



CONCLUSION

Before concluding our dissertation, it would not be out of place, we hope, if we recapitulate in brief, what we have been discussing somewhat in detail concerning religion, its source, its various aspects and its implications in relation to mankind, the individual as well as the human society at large, in contradistinction to Islam as a *din*.

I. Religion and Din

A perusal of the foregoing chapters must have brought to light the basic fallacy and the fundamental misconception in taking Islam as one among the various religions prevailing in the world from time to time; and the unfairness of making an assessment of *din* on that basis. Furthermore, it is equally fallacious if we were to try to understand and grasp its meaning and its impact on human society from the standpoint of religion as commonly understood.

Religion, as such, is nothing more than a kind of private relationship between man and his Creator. We are not, at the moment, concerned with the nature of this relationship which has been amply described in books like William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Anyhow, whatever the nature and characteristics of such experience, it is admittedly the experience of an individual of a purely subjective character having no relation whatsoever with worldly affairs, nor could it be communicated from one to another. This private relationship between man and his Creator is essentially founded on the idea of salvation. Salvation is common to all religions, even to Buddhism which does not acknowledge the existence of God.

The idea of salvation was born out of the belief that man's sojourn on earth was one of bondage. How to extricate himself from that bondage thus became the main object of his life.

Islam on the other hand, is neither such a relationship between man and God, nor is it characterized by the experience of an individual of a subjective nature, but is essentially a "Code of Life," regulating the conduct of affairs concerning the individual as well as the collective life of human beings. Secondly, it does not consider man's life on earth a period of bondage in. which case the .idea of

salvation does not arise. On the contrary, having assigned to man a very high position in the universe, Islam expects him to take up the challenge of life boldly in order to harness the forces of nature for the development of his own self and the larger community of mankind. The fallacy of considering Islam a religion springs from the fact that absolute "faith" in God is of fundamental importance to it, as it is supposed to be more or less so in all religions, past and present, but it is not only the "faith" in God that should serve as a criterion in arriving at a correct estimate of one or the other. The real question we should be concerned with is, what is the *concept* of God which is supposed to be the common factor?

II. Concept of God

Islam on its part, has presented a concept of God entirely at variance with the one advanced by the various religions of the world. Along with *Iman* in God, the distinguishing feature of the Islamic concept lies in the belief that God did not merely create the universe, but has also laid down definite laws to regulate the scope and functions of the various objects comprising it. The "Law of Cause and Effect," and the "Law of Uniformity in Nature", among others, being of basic importance; and they deal with the external nature of the universe. He has, besides, prescribed definite laws regulating human life and its activities.

The knowledge of the Divine Laws relating to the external universe is derived from a close observation of nature, scientific experiments and discoveries, but not so in the case of laws relating to human life and the regulation of its conduct which are communicated only through Revelation to the *Rusul* and conveyed by them as Messengers of God to mankind. It is this wherein Islam as a *din* also distinguishes itself from the Material concept of life which takes no cognizance of the Divine Guidance by means of revelation.

Islam asserts that such Divine Laws have been, from time to time, communicated to all the peoples of the world. The *Rusul*, the Messengers of God, received them through revelation and delivered them to their people. What happened after the demise of a *Rasul* was that his followers, chiefly their leaders having vested interests, tampered with the Laws with excision and deletion of what was found detrimental to their interests, and by interpolations, with the result that, from among the religions of the world, not one can produce the original text of Divine Revelation free from the taint of corruption. But these Divine Laws in their original form, words as well as letters, are fully extant and meticulously preserved in the Qur'an which is the last and the final of the series of the revealed Books of God, as was revealed to the last of the *Rusul*. So long as these Laws remain in their original form and pristine glory,

they constitute what is termed as *din*, but when they are tampered with and corrupted, they fall from the high pedestal and become what is known as religion; and that is why among all the religions of the world only Islam deserves to be styled as a *din*. As a matter of fact, no other religion makes a claim, nor could it prove, even if it were to advance such a claim, that it possesses a revealed book word for word and letter for letter as delivered to them by their *Rasul*. Islam, on the other hand, does make such a claim which is verified and fully supported by an impartial testimony of even non-Muslim historians.

Islam, thus, is a code of laws revealed by God, through

his Rasul, Muhammad (P), for the guidance of the whole of mankind, and which are fully preserved in the Book of God., known as the Qur'an; and they constitute what we may call the Permanent Values. Further, Islam emphatically and confidently advances the claim that if life is led in full compliance with and in complete subordination to the Permanent Values, it will be rid of all the travails and troubles in which the entire world of the present day finds itself beset condemning humanity to a hellish life despite the wonderful and awe-inspiring material and scientific advancement. The order of life according to these Permanent Values is termed as the Qur'anic Social Order, or, in other words, the Islamic State. It requires, however, to be made clear that every order of life established by the so-called Muslims., would not necessarily be the Islamic State as such, for, the Islamic State connotes only that State which is based on., and is in fullest consonance with the Permanent Values; and any other., lacking in this foundation, will be only un-Islamic, established though it may have been by the Muslims themselves. An Islamic State is thus an agency for the enforcement of Qur'anic injunctions, and laws made in the light of the principles enunciated therein.

III. Permanence and Change.

It should not, however, be misunderstood that the laws thus framed are rigid and hidebound with hardly any scope for progress or wanting in meting out the exigencies of the ever-changing conditions of life in the progressive world. In fact, the Islamic State is fully authorized, after mutual consultations, to legislate., within the framework of the Permanent Values, to provide for the needs of the time, and the body of laws thus promulgated could be altered and amended when necessary to suit the circumstances prevailing at a given time, with this essential proviso that in no circumstance shall the framework of the Permanent Values be disturbed or interfered with. From this point of view, the Islamic State may be considered as a "controlled democracy," which is quite

distinct in character from the concept of democracy commonly prevalent in the West, for, in that system the nation or its representatives enjoy an *unlimited* power of legislation.

IV. Human Personality

Another basic point of distinction between the Material concept of life and that of Islam is that, while in the former the life of a human being is circumscribed by and limited merely to man's physical existence in this world and is disintegrated and gets extinct with death, in the latter, the human body develops, flourishes, and eventually disintegrates under physical laws, but there is something else in man besides his body, that is, his Self or Personality, which is neither physical in its constitution nor is it subject to the physical laws as such. It is endowed to every human child in like measure at his but it is only in an undeveloped form. To develop it to its full maturity and to give a perfect and balanced shape is the goal of all human exertions. Every act of his performed in full compliance with the Permanent Values contributes to its development, and whatever is done against these values retards this process and weakens the self. An act, it should be noted, includes the thought and intent as well. The Self or Personality, thus developed, easily sustains the shock of death and survives the disintegration and dissolution of the physical entity, and goes on developing further, passing through more evolutionary stages, which we may call the "Hereafter", or the "life after death". The idea that, not only the actual deeds of a human being but his thoughts and intentions as well act upon the human Personality, is what we call the "Law of Retribution" which is as inexorable and as immutable as the laws of nature.

From the foregoing it must have become clear that whoever believes in Self or the human Personality needs no

supervision of the police or directives from a court of law to persuade him to act in full consonance with the Permanent Values and lead a life in accordance with the principles emanating therefrom, for, such a man acts upon them of his own choice and accord, and scrupulously avoids other trends that go against them. Fully conscious as he is that such a course of conduct is conducive to his own good and welfare, he willingly and ardently desires to pursue it. It is only such people, therefore, as bring about and establish the Qur'anic Social Order, believing, as they sincerely do, in the efficacy and well-being resulting from such an order of life; and it is they who are entrusted with the task of modeling the society according to that Order.

The Permanent Values have been referred to several times in the foregoing chapters. Here we make a mention again of some of the more fundamental and basic ones, so as to demonstrate how individuals leading their lives in accordance therewith embellish and adorn not only their own character but of others as well, and how highly prosperous, peaceful and contented is that society in which these values operate consistently and predominantly. How implicit a trust with sentiments of well-wishing other individuals and communities that come into contact will repose in them, and how an era of peace and prosperity will be ushered in when these values become universally recognized and acted upon—in fact the very life of *Jannah* on the earth. To usher in such in an era, in short, is the ultimate aim of Islam.

V. Permanent Values

Now let us mention some of the more fundamental Permanent Values, summed up in brief needing little excuse for repetition.

1. *Respect for humanity in general.* The very fact that every human child at his birth is equally endowed with a Self or Personality, entitles every individual as a human entity to equal esteem and respect ; and no distinction whatsoever should, therefore, be allowed to the incidence of birth, family, tribe, race or community, nationality, religion or sex, for, says the Qur'an :

Verily We have honoured all children of *Adam* (equally) (17 : 70).

2. *The criterion of a high position in society.* The intrinsic value of every individual human being is uniformly equal, but the criterion for determining the relative position and status of every individual rests on his own personal merits and character:

And for all there are ranks according to what they do (46 : 19),

and the principle underlying is this:

The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the best in conduct (49 : 13).

3. *Unity in humanity.* All human beings, according to the Qur'an, are the members of one brotherhood and branches of the same tree :

Mankind is one community (2 : 213).

Racial distinction or dividing mankind into different compartments of communities and nations by drawing lines on the globe is antagonistic to the very idea of humanity as a single entity, and is against the intents and purpose of nature. There is only one criterion for a division and no other—that those who believe in the Permanent Values are members of one community, and those who care not for them and lead their lives against them, go to the other division of a different community, as is said in the Qur'an:

He it is Who created you (as human beings) but one of you rejects (the Permanent Values) and another believes (in them, so this is the only line of demarcation) (64 : 2).

4. *Human Personality implies responsibility.* It means to say that every human being will be held responsible for his own actions, rewards as well as retribution, which none else will share. Says the Qur'an :

Whoever commits a crime commits it against his own self (4 : III),

and no other will be held responsible for it :

No bearer of a burden bears another's burden (53 : 38).

This makes it quite clear that the notions of "original sin", or "intercession", or "penance" have no room whatsoever in Islam. That one should be made responsible for one's own deeds is, therefore, a Permanent Value according to the Qur'an.

5. *Freedom.* According to the Qur'an, every human being is born free, and, therefore, should ever remain free; and freedom means that none, whosoever he may be, can extort obedience from another human being. In the Islamic Society, only the Qur'anic laws shall be obeyed. This is synonymous with the obedience of God, for very plainly asserts the Qur'an :

It is not right of any man that God should give him the Book and authority and (even) *Nubuwwah* and he should say to men "obey me instead of Allah" (3 : 78).

In fact, the Islamic Society is the agency for the execution of the Qur'anic laws; and this constitutes the main criterion to distinguish between the Muslim and non-Muslim creed:

And whoever judges not by what Allah has revealed, those are the unbelievers (5 : 44).

These provisions apply equally to all no matter what his position. Not to speak of others, even the *Rasul* of God was directed to proclaim :

I follow not but what is revealed to me. Indeed I fear, if I disobeyed my *Rabb*, the chastisement of a grievous day (10 : 15).

It may be mentioned that what is *worship* in religion, is *obedience* to the laws of God in *din*.

6. *Freedom of will—no compulsion*. The responsibility for the act of a human being is determined by his own volition and intent, so much so, that if one is forced to believe something or is prevailed upon with force and compulsion against his will to act in a particular manner, he would not be held responsible for such belief or action, for, *Iman* is the other name for full *conviction*. Says the Qur'an :

There is no compulsion in *din* (2 : 256),

and in another place :

And say : The truth is from your *Rabb*, so let him who pleases believe, and let him who pleases reject (18 : 29).

Physical compulsion and mental coercion apart, anything agreed to or followed traditionally or conventionally and not after due exercise of reason and intellect cannot be termed as *Iman*. Accepting anything traditionally is, according to Qur'an, the way of un-believers :

And when it is said to them (the un-believers), "Follow what Allah. has revealed," they say: "Nay, we follow that wherein we found our fathers." What! Even though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right path (2 : 170).

The believers, on the other hand, are those:

Who, when (even) the messages of their *Rabb* are presented to them, they fall not thereat deaf and blind (25 : 73).

7. *Tolerance*. Islam not only tolerates followers of other religions but also bestows upon them all the rights of humanity, and solemnly undertakes to protect and guard their places of worship. Says the Qur'an:

And if Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, in which Allah's name is oft remembered, would have been pulled down; and surely Allah will help him who helps Him (in this regard) (22 : 40).

8. *Justice*. Justice is one of the fundamental Permanent Values (16 : 90), and no distinction is allowed in this respect between friend and foe, for, says the Qur'an :

And let not the hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Be just : that is nearer to observance of duty (5 : 8).

As regards the courts of justice, we have been very clearly guided by the Qur'an :

(1) Confound not truth with falsehood (2 : 42).

(2) Nor knowingly conceal the truth (2 : 42).

(3) Hide not testimony (2 : 283).

(4) Evidence must be given truthfully (4 : 135).

(5) And be ye not an advocate for the fraudulent (4 : 105).

(6) And never be a supporter of the guilty (28 : 17).

(7) Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man for, Allah is nearer unto both (than you are). So follow not passions lest ye lapse (from truth) and if ye lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever informed of what ye do (4 : 135).

Crimes, according to the Qur'an, are not only those that are actually and physically committed; it considers even the mere thought of a breach of the Permanent Values as an offence. No doubt, such offences do not fall within the jurisdiction of a court of law, nevertheless they are offences in the eye of the Divine Law of Retribution, and adversely affect the personality of the perpetrators, as has been said in the Qur'an:

He knoweth the traitors of the eyes and that which the bosoms hide (40 : 19).

9. *Subsistence*. According to the Qur'an, it is incumbent upon the Islamic society to provide for the basic necessities of each and all the members comprising it, and make suitable provisions for the development of their human potentialities. Thereafter, it should extend the same facilities to other human

beings and thus make the Order of *Rububiyyah* universal. A society that fails in this responsibility does not deserve to be called Islamic, for, the Islamic society that is established in the name of God is bound to proclaim:

We will provide for you and your children (6 : 152).

It is paramountly clear that no society could fully discharge this responsibility unless and until it has all the means of production

under its control and the necessary resources at its disposal. It is solely for this reason that means of production cannot be owned privately in Islam, nor could the produce of such means, or, wealth, could form a private board (9 : 34-35).

For the same reason the principle underlying the growth and development of human personality is expressed thus: that an individual should work hard and earn and produce as much as possible, keep that is basically and essentially necessary for his own upkeep and of those for whom he is personally responsible, and give away the rest for meting out the necessities of others in need, as is ordained in the Qur'an:

And they ask thee as to what should they give (for the benefit of others). Say: "Whatever is surplus to your own requirements" (2 : 219)'

and in this their attitude should be such as to declare:

We desire from you neither reward nor thanks (76 : 9).

10. Sex. Chastity, according to Qur'an, is one of the Permanent Values and its breach a grave offence (24-3). It demands its observance from men and women equally (24: 30-31), and deems marriage as a free contract for leading a life of companionship and mutual cooperation in which both the parties stand on the same level and should be treated uniformly, for the Qur'an makes no distinction between man and woman on the ground of sex. Both, *as human beings*, are like each other and equal in all respects:

He it is Who has brought you (mankind) into being from one single life-cell (6 : 99).

11. *Aesthetic taste*. There is a basic difference between an animal and a human being, and that is that while the needs of an animal are confined to the mere satisfaction of physical wants, the requirements of man go beyond that. He is also endowed with the aesthetic sense, a liking, a taste for the appreciation of beauty. The Qur'an respects this leaning and

tendency towards fine arts in the human species and considers it as a necessary element in the growth and development of his personality. It says:.

Say : "Who hath forbidden the adornment of Allah., which He hath brought forth for His servants and the good things of His providing" ? (7 : 32).

Thus it gives full encouragement to the appreciation of beauty in its various phases of arts as well as objects, with the only proviso that the limits laid down in the Qur'an are not transgressed.

12. *Forces of Nature.* You come across at several places in the Qur'an with verses like this :

And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth,, all from Himself (45 : 13).

That is why Islam demands from us to subdue and harness the forces of nature with the sole object of utilizing them in consonance with the Permanent Values for the benefit of the entire humanity, and never for destructive purposes, for, the basic principle underlying this is :

Only that survives in the earth which is beneficial for entire mankind (13 : 17).

We have narrated above some of the basic values conveying the fundamental importance in human activity which have not only to be meticulously observed but to be carefully safeguarded by the Islamic Society against their breach and violation.

The Qur'an does not ignore or neglect, rather it lays a great emphasis on meting out the demands of man's physical existence and the satisfaction of his requirements for his ease and comforts, of course, in close observance of the Permanent Values. If the needs of his physical life and other requirements are both satisfied in harmony and accord with the Permanent Values, no difficulty or a problem as such arises. When there is a tie or an apprehension of a clash between the two, the Islamic

view of life will then, as a matter of course, give preference to the maintenance of and compliance with the Permanent Values, for therein lies the loftiness of the human character. This way of life greatly contributes to the development and well-being of the human self. In the Material concept of life on the other hand, the be all and end all of the entire human effort and activity is merely the satisfaction of the physical wants in luxury and plentitude without the least idea of the Permanent Values playing any role at all. This attitude is abhorrent to

Islam. Far from agreeing to accept it, Islam will, in no circumstances, even compromise with the Material concept. Further, the otherworldly view of religion, preaching contempt of the worldly life and its enjoyment and ignoring the physical wants, is equally unacceptable and hateful in its eyes.

VI. Comparison

A comparative study of religion or *madhhab*, and *din*, should help us understand the vital and fundamental characteristics of each and the differences between the two:

1. *Madhhab* is merely some sort of subjective experience and is concerned only with the so-called private relationship between God and man.

Din is an objective reality and a system of collective life.

2. Every follower of a *madhhab* is satisfied that he has established a communion with the Almighty, and the objective of each individual is his own salvation.

The aim of *din* on the other hand is the welfare and progress of all mankind, and the character and constitution of a society indicates whether or not it is founded upon the Divine Law.

3. *Madhhab* does not afford us any objective. criterion by which we could determine whether or not our actions are producing the desired results.

In a social order governed by *din*, the development of a collective and harmonious life correctly indicates whether or not the people are pursuing the right course.

4. *Madhhab* is hostile to scientific investigation and is an adversary of reason, so that it could flourish unhampered with the aid of a blind faith.

Din helps in the development of human reason and knowledge, allows full freedom to accept or reject on the basis of reason and arguments, and encourages investigation and discovery of all the natural phenomena to illumine the path of human life and its advancement in the light of the Permanent Values.

5. *Madhhab* follows the susceptibilities and prejudices of men and pampers them.

Din seeks to lead men to a path of life that is in harmony with the realities of life.

6. In every age, therefore, *madhhab* sets up new idols and mumbo-jumbos in order to keep the people's attention away from the real problems of life.

But *din* is rational and radical: it breaks all idols, old and new, and is never variable in its principles.

7. *Madhhab* induces a perpetual sense of fear in the minds of men and seeks to frighten them into conformity;

While *din* treats fear as a form of polytheism and seeks to make men courageous, daring and self-reliant.

8. *Madhhab* prompts men to bow before every seat of authority and prestige, religious as well as temporal.

Din encourages man to walk about with his head erect, and attain self-confidence.

9. *Madhhab* induces man to flee from struggle of life.

But *din* calls upon him to face the realities of life squarely, whatever the hazards.

10. *Madhhab* treats the world of matter with contempt and calls upon man to renounce it. It promises paradise only in the Hereafter as a reward for the renunciation of the material world.

Din, on the other hand, enjoins the conquest of matter and leads man to immeasurable heights of attainment. It exhorts him to seek well-being and happiness in this world as well as felicity in the life Hereafter.

11. *Madhhab* encourages belief in fatalism, and this tends to dissuade man from active life and self-development.

Din gives man power to challenge fate, and provides energy for a life of activity and self-development.

12. *Madhhab* seeks to comfort the weak, the helpless and the oppressed with the belief that the affairs of this world are governed by the Will of God and that its acceptance and resignation helps to endear them to God. This sort of

teaching naturally tends to morbidity, and emboldens their religious leaders who profess to interpret the Will of God, so that they indulge in their misdeeds with perfect impunity and persuade the adherents to a complete and quiet submission.

Din, on the other hand, raises the banner of revolt against all forms of tyranny and exploitation. It calls upon the weak and the oppressed to follow the Divine Laws and thereby seek to establish a social order in which all tyrants and oppressors will be forced to accept the dictates of right and justice. In this social order, there is no place for dictators, capitalists or priests. They are all enemies of *din*.

13. *Madhhab* enjoins religious meditation in the name of worship and thus induces self-deception.

Din exhorts men to assert themselves and struggle perpetually for the establishment of the Divine Social Order, and its betterment when attained. *Worship* in *din* really means *obedience* to the Laws of God.

14. *Madhhab* frowns and sneers at all things of art and beauty.

Din defies those who forbid the enjoyment of the good and beautiful things of life which God has created for the enjoyment of man.

15. *Madhhab* denounces everything new and declares all innovation as sin.

Din holds that the needs and demands of human life keep changing with the change in the conditions of life; change and innovation are, therefore, demanded by life itself. Only the Divine Laws are immutable.

It should now be easy for us to see the fundamental difference between *din* and *madhhab*. Islam means saying "Yes" to life; while the response of religion is "No"!

Thus Islam is an open challenge to religion as such



[Back to Top](#)