

DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM

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INTRODUCTION

The Muslim world is passing through a deep spiritual crisis. The classical interpretation of basic Islamic-concepts and values has more or less ceased to command the authentic assent of numerous intelligent and informed Muslim believers, and there is a sort of intellectual and spiritual vacuum in The Islamic world. Different ideas and ideologies are competing to fill in the vacuum in the Muslim world which comprises approximately one-fifth of the human family. Muslim countries have recently won political independence from western domination, but continue to be dependent on others, technologically or economically. They resist the idea of remaining camp followers and imitators of the western or Communist establishments. There is an inner demand for re-interpreting basic Islamic concepts, values and institutions to make them viable in the modern age. But an intellectually and spiritually satisfying Islamic vision has not yet crystallized for the vast majority. Expression such as 'Islamic democracy', 'Islamic Socialism', 'Islamic Economics', 'Quranic constitution', 'Sovereignty of Allah' are tenuous and are often, rather always, used in a manner, both simplistic and misleading.

The word 'democracy' has become a prestigious word (like 'truth', 'justice', or beauty'), and quite diverse political systems claim to be democratic. Many Muslims believe that Islam is the best form of democracy. The purpose of these lectures is (a) to make an accurate analysis of the concept of democracy, (b) critically to assess democracy, and its alternatives, (c) to ascertain how far, or in what sense, Islamic political thought and practice stand for democracy, and finally, (d) briefly to review the acceptability and prospects of democracy in the Islamic world today.

I. THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

The Essence of Democracy: The word 'democracy' is derived from the Greek words '*demos*' (people) and '*kratia*' (rule), and its literal meaning is 'rule by the people at large'. To rule means exercising supreme power in deciding and managing public affairs, maintenance of law and order, security of the realm, fixation of the powers, functions and remuneration of different occupational classes within a hierarchical power structure over-arching plural associations within society as a whole, and finally, the legitimate authority to punish (including capital punishment) offenders of any law, regulation or executive order. This supreme power is termed 'sovereignty', and the person or persons possessing it the 'sovereign'. The smooth functioning of society, obviously, requires law and order, which in turn, requires an effective power structure. Otherwise, the group identity and unity of the society would disintegrate, and sub-groups would emerge, which may further disintegrate for a similar reason, leading more or less to a state of anarchy.

Historically, sovereignty almost always has been exercised over territories of various sizes by single individuals (kings or tribal chiefs), whether or not they had some advisory council of elders or dignitaries. However, every sovereign has always been subject to some form of constraint. The sovereign has always had to contend against those who, while fully accepting his authority as supreme have yet sought to demarcate its proper sphere, not on grounds of rivalry or jealousy, but purely on principle. They are the holy men and the wise and learned men who have ever demanded that the ruler be not merely strong but also good. They have further held that the criterion of good and evil is not the sweet will of the sovereign but some principles, either Divinely revealed to the holy, or discovered by the wise. In other words, while the sovereign wields the power of the sword, the latter wield the power of the spirit. This tension between the two dimensions of power ever irks, and at times, even threatens

the sovereign. Indeed, some sovereigns have even aspired to combine the two dimensions of power, but in vain.¹

The sovereign faces quite a different type of challenge from his rivals, internal and external, who wish to displace him as the sovereign. The constant apprehension of rebellion from some dissatisfied and powerful rival makes the sovereign responsive to the demands of both prudence and morality. This principle also applies when the people become the sovereign in a democratic state, and the government is called upon to resolve peacefully the tensions between different groups and interests.

The Historical Background of Democracy: The first known societies whose sovereign was not an individual but the people, as such, were the Greek city-states in the pre-Christian era. But these city states comprised two categories of people (a) the free citizens enjoying equal authority as decision makers in all public affairs, and (b) slaves or inferior citizens without any 'say' or authority in public matters. Since Aristotle accepted the *status quo* and did not uphold the complete equality of all members of the city state irrespective of their 'status', he used the word 'democracy' in the pejorative sense of 'rule by the mob'. He equated democracy with 'rule by the mob' and stood for rule, exclusively, by the free citizens. The Romans later on also retained the distinction between the 'patricians' and the 'plebeians', as, indeed, all world religions have rejected the idea of people's power, as such, irrespective of religion, sect, caste, class, or sex. Christianity, for instance, held that power belonged to the Pope, as the Vicar of Christ, and to the king, as the shadow of God. Likewise, Islam held that believers should obey God and the Prophet, or his successors. In Hinduism, the Brahman lawgivers and *Kshatria* warrior's alone wielded supreme power, while all others were expected merely to perform duties appropriate to their caste.

Earlier still the pagan or tribal ethos had placed supreme authority in the chief who, as the strongest among the strong, could coerce others into submission. However, it was the general belief that his strength and prowess

were the gift of the gods who could withdraw their grace if ever the chief did anything to displease the gods. This honest faith restrained the chief from violating the group ethos or abusing his authority. It also implied the concept of magic as a power quite different from normal physical power. And it was the witch-doctor who wielded this 'spirit power'.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam believe there is a Divine hand in history, though humans enjoy a limited freedom in the performance of their allotted roles in the great drama of history being shaped by Divine providence. The chief characters, in this drama were, obviously, kings, nobles and priests, while the masses were mere witnesses rather than participants in matters of state. Their participation was confined to simple joys of family life, labour for livelihood, service to their superiors and the worship of God. Obedience to God, for the common man, implied loyalty to the king, the shadow of God. Rebellion against the king who had not broken any Divine law amounted to blasphemy. The common man could not even dream that he had any legitimate share whatsoever in sovereignty.

The modern period, of western history begins in the 15th century with the Renaissance—an elitist cultural renewal of the spirit of classical Greek Humanism. It was soon followed in the 16th century by the Reformation—a religious challenge to the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church and the subordination of individual conscience to a supposedly infallible Pope, as the Vicar of Christ. Though both these movements had some traces of democracy in their thought and value structures they were not informed by the spirit and temper of social and political egalitarianism and people's power—the essential features of modern democracy. Martin Luther's approach, though anti-authoritarian in relation to the Pope was definitely authoritarian in relation to the populace.

The 17th century, however, saw the first stirring of the republican spirit in Cromwell's England, even the beheading of the king in the name of people's

power.² The steady progress of natural science and independent philosophical enquiry in western Europe culminated in the 18th century Enlightenment—the developed and mature version of the Renaissance. The integration of accurate analytical reason and the scientific method led, first to the scientific, and later to the secular revolutions in the second half of the 18th century. Far reaching social and economic changes, brought about by technological innovations in methods of production, combined to bring the capitalist, the merchant, the entrepreneur, the professional manager, the factory worker and the secular intellectual on the centre stage of public activity, thereby relatively side-lining the landed aristocracy, the army and the church. In other words, new power relationships emerged in the British society. The process was weak and slow, to begin with, but gathered ever-increasing momentum in the 19th century. The culmination of this process took place in the early 20th century. The Parliament Act of 1911 represents the completion of the process begun in 1832 and signifies the shifting of supreme power from the hitherto dominant sections of British society to the populace in the literal sense.³

The idea of democracy is a living and still growing concept. The earliest elitist direct democracy of the Greek city states, long ago, evolved into the representative (but still elitist) democracy of the Roman Senate. The Magna Charta of 1215 and Bill of Rights of 1689 were notable landmarks in bringing democracy in England nearer the common man in late medieval and early modern times.⁴ The American Revolution of 1776 and the French devolution of 1789 are significant stages in the growth of democracy. The remarkable social and political reforms in 19th century England, under the inspiration of Bentham's Utilitarianism and liberalism, paved the way for adult franchise for all males. Women acquired the right to vote only after the First World War in the 20th century.⁵

The impact of Marx later contributed to the emergence of yet another dimension in the evolving concept of democracy—the state ownership and

control of industry. One single word which best sums up the formative sources and constitutive strands of modern democracy is 'Humanism'. Humanism implies unconditional respect for the individual and his spiritual autonomy, tolerance of plural viewpoints and of plural results of the human search for truth, goodness and beauty, universal well-being, and optimistic life-affirmation despite the trials, travails and tragedies of the human situation. And democracy is the political expression of Humanism.⁶

2. SALIENT FEATURES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

(a) *People's power and government by consent:* People's power and respect for the dignity and freedom of the individual, irrespective of all contingent factors or circumstances, demand that the people be governed with their consent. The freedom of every individual must be subject to the like freedom of every other. This naturally requires the imposition of law and order on the basis of a hierarchical power-structure ultimately responsible and accountable to the people at large. Democracy is a system of government whereby people rule themselves through either a sovereign Parliament comprising elected representatives of the people, or through an elected President who, as the Chief Executive, enjoys near supreme power. The elected representatives or the President function as the alter-ego of the people, as it were, and govern in accordance with laws framed after due deliberation in the general interest of society.

Parliament or the President need not consult the people on each and every matter. The people, however, continue to be the sovereign, in the ultimate sense, since Parliament or the President enjoy merely delegated supreme authority for the period for which they have been elected. Thereafter supreme authority reverts, or lapses, to the people who are again called upon to give a fresh mandate to whomsoever they may choose. In any case the individual retains his spiritual autonomy. This, incidentally, is also, the case with voluntary submission to any religious authority and its prescribed discipline. However, if

the believer is not free to switch over to some other spiritual or religious authority religious submission ceases to be democratic.

(b) Channelization of the People's will: The Parliament decides policies, frames laws, issues directives, while the council of ministers (which is essentially a committee of Parliament headed by the Prime Minister and fully responsible to Parliament) controls and oversees the functioning of the government. The party system ensures shared views among the members of Parliament and provides a definite thrust and direction to the government. The great powers and prerogatives of the Prime Minister enable him to guide and lead the party. The Presidential system works in a different way, but these differences are immaterial in the present context.

(c) The Right to Govern & the Right to Dissent: The cardinal principle of democracy is that the majority should govern, but the minority has the full and unfettered right of dissent. Each side must respect the right of the other. Dissent must be peaceful and not amount to obstruction, directly or indirectly. The majority should not grudge if the minority actively propagates truth, as it sees it, and aspires to win over the sovereign people by the time the next election falls due.

The right of the majority of the elected representatives to govern for a fixed period is based on the assumption that they represent the general will of the people. In case they flout the general will and cease to translate the general will into effective action they will soon realise their error and rectify it. If they do not do so the people will vote them out of power at the next general election. The right of the minority to propagate their dissent is crucially important because in quite a number of cases voters (as well as the ruling group itself) come to realize the wisdom of the minority opinion.

The concrete method of counting heads rather than weighing them has been adopted because figures or numbers can be accurately counted, while abstract reasons cannot be objectively and accurately evaluated. The verdict of the

majority is accepted, provisionally, as the voice of wisdom, but the possibility of error is also conceded and full opportunities are periodically provided for the review and re-evaluation of the issues involved.

(d) Free Enquiry and Freedom of Belief: Knowledge of factual truth is a pre-condition of satisfying human needs and purposes. Now the truths of science are empirically verifiable, while truths of logic and mathematics are self-evident, or can be deduced from self-evident premises. The case is very different in the spheres of morality religion and economics etc. This is why scientists generally agree, but no agreement exists in religion, politics and economics. Every one strongly feels one's own views and opinions to be right, but no one can conclusively prove his/her truth-claim. Such truth-claims may be called 'cultural' to distinguish them from factual or descriptive truths, on the one hand, and logical or mathematical truths on the other.

All cultural truth-claims, to begin with, are socially conditioned or 'truths of one's milieu', and there is no way to reach objective certainty in the sphere of cultural beliefs. Consequently, plural viewpoints and judgments are bound to remain. The method of following the view of the majority or counting the heads is, indeed, a better way out than the breaking of heads for deciding what should be done. In other words, democracy accepts cultural pluralism, peaceful settlement of differences, and where this does not come about, the agreement to differ without rancor or bitterness. The assumption is that when different observers having different backgrounds, attitudes and interests pursue the path of free enquiry and friendly dialogue there is every chance they would reach some sort of working consensus through mutual give and take. Free enquiry is a continuing self-corrective process without terminating at any point of history.

(e) Freedom of Expression and of Association: The freedom of belief remains meaningless without the freedom of expression. Likewise, the freedom of expression remains incomplete unless it be supplemented by the freedom of

association and propagation of truth, as one sees it. These three freedoms go together. Democracy means fully accommodating each and every interest-group in the over-arching unity of the sovereign state. Democracy guarantees the inalienable right of all individuals or groups to be respected and heard. It is impossible to improve upon the famous declaration by J.S. Mill, and earlier, by Voltaire in more or less the same words — 'I do not agree with a single word of what you say. But I shall give my life to defend your right to say so'.

(f) Clash of Interests and their Resolution: The clash of interests is inevitable in the human situation. Whether or not the Marxian theory of class struggle be the whole truth, different interest groups do clash with each other due to limited natural resources and the collective wealth of a societal unit. Different interests get organized sooner or later to promote their respective interests. Proper governance means judicious regulation of group interests for maximizing human welfare. That form of government is the best which produces maximum human welfare with the minimum conflict and violence. It is not practically possible completely to eliminate violence. But democratic governance is the best possible hope for approximating to the ideal situation. This is so because the democratic permission of free dissent prevents the piling up of destructive passions and their explosion in the form of terrorism or civil strife. The accepted right of the majority to govern and the equally accepted right of dissent cut at the roots of violence. Public ventilation of criticism acts as a safety valve for reducing the pressure of discontent, though the abuse of this freedom often leads to quite contrary results. In general, the good sense of peace-loving citizens results in the virtue of constructive compromise, but, at times, to the vice of appeasement as well.

(g) Consequence of the Exercise of Power: The continuing exercise of power is the source of tremendous satisfaction and the keenest pleasure, but at the same time brings about physical, mental and emotional wear and tear and a

corroding effect upon the moral fiber of the rulers. Long years in power result in skill and confidence, but they also make rulers less receptive to new ideas or perspectives. However, very few rulers voluntarily abdicate power, since the lust for power is, perhaps, the most insatiable among human passions.⁷ Clinging to power generally leads to attitudes and policies, not best calculated to promote general welfare, but rather the short-term interests of the ruler himself. Now democracy is the only system of government which makes the public the final judge to decide whether to extend the term of the government or terminate its services. It often happens that despite being unhappy with their rulers the people prefer continuity to change because they are afraid that the alternatives are likely to be even worse.

(h) Independence of the Judiciary: Democracy, as the rule of self-framed law, is opposed to rule by fiat or externally imposed regulations. But the application of laws in concrete situations requires considerable legal reflection and juristic interpretation, specially, when new situations and problems arise in society. The judiciary performs this function independently. If, however, the interpretations placed by the independent judiciary upon the law not be acceptable to the sovereign Parliament, it has the power to change the law. Thus the supremacy or independence of the judiciary and the sovereignty of the people can coexist.

(i) Distinction between Essence and Form of Democracy: The essence of democracy is governance by the consent of the people in the form of periodic free and fair peaceful general elections. Now this essence or nuclear core may be exemplified in different forms or systems of democratic functioning, such as the composition and powers of the chief Executive (President/Prime Minister), the nature and size of the constituencies, the nature and value of the votes cast, the prescribed term of the elected office, the right of recall or other modes of 'citizen vigilance', state/federal legislatures etc. A particular form or system of

democracy may be preferred because of practical advantages in a given situation. A different or changed situation may demand modifications for improving the working of the system. A system must be judged as democratic so long as people can really change their supreme managers through free and fair elections, no matter what the system may be. To say this is not to deny the importance of finding out which system best suits the needs and conditions of one's own people.

The question may be asked whether the essence of democracy survives in a situation (which has existed at times in India) where a party comes to power and forms the government on the basis of a numerical majority in the legislature, but does not win the majority of the total votes polled in the country as a whole. The same question may be raised when the largest single legislature party forms a coalition Government. Such situations are obviously not conducive to stability and effective rule. Nevertheless, the spirit of democracy is not negated since the principle of majority rule continues to operate in the legislature, as such, despite its erosion at a different level. If, however, the people do feel strongly on this issue, suitable modifications could be made in the electoral system. Indeed, there is considerable scope for improvement at several points in different democratic systems of the world.

It appears there cannot be any one model of ideal democracy to suit all. Each society will have to think out its own version. But this exercise should not be speculative or limited in scope, but must be done in the light of a critical survey of the experience of the human family.

3. EVALUATION OF DEMOCRACY

Many who strongly criticize democracy hardly seem to realise that the protagonists of democracy are well aware of these defects. In fact, the critical evaluation of democracy by competent western thinkers is far more penetrating than its facile criticism by the detractors of democracy. But these highly quali-

fied thinkers hold that the alternatives to democracy are even worse, and it is on this ground they prefer democracy. Whatever be the truth of the matter the complexities of the human situation are such that in many cases our choice does not lie between good and evil, but between the greater and the lesser evil.

7(a)

The main objections are: (1) Democracy leads to appeasement of voters and corrupt practices. (2) Elections involve enormous expenditure. Those who get elected are forced to compensate for their heavy investment by resorting to unfair means. (3) Democracy leads to extremely slow decision-making and divided responsibility. (4) Democracy results in mediocrity and inefficient administration- (5) Democracy means governance by the unwise majority rather than by the creative and talented few. I shall now comment on each objection in the above order:

(1) To promote the interests of the society as a whole is the very purpose and function of a democratic government. Should it fail to do so the voters would be perfectly justified in getting it voted out of power. The evil of appeasement sets in only when the government fails to do what is right and reasonable because of the opposition of powerful vested interests who stand to lose or suffer if the right course be adopted. But appeasement is certainly not an inseparable feature of democracy. There are numerous examples of great statesmen who remain responsive to the genuine needs and interests of every group, without fear or favour, but scrupulously avoid appeasing anyone. Likewise, constructive compromise without sacrificing basic principles is a virtue and not a vice.

As regards rewarding of party workers or helpers or shielding them in cases of wrong doings or irregularities etc., public opinion can and should be built against such abuses and other malpractices, say patently false promises at election time, material inducements, harassment of opponents and so on. But to give up democracy merely because it is liable to such misuses would not be the voice of wisdom. The baby should be washed, not thrown away with the bath.

(2) Elections do involve enormous expenditure, and both individual candidates and political parties are forced to seek funds from industrialists and others, which practice, leads to consequences, too well-known to be spelt out. Yet, to abandon the theory and practice of democracy on this score, instead of devising ways and means of removing or reducing the evil consequences of huge election expenditure would amount to falling from the frying pan into the fire. Several democratic countries have already taken steps to reduce the costs of democracy. The state funding of political parties and provision of increased facilities to voters and candidates at elections has already commenced and are steps in the right direction. In any case, the expenditure on the elective process should be viewed in the light of the total consequences of abandoning democracy with the resultant evils of authoritarian forms of government.

(3) This criticism will not bear scrutiny. Slow decision-making and divided responsibility are not integral features of democracy, but merely accompaniments due to the operation of checks and balances and committee deliberations. These features have both advantages and disadvantages. In any case, the negative features can be removed through suitable functional innovations and techniques. As for divided responsibility, the concept of constructive responsibility of the minister concerned is increasingly becoming an established convention. Likewise, the progressive increase in the powers of the Prime Minister in several democracies brings about a correlated enhancement in his sense of responsibility and accountability to the country as a whole.

(4) & (5) These two objections are, perhaps, the most popular but the least weighty. The criticism that in a democracy the foibles and idols of the market place rather than the wisdom and talents of the elite shape the destiny of the people, or as Iqbal says in his Urdu couplet—‘democracy counts, not weighs heads’ is a highly misleading over-simplification of the matter.

Firstly, there is no agreement among the philosophers and the other wise men who may think that they are born to rule the masses. Secondly, while

counting of heads is a clear and understandable procedure, the weighing of heads is not at all a clearly defined procedure for the simple reason that there is no prior agreement as to which weighing machine should be used. Despite the well known disqualifications of the masses, they do have a store of wisdom and commonsense which redeem all their negative qualities. Moreover, democracy is the only system which brings out different perceptions and prescriptions into full awareness. The airing of diverse views creates better understanding of the diverse positions thereby promoting the maximum possible reconciliation between them. A really constructive adjustment holds for some time until fresh tensions arise due to the essential fluidity of the human situation. New interests, new avenues of acquiring wealth or power, new rivalries, new power relations, new methods of production, new needs and aspirations, all conspire to create fresh points of social friction and conflict. The previous compromises and democratic solutions demand a fresh look in the light of an ever developing situation. Thus goes on the democratic human story.⁸

In short, far from being the government of fools pushing the people towards folly or disaster, democracy contains the promise of overcoming the fads and illusions of any one individual or group. The angularities of each get corrected by those of the other in the melting pot of collective decision-making. History shows that the assemblies of the ignorant masses have done less harm to humanity than those great men whose greatness lay in their *egos* rather than in their *vision*. This happened because they stood isolated and alienated from the common man, the housewife, the farmer and the worker. The wisdom of the common man is rooted in his experience of sufferings and deprivations, and its value is far greater than the 'sophistry and illusion' of the unverified and unverifiable theories of 'learned fools'.⁹

Alternatives to Democracy: If, for argument's sake, we reject democracy, what alternatives remain? It would be futile considering such

abstract or Utopian alternatives as 'Islamic democracy', 'party less democracy', 'Ram Raj', or 'Post-Soviet Communism'. What appears to be an excellent system on paper may function badly, in practice, because of the complexity of human affairs and the unintended consequences of human choices. An ounce of experience of how western democracy has actually worked has more educative value than tons of arguments in favour of any abstract system.¹⁰ Thus, the only alternatives worth considering are military dictatorship and Soviet Socialism, i.e. Communism in current parlance. What has been termed 'Euro-Communism' has recently emerged in some parts of Europe under Russian hegemony. To the extent that plural parties function freely and fair elections are held in these eastern European countries, the new system may well be deemed as democratic. The effective alternatives to democracy are, therefore, Soviet Communism and military dictatorship. For the present we may profitably ignore variations in different models of Communist governments and focus our attention on their common feature-- the single party system and the absence of free and unfettered public expression of opinion instead of the present system of internal debate in the top echelons of a monolithic Communist party.

The intra-party freedom of expression permitted in the Soviet Union fails to pre-empt the rise of the attitudes and politics of secrecy, conspiracy and violence in Communist society. It is true that plural democratic parties and the electoral power of the masses tends to breed corruption and appeasement in society. But the single party system breeds the evil of conspiratorial dissent in the body politic, and this, to my mind, is a greater evil. I, for one, hold corruption in a free society to be a lesser evil than conspiratorial politics in an authoritarian regime.

Long experience shows and confirms that authoritarianism (no matter how benign to begin with) inevitably degenerates into tyranny. In the final analysis, our choice is not between benign authoritarianism and corrupt democracy, but the evils generally associated with the two. Now while a corrupt

democratically formed government can be democratically changed and reformed, a corrupt or tyrannical authoritarian establishment cannot be de-established without recourse to methods fraught with the evils of conspiracy and violence. In short, the demon inside the ballot is less evil than the demon in the bullet.

4. Democracy and Sovereignty of God

Can the foregoing idea of democracy be reconciled with the view that sovereignty belongs to God alone? Is there not a basic contradiction between the idea of democratic freedom and the idea of total surrender to the 'Book and the Example of the Prophet'? This crucial point merits detailed consideration.

Prima facie, there is a clash between the autonomy of man and the sovereignty of God. But in reality there is no clash, provided believers do two things; (a) make a distinction between the jurisdiction or proper sphere of matters of faith, and the proper sphere of autonomous enquiry through logical reasoning or factual investigation, as the case may be; (b) apply the basic principles of semantics to the proper understanding of the Quranic scripture. In other words, if we make a distinction between objective beliefs concerning empirical and logical matters, and existential convictions concerning transcendental matters, we could well combine autonomy, in the sphere of objective beliefs, with surrender to the Scripture in the sphere of faith in the Unseen-- transcendental matters, such as Divine revelation to prophets, life after death, the final reckoning etc. Questions of fact or of logical implication belong to the sphere of objective belief, and must be dealt with according to the canons of the scientific method or of logic, and not on the basis of any scriptural authority or faith. Truth-claims concerning facts, natural, social, or historical can be conclusively settled, in principle, on the basis of the scientific method of observation, experiment and formulation and testing of hypotheses, but this procedure is ruled out, in the sphere of the 'Unseen'. And here the Muslim

believer can very well accept the supreme authority of the Quran. The spheres of objective enquiry and of existential faith should not be confused. If this confusion be avoided, no contradiction remains between spiritual autonomy and the sovereignty of God or faith in the infallibility of the Quran.

It is significant that the Quran does not refer to objective matters (factual or logical) apart, of course, from some biographical matters concerning the Prophet of Islam and earlier messengers etc. and some basic natural phenomena—the succession of the seasons, the night and the day, the cycle of birth, growth and death, and so on. However, such references are not meant to provide factual information or details, but rather to evoke proper attitudes or impart wisdom and moral or spiritual guidance. The tendency to read into the verses of the Quran some theory or other of Physics, Biology, Geography etc. is an hermeneutic error. It is significant that the Prophet himself never claimed that he had any super-natural access to knowledge concerning objective matters, just as he did not claim any super-natural powers to perform miracles in addition to his gift of prophecy. Here again, the tendency to attribute miraculous powers to the Prophet persists despite numerous Quranic verses declaring that he could not perform miracles and had no knowledge of the Unseen, though the Quran does give him the most exalted status among created beings. There is no reason to doubt that several opinions and beliefs of the Prophet (apart from the contents of the Quran) were derived from his milieu, as in the case of all human beings. Such beliefs cannot be deemed to be sacrosanct. The second Khalifa always took this stand.¹¹

The crucial question which we must now answer is whether social, economic, political, administrative matters belong to the category of objective beliefs or of transcendental convictions. The truth is that they belong neither to the one nor the other, but rather, to the category of cultural beliefs which are based partly on factual premises and partly on value judgments. Now obedience to the clear

moral imperatives of the Quran, no less than faith in its transcendental content is binding upon the believer. A clash is, therefore, theoretically possible between the conclusions of an independent or autonomous individual and some Quranic value judgment or imperative. However, it should not be difficult to resolve any actual conflict between spiritual autonomy and authority of the Quran, if we keep in mind the fact that the Prophet interpreted the Quran flexibly in the light of sturdy commonsense, rather than rigidly or literally. In fact it was because of his flexible and non-literal approach in the application of Quranic injunctions in actual life situations that led the early Muslim theologians to infer that some revelations were verbal (*wahi-e-jali*) and were included in the corpus of the Quran, while others were silent (*wahi-e-khafi*), though they were equally authoritative or normative for the believers. The above distinction was clearly meant to explain the Prophet's freedom of interpretation with respect to the Quran. The above distinction, however, is not found in the Quran and places believers in a predicament.¹² If they follow the Quran rigidly, in the literal sense, without the Prophet's flexibility of interpretation, they do something the Prophet did not do; if they show any flexibility of their own in interpreting the Quranic texts (*wahi-e-jali*) they risk deviating from both—the text as well as the judgments of the Prophet.

The roots of the above difficulty lie in confused thinking on some basic religious issues. No problem arises, as already mentioned, if we demarcate the proper spheres of faith and of scientific knowledge and also develop a proper methodology of interpreting Quranic texts and of applying the Prophet's example in an ever changing human situation. Difficulties arise only when we look upon religion or the Islamic faith (in the case of Muslims) as a total guide or map of the good life in all spheres of human activity. When this is done the spiritual or transcendental concerns of religion get mixed up with the concerns of politics, economics and general management of society. The *Jamat Islami* and other cognate groups shy away from making this basic distinction and

persist in their 'totalistic' approach to religion, Islam included. They merely advocate that the shariah should be reconstructed or adjusted to suit modern conditions or new factual knowledge. This approach creates deep internal fissures and grave political convulsions in numerous sovereign states that are multi-religious, or multi-ethnic or both. This tends to alienate the Muslim segment from other segments and from the mainstream as such to the detriment of all concerned. Ideally speaking, individuals and sub-groups must feel a sense of commonality, not merely with their own religion or nation, but also with the human family as such. Creative individuals must reach out for all that is best in the human family as a whole.¹³

5. SELF-PERCEPTION OF MUSLIMS REGARDING DEMOCRACY

It is quite common to hear among Muslim quarters that Islam is democracy, at its best. Let me examine this line of thinking in some detail. Islam, to begin with, was a set of convictions about transcendental matters. During the entire Meccan period (lasting 13 years) of the Prophet's mission, there were no problems of government before the Prophet. These problems or issues arose in Medina with the rapid accretion of political and economic power to the small but expanding Muslim community. Obviously, the Prophet was not a leader democratically elected by his followers who looked upon the Prophet as chosen and inspired by God. Though the Prophet consulted his followers occasionally and some (specially Omar) gave candid advice on matters, administrative and military, this could hardly be termed as a democratic form of government.

The situation after the passing away of the Prophet shows clearly, that though the Khalifa (literally 'successor') was subject to the authority of the 'Book and the Example of the Prophet' (*kitab Wal Sunnah*) he was not accountable to the community, and there was no definite procedure to review his actions or decisions. The Khalifa exercised power on the basis of his Islamic piety and his capacity to convince the people that his policies and orders were in line with the

Word of God and the, till then, orally reported doings and sayings of the Prophet. This situation prevailed, to a preeminent degree, during the terms of the first two Khalifas, and, to a lesser degree, during the tenure of the third Khalifa. But the term of the fourth Khalifa was marked by acrimonious controversies and civil war. The tragedy of the *Kerbala*, 48 years after the death of the Prophet, was the culmination of the civil strife and struggle for power set in motion by the Umayyad clan of the Quraish tribe to which the Prophet belonged.

The crucial points relevant to our central theme are that the Khalifa as the chief executive, was not accountable or responsible to the community of believers ; there was no definite or fixed term of his high office, there was no clearly laid down procedure for electing or selecting him in the first instance, and for removing him subsequently, there was no standard or authoritative interpretation of the Book binding upon the Khalifa, apart, of course, from oral reports in circulation about the doings and sayings of the Prophet. In short, there was neither any concept of responsibility to the people (in addition to the *Khalifa's* inner sense of responsibility to God and His Prophet) nor any procedure for unambiguously determining whether the *Khalifa's* actions were in consonance with the Book and the Example apart from his own assessment or that of others), nor any procedure for the peaceful transfer of authority from one Khalifa to his successor. He could be removed only through assassination or successful armed rebellion. It is significant that the last three of the four pious Khalifas were all victims of political assassination.¹⁴

It is true that the Islamic political doctrine, in the earliest phase of its history, was opposed to hereditary monarchy and stood for a theological form of republicanism which later on degenerated into hereditary monarchy. Even so, the Khalifa, as a monarch, was duty bound to uphold the Islamic canon law (*shariah*). Moreover, his legitimacy or *de jure* authority was conditional upon his upholding the *shariah*. But the theory did not provide any modalities for his 'election' or the peaceful transfer of power from one Khalifa to another. In the

case of the first four pious Khalifas, each became head of the Islamic republic in a different way. The *shariah* did stipulate the theoretical removal of the Khalifa in case he failed to uphold the *shariah*. But if he was powerful enough to make his writ run in the realm, there was no modality for removing him apart from armed force.

The *shariah* stipulated consultation as a desirable way of administration or decision-making. But the composition and powers of the consultative body were never spelt out, and in any case, their advice was never held to be binding upon the chief executive. The Quran contains no guidance and gives no clear rules concerning the crucial issue of succession to the Prophet in respect of his political or administrative functions. The Prophet also left no instructions in this regard. The developments, which took place later, are too well known to be recounted, though it must be stated that there is no agreement upon the exact details. Islamic political theory, as it developed in the course of time, became sharply divided into the 'Sunni' and the 'Shia' schools of thought. While the *Sunni* view stipulated that the Khalifa must be from among the males of the Quraish tribe, the *Shia* view restricted the eligibility of this high office to the house of the Prophet himself. Thus the concept of equality of status, in the full democratic sense, was at no point of time a feature of the republican temper or constitution of Islam even in the earliest golden period. However, Islam did stand for complete social equality among the believers, in every walk of life-- the mosque, the dining table, the battle field and so on. Thus, while Islam clearly upheld egalitarianism and also republicanism, it cannot be said that it stood for democracy, in the full sense of the term.

There are some other serious limitations in the Islamic political and social concepts. For instance, neither the Quran nor the *shariah* ever abolished slavery, as an institution, nor stipulated full gender equality. Again, while Islam stood for a high level of tolerance and equitable treatment of non-Muslims, far in advance the then prevailing Christian and Jewish norms, the tolerance did not amount to

complete equality of all citizens. Thus, (a) the notion of the complete equality of the rights, duties and opportunities of the individual and (b) the notion of accountability and responsibility of the ruler to the people and a clear modality for the peaceful transfer of *de jure* authority of the head of state, are not present in Islamic political thought and practice.

The Islamic concepts of the fraternity of believers, their social equality, tolerance and justice towards followers of other religions, near-equality of women with men, permission of divorce, permission of inter-religious marriage within certain limits and egalitarian laws of inheritance, certainly represent a creative advance on the then conditions of the human family. A legitimate pride in this fact is natural and also justifiable. But it should not be allowed to stand in the way of an honest and balanced evaluation of its limitations. It is undeniable that the human family has gently outgrown the Islamic level of excellence in all fields of life.

In the sphere of democracy the west has made tremendous advances in building infra-structures and procedures which promote democratic values and human welfare — the separation of the executive and the judiciary, the secrecy of the ballot, the party system, the collective responsibility of the cabinet, the freedom of the press, the system of recall, proportional representation, the permanence of the services, and so on. Avowedly, every institutional mechanism or system has good points as well as bad. Human efforts must ever go on to add fresh dimensions of value in all matters and we must be guided by our own and also the experience of the human family, as a whole. One's own traditions and institutions should not be summarily rejected, merely because of their imperfections or abuses, but we must ever be alive to the need for improvement and innovation. Social space has its own logic which cannot be ignored. Success in practice is the only test of the value of proposed reforms. No romantic notions or nostalgia for a golden past can be a substitute for the sociological and scientific approach to life.

Obstacles to Democracy in the Islamic Tradition: Some obstacles stand in the way of the Muslims' acceptance of democracy in the modern sense. The first obstacle is caused by the widespread apologetic approach to the tradition. A large number of educated Muslims see only the bright side of Islam and ignore the dark spots on the moon. The second obstacle is the fear of the social consequences of dissent from the majority position. There is no friendly dialogue between different groups within the Muslims themselves. Keeping one's views to oneself is supposed to be both prudence and courtesy to other Muslims or non-Muslims. One may occasionally open out before very intimate friends, but certainly not express his views in writing. This makes the orthogenetic growth of the tradition either impossible or extremely slow, as happened to Sir Syed's religious reform movement. Even after a lapse of a century his ideas are supposed to be dangerous heresies which should be politely ignored rather than seriously discussed even at Aligarh itself.

Perhaps, even more serious than the fear of dissent is what the philosophical psychoanalyst, Erich Fromm, calls the 'fear freedom'. The traditional Muslim develops a fear of independent thinking and suppresses one's genuine attitudes, feelings and intellectual difficulties, as if their mere registration, at the conscious level, would amount to blasphemy or sin. Any spontaneous disagreement from the generally received view is looked upon as spiritual perversion which needs a spiritual cure. This is why Muslims possessing high technical or professional degrees do not have the moral courage and spiritual creativity to enter into friendly dialogue with the Ulema and others. Without cultivating and freely expressing an integrated outlook on life religious faith turns into a mere badge lest one be accused of being disloyal to one's group.¹⁵

Another obstacle to the growth of democratic attitudes is the lack of suitable popular literature on Islamic liberalism, humanism and the social sciences. Islamic literature continues to be almost solely produced by either

traditional Muslim writers or by the *Jamat-e- Islami*. The *Jamat* disagrees with the traditional or conservative school of Islam as well as the liberal approach of Sir Syed, Abul Kalam Azad, et al. Another obstacle in the way of a wider acceptance of Islamic liberalism is the intellectual isolation of the *Ulema* and their almost total neglect of comparative religion, history, social sciences etc as well as the valuable work of western scholars on Islam and other religions. They do not realize that contemporary western scholarship, at its best, is no longer subject to the prejudices and foibles of Christian missionaries, apologists or imperialists, of the previous century, but that they are doing very creative and valuable research on Islamic Studies. Of course there are some rather misinformed and partisan Christian or other apologists, but their activities should not prevent enlightened Muslims from benefiting from the honest scholarly labors of numerous admiring and impartial western scholars of Islam.¹⁶

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Islamic resurgence, provided it be on right lines, should be welcomed, not only by the Muslims, but all genuine humanists who look upon humanity as one large family. When, however, the protagonists of Islamic resurgence take to positions which directly or indirectly, erode the basic values of humanism, spiritual autonomy, free enquiry, equality of the sexes, human rights, tolerance, equality of opportunity etc., Islamic resurgence becomes objectionable not only to non-Muslims but liberal Muslims as well.

Unfortunately, the champions of Islamic resurgence instead of engaging themselves in an impartial and constructive criticism of the human situation and a balanced evaluation of western thought and institutions, betake themselves to a negative debunking of modernity. This approach may well give them a sense of superiority to the 'decadent west'. But it definitely leads to clouded vision and blurred perceptions of the actual conditions prevailing in western society. Instead of acquiring an 'insider's insight' into the strength and weakness, the

real achievements and limitations of western modernity, the hostile critics get only distorted pictures, half-truths, over-simplifications, and the like. In other words, they commit the fallacy of 'outsider's negative bias —precisely the same fallacy which they attribute to the western students of Islam.

In relation to the purely traditionalist Islamic piety the movement of Islamic resurgence of the *Jamat* brand is progressive in many respects. The forward-looking emphasis of the *Jamat* is welcome. But, on a deeper analysis, their language of progress and their pleas for reconstructing and modernizing the shariah turns insipid. This happens because they virtually reject the method of free enquiry and the time-tested methodology of the natural and the social sciences, in favour of a newfangled 'Islamic methodology' which is never spelt out, but is merely dangled before charmed Islamic audiences as the panacea for solving all the ills which beset humanity. They fail to explain how can there be Islamic Physics/Geology/Astronomy/Zoology, or for that matter, Islamic Anthropology/Geography/ Agriculture etc, in contradistinction from these subjects, as they are understood by the world scientific or academic community. The one and only way of the pursuit of truth is the method of free enquiry in a spirit of humility and the readiness to surrender before truth, as ascertained by methods appropriate for the subject matter of the enquiry. The talk of Islamic science or knowledge, or the 'Islamization of knowledge' appears to be a rallying slogan rather than a serious tool of free enquiry. After all, the power of modern technology flows, ultimately, from the pragmatic truth of the scientific method. Technology will cease to grow the moment the scientific method is discarded. And the womb of the scientific method is free enquiry and the stress on verification. If this spirit weakens or withers away technology will begin to stagnate and eventually collapse.

The *Jamat* forcefully affirms that true religion is not merely praying, fasting and performing other rituals but working to build an equitable social,

political and economic order that promotes universal welfare. But the *Jamat* hardly realizes that all good religious people, no matter what their theological creed might be, assert this basic truth. It is, indeed, very true that individual piety is not enough in the absence of a just social order—a surrounding political, economic, and cultural space in which the individual lives and functions. Consequently, if religion aims at true human welfare, it must prescribe not merely individual piety and goodness through spiritual discipline, but also ensure the proper ordering of society as a whole. The mischief, however, begins when the thesis of the social role or relevance of Islam is made into an argument for Islamic separatism or supremacy of the shariah in every sphere of life—politics, economics and even knowledge, as such.

The present protagonists of Islamic Resurgence hold that Sir Syed and other Muslim liberal thinkers adopt a ‘cosmetic’ and soft approach to religion since de-linking it from political activity reduces the power and scope of religion to innocuous rituals. The fact is, precisely, the other way round. Religion loses its power and depth, not through the proper delimitation of its functions, but through an indiscriminate expansion of its jurisdiction. The existential depth and inwardness of religion, thereby, turns into the spatial thinness of fixed rules of conduct at every point of life. Spirituality, the life breath of religion, then gets strangled either in the weeds of regimentation or the pitfalls of power politics.

The religious liberals who wish to keep religion and politics apart do not ignore the importance of a just, social order. The thesis of the separation of religion and politics does not at all imply the separation of moral considerations and concerns from politics and economics. Since basic moral values are common to all religions the politics of democratic liberal secularism can not be deemed to be, essentially, ‘satanic’ or ‘Godless’.

Politics, in the sense of seeking and exercising a measure of power, if not supreme power, unavoidably leads to conflict within society. It is primarily the search for supremacy that leads to conflict between individuals, groups or nations, rather than search for truth or God. Ideologies function as instruments of attack and defence in the struggle for power. However, ideas and values also battle against each other. The concept of ideology, in the above sense, antedates the work of Marx. But it was he who brought the above-mentioned role of ideology into sharp focus. Today the above insight has become almost axiomatic for all thoughtful and mature minds, no matter what their religion, race or politics.¹⁷

The above thesis, however, does not mean that sincerity of faith and honesty of purpose are non-existent in our world and that the talk of religion, values and ideals is pure hypocrisy or, at best, self-deception. Ideals and interests both exist and cooperate with each other, in an extremely complex human situation which we can never understand with the help of any simple formula. While those who find the doors of opportunity closed, do develop negative feelings of envy and hate against those enjoying power and wealth, genuine impersonal moral indignation at the evils of the human situation also moves the world. Revolutionary fervor directed to rebuilding the world, nearer to our hearts desires and dreams, may also be rooted in a deep commitment to moral and spiritual values. Genuine moral indignation and self-interest coalesce, in varying proportions, in different individuals, and even in the same person at different points of time. Their perceptions and levels of aspiration often vary according to their self assessment of their place on the scale of social recognition and effective participation or of marginalization in society.

The highly complex problems of developing societies can not be solved by ideology-bound or text-book solutions. In short, the compulsions of development favour (in the long run) the reliance on sociology rather than ideology. In this context, the continuing liberalization process in post-Mao China

and the refreshingly new stance of post-Gorbachov in the USSR are of the greatest significance for the entire world. This shows how the compulsions of the developmental process and the logic of sociology score over purely ideological purism and reasoning.

It appears that the Arab oil-wealth explosion and, subsequently, the Islamic Revolution of Iran have jointly imparted a momentum to Islamic resurgence (in its present form) which the movement will not be able to maintain in the decades ahead. The ideological euphoria of Iran will, most probably, wither away in the wake of a revolution that failed. The oil-based Arab euphoria has already given way to economic worries in the wake of the oil recession. The Muslim mind will then awake from both 'dogmatic slumber' and romantic revolutionary dreams. Sociological insights and realistic aspirations would then displace 'ideological mirages. In short, sociology would prevail over ideology, and Islamic humanism and liberalism over pan-Islamism and 'religious totalism.'

This shift of perspective, however, would not be a quick or easy process. Concepts, categories and values evolve like organic species and cannot be created by reformers, philosophers or UNESCO agencies. Western Europe took almost two centuries to complete the process of the scientific and secular revolutions beginning in mid-18th century. However, with the blessings of such tools and instruments of social change, as television and, now, the computer, the journey of the Muslim mind towards Islamic liberalism and democratic humanism, hopefully, may be shortened.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Pharos of Egypt, Alexander the Great, the pagan Roman emperors and the emperors of Japan are some instances. Victory in combat or war has generally been regarded as a sign of Divine favour, though not a certain

index. The forces of evil symbolized by the Devil are deemed to be in perpetual conflict with the good and powerful God whose wisdom is inscrutable. Evil sometimes triumphs over good, but these reverses are transient and are meant to test the patience of the faithful. In some cases such reverses are a Divine punishment for the human lapses of the faithful.

2. King Charles I was executed in 1659, and Cromwell, later on, became the Protector of the Commonwealth. The restoration of Charles II took place in 1660. His brother, James II, was overthrown in the Glorious Revolution of 1688—a turning point in British and world history.
3. Parliamentary and electoral reforms were introduced very gradually in Britain. The Reform Act of 1832 first gave the right of vote to the urban middle class males. The second Reform Act of 1867 extended the franchise to the lower middle class males in both urban and rural sectors, and also practically the entire urban labour Class, The third Reform Act of 1884 further extended the franchise to agricultural labour, thus establishing adult male franchise in Britain. *The* Act of 1911 merely ensured the supremacy of the House of Commons over the House of Lords. Women got the right of vote partially in 1918 fully in 1928.
4. The *Magna Carta* is the first and fundamental charter of the demand for the rule of law ever made in world history by the subjects of a monarch. The provisions of the charter aimed at controlling the arbitrary powers of the monarch—religious, executive and judicial, and giving to all subjects a sense of freedom and security within the bounds of law.
5. Jeremy Bentham (d.1832) was a distinguished English thinker, reformer and statesman who is regarded as the father of the ethical and political philosophy termed 'Utilitarianism'. John Stuart Mill (d.1873) made important

contributions to this movement of thought and reform. Utilitarianism aimed at emancipating the human mind from the grip of fixed ideas of right and wrong rooted in blind faith or intuition. These two thinkers made the observed consequences of human acts the final test of right and wrong in ethics, politics and religion.

6. Karl Marx (d.1883) also stressed consequences of ideas as the real criterion of their validity or acceptability. Marx also championed people's power, but he thought that it would never accrue to the people in the real sense without violent revolution against the establishment. He further thought that people's welfare was not possible without state ownership and control of the entire means of production. The last two claims are far from being evident.

7. History abounds in instance after instance of this crucial truth. Thus the institutionalization of authoritarianism is fatal. No matter how good and sincere a person might be, to begin with, the exercise of power over a long period will have a corrupting influence. Lord Acton's famous dictum, 'Power tends to corrupt, and 'absolute power corrupts absolutely', deserves the wide acclaim it has come to enjoy.

7(a) This is the near normal position in politics. Very rarely the choice in politics lies between absolute good or evil.

8. Election costs are trivial in relation to the price society pays for violent and bloody struggles for political supremacy. These and some other shortcomings do not invalidate the basic thesis of democracy. Efforts are under way to remove or, at least, minimize these defects. Thus, multiple rounds, of voting could be used to determine which candidate eventually gets an absolute majority. The additional expenses involved in such

procedures would be a small price for the immense gains in terms of public welfare.

9. Innovations in restructuring democracy have begun and are producing good results. Eternal vigilance is the price of virtue.

10. The protagonists of 'Islamic democracy', 'party less democracy' etc all commit the fallacy of 'abstract Utopianism'. This romantic desire to discover a system of 'perfect democracy' will never help. . 'Islamic democracy' is so far, only a pious ideal or aspiration rather than something real or concrete. Consequently, it is very difficult to be aware of its defects, while those of the western models have become obvious to all honest students.

11. See the following two Quranic verses out of several others in the same vein. "Say (O Muhammad, to the disbelievers): I say not unto you (that) I possess the treasures of Allah, nor I have knowledge of the unseen, and I say not unto you: Lo! I am an angel. I follow only that which is inspired in me. Say: Are the blind man and the seer equal? Will ye not then take thought?"
(*Al-An'am*, 6; 50)

"Say: For myself I have no power to benefit, nor power to hurt, save that which Allah willeth. Had I knowledge of the unseen, I should have abundance of wealth, and adversity would not touch me. I am but a warner, and a bearer of good tidings unto folk who believe", (*Al-A'raf*, 7:188)

12. There was another need for this distinction. It is a fact that the directives or injunctions of the Quran are, so general or non-specific (with a few notable exceptions) that they, possibly, could not have been implemented without giving the directives concerned a definite and concrete sense. This was naturally and understandably done by the Prophet himself. The question was bound to arise whether the interpretations placed by the Prophet upon the

revealed verses were also 'revealed' in some way to the Prophet, or were they the products of the thinking and discretion of the Prophet, The concept of 'wahi-e- khafi' was *meant* to underscore that the said interpretations were the result of hidden or silent non-verbal revelation (as distinct from verbal revelation constituting the Arabic text of the Quran). This way of viewing enhances the status of the interpretations made by the Prophet and renders his directions unquestionable by the faithful. 'The terms 'wahi-e-matlu' (recited revelation) and '*wahi-e-ghair-matlu*' (un-recited revelation) refer to the same distinction.

13. The only sphere where any modification would amount to violating the sanctity of the Prophet's tradition is the devotional system and its symbolic rites and purely spiritual or liturgical components.

14. Each of the four pious *klialifas* was chosen in a different manner. Abu Bakr was elevated by a consensus of sorts, Omar nominated by his predecessor, Usman chosen by a panel appointed by Omar, and Ali was the choice of a faction which was initially dominant but which was soon militarily challenged by dissidents.

15. Unfortunately, there is a tremendous dearth of well- integrated Muslim scientists and intellectuals. It is quite common to hear of a Professor who teaches the theory of evolution in the lecture room but repudiates it immediately after stepping out from the class on the ground that the said theory is un-Islamic. Highly educated persons, when confronted with reasoning or evidence which go against their fixed beliefs, prefer to divide life into separate compartments each sealed from the other. Alternatively, they become inauthentic beings who profess beliefs without inwardly accepting them and without being bothered by an inner schism in the depths of their being.

16. See the excellent works of Gibb, Arberry, Montgomery Watt, Annemarie Schimmel, among others, for conceptual analyses of the Islamic belief and value systems. For area studies and objective political, social and cultural information, see (i) Mansfield, P. (Ed), *The Middle East*, Oxford, 1973, and Piscatori, J. P. (Ed.), *Islam in the Political Process*, Cambridge, 1984.

17. See Isiah Berlin's excellent work, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas*, London, 1976.