

# THE NATURE OF ISLMIC RESURGENCE

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## THE NATURE OF ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

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Four important consequences directly related to the impact of the colonial rule are relevant to an understanding of the contemporary Islamic resurgence in general and the emergence of the Islamic movement in Pakistan and the entire subcontinent in particular.

### Muslim Predicament: The Impact of Colonial Rule

The first is secularization: secularization of the state, its political, economic and social institutions. Secularism tried to introduce and 'impose' a new social ethics deriving inspired from a worldview and a policy perspective diametrically opposed to the basis on which a Muslim society is founded. In a Muslim society individual morality and social ethics are both derived from the same divine source: the Quran and Sunnah. In secularism divine guidance becomes irrelevant and man's roots in the divine scheme of creation and his destiny in the life beyond physical existence are denied<sup>1</sup>. This produces a very unique set of parameters for socio-political life, fundamentally different from the ones on which a faith-based society is established. This major change produced catastrophic consequences for Muslim society. The very moral fiber of the society was undermined.

Second, a new pattern of Western dominance, not merely by virtue of political rule of the Western countries but through basic institutional changes within the colonized countries and in their structural relationships with outside world, particular the colonizing countries. These led to a pattern of dependence upon the West, institutionalizing the dominance of the West.

Third, as a logical consequence of both the above factors, has been the bifurcation of education into two parallel mainstreams of secular and modern education, and religions and traditional education, resulting in the division of the society into two groups: the modern secular elites and the traditional leadership. The new secular leadership which was carefully groomed into power in different walks of life is looked upon by the masses of Muslim people as mercenaries as people who have taken the values and life-style of the colonial rulers and who would be prepared to act at the behest of a foreign power or at least a people who identified themselves with Western culture, with their values and became voluntary or involuntary instruments for the Westernization of the society. This has acted as a divisive force in society.

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1. See, Waterhouse, Eric S., "Secularism", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings, New York, Charles Scribners and Sons, vol. XI, pp. 347-50.

This led to the fourth consequence, a crisis of leadership. The traditional leadership of the Muslim society was systematically destroyed. A foreign political leadership was imposed and in its wake came the imposition of a foreign-oriented local leadership, a leadership which held the reins of political and economic power but which did not enjoy the trust and confidence of the people, a leadership alienated from its own people, and identified with the alien rulers and their life-style.

### Strategies for Revival

Among others, these were the more important consequences of Western dominance and the whole of this scenario made the Muslims ask a very pertinent question - "Why has this happened - this situation of political dominance as well as the decay and deprivation of our past heritage?"

One group tried to answer this question by suggesting that the times have changed and that we must take to the values, the technology, and the institutions of the dominant power. This would be the way to rise up again. This was the strategy of modernism.

Another said that we have reached this stage because we are not true to our original position. We are not truly Muslim. Islam is not responsible for our present predicament; it is the departed and non-abidance of Islam which is responsible for it.

It was this latter answer which again produced two further responses - one which tried to fall back upon the tradition and grasp it tightly, which I will describe as a traditionalist position, which believed that any change would be a change for the worst. Therefore, hold fast to our tradition and its legacy; remain tied to our roots and history. The two aspects of this strategy were, (a) isolation and withdrawal from the processes of westernization and (b) concentration on preservation and protection of the Muslim legacy, cultural intellectual, and institutional. This can also be described as a strategy of protective resistance and waiting for an opportunity to come out to re-assert for some positive objectives.

There has also been a second response which emphasized that the preservation of the past was not enough if we are to face the challenge that is knocking at our doors. We have to put up a creative, positive response to this situation by trying to understand the nature of the western challenge and offer an alternative to that. The challenge from the West was not confined to political domination. It was a challenge from a new civilization, having its own worldview and socio-economic institutions, seeking political domination over the entire world. As such, the response has to be more positive and comprehensive: to prepare for an all-out confrontation with the challenging power and offer Islam as the alternate basis for culture and civilization. This response called for the emergence of Islam as a socio-political movement to go back to the original message of Islam, to discover its relevance to our own times and to strive to change the status quo, to rebuild the society and its institutions in the light of the Islamic milieu and to inspire the individual with a new vision and a new destiny.

This response has been described as *tajdid* (renewal and reconstruction), a perennial phenomenon in Islamic history and therefore not particularly new or modern, yet distinct in its contemporary manifestations face the challenge of the twenty century.

### The Islamic Movement: its origins and character

The contemporary Islamic resurgence and particularly the Islamic movements that constitute the sheet-anchor of this resurgence can be understood not merely by examining them as reactions to colonial rule but in the context of the positive aspirations of the Islamic Ummah to regain the position it lost because of the Western domination. As such, the contemporary Islamic upsurge deserves to be seen as a positive and creative response to the challenge of modernity. In this respect, in the subcontinent the very establishment of Pakistan, in a way, is symbolic of the Islamic resurgence. The Pakistan movement derives its inspiration from the idea that Islam has to be the decisive factor in building our individual and social life. This was not possible under foreign dominance or under the dominance of the Hindu majority and therefore, the need for an independent country where Islam is free, where Islam is able to determine the course of events. This was the thinking behind the Pakistan movement<sup>2</sup>.

That is why the establishment of Pakistan, somehow, constitutes a watershed in contemporary Muslim history; it not only represent the beginning of the end of the colonial rule in Muslim lands but also heralds the beginning of a new era in the ideological life of the Muslim people. Their search for a future assumed a new dimension, an effort to rediscover their ideological personality and to seek for a new social order based on the ideals and value of Islam.

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2. "The Muslims Demand Pakistan, where they could rule according to their own code of life and according to their own cultural growth, traditions and Islamic laws", Quaid- e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Message to Frontier Muslim League Conference, Nov, 1945 See Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah, edited by Jamiluddin Ahmad, Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, vol.1 1, (1964) p.2.

The Quaid-e-Azam has also stated succinctly in a speech at Aligarh in March 1944 that:

"Pakistan started the moment the first non-Muslim was converted to Islam in India long before the Muslims established their rule. As soon as a Hindu embraced Islam he was outcast not only religiously but also socially, culturally and economically. As for the Muslims, it was a duty imposed on him by Islam not to merge his identity and individuality in any alien society. Throughout the ages, Hindus had remained Hindus and Muslims had remained Muslim and they had not merged their entities - that was the bas for Pakistan", *ibid*, vol. II, p.2. Similarly Pakistan's first Prime Minister and the former Secretary-General of the Muslim League, while moving the Objective Resolution in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan declared that:

"The Muslim League has only fulfilled half of its mission (and that) the other half of its mission is to convert Pakistan into a laboratory where we could experiment upon the principles of Islam to enable us to make a contribution to the peace and progress of mankind." Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Karachi, Manager of publications, Govt. of Pakistan, vol. V. No. 5, p. 9 6 (.1 2 March 1949) .

That is why the real issue for the Muslims in their struggle for freedom in India was not simply liberation from foreign colonial rule but a liberation leading to "free Islam in a free India".

This urge has been articulating itself ever since the mid- forties, despite all the obstacles and deterrents from within and without. This creative urge was never looked upon with sympathy in the non-Muslim world in general, and in the West<sup>3</sup> in particular. There were genuine difficulties and impediments within the Muslim society, particularly the ones generated by the impact of colonic rule on Muslim lands, but the situation was aggravated by the continuing efforts of the Western powers to 'Westernize' the liberated Muslim countries and keep them tied to the politico- economic system of the West, to perpetuate some kind of centre- periphery relationship between the West and the rest.

This is the background in which the contemporary movement of Islamic resurgence has expressed itself. That such an upsurge is there at almost all levels of Muslim existence, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, literacy, political and economic, is undeniable. But it would be too simplistic to assume that the movement is heading towards global success. The state of the contemporary Muslim society can at best be described as one of 'creative tension'. There are certain clear pointers towards the peoples' positive identification with Islam as a source for personal ethics and the dominant inspiration for the socioeconomic order they want to establish in their lands, but the institutional obstacles and selective resistance from certain power-elites are also a reality. A new process has been inaugurated in most of the Muslim countries, but the process has yet to unfold itself fully. It is, therefore, important to identify some of the major factors and forces that are shaping the future of the Muslim World.

### Resistance and Resurgence

The major forces of resistance to Islamic resurgence are, somehow, related to the four factors we have identified earlier as aspects of the impact of Western rule in the Muslim World. The forces that lie at the root of Islamic resurgence can be identified as two - first a general urge in the entire Islamic Ummah, the Muslim people and particularly Muslim youth thrilled by an urge to carve out a new future and seek a place of respect and honor in the world. This is an all embracing movement which cannot be classified in organization stereo-types. It can only be seen and felt and followed. It is made of two major strands, one negative and the other positive. The negative strand represents strong dissatisfaction with the experiments with secularism and secular ideologies of nationalism, capitalism and socialism in the Muslim World. The positive strand is represented by a rediscovery of Islam as an all-embracing system of life - as a faith as well as an ideology and a programme of life.

Contemporary Islamic resurgence is symbolized as much as it has been strengthened and fortified by the political liberation of the Muslim lands and some significant shift in the balance of economic power in favour of some of the Muslim countries.

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3. 'West' has been used here as a proxy for the dominant power of our times. Capitalist or Communist, Eastern or Western, consisting of both the super powers and the forces dominant in Europe.

But the most decisive influence in producing this upsurge has come from the contribution of the religious leadership of the Muslim countries, the Ulama and the Sufi a: in general, and more specifically the Islamic revivalist movements.

### Islamic Revivalist Movements

Islamic revivalist movements have their roots deep in the history of the Muslim people, medieval as well as modern. It would be naive to assume that these movements have emerged out of the blue. There is an almost continuous chain of Islamic movements operating amongst the Muslim people in all parts of the world<sup>4</sup>. These movements have mostly been conveniently ignore by the Western observers of the Islamic scene, who have confine their gaze on the ripples on the surface of the water, never caring to understand the currents and cross-currents beneath tl" surface. Those who have tried to touch upon this phenomenon have done greater injustice by misrepresenting these movements as manifestations of militant Islam. The labels put upon them bear no relevance to the nature of these movements; mostly they represent the basis or the fears of the vested interests. As such it is very important that the nature of these movements may be understood in the light of their own perception of their role.

The Islamic movements, despite some local features and indigenous accents, have stood for similar objectives and displayed common characteristics. They have shown unwavering commitment to Islam and great capabilities to creatively face the challenge of modernity. Their intellectual contribution is matched only by their moral fervor and political consciousness.

The most important aspect of the mission of these Islamic movements has been their emphasis on Islam, not just as a set of beliefs and rituals, but as a moral and social movement to establish the Islamic order. And by emphasizing this, they have identified them self with all the tajdid and Jihad movements of history. The works of Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, and Mawlana Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (Indo-Pak subcontinent), of Imam Hasan al-Ban Shahid and Syed Qutb Shahid (Egypt), of Malik bin Nabi and Shai Ibrahim al-Jazairi (Algeria), of Dr. Ali Shariati and Imam Khomeini (Iran), of Said Nursi (Turkey), and others constitute the most important influence in producing the contemporary revivalist movements in Islam. Only a close look at the mind and thought of these leaders and the movements they inspired can reveal the true nature of this phenomenon of tajdid, an effort to relate Islam to the contemporary reality of the Muslim life and society.

It also deserves to be noted that these Islamic movements seek for comprehensive reform that is changing all aspects of life, making faith the centre point. The relationship between the eternal and the temporal, the moral truth and the contemporary socio-political reality, is then a central issue. Mawlana Mawdudi and others have addressed themselves to this issue.

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4. 'Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi, A Short History of Revivalist Movements in Islam, Lahore, Islamic publications.

They have shown the relevance of faith for individual morality as well as for social ethics, for political life, for economic relationships and for the establishment of a just social order. This all embracing comprehensiveness of the Islamic movement is unique to the Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, the Muslim brotherhood, as well as to other Islamic movements of the 20th century. This comprehensiveness of Islam as an integrative principle is something which contrasts sharply with the West for it is not in keeping with the contemporary Western approach to human life and its problems, under whose influence problems are studied piecemeal and in isolation because they are not seen as interrelated and grounded in an integrated worldview.

Another important aspect of Islamic resurgence is that although socio-political struggles have taken place in the context of national situations, even highlighting local interest and problems, the thrust of the Islamic revivalist movement is not nationalistic in character. It is an ideological movement. Even if it is confined or its impact is confined to a particular territory, its approach is not nationalistic or parochial. It is ideological and then by definition international. Islam is a universal religion and all Muslims, regardless of regional or national ties, belong to a single community of brotherhood (Ummah).

Yet, another important aspect of this movement is that it is non-sectarian. And this is very important in the context of Muslim history. This movement has tried to bring all sects, all the schools of Muslim thought to common ground. It is moving neither on the pattern of the 'ecumenical movement' in the Christian world, nor of that of a religious trade union. Its basic emphasis is that the essential area of agreement amongst all Muslim schools of thought is far greater than its fringe differences. When the basic laws and regulations of Islam are being threatened, we must concentrate upon the essentials in the areas of agreement, allowing for the freedom of each individual and each group to follow his or her own interpretation. Thus, the works of some of the Shi'a scholars for example, the late Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Sadr, Imam Khomeini, and Dr. Ali Shariati have been published by predominantly Sunni organizations such as Mawlana Mawdudi Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and other Arab countries. On the other hand, the works of Mawlana Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb, Hasan al-Banna and others have been published by the Shia communities. The Islamic revolution of Iran has been welcomed by all Islamic revivalist movements, and even when there are differences on many a point of strategy or tactics, the universalistic Islamic current is easily discernable in a world which had unfortunately taken to sectarian and group affiliations.

Finally, an important aspect which deserves to be kept in view is the division in Muslim society between modern and conservative, between the new and the old, the westernizing and the traditional. This Islamic movement represents a third alternative force. Without condemning any of these, it acts as a bridge between these two and derives its strength from both of them. Instead of expanding the distance between these, it seeks to reach a point of convergence and join together all their resources.

In the Jamaat Islami Pakistan<sup>5</sup>, we find people from the old school, the Ulama and the Sufiya as well as highly educated people, students, professionals, and the working classes. The movement works among the labour force, among farmers, among all the various segments of society.

At the international plane too, the approach of the Islamic movement is to draw on both the modern civilization as well as the original sources of Islam and to seek to modernize without compromising on Islamic principles and values. The movement clearly differentiates between development and modernization on the one hand and westernization and secularization on the other. It says 'yes' to modernization but 'no' to blind westernization. The Islamic movement seeks to provide a new leadership to society, a leadership which, although culled from the modern and the traditional hinterland of the society is not identified with any one of these two extreme groups but nonetheless preserves the best in both.

### The Failure of the Western Model

This, I think, is extremely significant because a very important dimension of the present day crisis in the Muslim world is that the westernizing model as well as the westernizing elite has failed. The two classic examples of westernization in Muslim countries are Turkey and Iran. Whether we judge on the basis of the material results these experiments have produced or the moral havoc, the social ills and the psychological shock, that have come in their wake, it is the profound feeling of the Muslim people that the westernization experiment has decisively failed. Its variants, the capitalistic as well as the socialistic, have been tried and found wanting.

The whole of the Muslim Ummah has somehow passed through a trauma, becoming more and more conscious that the westernizing model cannot deliver the goods. They want to make a fresh start. They do not want to cut themselves off from the rest of the world. But they also do not want to be dependent on the non-Muslim world; they want freedom with strength; friendship with honor; cooperation without dependence. If the westernizing experiment has failed to achieve this; that Next? The Islamic movement represents one such alternative.

If you look at the Islamic movements over the last two centuries, you will find that in the first phase the predominant challenge that the Islamic movement faced with invasion by foreign powers. It tried to resist threats to the freedom and political sovereignty of Par al-Islam but it could not succeed. Nonetheless it made its impact. A second phase occurrence when western dominance had consolidated itself. Again, the challenge to colonialism came from Islamic sources which informed the people of their Islamic identity and inspired resistance movements against foreign rule. The Islamic movement was the chief source of the independence movement, seeking liberation from the political dominance of foreign powers.

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5. The same is true of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Hind, Jamaat- e- Islami, Bangladesh, the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East and other Islamic movements.



And it succeeded. But in its success, there also was a failure. The new system that was established by the new regimes in most of the Muslim countries was not Islamic. It was still cast in the shadow of western models. The new political, economic, and intellectual leadership of the Muslim countries was just a replica, a transplant implanted by Western powers. Now we have a third phase that Muslim countries are passing through. The third phase is the Islamic resurgence. The westernizing model has failed and now Islamic movements want to reconstruct society they are in search of a new social order. They want new answers to the questions which have been agitating them. The Islamic movements have given Muslims a new outlook, a new hope, a new possibility. It is the restructuring of their society, individual and collective life and rebuilding socio-economic life on the foundations of Islam. They are not averse to the technology of the West; but are not prepared to have it at the cost of their own identity and ideology.

### The Specter of Fundamentalism!

The West has failed to see the strength and potential of the Islamic movement. It has chosen to dub it as fundamentalist as fanatic, as anti-Western, as anachronistic, as what not. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It appears that the West is once again committing the fatal mistake of looking upon others belonging to a different paradigm, from the prism of its own distorted categories of thought and history.

An effort to put the cap of 'fundamentalism' on the Islamic resurgent movements is one such example. Fundamentalism was a unique phenomenon produced in certain periods of Western Christian history. It tried to impose a literalistic interpretation on a Book which claimed divine inspiration but was not the word of God, pure and simple. The fundamentalist groups in Christian history came up with many new fangled interpretations and strange religious positions and are generally regarded as reactionary and unrealistic. By clamping the same term on Islamic movements great violence is being done to history. It is also bound to misinform the western people and policy-makers about the true nature of Islamic resurgence, as they are being forced to see them in the light of a particular unhappy chapter of their own history. Islamic resurgence is a future-oriented movement and has nothing in common with the fundamentalist approach of the Christian groups. It has shown great awareness of the problems of modernity and the challenges of technology, and its emphasis on the original sources of Islam, the Qur'an and Sunnah, imparts to its approach flexibility and a capability to innovate which is conspicuous by its absence in the approach of the conservatives who stick to a particular school of fiqh (law). All these possibilities are ignored by analysts who try to see the contemporary Islamic world in categories which are not relevant to them.

The present Muslim mind cannot be understood properly unless we realize that it is deeper than just a political anguish. Unfortunately, efforts to understand the Islamic resurgence are often simplistic. The theory that the Islamic resurgence is just a result of rapid developmental efforts particularly in the case of Iran is overly simplistic. Yes, the development syndrome has its own problems, but it would be an oversimplification to assume that the Muslim peoples' overwhelming

response to forces of resurgence is simply due to the tensions that have been produced by efforts to achieve quick economic development through technology transfer. Such diagnosis betrays abysmal ignorance of the ethos of the Muslim society.

Similarly, reducing the resurgence to just an angry reaction of people against western imperialism is equally misleading. That there is a reaction against imperialism; there is no doubt about that. However, more than a political fury is being expressed or articulated. A much deeper cause is dissatisfaction with the ideals and values, the institutions and the system of government exported from the West and imposed upon them. It is dissatisfaction with their leadership which they associate with Western interests and believe has been instrumental in imposing Western models of development on the Muslim society. It is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. On the one hand, it is an historical expression of the concerns as well as the aspirations of the people, based primarily upon internal indigenous factors. On the other hand, it is also a response to an external challenge, the challenge of post- colonial impacts on Muslim society.

The movement of Islamic resurgence is a critique of the Muslim status quo. It is also a critique of the dominant culture of our times, the western culture and civilization which is prevalent in many of the Muslim countries. And it is a critique from a different base, from a different point of reference; and that point of reference is Islam, the original sources of Islam - the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

It represents a reawakening of faith. This dimension is neglected in most of the western writings; they assume that it is just a question of political and social rearrangements. The social order is definitely important but the starting point is reawakening and strengthening of faith, and rebuilding of the moral personality and the character of the individual. There is an upsurge of spirituality and idealism, generating a new sense of direction and a commitment to reconstruct their world, whatever by the sacrifice.

The model of leadership during the period of colonial domination and of post-colonial manipulation has been one which just looked after personal interests. That is why Muslim society has become so devoid of moral values and become rife with corruption. Corruption and exploitation have become a way of life in our part of the world. Muslims have their own weaknesses and they had faced many reverses as part of the global situation. But the explosion of corruption which is so visible in the present day Muslim World is a new phenomenon, and we relate it to the impact of secularization and westernization resulting in loss of individual morality and of social ethics, which had historically been based upon tawhid (the unity of God) and loyalty to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and which were weakened under these alien influences. Muslim modernism which has been the secularizing spearhead of westernization in the Muslim lands tried to super-impose the values of western liberalism on a Muslim society with the result that the grip of the traditional values weakened but no new morality could be developed to fill the gap. It is in the background of this moral vacuum that personal aggrandizement and socio-economic exploitation have become

rampant, mostly in the name of economic development and material progress. Islamic resurgence represents a rebellion against this state of affairs.

It stands for a reaffirmation of Islamic morality and a rededication of the resources of the Ummah - material as well as human - to the achievement of social justice and self-reliance. Muslim youth have been inspired by a new vision to rebuild their individual and social life in accordance with the ideals and principles given by Islam and to strive to establish a new social order, not only within their own countries but to see that a new world order is established ensuring peace, dignity and justice to the oppressed of the world.

### Mawlana Mawdudi and Jamaat-e-Islami

Before I conclude let me very briefly but specifically refer to the work and contribution of the late Mawlana Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) one of the chief architects of the contemporary Islamic renaissance<sup>6</sup>. Author of 138 original works; he has influenced the contemporary Islamic scene as a writer, a speaker, a scholar, a religious thinker, a social reformer, a political leader, and lately as elderly statesman. He made his impact on the intellectual life of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent in 1930 when at the early age of twenty four he published his voluminous scholarly work *Al-Jihad fi al-Islam* (Jihad in Islam), a work distinguished by erudite scholarship and research by remarkable intellectual integrity and moral courage, and a refreshing vision of the Ummah playing its constructive role in rebuilding the world community on foundations of Godliness and justice.

The work was remarkable for its range of conception: the author had placed Jihad in the total context of the Islamic law of nations, especially of war and peace, and had compared the Islamic laws of war and peace with those found in other religious and legal systems of the world, both of the past and present. The book revealed the scholar as possessed of extraordinary knowledge as well as keen and profound thought. The book was also striking for its arrestingly confident tone about Islam. There was no weak-kneed inclination to compromise, no "apologizing" for Islam, and no attempt to uphold it by showing it to be in harmony with the respectable ideas of the time. The author's strong conviction about the intrinsic soundness and distinctness of the teachings of Islam and about their continuing relevance for all mankind was too transparent to be missed by any reader.

Moreover, the book disclosed its author not only possessed of challenging and provocative ideas, but also of a very powerful pen to express them. These characteristics, which were evident from the first major work of Mawlana Mawdudi, have stood him in good stead throughout his life, and since the middle thirties his has been a major, dominating figure on the intellectual scene of the Indo-

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6. See: Ahmad, Khurshid and Ansari, Zafar Ishaq, (eds.) *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in Honor of Sayyid Abul A' la Mawdudi*. Leicester. The Islamic Foundation. 1 979. In the following paragraphs material has been utilized from our Preface to the book.

Pakistan subcontinent. The monthly magazine *Terjuman al-Qur'an*, which he has edited since 1933, has been a major influence on the minds of the Muslim intellectuals of the subcontinent. Since the forties, when Mawlana Mawdudi's writings began to be available in their translated versions in other languages, especially in Arabic and English, his ideas began to attract an increasing number of people far beyond the confines of the subcontinent. It is no exaggeration to say that Mawlana Mawdudi has been the most read Muslim author of the 20th century, and has contributed immensely to the contemporary resurgence of Islamic ideas, feelings and activity all over the world.

Islam, however, has not been merely an intellectual concern of Mawlana Mawdudi. In his early youth, he went through a process of intellectual experience as a result of which he has shown the zeal and vitality of a convert. (In fact, Mawlana Mawdudi claims himself to be a "convert" to Islam in so far as at a certain age of his life, he discovered in Islam a meaning and significance which he had not experience before). Since then he has consciously tried to live Islam and to live for Islam. At this point in his life - presumably in his early twenties - he resolved not only to devote all his energy to expounding the teachings of Islam, but also to do all that lies in his power to transform Islamic teachings into practical realities. Mawlana Mawdudi has been emphatic in asserting that Islam is not merely a body of metaphysical doctrines, nor merely a bundle of rituals, nor even merely a set of rules of individual conduct. It is indeed a way of life, the bases of which lie rooted in Divine Revelation; a way of life which is permeated with God-consciousness and is oriented to doing God's will and actualizing good and righteousness in human life. A Muslim is committed to follow this way of life, to bear witness to it by word and deed, and to strive in order to make it prevail in the world. Hence, in addition to his intellectual contribution, in 1941, Mawlana Mawdudi founded a movement known as the *Jamaat-i-Islami* ("The Islamic Organization"). He led this movement from its inception till 1972 as its chief. Even after he got himself relieved of the duties of its formal headship for health reasons, he continued to be a major source of guidance and inspiration for those associated with the *Jamaat-i-Islami* and indeed for a very large number of men and women across the globe, which may not have any affiliation to that organization. On-the whole, more and more people, particularly Muslims of the younger generation, came to appreciate Mawdudi and even identify with the vision of Islam that he articulated so lucidly and so incisively.

Mawlana Mawdudi, therefore, was not merely an academician, but also a man of action, engaged in a grim struggle for the implementation of the Islamic vision. During this struggle many sterling qualities of his character have come to the surface his sincerity and selflessness, his zeal and devotion, his courage and patience, his magnanimity and tolerance. It is because of his involvement in practical matters, especially since 1948, that Mawlana Mawdudi had to suffer persecution at the hands of the men of authority in Pakistan, who failed to perceive the real motives and true character of his movement. Many a time he had to court imprisonment, not unlike some of the great heroes of Islam - Abu Hanifa , Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, and Sayyid Qutb of our own time, to name only a few luminaries. Not only that, in 1953 he narrowly escaped the gallows and in 1963, the bullets of an assassin. In braving persecution for the sake of

his cause Mawlana Mawdudi has displayed a serene dignity and heroic fearlessness which have won him abiding love and respect of friends and foes alike.

It is remarkable that despite the exacting tasks laid on Mawlana Mawdudi's shoulders as the head of a large movement, he remained prolific as a writer and his writings remained impressive not only qualitatively, but also quantitatively. His magnum opus of course, is his translation and Tafsir (exegesis) of the Holy Qur'an, an epitome of his elegant literary style, his erudition, and the clarity and brilliance of his thought. One of the major characteristics of Mawlana Mawdudi has been his ability to bring out the relevance of Islam to the problems and concerns of man in the present age. This is largely because he combines with his Islamic scholarship awareness and knowledge of the intellectual trends and practical problems of man in the modern age. In encoring the challenge of modernity, Mawlana Mawdudi displayed neither ultra-conservative rigidity, nor any proneness to be overawed by the ideas and institutions current in our time simply because they are fashionable in the modern age or have gained respectability among the nations which are currently dominant in the world. He invited the Muslims to creatively appropriate the healthy and beneficial elements from the cumulative treasure of human experience, including the modern, and to employ them to serve the higher ends of life embodied in the Islamic tradition.

It can, therefore, rightly be claimed that Mawlana Mawdudi has been a singular influence on the contemporary Muslim mind in rediscovering the relevance of Islam for the individual as well as the socio-economic aspects of life. What he said in the 30's and 40's (about reconstruction of education, of economy, of politics, of social life) is now echoed in the parliaments and in the international conferences of contemporary Muslims. Some of his critics ridiculed him in the 40's and 50's when he said that "after achieving Pakistan as a homeland for Islam we must restructure the entire system of education on Islamic lines and strive to reconstruct human thought in the light of Divine guidance." Today the same approach is being emphasized by leading Muslim educationists, almost everywhere in the Muslim world. The same is true "of economics, of statecraft, of social order. He has been one of those few persons who have been instrumental in setting the tone of their times.

Islamic resurgence is a multi-dimensional phenomenon caused by many influences, yet the contribution of men like Iqbal, Mawdudi and Hasan al-Banna is outstanding. It is writ large on the horizon. It would be worthwhile to understand the contemporary Islamic scene in the context of the personalities and the forces that have played a decisive role in fashioning them, and to avoid classifying them under the labels with which the western analysts are familiar - whether of liberalism or fundamentalism, conservatism or progressivism.

### Islam and the West

In conclusion, I would suggest that the Islamic resurgence is primarily an internal, indigenous, positive and ideological movement within Muslim society. It is bound to come into contact even

clash with forces in the international arena. The close contact of the West, particularly through colonial rule is relevant but not the most decisive factor in producing the Islamic response.

Muslims constitute one fifth of the human race, around 900-1000 million in all parts of the world. There are forty nine independent Muslim states. If they want to reconstruct their socio-economic order according to the values of Islam, it is bound to come into conflict with the international status quo. So conflict is there. And to that extent, I would like to invite my western colleagues to understand that Muslims criticism of Western civilization is not primarily an exercise in political confrontation. The real competition would be at the level of two cultures and civilizations, one based upon Islamic values and the other on the values of materialism and nationalism. Had western culture been based on Christianity, on morality, on faith, the language and modus operandi of the contact and conflict would have been different. But that is not the case. The choice is between the Divine Principle and a secular materialist culture. And there is no reason to believe that this competition should be seen by all well meaning human beings merely in terms of geo-politic boundaries of the West and the East, In fact all those human beings who are concerned over the spiritual and moral crisis of our times should have a sigh a relief on Islamic resurgence, and not be put off or scared by it.

Once the nature of the conflict as the level of values and culture is clarified, I want to underscore is that there is a political dimension to the situation we must not ignore. There is nothing pathologically anti-western in the Muslim resurgence. It is neither pro. nor anti-West at the level of political relationship between the Western countries and the Muslim world, despite the loathsome legacy of colonialism which has the potential to mar these relationships. If China and the United States and Russia and India can have friendly relations without sharing common culture and politico-economic system, why not the West and the Muslim World? Much depends upon how the West looks upon this phenomenon of Islamic resurgence and wants to come to terms with it. If in the Muslim mind and the Muslim viewpoint. Western powers remain associated with efforts to perpetuate the Western model in Muslim society, keeping Muslims tied to the system of West domination at national and international levels and thus destabilizing Muslim culture and society directly or indirectly, then, of course, the tension shall increase.

Differences are bound to multiply. And if things are not resolved peacefully through dialogue and understanding, through respect for each other's rights and genuine concerns, they are destined to be resolved otherwise. But if, on the other hand, we can acknowledge and accept this world is a pluralistic world, that Western culture can co-exist with other cultures and civilizations without expecting to dominate over them, that others need not necessarily be looked upon as enemies or foes but as potential friends, then there is a genuine possibility that we can learn to live with our differences. If we are prepared to follow this approach, then we would be able to discover many a common ground and many a common challenge. Otherwise, I am afraid we are heading for hard times.

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