

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ

وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

**Allāh exalts those of you who
believe and those who are given
knowledge to high ranks**

Holy Qur'ān (58 : 11)



MESSAGE OF THAQALAYN

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Aims and Objectives

1. To provide a forum for scholars to make analytical studies of Islamic topics and themes.
2. To advance the cause of better understanding of the Qur'ān and the Ahl al-Bayt's ('a) contribution to Islam.
3. To publish English translations of Arabic and Persian works of Muslim scholars.
4. To endeavour to find Islamic answers to questions relating to the social, political, and moral problems of today.

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Scholars and writers from all over the world are invited to contribute to this journal.

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SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC CHARACTERS

CONSONANTS:

ء	'	س	s	ل	l
ب	b	ش	sh	م	m
ت	t	ص	s	ن	n
ث	th	ض	z	هـ	h
ج	j	ط	t	و	w
ح	h	ظ	z	ی	y
خ	kh	ع	'	Persian Letters	
د	d	غ	gh	پ	p
ذ	dh	ف	f	چ	ch
ر	r	ق	q	ژ	zh
ز	z	ک	k	گی	g

VOWELS:

Long:	ا	ā	Short:	ـَ	a	Doubled	یـِ	iyy (final from i)	
	و	ū		ـُ	u		وـُ	uww (final from ū)	
	ی	ī		ـِ	i		Diphthongs:	وـِ	au or aw
				ـِ				یـِ	ay or ai

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Editorial: The Fourth Martyr

It is rare to find multifaceted and comprehensive thinkers that distinguish themselves in various fields of intellectual and practical endeavour and leave behind immortal works for the benefit of mankind. One such man in the Muslim world was the martyr Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Sadr, who demonstrated great and rare brilliance and genius in various fields of thought and action. His intellectual and spiritual greatness made him a uniquely honored personage in contemporary Shi'ite history. Religiosity, piety, genius, honesty, courage, diligence, sensitivity and extensive and comprehensive knowledge characterized him. These traits can be found in every aspect of this noble martyr's life and works. Martyr Sadr is not only a rare role model for seminary students, his life and personality can also serve as a source of inspiration and enlightenment to all those who seek spiritual knowledge, illumination and truth.

Martyr Sadr's life was filled with the intellectual and practical struggle to safeguard Islam and the teachings of the Prophet (S). In the course of this struggle he laboured untiringly, endured great hardships, and, of course, accomplished much. In his

journey toward his noble aim he took effective theoretical and practical steps, the essence of which was the attempt to demonstrate the practicality of the teachings of Islam in harmony with the requirements of the age. He did this in regard to a wide range of issues in various fields of Islamic learning and produced worthy books in the process.

Sadr's life could be examined from different perspectives. Since we have dedicated this issue of the *Message of Thaqaalayn* to this dynamic star of the school of Najaf whose life was cut short in the dungeon of Baghdad in 1980, for the sake of brevity, we shall concern ourselves in the editorial, with the intellectual and scholarly dimension of this great thinker and scholar on the one hand and his social and political aspect on the other.

A. The Scholarly and Intellectual Dimension

Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Sadr's multidimensional personality, vast learning, deep thought and creative mind made him one of the most prominent intellectual figures of the Muslim world. His scholarly investigations and researches covered extensive areas in *fiqh*, philosophy, history and economics, and in every one of these subjects he produced works of immortal and universal significance. One trait that distinguished him from many other scholars was his ingenuity, creativity and critical ability. This characteristic had a profound impact on his works and helped to deepen their content and make them fresh. As a result of extensive scholarship and creativity, in every field in which he wrote, he produced books that not only subjected the works of earlier thinkers to painstaking criticism, but also offered new ideas and opened new intellectual vistas. His wide learning and profound insight into different schools of thought and intellectual perspectives enabled him to embark upon a comprehensive examination of all the issues under discussion and to set forth new opinions and views.

Martyr Sadr was keenly aware of the urgent need for modern Muslim thinkers, scholars and ulema to be knowledgeable about modern Western thought, philosophy and scientific methodology. This awareness led him, not only to embark upon a careful study of Western works on philosophy, logic and economics, but also to propose new approaches to the study of Islamic teachings. He considered it absolutely necessary for all Muslim seminary students and ulema to familiarize themselves with these modern ideas, approaches and methods and believed that this knowledge is vital if the needs of the Muslim world are to be met. This conviction caused him to campaign for the reform of the administrative and educational system of the seminaries so that these aims could be achieved. He did not limit himself to these reforms alone, but also believed that the use of modern methods and devices in the management of the Islamic seminaries and the introduction of new educational and research models are not only possible but in fact desirable. He proposed beneficial and effective plans in this regard. It is indeed imperative that all those involved in Islamic seminaries should study these proposals with the greatest of care and do their utmost to attain these fundamental and vital requirements. Ayatullah Sadr firmly believed that continuation of the present state of affairs in the Islamic seminaries will lead to great material and human loss for the Muslim world. Furthermore, he was fully aware that reform of the administrative structure of the seminaries is a gradual process that requires careful planning, the training of young men and the introduction of new ideas and academic fields into the seminaries.

In regard to the educational system governing Islamic seminaries, he believed that transformation of the textbooks, supervision of the manner in which teaching is conducted in different stages, and establishment of research centers connected with the seminaries are necessary. He also believed that the seminaries should make use of modern institutions of higher

learning. He not only did not consider this to be below the religious station of the seminaries, but in fact deemed it essential for making the education of the seminary students more efficient and for optimal use of the available material and human resources. He was particularly sensitive to the issue of textbooks and was very critical of the insistence of some instructors to continue teaching old textbooks. He thought it necessary to introduce the latest scholarly and scientific findings concerning *fiqh* and *usūl* and such modern academic disciplines as sociology, economics, philosophy and scientific methodology into the seminary curriculum. Of course, he proposed all these reforms in the context of the pivotal role of religious authorities. He set forth his ideas on this subject in his theory of religious authority.

Ayatullah Sadr believed that *fiqh* has the capability and flexibility to meet the requirements of every age, and scholars should demonstrate this dynamism of the Islamic *Shari'ah* since the requirements and needs of our own times are far greater and more varied than anything we have experienced in the past. Based on this conviction, he reorganized the different subjects and categories within *fiqh*, giving priority to social aspects over individual ones. Through his formal and substantial initiatives in Islamic law and its fundamental principles, his profound knowledge of the theoretical problems in *fiqh* and his scholarly attempts to solve them, he succeeded in revitalizing this important intellectual discipline. One of his major contributions in this field was *al-Fatāwā al-Wāzihah*.

One of Martyr Sadr's most important goals concerning *fiqh* and *usūl* was adapting fixed laws to changing temporal and local conditions, and he was much saddened by the fact that *ijtihād* had fallen into decay and had been pushed to the periphery of social life. He considered *fiqh* to be a theory that leads to action and regarded concrete and tangible social realities and needs to be the foundations of all research carried out in this field. He did not consider it sufficient to derive decrees and rulings by relying on

precedents or subjective beliefs. To sum up, his concerns regarding the various aspects of change and transformation in the Islamic seminaries were serious ones and deserve careful consideration from the responsible authorities.

B. Social and Political Dimensions

Martyr Sadr was not just a heroic figure in the world of scholarship and academic research, but maintained a brilliant and active presence on the social and political stage as well. In his view, the Muslim world does not suffer only from intellectual and scientific backwardness, but also from political inaction and imprisonment in the clutches of despotic and irreligious regimes. For this reason, from early youth, blessed by an unusually sharp mind and sensitive to the destiny of Islam and the Muslims, he entered the realm of political activity. From the theoretical perspective, one of his major preoccupations and goals in his scholarly researches and investigations was the establishment of the Islamic state. From his point of view, Islamic government, besides being a religious necessity, is also necessary for human civilization, since it is the only way in which human potential can flourish and Muslims may be allowed to obtain their natural and rightful status, which is none other than as vanguards of human civilization as a whole. The establishment of Islamic government, in other words, is the only way to liberate the Islamic world from the disarray, corruption and backwardness that afflict it today.

On the practical front as well, Ayatullah Sadr began an unrelenting struggle against the Iraqi regime with the aim of establishing the Islamic state. By setting up a political party, the Hizb al-Da'wah al-Islamiyyah, he organized extensive political opposition to the Iraqi Ba'th party. He emphasized the need for organized party activity and armed struggle in the pursuit of political aims. Following the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran, he rose to its defense, both intellectually and practically, and

called upon the Shi'ite majority of Iraq to emulate their Muslim brothers and sisters in Iran. While inviting them to rise, he urged them to follow the leadership of Imam Khumaynī (God's blessings be upon him), deeply convinced that Imam Khumaynī was the hope of the Muslims. This is how he addressed the Iraqi people on this subject:

Is it reasonable that such a religious authority as Imam Khumaynī should establish an Islamic state, something that we had always hoped for and dreamed about, and we should refrain from supporting him out of fear that we may thereby invoke the wrath of the Iraqi regime?

Martyr Sadr believed that all those who die in Iran in defense of Islam and the Muslims are martyrs and that God shall bless them with the company of Imam Husayn ('a). Martyr Sadr himself was finally tortured and killed in a cruel manner by the Ba'thist regime and attained martyrdom for the sake of his noble ideals. Thus, one of the greatest intellectual resources of the Muslim world left us at a time when the various fields of Islamic thought, the seminaries, and most important of all, the Islamic Revolution, desperately needed the ingenuity, creative ideas and sublime thoughts of this unequalled genius of our time.

Today, the nobility and profundity of Ayatullah Sadr's thought, his courage in the realms of thought and action, his indefatigable efforts and his deep faith in Islam invite all committed Muslim intellectuals, thinkers and scholars to pay fresher and deeper attention to his personality and thoughts and to follow his lead in the realms of thought and action, so that the vast horizons and vistas of his thought may once again clench the thirst of the true seekers of original and fresh ideas.

Thematic Exegesis According to Martyr Sadr

By: Sayyid Muhammad ‘Alī Ayāzī

Introduction

Muslims recite the Holy Qur’ān and understand the meaning of its verses as per its specific arrangement (*tartīb*) to which they have always attached special importance. According to confirmed sources the Holy Qur’ān was arranged in its present form in the time of Prophet Muhammad (S) himself.¹ The exegetes of the Holy Qur’ān, right from the period of its compilation, have not only memorised its contents as per this arrangement but have interpreted its verses and written commentaries according to the same order. This is why in the history of the exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān we find all traditional commentaries written in the order of its arrangement (*tafsīr tartībī*).

However, parallel to this traditional norm there have been other modes, such as exegesis on the basis of the order of revelation of the verses of the Holy Qur’ān (*tafsīr ‘alā tartīb al-Nuzūl*)² as well as thematic exegesis (*tafsīr mawzū‘ī*). Without doubt these developments or adaptation of particular modes saw the emergence of some great scholars. History is witness to the blossoming of different methods of writing exegesis to the extent

that a branch of knowledge called research exegesis has taken shape. As a result valuable works have been written for critical evaluation and introduction of a particular exegesis.³

Among the scholars who focused on thematic exegesis⁴ of the Holy Qur'ān by classifying the contents into different topics, was Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr who was known for his dynamic views on all topics in which he has written books including philosophy, economics, logic, *kalām*, *usūl* and *fiqh*. He was a prodigy whose scholarly views manifest his full awareness of the times. Since his views on thematic exegesis have not been fully reflected by critics, we will attempt a review of his thoughts in this particular field bearing in mind the importance of thematic or topical interpretation of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān on the basis of other verses. First let us briefly explain what is meant by thematic exegesis.

What is Thematic Exegesis?

Thematic exegesis is the method to recognize, interpret and make clear a subject mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān by taking note of verses which bear commonality and share a purport or have a phraseology which helps determine the topic. The method which the exegete follows in this regard is to classify various verses which speak on the same topic and by analysing them attempts to expound the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'ān. Generally, thematic exegesis seeks to provide answers to questions in different fields such as doctrinal, social, political, historical, jurisprudential and even conceptual. The exegete attempts to derive his viewpoint on the basis after a viewpoint.

In contrast to traditional exegesis which follows the order of arrangement of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān and where the sole aim of the exegete is to make clear the meaning and concept of each and every verse and its expression without bothering to derive any particular viewpoint, thematic exegesis has broader objectives than the simple understanding of the verse or the expression used

in it. The exegete here by focusing on the meaning and purport of each and every *āyah*, attempts to determine the Qur'ānic perspective on a particular topic from among several topics. He attempts to find from a set of *āyahs* the perspective of the Qur'ān which the Holy Book itself has mentioned, and moreover the exegete by analysing and evaluating the different opinions expressed or criteria mentioned for a particular topic, extracts the view which is compatible with the Qur'ān.

Element of Theme in Thematic Interpretation

The question here arises on which theme in the Holy Qur'ān should we focus attention for research? Which points are worth consideration in the thematic interpretation? Different interpreters have different approaches. Some focus on the phrases and terminology in the Holy Book itself by selecting root words, as for instance *sabr* (patience) or *insān* (man). Others take the apparent meaning of the words to build upon a theme, which might be related to human beings and social issues. Yet there are some who think that thematic interpretation covers concepts as well, whose elaboration would provide answers to the ambiguities man is facing. For example, it is interesting to find out the different meaning and application of the word *kufr* as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān. There are various other similar Qur'ānic words such as *nifāq*, *fisq*, *tāghūt*, etc. which have more than one meaning, and this necessitates a thematic interpretation to classify the terms and unveil the hidden realities of their contents.

Can one extend the sphere of the thematic interpretation to cover all concepts and meanings of the Holy Qur'ān, or does theme simply mean the external and outward interpretation of topics related to human life? Principally, those who regard thematic interpretation confined to the first and second categories, claim that research on the roots of the words falls within the domain of etymology, while extraction of the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'ān is aimed at addressing conceptual controversies on the basis of

human experiences. Therefore, to take up such a task, an interpreter should be aware of different views in order to find the core of the theme under investigation. He should, however, know that as long as no question is raised and as long as no dispute arises it would be impossible to have a specific viewpoint. But if the aim in determining the theme is to try to discover what actually is the Qur'ān's point of view, then such research undeniably falls in the category of the key and compound concepts found in the Holy Book itself. The task here is not merely to discover the meaning of a single word or classify *āyahs* which contain such words, but the goal is to render an analysis on the viewpoint of the Qur'ān in repeatedly using such words and phrases.

Thus, any attempt to discover and unveil the core meaning of a word or theme in the Qur'ān needs to be seen in the light of the Qur'ān itself. For instance, when defining *muhkam* and *mutashābih* in the Holy Qur'ān, the interpreter should take into consideration the apparent meaning as well as evidences pointing to the subject concerned. He needs to clarify what is *muhkam* or what is *mutashābih*, and what solid proofs does the Qur'ān provides in this regard? Is the Qur'ān all *muhkam* or is it all *mutashābih*? Is it partially *muhkam* and partially *mutashābih*?⁵ Naturally, such kind of interpretation requires a thematic approach, and thematic interpretation means to concentrate on a disputed subject rather than trying to find a specific word and phrase in the Holy Book. The theme under scrutiny for which the interpreter is trying to find an answer might be in or outside the Qur'ān. Thematic interpretation may also be confined to a special subject or view concerning life. In view of these facts, 'theme' could be broadly based on the following three categories:

1. The concept of *naskh*, *badā'*, *tashābuh*, *shirk*, *kufr*, *nifāq* and scores of similar words whose meaning are vital for an understanding of the Holy Qur'ān, since they serve as a basis for proper recognition of other Qur'ānic terms such as Allah, *Rahmān*,

Rahīm, Kitāb, Tibyān, 'Arsh, Kursī and Qalam. In these cases an etymological approach is not enough but what is required is an overall analysis of the Holy Book rather than sticking to the context of a single verse.

2. Topics which are not mere conceptual debates and are beyond the framework of routine issues in man's life but have been questions gripping the human mind for ages. One can point in this regard to themes such as *'ālam al-ghayb, malā'ikah, jinn,* and dozens of similar phrases with ideological bearings, which deal with the way man and universe have come into existence. A thematic interpretation attempts to extract the viewpoint of the Qur'ān in this regard by studying and classifying *āyahs* that refer to any of these themes and provide a rational answer.

3. Abstract topics such as freedom, government, power, rights, violation, production, distribution, consumption, education and similar issues regarding which man wants to know the attitude and guidelines of religion. Here the interpreter first tries to discover whether the Qur'ān has referred to any of these themes, and if so, he derives the guidelines and viewpoints of the Holy Book on these subjects.

Objective of Thematic Interpretation

Objective plays a vital role in clarification of a theme and the direction the exegete has chosen. If the goal and objective is clear, one will better understand the realm of thematic exegesis, which in reality is an attempt to identify the viewpoints of the Holy Qur'ān on various issues. This may include the views on problems facing communities and their beliefs or the intricacies associated with language. For instance, what is meant by the word 'Allah'? Is 'Allah' a new concept mentioned by the Holy Qur'ān, or was the word in use during the pre-Islamic period as well? The exegete here attempts to shed light on the lexical and semantic meanings of God and man as mentioned in the Qur'ān. Japanese Islamic scholar Tushihiko Izutsu has conducted extensive research on relations

between God and man from the Qur'ānic worldview. He has named his research Qur'ānic Semantics because the objective was to concord the semantic method with grammatical analysis of the words of the Holy Qur'ān. Scholars who attempt such researches normally classify the divine verses and group them thematically so as to find out God's intention in the Qur'ān. Undoubtedly, such a research goes beyond mere morphology and is a sort of exploration and discovery. Therefore, the objective of thematic exegesis is to identify the viewpoints of the Qur'ān on various issues including the ideological bases such as *tawhīd* (monotheism), *'adl* (justice), *nubuwwah* (prophethood), *imāmah* (imamate), *ma'ād* (resurrection) and the like. In this case, verses having a common theme are separated and classified, so as to help understand the actual purport and viewpoint of the Holy Qur'ān in this regard.

Thematic exegesis helps unravel issues related to man's life, since certain issues are time-bound and undergo changes in pace with the evolutionary process of social development. Man wants to know what solution the Qur'ān presents in this regard. For instance, which kind of government is approved by Islam and how should such a government be run? Man wants to know which kind of society the Qur'ān considers as upright and religious and in line with the goals of the Divine Messengers? Which principles and values should govern the society? How to deal with proponents and opponents, as well as the hostile and those waging war? What principles and laws pertain to economy and other spheres of life? These are some of the questions that normally arise. Man has presented solutions to these issues from his experiences in life and history, but the way of approach differs, and thematic exegesis is a novel attempt to identify the topics and define the viewpoints of the Qur'ān. However, one cannot claim that since *muhkam* and *mutashābih* are purely Qur'ānic semantics or since the debate on 'Allah' and 'Rahmān' is the concern of morphological studies,

therefore, these topics cannot be included in the framework of thematic exegesis.

Difference Between Thematic Exegesis and Interpretation of Qur'ān by Qur'ān

Some mistakenly believe that thematic exegesis is the same as interpretation of *āyahs* of the holy Qur'ān on the basis of other *āyahs*. It is true that basically thematic exegesis requires a brief explanation of *āyahs* through recourse to other *āyahs* for the purpose of grouping *āyahs* sharing similar purport and meaning but the important point is that instead of explaining a single *āyah* by referring to other *āyahs*, the thematic exegete discusses all other *āyahs* having a common theme in order to give a better and comprehensive understanding of the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'ān. The reason for application of such a method is fully clear because the most natural way for understanding the Holy Book is by referring to the other words of the Speaker Himself, Who is Almighty God. 'Allāmah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabātabā'i says in his monumental exegesis *Tafsīr al-Mizān* that the best method is to refer to the Qur'ān itself and seek help from other *āyahs* in order to fully understand the meaning of the *āyah* under discussion.

The aim of the thematic exegete, as said before, is extraction of views of the Qur'ān rather than emphasis on a specific *āyah* as is done in the case of Qur'ān by Qur'ān interpretation. Perhaps an *āyah* might be referred to frequently and used as a criterion for another *āyah* but the purpose is not to derive a single meaning nor to find out the intention of each *āyah*, rather it is to clarify the theme of the various *āyahs*. In other words, in thematic exegesis, *āyahs* sharing similar and related meaning, are grouped together according to the specific approach of the exegete in order to provide the answer to a particular question and help one understand the viewpoint of the Qur'ān on that subject. According to Martyr Sadr, this method is actually an analytical interpretation for better

understanding of the different themes in the Holy Qur'ān and unravelling the secrets of the *āyahs* by recourse to other *āyahs* in order to discover the topic under discussion. By thematic exegesis, he means efforts to discover a subject from among different subjects related to man's ideological and social life as well as knowledge of existence. This method helps narrow down the theme under study and helps extract the viewpoints of the Qur'ān. Thus, as it should be clear if the interpreter intends to explain the meaning of a word or a phrase in a particular *āyah* on the basis of another *āyah*, it is called exegesis of the Qur'ān through the Qur'ān. But if the aim is to discover a message in the Qur'ān and unravel its viewpoint on a particular subject, it is called thematic exegesis.

Importance of Thematic Exegesis

The Holy Qur'ān, as accepted by all believers, is the “*guidance for mankind*” (2:185), “*manifest light*” (4:174), and the “*Book explaining everything*” (16:89). But if one wants to find the Qur'ān's views on the different issues and human needs, or if a non-Muslim is interested to know the various themes in the Holy Scripture of the Muslims, any exegesis in the traditional order of arrangement will not be of much help in providing clue to the Qur'ānic viewpoint on a particular subject. The Qur'ān was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S) over a period of twenty-three years and sheds light on the various needs, conditions and incidents, and at the same time says that it is a constitution for all generations to come, but how could contemporary Muslims find answers to their growing needs in its contents? For instance, during the Meccan period, the *āyahs* of the Qur'ān revolved around the sin of idol-worship, *shirk* (polytheism), ignorance and the exhortation to *tawhīd*. Later when Islam had founded a state in Medina, divine revelation focused on *jihād*, confronting the internal and external enemies, machinations of the hypocrites, rules on ideology and administration, and the like. Apparently, since the revelation

addresses the specific situation and covers just one dimension of the issue under discussion, any exegesis of the Qur'ān according to its order of arrangement will not cater to the complex issues of the modern man, unless the *āyahs* are classified as per their themes such as economy, politics, education, science, awareness, freedom, corruption, disbelief, administration, etc. Qur'ānic *āyahs* are like a string of pearls, each with its own dazzling glow, sometimes matching another string and sometimes indicating a slightly or totally different radiance, that carries its own meaning and purport. Thus, it is for the thematic exegete to meticulously sort and match the different *āyahs* and discover the answers to the changing needs of man and society.

Moreover, exegesis in order of the traditional arrangement cannot meet the present needs of the society since it deals with each and every *āyah* in a separate and disintegrated form and simply presents a large number of unrelated guidelines, injunctions and concepts without analysing the viewpoints of Qur'ān on a particular issue. However, this method is indispensable, due to the fact that thematic interpretation is not possible unless the exegete in his attempt to group *āyahs* on the basis of a subject goes through the exegesis in order of traditional arrangement. One cannot go directly to any theme unless the meaning of Qur'ānic words and phrases are clear enough to be matched and classified together.

Martyr Sadr, underlining the importance of thematic interpretation, has said that the exegete here attempts to discover the Qur'ān's view on a subject and draws inspiration from the Qur'ān so as to discover the views of the Holy Book on the ideas that come under discussion. In view of this, it could be said thematic exegesis is inextricably linked with man's experience and progress. One can conclude that thematic exegesis is a kind of dialogue with the Qur'ān and asking questions from it. It is not merely a desperate attempt to find any weak response but is a dynamic way of discovering the amazing realities of life as God

has enclosed in His final revelation to mankind. As the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Alī ('a), after reciting the *āyah* "We have not neglected in the Book (Qur'ān) anything" (6:38), says:

"Certainly the outside of the Qur'ān is wonderful and its inside is deep (in meaning). Its wonders will never disappear, its amazement will never pass away and its intricacies cannot be cleared except through itself." (*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 18)

Methods of Thematic Exegesis

Thematic exegetes have used different methods to extract the viewpoints of the Holy Qur'ān. Similar to the different approaches among exegetes following the order of traditional arrangement, thematic exegetes have followed the same pattern, and according to modern research have been divided chronologically with respect to the intellectual and social developments and their distinctive leanings to determine a subject. True, thematic exegesis is something new but methodological differences are observed in this field. For instance, some believe that Qur'ānic themes are shaped in tune with man's ideas and experiences and an exegete should not extract an unconvincing answer from the Qur'ān so as to meet inferences on the topic under scrutiny. Rather, the exegete after looking at a particular problem in life and in reality, and determining the existing viewpoints and theories, should make recourse to the Holy Book to find out what it says in this regard.⁷ It is often seen that themes are taken out of the context and beyond the intellectual and social needs, while at times they are strictly confined to the realm of jurisprudence. The questions which arise are: Do jurists, irrespective of their religious and philosophical attitudes, act similarly as far as their inferential method is concerned? Are the styles adopted by Usūlis and Akhbāris identical? Is there a similarity between the methods of past and contemporary jurists? A look at the jurisprudential

works would reveal the stylistic differences.⁸ The method some use is mainly documentary. Others follow an analytical and descriptive style of thematic interpretation. Yet there are some who have devised a comparative approach by evaluating man's experiences according to the guidelines of the Qur'ān. Still others have resorted to what they call a scientific method of thematic interpretation by using scientific theories and comparing them with the *āyahs* of the Holy Qur'ān, so as to justify their intentions. To sum up, thematic exegesis can be broadly classified into the following three categories:

1. Exegesis based on religious and social beliefs, attitudes and disciplines.
2. Exegesis based on outward and inward approaches of methodological differences.
3. Exegesis based on order of arrangement and in accordance with the theme of the *āyahs* under discussion.

Therefore, if the one trying to render a thematic interpretation compares human beings' attitudes, besides using tradition so as to understand the book, or follows historical and experimental methods to understand the purpose of the issue under discussion, he has in fact followed a special method that is different from methods of other interpreters who do not accept the fundamentals and principally do not give any value to the experimental and historical methods.

What the one presenting a thematic interpretation lays as foundation of his interpretation, in fact requires a different method that affects the way the interpreter infers. The interpreter, who believes there is no contrast between religion and science, is in fact making a kind of inference. The one who thinks religion does not supervise issues related to existence and man's creation and believes that what have come in religious texts are merely reflection of the contemporary culture, is in fact making a

distinction between the methods used by the interpreter for inference.

In view of this classification, the one attempting a thematic interpretation by taking human attitudes into account on the basis of *hadith* in order to understand the purport of the Qur'ān, or following historical and experimental methods to understand the issue under discussion, has in fact adopted a special method that is different from others who do not accept the fundamentals. On the other hand, the exegete who believes there is no contradiction between religion and science is in fact making a kind of inference. Similarly the one who thinks religion does not supervise issues related to existence and man's needs and believes that religious texts are a mere reflection of the culture and necessities of the times, has in fact gone wide off the track in his methods as an interpreter.

Examples of Thematic Exegesis

As we said, thematic interpretation follows a specific style. In contrast to the method of *tartībī* exegesis which might have a variety of approaches depending on the school of *ijtihād* of the exegete or his philosophical, gnostic, mystical, scientific, historical and various other leanings, thematic exegesis is free of such shades. However, a look at thematic exegesis nonetheless reveals the diversity of approach and the methods used by the exegetes because of their tendencies, degree of knowledge, sensitivities and eventually backgrounds. It will not be out of context to cast a cursory glance at some well-known thematic exegetes and their works to understand the difference in style.

1. Martyr Mutahhari

Ayatullah Murtazā Mutahhari attempted both the thematic interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān as well as the *tartībī* one. He surveyed a large volume of religious issues from the Qur'ānic point of view. Among the salient features of his research on different

topics, one can refer to his discussion on *Recognition of the Qur'ān*, *The Qur'ān and Problems of Life*, *Primordial Nature from the Qur'ān's Viewpoint*, *Society and History*, *Man in the Qur'ān*, *Women's Rights*, *Fundamental Liberties* and various other issues. An important point raised by Martyr Mutahhari in his extraction of themes from the Qur'ān is their instructional aspects in addition to their analytical and descriptive features. Throughout his works he has sought to prove to the reader that the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'ān is superior to all other theories and viewpoints which have varying degrees of weaknesses. We will attempt a brief analysis of his book *The Qur'ān and Problems of Life* in order to have a better understanding of the method and purport of thematic interpretation.

This work, as indicated by its title, includes a collection of philosophical discussions in the light of the Holy Qur'ān with reference to the quality of the soul, its relationship with the body, the basic differences between the animate beings and the inanimate objects, and the comparatively differing approaches of materialists and theologians to the issue of life and evolution. Mutahhari even shows the difference between the logic employed by the theologians and the logic of the Qur'ān, and by explaining the seemingly ambiguous reference to the soul in the Qur'ān, provides justification on the basis of modern science. The language used by him in his thematic interpretation is descriptive and analytical. His method is highly comprehensive and convincing as well. To prove his points, he makes references not only to cognizant creatures but also to animals and plants. He refers to traces of intellect in creatures with ability to see and hear, get guided and offer guidance, and be inspired and follow instincts.⁹ The author raises the most interesting topic on difference between approaches of the theologians and the actual logic of the Holy Qur'ān. He explains that theologians refer to living creatures in their attempts to prove existence and related phenomenon, and since they do not find any other way to justify manifestation of life, they say that the creatures

have come into being as God wished. Moreover, he says, theologians often speak about God from a negative angle by viewing Him out of ignorance and pursuing illusions with the result that the more their knowledge increases, the weaker becomes their faith in Almighty Creator. The Qur'ān, as Mutahhari notes, does not follow such methods and never resorts to cases of disorder to prove monotheism. The Holy Book, in fact, refers to factors whose prelude and natural reasons are known to human beings, and invites them to ponder and bear testimony. On existence, the Qur'ān says it is merely a high degree of mercy which originates from a point far superior to the tangible object.¹⁰

Martyr Mutahhari's other works also have similar themes. He does not specifically emphasize on words in his thematic interpretation but uses the words wherever he thinks they would help clarify the point under discussion. He also takes into account the criticisms raised by the opponents and exposes the weakness of their attitude. His discussion is exhaustive because the words are carefully studied in depth and are supported by logical explanations. He classifies different theoretical or practical solutions while logically raising related problems and gives preference to the viewpoint that is compatible with them. His method is thus rationalistic and this rationalism is evident in all his discussions on the various aspects of the Holy Qur'ān.

2. 'Abbās Mahmūd 'Aqqād

The Egyptian writer Dr. 'Abbās Mahmūd 'Aqqād has left several books on Qur'ānic themes such as *Man in the Qur'ān*, *Woman in the Qur'ān*, and *Qur'ānic Philosophy*. His work *Man in the Qur'ān* deals with Qur'ān's philosophical approach towards man. He presents a critical evaluation of Qur'ānic viewpoints by comparing them with Western philosophical schools. The first part of the book deals with the description of man in the Holy Qur'ān, while the second part touches on the views of Western scholars and new approaches in contemporary philosophy. He critically

recounts their attitudes. The book *Qur'ānic Philosophy* deals with a collection of scientific discussions on creation, ethics, government, social strata, heritage, multiplicity of wives, international relations, soul, designity and various other themes. The method the author uses is comparative and at times critical. To understand issues better, the author uses a descriptive and analytical method. He then deals with themes in the Holy Qur'ān that are both similar and distinctive. Here, he quotes prominent scholars and philosophers and points to their problems with respect to the views the Qur'ān put forwards. He then defends the Qur'ānic viewpoint in a rational and convincing way and provides answers to doubts entertained on the injunctions of the Qur'ān.¹¹

At the end of his book 'Aqqād stresses that his aim in focusing on Qur'ānic themes is to judge philosophical disciplines, since many ancient philosophers had vouched the rationality of the Qur'ānic viewpoints. His other book, *Woman in the Qur'ān* is one of the best works dealing with women's psychology, their ethical features and their role in society. It puts forward the reasons for the Qur'ān's special emphasis on social behaviour, law, punishment, heritage and other related issues. 'Aqqād's method is mainly comparative and follows a defensive approach since he attempts to demonstrate to the reader that the injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān are superior to what the human mind can devise. He uses a descriptive and analytical style rather than mere accumulation of facts and compares God's revealed word with the fallacies of the human schools of thought. He begins with theories and discussions concerning what some regard as ambiguities in Qur'ānic injunctions, and then explores the various dimensions of the problems. For example, in *Woman in the Qur'ān*, when dealing with issues related to women, he explains the misunderstanding that is often raised concerning equality of women's rights, and then answers the questions by focusing on the Qur'ān's view of equality and how logically the issue of women's rights is resolved.¹²

3. Muhammad Taqī Misbāh

Ayatullah Muhammad Taqī Misbāh is among the contemporary Iranian scholars with valuable contributions in the field of thematic exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān. As part of his research, he has focused on the Qur'ānic outlook on universe and humanity. In the field of Qur'ān's ethics, he deals with society and history from the Qur'ān's point of view. In the field of theology he cites rational proofs based on the Qur'ān and surveys the principle of monotheism in the Holy Book from various angles. His researches probe the universe, earth, heavens, their diversity and the essence of creation including *'arsh*, *kursī*, day, night and natural phenomena from the point of view of the Qur'ān in order to make man aware of God's blessings. He says the Qur'ān is not a book of physics, botany, geology or any other specific subject, but includes all these and many other themes.¹³ In discussions concerning man, he deals with natural and philosophical aspects. His book *Ethics in the Qur'ān* compares the ethical concepts in the Holy Book with the theories coined by man in this field. The most important point, he notes in his thematic interpretation, is the difference between the ethical system of Islam and other systems. He also defines the educational points raised by the Qur'ān. Misbāh's *Society and History from the Viewpoint of the Qur'ān* deals with differences in social life, civil societies, and social changes.

Ayatullah Misbāh's aim in his thematic research is to enable other scholars to focus on Islamic injunctions in order to study the peripheral problems of society and find solutions for them in the light of the timeless wisdom of the Holy Qur'ān. As for classification of *āyahs*, he provides an elaborate discussion in his book, *Qur'ānic Sciences*, and proposes classification of the various themes in the Qur'ān on the basis of ideology, ethics, rules, humanity and monotheism. Misbāh's approach to thematic interpretation is primarily supported by ideological rules and

philosophical knowledge. Sometimes his works go beyond the mere raising of issues and adopts a comparative attitude and then he proceeds to find evidence in the Qur'ān to prove his points.¹⁴ He believes that pondering and contemplating on the words and phrases of the Qur'ān, helps in discovering the inner meanings of the ayahs and is actually a transition from interpretation according to order of traditional arrangement to thematic interpretation. However,

Ayatullah Misbāh relies less on the views of philosophers, especially the Westerners, and because of this ignores their criticism in various fields, especially in matters concerning God.

Thus as should be clear, different scholars use different methods of thematic interpretation, and this will help us to understand the approach of Martyr Sadr to the thematic exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān.

Martyr Sadr and Thematic Exegesis

The views of Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr on thematic interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān could be assessed from his books, *Muqaddamāt fī Tafṣīr al-Mawzū'ī al-Madrasah al-Qur'āniyyah*, as well as the twelve lessons he gave at the Najaf Seminary on the historical aspects in his work and which were later published along with the book. His views on this topic could be summarised as follows.

1. Thematic exegesis actually completes the task of *tartībī* exegesis, and is complementary to it since in the absence of *tartībī* interpretation there cannot be any thematic interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān.¹⁵

2. *Tartībī* exegesis is not capable of pronouncing the last word on the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'ān on any topic in contrast to thematic interpretation which delves into the boundless ocean of the *āyahs* to determine and define a topic.¹⁶

3. Thematic exegesis is the only way to enable understand the Qur'ān's views on the vast variety of issues in life.¹⁷

4. Thematic exegesis is not merely applied for specific topic and concepts but covers all the subjects that fall within the framework of religion and man's life and the problems that one faces.¹⁸

5. The main difference between thematic exegesis and *tartībī* exegesis is the recognition of a goal or objective. The thematic pursues specific aspects of life or ideological and social issues,

Elaboration of His Views

However, from Ayatullah Sadr's viewpoint, collection and juxtaposition of verses around a specific subject cannot be termed as thematic exegesis. After outlining his views, we will attempt a broader discussion of his approach to thematic interpretation. Martyr Sadr says that the thematic method is inextricably related to the *tartībī* method. He emphasizes that mankind has always been following the road to progress, and the more increase in knowledge and information, the more mature a human being would be regarded. The questions that race across the human mind are rapidly growing everyday. Since scientific progress affects man's life and changes his behaviour and attitude, religion should find answers to all questions that flash in his mind. The only way that one can find satisfactory answers is to refer to the Holy Qur'an which is the revealed word of God Almighty for the benefit of human society. This task cannot be undertaken by *tartībī* exegesis whose sole intention is to unravel the meaning, purport and significance of a word or *āyahs* in order of the traditional arrangement. It is here that thematic exegesis comes to the rescue to satisfy the thirst of the human intellect.²⁰

Some might point out that the different themes have also been raised by *tartībī* exegetes such as Rashīd Rizā in *al-Manār* and 'Allāmah Tabātabā'i in *al-Mizān*. But one should bear in mind that Martyr Sadr did not negate *tartībī* exegesis. Rather, he said that thematic interpretation completes the traditional exegesis, and

by classifying the *āyahs*, determines the widely expanding topics and unravels solution to the myriad of problems. He firmly believed that thematic exegesis is actually a developed version of *tartībī* exegesis. The realm of this method is wide and extensive and covers almost everything from family issues to political problems and scientific progress. Sadr stressed on a unique form of thematic interpretation by taking into consideration human experiences and knowledge, in contrast to the tendency of traditional interpreters. Thematic interpretation, in addition, is a firm proof of the miracle of the Holy Qur'ān and practically demonstrates the dynamism of Islam when faced with new and ever-expanding issues.²¹

Another point that Martyr Sadr took note was that thematic exegesis is vital for jurisprudence which in itself is a thematic interpretation of the science of *hadīth*. He said the science of jurisprudence would not have reached the present high stage if commentaries on *hadīth* narration such as *al-Wāfi*, *Mirāt al-'Uqūl* and scores of other books, had not been written. Principally, jurisprudence focuses on life and its realities, and it responds to the questions concerning the rituals of worship or trade and social issues, and at the same time covers the penal fields. Consequently jurists sorted and classified *hadīth* and gathered them according to specific topics so as to facilitate the determination of the Islamic point of view in keeping with the facts of life. Sadr thus maintained that thematic exegesis is actually this very method for determining the Qur'ānic viewpoints on various issues and the changing needs, after proper probe into socio-political and scientific fields. He said, unlike *tartībī* exegesis which strictly adheres to syntax, lexical aspects and the intricacies of the Arabic language, thematic exegesis has an amazing flexibility that keeps pace with scientific developments and addresses the new issues in life. This is not something strange. If the Holy Qur'ān says that it covers everything of the past, present and future and is the

constitution of the human race till the Day of Resurrection; thematic interpretation of the Holy Book, in the words of Martyr Sadr, is the most appropriate way of proving its timeless wisdom.

On the benefits of thematic exegesis compared to *tartībī* exegesis, Martyr Sadr was of the opinion that the latter method of interpretation has led to many religious conflicts and controversies because it is enough for an interpreter to take an ayah of the Qur'ān and bend it according to his sectarian tendencies in an attempt to justify his own religious views, thereby fanning the flames of dispute. There have been many such cases with philosophical terms such as *jabr* (compulsion) and *tafwiz* (delegation of power), which were twisted to satisfy sectarian whims and led to fanning of clashes which could have been avoided.

Critics might point out that thematic exegesis is also not without its shortcomings, since some exegetes might attribute a specific topic to the Qur'ān in an attempt to interpret divine words according to their own personal thinking, rather than try to find a solution for the problems of man and society for which God has revealed the Holy Book. Such a possibility does exist, but attention to the remarks of Martyr Sadr might remove many conceptions, especially when one takes into account such terms as *muhkamāt*, *muqayyadāt*, *mukhassasāt* and so on, which practically diminish the possibility of a self-centred approach. He says: "Let's ignore the case of contradictions that occur in *tartībī* interpretation which can be avoided in thematic exegesis."²² For instance, when one wants to know the view of the Qur'ān on democracy and the position of people in a government, he will first probe the views of political philosophers on this subject and in the light of human experiences will study the reasons for emergence of such regulations in societies. Then he will refer to the Holy Qur'ān to discover its attitude whether or not there is any specific *āyah* or group of *āyahs* in this regard.

In view of this, Martyr Sadr has called thematic interpretation as dynamic and says that subjects emanate from external events. Since such issues are new and have their roots in the various social, political, and scientific developments, thematic exegesis is more capable of dealing with them. However, he does not consider prejudged notions as thematic interpretation of the Qur'ān and holds the view that such a research will not help solve the daily problems of life. Moreover he is critical of those who attempt a thematic interpretation without taking into account the human experience and comparing them with the Qur'ān. He calls such an approach incomplete and flawed, and says, firstly the interpreter should be sure that the particular topic falls in the category of issues concerning man's life and the practical or theoretical problems of society. Secondly, he should be aware of the existing solutions and experiences in this regard, and then compare them with the viewpoints of the Holy Qur'ān. This point is worth pondering because man comes across many problems on a daily basis and the experiences he has gained are not exclusive to a special environment or geographical region.

Thus, the questions and answers are in fact a form of dialogue between Qur'ān and thematic interpreter. Among other points that Martyr Sadr raises is the historical background of thematic exegesis and factors which necessitated such an interpretation. After taking note that the science of exegesis evolved because of the eagerness of the people to properly understand the Qur'ān by asking the Prophet, the Infallible Imams, and prominent companions, to expound the meanings of certain of its *āyahs*, he says thematic interpretation of the text emerged because of social exigencies. As man's knowledge and expectations grew, he became more eager to have a scientific explanation of religious and spiritual needs through reference to the Qur'ān.

On the whole, from Ayatullah Sadr's point of view, the science of thematic interpretation is based on three pillars:

1. Ambiguous points should be separated and the approach of the exegete to any specific topic should be clear and unambiguous.

2. Human experience in any field should first be taken into consideration with all its positive and negative points, and then only should the Holy Qur'an be consulted in order to find the solution to the topic.

3. Approach should be deductive and in the form of a question and answer dialogue to the effect that the Qur'an's view is clarified and unravelled for the benefit of human society.

Sadr holds the view that in trying to discover a theme in the Qur'an, the interpreter should first understand the topic in question very well so as to properly present it to the Qur'an. Subjects such as 'Patience in the Qur'an', 'Covenant in the Qur'an', 'Guidance in the Qur'an', and so on might not be a difficult job but if there are attempts to take a look at some social issues, the complexity of understanding the particular theme as well as its experiences, would make the task complicated. For example, one of the problems with man has been freedom. In the course of history, man has been suffering various forms of restrictions since he believes that wars, poverty, social discrimination and injustice are the fruits of dictatorship. He has come to the conclusion that in the absence of freedom, there will be no justice, and as long as there is no freedom, power would be abused by certain people. He thus believes that only freedom of expression will help prevent corruption of power at the higher levels. However, this is man's view and not necessarily that of the Holy Qur'an which looks at such issues from a different perspective. Therefore, we have got to study the Qur'an in order to understand what God the Almighty Creator actually says regarding freedom of the individual and society, and what sort of regulations there should be to ensure prosperity and salvation for the human being.

Martyr Sadr in debates on historical philosophy surveys the issue from this outlook. At the beginning he points to regulations, laws and traditions and asks whether the regulations have been referred to in the Qur'ān.²³ He refers to his book *Iqtusādunā* (Our Economics) which deals with philosophical issues of economy, and explains different economic views, especially the two well-known theories of Marxism and Capitalism, and offers broad explanations on the themes, related issues and problems. He then refers to the Islamic view and outlines the broadlines of Islamic economy. To determine and define economic principles of Islam, Sadr in his book, quotes *āyahs* of the Holy Qur'ān.

The principles he refers to are respect for ownership, economic freedom, and social justice, with relevant justification from the Qur'ān, as outlines for governing the Islamic economy. He also refers to the element of ethics, spiritual training and the humanitarian teachings of Islam to support his views on a number of economic issues. Therefore, as should be clear, thematic exegesis, especially the views of Ayatullah Sadr in this regard, is a purely religious science with respect to human experiences and conventional knowledge.²⁴

Notes:

1. There is enough evidence to suggest that the present order of arrangement of the Holy Qur'ān should not be tampered with, in view of the narrations, which attribute to the Prophet the arranging of some of the *sūrahs* and *āyahs*. The author has referred in detail to these fact and has also cited the viewpoints of eminent in his treatise entitled *Nigāhī dar bāreh-ye Mas'aleh-ye Jam'-āwarī Qur'ān*.

2. Two of these works are: Muhammad 'Izzah Durūzah, *Tafsīr al-Hadīth* and Mullā Huwaysh, *Tafsīr Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*.

3. Initially researchers wrote works titled *Tabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn* to list the names of exegetes. Later scholars expanded this field to include analysis, and among books written in this regard, refer to al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Muffasssīrūn*.

4. Thematic exegesis have been written by several scholars, refer to the author's article, *Tafsīr-i Mawzū'ī Qur'ān*, Kayhān Andisheh, No. 28.

5. Refer to the author's article *A Step Towards Identification of Muhkam and Mutashābih*, *Payām-e Howzeh Magazine*, No. 16, p. 74.

6. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Introduction to Principles of Interpretation*, p. 15; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, vol. 1. p. 6; Badr al-Dīn Zarkishī, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, p. 291; Shaykh al-Tā'ifāh Tūsī, *al-Tibyān*, vol. 1, p. 4; Tabātabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. 1, pp. 11-12.

7. Sadr strongly stressed on the issue, see *Muqaddamāt fī Tafsīr al-Mawzū'ī*, p. 19, Kuwait, Dār al-Tawhīd al-Islāmī.

8. Zullamī, Muhammad Mustafā, *Asbāb Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā'*, Sa'ūd bin 'Abdullah al-Finisān, *Ikhtalāf al-Mufasssīrīn*, pp. 147-223.

9. Mutahhari, Murtazā, *Philosophical Articles*, p. 37, Tehran, Intishārāt-e Hikmat.

10. *Ibid*, p. 51.

11. 'Aqqād, 'Abbās Mahmūd, *al-Falsafah al-Islamiyyah*, p. 209, Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, second print, 1969.

12. *Ibid*, p. 51.

13. Misbāh Yazdī, Muhammad Taqī, *Qur'ānic Sciences*, vols. 1-3, pp. 9-10, Qum, Intishārāt-e Dar Rāh-e Haq, 1994.

14. For example, in the discussion on recognition of God and knowledge by presence, the author after a rational debate and reasoning, refers to Qur'ānic *āyahs* for justification, pp. 31-33.

15. *Al-Madrasah al-Qur'āniyyah*, p. 18.

16. *Ibid*, pp. 37-38.

17. *Ibid*, p. 33.

18. *Ibid*, p. 20.

19. *Ibid*, p. 17

20. *Ibid*, p. 33.

21. *Ibid*, pp. 20-21.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

24. *Iqtusādunā*, pp. 255-356, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1393 AH.

Defining the Islamic Political Theory of Sayyid Muhammad Bàqir Sadr

By: Dr. Tàlib 'Azíz

Sayyid Muhammad Bàqir Sadr did not systematically set forth a political theory. We do not have any work by Sadr himself that bears a title such as “On political theory according to Islam”. What we find, rather, are intimations here and there of a political theory. His voluminous writings incessantly reveal a central theme, a grand theory that he developed but never formally presented, mainly because he was not given sufficient time to do so. Like many great thinkers, his writings dealt with scattered topics without assembling major ideas into a unified and coherent schema. Although he had the desire to write extensive works in sociology and politics, he was occupied with duties tied to his religious status as a *marja'*. Death came so suddenly he could not bring to realization his long envisioned work, *Mujtama'unā*. Fate did not give him the time he needed. The task here is to discover his political dream, ponder on the different fields Sadr covered in his books, and to read between the lines in order to extract his political theory.

What is Political Theory?

There has been heated debate in the discipline of political science over the past century, starting with the rise of empiricism after the industrial revolution in the West, over the definition and the utility of political theory. A first group, the behaviourists, place the study of politics under the strictures of scientific methods; that is they subject every hypothesis to empirical verification. For them, a thesis in any social science discipline is valid only by virtue of the weight of observed data. The second group, the traditionalists, consider personal observations and judgements of great political thinkers as having a validity equal to that of empirical data. A philosopher or thinker may refer to his or her individual account of nature of the political environment and give his or her own views with regards to the pattern of political life, referring to the system of values to which he or she subscribes.

It is the political philosopher's derivation of his ideas from his *system of values* that causes behaviourists to reject the whole body of political literature of the past two thousand years since Plato. The validity of values cannot be determined through scientific experimentation, and their frame of reference includes such thinkings as God's will, social beliefs, or cultural myths. On this basis, the traditional political theories are rejected because they cannot be substantiated by acceptable scientific methods or supported by scientific data.

The positivist school of thought and Karl Marx waged the first major attack on the entire body of literature of traditional political theory. Marx, for example, considered the traditional political theory as mere ideology, an expression of the values of a certain historical period of economic development.¹ Ideology aims to support the dominant class of a particular historical epoch. Once the means of production develop, the ideology will be replaced by a new ruling class and a new historical period. The entire superstructure of the socio-economic system, such as values,

norms, political institutions and social relations is in a continuous progressive process of change.² Ideology, therefore, is a false consciousness that aims to legitimize the authority of the dominant class. It is only under the communist system, where the means of production is publicly owned, that the ideology will ensure forever. It legitimizes the authority of all, not one class over the other. Therefore, Plato's and Aristotle's political theory are not applicable today and can be considered backward and reactionary theories.

The positivists, on the other hand, reject the idea of standard values and adhere to the view that values are relative and changing from time to time and place to place. Reality, for them, is limited to the phenomenal world, and we can depend only on science to furnish us with physically observable facts to know and discover reality. Accordingly, "science could give us no information about the relative validity of the different goals men might espouse for their opinions about the good referred to subjective emotions rather than to objective facts."³ The political theorist, thus, should not take the liberty of advocating values he prefers and proposing a political system and ideas that other people should institute. Such value judgements are subjective and do not represent the facts about reality.

From a different point of view, both Marxists and positivists disregard any political thought that advocates a universal truth regardless of their practicalities or their philosophical accuracy. For the former, even philosophical treaties represent some forms of ideologies, and ideology is described as "bodies of thought held by the social classes,"⁴ and an illusory knowledge that does not represent the real truth of the social reality. For the latter, any political thought that prescribes universal truth and social values that cannot be substantiated by empirical data is not worth considering. For that matter, ideologies and political treaties of well-known philosophers in history are treated equally, since both represent a reflection on what is the good life of the community and

of man, and set a programme for the structuring of the political environment. These reflections in the traditional political theory are rejected on the basis as nonverifiable; thus they are considered worthless to the understanding of politics.

However, there are those who distinguish between political theory and ideology and counter the Marxist-Positivist schools by what is known as the normative political school. There is a great difference, they argue, between the political discourses of Plato and Hegel and what was advocated by Hitler and Napoleon. The formers' works aim to study objectively the nature of the political environment, and, in the process of their investigations, prescribe a political programme for achieving social harmony. Consequently, they refer to philosophical arguments to understand the true nature of reality and human nature. "The political theorist is or strives to be a philosopher, and a philosopher, as Plato saw so clearly, is a lover of wisdom and truth."⁵ The objectivity of their thought is judged by the validity of the critical assessment of the nature of the political reality they are examining. In fact, the idea advocated by the behaviouralist school is that a scientific argument free of value judgements is untrue. The post-behaviouralist movement in political science, which arose as a result of the rapid political change in the Third World and the social instability of the First World in the sixties, renounced the behaviourist stand that political science inquiries be limited to the realm of empirical investigation. Post-behaviourism champions the introduction of values in the political science because political thinkers have a "major task in society" and their "responsibility is to protect the human values of civilization."⁶ Moreover, values had played an important role in scientific research in terms of formulating a hypothesis, deriving generalizations, deciding the topics of investigation, and giving preference to the type of scientific method to be conducted.

On the other hand, ideologists are political adventurers, or as Germino liked to call them, *publicists*, who seek political goals in

their advocated thoughts and ideas. Their aim is not to enrich human understanding of the political environment, but rather to gain immediate political goals. Their arguments are simplistic, although they may use philosophical arguments to arouse popular enthusiasm. Publicists such as statesmen, politicians, and political propagandists usually have opinions and some understanding about politics, while philosophers go beyond giving opinions and try to discover the real essence of politics, keeping in mind the controversy between the two groups concerning the term *politics*, for politics means different things to different people. In Aristotelian terms, politics is defined as the whole set of social operations within the *polis*, includes the family structure, the control of slaves, revolutionary movements, and political process; i.e., it is the master science. To Max Weber, it is the struggle to gain power or to influence those in power, including the struggle between groups and states; i.e., it is the control of and the exercise of influence over others. For those who advocate the system theory, or are concerned with the structure of the state rather than the dynamics of politics, politics comprises the activities of the political institutions, or the authoritative allocations of powers and values.⁷ Definitions of politics have the important function of establishing the scope and agenda of political thought and research. Even if it is assumed that the term *politics* is part of the vocabularies of both the philosopher and the publicist, their approaches to the study of politics may differ greatly. In general, when a philosopher is in the process of examining any subject matter, he treats it with a careful analysis that penetrates its roots.⁸ He may, during the course of analysis and study to discover the truth about the nature of things, allow particular values to play a role but not to the extent of giving his investigation of true nature of political reality its ultimate shape. What makes philosophers different from publicists is that while both work from a self-endorsed set of values, the latter seeks certain goals to achieve

while the former seeks to discover the political reality; however he or she may or may not be involved in political affairs of his society. In fact, it is hard to imagine a political thinker writing about the heated issues of his society without some direct participation in politics. It is such deep concern for and involvement in political issues that makes him aware of the demanding issues of his time.

On the other hand, political philosophy in general is a conviction of the philosopher about the civil society.⁹ Philosophy, in the Platonic definition, is the quest for wisdom. Wisdom is to know and understand the essence of reality, i.e., the knowledge of the whole that goes beyond the phenomenal world to include the metaphysical technology. Political philosophy is defined as belonging within the scope of holistic wisdom, and entails a value judgement on the ability of human beings to attain that wisdom. Political philosophy, according to Leo Strauss, who is in the tradition of the classical political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, is the thought of a philosopher who seeks “to replace opinion about the nature of political things by knowledge of the nature of political things.”¹⁰ Further, he adds that “political philosophy is the attempt truly to know both the nature of and the right, or the goods, of political order.”¹¹ However, the distinction between ideology and political philosophy must be clear before one can proceed to the task of defining political theory.

The main difference between political philosophy and ideology is that while the latter seeks the mobilization of people in support of a specific idea to achieve certain political goals, the former has no genuinely practical goal. In act, political philosophy is considered the intellectual discourse of the few, understood by some, and beyond the reach of the majority. A political philosopher has no desire to attract the multitude to his ideology, even though he has the desire to change their political environment or personal beliefs. Philosophers are supposedly searching for the truth rather than to inspire others or shape the course of political events.

Therefore, they are not writing for their own time, but for generations to come. They appeal not to the emotion of the masses, but to the reason of the intellectuals. Accordingly, philosophers attempt to be logical, while publicists incite emotions in order to incite action. The latter has the purpose not to enhance the understanding of others as much as to make them enthusiastic, to mobilize them, and to have control over their lives and thoughts. They seek to persuade others to follow their guidelines. Ideology establishes the boundaries of political actions, defines the enemy, uses simple language to make ideas cross over easily into people's minds, and tries to maintain people's aspirations through a utopian vision of an ideal and immanent civil society. Ideology is a means for changing a society. However, political philosophy wants to enhance the knowledge of man and not necessarily to promote immediate personal or societal interests. This is why political philosophy is prosaic and monotonous for many, while political ideology is exciting and appealing. Accordingly, one finds that political philosophy tends to incorporate a measure of ideology in order to acquire appeal vis-à-vis non-philosophers, but rarely does ideology utilize philosophical explanations of its main ideas. Ideological writers borrow their ideas from one philosophy or another. For this reason, ideology is considered a simplification of philosophy.

One of the main characteristics of ideology is a utopian outlook that challenges the political environment by "advocating a conception of the good life, and describing the forms of social action and organization necessary for their achievement."¹² Political theorists too have such ideological interests and not merely the interest of writing philosophical treaties. They have always been "concerned with prescribing the goals which citizens, states, and societies, ought to pursue. His (i.e., political theorist's) aim is to generalize about right conduct in the political life and about the legitimate use of power."¹³ However, his concerns are not

historical situations, rather he wants to provide a solution to an intriguing political question facing man in his social environment. Consequently, political theory is a political philosophy and ideology. In other words, political theory is political philosophy applied to concrete social circumstances. It is the logical and systematic character of its construction of civil society which makes it more a philosophical study than an ideological one. “[T]he great political theorists of the past saw themselves as going beyond opinions to arrive at a critical *understanding* of man’s role in society.”¹⁴ On the other hand, political theory can fill the role of giving advise regarding ways and means of achieving the objectives that it propounds. Theories, for example, are interested in causation and are systematic in the way they form their major concepts, assumptions and solutions; they are also objective in their treatment of values. They can serve as a scale by which to judge critical issues in politics. Political theories at large are not only the philosophical means for explaining political phenomena, but also function as an ideology. Political theories set standards with which people are able to construct beliefs. For this reason, a political theory presents universal settings in a way that can affect the outcome of policy-making process. Political theory is thus (as stated above) applied political philosophy. Hegel regarded political theory as “not subjective ideology but experiential science.”¹⁵ The ideological side of political theories is that “they are influential not because they are right but because they are believed.”¹⁶

Generally, political theory deals with all the concepts that political philosophy is concerned with. Each political theory introduces its own visions and assumptions about the nature of reality, of human beings, the historical process, society and the state, and of the relationships of the individual to history and civil society. Most political theories comprise four components: epistemology, psychology, ethics, political doctrine. Epistemology entails the definition by a theorist of his assumptions about reality

and the nature of the world. Theorists are divided along the three main schools of philosophical thought: rationalism, empiricism and theological voluntarism. The first school emphasizes the rule of reason as the primary source of knowledge.¹⁷ Reality, for them, can only be discovered through reasoned discourses. Accordingly, reality is the invisible and metaphysical in essence. The ideal “forms” can be discovered only through rational reasoning and are the basis behind the visible world. Reality is what the mind beholds, not what appears to the eye. The temporal world is only the reflection of the ideal and everlasting reality.

Empirists on the other hand tend to be causality-mined (etiological) in their philosophical approach. They completely reject the ideal forms of reality. The starting point for them is the physical world, the realm of visible things. Nothing goes beyond what we see and feel through our senses. The realm of ideal Platonic *forms*, the metaphysical world, has no reality in itself since it cannot be perceived by our sensual perceptions. There is nothing to be discovered beyond the world of immediate experience, whether forms or ideals or even God. Human beings can discover only general laws that govern the physical world and the logic behind the phenomena which occur in it. Scientific experimentations are the means of knowing the world around us, not philosophical reasoning.

The third school of thought is theological voluntarism. The central theme of this school of thought is that the divine will determines the whole of reality and that ultimate truth must be derived exclusively from a revelation from God. Every thing in this universe is a reflection of God Himself. Neither reason nor experience are sufficient means to knowledge. Faith is the main source of understanding the true nature of the world.¹⁸ In contrast to theological rationalism, which emphasizes the harmony between revelation and human reason, theological voluntarism affirms a radical discontinuity between revelation and reason, invalidating

the latter as a source of truth about ultimate things. The implications of this kind of thought is that a good society and good government implement the laws and standards communicated by God to mankind through prophets, as opposed to laws and standards inherent in nature which the human reason is able to discern on its own.

The second component of a political theory is that, its psychology embraces its views about human nature. Here too political theorists are divided between the two schools of thought: the developmental and the behavioural. The question asked here is whether human nature by essence is good. The developmentalists take an optimistic view about the nature of man. Man is, after all, a rational being. Through reasoning, man is in a state of growing and developing his capacity to control and change his environment for the better. Through reasoning, he has the capacity to discover the ultimate, and to make it his destiny to achieve the ideal world. On the contrary, behaviourists think that man is the product of his environment. His thought and perception are shaped by his surroundings. Man cannot transcend his nature because his attitudes and beliefs are the reflection of his environment. Man is conditioned to have a certain state of mind, and does not have the ability to change the world around him.

Rationalists and empiricists are divided between these two views of human nature, whereas theological voluntarists tend to embrace a more synthetic way of thinking. For them, man is born subject to environmental conditioning but has the capacity to develop and transcend beyond his environment. Crucial to his development is his capacity to know God and to understand his commands and laws. Furthermore, he has the will to obey or rebel against his Creator. Man is not limited to a single set of behaviours. He can change the world in conformity to the will of God, or he can take the opposite route and suffer, confining himself to (to

borrow from Hobbes' language concerning the state of nature) the "nasty, brutish, and short" world around him.

The third component is ethics. Political theorists give some attention to ethical questions. Absolutists consider there is only one standard of moral value that applies to every man in all circumstances. What is good for Americans is good for Iranians too; and what is good for the prophets of Israel is good for modern man. The values of good and evil, right and wrong are unconditional. Unlike the variability of human desires, moral laws apply to all people, all the time, in all places, with respect to all moral instances. Relativists, on the other hand, consider there is no one rule of truth. Moral standards change when circumstances change. Ethical values are the byproducts of social beliefs. The absolutists belong to the rational school of thought. Rationalism is historically inclined towards normative thinking about civil society. If one is to know what is a good society, one must also know what is meant by good. The concern of rationalists, thus, is with concepts of good, justice and beauty. If society aims to achieve such standards, then society is considered good. Rationalists believe the purpose of the state is to facilitate the attainment of these ethical values. The idea of Aristotle's teleology is to look for the end product of things in general, and the civil society in particular. For the normative thinkers like Plato, Kant, and Hegel, politics and ethics are interrelated. Their concern is with what should be done about the shortcomings of the civil society. They do not like what they see in the world, but are still optimistic and believe in the capacity of man to transform the existing world into an ideal one. For the relativists, ethics is seen as intimately bound up with culture. A set of values that is considered good in one culture might be viewed as evil in another culture because the environmental and social conditions in the two cultures are different. Empiricists are relativists. They do not believe, for example, in the nature law of the traditional philosophers. Ethics and politics are two separate

concerns. Because they accept experience as the only source of knowledge,¹⁹ ethical values possess no universal validity at all. On the other hand, religious voluntarists are more like absolutists.

Finally, political theory must offer a political doctrine that prescribes ways of dealing with political reality. Each theorist views the world from a different angle, and looks at the political situation through a different lens. It is this component that gives the theory political relevance. What empiricists see as important in politics is not the *telos* of the society (justice and beauty) that the state should promote. Empiricists are realists in their approach to the analysis and the study of civil society. This is why the Humes of the world are always Machiavellian. They try to look at past descriptions to solve present situations. Their approach to the study of civil society is within the scientific mode, not with the ethical mode. Rationalists, on the other hand, regard the *ideal* form of the society as the higher reality and every thing else as imperfection, oppression, and injustice. This ideal political reality might be found in the “state of nature” or in the futuristic utopia. Politically speaking, the rationalists tend to be utopians bent on creating an ideal society as envisioned in the mind and sharply critical of the existing political environment, which they regard as having divided human beings, turned one against the other, and driven them into constant conflicts. The rationalists envision a world free of conflicts and oppression, and the human beings in harmony. Rationalists, thus, are universalities who see the whole of humanity as governed by the natural laws. In contrast, Aristotle as well as Marx bridged between the two extremes, by being both political realists and utopian. On the other hand, religious voluntarists tend to be utopian in their view of political reality.

Such diverse views about political reality made a difference in how political theorists perceive the right political action and approach to social change. There are major differences between violent revolutionary action aimed at change in existing regimes

and peaceful means of developing the political reality. Theories, therefore, can be classified into two categories according to their ideas about social change. The first comprises radical theorists that propose rampant change of the society as part of a natural process of development. These theories see the history of mankind as a series of stagnation and growth cycles separated by periods of rapid social change, called revolutions. These revolutions are not based on some pre-existing set of rules, practices, and social structures of its predecessor. Marxism stands at the summit of this body of political thought. The second category comprises conservative theories, which consider incremental change of the society as the soundest way of assuring survival. Conservatives view revolutions and radical changes in history as bringing only destruction and illness to the society. Gradual development of the society is not only the natural way for man to progress in history, but the preferred course of political action; thus, revolutions must be contained from jeopardizing man's survival. However, there is no clear cut distinction as to where each philosophical school of thought stands on the issue of social change. While Marx, an empiricist, favours revolution, Locke, also an empiricist, on the other hand, advocates a gradual process of change within the society. In contrast, religious theorists in general, believe that political tyrants on earth are God's punishment to man. Believers must obey their rulers, and in the process try to change the society gradually through appealing to the authority in charge.

Moreover, political theory serves the purpose not only of studying the problems facing the civil society but also, given its ideological bent, of providing prescriptions for maladies within given political situations. It is, therefore, not a value-free intellectual exercise such as is found in pure philosophy. Political theorists have a vested interest in changing the world around them. Their prescriptions for social illnesses are designed to assure the survival of humanity. Political theorists grow out of political crises

that beset civil society. This is why historicists like Dunning, Sabine, and McIlwain assumed that all political theorists are historically conditioned. People of ideas, philosophers and the like, reflect their understanding of the world surrounding them, and express their anger in it. Sabine, one of the renown historicists of this century, defined political theory as “an intellectual tradition and its history consists of the evolution of man’s thought about political problems.”²⁰ He explains that a political theorist “is thinking about something that has actually occurred and that has been the stimulus of his thought.”²¹ In other words, historicists suggest that there can be no universal truth, except that all ideas are a product of a historical period and cannot transcend it.²² To understand one particular political theory is to locate it within particular historical circumstances to which theorists are reacting. Such relativism does not give answers to the perennial problems of politics or postulate timeless values. To the contrary, the values and ideas of the past give shape to a particular age and people. Our modern belief system is in fact the production of the past. There is nothing in the minds of today’s thinkers that is not the outcome of the intellectual discourses of ancient history. According to Hegel, everything in the body of ideas has been worked out, nothing else is left to be discovered. For the West, the history of ideas reaches back to Greek antiquities while for the East it is rooted in ancient religion. The existing moral values are the *telos* of the past, and the past’s ideas are the embryo of today’s beliefs.

In sum, a political theory entails three kinds of factors: a factual statement about the circumstances that occasioned the theory; a causal statement about what would be the likely outcome of the current state of affairs; and the valuational statement suggesting what ought to happen or what should be the human action to change the course of events.²³ While the first statement represents the political philosophy component, the second and the third represent the ideological components. Because of the

ideological aspect, political theorists tend to be optimistic in their view of man's future. Political theories, in general, define the good political order and take the view that people have the capacity to achieve and build such an ideal order regardless of how political theorists view human nature (wicked or saintly), they view man as having the capacity to contribute to the realization and survival of utopia.²⁴ A political theory has two sides: the empiricist side, where the theorist uses his analytical skills to give a descriptive account of the prevailing political conditions; and the normative side, where he gives his prescription for the reorganization of the political life of the society.²⁵ The importance of political theory lies in its practical application. It serves as the blue-print for practice. Its insights into the political environment and its affirmations about the true nature of political actions serve as a guide for the restructuring of civil society, the establishing of new social institutions, the reorganizing of social behaviour, and the re-allocation of resources.

The building blocks in the construction of a theory are the independent variables that represent the basic facts. However, are not laws made up of similar elements? Does that mean that theorists and laws are similar? The answer is no. Laws, although built of such variables, are themselves considered as facts. They constitute associations between the factual variables. Laws do not "say why a particular associations holds, they cannot tell us whether we can exercise control and how might we go about doing so. For the latter purpose we need a theory."²⁶ Theories, in contrast to laws, are not to be considered as facts of life, but rather are a body of statements that explain the relations and associations between variables. These explanatory statements are the nonfactual elements of the theory.²⁷ They are made up of assumptions which "are not assertions of facts. They, [thus], are neither true nor false."²⁸ Therefore, a theory can be refuted only by another theory, while the validity of laws must be confirmed directly by carrying

out experiments. Theories, hence, are judged on the basis of the structural coherence, the plausibility of their assumptions, and the accuracy of their generalizations.

Because laws belong to the realm of the factual, they are used as the building blocks of theories. Theories are systems of statements that entail laws. One of their functions is to give a new understanding to the relations between observable facts or variables around us. These facts must have a role to play, otherwise they represent only useless data. "The real problem [then], to return to Rousseau, is what role is to be assigned to facts when writing a theory."²⁹ Theories make possible the ordering of data, and become a useful tool in selecting facts that are most relevant to the problem being analyzed.³⁰ Without theories, the real facts of life would have no order or meaning. Theories act as the spirit that is breathed into the body of data and make the data meaningful. They "indicate what is connected with what and how the connection is made. They convey a sense of how things work, how they hang together, of what the structure of realm of inquiry may be."³¹ Thus, political theories enable us to better understand the political life that surrounds us. Policies cannot be carried on without having some sort of theory about the political environment. A theory makes us understand not only the world around us, but also the outcome of its process, so our actions could be directed towards achieving a certain goal. It is a striving to attain the goals that make political theories essential for people in politics; the principal goal being to influence the political process and direct the outcome. As Arnold Brecht plainly puts it:

It is the function of the political theorist to see, sooner than others, and to analyze, more profoundly than others, the immediate and the potential problems of the political life of the society; to supply the practical politician, well in advance, with alternative courses of action, the foreseeable consequences of which have been fully thought through; and to supply him not only with

brilliant asides, but with a solid block of knowledge on which to build.³²

Generally, the structure of the theory consists of four elements.³³ *Paradigms*, the foundation of any theory, are the particular conceptualizations of the phenomenon being explained by the theorist. A paradigm, therefore, must underscore and fully explain the relationships between the variables of the phenomenon under consideration and the manner in which they operate. The behaviourist may choose the scientific approach to deal with the phenomenon he is investigating, while others may choose a more philosophical approach. *Concepts* are ideas or thoughts that are used as labels assigned to a class of phenomena. Theorists may attach different meanings and definitions to the same concept. Therefore, these concepts must be carefully defined and their relations to the paradigm must be demonstrated. Additionally, a theory must define the *logical relationship* between concepts and state clearly if they are positive, negative, or independent of one another. Those relationships must be linked theoretically. In fact, the structure of a theory “depends on the kind of relationship statements it contains and their relationship to one another.”³⁴ Finally, these abstract aspects of the theory must be validated on the basis of empirical data, i.e. *variables*.

Islamic Political Theory

We should highlight some of the distinct features of an Islamic political theory. Islam is a revealed religion and the revelations from God are considered real facts. The major body of facts in Islam is found in the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān’s authenticity, for a Muslim, is unquestionable. For a theorist who is a devoted Muslim, the verses of the Qur’ān are the factual variables with which to build a theory. These verses may contain historical data, social regulations, moral values, or sets of beliefs, all of which are taken as revealed truth which is beyond questioning. Revelation in

Islam, as in Judaism and Christianity, is not the only source of truth, but is most important one since it embraces the words of God. The religious mind considers that a human may not have the capacity to grasp the ultimate truth of God, being finite and of limited capacity. It is the mercy of God that has made available to man facts that are beyond his ability to know, particularly those facts that are essential to human salvation.

However, this does not mean that religious theorists totally deny the ability of the human intellect to discover and know the truth. It is the function of the human mind not only to understand the revelations of God, but also to know the physical world and observable facts around him. These kinds of truths must be searched for by man himself in order to facilitate his survival on earth. The Shī'ī jurists (*fuḡahā'*, plural of *faqīh*) assign an even greater role to man's intellect. The basic tenets one holds must be believed through one's intellect and reasoning powers. A Shī'ī (mainly of the usūlī school of thought),³⁵ for example, should be led by his reason to believe in God. The five tenets of belief in Islam – *tawhīd* (the oneness of God), *'adālah* (the justice of God), *nubuwwah*, (prophethood, both that of Muhammad (S) and of all previous prophets), *imāmah*, (the role of the divinely guided leadership of humanity), *ma'ād*, (the resurrection of man and the day of judgment) – all must be believed in as a result of intellectual reasoning. To accept these tenets of belief as part of a cultural tradition or simply because they are mentioned in the holy books is not acceptable to Shī'ī jurists. If someone does not use his intellect to believe in the tenets of Islam he is considered as blindly following his ancestors' religion, which is highly condemned by God in the Qur'ān. That is why it is customary among the Shī'ī jurists to write rational treatises to prove the existence of God and the five tenets of Islam. Ayatullah Sadr himself had supplemented his book of Islamic regulations, *al-Fatāwā al-Wāzihah*, with a preface devoted to rational proofs for the basic beliefs about God,

the prophethood of Muhammad (S) and the message of Islam. Sadr in this essay used the philosophical argument he developed in his book, *al-Usus al-Mantiqiyyah lil-Istiqrā'*. His method of proof was inductive, one which sought to derive conclusions about God, Muhammad (S), and Islam from observable facts. The preface was later published independently and subtitled *al-Mursil wa-al-Rasūl wa al-Risālah* (The Revealer, the Messenger, and the Message). Man is given an active role in proving the existence of God, not to mention his being accorded an ability to understand his responsibility in this life, and his accountability in the hereafter. This standpoint led Sadr to produce a rational argument to convince Muslims to adhere to the principles of Islam. He believed that once Muslims are presented with rational arguments about their religion, they would not deviate from their beliefs because, according to Sadr, Islamic beliefs are compatible with man's fundamental needs.

Nonetheless, Sadr never embraced the idea that human rationality could make man capable of discovering or implementing the political system that is best for his needs and survival. Human reasoning is able to give an accurate judgement when it comes to analysis of physical experiments, but this is not the case when it comes to analysis of social problems. Knowledge gained from physical experiments is pure knowledge, but the results of social experiments are always tainted with bias.³⁶ Such lack of objectivity in the study of social phenomena is due to several factors, according to Sadr: 1) The duration of a physical experiment is relatively short. Therefore scientists can cover virtually all aspects of the phenomenon and come to their conclusions. In contrast, a social phenomenon might transcend the life span of the scientist, and what he observes in his study are but some of the effects and features of the phenomenon; thus, conclusions are related to part of the reality. 2) Man has a vested interest when it comes to making conclusions about social phenomena, while scientists, in general, have no personal interests in manipulating the data and results

gained from experiments on physical matters. Sadr cites that a capitalist economist, when analyzing the social benefit of the banking system, would be predisposed to defend the social benefits of usury. 3) Even if an unbiased social analyst were able to discover the best social system, he should be committed to the ideal he is proposing for the society. For example, Marx's descriptive work as a social scientist was not enough to pinpoint the ills of capitalism; his commitment to utopian communism was also a factor. 4) Man is the product of his environment, and is not expected to transcend what he knows. "A man who is convinced of the soundness of the prevailing system cannot be expected to look for a better system."³⁷ Sadr gave an example of how the United States of America was not able to enforce the law banning alcohol because drinking is part of the social norms of the society even though science shows the negative impact of drinking upon the society.

Sadr therefore concluded that man is in need of immortal being, i.e. God, to show him the right and ideal social settings and a political system that is best for his survival. Only God, through His revelation to prophets, could provide humanity with the best social system. All other man-made social systems have their shortcomings. They cannot serve the full range of human interests throughout history. The best political order, according to Sadr, is the one ordained by God, the Creator of man Himself, Who is attentive to man's development and needs and is the best Protector of his interests. Islam is the final revelation of God to man; thus, an Islamic political system is the best system, one which serves the salvation of man both in this life and in the hereafter.

Sadr's Grand Political Theory

One of the indications that led me to believe that Sadr had a political theory in mind is his systematic way of dealing with the political crises of his time. Unlike other jurists, he did not resort to

mere political propaganda to defend Islam in the face of great political challenges, but rather studied alternative and even anti-religious political ideologies that were overwhelming the political arena, in his attempt to develop a more intelligent and scientific response that took into account the elements of political theory mentioned above. In his research, he wanted to look at other ideas objectively, notwithstanding the Islamic character of his own beliefs. This is noticeable, for example, in Sadr's admiration for Marx's thought and political philosophy. Other Islamic political activists and jurists attack Marxism from the standpoint of the failure of Marxist regimes in the world. Some have gone so far as to consider Marxism as part of an international Jewish conspiracy to weaken religious devotion among Muslims and Christians and to achieve a worldwide Jewish hegemony. Sadr, on the other hand, called Marx "the genius" but regarded his exceptional intellectual prowess as limited by European social experience in the nineteenth century.³⁸ Thus, "the Marxist solution to the social problem is diluted."³⁹ Sadr's approach was to counterattack Marxism not with rhetoric but with a grand political theory. Marxism has applied dialectical materialism "to history, society, and economics; and thus, it became a philosophical doctrine concerning the world, a method of studying history and society, a school of economics and a plan in politics."⁴⁰ Sadr wanted an Islamic response that would cover all aspects of political theory and would not resort to name calling and emotional attacks. Sadr clearly outlined his program of inquiry.

It is necessary, therefore, to inquire about Islamic philosophical convictions concerning life, the universe, society and the economy. We must also inquire about its legislation and procedures, in order to obtain a complete overview of Islamic ... thought, comparing these Islamic convictions to other forms of conviction regarding the procedures they pursue and the doctrines they adopt.⁴¹

Consequently, Sadr classified the subjects of his theoretical investigation under three headings, each of which became the title of a book. First, *Falsafatunā* (Our Philosophy) covers epistemological questions aiming at refuting empiricism and most especially dialectical materialism; Second, *Mujtama'unā* (Our Society) covers socio-political questions, that is to say, questions relating to the role of man within social settings and to the ideal social order and the attainment of man happiness through it; and, third, *Iqtisādunā* (Our Economics) deals with the structuring of economic activities within the proposed Islamic social order. However, Sadr, after publishing his first volume, was under pressure from readers to write about Islamic economics and to delay the proposed volume *Mujtama'unā*.⁴² It was due to the impact of Marxism that the readers were eager to know if Islam has any socio-economic perspective. Otherwise, Sadr would have proceeded with the goal of constructing an Islamic political theory in a systematic way from A to Z.

Sadr went on to openly denounce the existing political movements in the Muslim World which adopted nationalism as a basis of their political theory.⁴³ Nationalism, according to him, is nothing but:

An historical and linguistic tie and not a philosophical principle or an ideological doctrine, and it occupies a neutral position vis-à-vis different philosophical, ideological, social or religious systems of beliefs. The (nationalist) movements are in need of specific views towards the universe and life as well as a specific philosophy to mould the foundations of civilization, the process of its [historical] progress and the structure of its society.⁴⁴

It is this lack of doctrinal beliefs that leads these movements to link their nationalist creed to one school of thought or another. People in the East carry resentment towards the West because of the long history of colonization. For this reason nationalist movements in the Arab World, for example, adopted a naturalized

form of socialism called "Arab Socialism."⁴⁵ Both nationalism and socialism are part of the European experience and are totally foreign to the Muslims' traditional system of belief. Sadr traced back the basis of the nationalist socialist movements to the historical development of West.

The philosophical foundation of the West is empiricist in its epistemological principles. The Western man is always linked to the physical world around him. This led him to disbelieve in the metaphysical world. Such disbelief led him, after he was Christianized, to the point of bringing the God of Christianity down from heaven to earth through the doctrine of incarnation. Such strong attachment to the physical environment was also noticeable in scientific research, which tried to relate man's existence to the natural development process of life on earth. The Western man is brought up to believe that he is in a constant struggle with his environment. Physically, he must satisfy his desires and passions like other creatures around him, which consequently has led him to the belief that he must exploit the environment in order to amass wealth and satisfy his materialistic needs. Economically the West was able to develop quickly in modern history because every member of the society was part of a whole system that maximized his or her personal interests. Western economic development, according to Sadr, was due to the fact that the European social system was a reflection of the system of beliefs of Europeans. Even the personal freedom advocated strongly in the West was a result of the European's belief that he alone was responsible for his survival. He must have full authority over himself. In fact, such an individualistic view led to the development of one of the great philosophical schools in the modern European history, namely positivism. Socialism, however, is a natural response to overcome the shortcomings of the individualist foundation of the capitalist system in the West.⁴⁶

On the other hand, man in the East,⁴⁷ being shaped by heavenly messages, is more attached to the hereafter than to this world. A Muslim is not obsessed with materialistic needs, but rather is subject to constraints over his desires and passions. It is this preoccupation with the metaphysical that led Muslims to have negative stands toward the exploitation of the environment and made them resentful of the materialistic life. In the long run, unproductive and lazy attitudes toward work resulted. The attachment to the metaphysical also led them to see their actions as being continually under the surveillance of a supernatural authority. This belief led them to be less inclined to have a sense of personal freedom of choice. Moral value is consequently centered around the welfare of the community. Along with this communalism is a global outlook which makes it obligatory for believers to carry the message of heaven to all people, contrary to the European emphasis on national survival. A political theory, for Muslims, must take into consideration their system of beliefs and must find roots in their ideological commitments. It must overcome the Muslims' negative attitude towards exploitation of nature and elicit from them a powerful dynamic energy to develop the economy and eliminate backwardness. The theory must take into account the belief of Muslims in the supernatural stock-taking of their behaviour and not impose on them alien notions of individual freedom of the sort central to Western moral values.⁴⁸

It was within these guidelines that Sadr wanted to construct his Islamic political theory. He saw Islam as a complete system of beliefs that does not need to borrow from other ideological doctrines. The paradigms and basic concepts and principles of his theory are derived from Islamic teachings. He wanted all trained Muslim jurists, the '*ulamā*', to join the endeavour to prove that Islam is the final salvation of humanity. All other doctrines and creeds fall short of the perfection found only in Islam.

Sadr's universalist outlook on social problems made him repudiate the traditional approach of Islamic jurisprudence. As Islam had lost control over political life, jurists (*fuqahā'*) had come to look at Islamic laws entirely from the stand point of individual problems. In their juristic deliberations, they typically responded to the daily problems faced by faithful Muslims in what in reality amounted to un-Islamic social environments. Their effort was thus confined to regulating individual behaviour in accordance with Islamic teachings. Such an outlook caused jurists to undermine the social import of Islamic laws. Sadr gave two examples to prove his point. The jurists generally agreed that since the obligations that make up the *Shari'ah* cannot be determined with certainty, doubt concerning these obligations necessarily accompanies all effort to fulfill them. If so, one must exercise a cautious hesitation with regard to one's daily actions. One cannot be entirely sure whether one's behaviour is according to the will of God or not. Such thinking is not, however, feasible with regard to the formation of laws guiding the community. Social laws must be decidedly either lawful or prohibited in order to be enforceable by the political authority. A society as a whole, Sadr argues, cannot function on the basis of cautious hesitation. The natural social relations and the economic and political welfare of the society would come to a halt.⁴⁹

The second example that Sadr cites to show the failure of the traditional jurisprudence to develop a social vision is the application of the jurisprudential principle of "*lā Zarar wa lā Zirāra*" (no damage and no mutual infliction of damage). He argues this principle was applied in such a way that Islamic laws were rejected by jurists only because these laws, when executed, might have harmful effects on an individual. For example, since the confiscation of property for the purpose of achieving a public good violates the individual right of property ownership, the jurists decreed that action was unjust, and should be considered illegal.

Had the jurists approached the problem from a socially-oriented viewpoint, and become aware of the positive effects such actions had on the welfare of the society, then there would be no reason to adhere to these principles. Any damages, harms and disadvantage that might be inflicted on the individual would be compensated by the well-being of the community as a whole.⁵⁰

As a result of the *al-jānib al-fardī* (individualistic tendency) of *fiqh*, jurists resorted to finding escape routes for Muslims when facing circumstances not favoured by Islam. For example, when a Muslim deals in financial relations based on usury, which is prohibited by Islam, the jurists would try to find some arrangement to overcome such problems. This basic financial relationship is essential or unavoidable in the life of an individual. Meanwhile, the jurists in their sanction of the western-style banking transaction would not try to ignore the negative effects of usury on the community. Their main concern is to purify the individual behaviour, not the social relations of the whole community. Such an attitude of jurists has affected their understanding of the sources of Islamic laws (Qur'ān and *Sunnah*). An order by the Prophet not to use a well, for example, might be interpreted by jurists as either forbidding, or warning. However, the prohibition might be interpreted as only a temporary order by the Prophet while acting as a leader.⁵¹

Sadr wanted to give a social meaning or perspective to the *Shari'ah*. In his book review of Mughniah's *Fiqh al-Imām al-Sādiq*, he concurs with the author's view that in respect to acts of worship one must be restricted to the literal meaning of the indicators and passages of *Shari'ah*. On other matters, one can give a broad social interpretation to these sources of law.⁵² Sadr's socially oriented outlook on Islamic jurisprudence would make it possible for him to develop the grand political theory he had in mind. In contrast, the traditional individualistic view of jurists would hinder this effort and make it difficult to instigate the

creation of an Islamic state. The socially oriented outlook is not only new to the study of Islamic jurisprudence, but is revolutionary in its nature.⁵³ It is a sincere effort to modernize Islamic *fiqh* in order to bring it into line with the trends developed in the West by allowing Islamic jurists to place the social well-being of the community alongside the individual salvation. Sadr, well before the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, set the standards for the possibilities of applying Islamic law to the social settings. Like Marx, who saw Hegel as walking on his head and tried to make him stand on his feet, Sadr was determined to turn Islamic *fiqh* right side up.

Moreover, Sadr also wanted to turn from the traditional methodology of Qur'ānic studies, which explicates Qur'ānic verses one by one from the first *sūrah* (chapter) to the last, to a more "objective" style of finding the general themes covered by the Holy Book.⁵⁴ An incremental study of the Qur'ān might take several years and would result in an encyclopedic compendium of Islamic studies, but it would not give an understanding to the basic concepts and themes that, according to Sadr, God wanted man to grasp and believe. The Qur'ān is a book of guidance, but if Muslims do not understand all aspects of its message, it will be difficult for them to see the guidance in it. For Sadr, theoretical studies of the major themes of the Qur'ān are the only way to make the Holy Book an influential guide for the people.⁵⁵ The social function of the interpreter in the *tajz'i* (incremental) methodology is negligible because he focuses his attention on literal meanings and the historical circumstance behind particular verse (S). However, an interpreter of *mawzū'i* (objective) methodology tries to find a Qur'ānic solution to currently prevailing issues.⁵⁶ While the former's field of inquiry is history, that of the latter is the existing social norms and system. The objective interpreter is a full participant in the affairs of the people, and his inquiry aims to mould social life according to divine will.

When Sadr compared the studies in jurisprudence with those in the Qur'ānic commentaries, he found the former to be more socially advanced than the later.⁵⁷ Jurists had classified the issues of jurisprudence according to social needs in order to come up with a general understanding of the basic themes of Islamic law. *Ahādīth* are classified into topics such as family issues, acts of worships, financial transactions, and so on. This objective type of inquiry had given jurists the ability to discover the general guidelines within each area. Once these guidelines are known, jurists can make judgements on new circumstances. However, inquiry of this sort was not extended to the Qur'ān.⁵⁸ While the jurists show a comprehensive understanding of the basic principles of jurisprudence, the concepts developed by the Qur'ānic commentators are fragmented.⁵⁹ Students of the Qur'ān must instead be able to discover theories from the Holy Book that concern the prevailing human conditions of the time. Only in this way can the Qur'ān serve its main purpose as a source of guidance to human.

Jurisprudence itself must have a broader view of its subject matters and not be limited to themes and details relating to the various jurisprudential topics. It must carry on a deeper investigation to derive the basic theory behind each compartment of Islamic law. Sadr had phrased it:

We know that behind each set of laws for the various issues of life there are basic theories, which are related to certain aspects of the Islamic canons such as the Islamic economic doctrine. The Islamic canons that related to marriage and divorce and the relations of woman with man, [for example], entail a general theory about woman and man and the role of woman and man. These general theories should form the basic foundations of the general outlook of jurisprudence.⁶⁰

Sadr wanted to extend his *mawzū'ī* (thematic) research methodology, as he likes to call it, to other Islamic fields of study.

Likewise, when he studied the life of the twelve Infallible of the Prophet Household, he was trying to find the general role of the Imams' mission.⁶¹ He expressed his dissatisfaction with the previous historical studies of the lives of Imams. Each one of them had adopted different political functions in order to deal with the existing oppressive regimes. This would imply a contradiction between the actions of each Imam, and mean that the Imams had conflicting views. The Imams' actions and practices are divinely ordained, implying that their seemingly contradictory actions all have divine approval; therefore, Sadr wanted the historical studies to concentrate on finding the ultimate goal that all Imams tried to achieve. All Imams, during their mission, wanted to achieve that goal and adopted a different course of action. These actions by the Imams were to complement each other in order to reach the final goal of their mission.⁶² In this way, Sadr wanted to solve the seemingly contradictory nature of the Imams' actions when dealing with the various oppressive regimes.

Generally, throughout his Islamic inquiry, Sadr tried to discover the social concepts of Islam and relate them to the prevailing political conditions, an emphasis rarely adopted by other jurists before him. He wanted Islamic teaching to be part of the dynamics of social life. His emphasis on the *mawzū'ī* approach to all field of Islamic studies is related to his need to formulate an Islamic political theory. Consequently, one finds that his epistemology drew upon Islamic philosophy and his interpretation of history upon Qur'ānic interpretation, while in writing on the means of political struggle he employed a historical analysis of the early period of Islam, and in his prescription of the Islamic political state, he employed Islamic jurisprudence. Having witnessed the ignorance of the people about the basic principles of Islam, which made them susceptible to the influence of Western thought, he was determined to revise all standards of traditional Islamic teachings and make it possible to derive a grand political theory based on

Islam. He thought that such a mission was necessary in order to attach people more deeply to Islam again. The reason that the general teachings of Islam are foreign to Muslims is that they live in an environment unattached to the meanings of these principles. This situation is similar to one who knows how to speak his own language but has only a vague idea about the basics of its grammar.⁶³ For Sadr, Muslims must know the theoretical basis of Islam to be immune to the influence of the sociopolitical theories of the West.⁶⁴

However, Sadr does not consider himself to be constructing an Islamic political theory, but rather thinks of himself as *discovering*, or deriving it from the Islamic sources.⁶⁵ His belief is that Islam clearly has a grand political theory, on which underpins the entire body of its teachings. The fundamental principles of belief, the ritual acts of worship, the set of rules regarding individual behaviour, standards of ethics and social values, as well as Islamic laws and legislation, are mere reflections of the "Grand Islamic Theory." He considers the Islamic theory as the foundation upon which rests the superstructure of Islamic knowledge, including such things as laws and regulations. He developed an Islamic theory of economics and in so doing made an intensive effort to *discover* what is underneath the different laws of the various Islamic schools. His assumption is that these laws were derived by Muslim jurists to use their reasoning powers in applying fundamentals to circumstances as they rise, or to make them compatible with cultural standards. They are comparable to the differences between the British, German, Italian and American laws. Although capitalism represents the underpinnings and the ideological basis of these countries, their laws represent a reflection of their different historical and social heritages. The Anglo-Saxon culture is different from the Germanic, from the Roman and so on, which results in different legislation and sets of social-juristic rules. Since the grand theory underlying the Islamic sciences is not clear-

cut as are those of capitalism or Marxism concerning which one can directly go to the writings of Adam Smith or Marx, Sadr suggests that one can extrapolate the theory, the substructure in this case, from the superstructure.⁶⁶ One, in this case, must disengage all effects of historical circumstances, individual juristic reasoning, and limited interpretation of the general principles in order to truly get a clear embodiment of the theory.⁶⁷ The jurists sometimes unknowingly tried to justify current historical situations, or misread the reasons behind the Islamic traditions, which led to a misunderstanding of the principles of Islamic political theory. He concludes that the theory he is *discovering* goes behind his mere *ijtihad*, but rather represents the foundations common to the various Islamic schools of thought. His efforts are aimed at revealing the blueprint behind all Islamic teachings and knowledge down through the centuries.

Notes:

1. Karl Marx, *On Society and Social Change*, edited by Neil J. Smelser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
3. Dante Germino, *The Revival of Political Theory*, in the Richard H. Cox, ed. *Ideology, Politics and Political Theory* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), p. 107.
4. Kenneth Minogue, *Nietzsche and the Ideological Project*, in Noel O'Sullivan, ed. "The Structure of Modern Ideology" (London: Edward Elgar, 1989), p. 30.
5. Dante Germino, *Beyond Ideology: The Revival of Political Theory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 11.
6. S.P. Varma, *Modern Political Theory* (New Delhi, India: Vani Educational Books, 1985), p. 36.
7. George, E.G. Catlin, *Political Theory: What is it?*, *Political Science Quarterly* (March, 1957), pp. 1-6.

8. Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy?*, *Journal of Politics* (August, 1957), p. 3.
9. Sabine, *What is Political Theory?*, *Journal of Politics* (Feb., 1939), p. 7.
10. Leo Strauss, *What is Political Theory?*, *Journal of Politics* (August, 1957), p. 344.
11. *Ibid.*
12. P.H. Patridge, *Politics, Philosophy, Ideology*, in Richard Cox, *Ideology, Politics and Political Theory*, p. 116.
13. Andrew Haker, *Political Theory: Philosophy, Ideology, and Science* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1961), p. 2.
14. Dante L. Germino, *Beyond Ideology: The Revival of Political Theory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 5.
15. Dante Germino, *The Revival of Political Theory*, p. 105.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
17. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7, "Rationalism", by Bernard Williams.
18. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8. "Voluntarism," by Richard Taylor.
19. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 2, "Empiricism" by D.W. Hamlyn.
20. George H. Sabine and Thomas L. Thorson, *A History of Political Theory*, 4th ed. (Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press, 1973), p. 3.
21. Sabine, *What is Political Theory?*, p. 4.
22. David Easton, *The Decline of Modern Political Theory*, *Journal of Politics* (February, 1951), pp. 40-43.
23. Sabine, *What is Political Theory?*, p. 6.
24. Glen Tinder, *What Should be Political Theory Now*, in John S. Nelson, ed., *What Should Political Theory Be Now?* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), p. 153.
25. Om Bakshi, *The Crisis of Political Theory: An Inquiry into Contemporary Thought* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 6.

26. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (NY: Random House, 1979), p. 6.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
29. Haker, *Political Theory*, p. 7.
30. Kenneth W. Thompson, *Toward a Theory of International Relations*, *American Political Science Review*, p. 735.
31. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 12.
32. Arnold Brecht, *Political Theory*, p. 20.
33. Graham C. Kinloch, *Sociological Theory: Its Development and Major Paradigms* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977), p. 12.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Shi'ah, from a jurisprudence point of view, are divided into two main schools of thought: the akhbāris, which consider the Qur'an and the narrations without rational deduction as the only sources for deriving Islamic laws; and the usūli, which regards the principles of jurisprudence (which is considered as the logic of *fiqh*) as a valid source of deriving laws. On the foundations of the two schools and the historical intellectual conflict between them which ended in the defeat of the akhbāris in the late eighteenth century, see Sadr, *al-Ma'ālim al-Jadidah lil-Usūl* (Tehran: Maktabah al-Najāh, 1975), pp. 5-89.
36. Sadr, *al-Insān al-Mu'āsir wa-al-Mushkilah al-Ijtimā'iyyah* (The Contemporary Man and the Social Problem), in *al-Madrasah al-Islamiyyah*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrā', 1980), p. 24.
37. Sadr, *Islam and School of Economics* (a translation text of Sadr's *al-Madrasah al-Islamiyyah*), translator name unknown (Albany, CA: Muslim Students Association, n.d.), p. 42.
38. Sadr, *Muqaddimah fī al-Tafsīr al-Mawzū'ī lil-Qur'ān*, (Kuwait: Dār al-Tawjih al-Islāmi, 1980), p. 79.
39. Sadr, *Falsafatunā* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta'āruf, 1980), p. 31.
40. Sadr, *Our Philosophy*, translation of *Falsafatunā* by Shams C. Inati (London: Muhammadi Trust, 1987), p. 14.
41. Sadr, *Our Philosophy*, p. 32.

42. Sadr, Preface to 1st edition of *Iqtisādunā* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta'aruf, 1981), p. 27.

43. Sadr, Preface to 2nd edition of *Iqtisādunā*, p. 14.

44. *Ibid.*

45. Sadr, *Iqtisādunā*, p. 15.

46. Sadr, *Iqtisādunā*, pp. 18-21.

47. Sadr uses the concept "East" to refer to non-Western civilizations, generally, the civilizations influenced by divine religious teachings. These include the homelands of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrian, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The Afro-Asian civilizations are centred on God, while the European civilization is centred on man.

48. Sadr, *Iqtisādunā*, pp. 21-23.

49. Sadr, *al-Ittijāhāt al-Mustaḡbaliyyah li-Harakah al-Ijtihād* (The Future Trends of the Process of *Ijtihād*), in *Ikhtarnā Lak*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrā', 1980), pp. 79-80.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

52. Sadr, *al-Fahm al-Ijtimā'i lil-Nass fi Fiqh al-Imām Ja'far al-Sādiq* (The Social Understanding of Indicators in *fiqh* of Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq), *Ikhtarnā lak*, pp. 97-99.

53. M.H. Fazlullah, 'Alāmāt al-Istifhām 'Alā Tariq Harakah al Quwwah fi al-Dawlah al-Islamiyyah (Question Marks on the Route of Movement of Power in the Islamic State), *al-Tawhid* (Tehran) n. 21 (March 12, 1986) 90, referring to Sadr's new topology of *fiqh* subjects: and Hā'iri, *Mabāhith al-Usūl*, pp. 57-61, referring to Sadr's new school in *fiqh*.

54. Sadr, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 9-14.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-37.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-22.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

61. Sadr, *Dawr al-A'immah fi al-Hayāt al-Islāmiyyah* (The Role of Imams in Muslims' Life), in *Ikhtarnā Lak*, pp. 60-61; originally the articles were a speech delivered for the "Linguistic Society" in Najaf in 1966. The same idea was expressed in his *Dawr al-A'immah*, pp. 57-149, where he fully detailed the role of the Imams' missions in period that extended two and half centuries.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

63. Sadr, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 27-28.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

63. Sadr, *Iqtisādunā*, pp. 388-389.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 391.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 404-429.

The Rationale Development in the Political Thought of Martyr Sadr

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Introduction

What exactly are Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr's political thoughts? Is it possible for his political practice, which is based on his political thoughts, to be explained and commented upon? Has his political thoughts ever undergone any changes? If so, which parts of his political thoughts have encountered such changes? How can one go about learning about such changes? Basically, what are political thoughts? Does Martyr Sadr's political thoughts cover a specific form of Islamic government?

The questions raised above shall be used as a guideline for various topics in this article. The author's presumption is that based on spatio-temporal exigencies, and concepts and principles such as expediency (*maslahah*) and religious obligation (*taklif*), and a procedure such as *ijtihād*, al-Sadr's political thought went through certain changes. But these changes are not to be viewed as weak points in his political thoughts. Rather, these changes as a whole,

are considered as one of the most important developments in Sadr's political thoughts as well as an effective factor in guiding his political practice throughout his fruitful life. It is important to note that Sadr's political thoughts may be divided broadly into two categories: Reformist Thoughts and Revolutionary Thoughts.

Based on what has been said, the following topics shall be discussed:

1. The Concept of Political Thoughts.
2. Sadr's Political Thoughts.
3. A Critical Review of various responses regarding the cause for change in Sadr's political thoughts.
4. The author's response to the key question in this article which shall be based on: various views about Islamic political thoughts; the status of Sadr's political thoughts amongst these views and the constant principles in Sadr's political thoughts.

1. The Concept of Political Thoughts

There are certainly huge differences among the definitions for Political Thought; Political Philosophy; Political *Fiqh*; Political Ideology and Political Theory. Following is a brief definition of political thoughts within the framework of the subject being discussed in this article.

Raymond Aaron views political thoughts as:

Attempting to set certain goals which can reasonably be realized and to determine certain means through which those goals can reasonably be achieved.¹

Dr. Husayn Bashiriyyah commenting on Raymond's views regarding the issue of political thoughts, says:

To buttress his views, it has to be said that a political scholar is not someone merely with a set of beliefs and goals, or methods and means to meet those goals. Rather, he ought to be able to offer

some justifications for his views and beliefs to such an extent that those beliefs are not regarded as his mere personal taste.²

In correlating the above mentioned view with the history of Islamic political thought, particularly the political thought of Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr, it has to be stressed that what is meant by “political thought” is that, it significantly incorporates a set of philosophical ideas which are universal and generally accepted and at the same time, it involves political views and beliefs just as it includes political practice. Thus, those who plunge in political activities without having a set of thoughts or beliefs, undoubtedly take up a position irrelevant of any principles. Such individuals in Islamic societies are viewed more as politicians than Islamic scholars. Sadr had specific political views of his own which were based on sound logic and the principles of Islam, and he endeavoured to implement them practically to the extent that he was able to do because of the political conditions of his country. It should be said that in the history of Islamic political thought which covers a wide spectrum of life and society, political thought needs to have a distinct religious colour.³ Thus as is evident, Sadr's political thought is without doubt religious political thought.

2. Sadr's Political Thoughts

Since the aim of this article is to focus on the changes and development in the political thoughts of Ayatullah Sadr we will not enter into any detailed discussion of his political thoughts but would concentrate only on those aspects which are deemed necessary here. It is therefore appropriate to review his political thoughts in the historical order, and the main sources that reflect them are as follows:

a) *Al-Usus al-Islāmiyyah*, published in 1958; in the early days of the establishment of the Hizb al-Da‘wah al-Islāmiyyah by him.⁴

b) *Al-Fatāwā al-Wāzihah*, published in 1975.

c) Commentary on Ayatullah Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim's *Minhāj al-Sālihīn*, published in 1976.

d) Book Series: *al-Islām Yaqūd al-Hayāh* published in 1979.

a) *Al-Usus al-Islāmiyyah*

This work covers the issue of establishing an elected government led by a council.⁵ The key topics raised here are as follow:

1. Islam is a set of beliefs and Divine laws offered to mankind by the Almighty God through His last messenger, Prophet Muhammad (S). Islam is a religion which addresses all aspects of human life.

2. All mankind, throughout the globe, are obliged to obey the Islamic government. There are three types of governments in Islamic political thought:

i). The government of the Infallible (Prophet or Imam), to whom absolute obedience is obligatory.

ii). The government of the general representatives of the Infallible Imams, which, although seeks to observe Islamic laws is not immune from mistakes.

iii). An ordinary government which deliberately breaks Islamic laws. In view of the fact that such a government does not observe justice, it is an obligation for Muslims to overthrow it.

3. Considering that there are no clear terms and wordings in the Holy Qur'ān regarding the type and form of government during the period of *ghaybah* of the 12th Imam, it becomes essential to establish a government of councils according to the Qur'ānic verse:

“Through mutual consultation among themselves.” (42:38)

4. Under the government of councils which is also referred to as the government of people, the judgement and decrees are handled by fully qualified jurists.⁶

b & c. *Al-Fatāwā al-Wāzihah* & Commentary on *Minhāj al-Sālihīn*

In the above two books, the issue of *wilāyah al-Marji'* or the leadership of the supreme, upright and pious religious authority, selected by the majority of religious jurists is stressed. In *Minhāj*, the authority of the qualified supreme jurisprudent, in comparison to the theory raised in *al-Fatāwā*, is much broader.⁷

d. *Al-Islām Yaqūd al-Hayāh*

In *Khilāfah al-Insān wa Shahādah al-Anbiā'* which is a subtitle of the above series of books, the issue of people's rule under the guidance and control of a religious authority, or in other words, the theory of a composite government run by a council and supervised and approved by the supreme religious authority, is raised. The most important subjects addressed here are:

1. The Almighty God is Omnipotent, and His supremacy in human society is materialized simultaneously through the two essential elements of rulership (*khilāfah*) and supervision (*shahādah*). Accordingly, man is accountable to God.

2. The ummah brings about its rulership via the two Qur'ānic principles:

a). Through counsel and consultation in the sphere of the non-expressed (*ghayr mansūs*) issues.

b). Through guardianship (*wilāyah*) of the believers and the faithful with respect to each other.

3. The Almighty God has chosen certain supervisors or witnesses from amongst mankind to safeguard the divine trust to mankind, from going astray. Prophets, Imams, and religious authorities are regarded as God's witnesses. However, the Infallibles are both trustees and witnesses.

4. The representative of the Imam of the Age (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is the upright religious authority (*marji' sālih*).⁸

It is important to note that, Sadr has referred to a number of Qur'ānic verses with respect to each of the cases raised above. For instance, regarding the issue of caliphate, he cites the verse from the Holy Qur'ān:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, I am placing a vicegerent on the earth” (2: 30)⁹

As for the issue of supervision, he refers to the Qur'ānic verse:

“Thus we have set you up as a moderate group so you may act as witnesses over mankind even as the messenger was the witness over you.” (2:143)¹⁰

3. A Critical Review of Responses Regarding the Cause for Change in Sadr's political Thoughts

Unfortunately, the amount of research done in this respect is quite insignificant. Even so, these views are full of prejudgements. Some have a negative view about any sort of change and development in thoughts, and therefore, they believe that under no circumstances Sadr's political thoughts underwent any change. This is exactly why they have endeavoured to somehow justify Sadr's changed political thoughts. Others have attempted to prove changes and developments in the political thoughts of Sadr. However, they have rejected any other views in this regard and stuck to their own hypothesis. But, it is possible to accept the fact that Ayatullah Sadr's political thoughts encountered changes without getting entangled in the problems involved with the other two views. One scholar, in summing up the aforesaid views of his teacher, believes that they are actually the same, and those who believe in variation of the views are totally wrong. He writes:

Martyr Sadr's political thought hasn't faced much change as others think. The opinion of those who think that it was in later stages he realised the authenticity of the Imam of the Age's signed

decree (*tawqī'*) which states; "As for the developments which occur, turn to the narrators of our *hadith*, since they are proofs over you and I am the proof of Allah", and then used it as a basis for substantiating the necessity of *Wilāyat-i Faqīh*, is apparently not true¹¹, since Sadr Martyr in his views on composite government (people's rule under supervision of the upright religious authority) has used this signed decree (of the 12th Imam) to confirm the *wilāyah* and supervision of the supreme jurisprudent.¹²

In Martyr Sadr's political thoughts, the word *wilāyah* which is used in the general sense of religious authority, first and foremost means "supervision" and not government, as he himself has clearly explained. Secondly, in his viewpoint, it is among the duties and responsibilities of the people to establish a government. Thirdly, it is again the people who choose the religious authority for the position of supervision, unless there is more than one upright and pious religious authority.¹³

As it is quite clear from the reasoning of the above writer, there is a serious attempt to collect all of Martyr Sadr's views under one category. However, it should be pointed out that there are various views expressed by a number of his disciples, including Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Hakīm, Ayatullah Sayyid Kāzīm Husaynī al-Hā'irī and Muhammad al-Husaynī regarding his political thoughts. For instance al-Hakīm and Muhammad al-Husaynī have attempted to converge the second and third views of Sadr with respect to his political thoughts, under a single title: "The Absolute *Wilāyah* of the *Faqīh*."¹⁴ Sayyid Kāzīm Hā'irī has chosen a different way of interpretation of his teacher al-Sadr's political thought.¹⁵

Another writer by linking Sadr's first theory to his third theory and taking part of the reality, has also tried to link the second theory to the third one, to make it appear that according to Martyr Sadr the concept of *wilāyah* means witnessing and supervision.¹⁶

4. The Author's View

In order to understand the rationale for developments and shifts in the political thoughts of Ayatullah Bāqir al-Sadr as a great thinker and an prominent Muslim reformist, requires the following discussions:

1. Description of Islamic Political Thoughts
2. The Firm Principles of Sadr's Political Thoughts

1. Description of Islamic Political Thoughts

A discourse on goals and objectives which are normally observed by Islamic thinkers, both Shi'ite and Sunnis, when dealing with the Islamic political heritage, could be divided into three categories:

- a) Revolutionary Political Thoughts
- b) Reformist Political Thoughts
- c) Domineering Political Thoughts

a) Revolutionary political thoughts tend to totally alter the conditions. These are firmly based on Divine revelation and their goals are to implement religious obligations in society. These types of thought are found both in the early days of Islam and in the contemporary era. Islamic political thoughts were given practical shape for the first time by Prophet Muhammad (S), who on the basis of divine revelation succeeded in transforming the *jahiliyyah* society into Islamic society. Imam 'Ali ('a) referring to the days before the miraculous transformation wrought by his cousin the Prophet, says:

Allah sent Muhammad (S) as a warner (against vice) for all the worlds and as a trustee of His revelation, while you people of Arabia were following the worst religion and you resided amongst rough stones and venomous serpents. You drank dirty waters and ate filthy food. You shed blood of each other and cared not for relationship. Idols were fixed among you and sins were clinging to you.¹⁷

b) Reformist political thoughts by taking into consideration such factors as time and space, and in other words, by observing the realities, offer some advices for the relative improvement of affairs in an implicit manner. If circumstances become more favourable, then the followers and advocates of such thoughts would attempt to broaden their advices for improvements.

c) Domineering political thoughts try to preserve the status quo by supporting the theory, "might is always right". This type of thought is found mainly among the Sunnis, and to cite an example we quote Fazlullah bin Ruzbahān Khunji, the great Sunni religious scholar of the early 16th century, who writes:

There are four ways of establishing imamate (leadership). First is the consensus (*ijmā'*) of Muslims on the leadership of the concerned person and the swearing of allegiance to him by the prominent ulema, judges and chiefs. Second is *istikhlāf* or the appointment of a successor having the qualities of leadership by the former leader. The third way of choosing a leader is to convene a council (*shūrā*). The fourth way of determining monarchy or imamate is might and seizure of power. The ulema opine that if an imam were to die and another person were to overcome the people by demonstration of his might and army (by force), he should be acknowledged as worthy of imamate, whether or not he is a Qurayshite. It also does not matter whether he is an Arab, Persian or Turk. Irrespective of his meeting the required conditions or his being an immoral and ignorant person, he should be considered as king, imam and *khalīfah* since he has seized the leadership through show of force and might.¹⁸

The supporters of such thoughts, who are not few in number have constantly tried to save themselves and their positions, by attaching themselves to the court and the crown.

However, those thinkers who have expressed reformist ideas, have followed principles based on the great religion of Islam, and endeavoured to protect the Islamic goals and ideals. Sayyid Jamāl

al-Din Asadābādī,¹⁹ Ayatullah Mirzā Muhammad Husayn Nā'ini,²⁰ Imam Rūhullah Mūsawī Khumaynī,²¹ Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahharī and Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, were among such thinkers.

2. The Firm Principles of Sadr's Political Thoughts

Indeed, successful political thoughts are those based on firm and flexible principles. Moreover, political thoughts should bear the following characteristics:

- a) Setting rational goals
- b) Selecting required means to achieve those goals
- c) Being logical

Thus, due to the fact that Martyr Sadr had expressed his thoughts and views under various circumstances, naturally they should be different, and they are actually different. His initial views and political thoughts, that is the theory of "council government" was raised in 1958 when the "Hizb al-Da'wah" party was being established. Since there was no chance of overthrowing the Iraqi regime at that time, and the conditions weren't even favourable to publicly state such views, his thoughts were more of a reformist nature than revolutionary. Imam Khumaynī during the same period was introducing his reformist views in Iran.²² However, Sadr emphasized that if an Islamic state where the government is run by Muslims, deliberately violates Islamic laws, it would be considered as unjust and the people are required to fight and remove such a government. But if Islamic issues were ignored unintentionally, then public disobedience to its laws is not necessary and the government should be admonished according to the Islamic principles of *amr bi al-ma'rūf* and *nahy 'an al-munkar*.

Later on, when circumstances became more favourable and a revolutionary atmosphere emerged in Iraq, and at the same time the Islamic Revolution triumphed in Iran under the leadership of Imam Khumayni, Sadr began to spell out his revolutionary thoughts. This

is why, the developments in his political thoughts in the light of various political circumstances can readily be noticed and justified.

Although, his political thoughts are of two categories; reformist and revolutionary, they are based on certain firm principles, and the most important ones are:

1. Principle of Obligation
2. Principle of Expediency of Islam
3. Principle of Interests of Muslims
4. Principle of Adherence to Fixed Religious Laws
5. Principle of Invitation to Islam and its Spread
6. Principle of Negation of Means
7. Principle of Preferences (Most Important over Important)
8. Principle of Striving According to One's Ability and Circumstances
9. Principle of Justice
10. Principle of Necessity of Government
11. Principle of Divine Authority

In his works, Sadr has repeatedly emphasized that the religion of Islam is made up of firm and variable principles.²³ The key to understanding the political practice of the leading ulema and even the Prophet and the Infallible Imams, is to pay attention to the above said principles. To act according to the duty entrusted with due attention to the public expediency, and the exigencies of Islam and Muslims in order to safeguard Islam, has sometimes placed orthodox thinkers in the ranks of reformers, and at times among the revolutionaries (no reformist movement is considered genuine in Islamic lexicography unless it defines its duties and practically observes them). These flexibilities with full attention to divine laws could be seen in cases of dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) as well as in cases of concluding a truce. These are evident in the Prophet's Truce of Hdaybiyyah with the infidels of Mecca, and in Imam Hasan's ('a) treaty with Mu'āwiyyah, as well as in the uprising of Imam Husayn ('a) on the Day of 'Ashūrā in Karbalā. At times

these principles became manifest in the cry of protest of Hazrat Fātimah Zahrā ('a) against the gross violation of the principles of Islam after the passing away of her father the Prophet, and at other times in the 25-year silence of her husband Imam 'Alī ('a) – when the rule of the Islamic state passed from one incompetent person to another.

It was on the basis of these very principles that Muslims during their days of persecution in Mecca did not even had the permission of self-defence from the Prophet, let alone the waging of jihad, as did happen when circumstances changed after migration to Medina. In accordance to these principle the meaning of *nāsikh* (abrogator) and *mansūkh* (abrogated) becomes clear and the *ahamm* (most important) takes precedent over the *muhimm* (important). Ayatullah Bāqir al-Sadr paid meticulous attention to these divine principles and observed both issues of reform and revolution. In defining the call for reform, he has stated:

In a reformist call, which is aimed to reform certain aspects and affairs of a society, the other corrupt aspects of the society and the actual causes of the existing corrupt establishment are ignored.²⁴

In describing a revolutionary movement, he has said:

A revolutionary movement, while deeply understanding the actual circumstances through which the ummah is passing, never and ever gives in to the existing harsh conditions. When it finds the atmosphere and affairs in contrast to its doctrine and principles of ideology, it begins a relentless and comprehensive struggle to bring about a thorough change in the affairs of the society.²⁵

Sadr strongly emphasized the awareness of the existing situation. He has even stated that Prophet Muhammad (S) under such circumstances as those of today's, would exercise methods appropriate with the existing conditions.

If the Prophet was living in our times, he would have with his prudence and wisdom, adopted the relevant methods of propagation, information and organisation.²⁶

In Sadr's view, the problems of the social system should be considered as key issues of the contemporary world. Thus, under all circumstances, the most important point raised in his political thoughts, was addressing a social system based on realities.

The biggest problem of the contemporary world which has profoundly influenced the essence of man and has attracted towards it the total attention of human thoughts is the problem of the social system, since the type of social system is a determining factor in human life and existence in society.²⁷

As a matter of fact, in Martyr Sadr's view, if mankind is to reach the perfect and ideal state, which in other words means the proximity of Almighty God and the seeking of His Blessing, it has to observe the following four points, which are actually the firm bases of his political thoughts:

1. To have a clear ideological understanding towards a finer goal, which cannot be achieved but through believing in the indivisible unity of God (*Tawhid*).

2. The existence of a psychological force in relation to the relevant goal, to serve as a perpetual asset and constant fuel for mankind's will.

3. The necessity for a genuine relationship between mankind and the Absolute Goal (God) with Prophets serving as the medium.

4. When mankind faces a stage which according to Qur'anic terminology is called "divergence", the role of Prophets as bearers of tidings and warners is not enough. Hence, believers have to initiate the struggle against false deities and tyrants until victory is realized. Indeed, such wars require a qualified leader called the "Imam".²⁸

Conclusion

The political thoughts of every philosopher, is actually a reaction towards the crises and problems of his own era. Therefore, by observing the firm principles in the political thoughts of great Islamic thinkers and by paying attention to the factor and criteria of flexibility and change, it has become possible to illustrate the changes and developments in the political thoughts of Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, who attained martyrdom in pursuit of his ideological goals in April 1980.

Notes:

1. Bashiriyyah, Husayn, *Tārīkh Andisheh hāy Siyāsī dar Qarn-e Bīstom* (History of Political Thought in the 20th Century), p. 16, Nashr-e Ney, Tehran, 1376 S.H. (1997 C.E.).

2. *Ibid.*

3. Lakzā'i, Najaf, *Andisheh Siyāsī-yeh Muhaqqiq Sabzewāri* (Political Thought of Muhaqqiq Sabzewāri), Mu'ssasih Amuzesh 'Āli Bāqir al-'Ulūm ('a), Qum, 1377 S.H. (1998 C.E.), part one, pp. 4-5. Also Qādīrī, Hātam, *Andisheh Siyāsī Ghazzālī* (Political Thought of Ghazzālī), Daftar-e Mutālī'āt Siyāsī wa Bayn al-Milālī, Tehran, 1370 S.H. (1991 C.E.), pp. 71-72.

4. According to the weekly al-Jihad, he founded Hizb al-Da'wah in Rabī' al-Awwal 1377 A.H. corresponding to October 1957 C.E., but al-Sadr's own booklet entitled *Min Fikr al-Da'wah* gives the date of establishing the party a few months later in early 1958 C.E. For further information on Hizb al-Da'wah and the political measures adopted by Martyr Sadr, refer to the collection of essays published as *Inqilāb-e Islāmī wa Rīsheh hāy ān*, vol. 2, topic titled *Irtibāt-e Mutaqābil-e Inqilāb-e Islāmī Iran wa Jonbesh-e Shī'ayān-e Iraq* (Reciprocal Ties Between the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the Movement of Iraqī Shi'ites – with reference to the political thought of Martyr Sadr). Also refer to Jamshīdī,

Muhammad Husayn, *Andisheh Siyāsi-yeh Shahīd Rābi' Imām Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Sadr* (Political Thought of the 4th Martyr, Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Sadr), Mu'assasah-e Chāp wa Intishārāt-e Wizārat-e Khārijah, Tehran, 1377, pp. 35-44.

5. The treatise *al-Usus al-Islāmiyyah* was published by Muhammad al-Husaynī in his book *al-Imam al-Shahīd al-Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr Dirāsah fī Siratih wa Manhajih*, Dār al-Furāt, Beirut, 1989/1410, part one, pp. 336-359.

6. Kadivar, Muhsin, *Nazariyyah-hāy Dawlat dar Fiqh Shi'ah* (Views of the Government on Shi'ite Jurisprudence), Nashr-e Ney, Tehran, 1376 S.H. (1997 C.E.), pp. 160-167.

7. Al-Sadr, Muhammad Bāqir, *al-Fatāwā al-Wāzihah*, part one, Dār al-Ta'āruf lil-Matbū'āt, Beirut, 1981/1410, pp. 115-134. Also refer to notes of Martyr Sadr published on the margins of Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim's *Minhāj al-Sālihīn*, Dār al-Ta'āruf lil-Matbū'āt, Beirut, 1410, Section on Rites of Worship under note 25, p. 11. Also refer to Kadivar, *Ibid.*, p. 128 and Jamshīdī's work cited above, p.285.

8. Summary of Martyr Sadr's views as mentioned by Kadivar, *Ibid.*, pp. 127-140. Also refer to Part Four of collection of essays *al-Islam Yaqūd al-Hayāh* and al-Sadr, Muhammad Bāqir, *Khilāfah al-Insān wa Shahādah al-Anbiyā'*, Dār al-Ta'āruf lil-Matbū'āt, Beirut, 1979.

9. Other verses in this regard are *al-A'rāf*: 69, *al-Fātir*: 39, *al-Sād*: 26, and *al-Ahzāb*: 72.

10. Also refer to *al-Nisā'*: 41, *al-Mā'idah*: 117, *al-Nahl*: 29, *al-Hajj*: 78, *Al-i 'Imrān*: 140, and *al-Zumar*: 69.

11. Al-Hakīm, Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir, *al-Nazariyyah al-Siyāsiyyah 'Inda al-Shahīd al-Sadr*, (The Political Viewpoint of Martyr al-Sadr), Tehran, 1410, p.9.

12. Jamshīdī, p. 286.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 287.

14. Al-Hakīm, p.9; Kadivar, p. 128; Husaynī, pp. 335-36.

15. Hā'iri Husaynī, Sayyid Kāzīm, *Wilāyah al-Amr fī 'Asr al-Ghaybah*, (Possession of Divine Authority in the Period of Occultation --of the 12th Imam), Majma' al-Fikr al-Islāmī, Qum, 1414, pp. 128 & 160; Kadivar, p. 128.

16. Kadivar, *Ibid.*

17. Sermon No. 26, Ja'farī, Muhammad Taqī, *Tarjamah wa Tafsīr Nahj al-Balāghah*, Tehran, Daftar-e Nashr-e Farhang-e Islāmī, 1359 S.H. (1980 C.E.), vol. 5, pp. 129-130, Quoted from: A'ineh-vand, Sādiq, *Tārikh Siyāsī Islam* (Political History of Islam), Nashr-e Rajā', Tehran, 1362 S.H. (1983 C.E.), p. 30.

18. Ruzbahān Khunjī Isfahānī, Fazlullah, *Sulūk al-Mulūk* (Behaviour of the Kings), edited with a preface by Muhammad 'Alī Muwāhhid, Tehran, Intishārāt-i Khwārazmī, 1362 S.H. (1983 C.E.), pp. 79-82. He was a prominent Sunni scholar of the 9th-10th centuries AH and wrote this work in Bukhara for the Uzbek ruler 'Ubaydullah Khān Shaybānī, at whose court he had taken refuge after fleeing his homeland Iran because of his blinding hatred of the Safawids.

19. For study of the reformistic thought of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asad-Abādī refer to: Najaf Lakzā'i and Mansūr Mir Ahmādī, *Zamīneh-hāy Inqilāb Islāmī Iran* (Groundwork of the Islamic Revolution of Iran), Intishārāt-i A'immah, Qum, 1377 S.H. (1998 C.E.).

20. For study of the reformistic thought of Mīrzā Nā'inī refer to: Najaf Lakzā'i and Mansūr Mir Ahmādī, *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.* Also Lakzā'i, Najaf, *Mantiq Tahawwul dar Andisheh wa 'Amal Siyāsī Imam Khumaynī* (Rationale Development in the Thought and Political Activity of Imam Khumayni), published in Collection of Research Papers on Islamic Revolution under the title of *Jur'ih-ye Jāri*, through the efforts of 'Alī Dhū 'ilm, Pazhuheshgāh Farhang wa Andisheh, Tehran, 1377 S.H. (1998 C.E.).

22. *Ibid.*

23. Al-Sadr, Muhammad Bāqir, *Sūrah 'an Iqtisād al-Mujtama' al-Islāmī* (Part 2 of *al-Islām Yaqūd al-Hayāh*), Dār al-Ta'aruf lil-Matbū'āt, Beirut, 1979/1399, pp 22-24. Here Martyr Sadr replying to the question that how could Islam after the passage of 14 centuries solve the economic problems of the modern era, says: They are ignorant of the fact that Islam has two types of laws; fixed laws that are textually determined on the basis of the Holy Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet; and flexible laws that vary according to the spatio-temporal needs.

24. Al-Sadr, Muhammad Bāqir, *Mabānī Fikrī Hizb al-Da'wah al-Islāmī*, (Ideological Bases of Islamic Da'wah Party), Persian translation by the Hizb al-Da'wah Bureau, Tehran, p. 27 as quoted by Jamshidi, *Ibid*, p. 119.

25. *Ibid*, p. 120.

26. *Ibid*, p. 129.

27. Jamshidī, *Ibid*, p. 7, quoting Sayyid Husayn Husayni's Persian translation of Martyr Sadr's work under the title of *Theori-ye Shinākht wa Jahānbīnī dar Falsafah-ye Mā* (Theory of Recognition and Worldview in our Philosophy), p. 171, Badr Publications, Tehran 1362 S.H. (1983 C.E.).

28. Mūsawī Isfahānī, Dr. Sayyid Jamāl, Persian translation of Martyr Sadr's work under the title of *Sunnat hāy-e Tārīkh dar Qur'ān* (Historical Traditions in the Holy Qur'ān), Jāmi'ah Mudarrissīn, Qum, pp. 240-243.

The European Contagion and the Golden Mean

By: Dr. Jan Samuelsson

**A few reflections regarding *Iqtisādunā* by Sayyid
Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr**

Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr's work *Iqtisādunā* ("Our Economics") is constituted by a comparison between different economic systems, namely capitalism, Marxism and Islamic economy in the light of the author's conception of these systems.

Sadr's point of departure in his work can be regarded as ideological, however it is beyond question a scholarly method with footnotes, with a usual account of sources and the text enables the reader to follow the author from his reasoning to the conclusions he draws.

The point of departure that Sadr presents above all is the fact that there is no other framework within which to find solutions to the problems of backwardness in Muslim countries with the exception of the framework of the Islamic economic system. Further reasoning regarding this standpoint constitutes a dominant feature of *Iqtisādunā*.

Another important element is the reasoning about what the Islamic economic system implies and its position in proportion to economic systems like capitalism and Marxism. Sadr establishes the fact that it is not possible to choose the same methods used by Europeans in the building-up of their modern economy. The Islamic world has tried two economic systems developed by Europeans: market economy based on the capitalistic ideology, and planned economy based on the socialistic ideology. The results weren't encouraging. (The author uses the notion Marxism and socialism alternatively. The distinction between these two notions isn't always clear and, in several cases, they can be understood as synonymous notions). The author points out that it is not possible to just withdraw an economic system from its historical and social context and apply it in a society with totally different conditions. He emphasizes the fact that there are close links between, on the one hand Marxism and capitalism, and on the other hand European traditions and social conditions. These economic systems cannot be applied in societies based on religion. Not even if religion was suddenly abolished in an Islamic society would that be possible since ethics, traditions and institutions were formed by a centuries old Islamic influence.

It is easy to agree with Sadr's opinion about Marxism in that it is an ideology applicable in European conditions in the first place. This becomes obvious when one studies Marxian analysis that were for example carried out by Soviet researchers. It concerns awkward attempts to find "the Asian way of production" in Muslim societies. In view of that, Islam is often presented in deprecating wordings in these studies. (Brattlud, Asa – Samuelsson, Jan: *Islam – English folkrörelse*. Muslimer i Svenskt Samhällsliv. Skelleftea 1991. Page 19).

Sadr presents political and psychological aspects that go against the application of Marxism and capitalism in Muslim societies. The Ummah must base its modern revival on a social

organization and culture whose origin is not related to the countries of the colonialists. Why? Well because there is a psychological dislike to methods, ideas and institutions that are directly associated with Europe. This in itself worsens the possibility of applying these methods successfully.

Sadr describes Europe as a unit. Likewise, non-Muslim writers perceive the Muslim world as a unit. Generalizations like "Islam" and "Europe" are of course uncertain in certain contexts. However they can be regarded as being conventional within the frames of scientific literature that concerns these fields. See for instance Bernard Lewis: *Islam and the West*, New York 1993, as well as other works by Lewis.

When Sadr tries to capture what denotes a typical European human being, he becomes more ideological than scientific. "Europeans always look at the earth, not at heaven". Pious Catholics in Spain for example or Italy would certainly lift their eyebrows before such a description. The author also means that Europeans are freedom-lovers, both in a positive and a negative sense, in that they strive after freedom from moral responsibility. The European has also a tendency of perceiving existence as a struggle situation. This has been expressed in European science and philosophy through Darwinism, the class struggle of Marxism and the struggle between contrasts (tes – antites) in the Hegelian viewpoint. But for someone who perceives the presence of God in the creation, that is to say Muslims, the perspective is different. The interest for material advantages is not so dominant. According to Sadr, the interest for individual and moral freedom also gets impaired. Sadr wants to show here that Muslims and Europeans are generally constituted by two different types of human beings without further explaining why so is the case. The reasoning constitutes a link in the author's argumentation that the European way of thinking cannot successfully be applied in Islamic conditions.

A few conclusions can be drawn from Sadr's apprehensions. First of all, it follows from the author's reasoning that the Islamic economic system can barely work in Europe for the same reasons that economic systems like Marxism and capitalism cannot completely work in Islamic conditions. Another question is, in my opinion, whether individual Islamic economic institutions, like the Islamic bank, can work in a non-Islamic context like Europe. One can object to this question by claiming it is not correctly formulated. Europe can simply not be considered as a non-Islamic context. Nowadays, Europe embraces several considerable Islamic minorities even though their influence on the political process is humble. As a matter of fact millions of Muslims live in Europe. More than 300,000 Muslims live in Sweden alone which counts a relatively small population (Samuelsson, Jan: *Islam i Sverige*, Stockholm, 1999). These Islamic population groups in Europe should be considered as a sufficient basis to establish more Islamic banks in Europe. The question can be asked in a different way. Can an economic institution like an Islamic bank attract non-Muslims and in addition to that work in a satisfactory way even for non-Islamic customer? If this is the case, one cannot by reason exclude the opposite, at least in principle, namely that individual institutions within the capitalistic or Marxian economic system could work in an Islamic context.

Some debaters within the field of Islamic economy have vindicated that an Islamic bank cannot work well in a non-Islamic economy. In issues in Islamic banking, Leicester 1983, M. N. Siddiqi vindicated that the Islamic bank could only be successful in countries where the interest institution was forbidden and where interest proceedings were a penal action. However, this doesn't seem to be the most common opinion. Most Islamic economists and persons conversant with the legal system in Islam think that it is both possible and recommendable to act even in countries where Islam has little influence. It is also considered that Islamic banks

can successfully compete against institutions based on interest and even attract customers who are not Muslims. For instance, the management of A Baraka Turkish Finance House in Istanbul stands for such an opinion. Al Baraka's management think it is possible thanks to the high profitability produced by the bank and because of the fact that even non-Muslims can be attracted by the link between ethics and economy that the bank stands for. (Samuelsson, Jan: *Islamisk Ekonomi*, Lund 1999, p. 67).

Another observation from Sadr's reasoning is whether other reasons than those mentioned can be at the bottom of his dissociation from Marxism and capitalism as European systems. Such a theological, and perhaps also psychological reason with elements from a magical thinking, is what I would like to call "the conception of the European contagion".

Bernard Lewis points out that the Islamic habit, historically provable in several cases, to define innovation (*bid'ah*) as deviation from tradition. Tradition is regarded as being good and as containing God's message to mankind. Therefore, deviating from tradition is a priori something negative.

A particularly repudiable variation of *bida* is when one imitates the unfaithful person's habits. A tradition attributed to Prophet Muhammed says that "whoever imitates people becomes one of them". It has sometimes been interpreted as follows: whoever enters the unfaithful person's habits and behaviors commits a heretical action and an action of treason towards Islam, in other words one becomes unfaithful himself. (Lewis, Bernard: *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, London 1982, p. 224).

This interpretation was done frequently by persons conversant with the Qur'an in the Ottoman Empire in order to stop certain phenomena like scientific innovations, as for instance the apparition of printing technique and new medicines that originated from Europe. The perception that everything that was European was a priori evil, with a few exceptions like weapon technique,

contributed undoubtedly to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. Are we confronted to another case of the European contagion-syndrome in Sadr's work *Iqtisādunā*?

I have to answer no. Sadr's arguments sustaining the difficulty of applying Marxism and capitalism are based on logical reasoning that is well presented. For the Muslim reader, it is however important, in my opinion, not to generalize in the light of Sadr's opinion concerning economic systems and come to the conclusion that anything of European origin is in principle useless in an Islamic context. However, such a conclusion is very probable with regard to the founded distrust that exists towards the western world within considerable Muslim population groups. Crusades and colonialism, together with not the least aggressive American interventions in the Muslim world in modern times, has prepared Muslims to behold what the western world stands for with skepticism.

Political vigilance towards the West is one thing. From an Islamic perspective, it is well founded and essential. If this skepticism influenced the will to acquire special knowledge from West within the scientific fields, the price would be high from an economic point of view.

For economic and political reasons various writers have often taken pains to find similarities or differences (from separate motives, often of a political nature) between the Islamic economic system and certain other economic systems.

Comparisons have been made with systems based on market economy and planned economy. Political leaders, like the former president Nāsir in Egypt, have tried to point out certain similarities between socialism/communism and Islam while the leadership in Saudi Arabia has tried to point out the differences between these systems. The destruction of the Soviet Empire has made certain leaders in the Islamic world less prone to emphasize similarities between socialism and Islam. If there is any tendency today, in the

Islamic world, regarding comparisons between Islamic economy and other economic systems, it is in my opinion that the Islamic economy tends to be described, either as a unique system independent from capitalism and socialism, or as the golden mean between the two extremes/poles capitalism and socialism.

How does Sadr describe the Islamic economic system in *Iqtisādunā*?

Although Sadr obviously perceives the Islamic economic system as a unique system, the argumentation itself often tends to follow the fact that this system constitutes what one can call the golden mean. Communism and capitalism are perceived as two antipodes with Islam between them. Islam gets characterized as the rational mean between two unrational extremes. Here are a few examples: When it comes to ownership, the pole socialism stands for collective owning only while the pole capitalism stands for private ownership. As the rational mean, Islam stands for both collective and private ownership. When it comes to economic freedom, the pole socialism stands for no economic freedom while capitalism stands for total economic freedom. According to Sadr, Islam here stands for economic freedom but with limitations. "Islam took a middle stand, banning some kinds of profit like the usurious and permitting some others like the commercial profit." (Sadr: *Our Economics*, volume one, part two, page 129).

Moderation, balance, adequate are notions that have been applied and experienced as ideals in several Islamic contexts. This is quite obvious in the Islamic medical history. The good life leading to physical and spiritual health is characterized by adequate sleep, adequate food, adequate sexuality, adequate work and adequate prayers. Take for example Prophet Muhammed's attitude against exaggerated praying at the expense of social life. In his description of the Islamic economic system, Sadr can be seen as referring to this traditional adequate/moderation/balance – notion.

The author thinks that the Islamic economy is distinguished by social balance. With its way of thinking turned towards partnership, the Islamic bank confirms the conception that groups within the Islamic society aren't in opposition to one another as are for instance loan takers and loan givers or employees and employers in European societies.

Sadr's perception of Islamic economy can be compared to what Muhammad Umar Chapra has expressed. He thinks that what capitalism and socialism lacks, and Islam offers, is the synopsis between spiritual and material values – the capitalistic and socialistic systems have neglected people's spiritual needs. Every attempt to point out similarities between these systems and Islam shows the lack of understanding for what capitalism and socialism are, namely materialistic systems, Chapra says and, with that, describes Islam more as a unique system rather than a mean (Chapra, M.U.: *Objectives of the Islamic Economic Order*. Leicester, 1996, pp. 21-27).

In the article *Zakāt and Social Justice*, M.A.Z. Badawi claims that Islam constitutes the right point of balance between the two extremes, capitalism and socialism. He seems thereby to perceive Islam more as the mean (Badawi: *Zakāt and Social Justice*. In *The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order*. London: 1979).

Muslim writers usually claim that Islamic economy can be seen both as a unique system and the golden mean between capitalism and socialism although one of these two standpoints is emphasized more than the other.

It is, from a logical philosophical point of view important to emphasize the fact that there is a big difference between these two ways of describing Islamic economy. The standpoint that the Islamic economy is a totally unique system implies that the difference between Islamic economy and the capitalistic and socialistic system is basically of a qualitative nature. The standpoint that the Islamic economy constitutes the golden mean

implies that the differences in comparison to socialism and capitalism are in the first place quantitative (more collective ownership – less collective ownership, more individual freedom – less individual freedom, etc.).

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According to Sadr, Islam denies the fact that the form of production in a society forms this society's social organization in a decisive way. It is still possible to retain a certain social system even though the form of production changes with time. Sadr asserts here the principle that there is no demanding connection between a social system and a form production. The fundamental postulate of the materialistic historical perception, concerning the significance of the forms of production is brilliantly rejected by Sadr by means of the best conceivable example: The origin of the Islamic civilization. It wasn't the result of a new form of production or of important changes in the prevailing form of production. The most recent revolutionary experiment constituted by Islam can hardly be explained in the light of the socialistic perception of history, the author claims and it is hard not to agree with that. According to

Marxism, the idea that men are equal and have fundamental rights is developed with the growing bourgeoisie in Europe and is encouraged by the industrial revolution. However, similar ideas existed in the Arabian Peninsula in Mecca more than 1,000 years before the bourgeoisie revolution in Europe. What was there in this society living on agriculture and commerce (commerce being limited compared to other Arabic societies during the same period), leading to the perception of human equality? To Sadr, the answer is the one of the believer. In my opinion, non-Muslims haven't yet received any satisfactory answer regarding this question.

The politics of equalizing economic conditions among members of the Islamic society (first of all with the help of *zakāt*) that arose in Islam during the 7th century cannot be described as a result of the fairly unsophisticated economic activity that took place in this region during that period. The fact that the trade-development in Mecca required a more organized society cannot explain the origin of the Islamic civilization, a phenomenon that changed the history of the world. Mecca's situation between Yemen and Syria was not unique. The city of Petra had a much more flourishing economy. Another flourishing city with as good of chances as Mecca was Palmyra. Even other cities can be named in this context. "No," Sadr sums up in his reasoning, the Islamic revolution wasn't the result of certain material conditions and commercial circumstances in the region of Mecca.

It is obvious that Sadr approaches the question at issue, with his arguments, in a scientific way. Yet, the reasoning is also ideologically attractive from an Islamic perspective since it leads to the opinion that Islam could be maintained as a social form/system irrespective of the social form of production.

The conclusion is extensive:

Islam can survive or be introduced irrespective of the material conditions existing in a society.

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The Relationship between Philosophy and Theology in the Postmodern Age

By: Dr. Muhammad Legenhausen

When I was a student at a Catholic high school in Queens, New York, I was taught that although philosophy is the mother of the sciences, she is also the handmaid of theology. Sometimes the dialogue between philosophy and theology may have seemed to have taken the form of orders given by the theological mistress to her erudite but obedient maid, but that was a long time ago, if ever it was at all. The idea that philosophy should be in service to theology has been rejected in the West by most philosophers, and many theologians, at least since the Enlightenment period of European thought. But instead of bringing about the emancipation of philosophy, the result has been to place philosophy at the service of her own children, the natural and human sciences. Scientific realists would determine being itself by the ultimate dictates of science. So, where does this leave the relationship between philosophy and theology? Many see it as forever broken off, and many Christian theologians think that this is to the advantage of theology. As they see it, philosophy was never a very good servant, for it was always raising more problems than it solved. Of course, this attitude is not unknown to Muslim scholars. It is easy to find

Muslims who are suspicious of philosophy, especially Islamic philosophy; there are even those, like Ghazzālī, who would accuse philosophy of blasphemy. Others would be satisfied if philosophy would mind its own business and stay out of the way of theological doctrine.

Philosophy, however, refuses to be ignored. It has a way of making itself noticed even by those theologians who wish it would just go away. Philosophy accuses those who neglect her of lacking reason, and since it proclaims that reason is the difference between man and the other animals, this accusation amounts to the charge that those who neglect her are subhuman.

So, after the rise and fall of positivism, after philosophy had been declared to be a servant of the natural sciences, assigned to clean up left over questions, philosophy arrives in the new dress of philosophy of religion, coyly proffering her own questions for the theologian. On the surface, most or many of the questions are those that have been familiar to theologians for centuries: How can the existence of God be proved? How can God know what free humans will do? Can God make a stone so large that He Himself cannot lift it? How can the eternal God know the temporal material world? And so forth. While on the surface, these appear to be the same questions familiar to theologians since reason was first applied to religion, once one becomes familiar with the contemporary discussions of these questions it becomes obvious that the philosophy of religion is a naive girl seeking to understand her faith as best she can. Philosophy has served the sciences for years, and its servitude to the sciences has required countless compromises with humanism, materialism, physicalism, naturalism, and other ideologies antagonistic to religion. When it raises its questions for the theologians, the arguments of all these ideologies are ready and waiting for whatever response the theologians may offer. If the theologian responds by rehearsing the standard discussions to be

found in traditional texts, whether Christian or Islamic, he will be accused of ignorance and irrelevance to contemporary concerns.

The philosophy of religion is by no means merely another name for rational theology as traditionally understood, for the very standards of reason which are applied to theological issues have changed. If the theologian is not to be caught off guard, he must be prepared to question these standards, and thus, to adopt an unfamiliar hypercritical stance towards the canons of reason themselves.

The dialogue between philosophy and theology today is not simply an affair between the questioning mind of the philosopher and the pious spirit of the theologian. Every question comes with unspoken expectations of what sort of answer will be considered suitable. Every search for a reason presupposes a standard of explanation. The expectations and presuppositions that inform the philosophy of religion are deeply coloured by the entire history of recent Western thought. Since many of those who write and publish in the area of philosophy of religion have been trained in analytic philosophy, the standards of analytic philosophy, which are influenced to a great degree by empiricism, positivism, pragmatism, and naturalism, play an important but subtle role in this field.

The situation is complicated by the fact that many philosophers of religion, and even more Christian theologians, are influenced more by what is often called "continental philosophy" than by analytic philosophy. Most of the important continental philosophers have been from France or Germany, while the majority of analytic philosophers have taught at American or British universities. While philosophy in the U.S. has been dominated by analytic thought throughout most of the twentieth century, over the last ten or fifteen years, continental thought has come to play a more prominent role in American philosophy. What is emerging is a "world philosophy", but one from which the

Islamic world is largely excluded. The reason for this exclusion is not because of some conspiracy to suppress Islamic thought, but because we Muslims have not seriously attempted to enter the discussion, we must beware that it takes place in what is often hostile territory, in the context of expectations, presuppositions and standards of reasoning many of which are quite foreign to those found in the Islamic sciences.

These issues must be kept in mind before the Muslim scholar attempts to survey the questions contemporary philosophy of religion poses for theology, where and in what follows, theology is to be understood as including not merely *kalām*, but *'irfān nazarī*, religious ethics, and even some discussion of *fiqh* and *usūl*. What appears to be a dialogue between a philosopher who relies on pure reason alone and a theologian is in reality a complex discussion about philosophy, the sciences, theology and the various ideologies which have influenced these broad areas of intellectual endeavour.

Perhaps the attitude of the Muslim scholar to the complexity of the situation will be one of dismissal; the Muslim theologian might come to the conclusion that the philosophy of religion is the product of Western intellectual attitudes toward science and religion and does not apply to the Islamic world. The conversation between philosophy and theology is really a conversation between a Western philosopher and a Christian theologian. However, we ignore the philosophy of religion at our own peril. The ideas and attitudes that inform the philosophy of religion are not confined within the walls of a few universities in distant foreign lands. They are part of the Western cultural atmosphere whose volume is so large that it will find itself invading the Islamic world, or rather has already started invading, whether anyone wants it to or not. The international commerce in ideas – mostly Western ideas – cannot be slowed, let alone stopped. Faced with a trade imbalance, attempts may be made to preserve local markets, but ultimately the only successful policy will be one in which locally manufactured

products of export quality are made widely available. Since there are so many different kinds of Western intellectual products on the market, we Muslims cannot hope to gain our market share in all fields any time soon. However, we can hope to compete aggressively in those areas in which Islamic thought has demonstrated its strength in the past, and build on this to expand into other areas. In order to compete in the international market of ideas, Islamic thought must not only answer the doubts raised by various Western thinkers, it must do so in a way that is distinctively Islamic. We cannot simply look at the answers Christians have given and then search for an appropriate *hadith* to make them seem Islamic. Serious full time work has to be done to begin to formulate contemporary Islamic theologies which are in harmony with the tradition of Islamic sciences, especially *kalām*, *falsafah*, and *'irfān*.

With these points in mind, we can turn to some examples of the sorts of questions raised by the philosophy of religion for the theologian.

One of the deepest areas to be surveyed is that of epistemology. This is also an area to which medieval thinkers devoted less attention than our contemporaries. How do we know that God exists? The traditional answer given by Christians as well as Muslims was that we can formulate sound deductive proofs whose premises confirm the existence of God. The problem with this answer is that many of the premises that seemed self-evident enough in the past have now come to be questioned.

Consider, for example, the role of the principle that an actual infinity of causes is impossible. A number of Western philosophers, physicists and mathematicians have come to doubt this principle. In defence of the principle, an important book has been written in which some of the ideas of Muslim philosophers are given attention: William Lane Craig's *The Kalām Cosmological Argument*.¹ This is one of the rare cases in which ideas from the Islamic tradition (particularly those of Abū Hāmid Ghazzālī) have

been the subject of discussion in the contemporary philosophy of religion. The continued discussion of this work in scholarly journals sixteen years after the publication of the book is testimony to its significance. The important point is that what has seemed for centuries to be a self-evident principle is now the topic of vigorous debate. At first glance it seems that what we have here is a case of a principle of reason defended in Islamic philosophy and theology and pitted against the modern sceptics of the West. If we look closer, however, we find that the principle has undergone its own evolution within the tradition of Islamic philosophy. By the time we get to Sadr al-Muta'allihin Mullā Sadrā Shirāzi the principle is limited to a series of actual causes of existence occurring simultaneously. The question that needs to be addressed here is how the unqualified principle came to be qualified in Islamic philosophy, for the unqualified principle was also taken by some (such as Ghazzālī) to be a self-evident principle of reason, and the version of the principle still defended by Craig is not subject to the qualification of simultaneity!

In any case, what we find here is rather typical of the philosophy of religion. Philosophers impressed with the principles employed in the natural sciences or mathematics raise doubts about what had been considered to be self-evident or nearly self-evident principles which had been used as premises of proofs for the existence of God. The result is an epistemological problem. What was once claimed to be known is now doubted. The doubts raised are not unanswerable, but the formulation of answers requires a fair degree of sophistication, including a certain amount of familiarity with current physics and mathematics. William Lane Craig and Quentin Smith take up the debate about the cosmological argument and the new physics in a more recent book: *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*.²

Debates about the traditional proofs for the existence of God have led some to question whether proofs are really necessary at all

for rational religious belief. Alvin Plantinga has become famous among philosophers of religion for his defence of what he calls "reformed epistemology".³ Plantinga claims that for the devout Christian, belief in the existence of God is properly *basic*, that is, it doesn't need to be proved. He claims that the founder of the Reformed Church, John Calvin, held a similar view.⁴ Calvin was sceptical about the abilities of sinful man to reason his way to the existence of God, but Catholic philosophers, who have more faith in human reason, have also been impressed with Plantinga's position. The Catholic response to Plantinga is especially interesting because in the Shi'i tradition there has been a similar respect for the powers of reason. I suspect that in the long run, the responses of Catholic and Muslim philosophers and theologians will be similar in being diverse.⁵ Some of the Catholic thinkers who have researched the issue have defined a foundationalist epistemology, but the majority has sought to find some common ground with the sort of view defended by Plantinga.

Another major figure who has defended the rationality of religious belief without reliance on the traditional proofs for the existence of God is William Alston.⁶ Alston turns the more scepticism against atheism, claiming that we have no more reason to trust sense experience than we have to trust our religious intuitions. Since the beliefs based on sense experience are considered to be rational, the same must be granted of religious beliefs. Alston's work, like Plantinga's, has generated volumes of criticism and responses, most of which focus on such epistemological questions as the nature of knowledge and rationality, faith and belief, or evidence and justification.

Other defenders of the Christian faith have argued that the doubts raised by Hume (1711-1776) and Kant (1724-1804) about the rationality of religious belief can be answered through an examination of the standards of reasoning employed in the natural sciences today, which are far from what Hume and Kant imagined.⁷

In these discussions it is the philosophy of science to which theologians must turn in order to demonstrate to those who have faith in science but not in religion that their bias is not dictated by their fidelity to the rational standards of the empirical sciences.

In many of the discussions of the rationality of religious faith, the concept of religious experience plays a pivotal role. This is especially true of the writings of reformed epistemologists and of William Alston, but of many others as well, including Gary Gutting,⁸ Richard Swinburne⁹ and John Hick.¹⁰ The concept of religious experience is one which is especially foreign to Islamic thought, for it emerged in Europe and the United States in the writings of Friedrich Schleiermacher and William James as a result of the pressure religious thinkers felt exerted by the legacies of Hume and Kant, romanticism and empiricism. Even the very term “religious experience” is difficult to translate into Persian or Arabic. The most commonly accepted translation seems to be *tajrobeh-ye dini*, but *tajrobeh* has the odour of the laboratory and a sense of repetition, which is absent from the Western concept. Other terms which might be suggested each have their own problems, for example, *idrāk*, *shenākht*, and *ma‘rifat* each are appropriate only when some reality is successfully apprehended, while the term “religious experience” is supposed to be neutral as to whether it is illusory or veridical. It is to be understood on analogy with scientific data, and just as the scientist uses reason to judge which of the competing hypotheses can best explain the available empirical data, Gary Gutting and Richard Swinburne hold that the hypothesis of God’s existence can best explain the data of one’s inner religious feelings and intuitions. Alston and Plantinga, on the other hand, claim that for the believer, the proposition that God exists is more analogous to the scientist’s presumption that there is a physical world to be investigated and about which empirical data conveys information. They hold that religious feeling and intuitions, including mystical visions, provide data that

conveys information about God and His relation to the believer, information that presupposes the existence of God. To say that according to Alston and Plantinga religious experience presupposes the existence of God does not mean that for these philosophers God's existence is a mere assumption, for they hold that the assumption is warranted, and that its warrant can be demonstrated through a rational examination of the relation between the assumption and the sorts of religious experiences that are important to Christian life.

The focus on religious experience has led some philosophers, such as William Proudfoot,¹¹ Steven Katz¹² and Nelson Pike,¹³ to an epistemological examination of the reports of the mystics. They ask such questions as whether a meaningful distinction can be made between what appears in the heart of the mystic and how he interprets this appearance, whether mystical appearances must be analogous to sensory appearances, whether mystics of various traditions all have the same sorts of experiences, whether training determines the sort of experience the mystic will have and whether the mystics themselves take these experiences to have epistemological significance. Here we find a number of issues about which the philosopher and the theologian can be of mutual service. The theologian provides the philosopher with the doctrinal setting in terms of which reports of mystical experiences are understood, and the philosopher provides a critical analysis of both doctrine and report in order to place mystical experiences within the framework of a broader epistemological theory.

It is not only epistemology that serves as a source of the problems posed in the philosophy of religion for theology, but virtually all the branches of philosophy have some bearing on the philosophy of religion, and raise questions about theological doctrine.

One of the most distinguished areas of philosophy is metaphysics, and metaphysics has long had an intimate relation to

theology, especially to Islamic theosophy. Muslim, Christian and Jewish theologians have often utilized metaphysical systems based on ancient Greek thought in order to explain theological doctrines. Many religious philosophers have come to prefer other systems of metaphysics; as a result, they find themselves engaged in an attempt to restate religious doctrine in a way that does not use the language of the older metaphysics. Sometimes, however, doctrine becomes so intertwined with the older metaphysics that they are difficult to separate. For example, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was stated in terms of a metaphysics of substances, modes, persons and attributes drawn from Roman as well as Greek philosophy. Many contemporary Christian thinkers are now willing to concede that the traditional statements of the doctrine of the Trinity in these terms have not been successful. But rather than reject the claim that God is to be understood as the Holy Trinity, they have claimed that the doctrine is better explained without the claim that God is three persons but one substance, or with an interpretation of this claim that would have been unthinkable in past centuries.

Robert Cummings Neville, the Dean of the Boston Theological Seminary, completely dismisses the claim, and defends the Trinity as three ways or aspects of divinity understood with reference to the creation. God is the source of creation; He is the end or *telos* of creation, and He is the very activity of creation itself, according to Neville. Aside from this, there is little left of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity in Neville's theology.¹⁴

A more traditional defence of the Trinity is to be found in the work of a philosopher who teaches at Notre Dame University in Indiana, Thomas V. Morris. Morris uses the methods developed by analytic philosophers to defend a version of Social Trinitarianism from the heretical claim made by some process theologians that God is in need of the world. Process theology itself developed as a reaction against a metaphysics of substances inspired by Whitehead

and Hartshorne's idea that the world consists of essentially interrelated events.¹⁵

Another contemporary metaphysical idea that has had an impact on discussions of the doctrine of the Trinity is the theory of relative identity. According to this idea the identity relation is always governed by the category of its terms. Defenders of the Trinity such as Peter Geach and Peter van Inwagen have used the theory of relative identity to defend the proposition that while the persons of the Trinity may be different persons, they may at the same time be the same God.¹⁶

Other areas to which philosophers of religion have applied ideas drawn from contemporary logic and metaphysics include discussions of Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God, the many problems pertaining to the divine attributes, the nature of divine activity, God's foreknowledge and human responsibility, the nature of creation *ex nihilo* and the problem of evil.

Older than epistemology and at least as ancient as metaphysics is ethics. Philosophical reflections on good and evil, right and wrong and virtue and vice have always mingled with religious thought, and today, as well, philosophers whose primary concern is the nature of value and morality are raising important questions for theologians to ponder. All of the religions systematize moral thought to a certain extent, for all religions issue imperatives disobedience to which is considered morally as well as religiously wrong. Must moral theory conform to the moral concepts embodied in religion? Can there be altruistic ideals that go beyond the moral ideals of religion? Can religion issue orders which nullify moral imperatives? Can a person be morally reprehensible without violating any religious law? Can a rational ethics put constraints on an acceptable interpretation of religion? How could God, Who is perfectly good, order Abraham to kill his son?

This last question was forcefully raised by Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1885), and it is still a problem frequently discussed among Christian philosophers and theologians. Kierkegaard's answer, of course, was that religion issues orders with a force beyond anything found in morality, orders which from the point of view of reason, would be considered wrong. Philosophers and theologians who are not satisfied with this fideist approach to religious commands must find a plausible reconciliation between reason and moral intuition, on the one hand, and religious rulings and actions of those considered faultless, on the other.

The question of the relation between divine commands and moral imperatives has become the focus of considerable debate among contemporary philosophers of religion largely as a result of the work of Robert M. Adams.¹⁷ In his articles on divine command theories of morality, Adams has sought to reconcile the idea that actions are wrong or right because they are forbidden or commanded by God with the idea that God's commands are not arbitrary. Adams is no Ash'arite, and will not accept the claim that if God were to command cruelty and infidelity then torture and treason would be morally praiseworthy. God's commands have moral force, according to Adams, only because God is perfectly good, just and benevolent; but without God's commands, Adams contends there would no be moral imperatives at all.

Other recent publications in which the relation between religion and morality are discussed include J.L. Mackie's *The Miracle of Theism*¹⁸ and many of the writings of Alasdair MacIntyre.¹⁹ Mackie argues as an admitted atheist that the only ways to make sense of the relation between fact and value is either through Hume's moral philosophy or through a religious theory. He even confesses that if no variation on Hume's theory is ultimately defensible, we should be forced to seek a religious explanation to the manner in which values seem to supervene on natural properties. MacIntyre is also interested in the fact/value dichotomy,

and he explicitly seeks to refute Hume's approach to the problem, and to refute most other modern theorists as well. But MacIntyre is not satisfied with the notion that facts are related to values by divine decree; instead he seeks to revive a version of an Aristotelian teleological ethics, but one in which perfection is to be understood by means of attention to the movement of tradition and historical narrative, rather than through biology (as Aristotle sometimes seemed to suggest). Religion becomes paramount in MacIntyre's thinking because it is only religion that is able to support the sorts of traditions and historical narratives that can provide a firm basis for the moral life.

No discussion of the way religious narratives can contribute to our understanding of who we are and where we are headed would be complete without some attention to the issue of religious language, and this brings us to another area in which the philosopher may be seen as posing questions for the theologian.

One of the areas of most intense activity in twentieth century Western philosophy is that of the philosophy of language. The German mathematician, logician and philosopher Gottlob Frege (1848-1925) initiated a research program in the philosophy of language concerned with such problems as sense and reference, the failure of substitution of co-referential terms in various 'intentional' contexts (for example, it may be true that *S* believes that *a* is *F* and true that $a=b$, although *S* fails to believe that *b* is *F*), and the logical analysis of various sorts of semantic functions commonly performed in ordinary language by demonstratives, proper names, definite descriptions, and other kinds of terms and expressions. Frege's program was carried on by Russell (1872-1970), Wittgenstein (1889-1951), Carnap (1891-1970), Quine (1908-) and Kripke (1940-), to mention just a few of those whose ideas about the logical analysis of language have provoked extended debate. The programme of logical analysis was soon extended to theological statements. Philosophers of religion began

to ask questions about the logical analysis of such claims as “God is Eternal”²⁰ and “God is Omnipotent”,²¹ and the ways in which we may succeed in referring to God.²²

Although these discussions may be fruitfully compared to medieval discussions of related issues in Islamic as well as Christian theology and philosophy, many contemporary Christian theologians find the attention to logical detail a bit boring, and irrelevant to their primary concerns. Many of these theologians have been more favourably impressed by Wittgenstein’s later writings, and his suggestion that religious language may be compare to a game or a form of life significantly different from scientific language to prevent the possibility of any conflict between religion and science.²³

Wittgenstein’s doctrine of language games also has attracted theologians who sought a response to the positivists’ charge that religious claims were meaningless. Although the verificationist theory of meaning advocated by the positivists has been generally rejected, the Wittgensteinian slogan, “meaning is use”, provided theologians with a basis in the philosophy of language for turning their attention to functionalist theories of religious language which seemed to dovetail rather neatly with the anti-reductionism popular in Protestant theological circles. These theologians felt that any attempt to base religious claims on theoretical reason (as in the traditional proofs for the existence of God, called *natural theology*), or on practical reason (as in Kant’s theology), ought to be rejected as reductions of religious claims to metaphysics or ethics, reductions which failed to appreciate the fundamental originality of the religious view, what Schleiermacher (1768-1834) called the *religious moment of experience*.

These tendencies among many (although by no means all) of those who have been attracted to functionalist explanations of religious language are largely anti-philosophical tendencies, even when they turn to the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein for

support. Although there are many disagreements among those who find themselves supporting some variety of *fideism*, there is agreement among the fideists that religion does not need any philosophical explanation or justification.

So, after our tour through the philosophical territories bordering on theology, we find ourselves back where we started, at epistemology and the question of the rationality of religious belief, for functionalist approaches to religious language, including theories according to which religious language serves to express attitudes rather than to describe reality, are often attempts to escape rational criticism of religious beliefs. No justification is needed, the fideist proclaims, because the language of religion is independent of and irrelevant to the language of justification.

Here the reformed epistemology of Alvin Plantinga, or the related ideas of William Alston may be seen as a sort of compromise between those who would justify religious claims by rational proof and those who deny that any such justification is needed or desirable. What Plantinga and Alston offer is a philosophical argument as to why religious belief may be considered warranted and rational, even in the absence of direct evidential support.

Today's Christian theologians, however, are often unimpressed by the works of Christian philosophers such as those mentioned above. These philosophers are primarily concerned with the issues of rationality and the justification or warrant that can or cannot be provided for assertions of the truth of various religious claims. The theologians, on the other hand, often seem to be more interested in the effects in the lives of believers that are associated with adhering to various beliefs and participating in the Church. Religion is not a collection of truths about God, they insist, but a way to salvation. Religious symbols are important for many contemporary Christian theologians not as they serve to disclose religious truths that might not be expressible in non-symbolic

language, but rather because they present a framework within which meaning for human life is to be found.²⁴

Another reason Christian theologians have given for their antipathy toward philosophy is related to the problem of religious pluralism. In the past, Christian theologians claimed that the doctrines of Christianity were true, and that all those doctrines inconsistent with Christian dogma were false. Among the dogmas of traditional Christianity is the claim that there is only one way to salvation – for Catholics, the Church, and for Protestants, participation in Christ’s redemption of sin by faith. In short, traditional Christianity would exclude Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists from salvation and eternal felicity unless they would accept Christianity on learning of its gospel. As Christians are becoming increasingly aware that there are good people, even saintly people, who follow a path other than that of Christianity although they are familiar with the gospel, they are finding it difficult to accept the traditional dogma that would bar the non-Christian from paradise. A number of Christian theologians are even beginning to take the view that Christian theology has been too preoccupied with the truth of dogma altogether. In reaction to the *exclusivism* of traditional Christianity, according to which the acceptance of certain truth-claims is a necessary condition for salvation, some have gone to the extreme of thinking that the truth of religious doctrines is insignificant, and attempts to justify religious beliefs or show them to be rational are irrelevant to the issue of salvation.

Instead of occupying themselves with the central questions of traditional theology, constructing proofs to support doctrines, analyzing the logical structure of various religious concepts, and defending their interpretation of doctrines against rivals, many if not most contemporary Christian theologians have turned their attention to questions about how religious concepts develop and change, how they function in religious communities, how religious

ideas inform religious experience, and how Christian symbols, practices and institutions have been used and abused by Christian communities in various historical and social contexts. When these theologians turn their attention to questions of ethics, they are concerned about how to prevent the future abuse of Christian symbols, practices and institutions and how to encourage what they consider to be the positive and morally responsible development of the various elements of Christian life, although there is often a lack of critical reflection on the philosophical perspective which informs their own moral standards. Many believe that claims to have religious knowledge or certainty reflect a sinful desire to gain intellectual control over what must remain ultimately a mystery.

Today's Christian theologians are much more interested in postmodernist thought than the work of Christian philosophers trained in the analytic tradition. Postmodernism is a movement which has emerged from the ideas of certain contemporary French writers such as Jean-Franhois Lyotard,²⁵ Jacques Derrida,²⁶ Georges Bataille,²⁷ and Michel Foucault.²⁸ What these writers have in common is a generally cynical outlook, scepticism about the transcendental claims characteristic of the modern period of European philosophy from Descartes (1596-1650) through Kant (1724-1804), the suspicion that rational argument is a screen hiding desires for power, the idea that we cannot escape the cultural presuppositions which largely determine our worldwide, and an irreverent style. Many of the postmodernists look to Nietzsche (1844-1900) for inspiration. Contemporary Christian theologians who are reluctant to defend or try to justify Christian doctrine, some of whom even admit agnosticism, find common cause with the postmodernists.²⁹ Postmodernist writings do not really offer the theologian a set of philosophical questions of relevance to theology as we found with the philosophy of religion. Instead, the postmodernist offers consolation to the fideist theologian for his reluctance to attempt to show that his beliefs are reasonable and

excuses for not engaging in the reasoned defence of the truth of his beliefs.

Postmodernism is not a philosophy, but an intellectual movement against philosophy as traditionally understood. Traditionally, the term *philosophy* functions as an encomium – it is not merely descriptive, but has a strong evaluative sense. To imply that postmodernist thought is not *philosophy*, but *anti-philosophy*, is to express allegiance to the traditional ideal of philosophy as love of *Sophia*, as a quest for the truth which the postmodernists find somewhat preposterous. In castigating postmodernism as *anti-philosophy*, however, I do not mean to be dismissive. Postmodernism is a very important trend that has had a profound influence on many Christian theologians.³⁰ The philosophy of religion as practiced by Christian philosophers with training in analytic philosophy may be understood as a movement that to a large extent is diametrically opposed to postmodernism. To the postmodernists, the Christian philosophers seem a bit naive – still arguing about how to defend the rationality of asserting the truth of various religious doctrines. To the philosopher, however, what room remains for religion in the confines of postmodernism is little more than a sentimental attachment to the symbols and rituals of religion shorn of the metaphysical or transcendent significance which gives them their power and is responsible for the strong emotional response they provoke in the first place.

This is a claim. I suspect that most of my readers will agree with it, and that we do not have to look very far to find arguments to back it up. The claim is that the strength of the hold on the human imagination exerted by religion as evidenced by phenomena as diverse as the Islamic Revolution in Iran and allusions to religious themes in contemporary American fiction depends on the fact that religions allege that they contain truths that are absolute, truths that go beyond the particularities of their expressions in various cultural contexts. The questions of whether or not this

allegation is correct, and whether it is even rational to believe it, are central to contemporary discussions of the philosophy of religion. For this reason alone, the scepticism of the postmodernist is important and requires a response. But aside from how this response is formulated, there is this other question of whether postmodernism can provide a philosophical perspective from which theology is more profoundly understood or whether it undermines theology by denying that it has any real connection with Ultimate Reality. The Christian postmodernists and many, if not the majority, of contemporary Christian theologians contend that the question of the truth of religious doctrine can be dismissed without damage to religion, at least without damage to Protestant Christianity, because the focus of the evangelical's religion is salvation rather than gnosis.

This contention is dubious for several reasons. First, because the vast majority of believers, past and present, of the world's religions have understood their religions as making important claims about reality. Any denial of the importance of religious truth is a distortion of religious thought. Second, in Islam and Christianity, the Ultimate Reality is known as God, and the practical, symbolic and social dimensions of religious life are directed toward obedience and worship of God as the means to salvation. If claims that God exists are dismissed as naive, then the doubts generated about the reality of the object of worship threaten to make the meaningfulness of worship doubtful. Without God, worship is pointless, and without meaningful worship, there is no salvation. Third, the aura of the sacred and feelings of holiness generated by religion seem to involve the idea that the sacred provides us with a vehicle by means of which the mundane is to be transcended, the merely perspectival is to be escaped. In revealed religion, particular historical events are designated as revelation, and with this designation Christians and Muslims cease to see Jesus as a merely historical personality, and Muslims cease to see the

Qur'ān al-Karīm as a mere artefact of early medieval Arabian culture, but as the Word of God. This transformation of awareness from the mundane to the sacred is accomplished by means of a recognition of an ontological status for the Source of revelation, so that without the metaphysical dimension of religion, the rest of it, including the salvific potency of its symbols, the feelings of obligation to respect its commandments, the attachment to participation in its rituals, all would weaken and wither.³¹

The above discussion of postmodernism prepares the way for a return to our original question about the relation of philosophy to theology. Despite the fact that religious authorities might feel threatened from time to time by questions that arise out of unfamiliar philosophical discussions, many of whose participants are indeed hostile toward religious authority, if not toward religion itself, ultimately the theologian cannot escape an involvement with philosophy. Perhaps the most persuasive reason we can offer to the theologian is that the philosophical criticisms of religious ideas that plague the minds of the young require a philosophical response if the young are to be guided. Even if no amount of merely philosophical expertise will be sufficient to remove doubt, some philosophical wisdom is necessary in order to engage the sincere seeker in the spiritual work of rising above the widespread satanic suspicions that religion is little more than a pack of lies. The presence of philosophical doubts in the minds of the young was also the reason given to Grand Ayatullah Burūjirdi by 'Allāmah Muhammad Husayn Tabātabā'i for publicly teaching philosophy in Qum. Philosophy presents itself to theology as a servant without whose help the mess philosophy herself has made cannot be cleaned up!

But there are other reasons for theology to graciously accept the services offered by philosophy. Allah has graced the human mind with a thirst of wisdom, and the wisdom sought includes knowledge of the things of which religion speaks, as well as skill in

practical evaluations and the sort of precision in which logicians, mathematicians and physicists take pride, and other things, such as history, as well. The philosophical quest is one that propels the seeker to some degree of understanding of all these areas and an attempt to fit them together. From time to time philosophy might devote too much attention to a single dimension of understanding, resulting in waves of logicism or empiricism or historicism, but the structure of the human spirit ultimately cannot be satisfied with a narrow slot from which to view reality. I am told that Suhrawardi who founded the illuminationist school of philosophy said that a person who is not able to leave his body at will is not a real philosopher. I am not sure what this means, but it suggests to me the philosophical need to escape the confines of a physical perspective, the need to succumb to what some have derided as "the transcendental temptation".³²

Theology, on the other hand, is much more limited than philosophy. The business of theology is not to offer a comprehensive theory of reality, but merely to show that there is a Supreme Reality and how this is related to lesser things. Without some attention to philosophy, the business of theology is not likely to be very profitable, because we do not get a very clear picture of God's relation to the world unless we pay some attention to what the world is supposed to give an absolute stamp of approval to some particular metaphysical speculation, but theologians should not shy away from metaphysical issues either. Theology is well served by philosophy if it interacts with philosophical ideas without developing a dependency for a single philosophical way of doing things. Philosophy, too, perhaps finds its true vocation in service to theology. For if philosophy is to fulfil its goal of providing an intelligible comprehensive synthesis, it must make room for theological truth and knowledge of that truth, that is, by providing for the needs of theology. This becomes the worship of philosophy, to be at the service of theology; and as in all things human, the

highest degree of perfection is to be approached through worship of Allah, recognizing one's own *faqr* before *al-Ghani*.

Notes:

1. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.

2. New York: Oxford, 1993.

3. Plantinga's articles on this topic have not yet been collected in the form of a book, but two anthologies, in which there are articles by him and discussions of his work are especially worth mentioning: Robert Audi and William J. Wainwright, eds., *Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), and Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983). His definitive statement of his position is to appear in the forthcoming *Warranted Christian Belief*. Also worth mentioning is a book devoted to criticisms of Plantinga's ideas and his responses: James E. Tomberlin and Peter Van Inwagen, *Alvin Plantinga, Profiles Volume 5* (Dodrecht: D. Reidel, 1985).

4. Plantinga's claim has been disputed by John Beversluis, who argues that Calvin and the Reformed Church object to natural theology for reasons incompatible with the epistemological position advocated by Plantinga. See John Beversluis, "Reforming the 'Reformed' Objection to Natural Theology" *Faith and Philosophy*, 12:2, April 1995, 189-206.

5. See *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*, edited by Linda Zagzebski (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993).

6. His major work on this topic is, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

7. See Michael C. Banner, *The Justification of Science and the Rationality of Religious Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

and Nancey Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

8. Gary Gutting, *Religious Belief and Religious Skepticism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

9. Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979).

10. John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

11. Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

12. Steven Katz, ed., *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

13. Nelson Pike, *Mystic Union: An Essay on the Phenomenology of Mysticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

14. Robert Cummings Neville, *A Theology Primer* (Albany: SUNY PRESS, 1991).

15. See Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

16. See Peter Geach, *The Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), and Peter van Inwagen, "And Yet They Are Not Three Gods But One God", in Thomas V. Morris, ed., *Philosophy and the Christian Faith* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), pp. 241-278).

17. Robert Adams, "A Modified Divine Command Theory of Ethical Wrongness" in Louis Pojman, ed., *Philosophy of Religion* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1987), and "Divine Command Metaethics Modified Again" *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 1:7, 91-97.

18. J.K. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

19. MacIntyre's most important books are *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press,

1988), and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990). Translations of the first two of these works into Persian are being prepared, and a Persian summary of *After Virtue* may be found in the journal *Ma'rifat*, Nos. 9-18, and continuing.

20. See, for example, Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity" in Thomas V. Morris, ed., *The Concept of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

21. See the articles in Linwood Urban and Douglas N. Walton, eds., *The Power of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

22. See William P. Alston's "Referring to God", in his *Divine Nature and Human Language: Essays in Philosophical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

23. See D.Z. Phillips, *Religion Without Explanation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976) and Norman Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

24. See Gordon Kaufman, "Evidentialism: A Theologian's Response," *Faith and Philosophy*, 6:1 (January 1989), 35-46, and the response by Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Theologically Unfashionable Philosophy," *Faith and Philosophy*, 7:3 (July 1990), 329-339, and the defence of Kaufman's position by James A. Keller, "On the Issues Dividing Contemporary Christian Philosophers and Theologians," *Faith and Philosophy*, 10:1 (January 1993), 68-78 and James A. Keller, "Should Christian Theologians become Christian Philosophers?" *Faith and Philosophy*, 12:2 (April 1995), 260-268.

25. Jean-François Lyotard, tr. G. Bennington and B. Massumi, *The Postmodern Condition* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1984).

26. His major work is *Of Grammatology*, tr. G. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), but especially relevant to contemporary Christian theology is *Derrida and Negative Theology*, ed. Harold Coward and Toby Foshay (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).

27. Georges Bataille, *Theology of Religion*, tr. R. Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1989).

28. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, tr. A. M. Sheridan-Smith (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), also see the biography, James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) in which the relation between Foucault's writings and his sado-masochistic homosexuality is explored.

29. For a collection of essays in which postmodernist thought is seen as offering resources for Christian theology see *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (October 1993).

30. Postmodernism is also starting to attract the attention of students of Islamic thought. See Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise* (London: Routledge, 1992), and Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992).

31. Worthy of attention is Huston Smith's defence of the religions worldwide over the postmodern proclamation (issued by Richard Rorty) that "There is no Big Picture": "Postmodernism and the World's Religions" in *The Truth about Truth*, ed., Walter Truett Anderson (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1995), an address originally delivered in Kuala Lumpur for a symposium on "Islam and the Challenge of Modernity", and later revised without references to Islam as "The Religious Significance of Postmodernism: A Rejoinder" in *Faith and Philosophy* 12:3 (July 1995), 409-422.

32. See the defence of atheistic scepticism by Paul Kurtz, *The Transcendental Temptation* (New York: Prometheus, 1986).

Qum: Past and Present

By: Rasūl Ja'fariyān

A provincial capital since June 1996, Qum is a city 140 Kms. to the south of Tehran on the verge of the *kavīr*, the vast desert of central Iran. Centuries before the arrival of Islam in the region, it was a major village among the many hamlets of the area. Several traditions and theories exist concerning the town's origin and name. According to one of the more credible of them, its name derives from "*kūmeh*," meaning a group of neighboring dwellings, which was changed to "Kum" before it came to be called "Qum" by the Arab settlers. According to another theory it derives from "*Kamīdān*," which was the name for a portion of the area, which was later abbreviated as "Kum" before it came to be pronounced as "Qum" by the Arabs who migrated to the region.

These scattered hamlets were inhabited by Arab Muslims following their conquest of Iran, and, like many other Iranian towns, a number of them settled there. Accounts of the encounters of these Arabs with Iranian natives are cited in the sources, including *Ta'rikh-i Qum* (compiled in 379/989), by Hasan b. Muhammad b. Hasan al-Qummī, which is the most important

geographical source about the area. A major change in the history of this district was the transformation of its central part into a town during the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries. Since that time, Qum is mentioned in many geographical works written in the 4th/10th and the following centuries. The town's fame in the geographical sources compiled in the 4th/10th century was mainly due to its Shī'ī character, which stood in contrast to other cities of the surrounding region which were predominantly Sunnī. The Arabs settlers belonged to different tribes, but the dominant among them was the Yemeni tribe of the Ash'aris (descendents of Sā'ib b. Mālik al-Ash'arī and his cousins), who were formerly residents of Iraq and had migrated to the region in the seventh and eighth decades of the 1st/7th century due to causes arising from their religious and political differences with the Umayyad rulers. The Ash'aris, who were Shī'ī, took control of the town and remained staunchly attached to their Shī'ī creed. After the burial in the town in 201/816 of Fātimah Ma'sūmah, sister of Imam 'Alī b. Mūsā ('a), the Shī'ī character of the town became reinforced and more pronounced than ever before.

The Ash'arites, who had an experience of communal living and farming, established many hamlets around Qum, so much so that many of the villages and streams in the region are named after individuals belonging to this family.¹

From the 4th/10th century onwards Qum was considered to be part of the Iranian province of "the Jibāl," which extended to Hamadan in the west, Isfahan in the south, and Rayy and Qazvin in the north. The town's water supply was partly provided through a subterranean system of canals (*qanāt*) and partly by the Qum River, which originates in the mountains of Khwansār and Golpāyegān. According to the *Ta'riḡh Qum*, the town's water used to be sweet, but during the last several centuries it had become hard due to mixing with underground salt deposits. Today the hardness of Qum's water is one of the city's major problems. The Qum River,

which divides the city into its eastern and western parts, has practically dried up after the construction of the Fifteen Khordad Dam (inaugurated in 1994) during the second decade after the Islamic Revolution. The riverbed serves as a drain channel for occasional floodwaters and, in the part of it that passes through the town, parking slot.

Qum attracted some royal attention during the Buwayhid rule (4th/10th century) due to its Shi'ī character. During the Seljuq period (5th-6th/11th-12th centuries), like other cities of the Jibāl, it contributed several men of letters and secretaries in the employment of the regime.² The city's Masjid Jāmi' is a relic of that period. Throughout this period Qum as a Shi'ī town had close relations with Rayy, Kāshān, Aweh and Farāhān, as a result of which the people of these towns also embraced the Shi'ī creed. During the Mongol invasion, the town faced bloodshed and devastation like many other Iranian cities.

Qum remained a minor town during the 8th/15th and 9th/16th centuries, but it continued to attract the attention of the rulers and notables due to the shrine of Fātimah Ma'sūmah. During the 8th/15th century the city was controlled by some eminent families, such as the Safis,³ who served as local chieftains by establishing relations with bigger powers in the region. However, rivalries for the control of the city often exposed it to attacks.⁴

The city received the attention of Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu rulers during the 9th/16th century. Uzun Hasan, the Aq Qoyunlu king (857-882/1453-1478), for instance, used it as his winter capital, at times staying there through the spring. The city was known to be the winter capital of the kings of this dynasty. Royal decrees issued by Qarā Qoyūnlū kings concerning the office of the Shrine's *mutawallī* (caretaker) are extant.⁵

Qum During the Safawid Period:

Shāh Ismā‘il (907-930/1501-1524) who had inherited from the Qarā Qoyūnlū predecessors the tradition of travelling to the provinces of the Jibāl, especially Isfahan and Qum, for a temporary stay, took greater interest in this city on account of his Shi‘i beliefs. The northern hall of Ma‘sumah’s shrine is a relic of Shāh Ismā‘il’s days. It was built in 925/1519, as mentioned in an existing inscription. Thereafter Qum received greater royal attention. The holy environs of the shrine led it to become a central place for royal and noble mausoleums. The tombs of five Safawid kings, Shāh Safī (d. 1052/1642), Shāh ‘Abbās II (d. 1077/1666), Shāh Sulaymān (d. 1105/1693), Shāh Sultān Husayn (dethroned and killed by the Afghan invaders in 1135/1722), and Shāh Tahmāsb II (dethroned in 1144/1731), as well as those of a number of Safawid princes and nobles exist around the tomb of Hazrat Ma‘sumah.⁶ Although the practice of carrying the dead to be buried at Qum dates back from earlier times, it became a prevalent custom since the Safawid era, a practice which continues until present times.

The frequent journeys of Shāh ‘Abbās II to Qum for the purpose of *ziyārah* and his meetings with Fayz Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680) show the importance of this city during that period. Moreover, the sojourns of Mullā Sadrā Shirāzī (979-1050/1571-1640) and Qāzī Sa‘id Qummī at Qum, and the residence there of Mullā Muhammad Tāhir Qummī (d. 1098/1686) and Fayyāz Lāhijī (1072/1661) reveal its importance as a centre of scholarly pursuits.

Qum During the Qajar Period:

Without doubt the physical and cultural development of Qum in the last two centuries is due to the patronage of the Qajar rulers, in particular that of Fath ‘Alī Shāh (r. 1212-1250/1797-1834) and some of his ministers, as well as his sons and successors. At the beginning of his rule Fath ‘Alī Shāh had vowed to dedicate a sum of hundred thousand Tumans to the purpose of refurbishing

Ma'sūmah's shrine.⁷ At that time Mirzā Qummi (d. 1232/1816), the author of the *Qawānīn*, who enjoyed the Shāh's zealous patronage, lived here. Fath 'Alī Shāh visited Qum several times for *ziyārah* and to meet Mirzā Qummi. The present building of the shrine was largely rebuilt during the Qajar era, as is also attested by the numerous existing inscriptions. Qum witnessed a new phase of growth during this period. Besides a series of new subterranean canals for water supply, a number of structures were constructed by Qajar nobles and local notables.

Many members of the Qajar family are buried in the Old Courtyard (*Sahn-i 'Atīq*) of the shrine. Most prominent among them is the tomb of Fath 'Alī Shāh, which is covered with fine marble and is located in an elegantly built chamber. A number of Qajar princes are also buried there. The tomb of Muhammad Shāh Qājār is also in the same courtyard. Among other Qajar figures who have tombs within the shrine are Mahd 'Ulyā (Nāsiruddīn Shāh's mother), Fakhr al-Dawlah (his daughter), Mu'tamad al-Dawlah, one of the political figures of the Qajar era, and Mirzā Hasan Khān Mustawfi al-Mamālik.⁸

Qum also witnessed a change in its demographic composition during the Qajar era. Collective migrations brought large number of people from the west, who settled inside Qum and in the surrounding area and gradually altered the composition of the city's population, so much so that the original inhabitants of the town became confined to the oldest localities situated between the shrine and the Masjid-i Jāmi'. Important among the groups that migrated to Qum were the Bīgdilis, the Zandiyyeh, the Sa'dwands, the Gā'inīs, the Kalhurs, the Lashanīs, the Kurzehbars, the 'Abd al-Malikīs, the Khalajīs,⁹ and the Shād-Qulis.¹⁰ Thanks to the contemporary scholarly interest in recording facts relating to Qum during the Nāsirid era, which led to the compilation of such works as *Ta'rikh-i Dār al-Imān-i Qum*, one can reconstruct a vivid picture of Qum during this period.¹¹

Qum During the Pahlavī Regime:

The development of the city continued during this period at a gradual pace. The first new streets were laid out in 1928. The importance of Qum as a transit town between Tehran and the southern cities was evident since the latter part of the Qajar era. The railway line connecting Tehran to southern part of Iran, which passes through Qum, was laid in 1937. From 1965 onwards, new roads were built connecting Qum to Tehran in the north and to Kashan, Isfahan and Arak in the south and the west. With the increase in oil revenues since 1975, the development of the city proceeded at an accelerated pace and new official institutions were established.¹²

Part of the city's development work was carried out by the Shrine's *mutawalli* and the leading ulema. For instance, Grand Ayatullāh Shihāb al-Dīn Mar'ashī, one of the leading religious authorities, founded the biggest library in the town in 1353/1974. Before the victory of the Islamic Revolution (1979) there were, besides the ordinary schools, a college affiliated to Tehran University. Other educational institutions in the city consisted of religious seminaries and institutions, which besides religious education and training published several periodicals.

The shrine of Hazrat Ma'sūmah's did not experience any change during this period, except that a considerable portion of the graveyard towards its north eastern side was turned partly into a pavement and a park, leaving a surviving portion known as the Shaykhān Cemetery.

During the Pahlavī era, there existed three separate active centres of power in Qum. First was the city's governor, who represented the regime. Second was the shrine's *mutawalli*¹³ who, besides being quite wealthy himself, controlled many endowments and properties, and possessed considerable influence. Third were the leading members of the ulema who represented spiritual and

religious leadership and had a large number of followers among the laity and seminary students.

Like other cities, Qum also entered a new phase during the Pahlavī era. In 1926, in an unprecedented affront to tradition, Rizā Shah's wife and daughters visited Qum without observing the *hijāb*, the traditional modest Islamic dress for women. This led to a vehement protest by one of the clergymen named Shaykh Muhammad Taqī Bāfqī (d. 1946). A few days later, Rizā Shah came to Qum and chastened the protestor. This was the first confrontation of the clergy with the regime, a conflict which continued the following year in the form of the defiance led by Aqā Nūr Allāh Najafī (d. 1927) against Rizā Khan's regime. However, it was suppressed by the regime.

The regime's policies of modernization met with protest by Ayatullāh Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Hā'ri (d. 1936). But the regime, oblivious to all resistance, continued such anti-clerical measures as closing the *madrasahs*, imposing restrictions on the wearing of traditional dress by the clergy and seminary students, forbidding celebration of the traditional mourning ceremonies, and the unveiling of women—measures which were viewed with great resentment by the clergy and the devout.

The town's political significance begins with its entry into the stage of politics in late 1339 H. Sh./1961 and early 1340/1962. Political activism commenced by Ayatullāh Rūhullāh al-Mūsawī al-Khumaynī (b. 1320/1902), whose revolutionary zeal attracted the support of large number of young clergymen, created a new environment of political struggle against the Pahlavī regime. Violent repression continued for four years until the opposition was quelled by the regime by resorting to severe measures. Atatullāh Khumaynī was exiled to Turkey and Iraq. However, from that time Qum became the centre of anti-regime protests and activities as the clergy struggled to spread Islamic revolutionary ideas through books, pamphlets, and announcements and by dispatching

preachers to rural areas during the months of Muharram and Ramazān. In the following years many of the city's clergymen were arrested and imprisoned. After the attack on seminary students in June 19965 by the Shah's security forces and the closure of the Fayziyyah seminary, the event which triggered the Islamic Revolution occurred in this city on 19th Dey 1356 (January 9, 1978). On this day were ignited the flames of the Revolution which spread later to other Iranian cities, and ultimately led to the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime in February 1979 and its replacement by an Islamic theocratic republic with Qum as its spiritual and intellectual seat.

Qum After the Islamic Revolution:

With the emergence of Qum as the centres of religious studies and the seat of religious leadership after the Islamic Revolution, the city's developmental needs came to receive greater official attention. The city's boundaries were extended with the inflow of increasing number of immigrants. Several new townships, such as Shahr-i Qā'im, Yazdān Shahr, Shahrak-i Imam Khumayni, Safā Shahr, Shahrak-i Imam Hasan and Shahrak-i Quds, were established in the outskirts, adding new localities to the city on all sides. Moreover, a good number of religious seminaries, academic institutions and libraries were established during the last two decades. The population of the city, which was 96,499 in 1956, had grown to 681,253 in 1991. At the end of 2000 it had increased to 825,627, with about another 40,000 living in the surrounding rural areas. The immigrant population consists of four groups. Firstly there are those who come to Qum for studies and in the course of time become permanent residents. A large group of immigrants are Iraqis who were expelled from their country during the course of war with Iran. They have established their own bazaar in the Guzar Khan, and many of them reside in Yazdān Shahr. A third group consists of large numbers of Afghan refugees who have

taken up residence in Qum during the last twenty-two years. A fourth group consists of rural immigrants, especially the Turkish-speaking villagers from rural areas around Hamadān, Zanjān and East Azarbāijān, who constitute the largest number of settlers. They had established an impoverished locality called Nirūgāh before the Islamic Revolution, which has expanded and now constitutes a large section of the present city. Most of these settlers are workers and shopkeepers.

Qum as Centre of Religious Studies:

As the first independent centre of the Twelver Shi'is established in Iran, the city was controlled by the followers of this creed since the 2nd/8th century. As followers of the Imams of the Prophet's descent, they recorded and safeguarded the narrations and traditions of the Infallible Imams. As they did not have any centre outside Baghdad, they developed Qum into an academy of Shi'i hadith. The names of a large number of Ash'aris belonging to Qum are found in Najāshī's *Rijāl*, which is a list of Shi'i authors up to the fourth/tenth century. Also the names of many persons belonging to this city are found among narrators of the traditions of the Imams recorded in the great compendium of Shi'i *hadith*, *Al-Kāfi*.

However, Qum's fame as an academic centre seems to have disappeared after the 5th/11th century as the centre of Shi'i scholarship in Iran moved to Rayy and other cities of northern Iran, though according to 'Abd al-Jalil Rāzi there did exist several *madrasahs* in Qum during the 6th/12th century.¹⁴ Scholars such as Fayz Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680) and Mullā Muhammad Tāhir Qummi (d. 1098/1686) lived here during the Safawid era, but there are no significant outstanding figures to be found here during the long period extending from the 5th/11th to the 12th/17th century (except for Qutb al-Dīn Rāwandī [1112-1182] whose grave is in the main courtyard of Ma'sūmah's shrine). The reemergence of Qum as a

religious academy was due to the special interest in the city by Qajar notables. One of the most eminent figures in the Shī'i world was Mīrẓā-yi Qummi (d. 1232/1816) who had excellent relations with Fath 'Alī Shāh Qājār. Being a religious authority (*marja' taqlid*) and author of important works on law and jurisprudence, he is considered a point of departure in the history of Qum as an academic centre. Nevertheless, Qum continued to remain mainly a pilgrimage spot rather than an academic centre throughout the Qajarid era.

A new era in the life of the city as an academic centre begins with the arrival of Ayatullāh Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Hā'irī (1276-1355/1859-1936), who migrated to Qum in 1340/1921. During a period when the Qajar regime was in a state of imminent fall and the Pahlavī regime was gradually emerging, the academic centre at Qum was established under the leadership of this scholar and jurist. Before that, and afterwards as well, Najaf had remained the most important academy for the training of Shī'ī scholars and jurists since the 5th/11th century.

Ayatullāh Hā'irī had studied at the academic centres of the holy cities of Iraq. In 1332/1913-14 he had returned from Iraq to reside and work at Sultānābad, near the city of Arak, as a religious guide and teacher of religious sciences. However, considering the favourable position of Qum as a pilgrimage centre, like Najaf, he preferred it as a place suitable for the establishment of a religious academy. In the Rajab of 1340 (March 21 1922, coincident with the Iranian New Year) he came to Qum on the invitation of some scholars of the town and established the *hawzah 'ilmiyyah*. During the last fifteen years of his life in Qum he also urged several other scholars of eminence to settle in the city. He extended the Fayziyyah Madrasah, paid the students a humble monthly stipend, and reduced the anti-ulema pressure of Rizā Khān Pahlavī's regime by urging the religious students to stand aloof from politics. The fame of the Fayziyyah, an old *madrakah* built in the 6th/12th

century¹⁵ and extended and renovated during the Safawid¹⁶ and the Qajarid¹⁷ periods, dates from the time of Ayatullāh Hā'iri who renovated the building, added another story to the structure, and established a library.

There was a temporary period of setback in the importance of Qum as a religious academy after the death of Hā'iri (17th Dhū al-Qa'dah 1355/Bahman 10 1315/30th January 1937) until the arrival of Ayatullāh Burūjerdī (1944) and his recognition as the major religious authority of the Shi'i world following the death of Ayatullāh Sayyid Abū al-Hasan Isfahānī (1946) at Najaf. However, many youths had taken up the pursuit of religious studies following the abdication of Rizā in Shahrivar 1320 (August-September 1941) and the resulting alleviation in the regime's anti-religious policies. From the arrival of Ayatullāh Burūjerdī from Burūjerd onwards, the *hawzah 'ilmiyyah* began its rapid growth. Some of Hā'iri's pupils were now among senior teachers of the *hawzah*, among them Ayatullāh Rūhullāh al-Mūsavi al-Khumaynī, the future leader of the Islamic Revolution. Gradually, from the time of Ayatullāh Hā'iri onwards a number of the *'ulamā* at Najaf began shifting to Qum and participated in the development of the *hawzah*.¹⁸ Besides paying attention to the upkeep of many *madrasahs*, Burūjerdī built a big mosque adjacent to the Shrine known as Masjid-i A'zam (begun in 1374/1954), which until today serves as a major teaching space for the highest level of study (*dars-i khārij*) by the most eminent of teachers. Two religious periodicals were also published during this period.

During Burūjerdī's time, with a suspension of the repressive policies of the past, the ulema had gradually begun to step into politics. Also as a direct result of the propagation of anti-religious ideas by the Pahlavi court and the communist parties the political and social position of the ulema rose among the devout, who were alarmed by the onslaught of anti-religious trends and considered the ulema as defenders of the country's cultural and religious

tradition and identity. Ayatullāh Burūjerdī died in Farvardīn 1340/February-March 1961. After him several scholars rose to the position of *marja'iyah*, among them Ayatullāh Khumaynī. On entering politics, he confronted the Pahlavī regime, which exiled him in 1343/1964 first to Turkey and then to Iraq, where he settled at Najaf. After the experience of the Constitutional Movement, the second entry of the clergy into the field of politics had begun from the times of Burūjerdī. The years 1340-43/1961-64 marked a turbulent period of protests in the course of which the ulema opposed the Shah's agricultural reforms, the six-point programme of the White Revolution, the Capitulation, and the constitutional amendments. The bloodiest of these confrontations, which occurred not only in Qum but also in Tehran and many other cities, was that of 15 Khordād (June 5, 1964). It followed popular outrage and protest against the arrest and imprisonment of the revolutionary leader.

After the exile of Ayatullāh Khumaynī in 1343/1964, religious leadership was practically carried out by three āyatullāhs based in Qum: Sayyid Muhammad Kāzim Shari'atmadāri (d. 24 Rajab 1406 H./15 Farvardīn 1365 H. Sh./April 1986), Sayyid Muhammad Rizā Golpāyegāni (d. 24 Jamādī al-Thānī 1414 H. /18 Azar 1372/December 1993) and Sayyid Shihāb al-Dīn Mar'ashi (d. 5 Sharivar 1369/August 1990). Each of them established several institutions, such as seminaries, libraries and academic centres for training preachers and missionaries. At the end of Rizā Khan's reign, the number of religious students in Qum was about 500.¹⁹ This number was more than 6000 in the year 1975, and in 1991 it was above 23,000. Presently Iranian and non-Iranian students in Qum together make up more than 35 thousand. In the years before the Revolution some *madrāsahs* were established in Qum on modern lines, the most famous of them being Madrasah Haqqāni, many of whose graduates later joined the judiciary. A number of

other schools, more of a traditional kind, were established under the aegis of Ayatullāh Golpāyegānī.

New schools were established after the Revolution with large numbers of students joining the *hawzah* for religious studies. Gradually a special regulatory body, called *Shūrā-yi Mudīriyyat-i Hawzah 'Ilmiyyeh-yi Qum*, was created to coordinate the functioning of these schools. In recent years, a high council has been established to formulate curricula and programmes for schools of religious studies and to regulate the functioning of the numerous schools of Qum and other cities. After going through a curriculum that takes eight to ten years to complete, the graduates of these schools take up various kinds of available careers. A number of them remain in the *hawzah* for advanced studies and gradually become teachers. In the course of time some of the senior teachers of outstanding ability and erudition among them become religious authorities (*marja'*) in rather advanced years of life. Selection for this office depends on learning, moral integrity, personal charisma, and the ability to win the confidence of the general public. In recent years, a well-known clerical-political body of the *hawzah* put out a list of candidates from among the scholars of Qum eligible for the *marja' iyyat* so that the people may select one of them for *taqlid* (following a jurist in the matters of *Shari'ah*). Eminent scholars from Najaf also continue to be candidates for the *marja' iyyat*.

Since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution a large number of Muslim youths from abroad have come to Qum for traditional Islamic studies. Earlier they were enrolled in Madrasah Hujjatiyyah, a major *madrasah* in the city centre. In the course of time the academic training of foreign students was centralized with the establishment in 1993 of a major seminary called Madrasah Imam Khumaynī. These students come from Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, African countries and other parts of the world. Some of them from Arab countries, such as Lebanon, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, have independent seminaries of their own. The Jāmi'at al-

Zahrā' is a large seminary devoted to religious training of female students from Iran and abroad.

Besides the traditional *madrasahs*, there is also a state-run university in Qum which grew out of the Madrasah-yi 'Alī-yi Qazā'i, a law college that had been established for training seminary graduates as judges for the judiciary. Later on it grew into the Qum University which trains students in various social and human sciences. Among other academic institutions which offer degree courses in humanities and social sciences to graduates from the seminaries are the Shaykh Mufid University, Bāqir al-'Ulūm Institute, Martyr Mahallāti Academy (affiliated to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps), and the Radio and Television Academy. The Qum branch of the Islamic Open University (Dānishgāh-i Azāz-i Islāmī), the Fātimiyyeh University, a women's university of medical sciences, and a college affiliated to Tehran University also train a large number of students.

After Tehran, Qum has the largest number of bookstores and publishers among Iranian cities. There are also several research institutes, established in recent years, which carry out academic research in various fields of Islamic and social studies.²⁰ Many of these institutions publish academic journals on specialized subjects. There are more than thirty journals devoted to research on religious, social, cultural and political subjects.²¹

Qum as a Pilgrimage Centre:

The importance of Qum as a pilgrimage spot is due in the first place to the shrine of Fātimah Ma'sūmah, daughter of the Seventh Imam, Mūsā b. Ja'far ('a). Second in importance from the viewpoint of pilgrimage are the graves of several Alawid personages who lie buried within and around Qum. Thirdly it is due to the Jamkarān Mosque which is situated at distance of 5 kms from the city. These shrines and holy places in conjunction with numerous traditions related from the Infallible Imams ('a)

concerning the meritorious position of Qum as a Shi‘i centre and the importance of the *ziyārah* of the grave of Fātimah Ma‘sumah have made Qum the second holy city of Iran after Mashhad. Limited access to the holy shrines of Iraq and the long distance of Mashhad from central Iran have contributed to the importance of Qum as a pilgrimage spot since the Safawid period.

In the year 201/816 Fātimah Ma‘sumah travelled to Iran from Madinah for the purpose of visiting her brother Imam ‘Ali b. Mūsā al-Rizā (‘a) who was at Marv (presenting in the Republic of Turkmenistan), the Abbasid capital at the time. During the course of her journey she fell ill at Saveh. She moved to Qum and died seventeen days after her arrival. She was buried in the house of her host, named Mūsā b. Khazraj, one of the elders of the Ash‘arīs. A cupola was erected over her tomb. Later on Zaynab, a daughter of Imam Muhammad b. ‘Alī al-Jawād (‘a), who came to Qum after the year 256/870, had a dome built upon her grave which was replaced in 350/961 with a new structure. In the course of time a large number of notable sayyids of Qum were buried near her tomb. According to ‘Abd al-Jalīl Rāzī, Abū al-Fazl ‘Irāqī, one of the outstanding Seljuqid viziers of Tughril Beg’s times built a big structure over Ma‘sumah’s tomb.²² He also reports that a large number of people visited her shrine for the purpose of *ziyārah* during this century. Repairs of the shrine’s building continued to be carried on during the following centuries up to the rise of the Safavids.²³ The importance of Qum as a pilgrimage spot increased from the Safawid era with the acceptance of the school of Ahl al-Bayt by the majority of the people of central Iran to Shi‘ism. The number of pilgrims to the city increased steadily during the rule of the Qajars and the Pahlavis. At present the importance of Qum as a shrine city is next only to Mashhad.

The Old Courtyard (*Sahn-i ‘Atīq*), which is situated between the shrine and Fayziyyah Madrasah, was built by Shāh Ismā‘il and his son Shāh Tahmāsb. Later it was renovated during the Qajar

period. The spacious new courtyard towards the east of the shrine, known as Atābakī Courtyard, was built by Mirzā ‘Alī Asghar Khān Atābak. Conspicuous among the works of Fath ‘Alī Shāh was construction of a new gilded dome over the tomb. The Burūjerdi Mosque (or Masjid-i A‘zam), which stands on the western side of the shrine, has been recently connected to the shrine and the adjoining mosque by removing partition walls. Presently the shrine complex and the related structures cover an area of 13,527 sq. meters. During the last decades many scholars of eminence have been buried within the shrine, thus increasing its attraction as a pilgrimage spot. Among these personalities, many of whom were figures of scholarly and political eminence who died after the Islamic Revolution, are Ayatullāh Sayyid Asadullah Madanī, ‘Allāmah Muhammad Husayn Tabātabā’ī and Murtazā Mutahhari. Besides Hazrat Ma‘sumah’s shrine there are many other shrines of *imāmzādahs* (sons or descendants of the Imams) buried in the city, which are visited by pilgrims, especially the Shi‘is of Pakistan, India and Persian Gulf countries. In addition there is the Jamkarān Mosque on the borders of the city which gives Qum a special attraction as a pilgrimage spot.

As a holy city, Qum has attracted a large number of immigrants. Desirous of taking up residence in a religious and holy environment, they have made it their permanent home. The town has many hotels and travellers’ lodgings for visitors and pilgrims.

Since the last five years a new plan is in execution for developing the area around the shrine. Demolition of houses and shops in this area around the shrine is in process. There is also a plan for regilding the shrine’s dome, said to require 200 kgms of 24 carat gold. The shrine complex, the *Astāneh*, which controls a large part of the city’s land as endowments, is a conglomerate including a research institute, a library with a large number of manuscripts, a museum and a clinic. It puts out a monthly journal, the *Zā’ir*, and a newsletter called *Payām-i Astāneh*. After the Revolution, a large

madrasah, the Ma'sūmiyyah, was built by the Astāneh and handed over to the regulating authorities of the *hawzah* to be managed.

The link between the holy shrines of Iran and Iraq and the tradition of mourning is an old one. During the days of mourning innumerable bands of mourners converge on the shrine from all over the city. During the course of centuries the mourning traditions and ceremonies of Qum have travelled to other parts of the country due to its character as a Shī'ī centre and pilgrimage site that attracted visitors from all over the country. The number of *takiyeh* and *husayniyeh* in the city built for observance of mourning ceremonies is greater than any other city of Iran.²⁴

The Jamkarān Mosque:

The mosque at the nearby village of Jamkarān (5 kms from the city) is one of the main sites for *ziyārah*. It is referred to in several places in the *Ta'rikh-i Qum*²⁵ as a village that was considered important even before the arrival of the Ash'arīs in the region. It also records that the tribe of Banī Asad settled at Jamkarān.²⁶ This source cites numerous traditions concerning the origins of this village. According to one of them the village was founded by Dāwūd b. Sulaymān. These traditions underscore the holy character of this place from ancient days.

According to a tradition, the mosque was built at the orders of the Twelfth Imam ('a), who directed one of the Shī'ī residents of Jamkarān to build a mosque on his land. On this basis, the mosque is generally regarded as possessing a special sanctity and is called "the Holy Jamkarān Mosque." An inscription, oldest on the site, is dated 1153/1740 and has verses engraved on it. It mentions one Aqā 'Alī Akbar Jamkarānī as being the founder.²⁷

A special feature of the Jamkarān Mosque is that thousands of visitors from Qum and other cities come here on Tuesday and Thursday nights to offer a specially prescribed prayer. It is a popular belief that anyone who visits the mosque for forty

consecutive Tuesday nights and performs the prescribed prayer in the mosque will succeed in meeting the Twelfth Imam in person. More than an estimated ten million people visit the Jamkarān Mosque annually. The mosque and its precincts have been vastly extended during the last two decades following the Islamic Revolution. The mosque and the huge open spaces surrounding it are packed with several thousand pilgrims on Tuesday and Thursday nights. These visitors give Qum a look quite unlike the other days of the week.

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Notes:

1. See Hasan b. Muhammad al-Qummī, *Ta'riḫ-i Qum*, the index of places.
2. 'Alī Asghar Faqīhī, *Ta'riḫ-i Madhhabī-yi Qum*, pp. 131-132.
3. See Mudarrisi, *Qum-nāmeḥ*, pp. 9-37.
4. Concerning the condition of Qum during the 8th/ and 9th/ centuries see Mudarrisi, *Qum dar Qarn-i Nohum Hijri* (Qum during the 9th century).
5. *Turbat-i Pākān*, vol. 1, pp. 193 ff.
6. For the inscriptions on these tombs see Sutūdeh, *Kitābehhā-yi Haram-i Hazrat-i Ma'sūmah*, pp. 33-34.
7. *Turbat-i Pākān*, vol. 1, p. 27.
8. See Sutūdeh, *Kitābehhā*, pp. 49-51 for the grave inscriptions, and see Ahmad Shubayrī Zanjānī, "Safarnāmeḥ-yi Qum," in *Mirāth-i Islāmī-yi Irān*, No. 9, pp. 596-600.
9. See *EI2* concerning them.
10. See Mudarrisi, *Qum-nāmeḥ*, 79-84.
11. See John Girmi, "Ta'riḫ-negāri-yi Qum dar Doreh-yi Nāsiri," in *Ganjineh-yi Shahāb*, vol. 2, pp. 65-94.
12. See Qāsimī Nezhād, *Rāhnamā-yi Qum*, 1354 H. Sh. For further information concerning the city's development and the arrival of modern institutions, see Ibn al-Rizā, *Qum az Nazar-i Ijtīmā'i Iqtisādī*.

13. During the years following the Constitutional Movement, the office of the Shrine's *mutawalli* was held by Muhammad Bāqir Tawliyat, who was a friend of Shaykh Fazlullāh Nūri. He had two sons, Sālār (after whom is named the locality called Sālāriyeh) and Abū al-Fazl. The latter held this office for years until he was dismissed for supporting Dr. Musaddiq. Though he was reinstated for a short period, but was dismissed again for good and the office passed on to Naft, a brother of Dr. Iqbal, and then to Mehrān who was mayor of Tehran for some time. Tawliyat possessed enormous wealth with which he later gradually created endowments in cooperation with a number of clergymen following the activism of the clergy. In recent years the regulation of these endowments was brought under a foundation, the Bunyād-i Tāhir, which is apparently administered by the Imam Sādiq ('a) University.

14. *Naqz*, pp. 195-196.

15. *Turbat-i Pākān*, vol. 1, p. 132.

16. By Tahmāsb I in 934/1527.

17. By Fath 'Alī Shāh in the years 1213/1798 and 1314/.

18. See *Athār al-Hujjah*, pp. 76-86.

19. See *Athār al-Hujjah*, vol. 2, p. 119.

20. See *Kitāb-i Zard, bashīr* 79, Qum: Markaz-i Mudiriyyat-i Hawzah-yi 'Ilmiyyeh-yi Qum, 1379 H. Sh.

21. See Bābā Miri, *Rāhnamā-yi Matbū 'āt-i Qum 1302-1379 H. Sh.*

22. See *Naqz*, p. 219.

23. *Turbat-i Pākān*, vol. 1, pp. 20-21.

24. See Faqīhī, *Ta'rikh-i Takāyā wa 'Azādārī-yi Qum*, and Mahdi 'Abbāsī, *Ta'rikh-i Madhhabī-yi Qum*, which give an account of the city's mourning ceremonies and traditions.

25. *Ta'rikh-i Qum*, pp. 34-35.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

27. Concerning the Jamkarān Mosque and the popular beliefs about the place and traditional customs and rites associated with it, see Sayyid Ja'far Mir 'Azimī, *Masjid-i Muqaddas-i Jamkarān*.

Book Introduction:

Fadak fī al-Tārīkh

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr

The dispute between the Prophet's noble daughter Hazrat Fātimah al-Zahrā' ('a) and the first caliph, Abū Bakr bin Abi Quhāfah, over the tract of *Fadak* near Khaybar which was the personal property of Prophet Muhammad (S) and which he had bequeathed to his daughter, has been the subject of several books. The issue of *Fadak* is in fact a sad turn of events in the history of Islam, especially for the followers of the Prophet's Household, who view it as a symbol of oppression of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), of Hazrat Fātimah ('a) in particular.

The question which arises in Muslim minds is: What were the motives of Hazrat Fātimah ('a) and Abū Bakr to confront each other on a few acres of *Fadak*? This point has been analysed from different angles and convincing answers given by Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr in his valuable book *Fadak fī al-Tārīkh* (*Fadak* in History) which was written when he was 24 years old. The book, besides being considered one of the original works on this topic, gives an idea of the dynamic thoughts of the young Sadr

who at the start of his scholarly life displayed his tendencies as a guardian of the sanctity of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Fadak, according to Martyr Ayatullah Bāqir al-Sadr, is a wholly political issue, and the dispute over it between Hazrat Fātimah ('a) and Abū Bakr is not the dispute of ownership but is a political confrontation which, as he points out, was to continue in later centuries between the caliphs and the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt ('a). In fact, the author considers as political, the motive of the two sides in entering the dispute and stresses that Abū Bakr knew very well that Hazrat Fātimah's ('a) contention was not for mere inheritance, bequeathal or grant but was a political battle, or more properly a litigation for reclaiming the rights of her noble and peerless husband, Imam 'Alī bin Abī Tālib ('a), who had been deprived of his natural position and indisputable right over the Islamic state by the caliph and his accomplices. As Sadr notes, Hazrat Fātimah ('a) took this revolutionary step to assert her ownership of *Fadak* in defence of the trampled rights of her husband, and his political rule and leadership of the state which had been usurped after the Prophet. In view of this fact, says the author, the actual boundaries of *Fadak* are the boundaries of the caliphate and of Islamic rule. This becomes clear in the words of Hazrat Fātimah ('a) herself:

“Yes, *Fadak* was in our possession. *Fadak* in its wider sense, that is, whatever was under the shade of the sky. Then some envied it and others took it over.”

The book is divided into five sections. The first section presents the scenario of a revolution with Hazrat Fātimah ('a) playing the role of the leading revolutionary. The motive of the Prophet's daughter for taking this dynamic revolutionary step which has been recorded in history with all its deep tragedy, was to protest the usurpation of the indisputable rights of her immaculate husband who was the most suitable person for the caliphate. To

emphasise her point, she reminded people of the merits of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) and his position with the Prophet.

In the second section of his book the author has reviewed the political history of *Fadak* and how it changed hands among the caliphs and the descendants of the Prophet. During the rule of the Umayyads and the Abbasids, *Fadak* was restored to the descendants of Hazrat Fātimah (‘a) on several occasions, only to be seized again by the next caliph.

The third section deals with the history of the revolution with the author detailing the political duels of the first and second caliphs with Imam ‘Alī (‘a) and their role in paving the ground for coming to power of the ungodly Umayyads. He points out that among the pressures on Imam ‘Alī (‘a) and the Prophet’s clan the Banī Hāshim, during the reign of the first two caliphs was the increase of the political influence of those late and reluctant converts to Islam, the Umayyuds, and in view of these developments it could rightly be said that both Abū Bakr and ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb facilitated the conditions for the coming to power of this ungodly dynasty. Martyr Sadr then mentions the merits of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) and after drawing a comparison between him and the first three caliphs, praises his selfless sacrifice in leaving the caliphate alone, because his spiritual position was much higher and more extensive than his own political position. The author says that the Imam abstained from claiming his right of the caliphate in the interests of the Muslims and in order to avoid a civil war which at that particular stage of history would have been detrimental to the cause of Islam. According to Ayatullah Bāqir al-Sadr, the cry of justice of Hazrat Fātimah (‘a) is actually the cry of justice of Imam ‘Alī (‘a), but coming from the blessed mouth of his wife so as to prove the righteousness of her husband.

The fourth section focuses on the famous sermon of Hazrat Fātimah (‘a) in Masjid al-Nabī with an analysis and explanation of its words and phrases, and the memory it brought back to the

listeners of the sermons of her father the Prophet. In her sermon – which has been preserved in all historical texts – Hazrat Fātimah (‘a) after praising Allah the Almighty and sending blessings on Prophet Muhammad (S), elaborates on the tenets of Islam and recounts the merits and virtues of her husband, and warns the caliph and his companions of divine justice for their unjustified actions. She tells them:

“Now hang firmly to this cheap dromedary of caliphate of yours and release it not. But beware, the hump of this camel is injured while there are blisters and holes in its feet. It carries the scars of ignominy and the sign of the wrath of Allah. Eternal shame is attached to it.”

In this way she entrusted to God her complaint against their injustice.

In the fifth and last section of the book, Ayatullah Bāqir al-Sadr analyses the issue of *Fadak* and draws conclusion that in the first place Abū Bakr himself did not consider as reliable the *hadith* he recited for turning down the claims of Hazrat Fātimah (‘a) to *Fadak*. It was under the pressure of ‘Umar that he attributed to the Prophet the words: “We (the Prophets) do not leave inheritance and whatever we leave is charity.” The author then scrutinises the words of the supposed *hadith* and says that in the light of the verses of the Holy Qur’ān regarding the inheritance of previous prophets which Hazrat Fātimah (‘a) quoted in order to refute the contention of the caliph, it is clear that such an attribution to Prophet Muhammad (S) cannot be relied upon. For instance, the Prophet's daughter countered Abū Bakr’s contention as blasphemous since it implied that the Prophet (S) did not follow the divine commandments on inheritance. She pointed to the *ayahs* of the Holy Qur’ān where Allah, quoting Zachariah’s supplication, says: “So grant me from Yourself an heir, who shall inherit me and inherit from the family of Jacob.” (19:5,6) “And Solomon inherited David” (27:16).

In view of these clear facts it cannot be said that Prophet Muhammad (S) left no inheritance. In other words, says the author, Abū Bakr's contention stands null and void, and the least that one could interpret his words is that Prophets accumulate no wealth and property to be left as inheritance! He then goes on to study this spurious *hadith* from different angles, and after focusing on the verses of the Holy Qur'ān which Hazrat Fātimah ('a) cited in her defence, he dismisses Abū Bakr's attribution to the Prophet as false and contradictory to the express commandments of Almighty Allah.

The book provides excellent reading, and although brief, it draws a vivid picture of the dispute over *Fadak*, thereby clearing any doubts from unbiased minds that the Prophet's daughter was the guardian of her father's divine legacy and not those who had violated the Book and the *Sunnah* to seize the political functions of the caliphate.

Topical and Chronological List of Sadr's Works*

A) Topical List:

Fiqh:

1. *Buhūth fī Sharh al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* (Discourses on the Commentary of *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*), 4 volumes.

2. *Al-Ta'liqah 'alā Minhāj al-Sālihīn* (Annotation of Ayatullah Hakīm's *Minhāj al-Sālihīn*), 2 volumes.

3. *Al-Fatāwā al-Wāzihah* (Clear Decrees).

4. *Mūjaz Ahkām al-Hajj* (Summarized Rules of *Hajj*)

5. *Al-Ta'liqah 'alā Manāsik al-Hajj* (Annotation of Ayatullah Khu'ī's *Hajj Rites*).

6. *Al-Ta'liqah 'alā Salāh al-Jumu'ah* (Annotation on Friday Prayer)

Usūl al-Fiqh:

7. *Durūs fī 'Ilm al-Usūl* (Lessons in the Science of Jurisprudence), 3 Parts.

8. *Al-Ma'ālim al-Jadidah lil-Usūl* (The New Signposts of Jurisprudence).

9. *Ghāyah al-Fikr* (The Highest Degree of Thought)

* Compiled by: Sayyid Hāmid Husaynī.

Philosophy:

10. *Falsafatunā* (Our Philosophy)

Logic:

11. *Al-Usus al-Mantiqiyyah lil-Istiqrā'* (The Logical Basis of Induction)

Kalām:

12. *Al-Mūjaz fī Usūl al-Dīn: al-Mursil, al-Rasūl, al-Risālah* (The Summarized Principles of Religion: The Sender, The Messenger, The Message).

13. *Al-Tashayyu' wa al-Islam – Bahth Hawl al-Wilāyah* (Discourse on Divine Authority).

14. *Bahth Hawl al-Mahdī* (Discourse on Imam Mahdī)

Economics:

15. *Iqtisādunā* (Our Economics).

16. *Al-Bank al-lā Ribawī fī al-Islām* (Usury-free Banking in Islam).

17. *Maqālāt Iqtisādiyyah* (Essays in Economy).

Tafsīr:

18. *Al-Tafsīr al-Mawzū'ī lil-Qur'ān al-Karīm – al-Madrasah al-Qur'āniyyah* (The Thematic exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān).

19. *Buhūth fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Discourses on Qur'ānic Sciences).

20. *Maqālāt Qur'āniyyah* (Essays on Qur'ān).

History:

21. *Ahl al-Bayt Tanawwu' Ahdāf wa Wahdah Hadaf* (Ahl al-Bayt, Variety of Objectives Towards a Single Goal).

22. *Fadak fī al-Tārīkh* (*Fadak in History*).

Islamic Culture:

23. *Al-Islam Yaqūd al-Hayāh* (*Islam Directive to Life*).

24. *Al-Madrasah al-Islamiyyah* (*Islamic School*):

1. *Al-Insān al-Mu'āsir wa al-Mushkilah al-Ijtimā'iyah*
(*Modern Man and Social Problems*)

2. *Māzā Tu'raf 'an al-Iqtisād al-Islāmī?* (*What Could be
Known of Islamic Economy?*).

25. *Risālatunā* (*Our Mission*).

26. *Nazrah 'Ammah fī al-'Ibādāt* (*General View on Rites of
Worship*).

27. *Maqalāt wa Muhāzrāt* (*Essays and Lectures*)

B) Chronological List:

1. *Fadak fī al-Tārīkh*, 1374/1955.

2. *Ghāyah al-Fikr*, 1374/1955.

3. *Falsafatunā*, 1379/1959.

4. *Iqtisādunā*, 1381/1961.

5. *Al-Madrasah al-Islamiyyah*, 1384/1964:

1. *Al-Insān al-Mu'āsir wa al-Mushkilah al-Ijtimā'iyah*.

2. *Māzā Tu'raf 'an al-Iqtisād al-Islāmī*.

6. *Al-Ma'ālīm al-Jadīdah lil-Usūl*, 1385/1985.

7. *Al-Bank al-lā Ribawī fī al-Islām*, 1389/1969.

8. *Al-Usus al-Mantiqiyyah lil-Istiqrā'*, 1391/1971.

9. *Buhūth fī Sharh al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, Volume One, 1391/1971.
10. *Buhūth fī Sharh al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, Volume Two, 1392/1972.
11. *Buhūth fī Sharh al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, Volume Three, 1394/1974.
12. *Al-Ta'liqah 'alā Minhāj al-Sālihīn* (Sayyid Hakīm), 2 volumes, 1395/1975.
13. *Mūjaz Ahkām al-Hajj*, 1395/1975.
14. *Al-Fatāwā al-Wāzihah*, 1396/1976.
15. *Nazrah 'Ammah fī al-'Ibādāt*, 1396/1976.
16. *Al-Tashayyū' wa al-Islam (Bahth Hawl al-Wilāyah)*, 1396/1976.
17. *Buhūth fī Sharh al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, Volume Four, 1397/1977.
18. *Bahth Hawl al-Mahdī*, 1397/1977.
19. *Al-Mūjaz fī Usūl al-Dīn (al-Mursil, al-Rasūl, al-Risālah)*, 1397/1977.
20. *Durūs fī 'Ilm al-Usūl*, 1397/1978.