

## Milestones by Sayyid Qutb

### Introduction

Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice, not because of the danger of complete annihilation which is hanging over its head--this being just a symptom and not the real disease--but because humanity is devoid of those vital values which are necessary not only for its healthy development but also for its real progress. Even the Western world realizes that Western civilization is unable to present any healthy values for the guidance of mankind. It knows that it does not possess anything which will satisfy its own conscience and justify its existence.

Democracy in the West has become infertile to such an extent that it is borrowing from the systems of the Eastern bloc, especially in the economic system, under the name of socialism. It is the same with the Eastern bloc. Its social theories, foremost among which is Marxism, in the beginning attracted not only a large number of people from the East but also from the West, as it was a way of life based on a creed. But now Marxism is defeated on the plane of thought, and if it is stated that not a single nation in the world is truly Marxist, it will not be an exaggeration. On the whole this theory conflicts with man's nature and its needs. This ideology prospers only in a degenerate society or in a society which has become cowed as a result of some form of prolonged dictatorship. But now, even under these circumstances, its materialistic economic system is failing, although this was the only foundation on which its structure was based. Russia, which is the leader of the communist countries, is itself suffering from shortages of food. Although during the times of the Tsars Russia used to produce surplus food, it now has to import food from abroad and has to sell its reserves of gold for this purpose. The main reason for this is the failure of the system of collective farming, or, one can say, the failure of a system which is against human nature.

It is essential for mankind to have new leadership!

The leadership of mankind by Western man is now on the decline, not because Western culture has become poor materially or because its economic and military power has become weak. The period of the Western system has come to an end primarily because it is deprived of those life-giving values which enabled it to be the leader of mankind.

It is necessary for the new leadership to preserve and develop the material fruits of the creative genius of Europe, and also to provide mankind with such high ideals and values as have so far remained undiscovered by mankind, and which will also acquaint humanity with a way of life which is harmonious with human nature, which is positive and constructive, and which is practicable.

Islam is the only System which possesses these values and this way of life.

The period of the resurgence of science has also come to an end. This period, which began with the Renaissance in the sixteenth century after Christ and reached its zenith in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, does not possess a reviving spirit.

All nationalistic and chauvinistic ideologies which have appeared in modern times, and all the movements and theories derived from them, have also lost their vitality. In short, all man-made individual or collective theories have proved to be failures.

At this crucial and bewildering juncture, the turn of Islam and the Muslim community has arrived- the turn of Islam, which does not prohibit material inventions. Indeed, it counts it as an obligation on man from the very beginning of time, when God deputed him as His representative on earth, and regards it under certain conditions as worship of God and one of the purposes of man's creation.

**"And when Your Sustainer said to the angels, I am going to make My representative on earth.,"** (Qur'an 2:30)

**"And I have not created jinns and men except that they worship Me."** (2:143)

Thus the turn of the Muslim community has come to fulfill the task for mankind which God has enjoined upon it.

**"You are the best community raised for the good of mankind. You enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God."** (3:110)

**"Thus We have made you a middle community, so that you be witnesses for mankind as the Messenger is a witness for you."** (2:143)

Islam cannot fulfill its role except by taking concrete form in a society, rather, in a nation; for man does not listen, especially in this age, to an abstract theory which is not seen materialized in a living society. From this point of view, we can say that the Muslim community has been extinct for a few centuries, for this Muslim community does not denote the name of a land in which Islam resides, nor is it a people whose forefathers lived under the Islamic system at some earlier time. It is the name of a group of people whose manners, ideas and concepts, rules and regulations, values and criteria, are all derived from the Islamic source. The Muslim community with these characteristics vanished at the moment the laws of God became suspended on earth.

If Islam is again to play the role of the leader of mankind, then it is necessary that the Muslim community be restored to its original form.

It is necessary to revive that Muslim community which is buried under the debris of the man-made traditions of several generations, and which is crushed under the weight of those false laws and customs which are not even remotely related to the Islamic teachings, and which, in spite of all this, calls itself the 'world of Islam.'

I am aware that between the attempt at 'revival' and the attainment of 'leadership' there is a great distance, as the Muslim community has long ago vanished from existence and from observation, and the leadership of mankind has long since passed to other ideologies and other nations, other concepts and other systems. This was the era during which Europe's genius created its marvelous works in science, culture, law and material production, due to which mankind has progressed to great heights of creativity and material comfort. It is not easy to find fault with the inventors of such marvelous things, especially since what we call the 'world of Islam' is completely devoid of all this beauty.

But in spite of all this, it is necessary to revive Islam. The distance between the revival of Islam and the attainment of world leadership may be vast, and there may be great difficulties on the way; but the first step must be taken for the revival of Islam.

If we are to perform our task with insight and wisdom, we must first know clearly the nature of those qualities on the basis of which the Muslim community can fulfill its obligation as the leader of the world. This is essential so that we may not commit any blunders at the very first stage of its reconstruction and revival.

The Muslim community today is neither capable of nor required to present before mankind great genius in material inventions, which will make the world bow its head before its supremacy and thus re-establish once more its world leadership. Europe's creative mind is far ahead in this area, and at least for a few centuries to come we cannot expect to compete with Europe and attain supremacy over it in these fields.

Hence we must have some other quality, that quality which modern civilization does not possess.

But this does not mean that we should neglect material progress. We should also give our full attention and effort in this direction, not because at this stage it is an essential requirement for attaining the leadership of mankind, but because it is an essential condition for our very existence; and Islam itself, which elevates man to the position of representative of God on earth, and which, under certain conditions, considers the responsibilities of this representative as the worship of God and the purpose of man's creation, makes material progress obligatory for us.

To attain the leadership of mankind, we must have something to offer besides material progress, and this other quality can only be a faith and a way of life which on the one hand conserves the benefits of modern science and technology, and on the other fulfills the basic human needs on the same level of excellence as technology has fulfilled them in the sphere of material comfort. And then this faith and way of life must take concrete form in a human society--in other words, In a Muslim society.

If we look at the sources and foundations of modern ways of living, it becomes clear that the whole world is steeped in Jahiliyyah, [Ignorance of the Divine guidance] and all the marvelous material comforts and high-level inventions do not diminish this ignorance. This Jahiliyyah is based on rebellion against God's sovereignty on earth. It transfers to man one of the greatest attributes of God, namely sovereignty, and makes some men lords over others. It is now not in that simple and primitive form of the ancient Jahiliyyah, but takes the form of claiming that the right to create values, to legislate rules of collective behavior, and to choose any way of life rests with men, without regard to what God has prescribed. The result of this rebellion against the authority of God is the oppression of His creatures. Thus the humiliation of the common man under the communist systems and the exploitation of individuals and nations due to greed for wealth and imperialism under the capitalist systems are but a corollary of rebellion against God's authority and the denial of the dignity of man given to him by God.

In this respect, Islam's way of life is unique, for in systems other than Islam, some people worship others in some form or another. Only in the Islamic way of life do all men become free from

the servitude of some men to others and devote themselves to the worship of God alone, deriving guidance from Him alone, and bowing before Him alone.

This is where the roads separate, and this is that new concept which we possess and can present to mankind--this and the way of life which this concept organizes for all the practical aspects of man's life. This is that vital message of which mankind does not know. It is not a product of Western invention nor of European genius, whether eastern or western.

Without doubt, we possess this new thing which is perfect to the highest degree, a thing which mankind does not know about and is not capable of 'producing'.

But as we have stated before, the beauty of this new system cannot be appreciated unless it takes a concrete form. Hence it is essential that a community arrange its affairs according to it and show it to the world. In order to bring this about, we need to initiate the movement of Islamic revival in some Muslim country. Only such a revivalist movement will eventually attain to the status of world leadership, whether the distance is near or far. How is it possible to start the task of reviving Islam?

It is necessary that there should be a vanguard which sets out with this determination and then keeps walking on the path, marching through the vast ocean of Jahiliyyah which has encompassed the entire world. During its course, it should keep itself somewhat aloof from this all-encompassing Jahiliyyah and should also keep some ties with it.

It is necessary that this vanguard should know the landmarks and the milestones of the road toward this goal so that they may recognize the starting place, the nature, the responsibilities and the ultimate purpose of this long journey. Not only this, but they ought to be aware of their position as opposed to this Jahiliyyah, which has struck its stakes throughout the earth: when to co-operate with others and when to separate from them: what characteristics and qualities they should cultivate, and with what characteristics and qualities the Jahiliyyah immediately surrounding them is armed; how to address the people of Jahiliyyah in the language of Islam, and what topics and problems ought to be discussed; and where and how to obtain guidance in all these matters.

The milestones will necessarily be determined by the light of the first source of this faith--the Holy Qur'an--and from its basic teachings, and from the concept which it created in the minds of the first group of Muslims, those whom God raised to fulfill His will, those who once changed the course of human history in the direction ordained by God.

I have written "Milestones" for this vanguard, which I consider to be a waiting reality about to be materialized. Four chapters [These chapters are "The Nature of the Qur'anic Method", "Islamic Concept and Culture", "Jihad in the Cause of God", and "Revival of the Muslim Community and its characteristics."] are taken from my commentary, *Fi Jilal al-Qur'an*, [ *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, a commentary on the Qur'an.] which I have changed here and there slightly to suit the topic. This introduction and the other chapters I wrote at various times. In writing these chapters I have set down the deep truths which I grasped during my meditations over the way of life presented in the Holy Qur'an. These thoughts may appear random and disconnected, but one thing is common among them; that is, these thoughts are milestones on the road,' and it is the nature of signs along

the road to be disconnected. Taken together, these writings are a first installment of a series, and with God's help I hope to write some more collections on this topic.

And the guidance is from God.

## **Islam is the Real Civilization**

Islam knows only two kinds of societies, the Islamic and the jahili. The Islamic society is that which follows Islam in belief and ways of worship, in law and organization, in morals and manners. The jahili society is that which does not follow Islam and in which neither the Islamic belief and concepts, nor Islamic values or standards, Islamic laws and regulations, or Islamic morals and manners are cared for.

The Islamic society is not one in which people call themselves 'Muslims' but in which the Islamic law has no status, even though prayer, fasting and Hajj are regularly observed; and the Islamic society is not one in which people invent their own version of Islam, other than what God and His Messenger-peace be on him-have prescribed and explained, and call it, for example, 'progressive Islam'.

Jahili society appears in various forms, all of them ignorant of the Divine guidance.

Sometimes it takes the form of a society in which belief in God is denied and human history is explained in terms of intellectual materialism, and 'scientific socialism' becomes its system.

Sometimes it appears in the form of a society in which God's existence is not denied, but His domain is restricted to the heavens and His rule on earth is suspended. Neither the Shari'ah nor the values prescribed by God and ordained by Him as eternal and invariable find any place in this scheme of life. In this society, people are permitted to go to mosques, churches and synagogues; yet it does not tolerate people's demanding that the Shari'ah of God be applied in their daily affairs. Thus, such a society denies or suspends God's sovereignty on earth, while God says plainly:

**"It is He Who is Sovereign in the heavens and Sovereign in the earth." (43:84)**

Because of this behavior, such a society does not follow the religion of God as defined by Him:

**"The command belongs to God alone. He commands you not to worship anyone except Him. This is the right way of life." (12:40)**

Because of this, such a society is to be counted among jahili societies, although it may proclaim belief in God and permit people to observe their devotions in mosques, churches and

synagogues.

The Islamic society is, by its very nature, the only civilized society, and the jahili societies, in all their various forms, are backward societies. It is necessary to elucidate this great truth.

Once I announced as the title of a book of mine which was in press, The Civilized Society of Islam; but in my next announcement I dropped the word 'civilized' from it. At this change, an Algerian author (who writes in French) commented that the reason for this change is that psychology which operates in a person's mind while defending Islam. The author expressed regret that this was an expression of immaturity which was preventing me from facing reality!

I excused this Algerian author because at one time I myself was of the same opinion. At that time, my thought processes were similar to his thought processes of today. I encountered the same difficulty which he is encountering today; that is, to understand the meaning of 'civilization'.

Until then, I had not gotten rid of the cultural influences which had penetrated my mind in spite of my Islamic attitude and inclination. The source of these influences was foreign -alien to my Islamic consciousness, -yet these influences had clouded by intuition and concepts. The Western concept of civilization was my standard; it had prevented me from seeing with clear and penetrating vision.

However, later I saw very clearly that the Muslim society was the civilized society. Hence the word 'civilized' in the title of my book was redundant and did not add anything new; rather it would have obscured the thinking of the reader in the same way as my own ideas had been obscured.

Now the question is, what is the meaning of 'civilization?' Let us try to explain it.

When, in a society, the sovereignty belongs to God alone, expressed in its obedience to the Divine Law, only then is every person in that society free from servitude to others, and only then does he taste true freedom. This alone is 'human civilization', as the basis of a human civilization is the complete and true freedom of every person and the full dignity of every individual of the society. On the other hand, in a society in which some people are lords who legislate and some others are slaves who obey them, then there is no freedom in the real sense, nor dignity for each and every individual.

It is necessary that we clarify the point that legislation is not limited only to legal matters, as some people assign this narrow meaning to the Shari'ah. The fact is that attitudes, the way of living, the values, criteria, habits and traditions, are all legislated and affect people. If a particular group of people forges all these chains and imprisons others in them, this will not be a free society. In such a society some people have the position of authority, while others are subservient to them; hence this society will be backward, and in Islamic terminology is called a

'jahili' society.

Only Islamic society is unique in this respect, in that the authority belongs to God alone; and man, cutting off his chains of servitude to other human beings, enters into the service of God and thus attains that real and complete freedom which is the focus of human civilization. In this society, the dignity and honor of man are respected according to what God has prescribed. He becomes the representative of God on earth, and his position becomes even higher than that of the angels.

In a society which bases its foundation on the concept, belief and way of life which all originate from the One God, man's dignity is respected to the highest degree and no one is a slave to another, as they are in societies in which the concepts, beliefs and way of life originate from human masters. In the former society, man's highest characteristics - those of the spirit and mind - are reflected, while in a society in which human relationships are based on color, race or nation, or similar criteria, these relationships become a chain for human thought and prevent man's noble characteristics from coming to the fore. A person remains human regardless of what color, race or nation he belongs to, but he cannot be called human if he is devoid of spirit and reason. Furthermore, he is able to change his beliefs, concepts and attitudes toward life, but he is incapable of changing his color and race, nor can he decide in what place or nation to be born. Thus it is clear that only such a society is civilized in which human associations are based on free choice, and that society is backward in which the basis of association is something other than free choice; in Islamic terminology, it is a 'jahili society'.

Only Islam has the distinction of basing the fundamental binding relationship in its society on belief; and on the basis of this belief, black and white and red and yellow, Arabs and Greeks, Persians and Africans, and all nations which inhabit the earth become one community. In this society God is the Lord and only He is worshipped, the most honorable is the one who is noblest in character, and all individuals are equally subject to a law which is not man-made but made by their Creator.

A society which places the highest value on the 'humanity' of man and honors the noble 'human' characteristics is truly civilized. If materialism, no matter in what form, is given the highest value, whether it be in the form of a 'theory', such as in the Marxist interpretation of history, or in the form of material production, as is the case with the United States and European countries, and all other human values are sacrificed at its altar, then such a society is a backward one, or, in Islamic terminology, is a 'jahili society'.

The civilized society-that is, the Islamic society-does not downgrade matter, either in theory or in the form of material production, as it considers the universe in which we live, by which we are influenced, and which we influence, to be made of matter, and it considers material production to be the backbone of the vicegerency of God on earth. However, in the Islamic society material comforts are not made into the highest value at the expense of 'human' characteristics-freedom and honor, family and its obligations, morals and values, and so on - as is the case in jahili

societies.

If a society is based on 'human values' and 'human morals' and these remain dominant in it, then that society will be civilized. Human values and human morals are not something mysterious and undefinable, nor are they 'progressive' and changeable, having no roots and stability, as is claimed by the exponents of the materialistic interpretation of history or of 'scientific socialism.' They are the values and the morals which develop those characteristics in a human being which distinguish him from the animals and which emphasize those aspects of his personality which raise him above the animals; these are not such values and morals which develop and emphasize those characteristics in man which are common with the animals.

When the question is viewed in this manner, a fixed and well-defined line of separation is obtained which cannot be erased by the incessant attempt of the 'progressives' and the scientific societies to erase it. According to this view, moral standards are not determined by the environment and changing conditions; rather they are fixed criteria above and beyond the difference in environments. One cannot say that some moral values are 'agricultural' and others 'industrial', some are 'capitalistic' and some others 'socialistic', some are 'bourgeoise' and others 'proletarian'. Here, the standards of morality are independent of the environment, the economic status, and the stage of development of a society; these are nothing but superficial variations. Beyond all these, we arrive at 'human' values and morals and at 'animalistic' values and morals, this being the correct separation or, in Islamic terminology, 'Islamic values and morals and 'jahili' values and morals.

Indeed, Islam establishes the values and morals which are 'human' - those which develop characteristics in a human being which distinguish him from the animals. In whatever society Islam is dominant, whether it is an agricultural or industrial society, nomadic and pastoral or urban and settled, poor or rich, it implants these human values and morals, nurtures them and strengthens them; it develops human characteristics progressively and guards against degeneration toward animalism. The direction of the line which separates human values from animal-like characteristics is upward; but if this direction is reversed, then in spite of all material progress the civilization will be 'backward', 'degenerative', and 'jahili'!

If the family is the basis of the society, and the basis of the family is the division of labor between husband and wife, and the upbringing of children is the most important function of the family, then such a society is indeed civilized. In the Islamic system of life, this kind of a family provides the environment under which human values and morals develop and grow in the new generation; these values and morals cannot exist apart from the family unit. If, on the other hand, free sexual relationships and illegitimate children become the basis of a society, and if the relationship between man and woman is based on lust, passion and impulse, and the division of work is not based on family responsibility and natural gifts; if woman's role is merely to be attractive, sexy and flirtatious, and if woman is freed from her basic responsibility of bringing up children; and if, on her own or under social demand, she prefers to become a hostess or a stewardess in a hotel or ship or air company, thus spending her ability for material productivity

rather than in the training of human beings, because material production is considered to be more important, more valuable and more honorable than the development of human character, then such a civilization is 'backward' from the human point of view, or 'jahili' in the Islamic terminology.

The family system and the relationship between the sexes determine the whole character of a society and whether it is backward or civilized, jahili or Islamic. Those societies which give ascendance to physical desires and animalistic morals cannot be considered civilized, no matter how much progress they may make in industry or science. This is the only measure which does not err in gauging true human progress.

In all modern jahili societies, the meaning of 'morality' is limited to such an extent that all those aspects which distinguish man from animal are considered beyond its sphere. In these Societies, illegitimate sexual relationships, even homosexuality, are not considered immoral. The meaning of ethics is limited to economic affairs or sometimes to political affairs which fall into the category of 'government interests'. For example, the scandal of Christine Keeler and the British minister Profumo was not considered serious to British society because of its sexual aspect; it was condemnable because Christine Keeler was also involved with a naval attache of the Russian Embassy, and thus her association with a cabinet minister lied before the British Parliament! Similar scandals come to light in the American Senate. Englishmen and Americans who get involved in such spying scandals usually take refuge in Russia. These affairs are not considered immoral because of sexual deviations, but because of the danger to state secrets!

Among jahili societies, writers, journalists and editors advise both married and unmarried people that free sexual relationships are not immoral. However, it is immoral if a boy uses his partner, or a girl uses her partner, for sex, while feeling no love in his or her heart. It is bad if a wife continues to guard her chastity while her love for her husband has vanished; it is admirable if she finds another lover. Dozens of stories are written about this theme; many newspaper editorials, articles, cartoons, serious and light columns all invite to this way of life.

From the point of view of 'human' progress, all such societies are not civilized but are backward.

The line of human progress goes upward from animal desires toward higher values. To control the animal desires, a progressive society lays down the foundation of a family system in which human desires find satisfaction, as well as providing for the future generation to be brought up in such a manner that it will continue the human civilization, in which human characteristics flower to their full bloom. Obviously a society which intends to control the animal characteristics, while providing full opportunities for the development and perfection of human characteristics, requires strong safeguards for the peace and stability of the family, so that it may perform its basic task free from the influences of impulsive passions. On the other hand, if in a society immoral teachings and poisonous suggestions are rampant, and sexual activity is considered outside the sphere of morality, then in that society the humanity of man can hardly find a place to develop.

Thus, only Islamic values and morals, Islamic teachings and safeguards, are worthy of mankind, and from this unchanging and true measure of human progress, Islam is the real civilization and Islamic society is truly civilized.

Lastly, when man establishes the representation of God on earth in all respects, by dedicating himself to the service of God and freeing himself from servitude to others, by establishing the system of life prescribed by God and rejecting all other systems, by arranging his life according to the Shari'ah of God and giving up all other laws, by adopting the values and standards of morality which are pleasing to God and rejecting all other standards and, after this, when he investigates the laws governing the universe and uses them for the benefit of all mankind, applies them to resources hidden in the earth in accordance with the obligation imposed on him by God as His vicegerent on earth, unearths the treasures and resources of food and raw materials for industries, and uses his technical and professional knowledge for the development of various kinds of industries, doing all these things as a God-fearing person and as a representative of God; and when his attitude toward the material and moral aspects of life is infused with this spirit, only then does man become completely civilized and the society reach the height of civilization. In Islam, mere material inventions are not considered as civilization, as a jahili society can also have material prosperity. In many places in the Qur'an, God has described societies of this kind, which have attained material prosperity while remaining jahili.

**(Hud said to his people): "What is the matter with you that you make a memorial at every high place and build palaces as if you are immortal? When you deal with others, you are tyrants. Then fear God, and obey me. Fear Him Who gave you whatever you know. He gave you animals, children, gardens and rivers. I fear for you the day of a severe chastisement." (26: 128-135)**

**(Salih said to his people): "Will you remain secure here among these things - among gardens and fountains, the farmland and palm trees with juicy fruit? You build houses skillfully out of the mountains. So fear God and obey me, and do not obey the advice of the wasteful, those who make corruption in the earth and do not set things right." (26: 146-152)**

**"So when they forgot what they were reminded of, We opened to them the gates of everything until, when they rejoiced in what they were given, We seized them suddenly, and behold! they were greatly confounded. So the last remnant of the people who did evil was cut off. Praise belongs to God, the Sustainer of the Worlds." (6: 43-44)**

**"When the earth has taken on its glitter and has adorned itself fair, and its inhabitants think they have power over it, Our command comes upon it by night or by day, and We make it as stubble, as if yesterday it had not flourished." (10:24)**

But as we have said earlier, Islam does not look with contempt on material progress and material inventions; in fact, it considers them when used under the Divine system of life, as God's gifts. In the Qur'an we find that God promises His bounty to people when they are obedient to Him.

**(Noah said): "I said to my people, 'Ask forgiveness from your Sustainer; indeed, He accepts repentance. He will send upon you rain from the sky continuously and will make you powerful through wealth and children, and He will raise for you gardens and make streams for you.'" (71:10-12)**

**"Had the people of those towns believed and feared God, We would have opened blessings upon them from the sky and the earth, but they rejected the truth, so for their evil deeds We took them to account." (7:96)**

But the important thing is that foundation on which the industrial structure is built, and those values which bind a society, and through which a society acquires the characteristics of the 'human civilization'.

Since the basis of the Islamic society and the nature of its growth, which give rise to its community, have a unique character, one cannot apply to it those theories which can explain the establishment and growth of jahili societies. The Islamic society is born out of a movement, and this movement continues within it; it determines the places and positions of individuals in the community and then assigns them roles and responsibilities.

The origin of this movement, from which this community is born, is outside the human sphere and outside this world. Its source is a belief which has come from God to mankind, and which gives them a particular concept of the universe, of life of human history, of values and purposes, and which defines for them a way of life reflecting this concept. Thus the initial impetus for the movement does not come from human minds, nor from the physical world, but, as we have stated before, it comes from outside the earth and outside the human sphere; and this is the first distinctive feature of the Islamic society and its organization.

Indeed, the origin of this movement is an element outside the sphere of man and outside the physical world. This element, which comes into existence from God's will, is not something expected by any human being or taken into consideration by anyone, and in the beginning, no human endeavor enters into it. This Divine element sows the seed of the Islamic movement and at the same time prepares the human being for action -prepares the one who believes in the faith which reaches to him from the Divine source. As soon as this single individual believes in this faith, the Islamic community comes into existence (potentially) This individual does not remain satisfied at having this faith, but stands up to give its message. It is the nature of this faith that it is a virile and dynamic movement; the power which lights up this faith in this heart knows that it will not remain concealed but will come out into the open and will spread to others.

When the number of Believers reaches three, then this faith tells them; "Now you are a community, a distinct Islamic community, distinct from that jahili society which does not live according to this belief or accept its basic premise." Now the Islamic society has come into existence (actually).

These three individuals increase to ten, the ten to a hundred, the hundred to a thousand, and the thousand increase to twelve thousand-and the Islamic society grows and becomes established .

During the progress of this movement, a struggle would already have started within the jahili society. On the one side is this new born society, which in its belief and concepts, values and standards, existence and organization has separated itself from the jahili society, from which the Islamic society absorbs individuals. This movement, from the moment of its inception until the growth and permanent existence of its society comes about, tests every individual and assigns him a position of responsibility according to his capacity, as measured by the Islamic balance and standards. The society automatically recognizes his capabilities, and he does not need to come forward and announce his candidacy; in fact, his belief and the values to which he and his society subscribe compel him to keep himself concealed from the eyes of those who want to give him a responsible position.

But the movement which is a natural outgrowth of the Islamic belief and which is the essence of the Islamic society does not let any individual hide himself. Every individual of this society must move! There should be a movement in his belief, a movement in his blood, a movement in his community, and in the structure of this organic society, and as the Jahiliyyah is all around him, and its residual influences in his mind and in the minds of those around him, the struggle goes on and the Jihaad continues until the Day of Resurrection.

The ups and downs through which the movement passes determine the position and activity of every individual in the movement, and the organic body of this society is completed through the harmony between its individuals and their activities.

This kind of beginning and this method of organization are two of the characteristics of the Islamic society which distinguish it from other societies in respect to its existence and its structure, its nature and its form, its system and the method of regulating this system, and make it a unique and separate entity. It cannot be understood by social theories alien to it, nor can it be taught by methods foreign to its nature, nor can it be brought into existence by ways borrowed from other systems.

According to our unvarying definition of civilization, the Islamic society is not just an entity of the past, to be studied in history, but it is a demand of the present and a hope of the future. Mankind can be dignified, today or tomorrow, by striving toward this noble civilization, by pulling itself out of the abyss of Jahiliyyah into which it is falling. This is true not only for the industrially and economically developed nations but also for the backward nations.

The values to which we referred above as human values were never attained by mankind except in the period of Islamic civilization. We also ought to remember that by the term 'Islamic Civilization' we mean that civilization in which these values are found to the highest degree, and not a civilization which may make progress in industry, economics and science but in which human values are suppressed.

These values are not idealistic but are practical values which can be attained through human effort, by applying the teachings of Islam correctly. These values can be attained in any environment, whatever the level of industrial and scientific progress may be, as there is no contradiction; in fact, material prosperity and scientific progress are encouraged by the teachings of Islam, as they pertain to man's role as the representative of God on earth.

Similarly, in countries which are industrially and scientifically backward, these values teach people not to remain just silent spectators but to strive for industrial and scientific progress. A civilization with these values can develop anywhere and in any environment; however, the actual form it takes is not one, but depends on the conditions and environment existing in the society in which these values develop.

The Islamic society, in its form and extent and its way of living, is not a fixed historic entity; but its existence and its civilization are based on values which are fixed historical realities. The word 'historical' used in this context only means that these values took concrete form in a particular period of human history. In fact, these values, by their nature, do not belong to any particular period; they are the truth which has come to man from the Divine source-beyond the sphere of mankind and beyond the sphere of the physical universe.

The Islamic civilization can take various forms in its material and organizational structure, but the principles and values on which it is based are eternal and unchangeable. These are: the worship of God alone, the foundation of human relationships on the belief in the Oneness of God, the supremacy of the humanity of man over material things, the development of human values and the control of animalistic desires, respect for the family, the assumption of being the representative of God on earth according to His guidance and instruction, and in all affairs of this vicegerency the rule of God's law (al-Shari'ah) and the way of life prescribed by Him.

The forms of the Islamic civilization, constructed on these fixed principles, depend on actual conditions and are influenced by and change according to the stage of industrial, economic or scientific progress. These forms are necessarily different and are a consequence of the fact that Islam possesses sufficient flexibility to enter into any system and mold that system according to its purposes; but this flexibility in the outward forms of Islamic civilization does not mean any flexibility in the Islamic belief, which is the fountainhead of this civilization, nor is it to be considered as borrowed from outside, for it is the character of this religion. However, flexibility is not to be confused with fluidity. There is a great difference between these two.

When Islam entered the central part of Africa, it clothed naked human beings, socialized them,

brought them out of the deep recesses of isolation, and taught them the joy of work for exploring material resources. It brought them out of the narrow circles of tribe and clan into the vast circle of the Islamic community, and out of the worship of pagan gods into the worship of the Creator of the worlds. If this is not civilization, then what is it? This civilization was for this environment, and it used the actual resources which were available. If Islam enters into some other environment, then its civilization will also take another form-but with values which are eternal,-based on the existing resources of that particular environment.

Thus, the development of the civilization, according to the method and manner of Islam, does not depend on any particular level of industrial, economic or scientific progress. Wherever this civilization is established, it will use all the resources, will develop them, and if in a certain place these resources are non-existent, then it will supply them and will provide the means for their growth and progress. But in all situations it will be based on its immutable and eternal principles, and wherever such an Islamic society comes into existence, its particular character and its particular movement will also come into existence, and will make it distinguished and distinct from all jahili societies.

**"The baptism of God -and who can baptize better than God?" (2: 138)**

## **The Islamic Concept and Culture**

In the sixth chapter we have shown that the first part of the first pillar of Islam is the dedication of one's life to God alone; this is the meaning of "La ilaha illa Allah". The second part means that the way of this dedication comes from the Prophet Muhammad: "Muhammadar Rasul Allah" points to this fact. Complete submission to God comes by submitting to Him through belief, practice and in law. No Muslim can believe that another being can be a 'deity', nor can he believe that one can 'worship' a creature of God or that he can be given a position of 'sovereignty'. We explained in that chapter the meaning of worship, belief and sovereignty. In what follows we will show the true meaning of sovereignty and its relationship to culture.

In the Islamic concept, the sovereignty of God means not merely that one should derive all legal injunctions from God and judge according to these injunctions; in Islam the meaning of the 'Shari'ah' is not limited to mere legal injunctions, but includes the principles of administration, its system and its modes. This narrow meaning (i.e., that the Shari'ah is limited to legal injunctions) does not apply to the Shari'ah nor does it correspond to the Islamic concept. By 'the Shari'ah of God is meant everything legislated by God for ordering man's life; it includes the principles of belief, principles of administration and justice, principles of morality and human relationships, and principles of knowledge.

The Shari'ah includes the Islamic beliefs and concepts and their implications concerning the attributes of God, the nature of life, what is apparent and what is hidden in it, the nature of man, and the interrelationships among these. Similarly, it includes political, social and economic

affairs and their principles, with the intent that they reflect complete submission to God alone. It also includes legal matters (this is what today is referred to as the 'Shari'ah', while the true meaning of the 'Shari'ah in Islam is entirely different). It deals with the morals, manners, values and standards of the society, according to which persons, actions and events are measured. It also deals with all aspects of knowledge and principles of art and science. In all these guidance from God is needed, just as it is needed in legal matters.

We have discussed the sovereignty of God in relation to government and the legal system, and also in relation to matters of morals, human relationships, and values and standards which prevail in a society. The point to note was that the values and standards, morals and manners, are all based on the beliefs and concepts prevalent in the society and are derived from the same Divine source from which beliefs are derived.

The thing which will appear strange, not only to the common man but also to writers about Islam, is our turning to Islam and to the Divine source for guidance in spheres of science and art.

A book has already been published on the subject of art in which it has been pointed out that all artistic efforts are but a reflection of a man's concepts, beliefs and intuitions; they reflect whatever pictures of life and the world are found in a man's intuition. All these affairs are not only governed by the Islamic concepts, but, in fact, this concept is a motivating power for a Muslim's creativity. The Islamic concept of the universe defines man's relationship to the rest of the universe and to his Creator. Its basic subject is the nature of man and his position in the universe, the purpose of his life, his function, and the true value of his life. These are all included in the Islamic concept, which is not merely an abstract idea but is a living, active motivating force which influences man's emotions and actions. [The book, *The Principles of Islamic Art*, by Muhammad Qutb.]

In short, the question of art and literary thought and its relationship to Divine guidance requires a detailed discussion, and, as we have stated before, this discussion will appear strange not only to educated people but even to those Muslims who believe in the sovereignty of God in matters of law.

A Muslim cannot go to any source other than God for guidance in matters of faith, in the concept of life, acts of worship, morals and human affairs, values and standards, principles of economics and political affairs and interpretation of historical processes. It is, therefore, his duty that he should learn all these from a Muslim whose piety and character, belief and action, are beyond reproach.

However, a Muslim can go to a Muslim or to a non-Muslim to learn abstract sciences such as chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, medicine, industry, agriculture, administration (limited to its technical aspects), technology, military arts and similar sciences and arts; although the fundamental principle is that when the Muslim community comes into existence it should provide experts in all these fields in abundance, as all these sciences and arts are a sufficient

obligation (Fard al-Kifayah) on Muslims (that is to say, there ought to be a sufficient number of people who specialize in these various sciences and arts to satisfy the needs of the community). If a proper atmosphere is not provided under which these sciences and arts develop in a Muslim society, the whole society will be considered sinful; but as long as these conditions are not attained, it is permitted for a Muslim to learn them from a Muslim or a non-Muslim and to gain experience under his direction, without any distinction of religion. These are those affairs which are included in the Hadith, "You know best the affairs of your business". These sciences are not related to the basic concepts of a Muslim about life, the universe, man, the purpose of his creation, his responsibilities, his relationship with the physical world and with the Creator; these are also not related to the principles of law, the rules and regulations which order the lives of individuals and groups, nor are they related to morals, manners, traditions, habits, values and standards which prevail in the society and which give the society its shape and form. Thus there is no danger that a Muslim, by learning these sciences from a non-Muslim, will distort his belief or will return to Jahiliyyah.

But as far as the interpretation of human endeavor is concerned, whether this endeavor be individual or collective, this relates to theories of the nature of man and of the historical processes. Similarly, the explanation of the origin of the universe, the origin of the life of man, are part of metaphysics (not related to the abstract sciences such as chemistry, physics, astronomy or medicine, etc.); and thus their position is similar to legal matters, rules and regulations which order human life. These indirectly affect man's beliefs; it is therefore not permissible for a Muslim to learn them from anyone other than a God-fearing and pious Muslim, who knows that guidance in these matters comes from God. The main purpose is, a Muslim should realize, that all these affairs are related to his faith, and that to seek guidance from God in these matters is a necessary consequence of the faith in the Oneness of God and the Messengership of Muhammad.

However, a Muslim can study all the opinions and thoughts of jahili writers, not from the point of view of constructing his own beliefs and concepts, but for the purpose of knowing the deviations adopted by Jahiliyyah, so that he may know how to correct these man-made deviations in the light of the true Islamic belief and rebut them according to the sound principles of the Islamic teachings.

Philosophy, the interpretation of history, psychology (except for those observations and experimental results which are not part of anyone's opinion) ethics, theology and comparative religion, sociology (excluding statistics and observations)-all these sciences have a direction which in the past or the present has been influenced by jahili beliefs and traditions. That is why all these sciences come into conflict, explicitly or implicitly, with the fundamentals of any religion, and especially with Islam.

The situation concerning these areas of human thought and knowledge is not the same as with physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, medicine, etc. - as long as these last-mentioned sciences limit themselves to practical experiments and their results, and do not go beyond their scope into

speculative philosophy. For example, Darwinist biology goes beyond the scope of its observations, without any rhyme or reason and only for the sake of expressing an opinion, in making the assumption that to explain the beginning of life and its evolution there is no need to assume a power outside the physical world.

Concerning these matters, the true guidance from his Sustainer is sufficient for a Muslim. This guidance toward belief and complete submission to God alone is so superior to all man's speculative attempts in these affairs that they appear utterly ridiculous and absurd.

The statement that "Culture is the human heritage" and that it has no country, nationality or religion is correct only in relation to science and technology-as long as we do not jump the boundary of these sciences and delve into metaphysical interpretations, and start explaining the purpose of man and his historical role in philosophical terms, even explaining away art and literature and human intuition philosophically. Beyond this limited meaning, this statement about culture is one of the tricks played by world Jewry, whose purpose is to eliminate all limitations, especially the limitations imposed by faith and religion, so that the Jews may penetrate into body politic of the whole world and then may be free to perpetuate their evil designs. At the top of the list of these activities is usury, the aim of which is that all the wealth of mankind end up in the hands of Jewish financial institutions which run on interest.

However, Islam considers that - excepting the abstract sciences and their practical applications- there are two kinds of culture; the Islamic culture, which is based on the Islamic concept, and the jahili culture, which manifests itself in various modes of living which are nevertheless all based on one thing, and that is giving human thought the status of a god so that its truth or falsity is not to be judged according to God's guidance. The Islamic culture is concerned with all theoretical and practical affairs, and it contains principles, methods and characteristics which guarantee the development and perpetuation of all cultural activities.

One ought to remember the fact that the experimental method, which is the dynamic spirit of modern Europe's industrial culture, did not originate in Europe but originated in the Islamic universities of Andalusia and of the East. The principle of the experimental method was an offshoot of the Islamic concept and its explanations of the physical world, its phenomena, its forces and its secrets. Later, by adopting the experimental method, Europe entered into the period of scientific revival, which led it step by step to great scientific heights. Meanwhile, the Muslim world gradually drifted away from Islam, as a consequence of which the scientific movement first became inert and later ended completely. Some of the causes which led to this state of inertia were internal to the Muslim society and some were external, such as the invasions of the Muslim world by the Christians and Zionists. Europe removed the foundation of Islamic belief from the methodology of the empirical sciences, and finally, when Europe rebelled against the Church, which in the name of God oppressed the common people, it deprived the empirical sciences of their Islamic method of relating them to God's guidance.

Thus the entire basis of European thought became jahili and completely estranged from the

Islamic concept, and even became contradictory and conflicting with it. It is necessary for a Muslim, therefore, to return to the guidance of God in order to learn the Islamic concept of life-on his own, if possible, or otherwise to seek knowledge from a God-fearing Muslim whose piety and faith are reliable.

In Islam the saying, "Seek knowledge from the one who knows", is not acceptable with respect to those sciences which relate to faith, religion, morals and values, customs and habits, and all those matters which concern human relationships.

No doubt Islam permits a Muslim to learn chemistry, physics, astronomy, medicine, technology and agriculture, administration and similar technical sciences from a non-Muslim or from a Muslim who is not pious - and this under the condition that no God-fearing Muslim scientists are available to teach these sciences. This is the situation which exists now, because Muslims have drifted away from their religion and their way of life, and have forgotten that Islam appointed them as representatives of God and made them responsible for learning all the sciences and developing various capabilities to fulfill this high position which God has granted them. But Islam does not permit Muslims to learn the principles of their faith, the implications of their concept, the interpretation of the Qur'an, Hadith, the Prophet-peace be on him-the philosophy of history, the traditions of their society, the constitution of their government, the form of their politics, and similar branches of knowledge, from non-Islamic sources or from anyone other than a pious Muslim whose faith and religious knowledge is known to be reliable.

The person who is writing these lines has spent forty years of his life in reading books and in research in almost all aspects of human knowledge. He specialized in some branches of knowledge and he studied others due to personal interest. Then he turned to the fountainhead of his faith. He came to feel that whatever he had read so far was as nothing in comparison to what he found here. He does not regret spending forty years of his life in the pursuit of these sciences, because he came to know the nature of Jahiliyyah, its deviations, its errors and its ignorance, as well as its pomp and noise, its arrogant and boastful claims. Finally, he was convinced that a Muslim cannot combine these two sources-the source of Divine guidance and the source of Jahiliyyah - for his education .

Even then, this is not my personal opinion; this is a grave matter to be decided merely by some person's opinion, and the question of depending on a Muslim's opinion does not arise when the Divine standard provides us a way to judge the matter. This is the decision of God and His Messenger - peace be on him - and we refer it to them. We refer it to them in the same manner as is befitting for a Believer, as all controversial decisions ought to be referred to the judgement of God and His Prophet-peace be on him.

God Most High says in general terms concerning the ultimate aims of the Jews and Christians against Muslims:

**"Many among the People of the Book wish to turn you back from your faith toward unbelief, due to their envy, even after the truth has been known to them; but forgive and excuse them until God brings about His decision. Indeed, God has power over everything." (2:109)**

**"The Jews and Christians will not be pleased with you unless you follow their way. Say: 'Indeed, God's guidance is the true guidance'. And if, after this knowledge has come to you, you follow their desires, then you will find no helper or friend against God." (2:120)**

**"O you who believe! If you follow a party of the People of the Book, they will return you to the state of unbelief after you have believed." (3:100)**

**As reported by Hafiz Abu Y'ala, the Messenger of God- peace be on him- said: "Do not ask the People of the Book about anything. They will not guide you, In fact, they are themselves misguided. If you listen to them, you might end up accepting some falsehood or denying some truth. By God, If Moses had been alive among you, he would not be permitted (by God) anything except to follow me."**

After this warning to the Muslims from God concerning the ultimate designs of the Jews and Christians, it would be extremely short-sighted of us to fall into the illusion that when the Jews and Christians discuss Islamic beliefs or Islamic history, or when they make proposals concerning Muslim society or Muslim politics or economics, they will be doing it with good intentions, or with the welfare of the Muslims at heart, or in order to seek guidance and light. People who, after this clear statement from God, still think this way are indeed deluded.

Similarly, the saying of God Most High: "Say: 'Indeed, God's guidance is the true guidance', determines the unique source to which every Muslim should turn for guidance in all these affairs, as whatever is beyond God's guidance is error and none other than He can guide, as is clear from the emphasis in the verse, "Say: 'Indeed, God's guidance is the true guidance". There is no ambiguity in the meaning of this verse and no other interpretation is possible.

There is also a decisive injunction to avoid a person who turns away from the remembrance of God and whose only object is this world. It is explained that such a person follows mere speculation-and a Muslim is forbidden to follow speculation - and he knows only what is apparent in the life of this world and does not possess the true knowledge.

**"Avoid a person who has turned away from Our remembrance and does not desire anything beyond the life of this world, and this is the extent of his knowledge. Your Sustainer knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He knows best who is guided." (53: 29-30)**

**"They only know what is apparent in the life of this world, and are negligent of the Hereafter." (30:7)**

A person who is negligent in remembering God and is completely occupied with the affairs of this life-and that is the case with all the 'scientists' of today- knows only what is apparent, and this is not the type of knowledge, for which a Muslim can rely completely on its possessor, except for what is permitted to be learned from them to the extent of technical knowledge. He should ignore their interpretations concerning psychological and conceptual matters. This is not that knowledge which is praised repeatedly in the Qur'an for example in the verse, "Are they equal -those who know and those who do not know"? Those who take such verses out of context and argue are in error. The complete verse in which this rhetorical question is posed is as follows:

**". . . Or is he who is worshipful in the watches of the night, prostrating and standing, he being afraid of the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of His Sustainer? Say: Are they equal - those who know and those who do not know? Indeed, the thinking persons take heed." (39:9)**

Only such a person who, in the darkness of the night, remains worshipping, standing or prostrating, who fears the Hereafter, and hopes for the mercy of his Sustainer, is truly knowing, and it is his knowledge to which the above verse refers; that is to say, the knowledge which guides toward God and the remembrance of Him, and not that knowledge which distorts human nature toward denial of God.

The sphere of knowledge is not limited to articles of faith, religious obligations, or laws about what is permissible and what is forbidden; its sphere is very wide. It includes all these and also the knowledge of natural laws and all matters concerning man's delegated role before God. However, any knowledge, the foundation of which is not based on faith, is outside the definition of that knowledge which is referred to in the Qur'an and the possessors of which are considered praiseworthy. There is a strong relationship between faith and all those sciences which deal with the universe and natural laws, such as astronomy, biology, physics, chemistry and geology. All these sciences lead man toward God, unless they are perverted by personal opinions and speculations, and presented devoid of the concept of God. Such a regrettable situation actually occurred in Europe. In fact, there came a time in European history when very painful and hateful differences arose between scientists and the oppressive Church; consequently the entire scientific movement in Europe started with Godlessness. This movement affected all aspects of life very deeply; in fact, it changed the entire character of European thought. The effect of this hostility of the scientific community toward the Church did not remain limited to the Church or to its beliefs, but was directed against all religion, so much so that all sciences turned against religion, whether they were speculative philosophy or technical or abstract sciences having nothing to do with religion [ Refer to the chapter, "Al-Fisam al-Nakad", in the book *The Future Belongs to This Religion.*]

The Western ways of thought and all the sciences started on the foundation of these poisonous influences with an enmity toward all religion, and in particular with greater hostility toward Islam. This enmity toward Islam is especially pronounced and many times is the result of a well-thought-out scheme, the object of which is first to shake the foundations of Islamic beliefs and then gradually to demolish the structure of Muslim society.

If, in spite of knowing this, we rely on Western ways of thought, even in teaching the Islamic sciences, it will be an unforgiveable blindness on our part. Indeed, it becomes incumbent on us, while learning purely scientific or technological subjects for which we have no other sources except Western sources, to remain on guard and keep these sciences away from philosophical speculations, as these philosophical speculations are generally against religion and in particular against Islam. A slight influence from them can pollute the clear spring of Islam.

### **A Muslim's Nationality and his Belief**

The day Islam gave a new concept of values and standards to mankind and showed the way to learn these values and standards, it also provided it with a new concept of human relationships. Islam came to return man to his Sustainer and to make His guidance the only source from which values and standards are to be obtained, as He is the Provider and Originator. All relationships ought to be based through Him, as we came into being through His will and shall return to Him.

Islam came to establish only one relationship which binds men together in the sight of God, and if this relationship is firmly established, then all other relationships based on blood or other considerations become eliminated.

**"You will not find the people who believe in God and the Hereafter taking as allies the enemies of God and His Prophet, whether they be their fathers or sons or brothers or fellow tribesmen." (58-22)**

In the world there is only one party of God; all others are parties of Satan and rebellion.

**"Those who believe fight in the cause of God, and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of rebellion. Then fight the allies of Satan; indeed, Satan's strategy is weak." (3:78)**

There is only one way to reach God; all other ways do not lead to Him.

**"This is My straight path. Then follow it, and do not follow other ways which will scatter you from His path." (6: 1 53)**

For human life, there is only one true system, and that is Islam; all other systems are Jahiliyyah.

**"Do they want a judgement of the Days of Ignorance? Yet who is better in judgement than God, for a people having sure faith? (5: 50)**

There is only one law which ought to be followed, and that is the Shari'ah from God; anything else is mere emotionalism and impulsiveness.

**"We have set you on a way ordained (by God); then follow it, and do not follow the desires of those who have no knowledge." (45:18)**

The truth is one and indivisible; anything different from it is error.

**"Is anything left besides error, beyond the truth? Then to which do you go?" (10:32)**

There is only one place on earth which can be called the home of Islam (Dar-ul-Islam), and it is that place where the Islamic state is established and the Shari'ah is the authority and God's limits are observed, and where all the Muslims administer the affairs of the state with mutual consultation. The rest of the world is the home of hostility (Dar-ul-Harb). A Muslim can have only two possible relations with Dar-ul- Harb: peace with a contractual agreement, or war. A country with which there is a treaty will not be considered the home of Islam.

**"Those who believed, and migrated, and strove with their wealth and their persons in the cause of God, and those who gave them refuge and helped them, are the protectors of each other. As to those who believed but did not emigrate, you have no responsibility for their protection until they emigrate; but if they ask your help in religion, it is your duty to help them, except against a people between whom and you there is a treaty; and God sees whatever you do. Those who disbelieve are the allies of each other. If you do not do this, there will be oppression in the earth and a great disturbance. Those who believe, and migrate, and fight in the cause of God, and those who give them refuge and help them, are in truth Believers. For them is forgiveness and generous provision. And those who accept Faith afterwards and migrate and strive along with you, they are of you." (8:72-75)**

Islam came with this total guidance and decisive teaching. It came to elevate man above, and release him from, the bonds of the earth and soil, the bonds of flesh and blood-which are also the bonds of the earth and soil. A Muslim has no country except that part of the earth where the Shari'ah of God is established and human relationships are based on the foundation of relationship with God; a Muslim has no nationality except his belief, which makes him a member of the Muslim community in Dar-ul-Islam; a Muslim has no relatives except those who share the belief in God, and thus a bond is established between him and other Believers through their relationship with God.

A Muslim has no relationship with his mother, father, brother, wife and other family members except through their relationship with the Creator, and then they are also joined through blood.

**"O mankind, remain conscious of your Sustainer, Who created you from one soul and created from its mate, and from the two of them scattered a great many men and women. Remain conscious of God, from Whose authority you make demands, and reverence the wombs (from which you were born). (4:1)**

However, Divine relationship does not prohibit a Muslim from treating his parents with kindness and consideration in spite of differences of belief, as long as they do not join the front lines of the enemies of Islam. However, if they openly declare their alliance with the enemies of Islam, then all the filial relationships of a Muslim are cut off and he is not bound to be kind and considerate to them. Abdullah, son of Abdullah bin Ubayy, has presented us with a bright example in this respect.

Ibn Jarir, on the authority of Ibn Ziad, has reported that the Prophet called Abdullah, son of Abdullah bin Ubayy, and said, "Do you know what your father said?" Abdullah asked. "May my parents be a ransom for you; what did my father say?" The prophet replied, "He said, 'If we return to Medina (from the battle), the one with honor will throw out the one who is despised.'" Abdullah then said, "O Messenger of God, by God, he told the truth. You are the one with honor and he is the one who is despised. O Messenger of God, the people of Medina know that before you came to Medina, no one was more obedient to his father than I was. But now, if it is the pleasure of God and His Prophet that I cut off his head, then I shall do so." The Prophet replied, "No". When the Muslims returned to Medina, Abdullah stood in front of the gate with his sword drawn over his father's head, telling him, "Did you say that if we return to Medina then the one with honor will throw out the one who is despised? By God, now you will know whether you have honor, or God's Messenger! By God, until God and His Messenger give permission, you cannot enter Medina, nor will you have refuge from me!" Ibn Ubayy cried aloud and said twice, "People of Khazraj, see how my son is preventing me from entering my home!" But his son Abdullah kept repeating that unless the Prophet gave permission he would not let him enter Medina. Hearing this noise, some people gathered around and started pleading with Abdullah, but he stood his ground. Some people went to the Prophet and reported this incident. He told them, "Tell Abdullah to let his father enter". When Abdullah got this message, he then told his father, "Since the Prophet had given permission, you can enter now."

When the relationship of the belief is established, whether there by any relationship of blood or not, the Believers become like brothers. God Most High says, "Indeed, the Believers are brothers," which is a limitation as well as a prescription. He also says:

**"Those who believed, and migrated, and strove with their wealth and their persons in the cause of God, and those who gave them refuge and helped them, are the protectors of each other." (8:72)**

The protection which is referred to in this verse is not limited to a single generation but encompasses future generations as well, thus linking the future generations with the past generation in a sacred and eternal bond of love, loyalty and kindness.

**"Those who lived (in Medina) before the Emigrants and believed, love the Emigrants and do not find in their hearts any grudge when thou givest them something, but give them preference over themselves, even though they may be poor. Indeed, the ones who restrain themselves from greed achieve prosperity. Those who came after them (the Emigrants) say; 'Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who entered the Faith before us, and leave not in our hearts any grievance against those who believe. Our Lord! You are indeed Most Kind, Most Merciful.'" (59:9-10)**

God Most High has related the stories of earlier Prophets in the Qur'an as an example for the Believers. In various periods the Prophets of God lighted the flame of faith and guided the Believers.

**"And Noah called upon his Lord and said, 'O my Lord, surely my son is of my family, and Your promise is true, and You are the Justest of Judges'. He said, "O Noah, he is not of your family, as his conduct is unrighteous; so do not ask of me that of which you have no knowledge. I give you the counsel not to act like the ignorant.' Noah said, O my Lord, I seek refuge with You lest I ask You for that of which I have no knowledge, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I shall be lost". (11:45-47)**

**"And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain commands which he fulfilled, he said, 'I will make you a leader of people'. He said, 'And also those from among my offspring'? He answered, 'My promise does not extend to the evildoers". (1:124)**

**"And when Abraham said, 'My Lord! Make this a city of peace and feed its people with fruits, such of them as believe in God and the Last Day'. He said, 'And those who reject faith, I will grant them their pleasure for a while, but will eventually drive them to the chastisement of the Fire. What an evil destination!" (2:126)**

When the Prophet Abraham saw his father and his people persistent in their error, he turned away from them and said "I leave you and those upon whom you call besides God. I will only call upon my Sustainer, and hope that my Lord will not disappoint me." (19:48)

In relating the story of Abraham and his people, God has highlighted those aspects which are to

be an example for the Believers.

**"Indeed, Abraham and his companions are an example for you, when they told their people, 'We have nothing to do with you and with whatever you worship besides God. We reject them; and now there is perpetual enmity and anger between you and us unless you believe in One God.'" (60:4)**

When those young and courageous friends who are known as the Companions of the Cave saw this same rejection among their family and tribe, they left them all, migrated from their country, and ran toward their Sustainer so that they could live as His servants.

**"They were youths who believed in their Lord, and We advanced them in guidance. We gave strength to hearts, so that they stood up and said, 'Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We shall not call upon any god apart from Him. If we did, we should indeed have said an awful thing. These our people have taken for worship gods other than Him. Why do they not bring a clear proof for what they do? Who can be more wrong than such as invert a falsehood against God? So, when you turn away from them and the things they worship other than God, take refuge in the cave. Your Lord will shower mercies on you and will provide ease and comfort for your affairs"! (18:13-16)**

The wife of Noah and the wife of Lot were separated from their husbands only because their beliefs were different.

**"God gives as an example for the unbelievers the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were married to two of Our righteous servants; but they were false to their husbands, and they profited nothing before God on their account, but were told, 'Enter you both into the fire along with those who enter it.'" (66:10)**

Then there is another kind of example in the wife of Pharaoh.

**"And God gives as an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh. Behold, she said, 'My Lord, build for me in nearness to You a mansion in heaven, and save me from Pharaoh and his doings, and save me from those who do wrong.'" (66:11)**

The Qur'an also describes examples of different kinds of relationships. In the story of Noah we have an example of the paternal relationship; in the story of Abraham, an example of the son and of the country; in the story of the Companions of the Cave a comprehensive example of relatives, tribe and home country. In the stories of Noah, Lot and Pharaoh there is an example of marital relationships.

After a description of the lives of the great Prophets and their relationships, we now turn to the Middle Community, that is, that of the early Muslims. We find similar examples and experiences in this community in great numbers. This community followed the Divine path which God has chosen for the Believers. When the relationship of common belief was broken - in other words, when the very first relationship joining one man with another was broken, -then persons of the same family or tribe were divided into different groups God Most High says in praise of the Believers:

**"You will not find any people who believe in God and the Last Day loving those who fight God and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred. These are the people on whose hearts God has imprinted faith and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein. God will be well-pleased with them and they with Him. They are the party of God; truly the party of God will prosper." (58:22)**

We see that the blood relationships between Muhammad -peace be on him - and his uncle Abu Lahab and his cousin Abu Jahl were broken, and that the Emigrants from Mecca were fighting against their families and relatives and were in the front lines of Badr, while on the other hand their relations with the Helpers of Medina became strengthened on the basis of a common faith. They became like brothers, even more than blood relatives. In his relationship established a new brotherhood of Muslims in which were included Arabs and non-Arabs. Suhaib from Rome and Bilal from Abyssinia and Selman from Persia were all brothers. There was no tribal partisanship among them. The pride of lineage was ended, the voice of nationalism was silenced, and the Messenger of God addressed them: "Get rid of these partisanships; these are foul things", and "He is not one of us who calls toward partisanship, who fights for partisanship, and who dies for partisanship."

Thus this partisanship-the partisanship of lineage-ended; and this slogan-the slogan of race-died; and this pride- the pride of nationality- vanished; and man's spirit soared to higher horizons, freed from the bondage of flesh and blood and the pride of soil and country. From that day, the Muslim's country has not been a piece of land, but the homeland of Islam (Dar-ul-Islam) - the homeland where faith rules and the Shari'ah of God holds sway, the homeland in which he took refuge and which he defended, and in trying to extend it, he become martyred. This Islamic homeland is a refuge for any who accepts the Islamic Shari'ah to be the law of the state, as is the case with the Dhimmies. But any place where the Islamic Shari'ah is not enforced and where Islam is not dominant becomes the home of Hostility (Dar-ul-Harb) for both the Muslim and the Dhimmi. A Muslim will remain prepared to fight against it, whether it be his birthplace or a place where his relatives reside or where his property or any other material interests are located.

And thus Muhammad - peace be on him - fought against the city of Mecca, although it was his birthplace, and his relatives lived there, and he and his Companions had houses and property there which they had left when they migrated; yet the soil of Mecca did not become Dar-ul-Islam for him and his followers until it surrendered to Islam and the Shari'ah became operative in it.

This, and only this, is Islam. Islam is not a few words pronounced by the tongue, or birth in a country called Islamic, or an inheritance from a Muslim father.

**"No, by your Sustainer, they have not believed until they make you the arbiter of their disputes, and then do not find any grievance against your decision but submit with full submission." (4:65)**

Only this is Islam, and only this is Dar-ul-Islam- not the soil, not the race, not the lineage, not the tribe, and not the family.

Islam freed all humanity from the ties of the earth so that they might soar toward the skies, and freed them from the chains of blood relationships -the biological chains - so that they might rise above the angels.

The homeland of the Muslim, in which he lives and which he defends, is not a piece of land; the nationality of the Muslim, by which he is identified, is not the nationality determined by a government; the family of the Muslim, in which he finds solace and which he defends, is not blood relationships; the flag of the Muslim, which he honors and under which he is martyred, is not the flag of a country; and the victory of the Muslim, which he celebrates and for which he is thankful to God, is not a military victory. It is what God has described:

**"When God's help and victory comes, and thou seest people entering into God's religion in multitudes, then celebrate the praises of thy Lord and ask His forgiveness. Indeed, He is the Acceptor of Repentance." (110:1-3)**

The victory is achieved under the banner of faith, and under no other banners; the striving is purely for the sake of God, for the success of His religion and His law, for the protection of Dar-ul-Islam, the particulars of which we have described above, and for no other purpose. It is not for the spoils or for fame, nor for the honor of a country or nation, nor for the mere protection of one's family except when supporting them against religious persecution.

The honor of martyrdom is achieved only when one is fighting in the cause of God, and if one is killed for any other purpose this honor will not be attained.

Any country which fights the Muslim because of his belief and prevents him from practicing his religion, and in which the Shari'ah is suspended, is Dar-ul-Harb, even though his family or his relatives or his people live in it, or his capital is invested and his trade or commerce is in that country; and any country where the Islamic faith is dominant and its Shari'ah is operative is Dar-ul-Islam, even though the Muslim's family or relatives or his people do not live there, and he does not have any commercial relations with it.

The fatherland is that place where the Islamic faith, the Islamic way of life, and the Shari'ah of God is dominant; only this meaning of 'fatherland' is worthy of the human being. Similarly, 'nationality' means belief and a way of life, and only this relationship is worthy of man's dignity.

Grouping according to family and tribe and nation, and race and color and country, are residues of the primitive state of man; these jahili groupings are from a period when man's spiritual values were at a low stage. The Prophet-peace be on him-has called them "dead things" against which man's spirit should revolt.

When the Jews claimed to be the chosen people of God on the basis of their race and nationality, God Most High rejected their claim and declared that in every period, in every race and in every nation, there is only one criterion: that of faith.

**"And they say: 'become Jews, or Christians; then you will be guided'. Say: 'Not so: The way of Abraham, the pure in faith; and he was not among those who associate other gods with God'. Say: 'We believe in God, and what has come down to us, and what has come down to Abraham, Ismail and Isaac and Jacob and the Tribes (of Israelites), and what was given to Moses and Jesus and to other Prophets by their Sustainer. We do not make any distinction among them, and we have submitted to Him. If then they believe as you have believed, they are guided; but if they turn away, then indeed they are stubborn. Then God suffices for you, and He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. The baptism of God: and who can baptise better than God? And we worship Him alone.'" (2:135-138)**

The people who are really chosen by God are the Muslim community which has gathered under God's banner without regard to differences of races, nations, colors and countries.

**"You are the best community raised for the good of mankind. You enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and you believe in God." (3:110)**

This is that community in the first generation of which there were Abu Bakr from Arabia, Bilal from Abyssinia, Suhaib from Syria, Selman from Persia, and their brothers in faith. The generations which followed them were similar. Nationalism here is belief, homeland here is Dar-ul-Islam, the ruler here is God, and the constitution here is the Qur'an.

This noble conception of homeland, of nationality, and of relationship should become imprinted on the hearts of those who invite others toward God. They should remove all influences of Jahiliyyah which make this concept impure and which may have the slightest element of hidden Shirk, such as Shirk in relation to homeland, or in relation to race or nation, or in relation to lineage or material interests. All these have been mentioned by God Most High in one verse, in which He has placed them in one side of the balance and the belief and its responsibilities in the other side, and invites people to choose.

**"Say: If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and and your spouses and your relatives, and the wealth which you have acquired, and the commerce in which you fear decline, and the homes in which you take delight, are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until God brings His judgment; and God does not guide the rebellious people." (9:24)**

The callers to Islam should not have any superficial doubts in their hearts concerning the nature of Jahiliyyah and the nature of Islam, and the characteristics of Dar-ul-Harb and of Dar-ul-Islam, for through these doubts many are led to confusion. Indeed, there is no Islam in a land where Islam is not dominant and where its Shari'ah is not established; and that place is not Dar-ul-Islam where Islam's way of life and its laws are not practiced. There is nothing beyond faith except unbelief, nothing beyond Islam except Jihiliyyah, nothing beyond the truth except falsehood.