

STATE AND STATE CRAFT Relationship Between Islamic and Western Paradigms

*ABDUL HAFEEZ FĀZLI**

Abstract. Islam is the *Dīn* (the way of life) near Allah from the beginning of humanity till it was revealed to the last Prophet (*Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*). It is for whole mankind and is perfect (*kāmil*). The Qur'ān admits the existence of *dīn/s* opposed to Islam and calls them *disbelief* but also says that He who wants or brings any religion other than Islam will not be accepted from him.

The Qur'ān enjoys the status of *al-haqq* (the standard of truth) from the Lord. (02:41-42, 147) It is *the advice* for whole mankind. (6:90, 12:104) Whatever concept, teaching, ideology, way of life or whatever is in accordance with the Qur'ān is *truth (haqq)*. What is against it is *falsehood (al-bātil)* (02:42) or *zann* — unfounded conjecture (10:36) or *az-zalāl* (wrong) or *fiṣq* (moulding *truth* according to one's desires). These are the various forms *disbelief* can take in any period. Allah decrees the Muslims 'not to mix falsehood with truth. (3:71) *Zann* (conjecture) cannot spare anyone from *haqq*. *Az-zlāl* as deviation from *haqq* has no reality of its own. (10:32.) Allah leads astray none but *fasiqun*. To give equal importance to anyone's saying as the *Word of Allah* is *shirk*.

'Modernity' — a human endeavour — has assumed the role of *Dīn* (the way of life) in the present day world for a larger part of humanity. Democracy, capitalism, socialism, communism, nationalism, liberalism, secularism, humanism, scientism, pragmatism, Occidentalism and other countless isms are its various

*Dr. Abdul Hafeez Fāzli is Associate Professor at Department of Philosophy, University of the Punjab, New Campus, Lahore-54590 (Pakistan).
(E-mail: hfz52@yahoo.com)

manifestations. Post-modernism and its allied movements are also its further developments.

Islam and Modernity are two opposing paradigms. They disagree with each other in all their postulates. They are so drastically different that no viable understanding between the two at any level seems possible. But Islam does not leave us to wander in darkness. The Qur'ān opens the way of *bida't* (innovation). There are two types of *bida't* (innovation): *bida't-e-sayyia'* and *bida't-e-hasana*. The Qur'ān qualifies الراسخون في العلم (the sound in knowledge) for working out the limits and scope of *lawful/comely innovations* which help people in coming towards righteousness. This is *ijtihād*.

The present study proposes to explore the possibilities of working out a relationship between them in line with the Divine decree: *la talbisul haqqa bil batili*.

Let us study the essentials of both paradigms. The following are the postulates which comprise *modernity*:

- *Reason and sense experience*, the faculties owned by mankind, are the source of all knowledge required to mankind for regulating its affairs.
- *Rationality, freedom/autonomy, and natural goodness of man* are the basic values. 'Religion' is a personal and private affair. Everyone is free to embrace and live any ideology or religion he likes. No one is to be underestimated on the base of religion.
- State is a set up to regulate the affairs of citizens to ensure their well-being according to their wishes. "Respect for civil and political liberties, governance by law with the consent of the governed, ... is one of the features of a modern state and ideology."
- Maximization of the possibilities for the fulfillment of desires and actualization of abilities, and minimization of pain and suffering from the life of citizens by eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease is the function of State. State has nothing to do with anyone's religion for religion is private and personal. This is *Secularism*.

- No individual or group is to be allowed to enforce an ideology or religion as standard of determining values for society or mankind at large. Everyone is autonomous to decide what is 'good' for himself and free to pursue it unless it harms equal freedom of others.
- Communities/identities are free to regulate their personal and private affairs in accordance with their religious teachings or cultural tradition unless it conflicts with the social values evolved by liberal consensus of humanity in line with scientific and philosophical research.
- State-craft will be designed to bring about all possible conveniences to the citizens to help them in the maximum fulfillment of their desires and actualization of abilities. This is the spirit of *Secularism*. A secular society is a *liberal* society so far as it respects civil and political liberties of all citizens without discrimination on the base of creed, race or religion.
- The socio-economic system developed in accordance with the postulates of modernity is known as *Capitalism*. It is this thought, practice and ideology that prevail in the world today. Organization of this ideology into social and political system is called *Democracy*. '*State*' is the basic agency, a tool in the hand of democracy, to bring about dominance of capitalism. The two essential characteristics of the economic system evolved by capitalism are interest/usury and gambling/wager. The concept of '*Human Rights*' has been devised to protect the interest of capitalism and necessary to be observed in a democratic state. In a democratic state the Constitution becomes the most important document. Western civilization/modernity has made many experiments and worked out the details of social, political, educational, administrative, economic and other aspects of this ideology to the minutest. Western civilization is constantly making experiments to make their systems still better. 'Globalization' is a movement in the present

day world which aims at universalization of liberalism, secularism, and capitalism.¹

As stated at the very opening of this paper Islam is *the religion* near Allah, prescribed for whole humanity and for all times to come. Qur'ān is revealed knowledge and standard of truth. The Prophet (pbuh) is the teacher of the Book and wisdom and absolute model to be followed in our lives.² The Qur'ān contains all guidance needed to mankind at individual, social, national and international level; in all spheres of human activity, *i.e.* economics, politics, administration, education, research in natural and social sciences etc.; in all phases of life, *i.e.* peace, war and calamity; and in all modes of life, *i.e.* physical and spiritual.³ Reason, sense experience and intuition, are abilities granted by Allah and to be used subservient to Divine knowledge.⁴ Man is autonomous within Allah's prescribed limits.⁵ *Taufiq* (ability to do) at man's disposal is a trust and it is being seen whether he uses it in accordance with Allah's pleasure or follows his likes and dislikes.⁶ Qur'ān very clearly states values the upholders of which Allah loves and disvalues the upholders of which Allah does not love.⁷ Principles stated in these values/disvalues encompass all areas of individual and social life.

Organization of social life reaches its climax in the form of a State. Yet it is very strange when we see that the Qur'ān addresses the individuals as Muslims or Non-Muslims; the *epithet Muslim* or a *Disbeliever* or *Islamic* or *Un-Islamic* nowhere applies to a State or country. So to call a State *Muslim/Islamic* or a *Non-Muslim/Un-Islamic State* is against Qur'ānic teachings. Hazrat Yousaf, Hazrat Dawood and Hazrat Sulemān (pbut) were prophets as well as kings. Were the kingdoms ruled by them *Islamic* or *Un-Islamic*! The same is true about States ruled by Hazrat Zulqarnain and of Hazrat Talūt (pbut). The State of Madina, founded by the Prophet (pbuh), was an administrative set up brought about for the peaceful co-existence of various identities in accordance with their respective religions or cultures.⁸ Unification of State and Religion, has given nothing except immense pain and suffering to the mankind. How could Islam, the religion near Allah for whole mankind could propound such idea!

The Qur'ān declares the principle of non-coercion in matters of religion.⁹ Principle of non-Coercion and Principle of Social Justice¹⁰ provides basis for peaceful co-existence in a multi-cultural environment. It is a solution for religious pluralism and diversity of regional identities.

Every religion/ideology has two aspects: Paradigm and Practice. This is equally true of Islam and Modernity. It is illogical to compare Paradigm of one ideology with Practice of the other, and vice versa. Seen as paradigms Islam and Modernity are opposed to each other. Islam aims at emancipation from following desires¹¹ and modernity at providing maximum fulfillment of desires. Apparently no viable understanding between the two at this level seems possible. As for the practical aspect of utilizing the experiments of modernity is concerned Islam does not leave us to wander in darkness. The Qur'ān opens the way of *bida't* (innovation). There are two types of *bida't* (innovation): *bida't-e-sayyia'* and *bida't-e-hasana*.¹² *Rahbaniyyat* (monastic asceticism) was an innovation (*bida't*) of the Christians, Allah did not enjoin it on them. They had initiated it with the purpose of seeking Allah's pleasure. [Allah does not disapprove it.] They did not confine them within viable limits as they should. (Al-Hadīd, 57:27 *ورهبانية ابتدعوها ما كتبناها عليهم إلا ابتغاء رضوان الله فما رعوها حق رعايتها* 'No *bida't* (innovation) in respect of Prohibitions is allowed' is the basic principle of *ijtihad*. Not every one is qualified for carrying out this job.¹³ The Qur'ān qualifies *الراسخون في العلم* for working out the limits and scope of *lawful/comely innovations* to help people in coming towards righteousness. The *sound in knowledge* are the ones who are best qualified for working out an appropriate relationship between *Islam* and *Modernity* in line with the Divine decree: *la talbisul haqqa bil batili* ... 02:42 Examples help us in understanding our matters on analogical grounds. Firmly believing that postulates of modernity are drastically against Islamic Paradigm, we cannot conceive of living without the products of modernity. Already acting upon the principle of *innovation* we are making use of western system of medicine, methods of physical and psychological treatment, education, administration, all kind of technology, economic, commercial and social institutions. Why

not to make use of experiments made by western civilization in the field of administration, politics, sociology and economic institutions etc. reconstructing them according to our ideology until we work out and develop institutions in accordance with our Islamic Paradigm. It is the superiority of a civilization or ideology that makes others to follow. A civilization can demonstrate its superiority only by practically proving on global scale that it can relieve humanity from fear and grief better than any other civilization. And it is a very sad reality that the Muslims/Islamic Organizations, Political parties, Movements etc., have not been able to translate values and disvalues stated in the Qur'ān into systems, institutions, approaches, technologies, models, sciences and disciplines covering all walks of life to demonstrate their worth on laboratory bench of a global society.

The idea of an Islamic/Muslim State is Un-Qur'ānic. Practical impossibility of bringing about any such State can be viewed from another angle. Muslims are divided into Shia' and Sunnis, for the last fourteen centuries. Each sect is further subdivided into sub-sects and factions cutting each other's throat in the name of religion! It is not the end. Are we not further subdivided into linguistic, national, tribal, and regional identities and interests! Let us follow the constitution of Madina as our model.

Liberalism and Secularism of the West is absorbing Muslim societies and their states in the fold of its civilization. Consciously or unconsciously Muslim social scholars are heading towards mixing western paradigm into Islamic teachings and molding Islam according to modernity. The right approach would be to benefit experiments made by western civilization in various fields following the principle of *bidat-i-hasana*. *Bidat-i-Hasana* had always been part of Islam, and it will remain so for ever.¹⁴ It is high time that we get out of Un-Qur'ānic Ideal and separating State from Religion concentrate on working out a secular socio-political set-up on the principles of equity and justice, well-being of the citizens, respect for civil and political liberties, governance by law with the consent of the governed, protection from arbitrary authority, maximization of the possibilities and opportunities for the actualization of abilities and minimization of pain and suffering from the life of citizens, eradication of poverty,

illiteracy and disease, non-discrimination on the base of caste, creed and religion — in accordance with Qur'ānic values and disvalues — admitting modernity through the doctrine of *bidat-i-hasana*.

In the near future secularism seems to prevail all over the world. World is going to be organized under a single system. All outward religious activities are likely to be banned. What I have said may seem unbelievable to someone, but could anyone imagine some thirty years back that the Muslims will say their regular everyday as well as ceremonial prayers in Pakistan, an alleged Islamic country, under so severe security arrangements! Was it ever believable for the Spanish Muslims in their golden days what happened to them in the ensuing centuries! Allah's Will prevails everywhere.

ENDNOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Cf. Javed Akbar Ansari 2004. "Sarmāya awr Sarmayadāri Nizām kiya hai?" (Urdu) in *Sāhil*, Volume 15, No. 7, pp. 3-4.
- 2 *Ibid*, 02:151 *Kamā 'Arsalnā Fīkum Rasūlāan Minkum Yatlū 'Alaykum 'Āyātīnā Wa Yuzakkīkum Wa Yu'allimukumu Al-Kitāba WaAl-Ĥikmata Wa Yu'allimukum Mā Lam Takūnū Ta'lamūna. Ibid*, 33:21 لقد كان لكم في رسول الله أسوة حسنة
- 3 A detailed exposition of all things, and guidance and a mercy to any such who believe. (12:111) وتفصيل كل شيء وهدى ورحمة لقوم يؤمنون...
- 4 And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge; for every act of hearing, or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). (17:36) ولا تقف ما ليس لك به علم إن السمع والبصر والفؤاد كل أولئك كان عنه مسئولا
- 5 *Ibid*, al-Fatiha: 03 (Māliki Yawmi Ad-Dīni – He is the Master of the day of requital.)
- 6 *Lā Yukallifu Allāhu Nafsāan 'Illā Wus'ahā Lahā Mā Kasabat Wa 'Alayhā Mā Aktasabat ... Ibid*, 02:286 Allah does not burden anyone beyond his capacity. One gets reward for that which one has earned, and one is punished for that which one has earned ...
- 7 All other values or disvalues expressly stated or derivable anywhere from the Qur'ān are subsumable under these broader categories. The values are as follows: **Ihsān**: Allah loves *mohsinīn* (02:195), *i.e.* those who provide convenience to others in the fulfillment of obligation/s devolved on them with reference to truth. **Taubā**: Allah loves *tawabīn* (02:222), *i.e.* those who seek forgiveness from Allah on the errors committed from them with the resolution to be upright in future. **Taharat**: Allah loves *mutatahhirīn* (02:222), *i.e.* those who remain chaste in seclusion as well as in public and have the honour to grant chastity. **Taqwa**: Allah loves *mutaqīn* (03:76), *i.e.* those who act righteously. The characteristics of the god-fearing are given at the very beginning of the Qur'ān at 02:02-05. It is they who has the eligibility to get guidance from the Qur'ān. They keep themselves free of contradiction, establish prayer and keep the commitment they make in it, and spend in the way of Allah, believe the Qur'ān as well as prior scriptures as revealed. **Sabar**: Allah loves *sābirīn* (03:146), *i.e.* those who are firm and steadfast with reference to the

truth. **Tawakkal**: Allah loves *motawakkilīn* (03:159), *i.e.* those who put their trust in Him. **Qist**: Allah loves *muqsitīn* (05:42), *i.e.* those who judge in equity. **Taharat**: Allah loves *mutahhirīn* (09:108), *i.e.* those who remain chaste in seclusion as well as in public.

The disvalues stated in the Qur'ān are as follows:

Transgression: Allah loves not *m'utadīn*, *i.e.* the transgressors. (02:190) To cross the limits prescribed by Allah is transgression. **Wickedness**: Allah loves not the ungrateful and wicked (*kaffar-in-aseem*). (02:276) **Kufer**: Allah loves not *kafirīn*, *i.e.* those who reject faith. (03:32) **Zulam**: Allah loves not *zalimīn*, *i.e.* the wrongdoers. (03:57) **Khatal wa Fakhar**: Allah loves not *mukhtālan-fakhūra*, *i.e.* vainglorious and the boastful. (4:36) **Betrayal and Crime**: Allah loves not *khawwanan-aseema*, *i.e.* the betrayer of His trust and the criminal. (04:107) **Fasād**: Allah loves not *mufsidīn*, *i.e.* the mischief makers. (05:64) **Isrāf**: Allah loves not *musrifīn*, *i.e.* the wasters. (06:141) **Khianat**: Allah loves not *khāinīn*, *i.e.* the treacherous/dishonest. (08:58) **Takabbar**: Allah loves not *mutakabbirīn*, *i.e.* the arrogant. (16:23) **Treachery and Ingratitude**: Allah loves not *khawwanin-kafūr*, *i.e.* treacherous and the ingrate. (22:38) **Farhat**: Allah loves not *farihīn*, *i.e.* who exult. (28:76)

- 8 Cf. Dr. Naeem Ahmed 2004. "Misâq-i-Madina" in *Ayyam-i-Habib*, Lahore: Ch. Mohammad Ayyub, pp. 415-426. Dr. Naeem writes: "The Pact of Madina provided that non-Muslim tribes were free to live according to their culture and traditions while remaining part of this pact for the defence of State." *Ibid*, p. 426. Also see, Dr. Hamidullah Haiderabadi 2005. *Siyasi Vasiqa-jaat*, Urdu tr. by Maulana Abu Yahya Imam Khan Noshehravi. Lahore: Majlas-e-Taraqi-e-Adab, 2nd reprint, pp. 35-40.
- 9 Al-Qur'ān, Lā 'Ikrāha Fī Ad-Dīni Qad Tabayyana Ar-Rushdu Mina Al-Ghayyi Faman Yakfur Biṭ-Ṭāghūti Wa Yu'umin Billāhi Faqadi Astamsaka Bil-'Urwati Al-Wuthqā Lā Anfiṣāma Lahā Wa Allāhu Samī'un `Alīmun (02.256). Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error.
- 10 Ref. Qist: Allah loves *muqsitīn* (05:42), *i.e.* those who judge in equity.
- 11 *Ibid*, 18:28.

- 12 Rahbaniyyat (monastic asceticism) was an innovation (*bida't*) of the Christians, Allah did not enjoin it on them. They had initiated it with the purpose of seeking Allah's pleasure. [Allah does not disapprove it.] They did not confine then within viable limits as they should. (Al-Hadīd, 57:27 *ورهبانية ابتدعوها ما كتبناها عليهم إلا وأذن في الناس بالحج* See also *وَأَذْنُ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ* 22:27, *وَأَذْنُ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ* 22:27, *وَأَذْنُ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ* 22:27, And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways. [Could the Muslims go on hajj as stated in this verse? This is *Bidat-e-hasana* that now we go by air for acting upon this injunction.]
- 13 Not everyone is qualified for the demarcation of limits for the relationship between truth and untruth. Those who know and those who do not know are not equal. (Az-Zumar, 39:09) *هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ* ...Only those who are endowed with understanding grasp the Message. (... *Wa Mā Yadhdhakkaru 'Illā 'Ulū Al-'Albābi*. Āl-i-Imrān, 03:07).
- 14 Reference to note 12 above. Also consider the following: Fine flour, which is very harmful for health, was never used by the Prophet (pbuh) in his life time. But now it is used by Muslims all over the world. The products of fine flour are used in Makka and Madina in highly abundant quantity. Is it not *bid'at-i-sayia*? To have photographs was once considered *bid'at-i-sayia* but is it not the case that performance of *Hajj* or *Umra* is not possible without it? Has it not become *bid'at-i-hasana*! Many more examples from everyday life can be given.