

Islam's Normative Discourse On Monotheism And Socio-Economic Justice

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Published : 20, March-2023

Abstract

Islam emerged with the grand ethical ideal of monotheism as an inevitable moral necessity of destroying corrupt socio-economic structures of the world and redeeming socio-economic equilibrium and its essential egalitarian spirit inexorably culminated in the establishment of a global society based on the principle of One God-One Humanity. What transpired from the religious experience of Muhammad in the Cave of Hira was that he was obligated to plant socio-economic justice, particularly economic egalitarianism, in the fertile soil of monotheism since monotheism and social justice are two sides of the same coin linked organically to each other. Muhammad, fully conscious of the universality of his mission, addressed all mankind beginning with pagans of Mecca, Jews and Christians, his immediate addresses, to realize the ideal of monotheism in practical life: if God is one, mankind is also one. It required elimination of social inequalities, economic disparities, and political disenfranchisement. He himself as well as his opponents knew that social reform on such grand scale would require his assumption of political power, evoking fierce opposition at Mecca and resulting in his migration to Medina, where he finally found conducive environment to implement his program of moral sociopolitical order, in perfect logical harmony to its initial impulse and strategy at Mecca. To the Quran, Faith not accompanied by active (and mutual) good will (tawasa) and cooperation (taawun) is hypocrisy not Faith at all. The Brotherhood of Medina (Muwakhhat) was materialization of tawasa and taawun in its most ideal form, in which men competed only for virtue and mutual help based on sadaqah and zakat -- the linchpin of Quran's fiscal system, which terms Riba, by implication all commercial malpractices that distort socio-economic equilibrium of society, a war against God and His Prophet. This paper is based on qualitative research and intends to explore how did the Quran unfold its ideology of socio-economic justice over 23 years of prophetic career in his *Sitz im Leben*? Whether basic impulse of Islam was personalism i.e., to cultivate personal piety for "salvation" as medieval Sufism under the huge impact of al-Ghazali came to believe, or was it geared to establish a just socio-economic world order not based on "salvation" but on Quranic formula of "success [falah' fowz]" or "failure [khusran]", in the task of building egalitarian socio-political order?

Key Words: The Quran, Monotheism, society, social Justice, Riba, Zakat & Sadaqat, Sociopolitical order, socio-economic equilibrium, egalitarianism, Nafs, Primordial Covenant, *Sitz im Leben* i.e., psycho-sociological, and historical setting, zeitgeist, modernity, modernism. Islamic socialism.

Introduction

Understanding the fundamental thesis of Islam in its entirety demands not only disentangling the "historical" from the "normative" but equally of utmost importance is the dire realism of sociological and historical setting in which it appeared for, Islam at its best was a response to prevalent situation, an encounter, or an interaction of revelation with history through the mind of the Prophet. If the gist of some early revelations is secured it will not only bestow upon us an enough perspicacity of the basic impulse of the Quran but equip us with essential intellectual equipment as well to discern how Islam unfolded in the career of the Prophet, in turn what forms it assumed, what permutations, mutations and transformations, it underwent in its long developing subsequent history.

The world life on earth and sea was beset with corruption as an outcome of what men's hands have wrought (30:41) and mankind had been left for far long to its own devices by the God

to stew in its own juices, to taste the evil of their doings until God responded to the sobs and throbs of crying mankind and Islam appeared on the scene to steer the course of history out of crisis. "It seemed then that the great civilization that it had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism where every tribe and sect was against the next, and law and order were unknown. The older tribal sanctions had lost their power. Hence the old imperial methods would no longer operate. The new sanctions created by Christianity were working division and destruction instead of unity and order. It was a time fraught with tragedy. Civilization, like a gigantic tree whose foliage had overarched the world and whose branches had borne the golden fruits of art and science and literature stood tottering its trunk no longer alive with the flowing sap of devotion and reverence, but rotted to the core, driven by the storms of war, and held together only by the cords of ancient customs and laws, that might snap at any moment. Was there any emotional culture

that could be brought in to gather mankind once more into unity and to save civilization? This culture must be of a new type, for the old sanctions and ceremonials were dead, and to build up others of the same kind would be the work of centuries.¹” In nutshell the situation was ripe for Islam to launch its all-embracing, full-sweep comprehensive world career (7:157), in sharp contradistinction to racial, lingual, ethnical, or territorial basis as was the case of Judaism and Christianity in their own social milieu.

To Ibn Khaldun and Shah Wali Allah Arabia, Persia and Byzantium constitute the heart of world geography and their long immersion in this sensory world had sapped their very moral strength, disoriented minds to indulge in corrosive acids of materialism and atheism. Hence if the oxygenation of the petrified bloodstreams of this material world to bring fresh blood to the veins of aging humanity at large, was required, fixing the problems of the heart was first step forward for the moral venture to reform and get the earth and oceans free of corruption. Social inequalities, economic disequilibrium, political disparities along with the disenfranchisement of the weaker segments (women, children, the poor) of society with a few political, mercantile, and religious elites was not only the problem of Mecca; Persia and Byzantine were presenting the case of islands of opulence in the ocean of poverty when Islam assumed its career from the place where Asia, Europe and Africa join their mighty hands. “The world-life intuitively sees its own needs, and at critical moments defines its own direction²”. Hence, “Islam appeared in the moral necessity of destroying the corrupt socio-economic structures of Persian and Byzantine empires.³” To Ibn Khaldun the replacement or conquest of the urban centers of civilization by the sedentary ones was a norm. “It is only natural that Islam should have flashed across the consciousness of a simple people untouched by any of the ancient cultures and occupying a geographical position where three continents meet together⁴”. In their veins runs the blood of Abraham and Ishmael, though over centuries they had forgot God, the prevalence of values like simplicity, generosity, magnanimity, bravery, fulfillment of the commitments, hospitality, murawwah and adab i.e. sacrifice and reverence portray enough that transcendence essentially, ever would have been a part and parcel of life there and only removing the dust of time from the eyebrows of their collective history and memory was required.

The foremost of the values of the Arabs, was the freedom of mind and action, they love and enjoy liberty for which they were ever ready to sacrifice anything even lives. “Arabs were the only people who did not send their ambassadors to Alexander, who had planned to make Arabia the seat of empire.⁵” Moreover, “the masters of the world, as they were, the Romans failed to fasten the yoke upon Arabian necks. Their famous expedition of 10000 men conducted from Egypt under the leadership of its perfect Aelius Gallus in 24 B.C., during the reign of Augustus Caesar, and supported by their Nabataean allies, proved a signal failure. Its object was admittedly to capture those transport routes monopolized by the South Arabians and tap the resources of al-Yamen for benefit of Rome.⁶” Bedouin patterns of life are as secular and positivistic as of modern West “Nomadism is as much a scientific mode of living in the Nufud as industrialism is

in Detroit or Manchester ⁷.” Religion sits very lightly on Bedouin’s heart. “The desert Arabians are most confirmed in unbelief and hypocrisy (9:98)”.

Against this Sitz im Leben, the outset of Islam was not only a challenge of immense magnitude for its contemporary world in the titanic grasp of socio-economic and political exploitations at large but a tremendous initiative par excellence for the central plank of its mission was to strike socio-economic equilibrium and since socio-economic cum political exploitation in the world around it had crossed the Rubicon, the only way to redeem the balance of history was to destroy the prevalent corrupt socio-economic structures to construct history anew. The scenario of the laws and rules governing the rise and fall of the communities, the substitution of one great power by the other or on a broader/macro scale how new civilization replaces the other, requires the understanding of the Quran’s treatment of history. On micro level, among the communities amidst struggle for dominance, to the Quran “when the rot sets in, there is either a successful reaction against it from within or a power is imposed from without, the former being more common. However, even in this case, a fresh start has to be made and the new generation has usually to build the edifice of a clean civilization once again. [on macro level] The Quran sometimes talk as though there is an essential discontinuity between a decrepit and decayed civilization and its successor: often no ready-made and quick succession can be assured to a decaying civilization. God would rather clean the slate and make a new beginning than tolerate a symbiosis of decadent and the virile.⁸” Losing moral sap conducive to life and creativity a civilization becomes fossil and this is an unalterable law of God that fossils do not survive for long. The Quran recurrently asserts “then we created an altogether new generation (6:6; 23:31,42; 38:3) as well as “We gave the inheritance of the earth” to new and more deserving people (21:105; 33:27; 28:5; 7:128,137;39:74; 44:28).

Hence, the immediate addressee of Islam the crop of four thousand years old civilization having exhausted all its potentials, with its socio-economic and political cum cultural institutions rotten to the core, had sapped the moral strengths of mankind, stood in need of utter destruction just as a crop whose seeds after exhausting potentials refuse to bear fruits any more, demands to be mown down or burnt. Communities after preliminary hard work securing essentials credentials ascend the ladder of history with full-blown moral fervor and zest after getting spent force descend the same with dusted face and the crouches under arms. After having locked horns for centuries Persia and Byzantium in incessant wars with ever shifting balance of power now to the one and then to the other, with no end in sight, being spent forces par excellence the former sheer under the force of its intrinsic palatial intrigues and the latter due to the religious-intellectual colonialism of its subjects were breathing their last sighs when Islam comes upon the scene with an auspicious moral program i.e. a sure recipe of and a highway leading to new ethical-moral world order with a crystal clear prognostication that laws governing the affairs of the rise and fall of communities belong to the God and if your deeds and endeavors should respond to your assertions after going through turmoil and travails soon you would be assuming the steering

wheel of history and both Persia and Byzantium will become the relic of the past (30:1-5).

This is what was since long fermenting in the collective conscience of the Arabs [they would think if a prophet comes to us we would perform better than Jews and Christians (35:42; 6:157); with the exception of an exploitative aristocracy content with ancestral religion, they were desirous of new and special religion which would distinguish them from the earlier communities and make them excel these in guidance] and transpired into the religious experience of an introvert, shy and withdrawn personality of the Muhammad. The Quran descended on the Prophet as a unity and an organic whole in the Cave of Hira in the sacred night (44:3-6; 97:1-4; 2:185; 94:1-3) and when he left the cave once and for all never to come back all his life to enter the arena of history, it continued to reveal as per situation. Hence, his first address to his tribe and community as opposed to the traditional view of presenting five verses regarding human biological existence with allied theological dimension, percolated or distilled from the entire moral fabric of the Quran, the basic impulse of which at the outset of the career of Islam was nothing more or less than that if God is one mankind is also one; polytheism is nothing but symptomatic of the segmentation of society which rests on the gross socio-economic disparities a hotbed of pernicious divisiveness of mankind, every unit with its own idols i.e. desires [these are nothing but empty names which you and your forefathers have invented (53:23); or Josef's talk with co-prisoners (12:39)]. Thus, the elimination of social inequalities, economic disequilibrium, political disenfranchisement of the weaker segments of the society and frantic cultural schizophrenia of the elites of having splendid mansions in Syria and Rome to spend winters and summers there toeing Persians and Byzantine aristocracy, wearing gold-laced and gold-embroidered clothes was first step forward to redeem the moral texture of socio-economic equilibrium for striking one God-one mankind paradigm. The sermon was inherently bound on the one side of the spectrum to strike strong moral chords in the consciousness of the down-trodden it equally hit the steely nerves of the upper echelons i.e., religious, mercantile, and political elites for their very vested interests and monopolies were at stake. The message indeed threw a spanner in the long-established operations of their exploitative mechanism. However, so strong, scientifically vetted and formulated, and self-sustaining, self-evident was the case of Islam against their self-defeating conjectures that as if terrified asses be fleeing from a lion (74:49-51) or as if despite their pleasing appearance they [intellectually speaking] were timbers staked upon each other (63:4).

The Quran oozed out the deep spring of life, so its revelations "in the early stage are characterized by a staccato-like abruptness and consist of very short expressions like sudden volcanic outbursts or the passage of a huge river through a gorge"⁹ for it was all set to address the acute intellectual, moral and spiritual stasis of the worn and torn world before it, since the first message that Muhammad received involved the word Iqra, "recite", and "one interpretation of "recite" is that he (Muhammad) must re-examine life around him and with a particular urgency call for the renewal of humanity. Gabriel by

implication instructs all Muslims to "re-cite" the stories of human experiences from the past, not as a series of random arbitrary events, but as a search for ultimate reality in the warp and woof of life in Arabia and beyond.¹⁰ The juggernaut of world-life since long, had taken a gigantic turn to the endlessly complicated twists and enmeshing folds of the materials of history and the be-all-and-end-all of Islam at that critical juncture was to bend morally cash-starved history to a clear, long-range definite course kneaded in deep spiritual dimension, [Say what do you think? If of a sudden all your water were to vanish underground, who but God could provide you with water from unsullied springs (67:30)]. "Just as water is an indispensable element of all organic life, so is a constant flow of moral consciousness an indispensable prerequisite of all spiritual life and stability: and who but God could enable man to regain that consciousness after all the older stimuli have dried up and "vanished underground".¹¹"

For what was Muhammad in search of after the flashing of acute human problems on his conscience, seeking remedy lost on the way (93:7) and guided at the Cave of Hira amidst the night the Quran descended as a whole, and on that night was made clear, in wisdom, the distinction between all things [good and evil] at a behest from Ourselves (44:1-4). The descending of the Quran as a whole, is not only held by many Muslim commentators but corroborated in some vital sense by the Quran itself "Have We not opened your heart and relieved you of the burden which was breaking your back" (94:1-3)? "Relief from the burden" was then effected once and for all, yet it was substituted by another burden- that of successfully executing the Message- "We are indeed, putting upon you a burdensome Call (73:5). Muhammad's contemporary world had lost in Itraf i.e., worldly pleasures to the exclusion of moral considerations, imagined short sighted gains to be prodigious and this perpetual immersion in the carnal pleasures of this world had sapped their moral energies which in turn had rendered their social institution rotten to the core. The plight, sobs and throbs of the world around him would weigh heavily on the sensitive Muhammad who himself as a posthumous son of Abdullah suffered orphanage, poverty and helplessness and the predicament of the world around him would force him occasionally to retire in the cave, frequency of which incremented as his sense of injustice meted out to the weaker segments of society by the exploitative elites got more acute. But when the window from the ghayb (Unseen) opened, he was all set to oxygenate the petrified bloodstreams of this sensory realm and breathe new life into it: "what about him [Muhammad] who was dead, and We gave life to him and bestowed upon him a light whereby he walks about people [i.e., he does not retire to a hermitage] (6:22). Hence, "to seek the ghayb is necessary to be a recluse in the "Cave of Hira", but once the window opens it must free one to come into the arena of the moral world to teach, struggle and fight.¹²"

What transpires from the mystic religious experience of the Prophet at Hira was twin doctrine of grand ethical ideal of Tauhid with an allied and quintessential working formula of socio-economic justice, a sure recipe for human egalitarianism kneaded in humanism, which in turn was bound to strike world moral egalitarian order, a responsibility par excellence which

metaphorically mountains despite their firmness, heavens in spite of their heights, and earth despite its vastness had refused to take on, and, man i.e., unfair to himself and foolhardy [zalum and jahul] showed temerity to take the plunge (33:72). So strong was the pull of that experience that Muhammad impelled himself to be ensconced in solitude before the beginning of his prophetic mission that in subsequent Call he is made alert to forsake the comfort zone of solitude and hermitage, once and for all, with an immediate effect to “rise and warn” (74:1-2). As the Prophetic mission unfolds in full glare of history in response to the gigantic chaos of universal human affairs, neither it was supposed to be a utopian scheme nor its bearer was meant to be sheer an idealist to depreciate or ignore the complications and twists and turns of historical forces to swim superficially on their surface as the revivalists of our age being shorn of essential intellectual equipment and historical sense are habitual to, for the first and the foremost concern of the message and the Herculean task of its torch bearer was to bend history to a definite course i.e., making history a field of Divine Activity. For the God of the Quran is full-blooded- a moral and dynamic imperative, a Creator who directs this world in sharp contradistinction to the Greek God i.e., a principle, an intellectual formula which explains this world. History, to the Quran is an evolutionary dynamic process rather than Hellenistic repetitive stationary procedure, and it is a cumulative forward moving phenomenon as the entire movement of history is spiral not cyclic as the Greek and others would believe it. Sitting in the watch tower (89:14) the God of Muhammad is in an intimate touch with history, intervenes in history, “Speaks and Acts”, whatever the initiative an individual or community takes He as an Active Co-worker and Supporter entrenches one in the endeavor and facilitates the feat (92:5-11). This was the framework wherein Muhammad was supposed to act.

Host of concoctions and allegations were hurled at Muhammad not only amidst 7th century launch of Islam but during modern Western imperial debut against the Muslim world as well for as its message goes it strikes at the very roots of the vested interests of the powerful elites and equips its adherents with such a moral spiritual energy (Taqwa) that they can dispose of powers that be just as a little ant with living dreams dusts an elephant. Hence, the Western academic orthodoxy employed in service of European imperialism left no stone unturned to engineer premises the linchpin of their rigged scholarship to discredit Islam and Muhammad with burgeoning epistemes. Like their 7th century predecessors, they were all-set to deny Islam as a revealed religion. “The field is sharply divided between two camps, one contending, like Richard Bell, that the main historical source of the Quran’s teaching was Christianity, the other, represented by C.C. Torrey, insisting that Judaism was the chief historical antecedent of the Quran¹³”, as if the Arab social milieu before Islam be devoid of Judaic-Christian ideas or Islam be flourished in far of lands of Hindu India, Confucius China and Buddhis Japan rather than in Abrahamic tradition. An overblown idea of the retreat of the Prophet extending to fifteen years for incubation of religious ideas to plan a work an immense and masterly as the Holy Quran was brought forward to refute its status as a “revealed document”. Moreover, the genesis of the Quran is attributed to the religious ferment already there, the

monotheism of the Hanifs whereupon Muhammad built the edifice of Islam. All these concoctions are self-defeating and vanish into the thin air when the Quran is approached in its own terms and the Prophet in the light of his Prophetic career in his Sitz im Leben.

The basic elan of the Quran is moral, whence flows its emphasis on monotheism as well as social justice. The moral law is immutable: it is God’s ‘Command’, man cannot make or unmake the Moral Law: he must submit himself to it, this submission to it being called Islam and its implementation in life being called ‘ibada’ or ‘service to God. It entertains neither an idea of ‘salvation’ as what transpired into Occidental conception of ‘a purely spiritual movement’ which to W.M Watt is an exceptional case in the history of religions¹⁴, nor a Christian idea of ecumenism where every religious community is expected to be nice to others and extend its typical brand of salvation to others as much as it can for interconfessional relationships only. Islam affords a view of “success” [falah] or “failure” [khusran] which is to establish social moral world order on earth i.e., Ibada or service to God, an endeavor for which it unreservedly goes extra miles even to seek the cooperation of likeminded communities from the common platform of Tauhid (3:64), failing what is negation of Ibada, a “khusran” whereby not only the future of mankind is doomed, God’s destiny is frustrated as well for the failure puts future of God and man on stake for which both had taken a grave risk in Primordial Covenant (2:30;7:172; 33:72). So gargantuan is the immensity of the tremendous initiative i.e., establishment of moral egalitarian world order that man with frailty of his being and hard his lot (84:6) is being reminded that he has been created into a life of pain, toil and trial (84:6), with endlessly and relentlessly struggle -mongering aptitude (90:4), in the best of modes (95:4), in accordance with what he is meant to be (82:6-8), still the self-evident severity of the task is of such magnitude and grandeur that had it [the Quran] been sent down upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and split asunder through fear of God [intensity of responsibility involved] (59:21), but equally it testifies the power of its own Call “if it were possible for a Quran that mountains be moved by it or the earth rent or the dead spoken to [by its power, this Quran would have done it]” (13:31) for after all it was this Message which brought Muhammad back to life (6:123), to inject a fresh blood in the veins of aging, ailing, senile and rudderless humanity.

What sort of life it is? It is a ‘life of heart’ i.e., an instrument of perception [through which one really sees, really hears, and really understands] on which the Command of God is inscribed (91:7-10) just as it is “written into” every other creature (20:50). The Quran in its entire moral fabric and endeavor preconditions a mental-cum-spiritual attitude i.e., faith, to decipher and discern the God’s signs correctly in one’s own self (Psychology), the Scripture, Nature, and History (Sociology) “for the physical avenues of information [eyes and ears] may remain intact- in fact, may improve vastly- but “the heart” the instrument of perception and discernment is dulled; the inputs and outputs of computers may continue- indeed, become ever more efficient; only the capacity to ask the right questions, the humanly relevant questions, fails.¹⁵” The locus of “Faith” is “heart”, and the God

of the Quran intervenes between “man and his own heart”, and, also between man and man, for God is present wherever two or more persons are present (58:7). Perceiving or misperceiving the ‘signs’ depends upon the faculty of heart and conscience [by the instrument of Taqwa knowing right and wrong] honed and sharpened or dulled through the psychological law of incessant surrender to either side, and it is not subjective to the Quran if many do not see them just as the sun becomes not a subjective matter because nocturnal animals cannot see it.

Islam, in a natural idiom means “to be safe, integral, whole” through responding to someone’s or something’s own nature, laws of guidance or behavior inlaid in its own nature and disposition, when God creates a thing (khalq), He at the same time puts into it its nature, its potentialities, and the laws of behavior (amr, “command”, or hidaya, “guidance”) whereby it falls into pattern and becomes a factor in the “cosmos”. Hence, in a religious idiom Islam means “to be safe, integral, whole” through accepting God’s law. To be a Muslim is to accept God’s law. The Quran terms all nature “Muslim” because nature surrenders to its inlaid laws, the laws of God. The automatic, yet not autocratic, gigantic machine, the universe with all its processes, operations and minutiae details as a huge, well-knit system obeys its built-in laws without an iota of deviation from its set course is a cosmos not a chaos. “But while nature is automatically Muslim, God was not content with nature’s Islam and created man to be Muslim by choice- to be the unique locus of responsibility, and God’s assistant on earth. The Quran’s recurrent theme is that “man has not yet fulfilled this trust”, the trust of moral responsibility (80:23). Humanity still needs to become a human cosmos rather than a chaos¹⁶”. Thus, the earth, the human world, in the scheme of universe, is lowest of the low and highest of the high to a degree it is a chaos or a cosmos. The constitution of man’s Ego, Self or Soul, to the Quran, is a reflex, a mirror-image of the cosmic order wherein apparently opposing phenomena like Sun and moon, day and night, heaven and earth in an ultimate sense conducive to cosmic harmony complement each other (91:1-7) that a critical vision falls back dazzled and truly defeated finding no fault in the self-sustaining, self-consistent and well harmonized cosmic order (67:3-4). Just as the opposing components of an integrated and balanced universe involuntarily as a whole contribute to cosmic harmony and order; men and communities are required to voluntarily secure balance of moral tensions- a moral equilibrium in their individual and corporate personality. “Determinism and free will, potency, and impotency, hope and fear are, in human case, not contradictions, but rather God-given tensions within whose framework people must work; should they violate either side of the tension and think themselves to either omnipotent or impotent, they fall into a Satanic condition that the Quran calls Kufr....¹⁷”

Thus, achieving a golden mean of moral tensions at individual and corporate level leading to a human cosmos from the socio-economic and political cum cultural chaos, is the be-all-and-end-all of the Quran’s vision of human universe and to this end it instead of indulging in a maze and labyrinths of tricky debates on “free will” and “determinism” converges all its attention on the release of maximum moral energy by activating moral

potentials in man which to human count are infinite and as the Quran depicts history as an evolutionary process and emphasizes dynamism like every specie on exhaustion of capabilities to the fullest new set of potentials is bestowed upon him by the God/Nature and is accountable before God not for potentials but actualized faculties per se since Quran’s central aim is directed towards guiding the human affairs. Belief in Allah (God) is absolutely essential and the word Allah is mentioned well over 2500 times (let alone other equivalents of Divine names) yet the Quran at its best is a treatise about man for as the Quran itself proclaims that “nothing is like Him” and the God of the Quran is not something to be proved but to be “discovered”, neither something to be appreciated and praised nor One enticing us to pry into His nature, man’s task is to know His will and to implement it since the early generation of Islam due to the Quran’s and its own empirical temperament was interested in divine commands, not in theological mysteries and they knew well that their duty lay in believing and carrying out what they believed with an intensity of faith and a deep sense of purpose. It was under the tide of a mixture of cultures [i.e., Hellenistic, Zoroastrians, Jewish, Christian and Buddhist] amidst astonishingly swift conquests of Islam that imposed itself on Islam and a generation of here-splitting theologians turning its back on Islam’s policy of sociopolitical program and economic organization of its people, indulged in the formulation of characteristics and attributes of God considerably under the impact of Greek philosophy to which God is mere an explanatory principle and an intellectual construct, not a moral imperative, the development sealed the Quran’s vision of establishing a moral social order.

The Quran to its own view is the simplest discernible discourse, still it is as deep as life itself since it oozed out of the deep spring of life and took 23 years to be revealed. However, whereas it unfolds itself in the Prophetic career bit by bit in grades as per situations, the vision and strategy of the Prophet with some supervening basic impulse of the Scripture remained bound to emerge from the entirety of the Quran since at Hira in a sacred night it descended as a whole, in one fell swoop. As transcendence was rooted in the Arab social milieu and religious fermentation was at play some [Hanifs] had arrived at monotheism but quite distinguished and different is the God of Muhammad. “For Muhammad’s monotheism was, from the very beginning, linked up with a humanism and a sense of social and economic justice whose intensity is no less than the intensity of the monotheistic idea, so that whoever carefully reads the early Revelations of the Prophet cannot escape the conclusion that the two must be regarded as expressions of the same experience.¹⁸” While a sort of vague monotheism was there but which was through and through connected with the movement of social reform was Muhammad’s peculiar

Applied Monotheism. It hinges on a single prop: one God-one humanity. If the discovery of and belief in One God were the only requirement, with the rise of Hanifs it was a fait accompli. But Muhammad’s monotheism, Prophetic career, and entire endeavor from beginning to end in its all shades was directed against monstrosity of corrupt socio-economic structure of the world around and beyond for socio-economic equilibrium was

integral to the enterprise of this applied monotheism. Thus, whereas on the one side of the spectrum this monotheism was hell-bent on the elimination of socio-political disparities and economic disequilibrium- the ploys of social segmentation and polytheism being symptomatic of this fragmentation, its all-absorbing concern on the other was to bring its sister communities of Jews and Christians in the fold of Islam whom the Quran in its initial career terms sects, groups, partisans, denies their communal identity hoping their merger in nascent community of Islam for the realization of one God-one humanity paradigm for “the Quran definitely regards mutually exclusive and mutually confronting religions as a form of polytheism.¹⁹”

This empirical monotheism on the one hand flung a challenge on the side of status quo i.e., polytheism and monopoly of religious, mercantile, and political elites, and on the other threw dynamite into the stagnant waters of religious traditions and moral inertia of Judaism and Christianity acknowledging their self-surrender [to the Message of Moses and Jesus] demanded complete self-surrender [to the Message of the Quran as well] (2:208), and as whatever unfolds in and is truism of the career of the Prophet it was not going to be a Don Quixote scenario for the ideal and the real coalesce in the Quran and in prophet's temperament intense spiritualism and rigorous realism, democracy and religious authority were balanced with a finesse that defies description. With an enough perspicacity and precision, a hallmark of desert life which never bows to red herrings the Meccans without an iota of doubt discerned what the Message was meant to be, they felt with the clarity of wit that the Call was directed against not only the traditional religion based on polytheism but the very structure of their society, with its emphasis on social justice, empowerment and enfranchisement of the weaker segments of the society with a moral trajectory bound to steamroll the status quo. It hit the nests of crocodiles, sent shivering tremors into the nerve center of oligarchy. The reaction was par excellence. The monopolists never withdraw vested interests on sweet will, by the sheer power of articulate moral lessons even if be presented by an archetype monotheist Abraham, majestic Moses, or spiritually exalted Jesus. So, a head-on collision was in some vital sense a foregone conclusion. If the vicissitudinous inner history of the Prophet is any guide “the whole subsequent inner history of the Prophet is thus set between the two limits, i.e., the frustration caused by the attitude of the Meccans, which was outside his control, and the endeavor to succeed, for it is the part of the Quranic doctrine that simply to deliver the message, to suffer frustration and not to succeed, is immature spirituality.²⁰”

Since the fulcrum of this message was social reform both Muhammad himself and his opponents knew well that the reforms which the applied monotheism implies on such a broader scale would require his assumption of political power dead-set to transpire into **world moral social order**. Stakes were so high on both sides-whereas the opponents were all-set not to recede hard maneuvered privileges and commercially vested interests of which polytheism was a symptom rather than a cause, on the other hand for Muhammad combining history and revelation, metaphysics, and social fact, injecting moral values in the flesh and blood of history amounted to a kind of pragmatic

test of the value of his religious experience. Underestimating the either side would be a blatant disregard of intellectual integrity as whatever ensued over a 23 years long-drawn war depicts both sides operated with an ice in their veins directly proportionate to the stakes involved. The prestige and valor the Banu Hashim entertained it was not easy to lay hand on Muhammad even amidst full scale tumult well until his emigration to Medina. Still, the humble fiscal status of his clan enticed arrogant resentment of Meccan aristocracy hell-bent to deny him as an absolute religious-political head as the developing situation demanded. Their astute genius of managing affairs after and along with some coercive measures, comes to full play when they offered him an effective share in the decision-making city council of Mecca, an offer which he refused²¹. When their entire endeavor seemed to touch ground in the last phase of his Meccan career the upper-class merchants offered to accept his faith provided, he got rid of his poor and weak followers. The Quran citing such offer made to Noah what he declined condemned such offers and warned against them; he, of course, refused to accept them²².

On the other side, Muhammad's monotheism all-intent on one God-one humanity paradigm stood in dire need of social justice and fair-play demanding no less than stark socio-economic equilibrium which as time went on, became more and more specific in its condemnation of financial malpractices and exploitation of the poor. Islam, by its all definitions and connotations was a larger-than-life initiative and its chances of success were bleak unless status quo stood upside down and inside out and the Prophet if all his assertions and deeds are to go by, by all counts, his foremost concern was to peacefully secure peace otherwise he was willing to go that far, since be it Badar or Hudaibiyya both were two sides of the same coin if peace demands battle it stays inevitable if reconciliation no avoidance from it. The **task** required a committed Jama'a of men trained on divine pattern which regulate its internal conduct based on **active mutual goodwill and Cooperation** [tawasi o taawun] (90:17; 103:3 and 5:2). All-out unrelenting struggle occasionally or often culminating into an active fight between the nascent community of believers and its arch-rivals was in the offing with an overriding principle of governing human affairs whatever the direction (good or bad) an individual or community takes God entrenches him/it in it (92:5-10) which in the final analysis holds a glad tidings of success for those who stand on the right side of history provided they persevere and persist and is a shot in the bow of the forces of status quo, the doubters, the doomers and the gloomers. While amidst heart-wrenching toils and travails the looms of the Quran recurrently directed Muhammad not to consume himself that the Call is not enticing response, that you are obliged only to deliver the message but something from within the entire fabric of the Quran had hammered him home the point that by controlling the forces of history create a fresh world of ideals to objectify his religious experience was sine qua non of his message than to just sacrifice the life amidst struggle leaving no imprints on history i.e., without bending history to a definite course at all.

To erect a splendid edifice of grand ethical principle of applied monotheism Muhammad was able to train a good nucleus of

people – in the words of H.A. R Gibb “the leaven which was to leaven the whole lump²³” - with moral intellectual equipment i.e., metaphysics kneaded in faith so much so that at battle fronts they would stand in unison with their deeds corresponding to their assertions as though they were a building firm and compact [a solid cemented structure] (61:4). “A battle array, in which a large number of men stand, march, or hold together against assault as if they were a solid wall, is a striking example of order, discipline, cohesion and courage. “a solid cemented structure” is even a better simile than the usual “solid wall”, as the “structure” or building implies a more diversified organization held together in unity and strength, each part contributing strength in its own way, and the whole held together not like a mass but like a living organism.²⁴” They [believers] range themselves in ranks with so marvelous a strength of faith against evil forces that their endeavor manipulates the forces of history as judiciously as possible to establish Just moral order - an epitome of applied monotheism (37:1-4).

As the Meccan aristocracy asks why Muhammad had come to be Prophet and “why was this Quran not sent down upon some big man in the two cities [of Mecca and Taif]?(43:31), it at best manifests their desperation, an inner motive to keep the status quo intact since it [status quo] at least as a last resort seeks its own preservation and continuation by installing its own representative with supervening role in emerging structure when its exit seemed inevitable. The Quran’s disarming reply that “God knows where to put his Messenger-ship” (6:124) not only connotes that the prophethood in some vital sense requires scientific credentials as was portrayed in case of Moses (20:40-41) but also points to the amoral/antimoral vector of the opponents’ world-view which implies plenitude of their self-evident and hidden queries answers of which are to be traced in the basic impulse and entire fabric of the Quran and endeavor of the Prophet. On the other hand, “Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord?” (43:32) depicts that Prophethood cannot be of anyone’s making, even someone’s natural capacities cannot cause Revelation, which is a sheer mercy of God (42:24;17:86).

Power does never rescind its sway on sweet will over the dynamics of socio-economic mechanism. The religion inimical to leave a morsel for the poor serves it best. The classical modern Western particularly Marxist statement of Communist atheism is something novel in human history, the concept of God genuine or perverted had been part and parcel of human conscience and society though for the most part sacrificed on the altar of vested interests. Cobbled to irrelevance, the mute God of small things Who does not intervene on social realm had been the Cherished One of the forces of exploitation. Sufi theosophic monotheism i.e., shorn of socio-economic bearings -an epitome of monism which at best serves the interests of status quo- is not quite different from the God of Pagan Mecca, Greece, and patent Vedantic Hindu monistic idea. The recurrent theme and pattern of history testifies most often whenever the nexus of political, mercantile, and religious troika [as Pharaoh, Korah and, Haman] builds its nests high God recedes to hibernation. It is only a class of downtrodden whose sobs and throbs bring Him back to the arena of history and He swings them on the helm of affairs, steering wheel of history.

With this fact in mind Muhammad locked horns with exploitative forces, all-set to succeed with full-blooded God on his side. The opponents had powers and resources on their disposal but all this is mere a cobweb a house of spider the frailest of all houses (29:41) provided with the courage of conviction Muhammad and his followers show perseverance and persistence with an enlightenment that aspiring to goodness is to ascend a steep uphill road, not an easy-going venture (90:11-17) as “gravitating down to the earth is (95:5) , with a subtle, curious moral question flung to both sides “is he that goes along with his face close to the ground better guided than he that walks upright on a straight way?” (67:22). The Quran’s statement of the destruction of individuals like Pharaoh and Korah, the communities like Ad, Thamud is basically talking about the destructiveness of a way of life, of a society, of a type of civilization. The Quran had hammered believers home the reality that how much strongly built the house of kufr might be when truth hits it crumbles to barren dust just as how overcast the sky be when sun appears all clouds and crumbs vanish into thin air.

The antidote of power is power. Muhammad was self-conscious that if his applied monotheism has to see the light of day attaining power was indispensable since in so far as the forces of status quo are concerned mere moral preach falls on the deaf ears, communication with them is possible only in the language of power for rescinding power and vested stakes is non-existent in their vocabulary. Then what is the way forward when realization of applied monotheism stood in stark need of a power base. If Mecca/Taif lent themselves, admirable, the enterprise crucially needs **power base** near or far from Mecca to conquer it back if Arabian Peninsula had to be a launching pad of this curious monotheism for the world at large. This led to an emigration to Medina. still, a fear of frustration of the task combined and balanced with the hope of success and vulnerability of the adherents stood knocking at their doors demanding concrete steps for active mutual goodwill and cooperation among residents and émigrés for the consolidation of power and strength. The Prophet took two grand measures to this end. He struck an effective Brotherhood of Medina between residents and emigres with such a finesse that to each the well-being of fellow was dearer to his own with the Prophet having a higher claim on the believers than [they have on] their own selves (33:6). The move effected a unique compact solid homogenized cemented structure of the jama’a of believers led to new heights of strength and patterns of prosperity so much so that the Quran eulogizing their altruism at the eve of distribution of the booty [confiscated land of Banu Nadhir] comments “ but those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith,- show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot) and those saved from the covetousness of their own souls- they are the ones that achieve prosperity, shall attain to a happy state” (59:9). After striking inner unity the Prophet signed Pact of Medina with Jews and Pagan Arabs having stakes in the defense of the city thus all emerged as Umma which depicts as all and sundry are expected to benefit from the realization of applied monotheism not only

the cooperation of the people of book but pagans' as well is welcomed in the endeavor. Moreover, it illustrates that this applied monotheism was not territory or race specific it was universal in bearing bound to culminate into an international moral social order.

However, the issue confronting the Prophet's mind from the late Meccan phase to the early Medinan period was his all-embracing endeavor to strike one-God one-humanity paradigm of which the people of the book whom the Quran categorized as sects, groups, and partisans, were supposed to be part and parcel but that was not going to be. It set the Prophet with a problem of first theological order to which the Quran continued to address all along. The Quran and Muhammad since the early career of Islam well until initial Medinan phase hoped that the enterprise of applied monotheism will go a long way if people of the book joined the ranks of Islam. This is because they are being addressed as factions and cults or at best the people of the book in early phase without the mention of Torah and Bible hoping their absorption into Islam. Seeing their recalcitrance and stubbornness their identities gradually begin to emerge with the mention of Torah and Bible the latter mentioned only once in the whole Meccan phase. It was after 18 months of Hijra at Medina the Quran resolves this imbroglio by admitting Jews and Christians as separate communities with the community of Islam as gold median and the best community produced for mankind founded and named Muslim by Abraham (22:78; 2:143; 3:110 also 3:104). Their function was to materialize the grand ethical ideal of applied monotheism on the realm of history, "those who, if we give them power on the earth, shall establish prayers, pay zakat, command good, and forbid evil" (22:41). Here the prayers though among cardinal duties are not meant only to be some bodily and tongue gestures simply standing up facing the Ka'ba, are a farce without holistic view of Islam. For preventing the servant [of God] from praying (96:9-10) "applies to all attempts, at all times, to deny to religion (symbolized in the term praying) its legitimate function in the shaping of social life²⁵". If the destitute and the poor are not cared of, the prayers and the faith [i.e., applied monotheism] of the community stays hypocritical (107:1-7). Then, what the bearers of this monotheism are supposed to do? "It is not virtue that you turn your faces east and west [in prayer]. Virtuous are they who believe in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book [in a generic sense i.e., all Revealed Books], the prophets, who give of their wealth- despite their love of it- to needy kinsmen, orphans, the poor, the wayfarer, those who ask for financial help and for ransoming war captives, who establish prayers, pay zakat, fulfil their pacts when they made them, are steadfast in hardship, adversity and war- these are true [Believers]," (2:177). All these "acts" are in essence remedies to social ills, a recipe to attain socio-economic equilibrium the quintessence of **applied monotheism**.

Islam as a "pragmatic social proposition", i.e., applied monotheism, with its combination of homogeneously blended idealism and realism and, with the supervening commitment of its adherents was all-set to pervade the warps and woofs of history. Confrontations, reconciliations, peace overtures or letters to the powers outside Arabia, defensive strategies which sometime turned into offensive endeavors as well, in the long

unfolding 23 years career of Islam were nothing but directed toward noble act of bending history to a definite course i.e., an establishment of Just Moral World Order. The Quran though recognized the separate identities of Jews and Christians, "for each one of you We have appointed a Law and a Way of Conduct; had God willed, He would have made all of you one community but [He has not done so] that He may test you in what he has given you; so, compete in goodness" (5:48), yet the plurality of communities i.e., the multi-religions world is presented as the positive, catalyzing factor i.e., competition for justice, rather than as a factor of division and conflict in an indignant horror and ignorance since the Quran definitely perceives mutually exclusive and mutually confronting religions as a form of polytheism. While for each community a Law and a Way of Conduct has been appointed, the essence of religion is identical that each must strive for the just moral order- the be-all-and-end-all of Abrahamic family of monotheist religions- in its own sphere competing others or at best in an active collaboration with the others (3:64). For the realization of the task despite the combined opposition and idleness of Jews, Christians and pagan Arabs Muhammad stayed the course with consistent and sustained endeavor, with the conquest of Mecca the Vatican city, the commercial hub and political capital of Arabian peninsula, the promise of God came true (110:1-3), He completed His favors [atmuntu naimati] (5:3), and Islam stood as an archetype of Just moral world order all-set to outflow its motherland. Thus, the whole statement so far discussed culminates in one point: one God- one humanity – the invitation with which the Quran started in 610 and with which it ended in 632. So, "Muhammad bequeathed to mankind: both a set of ideals and a concrete way of achieving those ideals, which still constitute the best solution for mankind's ills.²⁶"

The linchpin and the fulcrum of the entire moral fabric of the Quran as it unfolded in 23 years' Prophetic career, from beginning to end without an iota of deviation from its normative discourse was belief in Just God which on pragmatic realm essentially implied social justice and fair-play, socio-economic equilibrium, an achievement of a just social milieu wherein an individual and community as a whole should both realize their potentials to the fullest unhindered and appreciate the meaning of God for the world. As a socially geared religion Islam was pivoted to this end. Islam's principle of applied monotheism as a 'pragmatic social proposition' worked well up until the reigns of Omar, as under the Prophet and first two caliphs, the integrity of the state and the solidarity of community was identical and, indeed, indivisible due to the principle of social justice and fair-play at full play as is evident from Omar's decision of declaring Iraq's conquered lands public property instead of dividing the same among warriors as had been the practice of Muhammad and method of the Quran. Intellectually alert God-intoxicated Omar thought in new situation, the methodology of the Quran and the Prophet that worked well in Arabian conditions, would defy the inner meaning and doctrine of empirical monotheism of the Quran and the Prophet which stands on social justice and fair-play [an equitable distribution of wealth and resources] (59:7&10)-

Social justice ensures the integrity of state and solidarity of its people. Its dilution with the heavy doses of nepotism, lack of restraint and accountability after Omar shattered the integrity of the state, and so was that of the community, while under Ali the state was dismembered, and so was the community. Later, as the community of Islam comes in the titanic grip of religious-political wars, which culminates in dictatorship, the state which so far had been the reflex of Islam's moral principles and common aspirations of the community turned to be the mirror-image of dynastic rule's interests. And as the extremist religious political conditions invoked extremist solutions-to address the Kharijite phenomenon a loose and hollow definition of the Muslim leading to laissez faire morality and political cynicism was coined; to counter Mu'tazila impotence of man against free-will was emphasized, doctrine of Irja leading to determinism was sought for- the organic link between faith and deed [deed being the evidence of faith] was perturbed, applied monotheism, the very swivel of Islam's credal formula was condemned to oblivion leaving the community on the mercy of new and resurrected forces of the status quo.

Islam, as it unfolded in the career of the Prophet, by its all definitions and manifestations was a gigantic moral initiative of an immense magnitude and tremendous grandeur, a movement of vast dimensions, a veritable groundswell, all set to realize its stated goal of applied monotheism i.e., socio-economic development based on transcendental anchoring, through an instrument of state which is nothing at all by itself, nor an "extension" of religion but a reflex of moral and spiritual values of Islam, an instrument which vanishes when one tries to regard it per se. Hence, in pristine Islam, the being, and the goal of community and state was identical and function of both displayed a total homogeneity well until the reins of four caliphs. But under Umayyads' there appeared a duality of state and community when under the dynamics of new situation, a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity of interests developed, the state was destined, in the long run, to be a reflex of the interests of the ruling elites. When dictators repaganized their political ideals, state and community constituted duality, binary typology, a dyadic reality, a far cry from an unmistakable stand of pristine Islam. There was a drastic shift from the original stance of socio-economic justice to politico-militarist posture on the cost of an economic and democratic organization of the society. The ethical-moral-cum-political ideal of applied monotheism submerged under the tide of astonishingly swift conquests of Arab imperialism, in turn, a truncated, piecemeal, and partial monotheism found expression in personalistic pietism. Hence seeing and interpreting Islam through the colorful fog of misty development stayed a norm. Schools of philosophy [Murijites, Qadrites, Jabrites, Mu'tazila and al-Ashari] and theologians assumed take-no-prisoner attitude for defining attributes and characteristics of God rather than to know and implement His Will, a quintessence of pristine Islam. Law schools consumed their energies in balancing the interests of the rulers and the ruled with a scant regard for social justice.

Sufism, in fact, dealt a fatal blow to the socio-economic dimension of monotheism. With its neutrality to the social reality and utter disregard of social fact it went extra-mile to

inculcate passivism leading to renunciation of world on the pattern of Christian monks. "God has created nothing more hateful to Him than this world, and from the day He created it He has not looked upon it²⁷", wrote Hasan Basri, to some accounts the pioneer of Islamic Sufism, in his letter of advice to Umar bin Abdul-Aziz, which later became a Sufi hadith. How contrary to the Quran which ceaselessly upholds natural phenomena as its wonders, tirelessly reminds humanity of the blessings of food, drink, and comfort etc. and says "do not forget thy share in this world (28:77)". "This world" in fact becomes evil and poison only if turns into a veil concealing God from humanity instead of revealing God to humanity.²⁸ Sufism won large swathes of Africa, Central Asia, and India to Islam, but "in the great struggle for life it is not principally number which makes a social organism survive; character is the ultimate equipment of man not only in his effort against a hostile natural environment, but also in his contest with kindred competitors after a fuller richer, and ampler life."²⁹

However, al-Ghazali though reconstituted Islam by an elimination of the sharp edges of differences between theology, law and Sufism that each fell in its proper place yet since his reach to the Quran and disciplines of Sunna and Hadith was weak, hence in so far as the revival and reform of the veritable applied monotheism of the Quran is concerned, he missed the mark. His intellectual affinities with Christian theologians transpired into personalism. Thanks to the vested interests of Seljuk, consciously or unconsciously he ignored the concerns of an integrated community of common aspirations and state as its reflex. His constructs culminated in personal-piety irrelevant to social reality. Under the patronage of Seljuk so huge was his impact that the majority Sunni community was bound to become King's party down the ages to date since his dichotomy of religious and worldly sciences supplied necessary submissive intellectual equipment to this end. Ibn al-Arabi's syncretic Sufi movement combined with his well-conceived and well-ordered peculiar speculative system of pantheistic Sufi theosophy brought this attitude to hitherto uncharted waters and almost crossed the Rubicon.

"In contradistinction to al-Ghazali's personalism, we find in Ibn Taymiyya what may be called "Islamic positivism."³⁰ Great Muhadith, an eminent jurist and an accomplished Mutakallim Ibn Taimiyya was a paradigm of traditional learning he approached Islam with the principle that "Truth" transcends obedience. He levelled critique against the religious-political wars of the great companions, collapsed the extremes of Qadarites and Jabrites, Asharites and Mu'tazila etc. into middle and concerns of integrally reconstituted Muslim community "commanding good and forbidding evil" come alive in his Islamic Socio-Logue. Yet, political fragmentation of the community and prevailing social milieu, veiled and concealed the Quran's ethical moral principle of empirical monotheism from his eyes.

It was Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi in whose mystic experience the solidity and richness of Islam pans out as a set of concrete moral spiritual ideals shorn of Sufi overlaying, self-defeating extravagant theological speculative systems and Greece-ridden

philosophical constructs. The reality of the world long submerged under the tide of Ibn al-Arabi's God-World identity paradigm (wahdat al-wujud) come alive on the touchstone of Sufi experience with discovery of hitherto unprecedented Sufi feats and unique psychological laws still terra incognita to modern psychology. "His work demonstrates, through a genuine dialect of religious experience, the true organic nature of the inner experience and the reality of the external world, necessitating a subsumption of the former to the latter, of the intuitive perception to the moral order.³¹" The depth of his mystic experience according to his own claims transcends monistic unitary state ultimate and final for Sufis and through the mediacy of the Prophet enters the province specific to prophets touching the level of prophetic consciousness. So modern, telling and porcelain-perfect are his ideas that magical poetry of Iqbal seemed reproduction of his Sufi metaphysics. However, so gargantuan was the pull of monism and dichotomy of the worldly and religious sciences in the socio-intellectual milieu around him that he criticizes ulama for "attributing real existence to this world besides God (ghayr-I wujud ra wujud thabit kardan)³²" and his original mystic experience could not deter him to discourage the cultivation of positive sciences. Yet, so satisfactory were the socio-economic conditions of the Muslims under the consolidated Muslim empire of Akbar and Jahangir that the ethical ideal of applied monotheism refused to divulge itself upon him.

A century and a half later, it fell upon Shah Wali Allah of Delhi to decipher, discern, and resurrect the moral-political ideal of applied monotheism from beneath the debris of historical Islam to present Islam as a 'pragmatic social proposition', to recover the socio-economic equilibrium of his community drowned in socio-economic cesspit after vacuum of Muslim power in India. His theory of *irtifaqat* (socio-economic development) and *iqtirabat* (spiritual evolution) wherein worldly and religious life by an organic fusion stays as an integrated whole was destined to be a springboard for the modernist Muslim thought after their encounter with the modern imperial West. Wali Allah's energies for the most part consumed in his methodology of *Tatbiq Principle* i.e., in reckless generosity of synthesizing differing elements of tradition perhaps keeping in view exigencies of his milieu and the moral intellectual stupor of his community yet if his theory of *Irtifaq* and *Iqtirab* is to go by, he succeeded to perceive and establish Islam as an ideologically geared governmental structure all-intent to strike socio-economic justice i.e., social moral world order by the elimination of social inequalities, economic disparities and political disenfranchisement of the weaker segments of society as it did in its initial career by destroying the corrupt socio-economic structures of Persia and Byzantine empires with a loud and clear message that the dictatorial rule and "hereditary kingship is as inimical to the political concept of Islam as polytheism is to its theological concept³³". In his Age, the English had reached Calcutta and Allahabad, and Islam with worn-out software and physical paraphernalia was standing at the threshold of modern world. Though he fails to notice the development, yet his thought-system succeeds in providing matrices for the creative activity of the great minds and spirits of Muslim modernists to come.

The total immersion of the Muslim Asia and Africa into the calamitous groundswell Western aggression with ever-developing, expanding scientific and technological sciences supported by varying burgeoning socio-economic-cum-political and philosophic thought-systems on its back was a challenge of politico-militarist subjugation and an opportunity of severe soul-search to interpret Islam afresh in face of the forces unleashed by an all-absorbing modernity. Now, was there any at this juncture like a Ghazali or an Ashari in Islam who would take the bull of unsettling modernity by the horns as they addressed the challenge of Hellenism squarely in medieval situation? Intellectually ill-equipped, tormented with socio-political deformities, defeated on the realms of culture and civilization the world of Islam failed to produce any person of such a caliber. Illusional self-confidence of their intellectual mores, cultural and civilizational norms, took defeat in terms of disciplined and well-equipped Western militaries. They thought science and technology to be a snake oil to address their ills once and for all but that was not going to be for "science cannot remain content with mere fact-finding that inevitably evolves a metaphysics of its own which may well come into conflict with that of religion.³⁴" The challenge of Western modernity was all-round and of immense monstrosity far greater than Judaic Christian rivalry and Hellenistic thought that Islam faced squarely at its initial career and amidst heydays of its politico-militarist power. It took them [the Muslims] over 200 years to come to their own from Hellenism despite being the masters of the world-destiny.

Then why the world of Islam fails to face Western modernity and imperialism unlike medieval situation wherein we see a genesis of a galaxy of scholars successfully struggling to grapple with the problem forthwith. Distinctions are more than parallels of two situations. Firstly, at that time Islam was in socio-economic-cum-politico-militarist ascendancy and the Muslims psychologically invincible. Secondly, perhaps the most important differentia, the Greek thought represented a homogeneous type of thought and specially so when Islam assumed the steering wheel of history the interfusion of Aristotelian, Platonic and Stoic elements had already matured. They took their healthy intellectual traditions [philosophy, science, and medicine etc.] almost accurately to manipulate them theologically while discarded the literature replete with the stories of gods. Quite different, almost reverse is the case now. The upper-class Muslim intelligentsia has taken secularism, shorn of transcendental dimensions and equally the bane of modernity, as a most precious long-lost gift, and the middle class trained in secular institutions with religious roots in conservatism is sandwiched between two opposing terms of extreme, here is the hypocrisy in toto.

Thirdly and most importantly, "the Modern Western thought is not one monolithic structure. It is not even a complex of thought-systems for even a complex has a unity. It is rather a constellation of several systems and interpretations of the universe and of man. What is more, the West is neither dead nor static: it is still alive and developing. The Muslim modernist therefor cannot be expected to absorb all these mutually unintegrated and often even conflicting but ever developing systems and bring Islamic principles to bear upon them.³⁵"

Fourthly, it is too early to expect this as Islamic modernism being a century and a half old, not too mature with scant, almost inimical, or hostile political will on its back and a huge stumbling glacier of historical Islam and tradition on its way.

However, the most positive impact of modernism on Islam was that it gave it a whirl and its best shot to recover the role of religion shaping social life. It was Syed Jamal al-Din Afghani, the first genuine Muslim modernist, father of Islamic modernism who realizing the positive scientific, democratic, and dynamic spirit of the Western culture negatively driven by materialistic and atheistic impulse said that religions have been, in their essence, the main prop of civilization and the cementing force of societies, despite the fact that they have often been distorted and sometimes perverted. The West after revoking the religion *per se* or its role in social life had evolved materialistic metaphysics trusted to science and positivism. so, the statement of Afghani was a protest against basing of socioeconomic reform on materialistic and atheistic doctrines, not falling back on traditional status quo in Muslim society since he struggled for ideologically geared constitutional governmental structures for the execution of socio-economic reforms in the Muslim world, and his was perhaps the first ever attempt at formulating the idea of Islamic socialism. It, at its best seemed a recourse to pristine ethical-moral ideal of applied monotheism of the Quran and the Prophet which was bound not only to inculcate hopes for the future of Islam in his community and inspire a chain of intellectual-reformers but destined to erect an Alexandrian Wall against the penetration of atheistic socialism in Islam. History vindicated his stand.

Half-baked classical Muslim modernism [i.e., of Syed Ameer Ali, Sir Syed etc.] assumed apologetic streaks- judged social institutions of Islam on Western lines- but Russo-Japan war (1903-4) and later the decolonization triggered reset between Orient-Occident relations which helped the Muslims to come to their own to build Islam as a pragmatic social proposition on its own terms, an endeavor if not undertaken the bouleversement of its very socio-economic and political moral ideals by the hegemonic Western modernity was a foregone conclusion. Thus, if the developments in Muslim Asia and Africa are to go by, at least on intellectual and constitutional realms Islam weathered the storm. Pakistan in its incubation and inception was promised to be a laboratory of Islam with fuller realization of its socio-moral principles- a highway to egalitarianism rooted in socio-economic justice and the Constitution of 1973 guarantees the same. Jamal Nasser of Egypt termed "communism as an enemy of faith, of the individual and individual freedom, turning man into mere tool in the vast machine of production³⁶", iterated in the Charter 1962 is "we have to unfold our national character and life -orientation within the framework of our religious and spiritual values.³⁷" Muhammad Harbi, an avowed Marxist based Algerian socialism on Arabo-Islamic culture. La Charter of Alger 1962 proclaims that Algerian liberation struggle has not been waged in isolation, that the doctrines of Afghani, Sheikh Abdu, the pan Arab thought of Shakib Arslan and socialist ideas contributed to it. The charter says "possessing a profound faith, the Algerian masses have vigorously struggled to recover Islam from all accretions and superstitions that have stifled or distorted

it. They have always reacted against charlatans who wished to make of Islam a doctrine of resignation and have spontaneously associated it with their task of putting an end to the exploitation of man by man. The Algerian Revolution must restore to Islam its true aspect- the aspect of progress.³⁸" Islamic socialism got sound attention in North Africa and Middle East while Iqbal and Obaidullah Sindhi voiced same concerns in India.

Islam was a movement in incubation and inception intended to strike socio-economic, democratic and economic organization of society rooted in transcendental values which remained the leitmotif of the Prophet and righteous caliphs. After dictators' assumption of power, when its political moral ideal transformed and went repaganized, then though the state was Islamic in all terms for the administrative structure of the empire was selectively based on Islamic law, the disciplines of learning were developed so, yet the ethical ideal of applied monotheism, as a supervening force of directing social initiative based on socio-economic and political justice, was in the long run bound to come to its sovereign default, which happened. It was its encounter with constitutional democratic structure and dynamic impulse of the modern Western culture that enticed the Muslims to pry into the nature of Islam.

Indeed, the Orientalists have made a remarkable contribution in resurrection of Islam as a social proposition and have been pioneers of modern studies on Islam. Still imperial optics, the angle of their vision, was, where needed, bound to distort the object of vision, for the most part they studied Islam merely as a historical datum, as a dead body to be analyzed and as they naturally looked Islam from the vantage point of their own social milieu, what precipitates is , in essence bound to be out of congruity with, or in an alienation from the real Islam. So, why the world of Islam fails to accept materialistic metaphysics, of which emerged opposing camps of capitalism and communism and its labored nationalism and secularism lock, stock, and barrel put them in a desperate distress to call it an anti-civilization, anti-progress 'conservative theocentric community, an incurable enemy of science and reason, ill-disposed to integrate in the modern world. Even, the most sober Western scholars of Islam fell prey to the booby trap of eying Islam from the lenses of their own tradition. H.A.R. Gibb writes "but there was a darker side to the prosperity of Mecca. It displayed the familiar evils of a wealthy commercial society, extremes of wealth and poverty, an underworld of slaves and hirelings, social class barriers. It is clear from Muhammad's fervent denunciation of social injustice and fraud that this was one of the deep inner causes of his unsettlement³⁹". He insinuates that this deep-seated malaise of the Prophet, instead of issuing into a movement of social revolution, was transformed into a religious movement under the impact of a vivid and immediate experience of unique God. Here, the dichotomy of religious and worldly spheres of his Christian tradition rings louder in his otherwise sublime analysis. It suggests either Islam became a religion instead of a reform thrust or its social reform agenda was cast in a religious mold. In his analysis, this duality of relationship, between the two is reflex of his tradition, to the Quran "monotheism and social justice are two sides of the same coin and the two organically involve each other.⁴⁰"

Westernism is an extreme reaction of and a violent spiritual break with its immediate parent, European medievalism, and with the loss of transcendental dimension is a law unto itself, in turn being an enemy of religion is inimical to negotiate with any spiritual system. With the development of materialistic metaphysics atheistic materialism was a natural outcome. It led the West to an awe-inspiring material progress on the cost of moral values. For when the transcendental dimension [Urwat al-Wusqa i.e., God the unfailing handhold, or a loop, or a handle or anchor (2:256)] is gone, then, rudderless voyage is a “must”, one is apt to worship oneself as God or one’s society or nation as God. To the Quran, when God creates a thing, simultaneously puts into it its nature, potentialities, and the laws of its behavior i.e., amr, “command”, and guides it towards its fulfilment (20:50) whereby it falls into a pattern and becomes a factor in the “cosmos”. An individual’s or a society’s departure from its normativity, nature is akin to forget God, removal of meaning and purpose from human life: “do not be like those who forgot God and [eventually] He caused them to forget themselves—these are the unrighteous ones (59:19). “God’s “remembrance” ensures the cementing of personality where all details of life and particulars of human activity are properly integrated and synthesized; forgetting God, on the other hand, means fragmented existence, “secularized” life, an unintegrated and eventually disintegrated personality, and enmeshment in the details on the cost of the whole.⁴¹ Forgetting God means to be out of congruity with or in alienation from the ultimate principle of existence, and when the God is gone it not only gives way to the exploitative and fraudulent commerce, misuse of wealth and abuse of power stays a norm, externalities and superficialities of life and wealth per se becomes be-all-and-end-all of life on the cost of al-akhira,[higher values] which “circumscribes both the inner reality of this world’s life and the ultimate reality of the hereafter.⁴² So, the Quran addressing the opulent Meccans and by implications to the atheistic materialism of our age exhorts “they know [well] the externalities of this material life but are heedless of the higher [meaning of life]” (30:7). “So, leave him alone who rejects our teaching [i.e., of the higher value of life] and has the material life as his sole end: this is the apogee of their knowledge (53:30). And What an all-absorbing smugness they express when it is said to these people “do not sow mischief and corruption on the earth, they reply “we are only reforming (2:11-12)”. This had been the staunch reply of the ‘materialists’ from antiquity down the ages to date.

When God went missing from the socio-economic and politico-cultural conscience of the West or euphemistically relegated to private life it gave way to the host of unending interpretations of the man and universe to weave the warps and woofs of materialistic metaphysics to build an edifice of modern civilization i.e., **human order with human reasons**. As human mind was thought to be the crucial locus of reform and progress, the issues touching the valuation and destiny of man got primacy. Man, a social animal of Aristotle had assumed a status of moral being in Revelation. But when the custodians of Revelation particularly the Church in Western parlance for a millennium subjugated him and refused him his due dignity, share in power, peace and prosperity, the complete disillusionment of the modern man in European hemisphere was

all-intent to disparage and discard everything religious. When the frozen minds of Europe received blows of ignominy from all sides and that on the name of religion, they melted in all directions not on the glacial pace but at the speed of broken dams demolishing everything [religious] what came its way. In newly emerging scenario biologists deemed man to be the chance product of matter or a grandchild of ape. Ethicists termed him immediate cream of the creation of an omnipotent and good God. Freud called man a victim of his direct or camouflaged sexual urges. Positive economics conceived him in terms of a mere plaything in the hands of economic forces and urges. Kar Marx weighed and valued man only in terms of economy. “Communism, in its classical statement, is only a systematic and extreme orthodox form of the absolute and uncompromising character of this Western modernity,⁴³” hence Westernism is pure secularism.

Protestant Reformation Movement led Europe to Peace of Westphalia (1648) wherefrom gushed forth ideology of nationalism and nation states with secularism a safeguard. With nationalism a lone spiritual value atheistic materialistic metaphysics split into two opposing doctrines of capitalism and communism two sides of the same coin i.e., materialism. The intent and spirit of the Peace of Westphalia fructified in Marx who interpreted man and history in economic terms and, religion as an opium of the masses. Ideologies of behavioristic and economic determinism through new sociological doctrines reduced man to an economic unit. The gigantic pivotal shift from geo-strategic to geo-economic thrust in the world arena and U.S-China’s tussle along with China’s One-Belt One-Road initiative based on the moral principle of shared prosperity portray enough that 21st century in its impulse and thought revolves around economy and “it would not be perhaps too much to say that Karl Marx remains the genuine father of the present generation all the world over (scope, method).⁴⁴”

Hence, the economism has almost drawn the winds out of man’s moral sails rendering him a sheer economic animal. So, what value Islam attributes to the wealth, its modes of earning and spending, production and consumption, storage and distribution, individual needs and social weal assume paramountcy and must be treated under the umbrella of its principles of **economic justice** when man has begun to be viewed as an essentially economic unit and his progress as an essentially economic progress. The progress is not something novel but only a modern differentiation of human welfare and well-being which was, is, and will remain the cornerstone of Islamic ethos. Since, the principles of socio-economic orientation lie in one’s culture, moral source, are in turn drawn from its socio-economic ideology, in a perfectly logical hence a natural harmony to its view of man, universe and God.

The Quran treats these subjects and their organic correlation exhaustively. Though it mentions God thousand times, presents a scientific picture of life, nature, and history, yet its fundamental overweening impulse and thrust centers around moral and material wellbeing of individuals and societies, for it releasing his moral energies to optimum level puts every item of the furniture of the universe on his disposal for the actualization

of his potentials. The Quran's concept of God is essentially functional: He has created the universe and man with respective form and nature while the former automatically surrenders to its inlaid laws and is Muslim, man has a choice either to conform or to violate the same to benefit or loss of his own and either of the decisions he takes, in this endeavor God being his co-worker, entrenches him in the same (92:5-10). It talks little about His nature. God is neither the intellectual abstraction, as Muslim philosophers perceived him, nor an explanatory formula of the stationary world, as the Greeks construed Him, nor an object of personal experience, as the Sufis conceived Him. God is "that dimension which makes other dimensions possible; He gives meaning and life to everything. He is all-enveloping, literally infinite and He alone is infinite.... God is not an item among other items of the universe, or just an existent among existents. He is "with" everything; He constitutes the integrity of everything...God then is the very meaning of reality, a meaning manifested, clarified, and brought home by the universe, helped even further by man⁴⁵". The essence of Quran's empirical monotheism culminates in belief in One God and ceaseless striving for social justice. For whatever transpires from the Quran says Ibn Taimiyya "God is not something to be merely perceived, admired and cherished but must be recognized as the One to whom alone our allegiance is true" and "man's is a duty to know His Will and implement the same⁴⁶", all else details are the necessary implements and moral safeguards against human decay and destructions, hence, the Quran is man-centric rather than a treatise about God since its central concern is guidance of man i.e., to save man from himself by himself and for himself.

To the Quran, an appreciation of human "Personality" (Nafs), is a key to understanding his task and function as an individual and as a member of society in relation to certain objective and transcendental laws governing rise and fall of communities, the man individually and collectively ought to conform to, which in the terminology of the Quran constitute "the Commands of God for man." Man is a mirror image of cosmos whose elements apparently oppose yet inherently complement each other. "Verily We create man in the best conformation (95:4)" i.e., endowed with all the positive qualities, physical as well as mental, corresponding to the functions which this creature is meant to perform. "... Who has created you and formed you in accordance with what you are meant to be, and shaped thy nature in just proportion, having put you together in whatever form He willed [you to have]" (82:6-8). Man's self (Ego) is a perfect equilibrium of moral tensions with an instinctive guidance to act justly and equally prone to unjustness, with all stakes assigned to his conscious choice. His moral compass consists in positive and negative moral forces i.e., angelic and animalistic tendencies in a proportionate order, his thought and actions are to his own make or break. His moral calculus operates/oscillates between these two extremes. What is desired is the reconciliation and synthesis of both terms, not elimination of animalistic term as conventional Sufism through the cultivation of harsh and severe disciplinary procedures seeks to "take off" by totally negating the lower, animal side. This deprives one of the much substance of virtue since it is a social sphere wherein one realizes his potentials and contributes to the evolution and progress of society for retiring to the caves or forests numbing moral

faculties mars moral initiatives leading to the evolution of history.

Running from social field and fact to chase Utopian world of fiction is, then, akin to defying one's own nature. This nature is a simplest complex package of moral laws and their acute consciousness what God bestows upon human "Selves" on time of their creation when God extracts their seeds from the loins of the children of Adam and makes them witness upon themselves, saying, Am I not your Lord? And they reply, no doubt, you are, we bear witness (7:172). This metaphor which the Quran states in past to allude it certainty as it often presents future events of the afterlife in the past tense to emphasize them as a matter of fact as 54:1 depicts. Hence, 7:172's translation in present brings into bold relief the continuous recurrence of the metaphorical "question" and "answer" to the birth of every individual self. The Quran untiringly and ceaselessly hammers us home that the Christian doctrine of "Original Sin", "Hereditary Sin" and Hindu-Buddhist idea of Karma, is fictitious. An identical constitution of "Self" has been engraved upon the hearts [91:7-10] which represents the Primordial Covenant; every person and people have continuously to search their own consciences not to take refuge in the excuse that they had been preconditioned by their "hereditary memory", by the set ways of their forefathers. "The primary task of the prophets is to awaken man's conscience so that he can decipher the primordial writing on his heart more clearly and with greater conviction.⁴⁷"

Thus, the world of Islam is a world of memory. What memory? The memory of "Primordial Covenant", the man's agreed covenant with God, that of surrendering to his normative nature, not to break his bond with God after it has been established [in their nature] and not to cut asunder what God has bidden to be joined [social bonds] and not to spread corruption on earth (2:26). Hence, "remembrance of God" individually and collectively in all its connotations is hearkening to inlaid laws of behavior and to integrate with principle of real existence, God and "forgetting God" means fragmented existence, "secularized" life, unintegrated and eventually disintegrated personality, a being, an entity decoupled and divorced from an Ultimate Reality. The prophets and heavenly scriptures came to facilitate, further, strengthen and clarify the "remembrance of God", which man's vested interests conceals from him. The religion removes cover from that "dormant remembrance". Hence, "to reveal is tantamount to giving life to the light that lies asleep in each person's heart, one that forgetfulness put down and suffocated. Here, there is no question of an original sin, an eternal fault, or a challenge to the Creator. The one who does not believe, the infidel (kafir), is the one who is no longer faithful to the "Original Pact", the one whose memory is sleepy and whose sight is veiled. In the notion of Kufr, in Arabic, there is indeed the idea of a veiling which provokes the denial of Transcendence.⁴⁸" The Quran is reminder (80:11) of the Primordial Covenant, fields man in historical arena to render the innermost hearts pure of all dross i.e., accretions and superstitions (3:154) and is meant to bring man's instinctive-though sometimes hazy or unconscious-realization of God into the full light of consciousness (7:172). "O you who have attained to faith! Be true to your covenants!" (5:1). "The covenants

referred here are of three kinds: the covenant between God and man [man's obligation to God], between man and his own soul, between the individual and his fellowmen⁴⁹ – thus embracing the entire area of man's moral and social responsibilities. So, the utmost thrust of this message is to recover and redeem the balance of man's normative nature for any deviation from the same, in the terminology of the Quran, constitutes kufr.

Now, with the backdrop of this normative nature, understanding the task and function the Quran entrusts to man and society is crucial, if learnt we need not enough perspicacity to unravel and discern the socio-economic dimension of Islam. Man is a bearer of "Trust" (33:72), charged with responsibility to strike just moral order on earth. Since all forms of social chaos are rooted in socio-economic disequilibrium, humanity to become a human cosmos needs socio-economic justice i.e., a sure highway to power, peace and prosperity for as Tibor Scitovsky puts "poverty in the midst of plenty and joyless affluence are but symptoms of a profound disorder⁵⁰". Mecca was a paragon of this picture with islands of opulence in the sea of poverty. The Quran highly valued the regular trade missions of the Quraish in the winter to the south for Indian goods and in the summer to the north to sell Indian and purchase Byzantine goods and points to the centrality of Ka'ba as a religious and commercial hub of Arabs a great source of peace and material prosperity and how they might be instrumental to a viable and progressive moral social order by the elimination of stark social inequalities and economic disparities from the fabric of its immediate society (106:1-5).

So, where the task of the community is an establishment of just moral socio-political world order on earth its function is to be a gold median community so that it can be a "witness upon mankind" i.e., mediate their extreme positions and balance these out (2:142). The term "witness" here refers to the balance of the two sides of the scale hence the Muslims are the standard, criterion, or scale whereby extremes are to be judged and they are also modifiers whereby those extremes are to be collapsed to the middle or smoothed out. Judging the extremes is intellectual endeavor a diagnostic function and balancing them is an operational initiative. Hence the task and the function of the community are integral, interwoven, and interdependent and neither is possible without the other. Then, what extremes in that historic context were confronted by the nascent community of Islam was most likely on the one hand the orthodox behavior, rigidity, immobility, particularism and racial doctrine of "chosen people" of the Judaism and liquidity or excessively "accommodating" nature of Christianity as Saint Paul popularized by freeing Christians of Moses' Sharia and Law on the other. However, as man is prone to oscillate between extremes and so are societies the verse has a universal import hence extends to the present extremes of Communism and Capitalism or any other extremes which mankind may assume in future.

Then the role of the Muslim community is "those who, when We give them power on the earth, shall establish prayers [i.e., strike social equality], pay Zakat [secure economic equilibrium], command good and prohibit evil [effect socio-political order by

eliminating injustice of whatsoever] and to God belongs the end of affairs i.e., their ideology of socio-economic justice does not sprout from materialistic metaphysics, secularism or atheistic materialism as has been and is the practice of the materialists naturism (22:40). "Commanding good and prohibiting evil" in all contexts of the Quran is a socio-political function of all the members of the community as "consultation among themselves" is their principle of governance. "Who respond to [the call of] their Sustainer and are constant in prayer; and whose rule [in all matters of common concern] is consultation among themselves and who spend on others out of what We provide for them as sustenance (42:38)." Here following immediately upon the call to communal unity and consultation, "the spending on others" bears the general connotation of "social justice⁵¹", [i.e., they have been given power (as a form of rizq, its spending means to dispense social justice) as "ar-rizq ("provision" or "sustenance") applies to all that may be of benefit to man, whether it be concrete (like food, property, offspring etc.) or abstract (like knowledge, piety etc.)...anfaqa (lit., he spent) is always used in the Quran to denote spending freely on, or as a gift to, others, whatever the motive may be.⁵² What "spending" else the provision of socio-political justice might be so valuable which releases moral energies to an optimum level and brings human potentials to full fruition.

Hence, where verses (2:142; 22:40) talk task and tactics of striking an effective egalitarian moral world order in the world at large; (3:103; 9:123) have more often been interpreted as referring to the internal constitution or structure of the Muslim community which after al-Ashari's formulation of orthodox Sunni credal formula led to the emergence of religious elitism in Islam which for the most part proved veritable arm of the state and in the long run was destined to be an interest group itself and more or less same happened to Shiism under Safavid Iran. 3:103 reads "Let there be of you a community/let there be from among you a community or a group, who invite to all that is good, command good and forbid evil", so far as Arabic is concerned, either construction is right. The latter construction is employed with a great tour de force to validate and strengthen religious elitism to confer upon them a socio-political role[of commanding good and forbidding evil] which otherwise is social obligation of the each member of the community "believing men and believing women are friends and supporters of each other, they command good and prohibit evil, establish prayers, pay zakat and obey God and His Messenger- these are the ones upon whom God is going to have mercy, God is Mighty and Wise (9:71). Here "God is going to have mercy upon them" points to (atmamtu alaikum namati), the completion of His favors, their endeavors for socio-political moral world order would ultimately be blessed with success and "believing men and women are friends and supporters of each other" is a restatement and a sublime pointer to the "active good will" (tawasi) and "cooperation" (taawun) the sole basis of their mutual relationship (90:17; 103:3). "Cooperation on the basis of goodness and warning each other against moral peril and do not cooperate on the basis of wrong doing and transgression (5:2)" is the duty and hall mark of the each individual of community not a prerogative of religious elite even in internal structure as well as has been defined on the external plane, global scale

(3:110;22:40;2:142). Of course, Islam emphasizes the learning of its adherents to equip them with sufficient intellectual tools and moral paraphernalia, intense spiritualism and rigorous pragmatism without which the entire endeavor to just moral order risks to be a wild goose chase rather than a feat. The Prophet dispatched learned men to different regions for the task but the execution of socio-economic and political justice on internal and external planes remained collective responsibility of the community through the duly constituted political or administrative authority called *ulu'l -amr* by the Quran (4:59; 4:83).

The Quran proclaims "...it is not desirable that all the believers take the field [in time of war]. From within every group in their midst, some shall refrain from going to war, and shall devote themselves [instead] to acquiring a deeper knowledge of the Faith, and [thus be able to] teach their home-coming brethren, so that these [too] might guard themselves against evil (9:122)". The clergy therefrom distills its magisterial right of "commanding good and prohibiting evil" with its monopoly over the knowledge of Faith. Molana Thanvi says no other verse of the Quran puts such emphasis on achieving knowledge as this, since though amidst war the very existence of community be threatened intellectual activity is not allowed to be suspended or postponed⁵³. *Din* being a whole expression of man's life is a vast term denotes customs, life, law and judgements, accountability, decrees, obedience, punishments and rewards, politics, and opinion etc⁵⁴. The Quran does not draw any dividing-line between the spiritual and the worldly concerns of life but, rather, regards them as different aspects of one and the same reality. It presents and emphasizes a scientific view of nature, existence, and cosmos [natural sciences, cosmology, and biology], laws of history governing human affairs [sociology], inner motivations and operations of human "self" or mind [psychology]. Thus, the dichotomy of religious and worldly sciences is innovation of medieval Islam. Hence, to the Quran where knowledge religious or nonreligious is based on observation and induction, it by its very nature is ever-growing and dynamic yet an organic whole. Fragmented knowledge is perhaps the biggest crisis of modern world due to its excessive obsession with specialization and isolated research it is salutary for it creates data and expand the volume of knowledge. But there must be class of genuine intellectuals who could integrate various threads of this knowledge into a total organic picture since Islam presents the concept of unity of knowledge.

Hence, the task of religious leadership might be the acquisition of correct and meaningful knowledge of the Faith and its diffusion through teaching and preaching; they cannot be exclusive bearers of socio-political administrative authority to establish just moral order on the earth i.e., an obligation devolved on all members of the community. On this plane Shi'i tradition has exhibited worse distortions than Sunnism. The Ulama of Iran control both the levers of power and public funds not with the power of sword but the power of fatwa [religious decree]. Their isolationism had made Iran the victim of world sanctions. Islam does not sanction such isolationism and perhaps is inimical to reward the suffrage of such, rather, self-earned and

self-imposed victimization. If Afghanistan is any guide, Sunnism, too has fared little well.

As establishment of moral world order is obligation of the community not a task and function of a few i.e., people of loosening and binding (*ahl al-hall wal-aqd*), Islam believes in general franchise. "Those whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation (*amruhum shura bainahum*)" insinuates on the one side their affairs [i.e., interests of all members, not of one person or dynasty as later went on] and on the other it insists on the execution of advice reached through mutual discussion on equal footing. The Quran proclaims here an idea of universal franchise i.e., a perfect equality of all members and their opinions of which vote is nothing but a modern differentiation. We know the mainstay of all authority was the Prophet himself and to the Quran obedience to his decisions was binding upon all believers, yet he was equally asked to run affairs through mutual consultations. In battle of Uhd the Prophet and some seniors members had a view to give battle to the overwhelming army of the Quraish from within the city if needed from the narrow streets of Medina but majority demanded to give battle out from the city from an open field and their advice was conceded on the principle of general franchise and though their miscalculation turned the balance in enemy's favor, neither the Prophet nor the Quran did attribute the failure to the principle of Shura instead emphasizing it further more ardently says the Quran "and it was by God's grace that you [O Prophet] did deal gently with your followers: for if you had been harsh and hard of heart, they would indeed have broken away from you. Pardon them, then, and pray that they be forgiven. And take counsel with them in all matters of public concern; then, when you have decided upon a course of action [after mutually agreed advice], place your trust in God; for, verily, God loves those who place trust in Him (3:159). However, at Peace of Hudaibiya, the Prophet exercised his religious authority so vehemently and almost against all members that he single-handedly struck deal and the followers only followed when he on his wife's advice came out of the camp to slaughter the sacrificial animal. "In the Prophetic Sunna indeed democracy and religious authority were balanced with a finesse that defies description."⁵⁵

Yet, the religious authority of the Prophet was his exclusivism and by analogy could not be extended to or devolved upon subsequent religiopolitical authorities or religious elite for the Quran abhors an idea of elitism and states all males/females are equally responsible for the task and function of the community (9:71), and "abolishes priesthood" by the statement "no authority except God (3:64;). Shura was pre-Islam tradition of the Arabs the Quran turned the same from tribal to community institution replacing blood ties with the bonds of faith. "The first test of shura came immediately after the death of Muhammad over the question of succession. Although he was looking for an appropriate opportunity to settle this fateful matter before his death, in view of the delicate balance of the forces in his community- particularly as between the Meccans who had settled in Medina after the emigration and Madinese population who had given him and his followers a haven- he had no opportunity to decide....the test was successful, but this is the first and last time in Islamic history that the community as a

whole, that is, its decision making representative elements, met and saved the community from disintegration which the frailties and vagaries of history may have perpetrated. Shura continued to function informally for some time during the first four caliphs until the Umayyad rule. With the introduction of dynastic rule under the Umayyads, shura was naturally replaced by those cliques who supported the regime. It was, in fact, never developed into an institution. If it could have been so developed, the history of Islam, both political and religious, would have been radically different, with important consequences for the non-Muslim world as well.⁵⁶ How it flies in the face of the Quran which condemns such secret cliques (58:8-9). Unfortunately, orthodoxy validated it as an Islamic norm whereby a power usurper selects his advisory council to seek advice and is entitled to accept or reject. It further vitiated its political system on a rigged premise of the safety of law and order through concocted traditions that rebellion is not allowed even against a tyrannical rule wherein an individual has no right except to choose for gallows. Was Islam itself not a rebellion against tyrannical exploitative Meccan aristocracy and had it not disturbed the calm waters of injustice and persecution, a world lent to socio-economic inequalities and political oligarchy. Had the monopolists surrendered voluntarily before the thesis of pragmatic monotheism, if not, had the Quran refused his adherents to take the plunge in interest of peace and law and order? "The Quran envisages the Muslim community internally as a perfectly egalitarian, open society based on good will and cooperation, without elitism and without the mentality that generates secret conspiracies⁵⁷". This is because Muslim modernist's advocacy of democracy and constitutionalism is warranted by the Quran which begins with Afghani who said without participation of the common man in political process and without constitutional structures of the states Muslims cannot withstand Western imperialism since despots are prone to cave in before the demands of Western powers. The appeal found ready response in some Turkish, Middle Eastern, and Indian reformers of Islam. However, the crux of the matter on this issue came to the fore clearly in Iqbal's critique of Western democracies. Iqbal struck hard at the very roots of Western culture and civilization based on secularism which was developing from the very genesis of Christianity with its principle of "rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's due and unto God what is God's due". Still, Iqbal's critique of Western democracies was not against their form and process, it was directed against their essence i.e., accomplishing materialistic ends through democratic set-ups on the cost of the vision of higher moral social order. So, Iqbal's critique of pure reason and materialistic democracy points to the Sitz im Leben which brought Europe to the view that religion is a sacred myth which needs to be discarded as now "reason can stand on its own" which led to human order with human reasons on the principle "man is the measure of all things". The half-read lot of Muslim took Iqbal's critique of pure reason as anti-reason and anti-science while of anti-materialistic democracy to be anti-democratic form and process per se. Iqbal was undoubtedly a democrat both in his impulse and thought and he advocated spiritual democracy which seeks an establishment of viable egalitarian progressive moral social order on the earth.

The Quran's moral weltanschauung and its matrix of a packaged socio-economic reform enveloped in its doctrine of applied monotheism keeps in view and gives due consideration and regard to man's nature a locus of desires, motivations, and actions. Hence, against Christian idea of original sin, the Quran fundamentally addresses the basic weakness of man from which spring all his moral and material ills. The Quran describes this weakness as "pettiness [da'f, 4:28]" and "narrowness of mind [Qatur, 17:100]". The constitution of his self, as earlier said, comprises moral tensions i.e., positive and negative moral extremes out of which a positive, creative mean, an integrative moral organism is required for which man has been instinctively guided and further facilitated and clarified by the prophets, if achieved this is a state of "self" characterized by the Quran as "satisfied self"(89:27-30), self's inner conflicts, spiritual and physical demands attain a gold median integrative mean, a perfect equilibrium and man comes to peace with himself in this life, after death joins "Supernal Plenum" and becomes a creative factor for the world and in hereafter this equilibrium of the self, by the grace of God keeps itself amplifying and beautifying (83:25-28;76:5-6) unhampered and undeterred by the exigencies of time and space (57:12).

The contradictory extremes of human "self" i.e., pride and hopelessness, determinism and freedom, absolute knowledge and pure ignorance, an utterly negative self-feeling and a feeling of omnipotence, self-righteousness and forthrightness, hope and fear, cowardness and bravery, higher values of spirit and lower values of biological existence, selfishness and altruism constitute natural tensions for proper human conduct, a "God-given" framework for human action. Tilt to either side or the elimination of the either term of two opposing terms violates the equilibrium of human "self", the result is deformity, distortion, and destruction of the moral human personality. The crux of moral life is that violating this balance to any direction produces a "satanic condition". Satan is an epitome of such disequilibrium. His utter pride deterred him to honor Adam and he took God for granted. When he fell, he lost all hope and sank in an utter desperation that recovery of his moral personality was next to impossible, demanded respite and became a professional evil monger. Hence, all sorts of evils, moral or material spring from either pride or hopelessness and as both these extremes sap moral strengths of individuals and societies leading them to nihilism and destruction, these conditions constitute kufr, for the be-all-and-end-all of the Quran is to maximize human moral energy, so instead of homily on "free will" or "determinism" it focuses on its primary task of releasing maximum moral energy and condemns whatsoever comes its way. So, as earlier said "determinism and free will, potency and impotency, hope and fear are, in human case, not contradictions but rather God-given tensions within whose framework people must work; should they violate either side of the tension and think themselves to be either omnipotent or impotent, they fall into a Satanic condition that the Quran calls Kufr..."

However, man has not been left to the vagaries of these contradictory extremes of the "self". The "self" is equipped with faculty of reason to regulate his behavior by the moderation of extremes. "It is We Who have created man, and We know what

his self-whispers within him: for We are closer to him than his neck-vein [And so] whenever the two demands [contradictory extremes of his nature i.e., moral tension] come face to face, contending from the right and from the left, not even a word can he utter but there is a watcher with him ever present (50:16-18)". "The watchful force (hafiz) set over every human being is his own conscience (82:10-12), which "records" all his motives and actions in his subconscious mind. Since it is the most precious element in man's psyche, it is described as "noble"⁵⁸". "And every person [self] will come forward with [his erstwhile urges, "libido" of modern psychology i.e., saiq] and faculty of reason, conscious mind i.e., shahid (50:21)⁵⁹". The term shahid (witness) here employed for the faculty of reason, intuitive or reflective, has reference to the balance of the two sides of a scale. The idea is that the intellect is a scale whereby contradictory extremes of the self are to be determined and reason is also a modifier whereby extremes are to be smoothed out. So, it constitutes intellectual, diagnostic function and operational as well, and both spring from "conscience", "the noble".

Man is party to his affairs, hence being prone to biases is not entitled to make or unmake moral law at his own whim to his convenience and conscience, nor the moral values should be misused and abused for the sake of expediency. What transpired in Muhammad's religious experience at the Cave of Hira where he went to contemplate, into the world, was not merely the demolishing of the plurality of gods, nor a theoretical concept of God devoid of practical connotations, but a sustained and determined effort to achieve socioeconomic justice. The message required constituting a community for goodness and justice i.e., socio-political order "under God". This order would govern its affairs within the decrees, bounds and limits prescribed and ordained by God. Since, the smallness, petty-mindedness, and narrowness of man's vision comes his way making him on the one side hasty and panicky, self-defeating, self-pity and deflated hopeless when evil touches him, on the other all is well state renders him self-sufficient, self-righteousness, inflated with swaggering self-confidence and pride. No two contradictory extremes of the "self" from the right side and from the left side meet and contend for the dominance but the innermost whispers within him are known to Him Who is closer than his neck vein (50:16:18).

Hence, the Quran brings in host of verses and recurrently clarifies the operations of human mind to hammer home the issues of the "narrowness of human vision" and suggests how to overcome the maladies of this "smallness" to reorient man to his normative nature. "Man has been created out of hastiness" (21:37); "whenever his sustainer tries him by generosity and by letting him enjoy a life of ease, he says My Sustainer has been [justly] generous towards me...whenever He tries him by straitening his means of livelihood, he says My Sustainer has disgraced me. But nay, nay [O men, consider all that you do and fail to do:] you are not generous to the orphans, do not urge each other to feed the needy, devour the inheritance [of others] with devouring greed and love wealth with boundless love [what is your contribution to social security and social weal?] (89:15-20). The pride and despair are two sides of the same coin as both suck moral energy and the Quran condemns both attitudes with equal

intensity and vigor as vehemently as possible. Man, revels when circumstances favor him, so long as natural causes/processes work for him in his feelings of smugness and self-sufficiency he does not "see" God in these natural causes, nor ponder over the inner meanings of natural phenomena and is ordinarily apt to forget God. But when he falls on evil times, either loses hope or else he turns to God only in that hour, when natural causes fail him that he discovers God (24:39; 10:22; 29:65). A'd, Iram, Thamud, Pharaoh and others of their ilk all fell prey to the booby trap of their pride, self-sufficiency, and over-blown haughtiness (89:6-14). Despair too is another name of the loss of moral energy termed *Kufr* by the Quran and called hallmark of unbelievers (12:87; 29:23; 15:56; 39:53).

Hence, what happens in condition of pride and despair? Transcendental handhold slips from the hands of man not metaphorically but literally of which idol worship is a logical consequence which are mere "names" (53:23) an embodiment of individual [subjective] desires (25:43; 7:176; 18:28; 28:50 etc.), and once the transcendental anchoring dimension is lost these individual subjective desires tend to be objectified to become socialized desires – one tends to worship himself, his tribe, his society, his race or in modern parlance nationalism, secularism, Nazism, communism, socialism and materialistic democracy stay objects of worship- And he [Abraham] said [to his people], you have adopted these idols besides God as a way to socialize your mutual desires in this world; but on the Last Day you will disown each other and curse each other (29:25). To Abraham everything material or spiritual that turns away from God stays idol and he turns to Him leaving all but God and became archetype of monotheism, paradigm of hope and symbol of supreme obedience to God. The supreme spiritual bond of love with his wife Hagar and his son Ismail could not deter or waylay him from God. He went against agreed rules of history [against the law of sanctity of life was prepared to sacrifice his son, the idol in the heart or ego of his father] to make new history to change the course of mankind. Hence, after 18 months of Hijra along with promulgation of pilgrimage, jihad, and the change of qibla the Quran constituting community proclaims "[This is] the community of your forefather Abraham, who already named you Muslims before this; let the Messenger be a witness over you in this regard and let you be witness over mankind. So, establish prayers, pay zakat, and hold fast to God Who is your protector-what an excellent protector and what an excellent helper! (22:78)". Perhaps having model of Abraham in view commenting on 2:256 says Imam Jaafar "everything that recedes you from the study and observation of Truth (God) is your idol [Taghut i.e., powers of evil]⁶⁰".

Muhammad both the physical and spiritual progeny of Abraham was all intent to redeem the balance of history by weaning the people away from individually subjective desires or objectified socialized evils of scientific exploitative socio-economic mechanisms to put them back on the track of their normative nature and conduct. For this task the turmoil which set in Mecca was not over in Medina, since jihad i.e., permission of war, here goes without holds and bars, with wisdom and taqwa i.e., capability to discern between right and wrong, the overweening driving force and revelation and mutual consultation as

overriding principles of governing affairs. "It is interesting that all the descriptions of [mystic] experiences and visions belong to the Meccan period; in the Medina era we have a progressive unfolding of the religio-moral ideal, and the foundation of the social order for the newly instituted community but hardly any allusion to inner experiences.⁶¹" Hence, contrary to the mystic experience which most often is meant to dwell upon and enjoy for its own sake, prophetic consciousness is fundamentally meant to reorient history. Thanks to the exaggerated accounts of medieval Sufis and historians, Orientalists who defy Islam to be a revealed religion, believe that a period of incubation of religious ideas must have preceded the appearance of the Quran. They extend duration of retreat almost to 15 years from marriage with Khadija to the first revelation and think much less is known of this period. This time they attribute to the idea of planning a work as immense and masterly as the Quran. Thus, Muhammad would have to have lived by himself in meditation, only to appear with his message at a much later date. "In fact, the most authentic sources fix the date of this retreat at just a month before the revelation. This month was interrupted several times by visits to the warmth of the family for getting supplies and was preceded by a period of very clear dreams, afterwards confirmed precisely by realities. All these precursory signs occurred towards the age of forty, the age of revelation. It is still certain that 11/12th of this interval was spent in the environs, and under the eyes of his companions. And the Quran (10:16) bases the argument precisely on the long presence of the Prophet among his people, for a time long enough for everybody to be able to recognize his good character, his occupation, and his incapacity for such an enterprise.⁶²" He neither had expected to be a prophet (10:16; 42:24) nor he was a poet nor a philosopher except a realist sensitive personality whom orphanage had rendered perspicacious and precocious, and he was aware that prophethood was neither of his making nor he aspired for, rather it chose him out of the sheer mercy of God. Had he not been drawn to Hira by some supernatural precursory events of true dreams catapulting him to solitude of an intense meditation in the month of Ramadhan, the much supposed 15 years long self-imposed, self-decreed seclusion would have led him to a sort of world-negating attitude of Christian priest, Hindu sadhu or Buddhist monk, not to the most perfect and hard surviving religion of Islam based on nature and cognizant of human weaknesses and moral strengths.

Yet, it is not without reason that soon after the launch of Islam at Mecca the prayer assumes a form of full-fledged religion though was destined to be a full-blown obligatory duty and self-contained, self-subsistent and self-sustained social reform system after getting rudimentary breathing space at Medina, since the actual challenges which the Prophet flung at the outset to the side of Meccan society were not solely directed against their pantheon, he got their socio-economic structure in crosshairs and zeroed in on the panacea. The prayer in essence is an epitome of human equality and stands for an essential human egalitarianism, a sine qua non of applied monotheism. The Prophet intended this egalitarianism to be permeated in the all-facets of social life with the sweet will of his addressees but if the resistance comes, that will, and which it must, for exploitative forces seldom withdraw their social privileges and

vested interests without being subdued on the realm of power, he will go on war spree even if he perishes amidst relentless all-out endeavor for he was dead set to materialize the moral principle of essential human egalitarianism in socio-economic and political spheres of human life since to the Quran no smaller or bigger than this was akin to establish prayer or to be constant in prayer. Hence, be it preventing a servant of God from praying in the sanctuary of Ka'ba (96:9-13), or by implications in any era is to deny religion its role in shaping social life on the principle of human equality. It was same in view that at Medina after permission of war, promulgation of pilgrimage and change of Qibla the Quran almost simultaneously spelling out the attributes of believers [i.e., they place trust in their Sustainer, shun heinous sins, control their anger to readily forgive] says that they respond to [the Call] of their Sustainer and are constant in prayer, conduct their affairs on the principle of mutual consultation, and spend on others out of what We provide them as sustenance and who when tyranny afflicts them, defend themselves (42:37-30). Here, soon after "they respond to the call of their Sustainer" comes "they are constant in prayer" which points to their unrelenting commitment for striking egalitarian moral social order on earth. On the other side having accentuated their tendency of conducting socio-economic and political affairs on the principle of Shura the Quran instantaneously declares that "they spend out of what We provide them as sustenance" is not an arbitrary shift from one subject to another, while being self-consistent and scientific with an integral logical cohesion in treating subjects of concern be the hallmark of the Quran. Here, sustenance connotes the bestowal of power by God on those who persevere and persist for just moral order whereby they dispense social justice, and "when tyranny afflicts them, they defend themselves" insinuates that when there comes a challenge to this egalitarian thrust of their social reform from within or without, they are beware and capable enough to defend their social role. "They place trust in God" is not meant to be placid or retire from social endeavor but it points to the fact that though reforming the earth is to ascend steep uphill road (90:11), a Herculean task indeed, still this moral initiative is pregnant with all signs of success provided God being a co-worker (92:5-11) not let their power of discernment and correct judgment die and keeps the keenness of the sense of moral responsibility (Taqwa) alive even though the disbelievers be equipped with stratagems of crushing mountains out of existence (14:46).

The Prophet's Sitz im Leben portray enough that Islam was a movement of social justice and fair play hinged upon the grand ethical ideal of Tauhid in sharp contradistinction to pagan Mecca's materialism or Greek speculative and its heir Western scientific atheistic materialist metaphysics. For, however sincere, the materialistic philosophy of life might be, it is beyond its ken to devise laws equipped with moral safeguards against decay and destruction, responsive to socio-economic conditions which should lead to egalitarian society since it is the justice of heart that reins in greed instinct, not of reason that seeks loopholes to satiate acquisitiveness. This is why says Rumi "if you apply knowledge [only] to your body, it will become a poisonous snake; if you apply to the heart, it will become your friend". The two socio-economic ideologies of 20th century i.e., Capitalism and Communism based on materialistic metaphysics

have shown their bloody innards. The mercantile industrial West trampled the poor at home and abroad, pitched man against man in cruel competition of amassing wealth, led to pernicious class hatred and created islands of opulence in the sea of poverty. Communism remedied class hatred simply by elimination of upper classes. Capitalist camp proffered an ideology of “freedom” against communist totalitarianism, but that freedom in essence is that poor man is free to go to the gallows to kill himself and the capitalist is free to add to his millions. The irony of Adam Smith’s laissez fair economy is that while the profit is private losses are public. However, it was British economist Maynard Keynes who advocated the central role of governments in public expenditure to create full employment. It was to assuage the extremes of laissez fair economy which it did in Roosevelt’s policy of “Big Deal.” The centrality of government role in economy and finance is a key to create somewhat just socioeconomic conditions this is because some Muslim modernists interpret Islam’s concept of fiscal system and economic justice in terms of Keynesian doctrine. However, be it Islamic socialism or allegiance to Keynesian formula, the import of exotic policies and methodologies to serve the native objectives is nothing but a camouflaged apologetics. Communism nationalized all capital on the rigged premise that it is “the congealed labor” of past generations, while to their own view transcendental values are a farce and man is nothing more than a matter, then everything including man is product of the labor of past generations, this logical absurdity rendered man to be nationalized as well on whose name the state nationalized wealth. Its classical maxim was “from each according to his capacity and to each according to his need”, but soon a realization dawned that without profit motive workers cannot be sufficiently geared to work and production. Communism first termed banking interest a cruel form of exploitation when people turned to saving money and crisis of poor investment loomed large people were incentivized to invest on 13 percent interest rate. The modern world boasts of its achievement of the abolition of slavery institution yet classical and neo-colonialism extended the scope of slavery from some people, tribes and races to nations and communities. Stumbling to and fro had been, is and will remain the perennial lot of materialistic philosophies of life.

The Quran says “the earth belongs to God (al-ardh-u- lillah) which means that ownership in an absolute sense belongs to God alone, that man holds what he possesses as a “trust” or “owns” it in a derivative sense, and that all men are equally entitled to benefit from what God has created. “God is the Sustainer of the entire world”, the very opening verse of the Quran (1:1) points to this moral principle. A whole host of the key Quranic verses converge on the point to be made “God has rendered submissive for you that which is in the earth and that which is in the heaven (45:13; also see 45:12; 14:32-33; 16:12 and 14; 22:65; 29:61; 31:20; 31:29; 35:13; 39:5 etc.)” The classical Muslim modernists had taken these verses to mean that God had created all the treasures of nature for the sake of man. Hence, to the Quran, learning the natural sciences to unravel the mysteries of the universe to benefit from the fruits of the earth and nature, or the cultivation of knowledge and research is an *Ibada*, a fundamental service to God. Thus, the be-all-and-end-all of man [i.e., the bearer of Trust (33:72)] is “to discover the laws of, and

thus get mastery over, nature- or in the Quranic terminology, “to know the names of all things”- and then use this mastery, under the human moral initiative, to create a good world order.⁶³” The Quran says nothing more than that Man has to make conscious use of nature that surrounds him and is within him.

However, in some Middle Eastern, African and Indian Muslim scholars of socialist exposition, there comes a certain shift of emphasis and nuances in interpretation of the said verses. “God it is who has made for you all that is in the earth”. Whereas in the earlier liberal modernist commentaries exploitability of the resources and fruits of earth and nature was a fulcrum “God has made submissive i.e., exploitable, for man all that is in the earth, in the socialist exegesis stress falls upon the words “for all of you,” it is interesting, grammatically both constructions are true. Socialists curiously proceed and vet their argument on much warranted premises, amidst call for jihad owing to meagre resources people asked the Prophet how much they should contribute? The Quran replied “al-afw” (2:229) i.e., “everything over and above your basic needs”; Omar declared all the conquered lands of Iraq, Syria, and Egypt to be public property; a hadith narrates “you all commonly share three things: water, fire and grass”; in Islamic law, all mineral wealth is declared to be national property. From these instances they infer a principle that common utility resources cannot be restricted to private owners but may be made public property. Hence, all basic industries may be nationalized if necessary.

It was in this backdrop that whether rode on the upsurge of Maoist China’s socialist ideas or Lenin’s Russia’s Communism or truly inspired by Islam, Z.A Bhutto an opportunist to the core, declared Islamic socialism as economic ideology in his party’s election manifesto, and hailed election result as “a great victory of Islam⁶⁴”, and though as an architect of 1973’s constitution of Pakistan, an orthodox reaction failed him to put the word “Islamic socialism” in the constitution, the term explicitly used both by Jinnah and Liaqat Ali Khan (which had actually been used by the pioneer of Muslim modernism, Jamal al-Din Afghani in Istanbul in the 1890’s) nevertheless he out-manuevered the conservative ulema by tinkering the constitution with socialist ideals or tweaking it to Islamic socialism. The penultimate clause of the Preamble of the constitution reads people of Pakistan have resolved “to protect our national and political unity and solidarity by creating an egalitarian society through a **new order**.” Here the term “new order” which shows undesirability of the traditional order perhaps points to “Islamic socialism”, a term abhorred by the orthodoxy, conspicuous by its absence yet in spirit insinuates its presence. Article 3 guarantees the state will ensure the elimination of all forms of exploitation with a principle laid down in article 38 (a), state shall raise the standard of living of all the people by preventing the concentration of wealth and means of production and distribution in the hands of a few...and by ensuring equitable adjustment of rights between employers and employees, and landlords and tenants. The previous constitutions spoke against **undue** concentration of wealth but here the “concentration of wealth” per se is regarded as an anomaly, perhaps as being deterrent to social weal, which is unequivocally discouraged by the Quran and community is asked to redeem the balance if it

tilts to a few (59:7). The words “means of production and distribution” are entirely new which firstly points that **economic base** will be made as broad as possible, secondly when public interest so demands, any industry, service, or source of production or distribution may be nationalized. Article 18 (c) puts “nothing shall prevent “the carrying on, by the Federal Government or a Provincial Government, or by a corporation controlled by any such government, of any trade, business, industry or service, to the exclusion, complete or partial, of other persons.” Article 253 (b) authorizes the Parliament to enact such nationalization. However, the crescendo of all this is reached in Article 253 (a), according to which “Parliament may by law prescribe the maximum limits as to property, or any class thereof which may be owned, held, possessed, or controlled by any person.” This capital provision, in fact collapses the extreme positions of both the right and the left into middle, gold median and accepts the basic principle of social justice i.e., the interference by the state in private wealth, should it become detrimental to the interests of the society, which is undoubtedly a feat par excellence.

Yet, organization of zakat and elimination of Riba appear in the Principles of Policy in Articles 2(c) and 38 (f) respectively, and so isolated is their character as if they had little to do with positive economic propositions and policies. The Quran envisages zakat as a comprehensive tax for all the needs of society as well as social welfare. “The Quranic verse (9:60) that lays out the heads of the expenditure of zakat covers all the departments and activities of a modern welfare state: (1) the poor and the needy; (2) the civil service (literally, tax collectors; but then tax collectors were in the Prophet’s days the only civil service, since his government was a simple, informal, and undifferentiated form of government); (3) diplomatic expenditure “to win goodwill” for Islam; (4) to free Muslim war captives; (5) to relieve the chronic debts of people who cannot relieve themselves from debt; (6) expenditure “in the path of Allah”, a phrase which in the Quran means both jihad, i.e., defense and expenditure on social wealth, for example, health and education etc., ; and, finally, (7) “facilitating travel”, i.e., communications expenditures.⁶⁵ However, it was in later Muslim history under dictatorial rule other taxes appeared without being integrated into zakat and as the social institutions of prayer and zakat organically involving each other stand for socio-economic justice and essential egalitarianism which defy dictatorship and its allied evils, hence in interests of the dynastic rule both these institutions ceased to be operative in proper letter and spirit envisioned by the Quran. Western domination of the Muslim world drove last nail in the coffin of zakat institution which in turn, from a blueprint for policies of social justice turned into a mere private and voluntary charity.

Zakat, in fact is a principle of interfere in private property for social security and welfare. “Our legal textbooks later distorted this institution and considered it only a pious act- like the saying of prayers- of giving charity to the poor. And following them, Western scholars also generally translate zakat as a “poor-tax”, or “alms”⁶⁶. For the Quran at least, it is a tax to be spent not only on the welfare of the poor, but on a multitude of other purposes like education, jihad, on facilitating better

communications and even “winning the opponent’s hearts”. “How could such an institution, conceived in this comprehensive sense of dire realism, be mere charity? ... this obviously does not mean and cannot mean that you take the money from the rich and simply spill it over the unearning members of the community who are otherwise capable of earning. To the Quran, only those people were to benefit from it who were “weaklings”. In the tribal situation of those days, this meant either disabled persons or real economic out-costs. For the rest, people have to be enabled to earn, they have to be made to earn.⁶⁷” Attacking the hidebound attitude of clergy, Communists ridicule and contend that zakat presupposes the existence of a poor class, but real socialism aims at eliminating such a class from society; therefore, Islamic socialism can never be true socialism. Traditional view of zakat lends credence to the Marxist allegation since no socialist commentator has been bold enough to suggest that zakat be construed not just as a particular tax with specified percentages as laid down by the Prophet (for his own time, no doubt) but as a general principle of interference in private wealth in the larger interests of social welfare and social justice, which it really appears to be. Shah Wali Allah terms such quantifications to be permanent in Divine Schema⁶⁸(Law of Amr) just like the freezing point of water but when socioeconomic conditions are generally subject to change, when means of production change at the center of change lies the problem of economic reconstruction and economic justice, hence unconditional support of specific quantified action defeats the very objective of the Quran and distorts the very efficacy of zakat institution. Does the constitutional law of the Quran bar to impose zakat tax on investment money or is the lapse of a year on accumulated wealth necessary for zakat tax? Medieval lawyers of Islam created fuss on such issues and succumbed to legal fictions (Kitab al-Heela) whenever stark realities of life seized them.

The irony is that while rightists hanker for restoration of zakat to its proper place, they are inimical to its rationalization. This renders the positive economic enunciations of the Constitution purely secular putting zakat either on the backburner or in an isolated corner. Then, capitalist either by paying meager amount of zakat eases his conscience to evade tax or the one who pays secular tax evades zakat. This is the dilemma of interpreting religion on bound basis. Keeping zakat, a private charity suits clergy since thanks to kitab al-hila a businessman while pays pennies to them evades pounds of secular tax.

As for Riba, usually translated in Urdu by the word “Sud”, which is of Persian origin and literally means “profit” and its antonym being ziyān, is a source of much confusion linguistically as well as historically. Yet what is certain “Sud” is not synonymous with the Quranic term Riba, but is synonymous with Arabic word Riba⁶⁹. It was a system of usurious exploitation in the Prophet’s Arabia. The Quran after a series of serious exhortation banned it altogether. However, the subject is so replete with confusions and misperceptions that all fuqaha agree that the issue fall in two distinct categories i.e., Riba al-Quran and Riba al-Hadith. A tradition attributed to Omar says “the last verse to be sent down was that on Riba, but God’s messenger was taken away without having expounded it to us, so the earlier death of the Prophet left

Riba and Kalala unsettled⁷⁰. But, Islam which primarily appeared in moral necessity of destroying the corrupt socio-economic structures of the world, which at the very outset flung the challenge of socio-economic justice on the side of Meccan oligarchy, who without an iota of doubt at the very beginning of the career of Islam realized that the Message stands in sharp need of the assumption of political power to push its plan through, how it could afford to leave Riba, the dire reality and feature of mercantile Mecca, in hazy obscure and ambiguous terms. Has it not with its commencement in its very earlier pronouncements took the exploitative, fraudulent commercial malpractices of the Meccan aristocracy in its crosshairs zeroing in on the plight of those getting short ends of the stick? Hypocritical and farcical are the prayers not accompanied by spending on the poor (107:1-7).

The communities of Ad, Thamud, Pharaoh and much whom no one knows except God are cited as ones who perished sheer out of injustices committed by them, and when an appointed term approached them neither heaven nor earth wept for them. The Quran addresses the situation with an idea of judgement- “a judgement which not only will occur on a distant and final Day of Judgement but one which occurs continuously in history upon nations, and which is the inevitable and imminent consequence of the collective evil existing in a society. It is through this sense of the imminence of judgement which seized the Prophet so alarmingly that the Quran ceaselessly brings in accounts of the rise and downfall of earlier peoples. The Meccans are warned that if they do nothing to relieve the situation, they will go down the same way as other peoples have done since the “conduct of God in history is inalterable (17:17)⁷¹”. The Quran’s idea of “being unjust to oneself [zulm al-nafs],” so that individuals and particularly societies are eventually destroyed, really means destruction of the right to exist in a social and historical context. When the Quran talks about the death of individuals like Pharaoh and Korah, it is basically talking about the self-destructiveness of a way of life, of a society, of a type of civilization.⁷²”

It is economic exploitation and disparity that penetrates in all facets of social sphere inspiring cruel competitive acquisitiveness it leads to pernicious class struggle and system and when apogee is reached its fuller culmination into an unswerving unjust order finally matures its self-destructiveness. According to socialist commentators the Quran’s metaphorical Story of Abel and Cane, portrays Abel to be a representative of cattle economy when the land was a shared property and Cane a representative of agricultural economy when sense of possession dawned on man and he lost the Garden i.e., state of happy bliss. Abel died issueless and we all are the offspring of Cane. Hence, Pharaoh, Korah and Haman are the monopolist troika of Cane order, a permanent feature of human history and Revelation (Din) a movement to divest them of their special exploitative political, capitalistic, and religious prerogatives. Man instinctively yearns for “paradise lost”, the prophets and their movements are nothing but an endeavor to restore Abel order.

Riba which distorts socio-economic equilibrium of society is a key characteristic of Cane order. This is why in early Meccan

Sura al-Rum the Quran says “and whatever you invest by way of Riba so that it may increase upon people’s wealth, increases not with God, but what you give by way of Zakat seeking the pleasure of God, these-they receive recompense manifold (30:39). The opening verses of the Sura point to the defeat of Romans at the hand of Persians in the neighboring lands i.e., Syria and Palestine in 611 A.C. (i.e., the first year of the Prophet’s mission) which reaches its culmination with the fall of Constantinople in 614 A.C. i.e., year 4 of Prophet’s mission. Thus, condemnation of Riba in so early a revelation must not be surprising enough, rather the absence of such early condemnation could have not only been surprising but also contrary to the wisdom of the Quran since it is centrally concerned to plant an excellent essential egalitarian economic system in the fertile soil of monotheism based on active goodwill and mutual cooperation. When unethical commercial practices of the Meccans like cheating in weight and measurement, profiteering and stinginess of the rich, their acquisitiveness are condemned in the worst possible terms how is it possible then that the Quran would have failed to condemn an economic evil like Riba? What is true is that here it passes only a moral stricture on Riba, yet its inner consistency and logical cohesion portrays enough that once Islam gets political power it is all intent to eradicate this evil.

It is at Medina on assuming political authority Islam categorically prohibits Riba “...do not consume Riba with continued redoubling (3:130) and its condemnation reaches its crescendo when Riba is declared to be a war against God and His Apostle (2:274-280). These are the last of the verses prohibiting Riba but unfortunately on some misstated facts were considered to be last of all the Quranic verses which context, logic and history defy. Omar, who himself terms “today I have perfected your religious law ... (5:3) to be the last verse revealed on the day of Arafah during the Last Pilgrimage of the Prophet, is attributed to say prohibition of Riba came at the end of the Quran and since the Prophet did not live long enough to spell out fully as to what were the constituent elements of Riba we should therefore , not only avoid Riba but also **ribah** (doubtful transactions). Instead of judging the veracity of the statement perhaps hair-splitting legal endeavors were focused on Ribah so much so that Abu Hanifa while waiting for funeral prayer of someone refuses to stay in shadow of a wall belonging to on his debtor lest this benefit may count as Riba. If Riba verses are last ones how perfection of religious law was possible before banning Riba. “And for the evil doing of the Jews, We did forbid them certain good things that were permitted to them, and for their barring many people from God’s way, and for their taking Riba, which was prohibited to them, and for consuming the wealth of the people with falsehood; and, We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a dire chastisement (4:160-161). Now, the criticism of the Jews of taking Riba was only possible and consistent after Riba had been eliminated from the Muslim society itself, otherwise what would deter the Jews from tu quoque. But the expulsion of Banu Qurayza, the last tribe of Jews from Medina occurred in 5th year of Hijra after Battle of Trench. Therefore, Riba prohibition for Muslims must have ante-dated 5 A.H to qualify their accusation of the Jews for Riba. How could Quran reform a Mammon-worshipping society

without squarely addressing the issue of Riba in crystal clear terms and how the Prophet could leave the issue unsettled without adequately explained due to shortage of time. Historical evidence, numerous instances, logic and consistency all converge on the point that the Quran had treated the issue of Riba in its entirety well-nigh in 4th year of Hira or before the end of 5 A.H. Be it the Sufis, theologians or law experts when something is attributed to Omar, logic, mind and the Quran cease to exist as a source of guidance. To qualify the concocted tradition related to Omar, Tabari and classical commentators of the Quran define word Riba in Meccan Sura (30:39) as *hadiyah* (gift), then bring in a fictitious debate of Halal Riba and Haram Riba supporting the argument with an inflated Hadith literature.

So dire and concrete issue of real life Riba was that the Quran could hardly afford its dubious or conjectural account. “Woe betides every obstinate and slanderous person who has amassed wealth is going to bestow eternal life upon him? (104:1-3). Vying with one another in amassing wealth is your sole preoccupation [i.e., to the neglect of all higher values] until you visit your graves (102:1-3). “they know well the externalities of this material life but heedless of the higher ends (30:7); “Material life is his sole end”(53:30); “this attitude strayed their efforts and all their deeds came to naught (18:104); “those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend them in the “Path of Allah”, give them good tiding of a tortuous punishment, Keep in mind the Day when these [materials] will be heated in the furnace of hell and their faces and backs will be branded with them (9:24)”. This evidence would tend to confirm the view that Riba was used in business undertakings, those people who hoarded money and did not circulate it among the society either through trade or through welfare spending, invested it only in usury in order to hoard more money. This laid the chief basis for Islamic law against hoarding cash and provided religious inspiration for opulent commerce in the Muslim world during Middle Ages as al-Biruni states “to hoard gold and silver and remove them from circulation was a crime against society⁷³”. However, in above verses, the Quran regards the amassing of wealth to be per se the absolute good and the highest end, as a false conduct but if the pursuit of wealth is accompanied by fairness and spending on the poor it terms the same “*khair*”, “*fadhil*” the terms which are otherwise specific to moral goodness and spiritual uplift hardly attributed to material things except money. But Sufi asceticism of the early period which developed in reaction to the aggrandizement, extravagance and luxurious lifestyle of the Muslims resulted from astonishingly swift conquests and their material outcomes, was bound in the long run to refute worldly life lock, stock, and barrel, these very verses of the Quran were harnessed for world denying tendencies, in the name of an “other-worldly spiritualism”.

However, the Quran’s scientific treatment of Riba is not oblivious of man’s nature. Man is prone to the instinct of self-aggrandizement which needs moderation rather than elimination. So, the Quran presents doubling and redoubling [اضعافا مضاعفا] of principle capital to be the **ratio legis** [illat-e-hukm] of the prohibition of Riba. So intricate and complex was the Riba system of the Prophet’s Arabia with its minutiae details, there was no other option for the Quran than to extricate it with

all allied minor evils from the fabric of the nascent community of Islam, since a small flexibility in this regard could revert them to previous practices. Ideally the same must be the goalpost of community’s moral economic life for the preservation of egalitarian socio-economic system that ensures social equilibrium is the aim of the Quran.

Islamic tradition is divided on the definition of Riba. Majority pandering to the linguistic use of the word plus to avoid Ribah (doubt) on the cost of the Quranic term Riba reached conclusion that “every loan from which some profit accrues is Riba”. Abu Bakr Al-Jassas (d.370 A.H) in his legal commentary *Ahkam al-Quran* puts “words which have passed into the terminology of sharia from the language [of Arabs] so that they have lost the meaning for which they had been originally coined, i.e., *salat* (prayer), *Som* [fasting], *zakat* [welfare tax], require restatement and precise definition⁷⁴”. The precaution which surrounds 4th century jurist and commentator al-Jassas does not bother to 14th century ulema who interpret Riba in linguistic sense. *Sahih* of Muslim says, “any excess at the time of repayment of loan is not merely Riba but constitutes “*husn al-aada*,” a good way of fulfilling a contract. The Prophet gave excellent camel for a young loaned camel saying the best is he who discharges his debt with something better⁷⁵. The Prophet owed some money from Jabir, at the time of repayment he added in excess of the principle borrowed⁷⁶. When Riba is such a heinous crime that except it no other major sin invokes threat of war from God and Apostle, does it not deserve to be explained in scientific terms? Allama Ibn Qayyim toeing Ahmad b. Hanbal instead of linguistic use of the term takes ratio legis of the Quran i.e., doubling and redoubling of the principle loaned money to be the primary concern which pitched tribes against tribes, resulted in slavery of tribes, which ruined homes, emptied the human hearts of fellow-feeling, created severe economic disequilibrium in society, blocked circulation of money to the detriment of social weal, made hoarders and profiteers leeches swollen with the blood of reduced to bloodless.

Question arises whether any Riba transaction wherefrom both creditor and debtor benefits fall in category of the Quranic Riba. Whether the Quran except the exploitation of debtor has any added personal grudge against creditor. Is an Islamic state bound to wage war against the creditor who loans money on un-exploitative terms of interest? These questions lend support to the theses of difference between usury [Riba of the Quran] and interest. The sociological and historical background is a “must” and disentangling the normative from the historical is an integral “must” to render the Riba of the Quran intelligible. Against this backdrop says Shah Wali Allah “in pre-Islamic Arabia, unending enmity and wars between different tribes and clans due to usury, prompted the Quran to make it illegal.” ... He condemned usury on economic grounds. He pleaded that the lust to become rich through usury undermined interest in agriculture, crafts, and other productive professions. People were tempted to enrich themselves by realizing high rates of compound interest. However, the Shah did not totally forbid the taking or giving of loans on interest but asserted that it was the duty of the authority enforcing sharia to set a limit to the interest rate.⁷⁷ Mufti Abdhul entertains same view in his *al-Manar* “when the original sum

was loaned. It was loaned not free, but on a certain percentage which was relatively small. But this term was not called Riba, a term used exclusively for doubling and redoubling the original sum for the debtor's failure to clear the debt within a stipulated time⁷⁸". This is because Sheikh Abduh, Sheikh Shaltut, Rector of al-Azhar, Dr. Hamidullah and some other Indian scholars attempted to legalize certain forms of interest on money advanced for commercial and productive purposes. But conservatives on account of risk involved justify the profit of sleeping partner in madarba while ignore banks also take risk though scientifically calculated and require bailout packages in case of huge loss.

However, the be-all-and-end-all of the Quran is to maintain socio-economic equilibrium of the society. any exploitative economic activity that disturbs the economic balance is morally wrong though it does not come in the purview of juristic term Riba but when it should create distortions and challenge the economic viability of the society it is equivalent of waging war against God and His Apostle. The high moral goalpost of the community demands "every forbidden commercial practice which one way or the other way harms socio-economic stability of the society should be deemed as Riba⁷⁹" but the standards of waging war against such culprits are subject to socioeconomic conditions obtaining, and must be the corporate scientific view of social scientists, economists, and ethicists. But the irony is that the Constitution of Pakistan treats Riba like Zakat in isolated corner perhaps as a religious myth rather than a subject of positive economics with a hollow assertion that "state shall eliminate Riba as early as possible". The military Dictator Ayub Khan had a temerity to proclaim "Islamic socialism" to be the goal of state policies in his Introduction to the Guidelines of the Third Five Year Plan and a grit to interpret Riba as usury (1964 edition, Article 18); but Z.A Bhutto the first elected prime minister of Pakistan who won elections on the slogan of "Islamic socialism" capitulates to the right and so easily deterred to put or make any reference to this orphan phrase "Islamic Socialism" and fails to mark difference between usury and interest in the Constitution. Thanks to "Repugnancy Clause", the right is over-satisfied that no law repugnant to the Quran and Sunnah shall be enacted while the secular Czars have been given a carte blanche to enact secular laws though Islamicity of law demands it should be not only not repugnant to Sharia it must be duly derived from the world view of Islam as well. The Clause is fundamentally a sweet pill for the self-oblivious right whom history had rendered secular long before the all-powerful elite was molded in the furnace of secular education system. Thus, so far as the secularity of zakat and Riba is concerned both differ in epistemes and forms rather than substance.

All world religions to some extent address the problem of human material misery but no other religion except Islam made it a focal point of its interest. It was because of the conditions of commercial Mecca in which it took birth that Islam linked human material well-being organically to its central creed of monotheism wherefrom issues forth all details of socio-economic justice. Thus, the impulse of economic justice seemed so embedded in Islam's nature, that the Quran not only treats it at length as vehemently as possible at its initial career in Meccan

milieu, but it grew stronger and stronger in intensity all along its Meccan phase and becomes the most transient leitmotif, in fact the problem of life and death at Medina soon after Islam attains elementary power there. Indeed, socio-economic equilibrium and social security of a society is so dearest to Islam that it goes extra mile to ensure the same that along-with economic justice it exhorts Ihsan i.e., kindness and generosity towards fellow-being (16:90), something more than due since it lay at the roots of human nature itself that the exigencies of the justness of the heart demand more than the justness of the mind, this is because the Quran duly addresses both the heart's intelligence and analytical intelligence in their respective spheres as Pascal rightly says "the reason does not know the reasons of heart". Abu Lubaba, the one of his Companions was held in great esteem by the Prophet, so much so that he left him in charge of Medina when he had left for the first Badr expedition. Sometime later a young orphan came to Muhammad to complain that Abu Lubaba had taken from him a palm tree that had long been his. On Prophet's investigation, the tree turned to be Abu Lubaba's, yet Muhammad in privately asked him, justice having now been rendered, to give the tree to the young orphan, for whom it was so important. Abu Lubaba went to such lengths to assert his right of ownership that he refused adamantly. This obsession veiled his heart and compassion. "Revelation was to recall, on both individual and collective levels, the singular nature of the spiritual elevation that makes it possible to reach beyond the consciousness of justice, that demands right, to the excellence of the heart, that offers forgiveness, or gives people more than their due: "God commands justice and excellence (16:90)⁸⁰".

The Quran is so replete with this added justness of the heart both at Mecca and Medina that it leaves no stone unturned to breathe this spirit of Ihsan in the believers. For the backdrop of socio-economic structures against which Islam appeared, makes this moral imperative an issue of first-rate concern. A lengthy Medinan Passage says "the people who expend in God's path, their likeness is a single seed which grows seven ears, each of which has a hundred grains- and God multiplies farther for whomever He wills: His knowledge is boundless. The people who expend in God's path and do not follow it up with counting their favors [since it is their duty to expend] and with harm, their reward is with their Lord, and they have nothing to fear, nor they shall come to grief. A word of kindness and forgiveness is better than a payment of charity which is followed by harm, and God is independent [he does not become beneficiary of charity, but in the final analysis, the giver himself] and forbearing. O you who believe! Do not set a naught your welfare- spending by counting your favors and doing harm-like the one who spends his wealth for show while he does not believe in Allah and the Last Day. His likeness is a rock which is covered by earth: suddenly torrential rains strike it and leave the rock bare [upon which nothing can be shown] depriving its cultivators of the results of their efforts-God does not guide disbelieving people. The likeness of those who spend their wealth seeking God's pleasure [in order to establish credit with God, and with a conviction from within themselves, is a garden grown] on a high ground which, if heavy rains fall upon it, gives double yield, but if rains do not fall upon it, dew [is sufficient for it- since it is one high ground]- and God knows well what you do. Would any one

of you like that he should possess a fruit garden of palms and grapes in which water streams flow; he has all kinds of fruits; but when he becomes old while his children are still weak, the garden is struck by whirlwinds mixed by lightening fire and it is all burnt down. Even so does God make clear to you His signs, perchance you may reflect, O you who believe! Give up for welfare the better parts of your earnings and of your produce from the land; do not give that portion [thereof] which is unworthy-such as you yourself will not take except at cheap price, and you should know that God is independent and deserving of praise. It is Satan who whispers poverty, and he commands you to commit obscenity.; God [on the contrary] promises you His forgiveness and His bounty [i.e., prosperity through investment in social welfare] and God has limitless knowledge [i.e., while you tend to be shortsightedness and think such expenditure is going to impoverish you]. God gives wisdom to whom He wills and whoever is given wisdom [i.e., instead of short-sightedness] he has been given a great good, but only people endowed with reason think so. Whatever you spend or make a vow [to spend], God knows it and the unjust will find no quarter. It is good if you give your welfare contributions openly, but it is still better if you give them secretly to the needy; this will cover your lapses while God [in any case] knows what you do. O Prophet! It is not up to you to guide people; it is God who guides whomsoever he wills- and whatever wealth you spend it is for your own good that you do, that is, the wealth you spend for God's pleasure only, and whatever wealth you spend, you shall be fully requited – no injustice will come to you. [worthy of expenditure] are those who could not march forth [to earn wealth] and were prevented from participating in jihad: a person ignorant [of their circumstances] thinks they are well off because they do not stick around begging; but you can find them out from their facial expressions- whatever you spend [on these people] God knows it...those who devour usury shall not rise except like one who has been touched by the devil. This is because they say that usury is just like [any other] business, while God has made business lawful and has prohibited usury. Thus, whosoever, when admonition from his Lord has come to him, desists, his past [usurious gains] will be considered by bygone and his affair is trusted to God; but whosoever returns [to usury], they are people of hellfire wherein they shall abide. God destroys usurious gains but makes welfare expenditure prosper, and He does not like a disbeliever who persists in wrongdoing. Indeed, those who believe and do good deeds, establish prayers and pay up zakat, shall have their requital with their Lord and they have nothing to fear, nor shall they come to grief. O you who believe! Fear God [do not act precipitously against His laws] and give up whatever remains of your usurious claims if you are believers. But if you do not do so, this is an ultimatum of war [against you] from God and His Apostle. If, however, you desist, then you may claim back your [loaned] capital-you will thus neither do wrong nor will be wronged. If [your debtor] is in strained circumstances, give him respite till his financial conditions [sufficiently] improves; yet it is better for you if you waive [your claims for the return of the loaned capital- since you have already consumed so much wealth through usury], if you would know the truth (2:261-280)".

Thus, the Quran's holistic treatment of the prevailing fiscal disorder, delineation of economic moral principles and general directives need not enough perspicacity to discern that the ideal moral situation towards which society is supposed to move is that of "al-afw" (2:219), i.e., "everything over and above one's basic needs" deserves to be contributed to God's cause i.e., social wealth. On this principle the business genius Abu al-Rahman bin Auf and others not only kept their wealth ever on the disposal of social weal but offered to give away all their wealth for charity and welfare, the Prophet prohibited them from this on the ground that they and their children have the right to enjoy their property. However, their gesture depicts that ownership in an absolute sense belongs to God alone, that man holds what he possesses as a "trust" or "owns" it in a derivative sense, and that all men are equally entitled to benefit from what God has created. The socialist commentators on this premise hold "the ownership of God means ownership of society as a whole. Hence, any individual who works on a part of this property, he works only "on behalf of the community", not on his own behalf. The socialists, by implication extend the scope of their argument even to the natural abilities and expertise of an individual and term them communal property saying whatever natural abilities a person has, he has to exercise them for the community of which he is a member, and he cannot deem himself to be the exclusive possessor of these abilities⁸¹. This argument holds water as the Quran says ... whenever you give or take credit for a stated term, set it down in writing. And let a scribe write it down equitably between you; and no scribe shall refuse to write for God has taught him (2:282). Thus, be it Joseph's expertise in interpreting dreams (12:37), of David in making coats of mail (21:80), or of scribes to write down documents of agreements, wills etc. (2:282), all knowledge-intellectual, scientific, or intuitive- comes from God. When, to the Quran, the scribes are asked not to deny their writing skill from social utility for God has taught them how to write [i.e., equipped man with faculty of creative knowledge which unfolds in differing human pursuits for knowledge (92:4)], by implication, we may draw principle that of whatever ability, skill or knowledge an individual is bestowed with, he possesses as a "trust", that must be exercised for the larger interests of society rather than the exclusive property of individual to the exclusion of society. At last, what were the basis of Abu Dhar al-Ghaffari's stand against the huge accumulation of wealth in private hands, during the reigns of Third Caliph Uthman, and why did he condemn private wealth as categorically un-Islamic, why did he suggest the pooling of all private wealth for redistribution on equitable terms? It is quite possible had there not been any fear of some major protest he would never have been exiled from Medina. He fell prey to the state's McCarthyism though he spoke from the standpoint of the Quran and the Prophet. Had he been listened would the trajectory of Islam same as transpired?

The dire realism of the Quran treats its subject-matter both on moral and legal planes. Its legal enactments were subject to the *Sitz im Leben* i.e., psychological, sociological, and historical conditions it was addressing to, while its moral vector was pointing to ideal moral conditions society was intended to aspire for, or relentlessly endeavor to reach that destiny. If the social conscience sooner reaches the desired moral goalposts where all

the sources of earth and abilities of all individuals are deemed to be the shared property and heritage of the community at large, the Quran, we think, has not only no qualms with this but indeed gently prods to such moral destiny where its ideal of Applied monotheism i.e., One-God-one-mankind, in some vital sense fructify for which the Quran actuates and fecundates the souls. "Although Islam calls some of these levies Zakat and others Sadaqat, and praises those who pay them...this is only in order to make it [psychologically] easier for them to pay these; otherwise, in any case they are compulsory levies collected by the state⁸²". More importantly "Islam has named expenditures for zakat, which comprehend all the areas of individual and collective (private and public) importance of both the state and religion (9:60).⁸³"

However, such a state of affairs wherein all sources of earth and individual expertise be a shared social wealth, may lead to the situation where a whole lot of workless parasites might throb on the labors of earning members of the community. It indeed happened when large swathes of conquered lands were brought into the political domain of Islam and for a long-time state managed stipends for its people, it in turn changed the attitude towards work, hence in classical theological and hermeneutical debates we see they overwhelmingly interpreted works in the sense of morally good and pious acts but seldom in economic sense or per se a value. The Quran is replete with invitation to work and initiatives including both good acts and labor in economic sense. The Arabic term 'amal' means both. The Quran talks of works and their just requital. "Man shall not get but that which he endeavors for (53:40)". Work in all its manifestations is a moral initiative in terms of capital, labor, and intellect and is in an ultimate term a contribution to social insurance and security. Work unfolds man unto himself. Amidst struggle confrontation with obstacles divulges the mysteries of fate and laws of nature. For, "purpose of causal processes is to make man endeavor whereby he both realizes his own capacities and truly appreciates the meaning of God for the world⁸⁴". Moreover, "it is essential for the economic welfare of society that no one, so far as possible, should remain idle, making no contribution to the welfare of society. The drain on the state treasury or on people's property caused by such people is detrimental to state economy as well as to the welfare of society and is not only uneconomical but un-ethical⁸⁵". Ethical conduct is which provides an effective means for the survival, preservation and welfare of society and its members, and is conducive to the progressive life that human beings are destined to attain.⁸⁶ To Wali Allah, it is in nature of things when any specie exhausts its potentials in religious idiom "Supernal Plenum", in natural or scientific idiom "Nature" bestows new set of potentials (taqdeer, qaddara) on it⁸⁷. Thus, 'amal' "work" is essential as it in fundamental terms leads ever to new vistas of power [on nature], peace [remove contradictions], progress and prosperity [adds to wealth], and last but not least ensures human evolution. Socio-cultural-political development (irtifaq) of society rests on the works and labors of its members. When they fell prey to moral inertia and intellectual stupor socio-political development comes to a halt and invites aggression from any neighboring civilization. Hence, unceasing struggle not only ensures evolution but defense as well.

Thus, as Islam appeared in the backdrop of fiscal disorder not only of commercial Mecca but of Persian and Byzantium empires or of the world at large (7:157), for it distributive justice was a matter of life and death since it is economic sphere which so easily disturbs the socio-economic balance of society therefor the Quran could not leave the matter of distribution of wealth to the easy conscience and sweet will of the people without furnishing details. The Quran's view on distribution of wealth, to Fazlur Rahman, is reducible to two basic principles and be it the banning of usury or the law of zakat and Sadaqat come under these two principles and stand for essential economic egalitarianism on the principle of human equality. The first fundamental principle is that no one shall get more or less than what is proportionate to his input either in terms of capital or labor or intellectual prowess. The Quran very clearly says "Woe betide those who take more than they give (83:1)," further puts "do not curtail or diminish (bakhsh) what is due to other people (7:85; 26:183). It applies to all physical possessions as well as to moral and social rights. "And [in all your dealings] give full measure and weight (6:152), ordains all social behaviors, norms and gestures be conducted based on human equality. No capitalist, feudal, landlord, leader i.e., religious/political is entitled to special privilege or prerogative since Islam's egalitarian principle condemns elitism whatsoever. Since more often elitism tends to grab the sources and wealth of the less privileged, the Quran says "Do not consume the wealth of others by wrongful means (2:188; 4:29). Thus, giving people their full due and not diminishing it" is an extremely comprehensive principle since it is a security against all curtailment of right dues, particularly in economic sphere. If a landlord exploits the peasant or an industrialist makes large profits while conditions of workers materially not improve, both are guilty of Tattif, the abridgment or curtailment of laborer's rights and an Islamic state has not only a right to interfere but legally bound to intervene for restoration of workers' right. It is not accidental that the 11th century Spanish Muslim theologian and lawyer Ibn Hazm, declared at that early stage of history that the government should compel employers to put some money by as disability or old age payment for the workers⁸⁸. He held that if the rich damns care for the plight of have nots and the hungry, the latter would be religiously perfectly justified in wresting from them whatever they needed to keep alive. If fight ensues and a have not is killed by a rich person, the latter shall be accused of murder, but if the rich man is killed, the "have not" will not be accused of murder⁸⁹ for he had no option but either of a suicide or attacking a rich to wrest his right. Ibn Hazm stays "food", "clothing", and "shelter" fundamental rights of the poor: "it is obligation of the rich in every society to fulfill the needs of the poor. The government has to compel them to undertake this if Zakat is insufficient⁹⁰. As earlier stated, Ibn Hazm goes so far as to say that if the government does not do this, it is religiously lawful for the poor to take the law into their hands and wrest these necessities of life from the rich. Ibn Hazm justifies on the basis of the verse of the Quran, "if a group [of Muslims] rebels against another, you must fight them until they return to the Path of Allah (49:9). Astonishingly and justifiably by the "rebel group" Ibn Hazm does not mean formal rebels against the rich but the rich themselves who, by denying the necessities of life to the poor,

are rebels against society⁹¹. It is to be noted that 11th century's Ibn Hazm inspired by the Quran itself plants essential economic egalitarianism in the rich fertile soil of applied monotheism in sharp contradistinction to the 20th century's Marxism which intended to cultivate economic egalitarianism in the barren soil of materialistic atheism.

The second principle and law of the Quran for distributive justice states "[Wealth] must not circulate only among the rich ones from among you (59:7)". The Quran insinuates that not all of wealth and property should be possessed by one generation that nothing is left for the successors, so in the distribution of property, not only is the present generation to be considered but "also those who come after them" (59:10). This was why not only Omar declared the lands of Iraq, Syria and Egypt a state property but in Mughal India too lands were public property. It had been a norm with disbelievers that they deem themselves as absolute owners of their wealth and property while to the Quran man owns them as a "trust" and as it is in nature of trust that the trustee can violate or fulfil the terms of trust with choice, but the violation entails consequences. When Korah was asked by his people to exult not [in thy wealth] and be kind and generous to people as God is to you, and not sow the seeds of corruption on the earth, he answered : this [wealth] has been given to me only by virtue of knowledge that is in me! (28:76-78). The People of Shoaib deem him a man of prudence and good guidance provided his faith should not come to intervene in market and let them with their wealth what they like to do. Shoaib answers what he has told them stands on the firm basis; he is only trying to reform their society and has no wish to disagree them purposelessly and ends by saying, O my people! Let your disagreement with me not lead you to a situation where you may be hit by the same fate as that of the people of the Noah, Hud and Salih and the fate of the people of Lot is not too far away from you (11:87-97).

The bestowal of God's favors follows some natural causal processes and man generally to the exclusion of moral laws working within those processes deems his capacities and endeavors to be the sheer instrument of his achievements. This swaggering arrogance of self-achievement leads him to the view that he has all the rights to spend or block his wealth to his likings. The Quran employs terms *malau* (11:27) i.e., aristocrats, empowered and chosen ones of every society and *Mutrif* i.e., "one who enjoys the life of ease and plenty" or "indulges in the pleasures of life, i.e., to the exclusion of moral considerations. The term "mutarraf" is an intensive form, namely "one whom a life of softness and ease has caused to behave insolently", or "one whom the [exclusive] pursuit of the pleasures of life has corrupted⁹²". *Itraf* is addressed in the Quran with varying degrees and references (11:116; 34:34; 43:23; 56:45; 17:16; 23:64). They prosper on other's earning. These are the very people who reject God's commands i.e., the moral safeguards against decadence and destruction and reaching a point of no return, the crop of their ripened heads stand ready to be mowed down.

Everything caused by natural processes is done by God. "The Quran uses both naturalistic and religious idioms to describe all

world phenomena, with no question of contradiction between the two. On the contrary, the religious idiom presupposes the naturalistic language and, far from supplanting it, envelops it: winds and clouds do cause rains, but it is God Who brings rains and Who is working within the natural causes. The religious idiom is ultimate after the demands of natural causation have been satisfied as explanatory formula⁹³". "Although one may use an entirely "naturalistic language to denote the processes of nature, nevertheless, the positing of God, even at a purely natural level seems necessary on two scores; the fact there is being rather than utter emptiness of nonbeing (which indicates an ultimate, dynamic ego) and the fact that the universe is an order. This later consideration is not negated by an apparent nonconformity of microscopic phenomena to laws, particularly to causal laws. God, therefore, is a creative Will, dynamic and "generous" by nature⁹⁴". Hence, whatever blessing is bestowed upon people, or a calamity befalls the sinning community, all are caused by natural causes, but all such phenomena represent God's will. The Quran ceaselessly brings in the instances of bygone generations to establish that it is the swaggering haughtiness of the self-indulgent (*Mutrif/ Malau*) sectors of community which ultimately snatching from it its right to exist seals the fate of entire community: "when we wish to destroy a community [or a civilization- the term *qarya* in this context can mean a town like the prophet Shuaib's or the civilization like Pharaoh's] We command its wealthy ones so they indulge in unrighteousness, and when it is ripe for harvesting [literally "when the judgement upon it has matured", but the Quran-11-100 and elsewhere- actually uses the metaphor of "harvesting a people"], We destroy it (17:16)". All such occurrences are a result of natural political processes but in the Quran are being represented as God's will.

The Adam Smith's modern concept of *laissez fair* economy is nothing but somewhat a scientific statement of the fiscal system which had been part and parcel of materialistic societies, and which creates islands of opulence in the sea of poverty. It creates *mutrifin* and *malau* with cruel scientific financial safeguards i.e., profit is private while loss stays public. This is because it tends to implode every now and then, and its chasms and fissures are addressed either by heavy doses of bailout packages from public coffers or by the applications of Keynesian financial formula. Since it caters to the acquisitive instinct of man it has become a norm rather than anomaly which needs to be tamed in the larger interests of both individual and society. On the other hand, the Marxist authoritarianism has dealt a fatal blow to individual liberties, initiatives, and profit motives. Islam takes a middle position between the two extremes, it permits private ownership and earning wealth since denying this would be to deny both Islam and human nature. To the Quran, "Everyone has his reward for his work". Hence, under normal conditions, to withhold the due of better worker is to deny nature and injure the incentives of people since people have not been created equal in their capacities: some are more capable than others; some work harder than others. However, when the socio-economic equilibrium of the society is threatened heavily and other remedies or reforms fail to redeem the balance "zakat" stands as a principle of interference in private wealth if the larger interest of the society demands so. Islam has no qualms with private

ventures provided these ventures do not prosper at the expense of the worker and society at large. In early Islamic developments, certain people like Abd al-Rahman ibn A'waf and Uthman ibn Affan became highly rich capitalist, but no evidence portrays the Prophet discouraging them from further commercial ventures. For these men were always ready to give up their property for the common good. In fact, Saad ibn Abi Waqas, Ibn A'waf and others offered to give up their properties, the Prophet asked them not to do so which indicates on the one side unless dire socio-economic conditions demand people must not be deprived of their private wealth, on the other it insinuates that the rich capitalists must always be prepared to surrender their wealth for social welfare over and above their basic needs.

However, landlordism, feudalism, profiteering, and hoarding are the bigger modern problems of Western inspired laissez faire economy and though the Muslim world found little attraction in atheistic socialism, yet capitalism has made strong inroads into Islamic countries and their poor material, moral, intellectual, and spiritual conditions and standards has added fuel to the fire. Are these modern economic malpractices not surely nearer to the manifest Riba? Whatever commercial practice that at a broader scale leads to socio-economic disequilibrium, in spirit comes in the category of Riba though it be excluded from the juristic doctrine of Riba. There are strong evidences that regarding landlordism and feudalism what transpired in early pristine Islam was pretty different from what the historical conditions led the medieval lawyers of Islam to formulate in their legal dicta. The Prophet said, "whoever is in possession of land, must cultivate himself but if he cannot do so, and is unable to cultivate the whole of it, then he should bestow it [or part of it] on his brother Muslim as a free gift or lend it to him but he should not seek wages [profit from it in any form]."⁹⁵ Further, "the person who does not desist from leasing his land [on condition that he will receive some agreed proportion of its produce] should be ready to face a war God and His Prophet."⁹⁶ Does this hadith not condemn landlordism with exactly same threat which was used against Riba in the Quran? As for feudalism, this was not a problem of Arabia. The conquered lands of Iraq, Syria and Egypt were declared state property. This policy continued until Abid al-Malik bin Marwan's time, who reversed it and later, when Umar bin Abd al-Aziz wished to restore Umar bin Khattab's policy, he was unable to do so⁹⁷. Before Islam, Arabs were familiar with the institution of "hima", i.e., land reserved by a tribe to be a shared grazing ground, which was public property. This was expanded after Islam and Umar reserved extensive lands for state use. Feudalism and landlordism were problems of Persia. When the institution of caliphate turned into dictatorship turning to such exploitative customs was a glamorous lure for dictators, their comrades and cliques. They found ready response in the intellectual labors of the lawyers of royal courts though the opposite stance was no less conspicuous. But state's interest i.e., elite's vested interests prevailed.

The positive impact of modern materialistic metaphysics of which capitalism and Marxism are only obverse and converse, on Muslim world had been that on the one side it put Muslims on the long forgotten track of positive sciences, on the other hand the world of Islam has cast a critical glance on Marxism and

whereas in Islam's theory and early practices, modern Islamic socialist thought has found an impressive and even moving array of ideas and symbols whose total impact and appeal is very strong, it has rejected atheism even more fervently and profoundly. "The ideas of social justice, cooperation and above all the idea of the "community" and its common goal have a strong religious basis in Islam and can stir deep emotional and moral chords in the consciousness of an average Muslim. But equally strong is the conservative pull, the pull of "historic" Islam – its formulations and practices endowed with a romantic attachment by the modern Islamic apologetic itself. In most cases, it is not at all easy for the educated Muslim mind to disentangle the historical from the normative. Without the results of a careful, discerning, and purposeful scholarship becoming accessible both intellectually and spiritually to the average Muslim in good time, this whole effort could not only remain fruitless but even prove self-defeating."⁹⁸

As earlier said, economic competition is the dominant feature and zeitgeist of 21st century. Still, all forms of rise and fall are rooted in intellectual foundations, and it is self-evident from the plight of the Muslim world that the communities which bear bowls on the realm of thought, an economic bowl bearing stays their lot. Traditional heritage of Islamic thought is not Islam but an endeavor of understanding Islam. Unless the Muslim world come to terms with the realities of 21st century and raises its moral, intellectual, and economic standards and indicators by interpreting Islam anew in its pristine spirit to combat current challenges, changing masters rather than destiny shall keep playing on a loop. Eradication of poverty is a jihad according to President Bourguiba (d.2000) and the Indian Muslim socialist revolutionary, Obaidullah (d.1944). Creation of wealth in present scenario is the foremost cardinal duty of the Muslim community and since "the Quran tolerates no distinction between one believer and another, male and female, as to their equal participation in communal life"⁹⁹, all members bear equal responsibility to fulfil the task. Shifting the onus onto other factors like imperialist neo-colonial policies of the West, World Monetary Institutions for socio-economic crisis of Islamic world is not a remedy. Federal Sharia Court of Pakistan's judgement against interest-based banking is perhaps untenable in present situation. Can any country afford isolation from the world. "The abolition of interest presupposes the highest degree imaginable of cooperative spirit and, therefore, cannot be implemented today unless the country's economy and production are to be left in dire jeopardy. At present this type of Islamic spirit of cooperation is wanting in our society and, indeed, we are now at the opposite pole from the social order envisaged by the Quran. This being the case, it will become particularly impossible for the Government to raise interest free loans for its basic not profit making projects, such as roads, hospitals, schools etc.... We, therefore, conclude that the abolition of interest in the present state of economic development would be a cardinal error...the general Quranic teaching wants to develop the maximum of cooperative spirit and socio-economic justice, which is called Sadaqat by the Quran and which must not be confused with the begging and giving of alms. The cooperative spirit envisaged by the Quran was well illustrated by the muakhat established by the Prophet after his migration to Medina between the

Muhairuns of Mecca and local Ansar. In the Welfare Co-operative Commonwealth of Islam, based on the true spirit of Sadaqat, bank-interest will certainly be eliminated, because in this ideal Commonwealth, there will be competition among men, but only for virtue and mutual help. To strive to achieve this goal is the noblest jihad of our times.^{100.}

In nutshell, the whole statement of this essay up to now was an endeavor to establish that Islam's applied monotheism demands socio-economic equilibrium i.e., essential human egalitarianism that culminates in one God- one Humanity. The demand of the Quran from the Muslim community is to establish a certain kind of viable egalitarian moral social progressive world order shorn of extremes. In so far as the internal life and constitution of the Muslim society under this sociopolitical order is concerned, it is to be relentlessly egalitarian and open, unstained by elitism and secret cliquing. This order must reflect three purposes of the Muslim society i.e., defense, development, and welfare. The Commands of God, Higher Moral Values i.e., the transcendental anchoring point of human conduct are to be the essential moral safeguards of this socio-political order against decadence and destruction. The internal life and conduct of society in this moral social order pivots around mutual active good will and cooperation.

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