



## Editorial

### Current Uprisings in the Arab World: A New World of Islam has Begun to Emerge

There is a huge uprising in the Middle East; a region which was thought to be docile as far as political protests and demonstrations are concerned. West-established and sustained status-quo in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East is falling apart. A historic process of change in the Muslim world in general, and Middle East in particular, has been firmly set in motion by the current upheaval. Big things are happening, heavyweights like Hosni Mubarak are caving in, and yet in this whole movement which is the instrument of the change, there is no leadership - individual or collective - embodying/symbolising the objectives of change, and there are no long-term and wide-ranging consensuses (given that the removal of a ruler/regime is short-term) about the future direction. No powerful figures, or even figureheads who are the authors of the movement, those who have worked out the future road-map, have managed to develop a vision for tomorrow. Facebook and Twitter help in co-ordinating and/or mobilizing a mass movement but they do not inspire or create the drive in the first place, those elements should already be present in order to be channelled via such tools. For any reflecting mind, this state of affairs poses questions in the same way as the dropping of the apple did for Isaac Newton. Questions arise as to how what happened could happen and now that things have happened, what does it say about the future to come? For any process of change there are always two basic milestones, one showing the point of departure, i.e. 'from', and the other showing the point of arrival or destination, i.e. 'to'. People journey 'from' the Real 'to' the Ideal. In the present Middle Eastern upheaval, 'from' is clear (at least in a superficial if not a comprehensive and profound sense) but there are no clear indications about 'to'. This was not the case with the Eastern European uprisings of the 80s or the Islamic Revolution of Iran before that.

In a situation as the one outlined above, one has to look at different variables on the ground, currents and undercurrents and above all, the historical forces of our time [that are] shaping the course of history. The absence of leadership makes a movement of change all the more vulnerable to historical forces which drag it along its course in much the same way as a flood does to a standing house. The two main historical forces that will influence/shape the ultimate outcome of the change are one, political Islam which has been pushed onto the centre stage of global politics by the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 and the other, a surge for freedom, justice and accountability, also roughly bundled together at times with the blanket label of 'democracy'. These two could push the events into two different directions and one might see the process of change settling at some destination, for example, a Western-democratic political system, but as both of these historical forces continue to exercise influence, this will prove only a transitional phase rather than a destination, and the process of change will continue unabated to a point in time where the two forces, at some level, reconcile with each other, and we can see the upheaval in Muslim lands settling with a genuine Islamic political order where Islam has an overwhelming component of freedom in it. This will be the original Islamic element of freedom and not a cheap imitation of the West where freedom essentially boils down to hedonism; the 'principle' that pleasure (effectively sensual pleasure) is the highest good. It was the component of freedom that became the first casualty when the political deviation of Islam started. As a result Muslims, particularly the first recipients of Islam, the Arab Muslims have been deprived of it for centuries together.

It needs to be pointed out that when we talk of the emergence of a genuine Islamic political order, it does not mean that it will happen tomorrow; actually any off-the-shelf 'Islamic' solutions in the short term will prove a non-

starter and as much transitional as the democratic set-up mentioned above, because these solutions, as for example, those of Ikhwanul-Muslimoon (Muslim Brotherhood) have serious colonial hangovers and as such are incapable of offering original Islamic systems of governance without undergoing a fundamental revision (for a fuller discussion of these points please see Dr Kalim Siddiqui's paper 'Political thought and behaviour of Muslims under colonialism' 1987 London). However, when we say the events are moving ultimately in the direction of the supremacy of Islam, we are not making an astrologer's prediction or a wishful statement; we are only looking at the historical process, the realities of our time and the historical forces influencing the movement of history at this point in time. We are looking at the direction of history and the ultimate shape of the things to emerge as a result of a very significant and hugely consequential process of change that has firmly set in. Tracing the whole trajectory of this process would require a full volume, but staying within our space here, a few points may merit attention in order to bring some clarity to what is being said.

#### Historical Process

The connections, howsoever small but nonetheless significant, of the current uprising with the 1979 Islamic revolution of Iran, have to be identified and appreciated. True there are major differences like that of leadership, declared objectives, etc. etc. but there are some important similarities as well both, in letter and spirit. One may recall that among other constituents, three important elements relating to the vision of Islamic Revolution very often articulated through slogans, were 'azadi', freedom; 'istiqlal', independence and; 'Jamhoori Islami', Islamic Republic. The two elements in the current Middle Eastern uprisings, namely, the urge for freedom from tyrannical regimes and independence from the West's slavery which the rulers had subjected these countries to, could be traced back to the 1979 revolution. Furthermore, like the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the masses, as opposed to elites, have emerged as the main face of the current uprisings. Also, Fridays have proven to be the launching days much like 1979 revolution. The Islamic revolution has been regarded as the start of the process of Islam's political recovery after a long spell of colonial subjugation and monarchical orders. The success of the Revolution in Iran only does not deem the entire process complete because of the global nature of Islam. Since the current uprisings connect to the 1979 revolution, we ought to look at the whole thing as a collective historical movement, progressing towards the ultimate objective of Islam's triumph.

#### Historical Condition

First, the power of historical forces to influence is directly related to the historical condition of a people at a given point in time. That is where the time factor becomes crucial. Let us identify some realities in this regard:

a) **The international system** led by the USA is in serious trouble. New economic powers are emerging, and both, unilateralism (US acting on its own with or without the consent of other nations) as practiced by George Bush, as well as multilateralism (taking other nations on board) are becoming difficult. The West finds it increasingly difficult to manage the global security agenda. No one should have any doubts that the current uprising in the Arab world has taken the West by surprise and it is finding it hard to properly adjust its policies to the new emerging realities. Hitherto, the West was supporting tyrants like Hosni Mubarak; now they have started supporting, at least apparently, people's rights and democracy. To be honest, they don't have any choices left; this is how they think they can advance their interest in the changed situation. Economic recession, which some believe is irreversible,

has added to the West's misery. They are finding it difficult to manage public opinion at home while embarking on new political-military ventures abroad involving high costs in terms of troops and money.

b) **Iran in 1979 and now a shaky Egypt;** the West is losing its main pillars of control in a highly strategic region. If cheap access to resources and raw material and unhindered flow of oil from Middle East is affected, as appears to be happening, how can the capitalist West maintain its prevalence and actual control over the rest of the world?

c) **Muslims have reached a point** where what was once a fantasy has now become a nightmare. Arab nationalists, Socialist revolutionaries, have all proved paper tigers. Yasser Arafat died having not only failed to get Palestine, but surrendering 70% of territory to Israel and, above all, effectively surrendering the leadership of Palestine movement to Hamas. The PLO he left behind has been exposed as a bunch of thieves and collaborators of the Zionist regime (see 'Palestine Papers' brought out by the Arab TV channel Aljazeera; also available at their website <http://english.aljazeera.net/>). Mu'amar Ghaddafi, once a hero for young revolutionaries worldwide in the early '70s has turned out to be a tyrant. It is only the global Islamic Movement led by Iran which is steadfastly standing up against the global arrogance led by the United States.

#### Political Environment Needed to Sustain the Process of Change

With this historical condition, the process of change will inevitably move towards the emergence of a genuine Islamic political order. This is a long process but nonetheless, one with a sure and certain destination. The fact that this process has started, is the real cause for celebration at this moment. However, one needs to bear in mind that history is not a stage managed drama where the director of the play chooses to lock away a certain character for a while, leaving the field open for another player to have his way and produce wonders. The natural stage of history is equally open to all - good and evil forces- to face each other and test their might; Allah (SWT) the Creator, definitely helps the Good, which may or may not always translate into victory because of the higher Divine Purposes involved, but that is besides the point here. The West-created and sustained political order is no doubt crumbling but its influence, in terms of actual control, is not going to go away soon and we could be witnessing new power games aimed at creating new client regimes. However, with the political environment that has already started building up, we have good reason to believe that these new power games will yield nothing, and hope that the current process of change will sustain, travel in the right direction, and produce good results. Let us briefly point out the three defining features of this environment:

- 1) Decline in the West's capability/will to influence (particularly through force and coercion) Muslim societies/regimes.
- 2) Islamic Republic of Iran continuing to function as the leading edge of the Islamic Movement.
- 3) End of Saudi monarchy and its associated quasi-state religious establishment.

As one can see, this environment has almost already come to exist, except of course, that the monarchy is still in place, but it is simply a matter of time before this corrupt regime too collapses. Egypt, by virtue of its being the cultural-intellectual capital of the Arab world, has been historically considered the trend setter in that region. The

## The Guidance *The Divine word, "All praise is due to Allah", is a sort of training to the servant - a training without which he could not know how to declare the praise of Allah because the servant cannot fully comprehend the acts, deeds and creation of Allah(SWT).*

(We are continuing with the translation and commentary of the first Sura of Quran, namely, Sura Hamd/Sura Fatiha. In the previous issue the first verse was taken up, and in this issue the second and third verses are explained)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**QUR'AN: All praise is due to Allah. the Lord of the Worlds.**

It has been said that "Al-Hamd" is to praise someone for a good acquired by his own intention, "al-madh" (also translated as praise) is more general - it is used to praise even that good which someone is given without his will and power. If you praise someone for his benevolence, you may use either word - Al-Hamd or al-madh but if you want to praise a pearl for its luster, you may use the verb al-madh, but not Al-Hamd because the pearl has not acquired that luster by its own will and power.

"Al" (translated here as "all") in "Al-Hamd" denotes either species or praise, or each and every praise. The end-result is the same in either case; that is why it has been translated here as "all."

Allah says: That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of every thing (40:62). Whatever there is, is created by Allah. Again He says: ...Who made good everything that He has created (32:7). Everything is good because it has been created by Allah and is attributed to Him. In other words, a thing becomes good because it is created by Allah; and everything created by Him is good. Every creature is good and beautiful because Allah has made it so; and every good and beautiful thing is created by Allah, attributed to Him. Allah says: He is Allah, the One, the Subduer (of all) (39:4); And the faces are humbled before the Living, the Self subsistent God... (20:111). In other words, He has created the creatures by His own knowledge, power and will, and not because He was compelled by someone else to do so. Therefore, everything is His own good work, done by His own will.

The above discourse was about Allah's action. Coming to His names, He has said: Allah is He besides Whom there is no god; His are the very best names (20:8); And Allah's are the best names; therefore call on Him thereby, and leave alone those who violate the sanctity of His names (7:180). It is clear that Allah is good in His names and good in His actions; and that every good and beauty emanates from Him.

Therefore, Allah is praised for His good names as He is praised for His good actions. Every praise, uttered by any speaker for any good deed is in reality addressed to Allah only; because every good (which is the object of praise) emanates from Him only. In short, to Him belongs the species of the praise and all and every praise.

The verse: "Thee do we worship", shows that the whole chapter is revealed on behalf of man. Allah teaches him in this chapter how to praise his Lord and how to show his allegiance to, and humility towards, Him. And the phrase, "All praise is due to Allah", further strengthens this inference, as will be seen in the next paragraph.

The praise means to attribute, to ascribe; and Allah has declared that He is above all that His servants ascribe to Him. He has said: Hallowed be Allah (for freedom) from what they ascribe, except the servants of Allah, freed (from sins) (37:159 -160). This declaration is general and unconditional; and it is further proved by the fact that not a single verse in the Qur'an ascribes the action of "praise" to anyone except Allah and some of the prophets (who were doubtlessly freed from sins). Allah addresses Nuh (Noah - A.S.) in these words: ...Say: "All praise is due to Allah who delivered us from the unjust people" (23:28). And He quotes Ibrahim (Abraham - A.S.) as saying: "Praise be to Allah, Who gave me in old age Isma'il and Ishaq (14:39). Also, He told His Prophet, Muhammad (S.A.W.) in several places, And say: "Praise be to Allah. (27:93). Further, he says about Dawud and Sulayman (peace be on both of them): . . . and they both said: "Praise be to Allah.. ." (27:15). Another exception is of the people of the Paradise

and they also are freed from spite and rancor as well as from vain and sinful words: ...and the last of their cry shall be: "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds" (10: 10).

As for other creatures, the Qur'an never says that they "praise" Allah - they always "glorify Allah with His praise." Allah says: ...and the angels declare His glory with the praise of their Lord. (42:5); and the thunder declares His glory with His praise... (13:13); and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise... (17:44). In all these verses "praise" is preceded by glorifying; rather "glorifying" is the main verb and "with praise" is only a clause, attached to it. None except Allah may comprehend the beauty and perfection of His work, nor can anyone else understand the beauty and perfection of His names and attributes. Allah says: they do not comprehend Him in knowledge... (20:110). In this background, if they were to praise Him it would mean that they had comprehended Him in their knowledge; in other words, Allah would be surrounded by their limited understanding, confined within the boundary of their comprehension. Therefore, they were careful enough to first declare His glory from all the limits of their comprehension, before starting His praise. Allah says: ...surely Allah knows and you do not know (16:74).

So far as His purified servants are concerned, He treats their utterance of praise as though He Himself has said it, because they are free from sins and defects.

From the above discourse, it becomes crystal-clear what the good manner of servitude demands: The servant should praise his Lord in exactly the same words the Lord Himself has chosen for Himself; no deviation from it would be tolerable, as the Prophet has said in an universally accepted tradition; "I do not enumerate Thy praise; Thou art as Thou Thyself hast praised Thyself.

Therefore, the divine word, "All praise is due to Allah", is a sort of a training to the servant - a training without which he could not know how to declare the praise of Allah.

**QUR'AN: The Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent , the Merciful.**

"Ar-Rabb" is the Master Who manages the affairs of His servant. The word, thus connotes the idea of ownership. Ownership (in our social structure) is a special relationship of one thing with another - a relationship that allows the owner to do with the owned thing as he wishes. When we say, "This thing belongs to us", it shows that it has a special relationship with us that allows us to do with it as we wish; had it not been for this relationship, we would not have had this authority over it. In this social context, it is an idea which the society has laid down but which has no existence outside imagination. This idea is derived from another real and positive concept, which too is called "ownership": Our limbs and faculties, like the sight, the hearing, the hands and the feet, belong to us - they exist because of our own existence, they have no independent existence, they depend on us for their existence and continuity, and we use them as we like. This is the real ownership.

The ownership that may be attributed to Allah is the real one, and not that which is based on subjective outlook. Obviously the real ownership cannot be disjoined from management of the affairs of the owned thing. The owned thing depends on the owner in its existence, as well as in all affairs related to its existence. Allah is "Ar-Rabb" the Lord of everything because the Lord is the owner who manages the affairs of, and looks after, the owned thing - and only Allah has this attribute.

"Al-'Alamin" is the plural of Al-'Alam (the world) which literally means, "what one is known with." This paradigm is used for "instrument", like al-qalab (the mold, the form), al-khatam the seal, the instrument of sealing) and at-taba' (the stamp, the impress). The word Al-'Alam is used for the universe - the whole creation taken together. Also it is used for each genes or species taken separately, for example, the inorganic world, the vegetable world, the animal world, the human world. It is also used for a class of a species, like the Arab world, the African world etc. This last meaning is more appropriate in the context of

these verses: The verses that enumerate the good names of Allah until they come to "the Master of the Day of Judgment." The judgment is reserved for mankind alone or together with the jinn. Therefore, the "worlds" should refer to the worlds of the human beings and the jinn, that is, their various groups. The word al-'alamin (the worlds) has been used in this sense in other Qur'anic verses too. Allah says: ...and has chosen you above the women of the worlds (3:42);... so that he may be a warner to the worlds (25:1); What! do you commit an indecency which any one in the worlds has not done before you (7:80).

**Quran: The Beneficent the Merciful.** (This was explained in the last issue while explaining the verse 'In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful'.the commentary is being repeated here.)

"Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim (The Beneficent, the Merciful) are two adjectives derived from Ar-Rahmah (mercy).

When you see someone suffering from a deficiency which he cannot remove. by himself, the reaction which you experience and which tells you to provide him with what he needs in order to make up his deficiency, is called mercy. Ultimately, mercy means giving and bestowing to fulfill other's need. It is this latter meaning in which this attribute is used for Allah.

"Ar-Rahman" is on a paradigm which is used for magnification and exaggeration. "Ar-Rahim" paradigm of as-Sifatu'l-mushabbah (perpetual adjective, inseparable attribute). Therefore "Ar-Rahman" (translated here as "the Beneficent") relates to that all-encompassing mercy that is bestowed upon the believers and the unbelievers alike. It is used in the Qur'an, mostly in this meaning. Allah says "The Beneficent (God) is firm in power" (20:5). "Say: As for him who remains in error, the Beneficent (God) will surely prolong his length of days..." (19:75). "Ar-Rahim" (translated here as "the Merciful"), on the other hand, is more appropriate for that mercy which shall remain for ever, the perpetual inexhaustible mercy that shall be bestowed on the believers in the life hereafter. Allah says: ...and He is Merciful to the believers (33:43); surely to them (i.e., the believers) He is Compassionate, Merciful (9:117). That is why it is said that the mercy of "Ar-Rahman" is common for the believers and the unbelievers, and that of "Ar-Rahim" is reserved for the believers.

...to be continued

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we hypothesize as another universe will turn out to be this same universe or a part of it. This analogy pertains to the universe of bodies and corporeal beings that are limited, conditional, created, and none of which has an absolute, independent, and self-subsistent reality. The material universe, if unlimited in extent, is limited in reality. Because, according to this hypothesis, it is unlimited in extent, no second universe can be conceived of. God Most High is the Unlimited Being and the Absolute Reality. He encompasses all things and is absent from no time or place. He is nearer to us than our jugular veins. Therefore, it is impossible for Him to have a likeness. Or rather, it is inconceivable that He should. We see the effects of His providence, planning, and wisdom in all beings. We witness a single intent, a single will, a single order throughout the universe, and this fact itself indicates that our universe has only one focus, not more.

If there were two (or more) gods, two (or more) intents and wills would necessarily be involved, both of which would necessarily bear the same relation to events in influencing them. Whatever was to come into existence under that one relation would necessarily constitute two beings if it were to derive from the two foci, and each of those two beings would constitute two further beings in turn, and so on ad infinitum. In consequence, no being would appear and the universe would not exist. Thus, the Noble Qur'an says: "If there were in them gods other than God, [heaven and earth] would be in ruins" (21:22).

*Next Issue: The Worldview of Tauhid-4 where the author discusses the what and how of 'Ibadah Worship. Also from here the important discussion 'Levels and Degrees of Tauhid' starts which continues further.*

## Understanding & Awareness

### The Worldview of Tauhid-3

By: Murtadha Mutahhary

*Every path and philosophy of life is based on a belief, outlook, and value system vis-a-vis being or on an explanation and analysis of the world. The kind of conception that a school of thought presents of the world and of being, the manner in which it contemplates it, is considered the intellectual foundation and support of that school. This foundation and support is termed the world view. All religions, customs, schools of thought, and social philosophies rest on a world view. A school's aims, methods, musts and must nots all result necessarily from its world view.*

#### The Realistic World View

Islam believes in truth, in reality. The word Islam means surrender; the first condition of being a Muslim is to surrender to realities and truths. Islam rejects and condemns every kind of obduracy, obstinacy, fanaticism, blind imitativeness, partisanship, and selfishness, which are contrary to the spirit that seeks to realize truth and reality. According to Islam, a person who seeks the truth, has no personal considerations, and struggles to attain the truth but fails may be excused, whereas the one who harbors obduracy and obstinacy and accepts the truth through imitation, because of his heritage or for like reasons, has no standing. The real Muslim, man or woman, according to his spirit of search after truth, adopts and integrates wisdom and truth wherever and from whomever he finds it. In searching for truth and knowledge, he does not display the least fanaticism, but instead hastens to find it in the farthest parts of the world. The real Muslim does not confine this search for truth to a certain period of his life, area, or certain persons because the great leader of Islam has ordered that the search for knowledge is incumbent upon all Muslims (men and women alike). He likewise has ordered, "Assimilate wisdom wherever and through whomever you find it, even through a mushrik." He has further ordered, "Seek knowledge, even if you must travel to China." This also has been attributed to him: "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave."

Shallow, one-sided conceptions of problems, blind imitation of parents, and submission to inherited traditions are condemned as contrary to the Islamic spirit of surrender and desire that the truth should prevail and as leading to error, deviation, and remoteness from the truth.

#### God, the absolute Reality and Source of Being

Man is a realistic being. The human newborn seeks the mother's breast from the first hour of life; it seeks the mother's breast as a reality. Gradually, as the child's body and mind develop, it comes to distinguish between itself and other things, to regard other things as phenomena external to itself. Although a sequence of thought connects it to things, it uses thought as a means, a functional link, and knows that the reality of things is other than the thoughts it has in its mind.

#### Five properties of any reality perceived by human senses

The realities that man perceives through his senses, the sum total of which we call the world, are phenomena from which the following five properties are inseparable:

**1. Limitation.** The beings we sense and cognize, from the smallest particle to the most immense star, are limited. They are allocated to a particular area of space and interval of time. They do not exist beyond that area of space or interval of time. Some beings occupy a larger space or a longer time and some, a smaller space or a shorter time; but ultimately, all are limited to a region of space and a quantity of time.

**2. Change.** The beings of the universe are all undergoing change and transformation, are unstable. No being in the world of sense remains in a single state. All are either growing and evolving or eroding and declining. A sensible material being follows a course of continuous exchange with its environment throughout its term of existence. It takes, it gives, or it takes and gives both; that is, it partakes of the realities of other things and makes them part of its own reality; it transmits something of its own reality to the external environment; or it performs both of these functions.

**3. Dependency.** Every being's existence is dependent and conditional upon the existence of one or more other beings. If those other beings were not, neither would this being be. Whenever we look into the reality of these beings in their context more closely, we find each of them to be paired with an "if" or with many "ifs." We find no sensible being that can exist unconditionally and absolutely (free of ties to other beings, such that the presence or absence of other beings is of no consequence to it). Each being exists by virtue of the existence of another, which in turn exists by virtue of another, and so on.

**4. Need.** The beings we sense and cognize, in being dependent and conditional, have needs for all those conditions upon which they depend. And each of those conditions likewise in its turn needs another series of conditions. Among all sensible beings, we cannot find one that is of itself, that does not need things other than itself, that, supposing things other than itself should cease to exist, would remain in existence. Thus, poverty, necessity, and need envelop all these beings.

**5. Relativity.** The beings we sense and cognize are relative from the standpoints of the origin and the perfections of their existence. If, for instance, we characterize them as great, powerful, beautiful, old, or even existent, we do so by comparing them with other things. If we say the sun is large, we mean it is large by comparison with us, our earth, and the other bodies in our solar system; but the sun is small in relation to some stars. And if we say some ship or animal is powerful, we mean it is powerful by comparison with a man or something weaker. The same holds for objects in which we discern beauty and knowledge. Even the being of a thing is an appearance relative to the being of another. Whatever being, perfection, knowledge, beauty, power, or glory we consider is relative to a lesser, but one can also conceive of a greater, relative to which any of these attributes turns into its opposite. That is, relative to this greater, being becomes

appearance; perfection, defect; knowledge, ignorance; beauty, ugliness; and power and glory, paltriness.

#### The power of man's reason and thought

The power of man's reason and thought, which, by contrast with the senses, do not remain content with appearances but cause their rays to penetrate behind the curtain of existence, proclaims that being cannot be confined to these limited, mutable, relative, conditional, and necessitous phenomena. This edifice of existence that we see before us as a whole stands by itself and rests on itself. There must necessarily exist some unlimited, enduring, absolute, unconditioned, self-sufficient reality present at all times and places as a support to all beings. Otherwise the edifice of existence could not subsist, or rather there would be no such thing; there would be only sheer nonexistence.

#### What the noble Qur'an says

The Noble Qur'an refers to God by such attributes as "the Everlasting," "the Free of Need," and "the Eternal." Thus, it reminds us that the edifice of existence needs that Reality by which it subsists. That Reality is the support and preserver of all limited, relative, and conditional things. He is without need because all other things have needs. He is full and perfect (the Eternal) because all things other than Him are empty within and need the reality that is to fill them with being.

The Noble Qur'an designates sensed and cognized beings as signs (ayat), meaning that each being in turn is a sign of this unlimited Being and of the divine knowledge, power, life, and will. According to the Glorious Qur'an, all of nature is like a book composed by a knowing, wise Author, of Whose boundless knowledge and wisdom its every line, its every word, is a sign. According to the Qur'an, the more man learns through the power of science, the more aware he grows of the effects of divine power, wisdom, providence, and mercy.

Every natural science, just as from one point of view it is a science of nature, from another, more profound, point of view is a science of God.

*Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the succession of night and day, the ships that sail the seas to the benefit of man, rain that God causes to fall from the skies, and in how by this means He revives a dead earth and scatters all kinds of creatures across the earth, and in the circling of the winds and the clouds that are appointed to work between the sky and the earth-are signs for people who reason and reflect. (2:164)* This noble verse summons us to cosmology in its widest sense, to the art of navigation, 'to world travel with its economic benefits, to meteorology, to study of the origin and source of wind, rain, and the movements of the clouds, and to biology and zoology. It holds that reflection on the philosophies of these sciences will lead to a knowledge of God.

The Noble Qur'an says that God is characterized by all the attributes of perfection: "His are the most beautiful names" (59:24). The most beautiful names and the highest qualities are His: "His is the most sublime similitude in the heavens and the earth" (30:27). The sublime qualities throughout existence are reserved for Him. Thus, God is "the Living," "the Powerful," "the Knowing," "the Intender," "the Merciful," "the Guide," "the Creator," "the Wise," "the Most Forgiving," "the Just"-in sum, there is no attribute of perfection lacking in Him.

From another standpoint, He is not a body, is not compounded, mortal, weak, under compulsion, or oppressive.

The first set of attributes, the "attributes of perfection, by which God is characterized are called the affirmative attributes. The second set, which arise from defect and which God is above characterization by, are named the negative attributes.

Our praise of God may take either of the forms termed in Arabic thana and tasbih. We offer God thana when we recall the beautiful names and the attributes of perfection, and we offer Him tasbih when we recount how He is beyond and free of what is unworthy of Him. In both cases, we reinforce our knowledge of Him and by this means raise ourselves higher.

#### The Uniqueness of God

God, Most High, has no likeness or associate. It is fundamentally impossible that God should have a likeness and in consequence that, instead of one God, we should have two or more gods, because to be multiple, twofold or more, is among the special properties of limited, relative beings. For an unlimited, absolute being, manifoldness and multiplicity have no meaning. We can have one, two, or more children or one, two, or more friends in that the child and the friend are both limited beings, and limited beings can have likenesses on their own level and in consequence will admit manifoldness and multiplicity. But an unlimited being does not admit them. The following analogy, however inadequate it may be from some standpoints, is useful in explaining this point.

As to the dimensions of the sensed material universe (that is, the universe of bodies that we cognize and sense), scientists have presented two kinds of theories. Some advance the theory that the dimensions of the universe are limited (this sensed universe reaches a point and then ends), but some hold that the dimensions of the material universe are limitless, bounded in no direction, that the material universe has no beginning, end, or middle. If we regard the material universe as limited, a question arises: Is there only one material, corporeal universe or more than one? But if the universe is limitless, the supposition of another corporeal universe becomes irrational. Whatever

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## Hassan Hanafi\* on Globalization, Civil Society....

(Excerpts from his paper 'The Middle East, in whose world?' 1998)

Globalization is also another label from the same kind, expressing the power relationship between the East and the West after the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union. Globalization is not an essential concept but an existential given, not a substantial factor but an accidental fact. Sometimes political scientists transform a reality to a concept, a fact to an essence, a spatio-temporal situation to an everlasting state of mind, de facto to de jure, doing harm to the discipline itself and switching superstitiously from science to ideology, from political analysis to political position. If the expression Middle East was coined in the British mind the term globalization is also coined in the American intelligence research centers.

Globalization was always a World system. The powerful was the global while the weak was the local. The global was the center while the local was the periphery. Ancient China was the center of the world according to ancient cartography. Persia and Rome disputed the center of the world. Then Islam as a new power inherited both, Western and Eastern powers and became the center of the world in spite the invasions from the West, the Crusaders, and from the East, the Tatars and the Mongols. The West followed, after reaching the Western hemisphere by crossing the Atlantic, even if the intention was to reach India by the western route. Since Western modern times till the end of modern times Europe was the center of the world, Africa, Asia and Latin America were the periphery. Globalization is not a recent phenomenon since the downfall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the socialist block with the exception of Cuba and China. Globalization is not one instant in modern history of Europe but it was always there, expressing the will of the powerful, the balance of power between the center and the periphery.

Globalization expresses one sole course of history of a special historical consciousness, that of the West. In the beginning of modern times, Europe was expanding westwards crossing the Atlantic, two years interval after the fall of Grenada in 1492, and eastwards against the Ottoman Empire in Eastern Europe to the extreme limits of Asia passing by India, putting an end to the Mongol Empire. The XIX century was the peak of European expansion when Europe inherited the center of the world making from Asia, Africa and America its periphery. Colonialism was its outcome. If military colonialism is almost ended with the

exception of some aggressions here and there, economic exploitation, scientific dependency and cultural domination are still continuing. Globalization is a new form of Western hegemony after the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the socialist regimes, as if history was blocked in time and in space, nothing after and nothing elsewhere.

Globalization is a fabricated concept, not a reality. It is an ideology in spite of the old myth, the end of ideology and the beginning of technology, another myth. In the name of the world as a global village, the information revolution, the Internet, the E-mail, the satellites and all modern means of communication and mass-media, all borders are dropped, between nations, peoples, cultures, customs and manners called specificities, particularities, value-systems, etc... The purpose is to pass the free market economy, the end of economic planning and the state economy after the fall of socialist regimes in 1991 proved that the free market economy is the most congruent to human activity. With multi-national corporations, economy is implemented on a world-wide scale. The group of eight, the GATT, the World Bank, the IMF and all international financial centers are run globally not locally. There are only two alternatives: to compete or retreat, to produce or to consume, to create or to imitate, to invent or to assimilate, to give or to take, to export or to import, to be in the center or to be in the periphery.

Other side-concepts came into help such as: civil society, governance, human rights, gender, greenery, end of history, clash of civilization, freedom, democracy, etc. Civil society is introduced as an alternative to the state, a society governed by the unions and the NGOs. A free society is the prerequisite for a free economy without any state intervention, irrespective of the historical context of the concept and its anti-religious and anti-state connotation. It is blocked by other traditional concepts such as Ummah, 'Ashira, Kawm, Ahl, Sha'b, Kabila, Raht, Naas, etc. Governance gives the priority to administration of business instead of the national state. Government is management rather than national sovereignty. It can be run by international experts not by nationals. The value is that of the individual, not the community. The battle is human rights not peoples rights. The individual inherits society as society inherits the state. The state is reduced to society and the society is reduced to the individual. The individual is even split into a male-female dichotomy in the name of the

gender. The liberation of the female precedes the liberation of the individual and the autonomy of the state. Feminism is a component of civil society. The struggle for freedom and equality begins by the gender not by socio-political struggle. The struggle for freedom and democracy is not a struggle for freedom and democracy per se as a part of natural right but as a prerequisite for free economy. The Greens are fighting against pollution in the West not against desertification in Africa, to protect environment in the West by stocking the nuclear residuals in countries of the Third World. The collapse of socialist regimes meant the victory of capitalism and the free market economy. History ended, the prophecy accomplished, the Messiah appeared and the process fulfilled. For the periphery where traditional societies live, the clash of civilizations is their destiny as if the conflict between the center and the periphery is not a power conflict including socio-economic conflict, but only a civilizational one as if the clash of civilizations was a cover-up for the real socio-political and economic hegemony.

If globalization is the empowerment of the center, fragmentation is planned for the periphery. The power of the whole requires the weakness of the parts.

Globalization expressing the one-polar world as another new world order does not tolerate any challenge even in potentia and in the future of any resistance or even reluctance to be a part of the global world. The bipolar world is finished for ever. It is not only a part of recent past history but it is the structure of future history. A challenge to globalization may not come from Asia. The new industrial societies are busy in performing their Asian wonder. Their upheaval is dependant on Western capital, Western stock-markets and the free market economy. It is a fragile experience especially after the devaluation of their currency in Indonesia, Malaysia and even in South Korea and Japan. The World global economy goes beyond peoples and cultures. Latin America, the home of Che Guevara, the birth place of liberation theology and of dependency theory is now cooling down, hit by hunger, drugs, poverty and oppression. The sixties were a nice dream. Africa is also hit by civil wars, border conflicts, drought, hunger, famine, genocide, dictatorship, AIDS in spite of the end of apartheid in South Africa. The Arab/Muslim world is still struggling in spite of its dependence on USA and recognition of Israel, defending its own cultural identity and autonomy in a global world. That is why it is antagonized and threatened: Sudan and Iran threatened, Egypt marginalized, Israel supported, Islamic fundamentalism encouraged because of its conservatism and fought because of its anti-westernism, etc. The Arab/Muslim world may represent a possible challenge of the one polar world, given its historical depth, its cultural specificity, its long struggle against foreign domination and its material and moral potentialities. Islamic movements are becoming more and more stronger. Islam is succeeding as vehicle of protest, as an expression of socio-political grievances, presenting itself as an alternative. ●

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## Current Uprisings in the Arab World

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successful uprising at Tahrir Square will, for certain, have far-reaching effects, and the Saudi regime cannot remain unaffected, though its collapse will not come about that easily. It is the main linchpin of US, not only in the region, as Egypt was, but globally as well because of its oil, and control of the Haramain Sharifain, the two Sacred Mosques. The collapse of Saudi regime will have a hugely positive impact on the whole of the Muslim world. The West has been fighting the Islamic movement at all levels, political, military, but when it comes to fighting it at the religious level, it employs the services of its client regime in Saudi Arabia; a recent example is that of Bahrain. There too an uprising began much like the ones in Egypt or Yemen. To defeat this uprising the US had Saudi troops sent in, so that the world mistakenly views it as a 'Shia' uprising against a 'Sunni' ruling clan, rather than a general people's uprising for their legitimate rights that it really is. It is not only now, but ever since the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Saudi Kingdom has been using this sectarian card under the pretence of a self-appointed leader of 'Sunnis'; thereby disrupting Muslim unity and weakening the Islamic movement. That has been the role of the Saudi regime worldwide, and in that role it has been effectively operating as the religious wing of the West's overall campaign against the Islamic movement. ●

## Healing of the Hearts

## On Lowering the Gaze

*There is nothing more gainful than lowering one's gaze, for the sight is not lowered from things, which Allah has forbidden unless the witnessing of majesty and glory has already come to the heart.*

*The Commander of the Faithful was asked what could help in lowering one's gaze. He said, 'Submission to the power of Him Who is aware of your secret. The eye is the spy of the hearts and the messenger of the intellect; therefore lower your gaze from whatever is not appropriate to your faith, from whatever your heart dislikes and from whatever your intellect finds repugnant.'*

*The Holy Prophet said, 'Lower your eyes and you will see wonders.'*

*Allah said,*

*قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ●*

*Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts. (24:30)*

*'Isa [a] said to the disciples, 'Beware of looking at forbidden things, for that is the seed of desire and leads to deviant behaviour.'*

*Yahya [a] said, 'I would prefer death to a glance which is unnecessary.'*

*Whenever the eye looks at something forbidden, a knot of desire is tied in the person's heart, and that knot will only be untied by one of two conditions: either by weeping out of grief and regret in true repentance, or by taking possession of what one desired and looked at. And if a person takes possession unjustly, without repentance, then that will take him to the Fire.*

*As for the one who repents of it with grief and regret, his abode is the Garden and his destiny is Allah's favour.*

*Hazrat Imam Ja'far Sadiq*