a religion are concentrated in its book, its "scripture," the very foundation of the school of thought to which it summons men. As for the biography of a religion, it is its history.

There are, then, two fundamental methods for learning Islam correctly, precisely and in accordance with contemporary methodology. First, the study of the Qur'an, taking it as the compendium of the ideas and the scientific and literary output of the person known as "Islam"; and second, the study of Islamic history by Islam from the beginning of the Prophet's mission down to the present.

These are the two methods, but unfortunately the study of the Qur'an and the study of Islamic history are very weak, as they now exist in our corpus of Islamic studies; in fact, they exist on the fringe of those studies. Fortunately, however, as a result of the awakening that has taken place in Muslim society in our age, Muslims are paying increased attention to the study of the Qur'anic text and to the analytical study of Islamic history.

In his book The Night of Imperialism, Farhat Abbas says that the social awakening of the countries of North Africa - Morocco, Algeria and Tunis - began on the day that Muhammad Abduh came to North Africa and began teaching the interpretation of the Qur'an, a subject that had not customarily been taught in the circles of religious learning.

We see that the author of the book - who was not himself religiously oriented - regards the beginning of awakening and religious development in the countries of North Africa as having occurred when the Muslims and their religious scholars laid aside the study of the various

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religious sciences and made it their chief concern to go back to the Qur'an and study its text.

The knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an as the source of the ideas of Islam, and record of the various events that have occurred at different times - these are the two fundamental methods for attaining a precise and scientific knowledge of Islam.

If today the Muslims of Iran are transforming their mosques into centers of activity and are drawing up plans for the instruction of the masses, on the twin bases of the Qur'an and history, they will have laid the firmest foundation possible for a great Islamic intellectual expansion and development.

Another method exists for gaining knowledge and understanding of Islam - the method of typology. This method, which many sociologists believe effective, consists of classifying topics and themes according to type and then comparing them on that basis.

Based on this approach, which is used in Europe in research on certain topics pertaining to the human sciences, I have established a method that can be applied to every religion. It consists of the identification of five distinguishing aspects or characteristics of every religion, and then comparing them with the corresponding features in other religions:

1] the god or gods of every religion; i.e., the entity worshipped by the followers of the religion.

2] the prophet of each religion; i.e., the person who proclaims the message of the religion.

3] the book of each religion; i. e., the foundation of the law proclaimed by the religion, to which it invites men in faith and obedience.

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4] the circumstances of the appearance of the prophet of each religion and the audience to which he addresses himself; for each prophet proclaims his message in a different fashion. One will address himself to people in general [al - nas], another to princes and the nobility, and still another to the learned, the philosophers and the elect. One prophet will thus seek to draw near to established power, while another sets himself up as an adversary and opponent to established power.

5] those choice individuals each religion nurtures and produces - the representative figures it has trained and then presented to society and history. In just the same way that the best method for assessing a factory is to inspect the goods it produces, and for assessing a plot of land is to examine the harvest it yields, so too religion may be regarded as a factory for the production of men, and the men nurtured by each religion constitute the goods it produces.

According to this method, in order to learn and know more of Islam, one must first know God or Allah. Various ways exist for gaining knowledge of God, such as gazing and meditating upon nature and the methods of philosophy, illumination and gnosis. But the method I wish to propose is that of typology. We examine the type, concept, features and characteristics of the God discussed in Islam. For example, we ask whether He is wrathful or merciful. Is He exalted above all being? Is He commingled with man? Does His compassionate aspect predominate over His wrathful aspect, or is the reverse the case? In short, what "type" of God is He?

In order to correctly recognize the characteristics of God, we must refer to the Qur'an and the words of the

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Prophet, as well as the elite among those whom he trained. For the divine attributes have been clearly set forth in the Qur'an, and the Prophet and those whom he trained have referred to them in their pronouncements. Then we can compare Allah with the figure depicted in other religions as God - Ahuramazda, Yahwa, Zeus, Baal, and so forth.

The second stage in knowing and learning Islam consists in knowing and learning its book, the Qur'an. One must also understand what kind of a book the Qur'an is, what topics it discusses, and what areas it emphasizes. Does it speak more of the life of this world or more of the hereafter? Does it discuss questions of individual morality more, or social questions? Is it concerned more with material or with abstract objects? Is it more interested in nature or in man? In short, what matters does it treat and in what fashion?

For example, with respect to proving the existence of God, does it recommend to man that he should refine his soul in order to know God? or does it instruct us to attain knowledge of God through the study of the particulars of creation, the external and internal worlds? Or should we follow both paths?

Havings answered these questions, we should proceed to a comparison of the Qur'an with other religious texts, such as the Gospels, the Torah, the Vedas, the Avesta, and so on.

The third stage in acquiring knowledge of Islam is learning the personality of Muhammad ibn Abdullah. To know and understand the Prophet of Islam is extremely important for the historian, for nobody has played in human history the same role as the Prophet. The role of the Prophet in the events he occasioned is an extremely powerful and positive one. When we speak of the

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personality of the Prophet, we mean both his human attributes and his relationship with God, with the particular spiritual strength he derived therefrom. In other words, we are concerned both with his human and his prophetic aspects.

For example, with the human dimension of the Prophet, we must study the way in which he spoke, worked, thought, smiled, sat and slept; we must study the nature of his relations with strangers, with enemies, with friends and family. We must also examine his failures and his triumphs and the manner in which he confronted great social problems. One of the basic and fundamental ways of learning the original essence, spirit and reality of Islam is, then, learning about the Prophet of Islam and comparing him with other prophets and founders of religions, like Moses, Jesus, Zoroaster and the Buddha.

The fourth stage consists of examining the circumstances under which the Prophet of Islam appeared. Did he, for example, appear without any preliminary? Was anyone waiting for him? Did he himself anticipate his mission? Did he know what his mission was to be? Or was it that a sudden and powerful blow descended upon his spirit, an extraordinary current of thought began to flow through his mind, totally changing his manner of speech and personality, in such fashion that he initially found it difficult to bear? How did he confront men when he first proclaimed his mission? To what class did he pay particular attention, and against what class did he struggle? All of these are matters that aid us in the understanding of the Prophet of Islam and the circumstances of his appearance.

If we compare the circumstances under which the

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Prophet of Islam appeared with those under which other prophets appeared - whether true or false - such as Jesus, Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Confucius, Buddha and so forth, we reach the following remarkable conclusion: all the prophets, with the exception of those of the Abrahamic line, turn immediately to the existing secular power and seek association with it, hoping to propagate their religion and message in society by means of that power. By contrast, all the prophets of the Abrahamic line, from Abraham down to the Prophet of Islam, proclaim their missions in the form of rebellion against the existing secular power. At the very outset of his mission, Abraham begins destroying idols with his ax; he strikes his ax against the supreme idol of his people in order to proclaim his opposition to all the idols of his age. The first sign of the mission of Moses is when he enters the court of the Pharaoh in his shepherd's garb, with his staff in hand, and declares war on pharaonism in the name of monotheism. Similarly, Jesus struggles against the power of the Jewish priesthood, since it is allied with Roman imperialism. And the Prophet of Islam, at the very beginning of his mission, starts the struggle against the aristocracy, the slaveowners and the merchants of Quraysh, the owners of orchards in Ta'if. The comparison of the two groups of prophets - the Abrahamic and the non - Abrahamic - helps us to understand the essence, spirit and orientation of the various religions in question.

The fifth stage in the learning and understanding of Islam consists in studying the outstanding examples, the finest goods that these factories for the production of men have delivered to humanity, society and history.

If, for example, we choose to study Aaron in the

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religion of Moses, St. Paul in the religion of Jesus, and Ali, Husayn or Abu Dharr in the religion of Islam, as outstanding specimens of each of the religions, this will facilitate for us the understanding of the religions.

An exact, clear knowledge of those persons will, from the scientific point of view, resemble the knowledge of a factory through the knowledge of the goods it produces, because religion is a factory engaged in the production of men.

Let us tonight take Husayn as the example of one trained and nurtured by the religion of Islam, in order to discover what kind of a man it is who believes in Allah, the Qur'an and the Prophet.

The life of Husayn is well known, as are the principles for which he fought. His sensitivity with respect to social matters and the destiny of the people, his devotion and self - sacrifice - these, too, are well known. It is well known, further, when the truth and what he belived in were threatened, how easily he renounced and sacrificed all that a man is attached to in the course of his worldly life. He was, in short, such a person that we can designate Husayn the son of Ali as an outstanding example for the purposes of our study.

In addition to learning and acquiring a knowledge of the life, ideas, and characteristics of Husayn, another method also presents itself to us. This is to compare Husayn with Abu Ali Sina and Husayn b. Mansur Hallaj, who were Muslim but trained and nurtured by philosophy and Iranian Sufism respectively.

The comparison of these three individuals will help us to gain a vivid comprehension of the differences between the schools of philosophy, Sufism and Islam, as well as

their common features.

Ibn Sina was a great philosopher, scholar and genius, a source of pride to the whole history of science and philosophy in Islamic civilization. But this great and profound man, who was so outstanding as a philosopher and scholar, was content, from the social point of view, to place himself in the service of rank and of power, and he never showed any concern with the destiny of man and the fate of his society. He saw no connection between his own fate and that of others. His sole concerns were the investigation of scientific matters and scholarly research. The outer form of his life was a matter of indifference for him; whoever granted him money and position was acceptable to him.

As for Hallaj, he was a man aflame. A man that is on fire has no responsibility; it is his function simply to burn and to cry out. Why was Hallaj burning? From the passionate love of God. He had taken his head between his hands and run through the streets Baghdad proclaiming, "Split open this head, for it has rebelled against me! I am nothing, I am God!" By this he meant, "I no longer exist, God alone exists!"

Hallaj was constantly immersed in the burning invocation of God, and this was a source of true exaltation for him. But imagine if Iranian society were to consist of 25 million Hallaj's. It would be nothing but a vast lunatic asylum, with everyone running into the streets proclaiming, "Come, kill me! I can endure it no longer! I have nothing! There is naught in my cloak but God!"

Such instances of burning passion and immersion represent a kind of spiritual or mystical lunacy, and if all the members of society were like Hallaj - or, for that

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matter, like Ibn Sina - the result would be wretchedness and destrudction.

But now imagine a society in which only one Husayn son of Ali exists, together with several Abu Dharrs. That society would have life and liberty, thought and learning, power and stability; it would be capable both of defeating its enemies and of truly loving God.

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A translation of Insan va Islam, a lecture given at the Petroleum College of Abadan. The introductory paragraph has been omitted.

Man and Islam

THE QUESTION OF MAN is the most important of all questions. The civilization of today is based upon humanism, the nobility of man and the worship of man. It is believed that the religions of the past crushed the personality of man and compelled him to sacrifice himself to the gods. They forced him to regard his own will as totally powerless when confronted by the will of God. They compelled him always to be seeking something from God by way of prayer, supplication and entreaty. The philosophy of humanism is, then, a philosophy that, since the Renaissance, has opposed religious philosophies - philosophies founded on belief in the unseen and supranatural realm - and its aim has allegedly been to restore nobility to man. The roots of humanism lie in

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Athens, but as a universal philosophy, it has become the basis of the modern civilization of the West. In reality, it arose as a reaction to scholastic philosophy and medieval Christianity.

My purpose tonight is to examine - within the limits of my capability and the present occasion - the question of man from the viewpoint of our religion, Islam, and to seek an answer to the question: what kind of a phenomenon does Islam see in man? Does it see in man a powerless creature whose ultimate aim and ideal is to stand helpless before God? Does Islam deny man all notion of nobility? Or, on the contrary, does belief in Islam itself impart a form of nobility to man, and make an acknowledgement of his virtues? This is the topic I wish to discuss.

In order to understand the place of "humanism" in different religions, and the concept of man that each of them holds, it is best to study the philosophy of the creation of man that each has set forth. However, I do not have the opportunity now to examine all the religions of East and West from this point of view. I will speak only of the philpsophy of creation that exists in Islam and those pre - Islamic religions of which Islam is the continuation - the religions of Moses, Jesus and Abraham.

How is the creation of man explained in Islam or the Abrahamic scriptures, of which Islam is the culmination and perfection? Can we deduce the status and nature of man from the manner in which the creation of man is described in the Qur'an, the Word of God, or in the words of the Prophet of Islam? From examining the story of Adam - the symbol of man - in the Qur'an, we can understand what kind of a creature man is in the view of God and therefore in the view of our religion. By way of

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introduction, let me point out that the language of religion, and particularly the language of the semitic religions, in whose prophets we believe, is a symbolical language. By this we mean a language that expresses meaning through images and symbols - the most excellent and exalted of all the languages that man have ever evolved. Its value is more profound and eternal than that of expository language, i.e., the clear and explicit language that expresses meaning directly. A simple and straightforward language, one deprived of all symbol and image, may be easier for purposes of instruction, but it has no permanence. For, as the celebrated Egyptian philosopher Abd ar - Rahman Badawi has pointed out, a religion or philosophy that expounds all of its ideas and teachings in simple, onedimensional and straightforward language will not be able to survive. Those addressed by religion or philosophy represent different human types and classes - both the common folk and the educated. The audience of a religion is, moreover, not a single generation or age, but different and successive generations which follow upon each other throughout history. They inevitably differ with each other with respect to way of thought, level of thought, and angle of vision. The language that a religion chooses in order to convey its concepts must, then, be a versatile and multi - faceted language, each aspect and facet of which addresses itself to a particular generation and class of men. If the language be monofaceted, it will be comprehensible only to a single class, and totally without value for all other classes; accessible to one generation, but beyond the reach of the next. It will be impossible to extract any new meaning from it. It is for this reason that all literary works written in symbolic language are immortal. For example,

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the poems of Hafiz are immortal, and whenever we read them we deduce a new meaning from them, in proportion to the depth of our thought and taste and outlook. But the history of Bayhaqi is something different, as is, too, the Gulistan of Sa'di. When we read the Gulistan, its meaning is quite apparent to us, and we enjoy its verbal beauty and structure. But many of the ideas it contains are outmoded, precisely because it is clear what Sa'di had to say, and what he had to say is false! But the style of Hafiz is multifaceted and symbolical; depending on his taste and manner of thought, everyone can interpret its symbols in a certain sense, thus deducing new meanings from the text.

It is for this reason that religions must employ a symbolic language; they are addressed to different human types and different generations of men. There are numerous concepts in religion that were not clearly understood at the time of their appearance. If religion had not, on the one hand, expressed its ideas in common, familiar language, it would have been incomprehensible to the people of that age; but if it had expressed its ideas in common language, religion would have had no meaning in later times. It was therefore necessary that religion should speak in images and symbols that would become comprehensible with the development of human thought and science. Symbolism represents the highest of styles in European literature - symbolism, which is the art of speaking in symbols and images and concealing profound ideas in images that apparently mean something else but have an inner significance that man can discover in accordance with his own degree of profundity.

It was necessary, then, that the story of the creation of Adam, of man, be told in symbolic fashion, so that today,

after fourteen centuries of progress in the human and natural sciences, it should still be readable and comprehensible.

How was man created, in the view of Islam?

First God addresses the angels, saying, "I wish to create a vicergent for Myself upon earth." See how great is the value of man according to Islam! Even the post - Renaissance humanism of Europe has never been able to conceive of such exalted sanctity for man. God, Whos in the view of Islam and all believers, is the greatest and most exalted of all entities, the creator of Adam and the master of the cosmos, addresses the angels and presents man to them as His viceregent. The whole mission of man according to Islam becomes evident from this divine address. The same mission that God has in the cosmos, man must perform on earth as God's viceregent. The first excellence that man possesses is, then, being God's representative on earth.

The angels cry out saying, "You wish to create one who will engage in bloodshed, crime, hatred and vengeance." [Since before Adam, there had been other men who, like the man of today, busied themselves in bloodshed, crime, corruption and sin, and the angels wished to remind God that if He were to create man again and grant him a second opportunity of earth, man would again engage in bloodshed and sin.] But God replies, "I know something that you do not know," and then sets about the task of creating man.

It is at this point that the symbolic aspect of the narrative begins. See what profound truths concerning man are hidden beneath these symbols! God desires to create a viceregent for Himself out of earth, the face of the globe.

One might expect that the most sacred and valuable of materials would have been selected, but God chose, on the contrary, the lowest of substances. The Qur'an mentions on three occasions the substance from which man was fashioned. First it uses the expression "like potter's clay" [55: 14]; that is, dry, sedimentary clay. Then the Qur'an says, "I created man from putrid clay" [15: 26], foul and evil - smelling earth; and finally it uses the term tin, also meaning clay [6: 2, 23: 12]. So God set to work, and willed to create a viceregent for Himself; this precious viceregent He created out of dry clay, and then He inhaled some of his own spirit into the clay, and man was created.

In human language, the lowest symbol of wretchedness and baseness is mud. No creature exists in nature lowlier than mud.

Again in human language, the most exalted and sacred of beings is God, and the most exalted, sacred and noble part of every being is its spirit. Man, the representative of God, was created from mud, from sedimentary clay, from the lowliest substance in the world, and then God inhaled into him not His blood or His body - so to speak - but His spirit, the most exalted entity for which human languages possess a name. God is the most exalted of beings, and His spirit is the most exalted entity conceivable, the most exalted concept that could ever arise in the human mind.

Thus man is a compound of mud and divine spirit, a bidimensional being, a creature with a dual nature, as opposed to all other beings which are one - dimensional. One dimension inclines to mud and lowliness, to stagnation and immobility. When a river overflows, it leaves behind a certain muddy sediment that lacks all motion and life, and the nature of man, in one of its dimensions, aspires to

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precisely this state of sedimentary tranquility. But the other dimension, that of the divine spirit, as it is called in the Qur'an, aspires to ascend and to mount up to the highest summit conceivable - to God and the spirit of God.

Man is composed, then, of two contradictory elements, mud and the spirit of God; and his splendor and importance derive precisely from the fact that he is a two - dimensional creature. The distance between his two dimensions is the distance between clay and the spirit of God. Every man is endowed with these two dimensions, and it is his will that enables him to decide either to descend toward the pole of sedimentary mud that exists in his being, or to ascend toward the pole of exaltation, of God and the spirit of God. This constant striving and struggle takes place in man's inner being, until finally he chooses one of the pole as the determinant for his destiny.

After thus creating man, God taught him the names. [As will be apparent to you, I am paraphrasing the verses of the Qur'an as I proceed.] What does this teaching of the verses of the Qur'an as I proceed] What does this teaching of the names mean? It is not yet certain. Everyone has expressed a certain opinion and every commentator has suggested his own interpretation. Everyone has interpreted it according to his own outlook and way of thought. But whatever be the correct explanation, there can be no doubt that the verse centers on the notion of teaching and instruction. When the creation of man was completed, God taught His viceregent the names so that man became a possessor of the names. Then the angels cried out in protest, "We were created of smokeless fire and man was created of clay; why do you prefer him to us? And God replies, "I know something you do not know; fall down

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at the feet of this two - dimensional creature of mine." All the angels of God, great and small, are commanded to fall down in prostration before this creature.

This is true humanism. See how great is the dignity and stature of man; so great, indeed, that all the angels, despite their inherent superiority to man and the fact that they are created of light while he is created of mud and clay, are commanded to fall down before him. God tests them because of their protest, and asks the angels concerning the names; they do not know the names, but Adam does know them. The angels are defeated in this test, and the excellence of Adam - which lies in his knowledge of the names - becomes apparent. This prostration of the angels before Adam serves to clarify the Islamic concept of man. Man knows certain things that the angels do not know, and this knowledge endows man with superiority to the angels despite the superiority of the angels to man with respect to race and origin. In other words, the nobility and dignity of man derive from knowledge and not from lineage.

Another point to be considered is the creation of woman from the rib of man, at least according to the translations usually made from the Arabic.[1]. But the translation "rib" is incorrect,and the word so translated has the real meaning, in both Arabic and Hebrew, of "nature, disposition or constitution." Eve - that is, woman - was created, then, out of the same nature or disposition as man.

1- The creation of Eve is not directly mentioned in the Qur'an, so the author is presumably referring to accounts such as that given in Kisa'i's Qisas al - Anbiya, Cairo, 1312, pp. 18 ff. [TR.]

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Since the word has been mistranslated as "rib," the legend arose that woman was created from the left rib of Adam, and therefore all women are lacking one rib!

A great man like Nietzsche said that man and woman were created as totally separate creatures, and only came to resemble each other because of their constant association through history. The ancestries of man and woman he held to be totally different. Almost all scholars and philosophers have conceded that man and woman are of the same stock, yet they have always tried to belittle the nature of woman and present the nature of man as superior. But the Qur'an says, " We have created Eve from the same nature or disposition as Adam; man and woman proceed from the same substance."

Another remarkable matter concerning the creation of man is that God summons all of His creation, all the phenomena of nature such as inanimate objects, plants, animals, and tells them, "I have a trust that I wish to offer to all of you - earth heavens, mountains, oceans and beasts." They all refuse to accept it, and instead, man accepts it. It is thus clear that man has another virtue and excellence, deriving from his courageous acceptance of the Trust that God offered to all beings and they rejected. Man is not only the viceregent of God in this world and on this earth, but also - as the Qur'an makes clear - the keeper of His Trust. Now what is the meaning of the Trust? Everyone says something different. Maulana Jalal ad - Din Rumi says that the Trust means man's will, his free will, and this is also my opinion.

It is by means of his will that man attains superiority over all other creatures in the world. He is the only being able to act counter to his own instinctual nature, something

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no animal or plant can do. For example, you will never encounter an animal voluntarily engaging in a two - day fast, or a plant committing suicide out of grief. Plants and animals can neither render great services nor commit treachery. It is not possible for them to act in a way different from that in which they have been created. It is only man who can rebel against the way in which he was created, who can defy even his spiritual or bodily needs, and act against the dictates of goodness and virtue. He can act either in accordance with his intelligence or in opposition to it. He is free to be good or to be evil, to resemble mud or to resemble God. Will is, then, the greatest property of man, and the affinity between God and man is apparent from this fact.

For it is God Who inhales into man some of His own spirit and makes of him the bearer of His Trust, and man is not merely the viceregent of God upon earth but also His relative - if the expression be permitted. The spirits of God and man both possess an excellence deriving from the possession of will. God, the only entity and being possessing an absolute will, and capable of doing whatever it wishes, even in contradiction to the laws of the universe, inhales some of His spirit in man. Man can act like God, but only to a certain degree; he cant act against the laws of his physiological constitution only to the extent permitted by his similarity to God. This is the aspect held in common by men and God, the cause of their affinity - free will, the freedom for man to be good or evil, to obey or rebel.

The following conclusions can be drawn with regard to the philosophy of the creation of man in Islam:

All men are not simply equal; They are brothers. The

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difference between equality and brotherhood is quite clear. Equality is a legal concept, while brotherhood proclaims the uniform nature and disposition of all men; all men originate from a single source, whatever their color.

Secondly, man and woman are equal. Contrary to all the philosophies of the ancient world, man and woman were created out of the same substance and material at the same time and by the same Creator. They share the same lineage, and are brothers and sisters to each other, descended from the same mother and father.

Thirdly, the superiority of man to the angels and the whole of creation derives from knowledge, since man learned the names and the angels fell in prostration before him; despite the superiority of their descent to that of man, they were compelled to humble themselves before him.

More important than all this, man's being stretches out over the distance between mud and God, and since he possesses will, he can choose either of the two opposing poles these represent. Again since he possesses will, a certain responsibility comes into being. From the point of view of Islam, man is the only being responsible not only for his own destiny but also for the fulfillment of a divinely entrusted mission in this world; he is the bearer of God's Trust in the world and in nature. It is he who has learned the names - and, in my opinion, the proper meaning of "names" is the truths of science, since the name of a thing is its symbol, its defined, conceptual form. The teaching of the names by God means, therefore, the bestowal of the ability to perceive and comprehend the scientific truths inherent in the world. Through this primordial instruction by God, man gained access to all the truths existing in the world, and this constitutes a second

great responsibility for man. Man must fashion his destiny with his own hands. Human society is responsible for its own fate, and the human individual is responsible for his own fate: "Yours is what you acquire and theirs is what they acquire" [Qur'an, 2: 134]. The fate of past civilizations is no more and no less than what they brought down on themselves, and your fate will consist exactly of what you are now fashioning with your own hands. Man thus has a great responsibility toward God, since he possesses free will.

Here we must add this observation, that history has witnessed a great tragedy; namely, man has not been recognized as a two - dimensional being. In contrast with other religions that posit God and the Devil to exist within nature in mutual combat, Islam teaches that only one force exists in nature - the force of God. But within man, satan wages war against God, and man is their battlefield. The dualism of Islam, unlike religions of the past, posits the existence of two "deities," two hypostases, in the inner being and disposition of man, not in nature. Nature knows only of a single hypostasis; it belongs to the realm, and is subject to the will, of a single power, the power of God. In Islam, Satan is not a contestant with God; he is a contestant against man, or rather against the divine half of man. And since man is a two - dimensional creature composed of God and of clay, he has need of both elements. The religion and ideology that he needs to believe in and to found his life upon must fulfill both kinds of need and pay both of them due attention. The tragedy is that history tells a different tale. History tells us that all societies and civilization of China began by being oriented to this world, by giving primacy to pleasure and beauty and striving to enjoy the gifts of nature to the full,

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as the life of the Chinese aristocracy testifies. Then came Lao Tse, bringing a religion exclusively oriented to the hereafter, and emphasizing the spiritual and other - wordly dimension of man. Indeed, he led the Chinese so far in that direction, that a people who had lived purely for the sake of pleasure became monks, gnostics and mystics. He was succeeded by Confucius, who reoriented society toward this world and summoned the Chinese to the pleasures of wordly life, causing them to revert to their former preoccupations.

India, the land of rajas and legends, was oriented to the other world by the teachings of the Vedas and the Buddha, devoting itself to abstemiousness, monasticism and mysticism. It is for this reason that India now famous for men sleeping on beds of nails, or subsisting for forty days on a single date or almond, for remaining behind the progress of civilization.

In Europe, ancient Rome devoted itself to murder and bloodshed, to establishing political mastery of the world, to accumulating all the wealth of Europe and Asia; it immersed itself in enjoyment and pleasure, in gladiator fights and the like. Then came Jesus, who directed society to concentrate on the hereafter, so that Rome changed its orientation from pleasure and worldliness to asceticism and contemplation of the hereafter, the ultimate result of this being the Middle Ages. The medieval world was one of war and bloodshed and military ascendance on the one hand; and one of monasteries, nunneries and retreats, on the other. Europe was delivered from this orientation only by the Renaissance, which caused the pendulum to swing in the other direction. Today we see that European civilization is so worldly in its orientation, and so

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exclusively defines the purpose of man's life as pleasure and enjoyment, that as Professor Chandel has put it, the life of contemporary man consists only of making the tools of life. This is the idiocy of the contemporary philosophy of man, the result of a purpose - free technology. The whole meaning of civilization has been robbed of any ideal, and the world has gone so far in the direction of worldliness that it almost seems as if another Jesus were needed.

As is apparent from the philosophy of man in Islam, he is a two - dimensional being and needs, therefore, a religion which will aslo be two - dimensional and exert its force in the two different and opposing directions that exist in man's spirit and human society. Only then will man be able to maintain his equilibrium. The religion needed is Islam.

Why Islam?

In order to understand any religion, one must study its God, its Book, its Prophet, and the best individuals whom it has nurtured and raised.

First, the God of Islam is a two - dimensional God. He has the aspect of Yahwa, the god of the Jews, who interests himself in human society, in the affairs of this world, who is stern, severe in punishment, and tyrannical, and also the aspect of the god of Jesus, who is compassionate, merciful and forgiving. All of these divine attributes can be found in the Qur'an.

As for the book of Islam, the Qur'an, it is a book that like the Torah contains social, political and military provisions, even instructions for the conduct of warfare, the taking and setting free of prisoners; that is interested in life, in building, in prosperity, in struggling against enemies

and negative elements; but it is also a book that concerns itself with the refinement of the soul, the piety of the spirit, and the ethical improvement of the individaul.

The Prophet of Islam also possesses two contrasting aspects, aspects which would be contradictory in other men, but in him have been joined in a single spirit. For he was a man constantly engaged in political struggle against his enemies and the disruptive forces in society, concerned with building a new society and a new civilization in this world; and also a guide leading men to a particular goal; that is, also a man of prayer, piety and devotion.

And then three men trained by him - Ali, Abu Dharr and Salman - were supreme examples of two - dimensional men. They were both men of politics and battle, struggling for a better life and constantly present in circles of discussion and learning, and also men of piety and purity, not less than the great monks and mystics of the East. Abu Dharr was a man of politics and piety; the reflections of Abu Dharr concerning the nature of God can serve as a key to the understanding of the Qur'an. Look at all the Companions of the Prophet; they were all men of the sword, concerned with improving their society, men of justice, and at the same time, great men of thought and feeling.

The conclusion I wish to draw is this: in Islam man is not humbled before God, for he is the partner of God, His friend, the bearer of His trust upon earth. He enjoys affinity with God, has been instructed by Him, and seen all of God's angels fall prostrate before him. Two - dimensional man, bearing the burden of such responsibility, needs a religion that transcends exclusive orientation to this world or the next, and permits him to maintain a state

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of equilibrium. It is only such a religion that enables man to fulfill his great responsibility.

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Translated from Islamshinasi, vol.I,
pp. 46-56.

The World - View of Tauhid

MY WORLD - VIEW CONSISTS OF tauhid. Tauhid in the sense of oneness of God is of course accepted by all monotheists. But tauhid as a world - view in the sense I intend in my theory means regarding the whole universe as a unity, instead of dividing it into this world and the hereafter, the natural and the supernatural, substance and meaning, spirit and body. It means regarding the whole of existence as a single form, a single living and conscious organism, possessing will, intelligence, feeling and purpose. There are many people who believe in tauhid, but only as a religious - philosophical theory, meaning nothing but "God is one, not more than one." But I take tauhid in the sense of a world -

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view, and I am convinced that Islam also intends it in this sense. I regard shirk in a similar fashion; it is a world - view that regards the universe as a discordant assemblage full of disunity, contradiction, and heterogeneity, possessing a variety of independent and clashing poles, conflicting tendencies, variegated and unconnected desires, reckonings, customs, purposes and wills. Tauhid sees the world as an empire; shirk as a feudal system.

The difference between my world - view and that of materialism or naturalism lies in this, that I regard the world as a living being, endowed with will and self - awareness, percipient, and having an ideal and a purpose. Existence is therefore a living being, possissing a single and harmonious order that is endowed with life, will, sensation and purpose, just like a vast and absolute man [man likewise resembles the world, but a small, relative and defective world]. To put it differently, if we take a man endowed with awareness, creativity and purpose, exemplary to the utmost degree in all of his aspects, and then enlarge him to the utmost degree, we will have before us the world.

The relationship of man with God, of nature with metanature, of nature with God [all of these are terms I use reluctantly], is the same as that of light with the lamp that emits it. It is also the same as the relationship between an individual's awareness of his limb and the limb itself: his perception is not separate from his limb, nor is it alien to it; but neither is it part of the limb, and still less, the limb itself. At the same time, the limb itself, without

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his consciousness of it, is a meaningless corpse.[1] So it is that I do not believe in pantheism, polytheism, trinitarianism, or dualism, but only in tauhid - monotheism. Tauhid represents a particular view of the world that demonstrates a universal unity in existence, a unity between three separate hypostases - God, nature, and man - because the origin of all three is the same[2]. All have the same direction, the same will, the same spirit, the same motion, and the same life.

In this world - view of tauhid, being is divided into two relative aspects: the unseen and the manifest. These two terms correspond in current usage to the sensible and the suprasensible, or, more exactly, to that which lies beyond the scope of examination, observation and experiment [and hence knowledge] and is hidden from our sense - perception, and that which is manifest and observable. This

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1- How profound, beautiful and clear are the words of Hazrat Ali: "God is outside of things, but not in the sense of being alien to them; and He is inside things, but not in the sense of being indentical with them."

2- It hardly needs stating that I do not intend here a substantial unity in essence and quiddity. Do not permit these philosophical and theological terms to tire your brain; simply expel them from your mind. For I am convinced that this is the only thing to do with this kind of apparently insoluble philosophical - literary problem. My meaning in saying that God, nature and man have the same origin is that they are not remote from each other, not alien to each other, not opposed to each other, and that no boundary exists among them. They do not have each a separate and independent direction. Other religions believe that God exists in a special, metaphysical world of the gods, a higher world contrasting with the lower world of nature and matter. They also teach that the God of man is separate and distinct from the God of nature. Thus God, the world and man are all separate from each other! We do not accept this separation.

does not represent a form of dualism or bisection of being; it is a relative classification - relative to man and his means of cognition. The division into unseen and manifest is, in reality, an epistemological one, not an ontological one. It is also a logical division, not only accepted but also applied by science.

The materialists believe in the primacy of matter as the original and primordial substance of the physical world, and regard energy as the product and the changing form of matter. The energists claim that on the contrary, energy is the primary and eternal substance of the physical world, and that matter is the changed and compressed form of energy. In opposition to both groups, Einstein proclaimed that an experiment in a darkened room proves that neither matter nor energy is the primary and true source of the world of being. The two interchange with each other in such a way as to prove that they are the alternating manifestations of an invisible and unknowable essence that sometimes shows itself in the form of matter and sometimes in the form of energy. The only task of physics is to examine these twin manifestations of the one suprasensible being.

In the world - view of tauhid, nature, the manifest world, is composed of a series of signs [ayat] and norms [sunan].

The use of the word "sign" [aya] to designate a natural phenomenon bears profound meaning. The oceans and trees, night and day, earth and sun; earthquake and death, illness, vicissitude, law, and even man himself - all these are "signs." At the same time, "sign" and "God" do not represent two separate and discordant hypostases, essences, realms, or poles. "Sign" has the sense of indication or

manifestation, and this in turn is synonymous with a term current today, not only in physics but all the sciences concerned with the tangible world - "phenomenon," translated in Persian as padida or padidar, and in Arabic as zahira. Phenomenology, in its most general sense, is based on the recognition that absolute truth, the ground and essence of the world, of nature and of matter, lies beyond our grasp. What is knowable and accessible to our experience, knowledge and sense - perception, is "appearance," not "being"; it consists of the outer and sensible manifestations and traces of a primary, unseen and suprasensory reality. Physics, chemistry and psychology can examine, analyze and render knowable these outer manifestations and sensible indications of the true essence of the world and the soul. In short, science deals with the signs, indications and manifestations of being, because sensible nature is the amalgam of these signs and manifestations.

Among all the books of religion, science and philosophy, it is only the Qur'an that designates all the objects, accidents and processes of nature as "signs." Of course, in Islamic mysticism as well as oriental pantheism, the material world has been depicted as a series of waves or bubbles on the face of the vast, colorless and formless ocean that is God or the true essence of being. Idealism and various religious and ethical philosophies have also regarded material nature as a collection of lowly and worthless objects opposed to both God and man. But the Qur'an assigns positive scientific worth to the "signs"; it does not consider them illusions, or veils over the face of the truth. On the contrary, they are indications pointing to the truth, and it is only by means of contemplating them in

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a serious and scientific fashion that one can attain the truth, not by ignoring them and thrusting them aside.

This manner of regarding the "signs" or phenomena of the world is closer to the approach of modern science that to that of ancient mysticism. It is not a question of the wahdat al - wujud of the Sufis, but a tauhid - i wujud, scientific and analytical. According to tauhid, multiplicity, plurality and contradiction are unacceptable, whether in history, society or even in man.

Tauhid, then is to be interpreted in the sense of the unity of nature with metanature, of man with nature, of man with man, of God with the world and with man. It depicts all of these as constituting a total, harmonious, living and self - aware system[1].

I have said that the very structure of tauhid cannot accept contradiction or disharmony in the world. According to the world - view of tauhid, therefore, there is no contradiction in all of existence; no contradiction between man and nature, spirit and body, this world and the hereafter, matter and meaning. Nor can tauhid accpet legal, class social, political, racial, national, territorial, genetic or even economic contradictions, for it implies a mode of looking upon all being as a unity.

Contradiction between nature and metanature, matter and meaning, his world and the hereafter, the sensible and the suprasensible, spirit and body, intellect and illumination,

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1- The Light Verse [Qur'an, 24: 35] illustrates this concept of being, since it demonstrates the special relationship between God and the world according to the world - view of tauhid. The whole of existence is like a burning lamp; this is neither "unity of being" [wahdat al - wujud] nor multiplicity of being, but tauhid of being

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science and religion, metaphysics and nature, working for men and working for God, politics and religion, logic and love, bread and worship, piety and commitment, life and eternity, landlord and peasant, ruler and ruled, black and white, noble and vile, clergy and laity, eastern and wetern, blessed and wretched, light and darkness, inherent virtue and inherent evil, Greek and barbarian, Arab and non - Arab, persian and non - persian, capitalist and proletarian, elite and mass, learned and illiterate - all these forms of contradiction are reconcilable only with the world - view of shirk - dualism, trinitarianism or polytheism - but not with tauhid - monotheism. It is for this reason that the world - view of shirk has always formed the basis for shirk in society, with its discrimination among classes and races. Belief in a plurality of creators justifies and sanctifies a plurality of creatures, presenting it as something eternal and everlasting[1]. Similarly, a belief in contradiction among the gods presents as natural and divine the contradictions existing among men. Tauhid, by contrast, which negates all forms of shirk, regards all the particles, processes and phenomena of existence as being engaged in harmonious movement toward a single goal. Whatever is not oriented to that goal is by definition nonexistent.

1- The term "Creator" in polytheistic religions implies something different from the term "Lord" or "God." Sometimes the gods themselves are created by a great Creator, while being at the same time entrusted with power and authority over a certain species or a certain sector of the world and human life. They have thus been worshipped by a certain class or race, and through their very multiplicity, have justified shirk among men

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One further consequence of the world - view of tauhid is the negation of the dependence of man on any social force, and the linking of him, in exclusivity and in all his dimensions, to the consciousness and will that rule over being. The source of support, orientation, belief, and succor of every individual is a single central point, a pivot around which revolve all the motions of the cosmos. All beings move in a circle described by luminous radii equidistant from the center, which is the powerful source of all being, the only will, the only consciousness, the only power that exists and rules over the universe. The position of man in this world is an objective embodiment of this truth, as is, more obviously, his circumambulation of the Ka'ba.

In the world - view of tauhid, man fears only one power, and is answerable before only one judge. He turns to only one qibla, and directs his hopes and desires to only one source. And the corollary is that all else is false and pointless - all the diverse and variegated tendencies, strivings, fears, desires and hopes of man are vain and fruitless.

Tauhid bestows upon man independence and dignity. Submission to Him alone - the supreme norm of all being - impels man to revolt against all lying powers, all the humiliating fetters of fear and of greed.

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Translated from Islamshinasi, Vol. I, pp. 56 - 68.

Anthropology: The Creation of Man and the Contradiction of God and Iblis, or Spirit and Clay

THE STORY OF ADAM and his creation in the Qur'an is the most profound and advanced expression of humanism that exists. In this story, Adam represents the whole human species, the essence of the human race, man in his philosophical sense, not in the biological sense. When the Qur'an speaks of man in the biological sense, it uses the language of the natural sciences, mentioning sperm, drops of clotted blood, fetus, etc. But when it comes to the creation of Adam, its language is metaphorical and philosophical, full of meaning and symbol. The creation of man, that is, the essence, spiritual destiny and attributes of

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the human race, as it appears in the story of Adam, may be reduced to the following formula:

The spirit of God + putrid clay = man

"Putrid clay" and the "spirit of God" are two symbols, or indications. It is not that man has actually been fashioned of putrid clay [hama' masnun] or of the spirit of God; rather, the first of the two terms refers to lowness, stagnation and absolute passivity, and the second indicates an endless movement toward perfection and infinite exaltation. "Spirit of God" is the best conceivable phrase for expressing this meaning.

The meaning of the Qur'anic statement that man is compounded from the spirit of God and putrid clay is similar to the assertion of Pascal in his book Two Infinites, that man is a being intermediate between two Infinites: an infinity of lowliness and weakness, and an infinity of greatness and glory. There is, however, a great difference between the words of Pascal and the words of the Qur'an, even though they express the same truth; it is the same difference between Pascal and God!

The human situation, to use the terminology of existentialism, or the primordial disposition of man [fitra] - both terms signifying the dual and contradictory nature of man - can be deduced from the Qur'an as follows: man is a free and responsible will occupying a station intermediate between two opposing poles - God and Satan. The combination of these two opposites, the thesis and the antithesis, which exist both in man's nature and in his fate, create motion in him, a dialectic, ineluctable and evolutionary movement, and a constant struggle between the two opposing poles in man's essence and in his life.

The opposing, contradictory compound - God and Satan,

or spirit and clay - that comprises man makes him a dialectic reality[1].

God or the spirit of God, which represents absolute and infinite purity, beauty, splendor, power, creativity, awareness, vision, knowledge, love, mercy, will, freedom, independence, sovereignty and eternity, is present in man as a potentiality, an attraction that draws him toward the summit, to the glory of the heavens; as an ascension toward the sphere of God's sovereignty and being nurtured with the attributes and characteristics of God, as far as knowledge will reach. Aware of all the secrets of nature, man becomes a power enjoying kingship over the world; in front of him there bow down in submission all material and spiritual forces, earth and heaven , the sun and the moon, and even God's angels, including the highest among them. Man is thus a creature and a creator, a servant and a master; he is a conscious, seeing, creative, decisive,

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1- I am, of course, aware that the joining of opposites is impossible, as is also the resolution of contradictions. But these rules pertain to Aristotelian logic, formal and abstract logic. Dialectics, however, has nothing to do with abstract forms, only with objective realities; it discusses not the motion of the mind and intellectual forms, but the objective motion of natural phenomena. In the world of the mind, it is impossible for an object to be hot and cold at the same time, or to be both large and small. In nature, however, this is not only possible, but actually obtains. The intellect cannot conceive of a being simultaneously dead and alive, because death and life cancel each other out, but in nature death and life with each other and within each other; they are the two sides of a single coin. A tree, an animal, a man, a social system, love, maternal tenderness - while all these are living and developing, they are also preparing their own old age and death. Hazrat Ali said; "The breaths a man takes are also the steps by which he advances toward death. "The breath of life itself is a progress toward death

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knowing, wise, purposeful, pure and exalted will, the bearer of God's trust and His vicergent on earth, an eternal creature of paradise.

How and why is this so? Half of man is the spirit of God; this is the thesis, the given, the fundament, that enables him to fly in ascension toward the absolute, toward God and divine character, that impels him to motion. There is, however, a powerful factor opposed to the first, which summons and drags him down to stagnation, solidity, immobility, death, lowliness and ugliness. Then man, who has a divine spirit which flows powerfully and tumultuously as a flood, which broadens and removes all obstacles in its path, causing verdure, gardens and fields to grow in its wake, before finally reaching the limpid waters of the ocean of eternity - then man will become the stagnant pools left behind by a flood. He will be unable to move; he will become stiff and hard and finally shatter, like the potter's sherds that cover the ground, blocking springs and stifling seeds. Nothing will grow from him; he will remain motionless and become a swamp instead of a field, a lagoon instead of an ocean; he will be stagnation instead of movement; death, instead of life; putrid clay, instead of the spirit of God - mud and sediment. The factor that brings all this about is the antithesis, that which negates and contradicts the thesis, what impels man in a direction opposed to the thesis.

Form the combination of these two opposites, struggle and motion arise, as a result of which a perfecting synthesis comes into being.

The distance between the spirit of God and putrid clay is the distance between two infinities; and man is a "hesitation," a pendulum between them, a free with a

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weighty and difficult choice - the choice of the spirit, the spirit of God, while contained within putrid clay and buried beneath mud and sediment.

In one direction lies the highest of the high - perfection, beauty, truth, power, awareness, absolute and infinite will higher and greater than anything that might be imagined, beyond all that is lowly, banal, contemptible, commonplace, and petty - this is the hereafter. In the other direction lies the lowest of the low - defect, ugliness, falsity, weakness, ignorance, absolute bondage, an infinite decline - viler, uglier and more egoistic than anything that might be imagined - this is this world.

And in fact we see that men known to us have risen so far in brilliance of spirit, splendor, beauty, awareness, virtue, purity, courage, faith and generosity, and integrity of character, that they leave us amazed. No being material or immaterial, angel or jinn, has the capacity for similar growth. At the same time, we see other men who in their vileness, impurity, weakness, ugliness, cowardice and criminality have descended lower that any beast, microbe or demon. Man may attain the infinite in vileness, ugliness and evil just as he does in perfection, nobility and beauty. One extremity of man touches God; the other, the devil. Man is situated between two absolute possibilities, each situated at two extremities. He is a high way leading from "minus to the power of infinity" to "plus to the power of infinity." Facing him, traced out across the plain of being, is a highway leading from an infinitely vile minus to an infinitely exalted plus. He is a free and responsible will; he is both a will obliged to choose and the object of his own will and choice. To use the terminology of Brahmanism, he is the way, the wayfarer and the wayfaring. He is engaged

in a constant migration from his self of clay to hid divine self.

Man, this compound of opposites, is a dialectical being, a binary miracle of God[1]. In his essence and life - destiny, he is an "infinite direction," either toward clay or toward God[2]. But apart from this, in actuality man is, of course, precisely what we see in ourselves, what is examined and made known by science.

The Qur'an, moreover, repeatedly discusses the creation and composition of man in scientific, not philosophical, terms. No element of the divine essence exists in him, nor can it exist in him. God exists in man as a potentiality, a possibility, a direction in which man can strive toward

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1- The duality of God and Satan in Islam is not the same as the duality of God and Satan [the "bright Zurvan and the dark Zurvan"] in dualistic religions such as Zoroastrianism and Manicheism. Further, it is not in any way opposed to tauhid. In Islam, there is no question of a contradiction or dualistic warfare in the world between Ahuramazda and Ahriman. The contradiction exists only in man Satan is not the antithesis of Allah; he is His impotent and submissive creature, permitted by God to engage in enmity with man. In other words, Satan has no independent power of himself. He is the antithesis of the divine half of man, and the struggle between light and darkness, Allah and Iblis, plays itself out in the world of men, in societies and individuals; the combination Allah - Iblis yields man as its result. The world of nature is the undisputed realm of God absolute sovereignty; it is all light, goodness and beauty. The contradiction of good and evil does not exist there, and Ahriman counts for nothing

2- There exists a certain apparent similarity between some of my expressions and terminology and the words used by the Sufis, the Indian and Platonic sages, and certain of the Islamic theologians... What I have to say, however, should not be confused with their view...

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God, absolute essence and infinite perfection. The profound verse "Truly we are God's and to Him we shall return" [23: 60], I do not understand as referring to death and the tomb, as do the commentaries commonly in use. These commentaries imply that only when we head for the tomb does God take possession of us, when His servants come and remove us from this world that is supposedly our property. Nor do I understand it like the pantheists, who interpret it in the sense of man becoming merged in the objective essence of God, like a bubble which, bursting, is reabsorbed into the ocean; his self fades away and he becomes immortal in God. The verse does not use the word fihi ["in Him"]; it uses the word ilayhi ["to Him"]. That is, we return to God, not in God; the verse is proposing an orientation of man toward infinite perfection.

On account of his dualistic and contradictory nature, man, this dialectical phenomenon, is compelled to be always in motion. His own self is the stage for a battle between two forces that results in a continuous evolution toward perfection.

This movement is form clay toward God, but where is God? God is in infinity. Man, then, can never attain a final resting place and take up residence in God. The distance between clay and God is the distance that man travels in his search for perfection; but he travels unceasingly, in ascent and upward striving to Him Who is infinite, unbounded and unlimited. Thus the movement of man is from infinite lowliness toward infinite exaltation, and the destination is God, the spirit of God, eternity; it is impossible for him ever to stop!

How disgraceful, then, are all fixed standards. Who can ever fix a standard? Man is a "choice," a struggle, a

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constant becoming. He is an infinite migration, a migration within himself, from clay to God; he is a migrant within his own soul.

The path that has been laid down from clay to God is called "religion." Now we all know that religion [madhhab] means path, not aim; it is a road, a means[1]. All the misfortunes that are observable in religious societies arise from the fact that religion has changed its spirti and direction; its role has changed so that religion has become an aim in itself. If you turn the road into an aim or destination - work on it, adorn it, even worship it generation after generation for hundreds of years, love it and become infatuated with it so that every time its name is mentioned or your eye glimpses it you burst into tears; if you go to war with anyone who looks askance at it, spend all your time and money on decorating, repairing and leveling it, never leave it for even a minute to go in pursuit of your worldly affairs, constantly walk on it, talk about it, and rub its dust into your eyes as if it were some cure - if you do all of this, generation after generation, for hundreds of years, what will you become? You will become lost! Yes, this straight, true and correct roadwill deflect you and hold fashion after having found the road is worse than never to have found the road in the first place.

You have heard that this true, straight path, this smooth and sacred highway, has led thousands of men to their destination. But you has it detained for a whole lifetime, so

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1- The word madhhab is used in Persian to mean "religion" as well as "school of thought," its customary meaning in Arabic. [TR.]

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that in effect you have become like those who have chosen the wrong path which leads them astray and into misguidance.

Why? Because you have made the path a place of recreation; you have turned the high way into some sort of sacred park or clubhouse. Look at the Shi'a. In their belief, the Imam is a person who leads and guides them. But he has become for them, in effect, a sacred and invisible essence, a suprahuman entity to be praised and loved and worshipped and extolled, but nothing else! Religion as a whole, the principles and ordinances of the law, the personages important in religion - they have all become aims in themselves, and are no longer capable of directing you to the true aim and destination. Now prayer is a means; the Qur'an describes it as a means for preventing abomination and evil. But now the words and motions of prayer have become ends in themselves, so that while our knowledge of prayer has become more complex, more sensitive, more technical, the actual effectiveness of our prayer has decreased.

In my view, it is not fortuitous that all the names and expressions used in the vocabulary of Islam to designate the different aspects and dimensions of religion have the meaning of road. The word din [religion] itself has the meaning of road, in addition to the other significances that have been proposed for it, such as sacred wisdom and so forth. Other terms also have the same meaning: silk: a narrow mountain path; shari'at: the path leading down to a river, enabling the thirsty to take water; tariqa: a broad path or road leading form one town to another or one land to another; madhhab: a highway; sirat: a road leading to a place of worship; umma: a group of people moving

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toward a common destination under a single leader and along a single road.

Religion is, therefore, a road or a path, leading from clay to God and conveying man from vileness, stagnation and ignorance, from the lowly life of clay and satanic character, toward exaltation, motion, vision, the life of the spirit and divine character. If it succeeds in doing so, then it is religion in truth. But if it does not, then either you have chosen the wrong path, or you are making wrong use of the right path. In either case, the result will be the same. We see there is no difference here between Muslim and non - Muslim; neither of them attains the goal of the path.

Here someone might say, "Non - Muslims are in fact better situated than Muslims in today's world." This is true. If somebody advances with determination on an incorrect path, he may attain his goal more quickly than somebody who does not know how to make correct use of the right path. If somebody chooses a roundabout, twisting road but walks swiftly along it, he will sooner or later reach his goal. As for the people who are supposedly on the right path, either they are not walking correctly. or they are shuffling along. Maybe they are even sitting down and discussing the merits of the road! Or maybe they are simply walking around in circles, gazing admiringly on themselves; this is an even worse possibility. There are a thousand and one proofs for the correctness and the truth of the path they have chosen, and a thousand and one examples of men before them who have traversed this path and attained the destination. But despite all these signs and proofs, all this certainty and assurance, they have no awareness of their backwardness, no selfdoubt, no

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concern to do something in order to change worshippers of cows have outpaced the worshippers of God, and our pious believers are not even aware of it.

The totality of elements that emerge from the story of Adam in the Qur'an for a comprehensive definition of Adam are, then, the following: man is a theomorphic being in exile, the combination of two opposites, a dialectical phenomenon composed of the opposition "God - Satan" or "spirit - clay." He is a free will, capable of fashioning his own destiny, responsible, committed; he accepts the unique trust of God, and receives the prostration of the angels; he is God's viceregent on earth, but also a rebel against Him; he eats the forbidden fruit of vision; and he is expelled from the garden and banished to this wasteland of nature, with the three aspects of love [=Eve], intellect [=Satan], and rebellion [= the forbidden fruit]. He is commanded to create a human paradise in nature, his place of exile. He is in constant struggle within himself, striving to rise from clay to God, to ascend, so that this animal made of mud and sediment can take on the characteristics of God!

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Translated from Islamshinasi, Vol. I, pp. 68 - 85.

The Philosophy of History: Cain and Abel

ACCORDING TO THE ISLAMIC school of thought, the philosophy of history is based on a certain kind of historical determinism. History represents an unbroken flow of events that, like man himself, is dominated by a dialectical contradiction, a constant warfare between two hostile and contradictory elements that began with the creation of humanity and has been waged at all places and at all time, and the sum total of which constitutes history. History is the

movement of the human species along the course laid down by time, and the human species itself is a microcosm, representing the most perfect expression of being, the most evident manifestation of creation. In it, nature attains to awareness of self, and it moves toward perfection as man himself advances - nature, living, conscious and aware.

To put it differently, man is a manifestation of God's will, the absolute will and consciousness of all being, and man, according to anthropology, is the representative of God in the world, His viceregent upon earth. The history of man, which consists of the record of man's becoming and the formation of his essence, cannot therefore be accidental, something fashioned by events, the plaything of adventurers, banal, vain, aimless, purposeless and meaningless.

History is without doubt a reality, just like the other realities in the world. It began at a certain point, and must inevitably end at a certain point. It must have an aim and a direction.

Where did it begin? Like man himself, with the beginning of the contradiction!

In our discussion of anthropology, we have seen that man is a compound of clay and divine spirit; this is

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apparent from the story of Adam. The story of Adam is also the story of man, man in the real and philosophical meaning of the word. Man begins with the struggle between spirit and clay. God and Satan, within Adam. But where does history begin? What is its point of departure? The struggle between Cain and Abel[1].The sons of Adam were both men, human and natural, but they were at war with each other. One killed the other, and the history of humanity began. The war of Adam was a subjective, inner one that took place within his own essence [or the human race as a whole], but the war between his two sons was an objective one that took place in outer life. The story of Cain and Abel is therefore the source for our philosophy of history, just as that of Adam is the source for our philosophy of man. The war between Cain and Abel is the war between two opposing fronts that have existed throughout history, in the form of a historical dialectic.

1- In this and the following section, Shari'ati is basing his theories not only on the elliptic narrative of the Qur'an [5: 30 - 34], which does not even mention the names of Adam's sons, but also on the traditions that sprang up in amplification and explanation of the Qur'anic account. It is said that both Abel and Cain had twin sisters, and Adam decided that each should marry the other's twin sister. But Cain regarded his own twin sister as more beautiful that Abel's and therefore determined to marry her, not shrinking even from the murder of his brother in order to gain his wish. Some writers, viewing this primordial incest with repugnance, have suggested that the two brother's brides were jinn, not human. See Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wa-l-Umam, I, pp. 137 ff; Tha'alibi, Qisas al - Anbiya, pp. 34 - 37. [TR.]

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History, therefore, like man himself, consists of a dialectical process. The contradiction begins with the killing of Abel by Cain. Now Abel, in my opinion, represents the age of a pasture - based economy, of the primitive socialism that preceded ownership, and Cain represents the system of agriculture, and individual or monopoly ownership. Thereafter a permanent war began so that the whole of history became the stage for a struggle between the party of Cain the killer, and Abel, his victim, or, in other words, the ruler and the ruled. Abel, the pastoralist was killed by Cain the landowner; the period of common ownership of the sources of production - the age of pastoralism, hunting and fishing - the spirit of brotherhood and true faith, came to an end and was replaced by the age of agriculture and the establishment of the system of private ownership, together with religious trickery and transgression against the rights of others. Abel disappeared, and Cain came to the forefront of history, and there he still lives.

I have deduced the foregoing from the fact that when Adam proposes to his sons that they should each offer a sacrifice to God in order to resolve their dispute - Cain having fallen in love with the beautiful betrothed of his brother cain places a handful of withered yellow corn on the altar, while Abel brings a young and valuable red - haired camel. I have therefore considered the latter as representative of pastoralism and the former as representative of agriculture. History tells us that in the age of pastoralism, which was also the age of fishing and hunting, nature was the source of all production [and in the story the camel represents this system of production]. Forests, seas, deserts and rivers - these resources were at

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the disposal of the whole tribe, and the tools of production were mostly men's hands and arms. If in addition to these they had a few simple tools, they were objects anyone could make and own.

Monopolistic or individual ownership of the sources of production [water and land] or the tools of production [cows, plows, etc.] did not exist. Everything was equally at the disposal of everyone. The spirit and the norms of society, paternal respect, steadfastness in fulfilling moral obligations, absolute and inviolable obedience to the limitations of collective life, innate purity and sincerity of the religious conscience, a pacific spirit of love and forebearance - these were among the moral characteristics of man in that system of production, and we may take Abel as representative of them.

When man made the acquaintance of agriculture, his life society and whole make - up became exposed to a profound revolution, which, in my view, constitutes the greatest revolution in history. It was a revolution that produced a new man, a powerful and evil man, as well as the age of civilization and discrimination.

The agricultural system resulted in a restricting of the sources of production present in nature. It brought about the emergence of advanced tools of production, complex relations of production; and since arable land, unlike forests and seas, could not be freely at the disposition of all, the need appeared for the first time in human life for men to arrogate part of nature to their own selves and deprive others of it - in a word, private ownership.

Before this, the individual had not existed in human society; the tribe itself was the individual. But now, with the coming of agriculture, that unitary society, where all

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men were like the brothers in a single household, was divided. The first day that a piece of land that had been owned in common was taken from nature and became the exclusive right of one person to the exclusion of all others, no law yet existed under the name of law, religion or inheritance; it was purely a matter of force. The strength of the more powerful members of the tribe in the system of pastoral ownership had served to protect the tribe and to increase its social prestige, or its sustenance form hunting and fishing; it fulfilled both of these functions for the sake of the tribe. But now it became the sole source for the determination of "rights," the measure of private consumption, and the primary factor in the acquisition of private ownership. At this critical point in history, the exact opposite of Marx's theory applies; it is not ownership that is a factor in the acquisition of power, but the converse. Power and coercion were the factor that first bestowed ownership on the individual. Power brought about private ownership, and then in turn, private ownership bestowed permanence on power and strengthened it by making it something legal and natural.

Private ownership bisected the unitary society. When acquisition and private possession became the norm, nobody was willing to content himself abstemiously with the amount he genuinely needed. In any event, it was left to every individual to determine the extent of his need. People therefore ceased the practice of acquiring property when they were obliged to rather than when they wished to. By contrast, under the previous system, the system of Abel or of collective ownership, men had engaged in hunting and fishing only to the extent of their needs. Nature, free and generous, was always at their

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disposal. Labor was merely a means for the satisfaction of need, and whoever was more skilled in production gained more.

But now the open and abundant spread of nature - its forests and seas - had been left behind and men crowded around the poverty stricken and pitiable meal offered them by tillage and land. In greed and acquisitiveness they began to struggle and with each other. In this new form of social life, the eagles and the vultures - the crows, in the story of Cain - broke the wings of the weaker birds and drove them away. Previously, society had been like a flock of migratory birds, moving across desert and down river banks and the shores of the oceans in harmony and unison. But now for the sake of the carrion of private property and the desire of monopoly, the birds, full of savage hatred for each other, were pecking and clawing at each other.

Finally, the human family that had been overflowing with freedom, peace, tranquillity and vitality, became transformed into two warring and contradictory camps. On one side was a minority that possessed land in excess of need and in excess of its ability to work it, and that therefore needed the labor of others. On the other side was a majority that, on the contrary, possessed only hunger and the ability to work, but had neither land nor tools. Under the new social system, the fate of the majority was clear - slavery. The class now subjected to slavery had nothing - no land, no water, no honor, no ancestry, no morality, no dignity, no thought, no art, no learning, no value, no rights, no truth, no spirit, no meaning, no education - in short, nothing in this world or the next.

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For all these things of which they were deprived depended on land and the soil, on the fruits that orchards and fields yielded. These things were therefore the monopoly of the class that possessed the sources of production, not only material tasks and the opportunity and capital needed to engage in education and the cultivation of abstract culture, literature, science and the arts. The two opposing classes used to live in a uniform society, animated by a single spirit, a single sentiment, a single concept of honor and dignity - that of the tribe. They used to venture together into the forest empty - handed, and out to the ocean. The riches of nature, like the air surrounding them which they inhaled together, or like the landscapes encompassing them which they beheld together, were at the disposal of both of them, at the disposal of the tribe. They were equal with each other, and therefore they were brothers. They were both sons of Adam, and Adam was from clay. Now, because of the carrion of property, they had drawn apart and were facing each other in hostility, and enmity prevailed between them. The ties of kinship had been replaced by the bonds of servitude; equality had been sacrified to discrimination, and brotherhood, to fratricide. Religion had become a means of deception and the acquisition of material benefit, and nothing else. The spirit of humanity, conciliatoriness, and compassion, gave way to the spirti of hatred, rivalry, the worship of wealth, acquisitiveness, desire for monopoly, deception, coercion, oppression, self - worship, cruelty, murderousness, transgression, the desire for domination, the claim of superiority, the creation of privilege, the despising of men, the killing of the weak, the trampling underfoot of everything and everyone for the sake of property, the

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killing of brothers, the torturing of father, and even the deceiving of God.

We can thus attain a profound understanding of the contradiction between the two types - Abel, the man of faith, peaceable and self - sacrificing, and Cain, the worshipper of passions, the transgressor, the fratricide - by means of psychological analysis and on the basis of a scientific and sociological examination of their upbringing and family, their environment and religion. In that original environment, we assume that human society had not yet been fully formed, and that different intellectual environments, varying cultural atmospheres and social groups had not yet come into being. We cannot therefore say that each of the two brothers was subject to the influence of differing religious or educational factors, at least not to the extent that they should have grown up as exact opposites, each symbolizing a certain type.

Both scientific and logical method demand that when two phenomena, though similar in every respect, develop in differing or opposing directions, we should draw up a list of all the causes, factors and conditions that affect each of them. We will then be able to delete all that they hold in common and arrive at the factor or factors that are in opposition or contradiction. The only factor that differentiates the two brothers from each other in the story consists of their different occupations. These differing occupations set the two brothers in a particular economic and social position; they have contradictory types of work, structures of production, and economic systems.

Our theory is clearly supported by the exact correspondence, on the one hand, between the type of Abel and the class psychology and the social behavior of

man in the period of primitive socialism, of free pastoral hunting and fishing economy; and on the other hand, between the type of Cain and the social and class characteristics of man in the period of class society, the system of slavery and master psychology.

Now the commentators on the Qur'an and other religious scholars have said in explanation of the narrative concerning Cain and Abel that the purpose for its revelation was the condemnation of murder. But this is very superficial and over simplifies the matter. Even if my theory is not correct, the narrative of the two brothers cannot be as slight in meaning and purpose as they hold it to be. The Abrahamic religions, especially Islam, depict this story as the first great event that occurs on the threshold of human life in this world. It is not credible that their only purpose in so doing should be the mere condemnation of murder. Whatever may be the underlying sense of the narrative, it is surely far more than a simple ethical tale, yielding the conclusion, "It has thus become clear to us now that murder is an evil deed, so we must try never to commit this shameful act. Let us avoid doing it, particularly to our brothers!"

In my opinion, the murder of Abel at the hands of Cain represents a great development, a sudden swerve in the course of history, the most important event to have occurred in all human life. It interprets and explains that event in a most profound fashion - scientifically, sociologically, and with reference to class. The story concerns the end of primitive communism, the disappearance of man's original system of equality and brotherhood, expressed in the hunting and fishing system of productivity [equated with Abel], and its replacement by

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agricultural production, the creation of private ownership, the formation of the first class society, the system of discrimination and exploitation, the worship of wealth and lack of true faith, the beginning of enmity, rivalry, greed, plunder, slavery and fratricide [equated with Cain]. The death of Abel and the survival of Cain are objective, historical realities, and the fact that henceforth religion, life, economy, government and the fate of men were all in the hands of Cain represents a realistic, critical and progressive analysis of what happened. Similarly, the fact that Abel died without issue and mankind today consists of the heirs of Cain[1] also means that the society, government, religion, ethics, world - view and conduct of Cain have become universal, so that the disequilibrium and instability of thought and morality that prevail in every society and every age derive from this fact.

The story of Cain and Abel depicts the first day in the life of the sons of Adam on this earth [their marriage with their sisters][2] as being identical with the beginning of contradiction, conflict and ultimately warfare and fratricide. This confirms the scientific fact that life, society and history are based on contradiction and struggle, and that contrary to the belief of the idealists, the fundamental factors in all three are economics and sexuality, which come to predominate over religious faith, brotherly ties, truth and morality.

The source of the conflict between Cain and Abel was

1- We mean heirs in a typological sense, not a genealogical one.

2- Certain pious believers have invented various devices for legitimizing the marriages of Cain and Abel in order to free mankind of the blemish of bastardy. However, it is a little late for that! [See our earlier footnote on p. 98. TR.]

the following. Cain preferred the sister who had been betrothed to Abel to his own fiancee. He insisted on having her, and demanded the betrothal that had been concluded with Adam's approval be annulled. The two brothers went before Adam, who then proposed to them that they each offer a sacrifice. Whoever had his sacrifice accpeted should have the sister, and the loser should accept the result. Cain tried trickery, brought his trickery to bear and brought some withered corn as his sacrifice; naturally, it was not accepted. [See how Cain always practices treachery whenever he feels the need, even toward God! Every representative of the "system of Cain" behaves in the same way.] Again Cain resorted to trickery, and preferring his own passions to God's word, he vilely slaughtered Abel [who, although he was not the original complainant and desired nothing of Cain, had offered God his best camel, his most precious possession, a sacrifice which was of course accepted].

The dialogue that takes place between them at the time of Abel's death is also instructive. Cain threatens him with death, bul Abel replies softly, kindly and submissively. "But I will not raise my hand against you."

The society and system represented by Abel were thus subdued by the aggressive and acquisitive system of Cain, without there being any resistance offered.

When considering the story of Cain and Abel, I wondered at first whether the question of sexuality might not be depicted in it as a stronger and more primary factor than economics. Might not Freudianism be correct in this case? The first word uttered in the conflict was, after all, "woman," just as everything began with Eve in the case

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of their father.

But if we think a little more deeply, we see that matters are not this simple. It is true that the first source of the conflict is Cain's attraction to the betrothed of Abel; so far, Freud would appear to be right. But were Freud to accept that another cause, or set of causes and factors, existed prior to sexuality - which he regards as the primary cause - he would have to agree that the story cannot be analyzed in the sense of primacy of the sexual factor. For before the question of sexuality arises, this question too must be considered; it is true that Cain begins the dispute with his brother on account of his attraction to his betrothed, but why does Cain of the two brothers display this type of behavior? For considering the important fact that both brothers had a similar heredity and environment, they ought to have conducted themselves in an identical manner, both showing the same determination and steadfastness[1] Then again, even if it be scientifically possible that under indentical conditions, only one of the two brothers should manifest such conduct, why was that one Cain? There is also this third point, that the general conclusion to be drawn from the text of the story and the dialogue between the two brothers and their respective forms of behavior, as well as the view of the narrator of the story - this being the Qur'an, and also the Christian and more particularly Jewish texts, not to

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1- For example, it is not possible to say that they were both brothers, but one studied in Qum while the other studied in Paris, one read Islamic periodicals and the other, frivolous magazines! Or that one of them had a sayyida for a mother and the other, a Swede!

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mention books of exegesis, history and Islamic lore - the conclusion to be drawn from all of these is that Abel is presented as the type of good and Cain as the type of evil. I use the word "type" and not "character", for the latter would imply that Cain possessed only evil characteristics such as lust and materialism, and that Abel possessed only good characteristics such as religiosity and sensitivity. No, one of them is the complete manifestation of and evil man, and the other of a good man.

I have therefore reached the conclusion that Abel is a man of sound disposition; an inhuman and unbalanced social system, form of work and economic life have not alienated, disfigured, perverted or polluted him; they have not made of him a crippled and defective being, one of the "fractured," to use the expression of Marcuse, polluted and laden with complexes. At the same time that he is filled with love for his father, affection for his brother, belief in God and steadfastness for the sake of justice, and does not display the same passionate insistence as his brother on the fulfillment of his sexual appetites, he is not neutral and insensitive ot the face of beauty. For throughout the various tribulations to which Cain subjects him - even threatening him with death on several occasions - he did not say even once, in pious abstention: "Here, brother, I renounce her. She's not worth arguing over; take her, she's yours."

Abel was a man, a "son of Adam," neither more nor less. All the texts that relate this story present him in this light. The reason for this, in my opinion, is that he lived in a society without contradiction and discrimination; his work was free and unfettered - "He was neither mounted on a camel, nor laden like a donkey; neither a master of slaves,

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nor servant to a king."[1] He was merely a man. In a society where all enjoy equally and possess in common all the bounties of life, all the material and spiritual resources of society, all will necessarily be equal and brothers, and the spirit of salubrity, beauty, kindness, purity, sincerity, love and goodness will be cultivated.

Cain is not inherently evil. His essence is the same as that of Abel, and nobody is inherently evil, for the essence of everyone is the same as the essence of Adam. What makes Cain evil is an anti - human social system, a class society, a regime of private ownership that cultivates slavery and mastery and turns men into wolves, foxes or sheep. It is a setting where hostility, rivalry, cruelty and venality flourish; humiliation and lordship - the hunger of some and the gluttony of others, greed, opulence and deception; a setting where the philosophy of life is founded on plundering, exploitation, enslavement, consuming and abusing, lying and flattering; where life consists of oppressing or being oppressed, of selfishness, aristocratic arrogance, hoarding, thievery and ostentation; where human relations are based on the giving and receiving of blows, on exploiting or being exploited; where human philosophy consists of maximum enjoyment, maximum wealth, maximum lust, and maximum coercion; where all things revolve around egoism and the sacrifice of all things to the ego, a vile, crude and avaricious ego.

It is all this that makes of Cain - the brother of good, kind, pure Abel; the immediate son of Adam - a creature ready to lie to commit treachery, to drag his faith into the

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1- A line quoted from the Gulistan of sa'di. [TR.]

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mud with a quiet conscience, and ultimately to behead his brother, all for the sake of his sexual inclinations - not even some crazed and powerful infatuation, but straightforward and transient lust! No, Mr. Freud, he does all of these things not because his sexual instincts are stronger than those of others, but because [and this is quite simple] human virtues have grown exceedingly weak in him, weaker even than some feeble expression of lust. If what Freud said were true, and the sexual factor were so strong in him that he would do anything to attain the object of his desire, then he would have been the one to offer up a precious red - haired camel at the altar, not Abel! If what Freud said were true, we would see Cain running out into the fields and burning all his crops as soon as his father made the suggestion.

We see, on the contrary, that all Cain is ready to do in order to gain God's pleasure and win his lost love is to sacrifice a handful of grain, grain that was, moreover, yellowing and withered.

My purpose in examining the story in such detail has been first, to refute the idea that it is exclusively ethical in purpose, for it treats of something far more serious than the topic for a mere essay, and secondly, to make clear that it is not the story of a dispute between two brothers. Instead, it treats two wings of human society, two modes of production; it is the story of history, the tale of bifurcated humanity in all ages, the beginning of a war that is still not concluded.

The wing represented by Abel is that of the subject and the oppressed; i.e., the people, those who throughout history have been slaughtered and enslaved by the system of Cain, the system of private ownership which has gained

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ascendancy over human society. The war between Cain and Abel is the permanent war of history which has been waged by every genetation. The banner of cain has always been held high by the ruling classes, and the desire to avenge the blood of Abel has been inherited by succeeding generations of his decendants - the subjected people who have fought for justice, freedom and true faith in a struggle that has continued, one way or another, in every age. The weapon of Cain has been religion, and the weapon of Abel has also been religion.

It is this reason that the war of religion against religion has also been a constant of human history. On the one hand is the religion of shirk, of assigning partners to God, a religion that furnishes the justification for shirk in society and class discrimination. On the other hand is the religion of tauhid, of the oneness of God, which furnishes the justification for the unity of all classes and races. The trans historical struggle between Abel and Cain is also the struggle between tauhid and shirk, between justice and human unity on the one hand, and social and racial discrimination on the other. There has existed throughout human history, and there will continue to exist until the last day, a struggle between the religion of deceit, stupefaction and justification of the status quo and the religion of awareness, activism and revolution. The end of time will come when Cain dies and the "system of Abel" is established anew. That inevitable revolution will mean the end of the history of Cain; equality will be realized throughout the world, and human unity and brotherhood will be established, through equity and justice. This is the inevitable direction of history. A universal revolution will take place in all areas of human life; the oppressed classes

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of history will take their revenge. The glad tidings of God will be realized: "We have willed that We should place under obligation those who have been weakened and oppressed on the earth, by making them the leaders of men and heirs to the earth" [Qur'an, 28: 5].

This inevitable revolution of the future will be the culmination of the dialectical contradiction that began with the battle of Cain and Abel and has continued to exist in all human societies, between the ruler and the ruled. The inevitable outcome of history will be the triumph of justice, equity and truth[1].

It is the responsibility of every individual in every age to determine his stance in the constant struggle between the two wings we have described, and not to remain a spectator. While believing in a certain form of historical determinism, we believe also in the freedom of the individual and his human responsibility, which lie at the very heart of the process of historical determinism. We do not see any contradiction between the two, because history advances on the basis of a universal and scientifically demonstrable process of determinism, but "I" as an individual human being must choose whether to move forward with history and accelerate its determined course

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1- Justice ['adl] refers mostly to the legal relations between individuals and groups, on the basis of the laws laid down in society. Equity [qist] refers to the equal enjoyment by all men of the fruits of their labor and of their rights, whether or not this is recognized by law. Justice implies the existence of a judicial system, and equity relates to the structure of society. In order to have justice, the judiciary must be reformed; in order to have equity, the social system must be changed - not superficially, but in its fundamental structure.

with the force of knowledge and science, or to stand with ignorance, egoism, opportunism in the face of history, and be crushed.

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Translated from Islamshinasi, Vol. I, pp. 85 - 94.

The Dialectic of Sociology

SOCIOLOGY IS ALSO FOUNDED on a dialectic. Society, like history, is composed of two classes - the class of Abel and the class of Cain - for history is simply the movement of society along the line traced out by time. Society represents, therefore, a fragment corresponding to a certain time - sector in history. If we remove the concept of time from the history of a people, we will be left with the society of that people.

In my opinion, there are only two possible structures in all of human society - the structure of Cain and the structure of Abel. I do not regard slavery, serfdom, bourgeoisie, feudalism and capitalism as constituting social structures. These are all part of the superstructure of

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society. Marx has put all these five stages - together with a special stage he calls the Asiatic mode of production - on the same level as primitive socialism and perfected socialism [i. e., the classless society that is ultimately to come into being]. He has regarded them as all belonging to the same category and designated them all as "structures." According to Marx, when the village khan becomes the urban hajji, and the peasants become workers, a change takes place in the structure of society, just like the change that occurred when the common ownership of the sources of production gave way to private ownership, with one group owning everything and another group lacking everything. To equate the two changes is remarkable!

No more than two structures can exist in society: one where society is the lord and master of its own destiny, and all men work for it and its benefit, and another in which individuals are owners, and the masters of their own destinies and the destiny of society. However, within each of these two structures, there exist different modes of production, forms of relationship, tools, resources and commodities; all these constitute the "superstructure." For example, within the structure of Abel, it is possible to have economic socialism [i. e., collective ownership]; the pastoral and hunting mode of production, and the hunting mode of production [both existed in the primitive commune]; the industrial mode of production [in the classless, post - capitalist society]; and even the mode of production, the tools and commodities of the period of the urban bourgeoisie; and the artisan and peasant culture of the feudal period with its socialist structure.

At the opposing pole, that of the "structure of Cain," or economic monopoly and private ownership, various economic

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systems, forms of class relations, and tools, types and resources of production, may also exist. Slavery, serfdom, feudalism, bourgeoisie, industrial capitalism, and - as its culmination - amperialism, all belong to the structure of Cain.

But in my opinion, Marx has mixed certain criteria in his philosophy of history, so that his classification of the stages of social development has become confused. He has confused three distinct entities: the form of ownership, the form of class relations, and the form of the tools production. According to Marx, the stages of historical development, each of which he regards as a change in social structure, are the following:

1] Primitive socialism, the period in which society lives colectivcly and on the basis of equality, in which production consists of hunting and fishing, and there is joint ownership of the sources of production - the forests and streams, Here, the criterion of the structure is the form of ownership, which is collective.

2] Slavery, the period in which society is divided into two classes, master and slave, and the relationship between these two classes is that of owner and property, or man and animal. The master has the right to do what he wills with his slave, his tool - to kill him, beat him, or sell him. Here, the detemining factor in the structure is the form of human relationship.

3] Serfdom, the period in which one class owns the land, and the other class, the serfs, although leberated from slavery to masters, has in effect become a slave to the land and tied to it. They are bought and sold together with the land, and their status vis - a - vis the landowner is higher than that of the slave but lower than that of the

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peasant.

4] Feudalism, a mode of production based on agriculture and land ownership. The landowner is a master who enjoys political power over the mass of the peasants, within certain limits. He levies taxes, and possesses certain moral and inborn privileges; he possesses "honor and nobility" based on blood and lineage; he has inherited them and the masses are deprived of them.

5] Bourgeoisie, a structure based on acquisition and commerce, on handicrafts and urban life, and the exchange of money. The middle class - i. e., the class intermediate between peasant and landlord, between aristocracy and serf - the shopkeeper, the tradesman, the artisan, the urban craftsman - comes into its own, and with its newly acquired wealth, takes the place of the former aristocracy of ancient lineage and noble birth. The landlord - peasant relationship disappears, and tendencies to liberalism and democracy make their appearance.

6] The full development of the bourgeoisie and industry. Capital is accumulated and production becomes concentrated in large - scale industry. Shops give way to supermarkets, small rooms in the bazaar to companies, small artisan workshops to vast factories, moneychangers to banks, caravansarais to stock exchanges, and merchants to capitalists. In place of the exchange of money, drafts, cheques, shares and credits become the symbols of economic exchange and commercial transaction. The peasants are drawn from their fields, and the workers from their bazaars, ateliers and shops, to the factories and the poles of industrial production. There, they are place everyday under increasing pressure. Since the means of production and the tools of labor are no longer spade,

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pick, saw and ax, or cow, donkey and plow, but only machinery, the worker becomes totally at the disposal of the capitalist. He faces him emptyhanded, and can demand only a wage for the labor of his hand. He is more of a captive and more exploited than before. It is for this reason that he is no longer called worker, but proletarian.

7] As the capitalists become fewer in number and greater in wealth, and both industry and capital continually expand, the industrial proletariat is placed under ever - increasing pressure. But it becomes stronger at the same time, and the dialectical war between the two poles ends in the triumph of the proletariat. The private ownership of industry and capital is abolished; public ownership takes its place; and a classless society comes into being.

We can see clearly that the first and seventh stages are characterized by the same structure, as are the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth stages. Throughout history, then, only two structures have existed, and it is not possible for there to be more than two. For example, the structure existing in feudalism and industrial capitalism is the same; in both cases we see private ownership of the tools and resources of production. Again in both cases, the social structure is based upon class; the only differences are the tools of production, the form of production, and, as a result, the outer form of the relations of production. The converse also holds true: it is possible for the tools, form and relations of production to be the same, but for the structure to be different. For example, a society that engages in agricultural production, with tools that are unchanged, that has no notion of industry or capitalism and no developed bourgeoisie, may establish a socialist structure, a system of collective ownership, by means of

revolution, war with external forces or internal coup d'etat.

Once I and my fellow tribesman lived together in equality and brotherhood, hunting and fishing; a single structure existed in our society. Then he became an owner, and I, one of the deprived; he, the ruler, and I, the ruled. The form of things changed, the tools and the mode of production, but he remained an owner and did not work, and I remained one of the deprived and worked. One day, I was a slave and he was the master. Then I became a serf and he became the lord. Then I became a peasant and he became the landlord. Later still, I laid down my spade, and he abandoned his horse, and we both came to the city. He bought a few taxis with the proceeds of his land, and I became a taxi - diver. Now he has a factory, and I am the proletarian working in it! When and in what respect did the structure ever change? It was only the forms, the names, the tools, the forms of labor that changed; all these things relate to the superstructure. In all periods, with the exception of the period of primordial equality and fraternity, he retained his position of ruler and I, my position of ruled, running back and forth in his service. The structure will change only when we again both go out to work on the same piece of land as before, with the same cow, plow and spade as before!

It is possible, then, to divide society in accordance with these two structures, into two poles, the "pole of Cain" and the "pole of Abel."

1] The pole of Cain. The ruler = king, owner, aristocracy. In the primitive and backward stages of social development, this pole is represented by a single individual, a single force that exercises power and absorbs all three powers [king, owner and aristocracy] into self; it represents

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a single visage, the visage of Cain. But at later stages in the development and evolution of the social system, of civilization and culture, and the growth of the different dimensions of social life and the class structure, this pole acquires three separate dimensions and presents itself under three different aspects. It has a political manifestation - power, an economic manifestation - wealth, and a religious manifestation - asceticism.

In the Qur'an, the Pharaoh is the symbol of the ruling political power; Croesus [Qarun] is the symbol of the ruling economic power; and Balaam is the symbol of the official, ruling clergy. They are the treefold manifestation of the single Cain.

These three manifestations are referred to in the Qur'an as mala', mutraf and rahib, meaning, respectively, the avaricious and brutal, the gluttons and the overfed, and the official clergy, the long - bearded demagogues. These three classes are constantly engaged in, respectively, dominating, exploiting and deceiving the people[1].

1- Islam has abolished all forms of official mediation between God and man, and the Qur'an mentions the third manifestation of Cain - the official clergy - with harsh words, even going so far as to curse them and compare them to donkeys and dogs. The Prophet of Islam said: "Any beard longer than a man's hand shall be in hellfire, "and he aslo commanded men to keep short their sleeves and the hems of their garments. All of this is a sign of the struggle that Islam has waged against the concept of an official clergy that exists in all other religions, and the attention it has paid to their deviationist role in stupefying the people and distorting the truth. What is imporant to remember is that Islam has no clergy; the word "clergy" [ruhaniyun] is recent, a borrowing from Christianity. We have scholars of religion; they do not constitute official authorities who impose themselves by way of heredity or monopolistic powers.

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2] The pole of Abel. The ruled = God - the people. Confronting the threefold class of king - owner - aristocracy is the class of the people, al - nas. The two classes have opposed and confronted each other throughout history. In the class society, Allah stands in the same rank as al - nas, in such a fashion that wherever in the Qur'an social matters are mentioned, Allah and al - nas are virtually synonymous. The two words are often interchangeable, and yield the same meaning.

For example, in the verse beginning "If ye lend Allah a goodly loan ..." [Qur'an, 64: 17], it is obvious that what is meant by God is in reality "people," for God has no need of any loans from you.

In the affairs of society, therefore, in all that concerns the social system, but not in credal matters such as the order of the cosmos, the words al - nas and Allah belong together. Thus when it is said, "Rule belongs to God," the meaning is that rule belongs to the people, not to those who present themselves as the representatives or the sons of God, as God Himself or as one of His close relatives. When it is said, "Property belongs to God," the meaning is that capital belongs to the people as a whole, not to

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They are simply specialized scholars who have come into being in Islamic society as the result of a necessity, not on an institutionalized basis. They derive their influence, presence and power in society from the people and the free and natural choice of the members of society. They are normal individuals, either students who piously study religion with effort and the endurance of hardship, or scholars who teach and conduct research. If their ranks have been penetrated by the illiterate, this is because of the general illiteracy of society or other factors. The garb they wear is not that of an official clergy, but that of knowledge, personal investigation, and research.

Croesus[1]. When it is said, "Religion belongs to God," the meaning is that the entire structure and content of religion belongs to the people; it is not a monopoly held by a certain institution or certain people known as "clergy" or "church."

The word "people" [al - nas] has a profound meaning and distinct significance in Islam. It is only the people as a whole who are the representatives of God and His "family" [al - nas iyalu' Llah]. The Qur'an begins in the name of God and ends in the name of people. The Ka'ba is the House of God, but the Qur'an also calls it the "house of the people" and the "free house" [al - bayt al - 'atiq] [22: 29, 33], as opposed to other houses that are in the bond of private ownership. We see here that the world al - nas does not denote a mere collection of individuals. On the contrary, it has the sense of "society" as opposed to "individuals." The word al - nas is a singular noun with the

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1- Mu'awiya said, "Property belongs to God," and Abu Dharr reported, "You say this in order to draw the conclusion that since I am the representative of God, property belongs to me. Say instead, 'Property belongs to the people.'" The celebrated dictum "People are empowered over their own property, "from which the principle of taslit [empowering] in Islamic jurisprudence has been derived, means exactly the opposite of what is commonly thought. People have regarded it as constituting a religious justification for individual ownership and the sanctity of private capital. They have interpreted "people" as meaning "individuals," whereas on the contrary, what is intended is "people's ownership" of property, as opposed to the ownership of those individuals who have gained control of the wealth of the people through plunder, usurpation, exploitation, whether "legaly" or "illegallyf" The subsequent addition of the word "and their own persons" at the end of the hadith may have had the purpose of further reinforcing the concept of individuality at the expense of that of al - nas

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sense of a plural ; it is a word without a singular. What word could better convey the concept of "society," something possessed of an identity totally independent from all of its individual members.

All societies that have existed throughout history, whether they have been defined in national, political or economic terms, have been founded on a system of contradiction, a contradiction that has existed at its very heart. Within every class society, two hostile and opposing classes have existed: on the one hand, king, owner and aristocracy, and on the other, God and the people[1]. On the one hand, religions in their multiplicity; on the other, the one religion.

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1- According to the Qur'an [94: 1 - 3], Allah is the Lord of the People, king of the People, and the God of the People. That is, He does not belong to the aristocracy, to the prominent minority in society, to the elite. Note carefully these three concepts relating to Allah and His relationship with men, as well as the opposites by each of them

Tranlated from Islamshinasi, Vol. 1, pp. 97 - 98.

The Ideal Society - the Umma

THE IDEAL SOCIETY OF ISLAM is called the umma. Taking the place of all the similar concepts which in different languages and cultures designate a human agglomeration or society, such as "society." "nation," "race," "people," "tribe," "clan," etc., is the single word umma, a word imbued with progressive spirit and implying a dynamic, committed and ideological social vision.

The word umma derives from the root amm, which has the sense of pathe and intention. The umma is, therefore, a society in which a number of individuals, possessing a common faith and goal, come together in harmony with the intention of advancing and moving toward their common goal.

While other expressions denoting human agglomerations

have taken unity of blood or soil and the sharing of material benefit as the criterion of society, Islam, by choosing the word umma, has made intellectual responsibility and shared movement toward a common goal the basis of its social philosophy.

The infrastructure of the umma is the economy, because "Whoever has no worldly life has no spiritual life." Its social system is based on equity and justice and ownership by the people, on the revival of the "system of Abel," the society of human equality and thus also of brotherhood - the classless society. This is a fundamental principle, but it is not the aim, as in Western socialism, which has retained the world - view of the Western bourgeoisie. The political philosophy and the form of regime of the umma is not the democracy of heads, not irresponsible and directionless liberalism which is a plaything of contesting social forces, not putrid aristocracy, not anti - popular dictatorship, not a self - imposing oligarchy. It consists rather of "purity of leadership" [not the leader, for that would be fascism], committed and revolutionary leadership, responsible for the movement and growth of society on the basis of its worldview and ideology, and for the realization of the divine destiny of man in the plan of creation. This is the true meaning of imamate!

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Trnslated from islamshinasi, Vol 1,

pp. 98 - 104.

The Ideal Man - The Viceregent of God

THE IDEAL MAN IS the theomorphic man in whom the spirit of God has overcome the half of his being that relates to Iblis, to clay and to sediment. He has been freed from hesitation and the contradiction between the "two infinites." "Take on the characteristics of God" - this is our whole philosophy of education, our sole standard! For it is a negation of all fixed and conventional standards in favor of assuming the characteristics and attributes of God. It is a progression toward the absolute goal and absolute perfection, and eternal and infinite evolution, not a molding in stereotyped forms of uniform men.

This man, the man that ought to be but is not, is bidimensional man, a bird capable of flying with both

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wings. He is not the man of those cultures and civilization that cultivate good men and powerful men separately from each other - on the one hand, men pure and pious but with weak consciousness and awareness, and on the other hand, powerful and brilliant geniuses, but with narrow hearts and hands polluted by sin. There are, on the one hand, men whose hearts are devoted to the inner life, to beauty and the mysteries of the spirit, but whose lives are spent in poverty, decline, humiliation and weakness, like those hundreds of thousands of Indian ascetics who despite their spirituality, their inner wonders, their subtle and exalted feelings, were for long years the playthings and wretched prisoners of a handful of English colonels. On the other hand, there are men who fend the earth, the mountains, the sea and the heavens, with the power of their industry, who create a life overflowing with abundance, enjoyment and prosperity, but in whom feeling and all sense of value have been suspended, and the peculiarly human capacity to perceive the spirit of the world,the profundity of life, the creation of beauty, and the belief in something higher than nature and history has been weakened or paralyzed.

Ideal man passes through the very midst of nature and comes to understand God; he seeks out mankind and thus attains God. He does not bypass nature and turn his back on mankind. he holds the sword of Caesar in his hand and he has the heart of Jesus in his breast. He thinks with the brain of Socrates and loves God with the heart of Hallaj. As Alexis Carrel desired, he is a man who understands the beauty of science and the beauty of God; he listens to the words of Pascal and the words of Descartes.

Like the Buddha, he is delivered from the dungeon of

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pleasure - seeking and egoism; like Lao Tse, he reflects on the profundity of his primordial nature; and like Confucius, he meditates on the fate of society.

Like Spartacus, he is a rebel against slaveowners, and like Abu Dharr, he scatters the seed for the revolution of the hungry. Like Jesus, he bears a message of love and reconciliation, and like Moses, he is the messenger of jihad and deliverance.

He is a man whom philosophical thought does not make inattentive to the fate of mankind, and whose involvement in politics does not lead to demagoguery and fame - seeking. Science has not deprived him of the taste of a faith, and faith has not paralyzed his power of thought and logical deduction. Piety has not made of him a harmless ascetic, and activism and commitment have not stained his hands with immorality. He is a man of jihad and ijtihad, of poetry and the sword, of solitude and commitment, of emotion and genius, of strength and love, of faith and knowledge. He is a man uniting all the dimensions of true humanity. He is a man whom life has not made a one - dimensional, factured and defeated creature, alienated from his own self. Through servitude to God, he has delivered himself from servitude to things and to people, and his submission to the absolute will of God has summoned him to rebellion against all forms of compulsion. He is a man who has dissolved his transient individuality in the eternal identity of the human race, who throuhg the negation of self becomes everlasting.

He has accepted the heavy Trust of God, and for this very reason, he is a responsible and committed being, with the free exercise of his will. He does not perceive his perfection as lying in the creation of a private relationship

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with God, to the exclusion of men; it is, rather, in struggle for the perfection of the human race, in enduring hardship, hunger, deprivation and torment for the sake of the liberty, livelihood and well - being of men, in the furnace of intellectual and social struggle, that he attains piety, perfection and closeness to God.

He is not a man who has been formed by his environment; on the contrary, it is he who has formed his environment. he has delivered himself from all the forms of compulsion that constantly press down upon man and impose their stereotypes on him by means of science, technology, sociology and selfawareness, through faith and awareness. He is free of the compulsion of society and environment; guided by science and thechnology, he has freed himself from these three prisons. As for the fourth prison, that of the self, he has liberated himself from it by means of love. he has rebelled against the ego, subdued it and refashioned it.

Liberating his character from the inherited norms of his race and the conventions of his society - all of which are relative and the product of environment - and discovering eternal and divived values, he takes on the characteristics of God and attains the nature of the absolute. He no longer acts virtuously as a duty imposed upon him, and his ethics are no longer a collection of restraints forced upon him by the social conscience. To be good has become identical with his nature, and exalted values are the fundamental components of his essence; they are inherent to his being, his living, his thinking, his loving.

Art is not a plaything in his hands; it is not a means for gaining pleasure, for diversion, for stupefaction, for the expenditure of accumulated energy. It is not a servant to

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sexuality, politics or capital. Art is the special trust given to man by God. it is the creative pen of the Maker, given by Him to his viceregent so that he might make a second earth and a second paradise, new forms of life, beauty, thought, spirit, message, a new heaven, a new time. God possesses absolute freedom, absolute awareness and absolute creative power. Ideal man, the bearer of God's trust, he whom God has fashioned in His own form, is and eternal will overflowing with beauty, virtue and wisdom. In all of nature, only man has attained to a relative freedom, a relative awareness, and a relative creative power. For God created him in His own image and made of him His relative, telling him, "If you seek Me, take your own self as an indication."

Ideal man has three aspects: truth, goodness and beauty - in other words, knowledge, ethics and art.

In nature, he is the viceregent of God; he is a committed will with the three dimensions of awareness, freedom and creativity.

He is a theomorphic being exiled on earth; with the combined wealth of love and knowledge, he rules over all beings; in front of him, the angels prostrate themselves.

He is the great rebel of the world. his existence is a smooth path trodden by the will of God, Who desires to accomplish the ultimate purpose of His creation in him and by him. he has descended from the paradise of nature to the desert of selfawareness and exile to create there the paradise of man.

He who is now the vicergent of God has traversed the difficult path of servitude, and carrying the burden of the Trust, he has now come to the end of history and the last frontier of nature.

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Resurrection is about to begin, and a project unfolds among God, man and love, a project for the creation of a new world, for telling the tale of a new creation.

Thus it was that the Trust God proposed to the earth. the heavens and the mountains, they all forebore from assuming; it was only man that accepted it.

Man, this rebel against God
Who has given one hand to the devil - intellect
And the other hand to Eve - love,
Who bears on his back the heavy burden of the Trust,
Descended from the paradise of painless enjoyment,
Alone and a stranger in this world.
He is a rebel, but constantly yearning to return,
And now he has learned through worship how to attain the path of salvation.
And through submission to the constraints of the beloved,
After escaping blind constraint through his rebellion,
He is now delivered too from the torment of the escape of desperation.
He who fled from God
Was tested and purged in the furnaces of this world -
Awareness, solitude, decision -
And now he knows
The path of return toward God,
That great Friend Who is awaiting him,
The path that leads to Him by becoming Him.

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