
The Second Message of Islam

Mahmoud Mohamed Taha (Sudan, circa 1910–1985) received his university degree in Khartoum, Sudan, and worked for many years as a civil engineer, specializing in irrigation. At the same time, he was active in the Sudanese independence movement. In 1945, he helped to found the Republican Party and then spent several years in jail as a result of his activism. After independence, his followers founded the Republican Brothers, which Taha led until his execution in 1985. The founding document of this organization, first drafted in the early 1950s and published in 1967—excerpted here—presents Taha’s unorthodox view that the earlier Qur’anic revelations (revealed in Mecca before the Prophet gained political power) should be granted greater importance than the later revelations, which refer more narrowly to the conditions of the Prophet’s rule in Medina. This view brought Taha into conflict with the Sudanese government’s implementation of more orthodox Islamic laws in the 1980s. His protest against these policies led to his arrest and execution.¹

Introduction to the Third Edition

This is the introduction to the third edition of *The Second Message of Islam*. The first edition was published in January 1967 A.D., in the revered month of

Ramadan 1386 A.H. The second edition was published in April 1968 A.D., in the month of Muharram 1388 A.H. At the time of the second edition we were, however, preoccupied with other business and could not give that edition an introduction of its own.

This book, *The Second Message of Islam*, is new in every respect. . . . Besides being new, it is also totally “strange,” that is, unexpected, since it proclaims the return of a renewed Islam. Such “strangeness,” however, is to be expected, especially by informed Muslims. The Prophet is reported to have said: “Islam started as a stranger, and it shall return as a stranger in the same way it started. Blessed are the strangers! They asked: Who are the strangers. O Messenger of God? He replied: Those who revive

1. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, “Translator’s Introduction,” in Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, *The Second Message of Islam* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987); Khalid Duran, “An Alternative to Islamism: The Evolutionary Thought of Mahmud Taha,” *Cross Currents*, volume 42, number 4, Winter 1992–1993, pp. 453–467; Paul J. Magnarella, “Republican Brothers,” in John L. Esposito, editor, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), volume 3, pp. 429–430.

my *sunna* [practice of the Prophet] after it had been abandoned.”

Thus, the return of a revived Islam is by nature strange, that is to say, mysterious and unexpected. Those who criticize this book for its “strangeness,” therefore, reveal both a lack of understanding and of patience. We need not concern ourselves here with those who oppose this book’s message out of misunderstanding and deliberate distortion out of bad faith. But we must emphasize that the apparent “strangeness” of this message is inherent in the nature of Islamic revival. Understanding this book requires patience, diligence, and close scrutiny. If the reader is able to persist, his mind shall be open to a new understanding of the Qur’an and Islam, and he shall be rewarded for his perseverance, God willing.

Sunna and Shari’a

In the above quoted *hadith* [tradition of the Prophet], the Prophet referred to the strangers and said they were those who revive his *sunna* after it had been abandoned. Those who call for such a revival become strangers amongst their own people, because such a call involves a divergence from what people are accustomed to. They are strangers by virtue of their adherence to the truth amongst people for whom the truth is a stranger. If people have experienced falsehood for so long, then because of their long unfamiliarity with the truth, they come to accept falsehood as the truth.

It is mistakenly believed by some that the *sunna* consists of all the acts and words of the Prophet, as well as his approval of the action of others. This is not true, because his teachings to others and approval of their conduct relate to *shari’a* [Islamic law]. Only the Prophet’s personal deeds, and his utterances that reflect the state of his heart in its knowledge of God, constitute *sunna*. The Prophet’s statements which were designed to teach the people their religion are *shari’a*. The difference between *shari’a* and *sunna* is the difference between the Message and the Prophethood. In other words, it reflects the difference between the standard of the generality of Muslims of all levels, and the standard of the Prophet, which is a tremendous difference indeed.

Sunna relates to the personal practice of the Prophet, while in *shari’a* the Prophet descends from the level of his own personal practice to the level of his people in order to teach them according to their

capabilities, thereby requiring them to act within their capacities. *Sunna* is his prophethood, while *shari’a* is his message. With respect to his message, the Prophet said: “We the prophets have been instructed to address people in accordance with the level of their understanding.”

Al-Islam and Al-’Iman

There is a common failure to appreciate the fine distinction between *islam* [submission to God] and *’iman* [faith]. *’Iman* is widely and mistakenly believed to be superior to *islam*. This mistaken belief is due to an inability to appreciate the circumstances of the time. The time when such belief sufficed is over, as we have now reached a point when the understanding of religion has developed and evolved from the level of *’iman* to the level of *islam*. The distinction can be explained as follows:

Islam is an intellectual process by which the diligent worshiper proceeds on a ladder of seven steps, the first being *islam*, secondly *’iman*, thirdly *ihsan* [beneficence], fourthly *’ilm al-yaqin*, fifthly *’ilm ’ayn al-yaqin*, sixthly *’ilm haqq al-yaqin*, and seventhly *islam* once more.² But *islam* at the higher stage differs in degree from *islam* at the initial stage. At the initial stage, *islam* is merely external or apparent submission, while in the final state it is both external and internal (genuine) submission. *Islam* at the initial stage concerns speech and action, while in the final stage it is intelligent surrender and submission and acceptance of God both in private and in public. At the initial stage *islam* is inferior to *’iman*, while at the final stage it is superior to *’iman*. Many theologians whom we know today are unable to make this distinction.

Religious scholars have been confused by the *hadith* involving Gabriel, reported by ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab [Companion of the Prophet, 592–644], who said:

As we were seated with the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, there came a man wearing [clean]³

2. [These somewhat technical terms refer to the various degrees of piety and perfection of conduct and lifestyle, in accordance with religious and moral norms and ethics.—Translator]

3. [The bracketed words in this quotation and throughout this chapter, with several exceptions, have been inserted by the translator.—Editor]

white clothes, with very dark hair. None of us knew him, yet he did not show the signs of travel. He sat near the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, and placed his knees next to his [the Prophet's] knees, and placed his hands on his [the Prophet's] thighs and said: O, Muhammad, tell me about *islam*. . . . He [the Prophet] said: *islam* is to declare that there is no god but God, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God; to say the prayers; pay *zakat* taxes; fast the month of Ramadan, and do pilgrimage to the House [of God], if you can afford it. He said: You are right. We wondered how he could ask him and then confirm he was right. Then he [the man] said: Tell me about *'iman*. He [the Prophet] replied: *'iman* is to believe in God, His angels, His Books, Messengers, fate whether good or bad, and the hereafter. He [the man] said: you are right. Then he asked: tell me about *ihsan*. He [the Prophet] replied: *ihsan* is to worship God as if you see Him, and although you do not see Him, be certain that He can see you. He [the man] said: you are right. Then he said: Tell me when is the final hour? He [the Prophet] replied: the one being asked does not know of it more than the one who asks. He [the man] said: Tell me of its signs? He [the Prophet] replied: When the woman gives birth to her mistress, and when you see the bare-footed and naked shepherds practice extravagance. He said: You are right. Then he left. We stayed a while, then the Messenger, peace be upon him, said: O 'Umar, do you know the one who was asking the questions? I replied, God and His Messenger know better. He said: This is Gabriel, who came to teach you your religion.

Many religious scholars interpreted this to mean that Islam proceeds in three stages: *islam*, *'iman*, and *ihsan*. Since it is said in the Qur'an, concerning the Bedouins, "The Bedouins said *amanna* (we believe); tell them you have not believed, but say *aslanna* (we submit) and *'iman* (true belief) did not enter your hearts yet" (Sura 49, Verse 14), it seems obvious to these scholars that *'iman* is higher in degree than *islam*. Those scholars failed to appreciate that the issue needs close consideration.

The Truth of the Matter

The truth of the matter is that *islam*, as conveyed in the Qur'an, comes in two stages: the stage of dogma (*'aqida*) and the stage of the truth (*haqiqa*) or knowledge. Each of these two stages has three levels.

The levels of dogma are *islam*, *'iman*, and *ihsan*, while the levels of knowledge are *'ilm al-yaqin*, *'ilm 'ayn al-yaqin*, and *'ilm haqq al-yaqin*. Finally, there is a seventh stage in the ladder of evolution, which is *islam*, which completes the cycle. The end of religious evolution resembles the beginning, yet they are not identical. The beginning is *islam* and the end is *islam*, but there is a vast difference between *islam* at the beginning of religious evolution and *islam* at the end. The stage of *'aqida* is the stage of the nation of *Mu'minin* [Believers], which is the nation of the First Message of Islam.

The stage of knowledge is the stage of the nation of *Muslimin* [Muslims, literally Those Who Submit], which is the nation of the Second Message of Islam. This nation has not come yet, although its vanguard have appeared individually throughout human history, in the form of prophets, with the final prophet being the Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullahi, may he receive the highest blessing and utmost peace. It was Muhammad who prophesied the coming of the nation of *Muslimin* and brought its message, as contained in general terms in the Qur'an, and detailed it in the *sunna*. When the nation of *Muslimin* comes, it shall begin at the same point as the nation of *Mu'minin*, namely at a stage of dogma or *'aqida*. But it shall not stop at the third step of the ladder, where Gabriel stopped in his questions. It shall continue to evolve to the end of the ladder, thereby combining both dogma as well as knowledge. In other words, the coming nation is a nation of both *Muslimin* as well as *Mu'minin* at one and the same time, while the first nation was one of *Mu'minin* (believers) and not *Muslimin* (submitters) in the final sense of *islam* [as total and intelligent surrender to God].

It must be noted that Gabriel stopped in his questions at the end of the level of dogma, *'aqida*, because he had come to explain religion to the nation of *Mu'minin*, and not to the nation of *Muslimin*, which had not yet come.

Muhammad is the Messenger of the First Message, and he is also the Messenger of the Second Message. While he explained the First Message in detail, he only outlined the Second Message. Its elaboration now requires a fresh understanding of the Qur'an. That is the purpose of this book.

Those who approach this book with an open mind will be guided along the right path. We ask God for

rectification and success in our endeavor; He is the best Lord. . . .

The First Message of Islam

Nation of Mu'minin

We have said that the Qur'an was divided between 'iman and islam, as well as being revealed in two parts as Meccan and Medinese. The Meccan Qur'an was revealed first. In other words, people were invited to adopt Islam [in the ultimate sense] first, and when they failed to do so, and it was practically demonstrated that they were below its standard, they were addressed in accordance with their abilities. This offer of the higher standard is the conclusive argument against people referred to in the verse: "And We will surely try you until We make manifest those among you who strive [for the cause of God] and those who are steadfast. And We will make known the truth about you." (Sura 47, Verse 31) This experiment and consequent practical experience is for the benefit of mankind because God's knowledge does not occur afresh (*hadith*).⁴ The phrase "those who strive" means major *jihad*, namely, striving to control the self.⁵ "And those who are steadfast" refers to endurance of the state of distance from God. "And We will make known the truth about you" means to extract thoughts that are repressed in your subconscious—your *sir al-sir*.

The verses which demonstrate descent from ultimate Islam to the level of 'iman are numerous—for example, the verse, "O believers (*mu'minin*), fear God as He ought to be feared, and become true submitters (*muslimin*) before you die." (Sura 3, Verse 102) When the believers (*mu'minin*) said "which of us can fear God as He ought to be feared?" the Qur'an descended in another verse to the level of "Fear God as much as you can, listen and obey and pay alms,

as that is good for yourselves, and those who are rid of their own selfishness are the truly successful ones." (Sura 64, Verse 16)

When the verse, "Those who believe without obscuring their belief with unfairness have security, and they are truly guided" (Sura 6, Verse 82) was revealed, people found it too difficult to comply with, and they said: "O Messenger of God, which one of us is not unfair to himself?" He replied: "It is not what you mean. Did you not hear what God's true slave (Luqman) said: O son, do not disbelieve in God, such disbelief is great unfairness. The verse means disbelief." The believers were relieved because they knew that they had not disbelieved since the time they came to believe. In fact the Prophet explained the verse to them at the level of *mu'minin*, knowing that its explanation at the level of the *muslimin* was above their ability, because "unfairness" then means subtle polytheism in the sense mentioned in the verse of the *sir al-sir*. "All shall submit to the living and all-sustaining God. And he indeed has failed who holds iniquity." (Sura 20, Verse 111)

It is reported about the verse, "Those who believe without obscuring their belief with unfairness have security, and they are truly guided," that the Prophet said: "I was told that I am one of them." The Prophet is not merely one of the believers (*mu'minin*), as he is the first of the true submitters to God (*muslimin*): "Say: 'My prayer and my worship and my life and my death are [all] for God the Lord of all creation. He has no partner. And so am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit (*muslimin*).'" (Sura 6, Verse 163)

We have said that the nation of the First Message are *muslimin*. While the Qur'an described *muslimin* at the time of Moses as the Jews, and at the time of Jesus as Christians, it describes them at the time of the First Muhammadan Message as *mu'minin* or "those who believed." Listen to the Qur'an: "Surely, those who believe and the Jews and the Christians and the Sabians who so believe in God and the Last Day, and do good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord, and no fear [shall come] upon them, nor shall they grieve." (Sura 2, Verse 62) Again, it says, "Surely, those who have believed, and the Jews, and the Sabians, and the Christians who so believe in God and the Last Day and do good deeds—on them [shall come] no fear, nor shall they grieve." (Sura 5, Verse 69) Another instructive verse reads:

4. [God in His comprehensive and all-preceding knowledge already knew that Islam would be rejected when first offered in Mecca, but He conducted the experiment for our sake, so that we should know with certainty. God's knowledge is ancient and external beyond time, *qadim* and not *hadith*.—Translator]

5. [Reference here is to the *hadith* where the Prophet describes self-control as the primary and major *jihad* or self-exertion.—Translator]

O believers (*mu' minin*), believe in God, His Messenger, and the Book that He revealed to His Messenger, and the Book revealed previously. He who disbelieves in God, His angels, books, messengers, and the Final Day, has grossly strayed from the path. (Sura 4, Verse 136)

So He calls them *mu' minin* (believers) and yet invites them to further belief, more *'iman*.

The verses: "O believers (*mu' minin*), fear God as He ought to be feared, and become true submitters (*muslimin*) before you die," and "Fear God as much as you can, and listen and obey and pay alms, as that is good for yourselves, and those who are rid of their own selfishness are the truly successful ones" clearly have two different meanings—one setting an original precept and the other a subsidiary one. It is also clear that the real objective is the achievement of the original precept. When it was shown that it was impracticable to do so, it was postponed and the intermediate objective of implementing the subsidiary precept was sought. When the conditions necessary for achieving the original objective, that is to say, when both individual as well as collective human capacities are sufficiently mature, the original precept shall be restored. This is the reason why the original precepts of religion were postponed, and the subsidiary precepts were implemented [as transitional measures] as shall be explained below.

Jihad Is Not an Original Precept in Islam

Islam's original view is that a person is free until it is shown, in practice, that he or she is unable to properly discharge the duty of such freedom. Freedom is a natural right corresponding to a duty, namely, its proper exercise. Once a free person is unable to fulfill the duty of his or her freedom, such freedom shall be withdrawn under a law which is consistent with the constitution, that is, a law which reconciles the need of the individual for absolute individual freedom, and the need of the community for total social justice. As already stated, this is the law of *mu'awada* (reciprocity).

This was Islam's original and fundamental principle. The propagation of Islam began with the verses of persuasion in Mecca where the verse "Propagate the path of your Lord in wisdom and peaceable advice, and argue with them in a kind manner. Your Lord is more knowledgeable of those who stray from His path, and He is more knowledgeable of the

guided ones" (Sura 16, Verse 125) and many other similar verses were revealed. This approach was continued for 13 years, during which time much of the miraculous Qur'an was revealed, and many men, women, and children were transformed under the guidance of the new discipline. The early Muslims curtailed their own aggression against the unbelievers, endured hurt, sacrificed their comforts sincerely and self-denyingly in the cause of spreading their religion, without weakening or submitting. Their lives were the supreme expression of their religion and consisted of sincere worship, kindness, and peaceful coexistence with all other people.

God says: "I have created *jinn* [spirits] and people for no reason except that they may worship Me." (Sura 51, Verse 56) And He favored people with the mind, body, and comforts that enable them to worship Him and appreciate His Grace. He also says: "God enjoins *'adl* [justice], *ihsan*, the doing of good to others, and benevolence to the next of kin; and forbids indecency, lewdness, manifest evil, and transgression. He admonishes you that you may take heed." (Sura 16, Verse 90) Again, God says:

and that you slay not your children for fear of poverty—it is We who provide for you and for them—and that you approach not foul deeds, whether open or secret; and that you slay not the self, which God has forbidden save in accordance (with the demands of) justice. That is what He has enjoined upon you, that you may understand. (Sura 6, Verse 151)

All this the Qur'an produced in the new religion, and the Prophet and his Companions delivered by their words and example, all to the best interest and advantage of their people.

Nevertheless, their people persisted in worshipping the stone they carved, severing relations with the next of kin, destroying life, and burying girls alive,⁶ thereby abusing their freedom, and rendering it liable to be withdrawn. Since at that time there was no law except the sword, the sword was used to that effect [abridging freedom]. Thus, implementation shifted from the verse, "Then remind them, as you are only a reminder. You have no dominion

6. [In pre-Islamic days, the Arabs used to bury their daughters alive to avoid any shame they might cause to them, if taken by their enemies, and to avoid having to defend and feed them generally.—Translator]

over them" (Sura 8, Verses 21–22), to the verse, "except he who shuns and disbelieves, on whom God shall inflict the greatest suffering." (Sura 88, Verses 23–24) It is as if God said, "We have granted you, Muhammad, dominion over anyone who shuns and disbelieves, so that God shall subject him to minor suffering at your hands through fighting, then God shall also subject him to the greatest suffering in hell." "It is to Us that they shall return. Then We shall hold them to account." (Sura 88, Verses 25–26) Thus the two first verses were abrogated or repealed by the two second verses. In this way, all the verses of persuasion, though they constitute the primary or original principle, were abrogated or repealed by the verses of compulsion (*jihad*). This exception was necessitated by the circumstances of the time and the inadequacy of the human capability to discharge properly the duty of freedom at that time. Hence the Prophet said:

I have been instructed to fight people until they declare that "There is no god but God," and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God (et cetera). Once they do, they will have secured their lives and property, unless they violate the law. And I leave their sincerity to be judged by God.

Some Muslim scholars believe that Islamic wars were purely defensive wars, a mistaken belief prompted by their keenness to refute claims by the Orientalists that Islam spread by means of the sword. In fact, the sword was used to curtail the abuse of freedom.

Islam used persuasion for 13 years in propagating its clearly valid message for the individual and the community. When the addressees failed to discharge properly the duties of their freedom, they lost this freedom, and the Prophet was appointed as their guardian until they came of age. However, once they embraced the new religion and observed the sanctity of life and property, and the social claims of their kith and kin, as they had been instructed, the sword was suspended, and abuses of freedom were penalized according to new laws. Hence the development of Islamic *shari'a* law, and the establishment of a new type of government.

In justifying the use of the sword, we may describe it as a surgeon's lancet and not a butcher's knife. When used with sufficient wisdom, mercy, and knowledge, it uplifted the individual and purified society. God said to this effect:

We have sent Our Messengers with the clear signs, and revealed with them the Book and the scales, so that people should maintain the fair balance, and decreed iron with much hardship and benefits to people, so that God may discover who supports Him and His Messengers sincerely. God is All-Powerful and Self-Sufficient. (Sura 57, Verse 25)

"We have sent Our Messengers with the clear signs" indicates the conclusive proof of the validity of their messages; "and revealed with them the Book" refers to the principle that "There is no god but God." "The scales" means the *shari'a* to adjudicate between slave [man] and the Lord on the one hand, and between one slave and another on the other hand, "so that people should maintain the fair balance," that is to say, be fair in their dealings.

The part "and decreed iron with much hardship and benefits to People" signifies that God has enacted fighting with the sword in order to curtail the freedom of those who abuse it, so that the sword brings them to their senses, thereby allowing them to earn their freedom and benefit from their life. That is, of course, besides other benefits which may be derived from iron, which we need not enumerate here. The part "so that God may discover who supports Him and His Messengers sincerely" is to discover out of practical experience for man's own benefit, because fighting is hateful and difficult. In other words, the object was to see who would endure the hardship of war for the sake of God and in support of the oppressed, by maintaining the fair balance between each individual and himself, and between himself and others. "God is All-Powerful and Self-Sufficient" implies that He is so Powerful that He needs no support from anyone else, and nothing can be gained from Him except through His own Grace.

What can be gained from Him in this context is victory. So the verse refers in a subtle way to another verse: "O believers, if you support [the cause of] God, He will help you and will make your steps firm." (Sura 47, Verse 7) So if you support the cause of God by supporting His Prophet in order to maintain the balance, God shall help you and give you victory over your own lower selves. In other words, if you stand by the cause of God in minor *jihad* (fighting), He shall support You and give you victory in the major *jihad* (self-control) where one is helpless without God's help, and no one can give you victory except Him. To "make your steps firm" means tran-

quillity and peace of mind, and includes, of course, physical courage in battle.

In treating ailments of the heart it is wise to begin with gentle means, and to resort to strict measures only when absolutely necessary, deferring drastic treatment to the very end. Suffering death by the sword in this life is really an aspect of suffering hell in the next life, since both are punishments for disbelief. Whoever adds to his own disbelief by inciting others to disbelief or to shun the path of God must be suppressed before he takes up arms in the cause of disbelief. God says:

Those who spend their money in order to shun the path of God shall spend it, achieve only sorrow, and still be defeated. The infidels shall be gathered in hell, so that God may distinguish the bad from the good and set the bad apart and cast them all in hell. These indeed are the losers. Tell the infidels that if they repent, they shall be forgiven for what they have done, but if they persist, then they shall be dealt with as were similar people before them. Fight them to prevent chaos, and so that all religion is rendered unto God; if they give up, then God has insight in what they do. (Sura 8, Verses 36–39)

When we consider God's expression, "the infidels shall be gathered in hell, so that God may distinguish the bad from the good," we can readily appreciate that the cause of suffering is disbelief. "God has no need for your suffering if you are thankful and believing, God is All-Thankful and All-Knowledgeable." (Sura 4, Verse 147) The part of the above text, "Fight them to prevent chaos," means so that there will be no disbelief, its propagation, or the shunning of the path of faith. "[S]o that all religion is rendered unto God" reflects the original purpose of fighting: "Your Lord commanded [that you] worship none but Him." (Sura 17, Verse 23) This is the design which He shall accomplish regardless of the wishes of the infidels.

In another verse God says: "Fight them to prevent chaos, and in order to render religion unto God; if they desist, then there can be no hostility except against the wrongdoers." (Sura 2, Verse 193) The wrongdoers are of two levels. On one level there are those who worship other than God, and persist in doing so, while on the other level there are those who appear to submit to God in obedience, but transgress upon the rights of other people and do them injustice. The verse decrees that freedom be withdrawn from those who abuse it, such withdrawal being proportionate to the degree of abuse: for the disbelievers the law of war, and hard-

ship of iron, while to the transgressors, the law of peace and adjudication of rights. This is the meaning of the expression "then there can be no hostility except against the wrongdoers."

Postponement from the original principles to the subsidiary principles signifies descent from the level of *islam* to the level of *'iman*. This is referred to in the verse "And We have revealed to you the Reminder [the Qur'an] so that you may explain to mankind that which has been sent down to them, and that they may reflect." (Sura 16, Verse 44) The phrase "we have revealed to you the Reminder" means the whole of the Qur'an including the original principle—*islam*—as well as the subsidiary (*'iman*). "So that you may explain to mankind that which has been sent down to them" means to detail through legislation, and to explain, in various other ways, to the believers (*mu'minin*) what has been brought down to their level. "[T]hat they may reflect," means that perhaps such reflection, while implementing the subsidiary principle, may lead them to the original principle they were unable to implement at the beginning. Here is a subtle reference to the ascent up the various levels of Islam, starting with initial Islam, and ascending by means of clear thinking, guided speech, and sincere action: "Unto Him ascends the pure words, being elevated by good deeds." (Sura 35, Verse 10)

Thus we reach an extremely important conclusion: many aspects of the present Islamic *shari'a* are not the original principles or objectives of Islam. They merely reflect a descent in accordance with the circumstances of the time and the limitations of human ability.

Slavery Is Not an Original Precept in Islam

Islam's original principle is freedom. But the Islamic religion was revealed to a society in which slavery was an integral part of the socioeconomic order. It was also a society that was shown in practice to be incapable of properly exercising its freedom, and therefore its individual members needed guidance; hence the consequent enactment of *jihad*. In Islamic *jihad*, the Muslims first had to offer to the unbelievers the new religion. If they refused to accept it, they had the second option of paying *jizya* [tax] and living under Muslim government, while practicing their own religion and enjoying personal security. If they also refused the option of *jizya*, the Muslims would

fight them and if victorious take some of them as slaves, thereby adding to the number of those already in slavery.

The rationale of such servitude is to be found in the principle of reciprocity (*mu'awada*). If an individual is invited to become the slave of God but refuses, such refusal is symptomatic of ignorance that calls for a period of training. The individual prepares to submit voluntarily to the servitude of God by becoming the slave of another person, thereby learning obedience and humility, which are becoming of a slave. Reciprocity (*mu'awada*) here rules that if a free person refuses to become the slave of God, he may be subjugated and made the slave of a slave of God, in fair and just retribution: "And whoso does an atom's weight of evil will also see it" (Sura 99, Verse 8). . . .

The Second Message of Islam

The Second Message is Islam. The Prophet himself imparted this Second Message without elaboration or detail, except for such overlaps between the First Message and the Second Message as *'ibadat* and *hudud* [worship practices and the specified penalties]. God says: "Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My grace upon you, and sanctioned Islam as your religion." (Sura 5, Verse 3) That day was the day of *'arafa* [ninth day of the month Dhu'l-Hijja] on *hajjat al-wada'* (the farewell pilgrimage) of the eighth year A.H., which was a Friday. This verse is the last verse of the Qur'an to be revealed, and is the ultimate word of the Divine Message.

God has accepted Islam for mankind so that we may accept it, because anything that is not initiated by Him cannot be undertaken by us. God says: "Then He forgave them in order that they may repent." (Sura 9, Verse 118)⁷

Many people considered the phrase, "Today I have perfected your religion for you," as implying that Islam itself has been fully achieved by mankind on earth on that day. The verse "And We have revealed to you the Reminder [the Qur'an] so that you may explain to mankind that which has been sent down to them" (Sura 16, Verse 44) was also taken to mean that the Qur'an has already been finally and

conclusively explained. Nothing, however, is further from the truth than this view. "Explanation" of the Qur'an has been only in terms of [expedient] legislation, the *shari'a*, and interpretation to the extent appropriate for the time of such explanation and in accordance with the capacity of the audience and the abilities of the people.

The Qur'an can never be finally and conclusively explained. Islam, too, can never be concluded. Progress in it is eternal: "Surely, the [true] religion with God is Islam." (Sura 3, Verse 19) "With God" [is eternal] beyond time and space. Progress into Islam by means of the Qur'an is progress towards God in infinitude (*itlaq*). As such it has not been, and can never be, fully and conclusively explained. It is its revelation into *mashaf* [Arabic text] as a Book that has been concluded, but its explanation has not.

This is how one should understand the difference between "revealed" and "explain" in the verse "And we have revealed to you the Reminder [the Qur'an] so that you may explain to mankind that which has been sent down to them, and they may reflect." According to the prevailing understanding of Muslim scholars, the two notions are synonymous, while in fact they are not. The level of understanding in the phrase "that which has been sent down to them" does not refer to the whole of the Qur'an but only to the part subject to explanation, namely, the First Message, and sections where the First and the Second Messages overlap.

The Qur'an was revealed with dual meanings. God says in this connection:

God has revealed the best speech in a Book of similar and dual meanings, from which the skin of those who fear their Lord creeps! Then their skin and hearts soften to *dhikr* [remembrance through worship of God]. That is the guidance of God with which He guides whomsoever He wishes, and he whom God misguided has no other guide. (Sura 30, Verse 23)

The word "similar" implies that there is some similarity between the Qur'an at its base and at its peak, its front and back. Its *zahir* and *batin*, "dual meanings," refer to its two levels of meaning: a distant meaning with the Lord, and a nearer meaning that has come down to the slave [of God].

The whole of the Qur'an is of dual meanings: every verse and word and even every letter has a dual meaning. The reason for this is that the Qur'an is the Lord's speech to His slave. The similarity in the

7. [That is to say, people's repentance is initiated by God before it can be undertaken by them.—Translator]

Qur'an is due to the similarity between the Lord and the slave, expressed by the Prophet in the *hadith*, "God has created Adam [man] after His Own image." God expresses the same meaning in the verse: "O people, fear your Lord, Who has created you from a single Self." (Sura 4, Verse 1) That "single Self" means His Own Blessed and Exalted Self.

The word Islam, for example, has a near meaning exposed by the Qur'an in the verse, "The Bedouins said *amanna* [we believe]; tell them you have not believed, but say *aslamna* [we submit] and '*iman* [true belief] did not enter your hearts yet.'" (Sura 49, Verse 14) This is what we termed initial Islam which, we said, is not taken by God as significant. Islam has a further meaning which lies with God in infinity. To this further meaning comes the reference in the verse: "Oh believers [*mu'minin*], fear God as He ought to be feared and become true submitters [*muslimin*] before you die." (Sura 3, Verse 102)

It goes without saying that no one fears God as He ought to be feared except God Himself. This is, therefore, a methodology of ascent to God through many levels of servitude, humility, and submission. Servitude is infinite, just like Lordship. Absolute servitude to God requires absolute knowledge of God, and this only God can achieve. "Say no one knows what is in heaven and earth, the Unknown, except God." (Sura 27, Verse 65) The Unknown here means God Himself, so it is as if He said, "No one knows God except God Himself." In our book *Rasalat al-salah [The Message of Righteousness]*, which may be consulted in this context, we have shown how servitude [to God] is freedom.

Islam is a method of ascent to servitude, and the Qur'an is the Book which leads the way. This quality of the Qur'an is the reason it was revealed, as indicated in the verse, "And, indeed, We rendered the Qur'an for the sake of *dhikr*, remembrance through worship, is there anyone who would take heed?" (Sura 54, Verse 17) The Qur'an reminds us of servitude which we have accepted and then forgotten:

And [remember] when thy Lord brought forth from Adam's children—out of their loins—their offspring and made them bear witness against their own selves saying, "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes, we admit this." [This He did] lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "we were surely unaware of this." Or [lest] you should say, [it was] only our fathers [who] associated co-partners [with God] in the past and we were merely a generation after them.

Will Thou then destroy us for what those, who lied, did? And thus do We make clear the Signs, [that they may be admonished] and that they may return [to God]. (Sura 7, Verses 172–174)

So that they may return to God in servitude and submission, through Islam.

As the Qur'an is the methodology of ascent to God, "We said: Go forth hence, all of you. And if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoso shall follow My guidance, on them [shall come] no fear, nor shall they grieve." (Sura 2, Verse 38) Since the Qur'an is that guidance, then it has its beginning with God, and its end with us. If we proceed properly through its levels, we shall recover the paradise we lost through the sin of Adam, and ascend into infinity (*itlaq*). God said of the Qur'an: "*Alif lam min*." That is certainly the Book which contains guidance for the God fearing." (Sura 2, Verses 1–2) Of those who fear God who are guided by the Qur'an. He said: "Those who fear God are in paradise, and a river, on a seat of truth, with the Most Able King." (Sura 54, Verse 54) These are levels or grades, beginning with paradise, then the river, then the seat of truth, and finally with the Most Able King in infinity. Such levels vary from physical paradise—which is the paradise lost through sin, to the Absolute in His *itlaq*. The Qur'an guides to all this, hence it is inexhaustible: "Say, if every sea became ink for the words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if a similar amount is brought as additional supply." (Sura 18, Verse 109) For this reason it is false to assert that the Qur'an may be finally and conclusively explained. The Qur'an is God's *dhat* [Self or Soul] which has descended, out of pure grace, to levels comprehensible by the slaves, thereby becoming the Qur'an in its various levels of descent: *dhikr*, *Qur'an*, and *furqan*.⁹ *Furqan* was the most effective form of Arabic expression to indicate the two levels of *Qur'an* and *dhikr*. The Qur'an was rendered into the form of Arabic expression so that we might understand from God. God says in this respect: "We have rendered it into Arabic so that you may understand." (Sura 43, Verse 3) This verse and other similar verses

8. [Three letters of the Arabic alphabet. 28 of 114 *suras* of the Qur'an begin with letters.—Editor]

9. [These terms refer to the Qur'an at different levels of knowledge and understanding of the truth in its *batin*, beyond the superficial *zahir* meaning of the text.—Translator]

have misled many Muslim scholars into believing that the Qur'an itself is Arabic, in the sense that its meanings may be exhaustively understood through the Arabic language. It is not so, as we have explained when discussing Qur'anic chapters starting with letters of the alphabet, above.

Being so supreme, Islam has never been achieved by any nation up to the present day. The nation of *muslimin* has not yet come. It is expected to come, however, in the future of humanity. Its day of emergence shall be the day of the ultimate pilgrimage, the day when the Divine statement "Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My grace upon you, and sanctioned Islam as your religion" (Sura 5, Verse 3) is realized in practice.

Muhammad, in his time, was the pioneer of the *muslimin* to come. It was as if he came to his nation, the nation of the *mu'minin* from the future. He was not one of them, as he was the only Muslim amongst them. "Say: My prayer and my worship and my life and my death are [all] for God the Lord of all creation. He has no partner. And so am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit [*muslimin*]." (Sura 6, Verse 163) Abu Bakr [died 634], the second best man, was the most superior of all the believers (*mu'minin*), yet there was a huge gap between him and the Prophet. It was to future *muslimin* that the Prophet referred, when he said:

"How I long for my brothers who have not come yet." And Abu Bakr said: "Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of God?" He replied: "No, you are my Companions!" Then he said again: "How I long for my brothers who have not come yet!" Then Abu Bakr said: "Are we not your brothers, O Messenger for God?" He said: "No, you are my Companions!" Then He said for the third time: "How I long for my brothers who have not come yet!" They asked: "Who are your brothers, O Messenger of God?" He said: "A people who come at the end of time, of whom the active one shall have seventy times as much reward as you have." They asked: "Seventy times as much as we have or they have?" He replied: "As you have." They asked: "Why?" He replied: "Because you find assistance in doing good, and they find no assistance."

The Muslims (Muslimin)

The Muslims, as a nation, have not yet come, but the Prophet prophesied their coming, towards the end of time, when circumstances are suitable, and God's

promise is fulfilled: "And he who seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted of him and in the Hereafter he shall be among the losers." (Sura 3, Verse 85) On that day all people shall embrace religion and find no alternative, because religion provides the only answers.

We believe that the earth is preparing for the emergence of the Islamic *shari'a* of the true submitters (*muslimin*), which shall establish the new civilization. In view of the bankruptcy of contemporary social philosophies, there is no alternative. As stated at the outset of this book, the whole of humanity today is in an ideological wilderness, with Western civilization lost and bankrupt,¹⁰ and with issues of democracy, socialism, and individual freedom persistently demanding answers. Yet there is no answer except through the cross-fertilization of Western civilization, or to be more precise, Western material progress, with a new spirit, namely, the spirit of Islam. Islam appears to be the only ideology capable of resolving the existing conflict between the individual and the community and between the individual and the universe, as we have already demonstrated.

We should not confuse the name Muslims with the traditional name given to the present nation. We have already stated that the present nation derives its name from the initial Islam. Actually, present Muslim society is the nation of the *mu'minin* [believers]. No nation up to now has deserved the name *muslimin*. Any mention of Islam with respect to previous nations refers merely to initial Islam, except for the pioneers of humanity who achieved ultimate Islam, or rather a degree of the ultimate Islam, as the ultimate Islam can never be exhaustively achieved. Such pioneers are, therefore, the pioneers of the nation of *muslimin* which has not come yet. God says in this connection:

And [remember the time] when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House [praying]: "Our Lord, accept [this] from us for Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. Our Lord, make both of us submissive to Thee and make of our offspring a people submissive to Thee. And show us our ways of worship and turn to us with mercy; for Thou art Oft-Returning [with compassion, and art] Merciful. And, Our Lord, raise up among them

10. [As indicated earlier in his book, the author includes both the Marxist and liberal traditions when he refers to Western civilization.—Translator]

a Messenger from among themselves, who may recite to them Thy Signs and teach them the Book and Wisdom and may purify them; surely, Thou art the Mighty, the Wise." And who will turn away from the religion of Abraham but he who makes a fool of himself. Him did We choose in this world, and in the next he will surely be among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, "Submit," he said, "I [hereby] submit to the Lord of the worlds." The same did Abraham enjoin upon his sons—and Jacob [also—saying,] "O my sons, truly God has chosen this religion for you; so let not death overtake you except when you are in a state of complete submission." Were you present when death came to Jacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They answered, "We will worship thy God, the God of thy fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, the One God; and to Him we submit ourselves." (Sura 2, Verses 127–133)

The phrase "Our Lord, make both of us submissive to Thee" refers to ultimate Islam, and they [Abraham and Ishmael] were in fact *muslimin* [in this sense of ultimate Islam]. But the phrase "and make of our offspring a people submissive to Thee" indicates, in the short run, a Muslim nation in the sense of initial Islam, which shall evolve and develop into the ultimate Islam. Their prayers have been answered. Abraham advised his sons that there is no god except God, and so did Jacob: "O my sons, truly God has chosen this religion for you; so let not death overtake you except when you are in a state of complete submission"—that is to say, remain holding fast to the creed and maintain that "there is no god but God" until your death. Their answer, "we will worship thy God, the God of thy fathers Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, the One God; and to Him we submit ourselves," refers to the initial Islam.

God also said: "As I inspired the disciples [of Jesus] to believe in Me, and in My Messengers, they said: We do believe, and You shall bear witness that we have submitted (*muslimin*)." (Sura 5, Verse 111) Their Islam here is synonymous with *'iman* [faith], as required in the revelation. God in the revelation required them to believe. When they did believe and declared this, they thought that their *'iman* was Islam, so they said: "You shall bear witness that we have submitted (*muslimin*)." A knowledgeable person can hear the Lord replying: "Do not say we have surrendered, but say we believe." They had not surrendered

in the sense of the ultimate Islam. They merely surrendered in the sense of the initial Islam.

The disciples were Muslims in the sense of initial Islam, since even the first stage of ultimate Islam requires moving out of the law for the community as a whole, and entering upon *shari'a fardiya*, the law for the individual. Individuality is achieved only after perfect compliance with the law for the community, until one is able to properly exercise his absolute individual freedom. The ultimate Islam is the level of individualities.

Individuality cannot be achieved by anyone who is divided within himself. When the conscious mind is no longer in conflict with the subconscious, unity of being is attained, and this is characterized by wholesomeness of the heart, clarity of thought, and beauty of body, thereby realizing a full and comprehensive intellectual and emotional life. "The next life is the ultimate life if they only know." (Sura 29, Verse 64) Ultimate life, free from defects, disease, and death, indeed the opposite of death.

To restore unity to one's being is for an individual to think as he wishes, speak what he thinks, and act according to his speech. This is the objective of Islam: "O believers, why do you say what you do not do? It is most hateful to God that you say what you do not do." (Sura 61, Verses 2–3)

The Good Society

This superior state can only be reached through a two-fold method: first, the good society, and secondly, the scientific educational method to be adopted by the individual in order to liberate himself from inherited fear.

The good society is one that is based on three equalities: economic equality, today known as socialism, or the sharing of wealth; political equality or democracy, or sharing in political decisions which affect daily life; and social equality which, to some extent, results from socialism and democracy, and is characterized by a lack of social classes and discrimination based on color, faith, race, or sex. In the good society, people are judged according to their intellectual and moral character, as reflected in their public and private lives and demonstrated in the spirit of public service at all times and through every means. Social equality aims at removing social classes and differences between urban and rural life

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by providing equal opportunities for cultural refinement. The criterion of social equality is that marriage [the most fundamental and intimate relation] is possible between any man and any woman. This is the accurate test of social equality.

A good society also enjoys tolerant public opinion, permitting different life-styles and manners, as long as these are beneficial to society.

Public opinion has its own judgments over and above those of the law and may be more effective than legislation itself in deterring deviants and offenders. Public opinion may, of course, condemn any type of conduct it disapproves, but it must always do so only by nonviolent means, since violence usually results in one of two evil responses: counterviolence or hypocrisy. Sometimes public opinion can be enacted as legislation if this is consistent with the constitution as described above [that is, legislation that reconciles the individual need for absolute individual freedom and society's need for complete social justice]. . . .

Political Equality: Democracy

Again, we will not discuss democracy in detail here, as it will be discussed in our book *Islam Is Democratic and Socialist*. Just as socialism is the product of the struggle between the "haves" and the "have nots" in the material sphere, democracy is the product of the struggle between those same extremes in the political sphere. Its purpose is the sharing of power. Democracy parallels socialism; they are as two wings of society. In the same way that a bird does not fly with one wing, so does society need the two wings of democracy and socialism.

Socialism, which requires greater social awareness, is preceded by democracy which, in the beginning, may be exercised by only a few enlightened individuals. Scientific socialism also needs, as a base, the riches of developed capitalism as well as the advances of modern technology. Primitive, native socialism, however, has its origins in ancient history.

Democracy was born in Athens, the most culturally advanced of the Greek city-states. Each of those cities had its own independent government. As the city-states were small, it was easy for the entire population to participate in government through public assemblies. Greek democracy was, therefore, direct democracy, with no need for an elected house of rep-

resentatives or executives of modern democratic governments. In Greece officials were elected annually, and elections were often conducted by poll. The Athenians believed that participation in public affairs was the right and duty of every citizen. (However, they did not regard women and slaves as citizens). Pericles [circa 495–429 B.C.], their greatest orator, speaking on behalf of Athenian democracy in the funeral oration following the war against Sparta in the year 430 B.C., described Athenian democracy as follows:

[Our government] favors the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we took to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if to social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way; if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbor for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without acknowledged disgrace.

Further, we provide plenty of means for the mind to refresh itself from business. We celebrate games and sacrifices all the year round, and the elegance of our private establishments forms a daily source of pleasure and helps to banish the spleen; while the magnitude of our city draws the produce of the world into our harbor, so that to the Athenian the fruits of other countries are as familiar a luxury as those of his own.

. . . We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy; wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle against it. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters, for, unlike any other nation we regard him who takes no part in these duties not as unam-

bitious but as useless. We Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate, and instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all.¹¹

Athenian democracy, as described by Pericles, continued to grow and develop in various parts of the world after the city's demise. This type of democracy manifested certain principles and a distinctive approach to life—recognizing the dignity of man and attempting to manage human affairs in accordance with justice, truth, and popular acceptance. Modern democracy has established certain principles, the most important of which may be summarized as follows:

1. Recognition of basic equality between all individuals.
2. The value of the individual as above that of the state.
3. Government as the servant of the people.
4. The rule of law.
5. Appeal to reason, experiment, and experience.
6. The rule of the majority, with utmost respect for rights of the minority.
7. Democratic method and procedures used to achieve objectives.

Democratic methods and procedures are not an end in themselves, but rather means to an end that lies behind them. The object of democracy is not simply to establish legislative, executive, and judicial organs, since all these are but means to realize the dignity of man. Democracy is not merely a way of government; it is also a way of life. The individual human being is the end, and everything else is a means to that end. The respect and high regard which people have for the democratic approach to government are due to the fact that it is the best approach to achieving the dignity of the individual.

There remain, however, some inadequacies in the present democratic approach, although these are much less pronounced than the deficiencies of Marxism. We leave its detailed examination for our coming book, *Islam Is Democratic and Socialist*.

The dignity of man is derived from the fact that he is the most capable of all living things in learning

and developing. The value of democracy is that it is the type of government most capable of providing opportunities for man to realize his dignity and honor. In a dictatorship, however, the government denies individuals the right to experiment and assume responsibility, thereby retarding their intellectual, emotional, and moral growth. In contrast to dictatorship, democracy is based on the right to make mistakes. This does not mean that individuals are encouraged to make mistakes for the sake of making mistakes, but rather it is recognition of the fact that freedom requires a choice between various modes of action. Democracy implies learning how to choose, choosing well, and correcting previous mistakes. In fact, all self-discipline and the true exercise of freedom are a series of individual actions in choice and implementation. In other words, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of action all require that one accepts responsibility for mistakes in speech and action in accordance with law that is consistent with the constitution.

Democracy is therefore the right to make mistakes, as we learn from the *hadith* of the Prophet: "If you do not make mistakes, and then ask for forgiveness, God shall replace you by people who make mistakes, ask for forgiveness, and are forgiven."

Human dignity is so dear to God that individual freedom is not subject to any guardianship, not even that of the Prophet, irrespective of his impeccable morality. God says: "Then remind them, as you are only a reminder. You have no dominion over them." (Sura 88, Verses 21–22) Reference here is made to the polytheists who refused to worship God and tended the idols, worshipping them and sacrificing to them. Even the Messenger Muhammad, who was not seeking power for himself and whom God described in the Qur'an: "You are of great moral character" (Sura 68, Verse 4) [was not allowed to have dominion even over such a backward people]. This indicated that no man is perfect enough to be entrusted with the freedom of others, and that the price of freedom is continuous individual vigilance in safeguarding such freedom. In fact, individual freedom is a fundamental right with a corresponding duty, namely, the proper exercise of such freedom.

Since the society of *mu'minin* was incapable of exercising individual freedom in choice and action, the Prophet was appointed as a guardian to prepare them for the responsibility of absolute individual

11. These extracts, corresponding roughly to the part quoted by the author in Arabic, are quoted here as translated by Joseph Gorse, in *The Complete Writings of Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War* (New York: Modern Library, 1934), pp. 104–105.

freedom. While exercising such guardianship, he insisted on giving them the right to make mistakes, whenever possible, without subjecting them to undue hardship or difficulty. In that way he was preparing them for democracy, for which they had to be sufficiently mature and intelligent. Such was the order of God when He said:

And it is by the Great Mercy of God that you are kind towards them, and if you had been rough and hard-hearted, they would surely have dispersed from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult them; and when you are resolved, then put your trust in God. Surely, God loves those who put their trust [in Him]. (Sura 3, Verse 159)

This is the verse of *shura* [consultation], and consultation, whenever mentioned, whether in this verse or in the following verse—"those who answered the call of their Lord, and perform the prayer, and their affairs are [decided] by *shura* [mutual consultation] and pay alms from what We have provided for them" (Sura 42, Verse 38)—does not refer to democracy. *Shura*, however, was a necessary stage in preparation for democracy, in due course.

Shura is not an original Islamic precept, but rather a subsidiary one. It is not democracy, but rather the rule of the mature individual who is preparing the nation to become democratic. The original precept of democracy is based on the verse, "Then remind them, as you are only a reminder.

You have no dominion over them." (Sura 88, Verses 21–22)

By the same token, *zakat* [Islamic taxation] is not a socialist practice; it is rather capitalist and is based on the verse, "Take alms out of their wealth, so that you may cleanse them and purify them thereby. And pray for them; your prayer indeed is [a source of] tranquillity for them. And God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing." (Sura 9, Verse 103) Thus, *zakat* is not an original precept of Islam, but rather a subsidiary one. Its purpose is to prepare people psychologically and materially for socialism in due course. The original precept which the verse of *zakat* abrogated is that which reads, "When they ask you what to give away, say all that you do not need" (Sura 2, Verse 219), as explained above.

The Second Message calls for a return from the subsidiary verses to the original verses, which were temporarily abrogated because of circumstances and material and human limitations. We must now elevate legislation by evolving and basing it on the original Qur'anic verses. In this way we shall welcome the age of socialism and democracy and open the way to absolute individual freedom through worship and humane dealing with other people. This is the *shari'a* law of the nation of the Muslims (*muslimin*) that is yet to come, as the earth is now preparing to receive it. It is the duty of the people of the Qur'an [present-day Muslims] to pave the way for *muslimin*. And that is the purpose of this book. . . .