

Trends in Western Civilization Project, No. 7

WESTERNNESS AND ISLAM

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To the BERGHOF STIFTUNG in Germany

I owe my sincerest thanks for having made this study possible.

HS

PREFACE

This paper is an attempt at four things:

First, an in-depth analysis of a non-European religion, or rather, civilization, digging down beneath the layers of specific dogmas and trying to unearth some core characteristics. Second, a search for the causes of such characteristics, as opposed to those of European civilization and religion. Third, a discussion of whether what Marxists term the ideational superstructure of society is merely an expression of extant economic power relations (a product of material 'productive forces'), or whether ideational elements can have autonomy and causational power of their own. (If so, what kind of ideas, and why?) Fourth, what is the sum of Westernness, ideational or otherwise?

With some satisfaction I note that Marx himself was neither simplistic nor consistent on the subject of the so-called superstructure. Viz. his remark in 'Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie' (1843), where religion is characterized as opium for the people: "The weapon of criticism cannot replace the criticism of the weapons, material power must be strengthened by material power, but theory too becomes material power when it seizes the masses."

That is the point of this paper; it is a truth that applies just as well to Islam as to Marxism. What kind of material power, what system of rule and dominance, if any, is Islam translating into today? That is one question. What, if anything, is common to, say, Islam and Marxism? That is another.

Lastly, due thanks go to the Chair in Conflict and Peace Research. The collegium there could not possibly foresee what answers and conclusions this study would come up with. Nor could I.

1. THE WEST AND ISLAM AS INTELLIGIBLE UNITS

The overall purpose of the 'Trends' Project is to unravel threads of both ideology and practical, historical developments that are uniquely Western. A method that readily suggests itself is to look at Western civilization from the outside, from the vantage point of another (supposedly alien) culture. In asking about the mental and behavioristic frame of mind in the West we might just as well search out a geographical frame. Such a clearcut borderline is difficult to find on going right east - the Soviet Union, perhaps also (cfr. Toynbee among others) the dominant Great Russian people, is part European, part Asiatic.¹⁾ On the other hand, the Americas - or at least the USA and Canada - are unequivocally 'Western'. Only to the south of Europe do we find a sharp cultural and political discontinuity.²⁾

At the time of writing mass media are busy underscoring the Great Confrontation between 'the Western World' and 'the Arabs', a particularly acute showdown between North and South, between industrialized and Third World countries. 'The Arabs' are frequently vilified as a threat to 'the West' - and the rest of the Third World to boot.

It is a commonplace to Westerners that 'Arabs have another mentality'. So they do in many regards. Their cast of mind has often been derided for being unintelligible to us. Take the sense of time - or rather, the way of expressing it: There is no distinction between being and becoming in Arabic - labisa means to dress as well as to be dressed, galasa to sit down as well as to be seated; ³⁾ 'God is splendid' translates literally as 'God splended and greated'. "We have built the High Dam," Egyptians chanted before the first workman was in place. Such lack of realism! US commentators noted. And the US government abruptly withdrew its loan to Aswan, confident that Egypt would submit to US power politics.⁴⁾ Fifteen years later the Dam was there, three quarters financed by Egypt itself. Who was unrealistic? "We are storming the Golan," announced Syria in 1971-72 "Untrue - and impossible too," said Western editors, "that shows their warped mentality." To the Syrians, however, such statements were no lies, they were quite earnest: In 1973, on came the Syrians to the shock of the Western World.

Taking 'the Arabs' as a cultural entity is a bit difficult, though. Lots of things vary from Persia to the Atlantic. Egyptians, Lebanese and Berbers are more or less Arabicized, but should not be called Arabs without qualification.⁴ Moreover, for purposes of comparison with European culture, a codification of dominant norms and attitudes is called for. This codex is present in the shape of Islam, meaning the Quran, the Sayings (hadiths, or proverbs and precepts from Muhammed) and the four recognized religious Law Schools.⁵

Every detail of life, not only of some 100 million Arabic-speaking Muslims, but also of 350 million other adepts in Africa and Asia, is regulated by Islamic tradition. And Islam, having arisen in a patently 'non-Western' setting, a small desert town well outside the pale of Byzantium, should be able to bring out sharply the contrast to European ways.

The feeling of estrangement West-East, or more correctly North-South, is however not quite as mutual as might be believed. True, the Arabic word for Western is gharib, which also means strange, queer, and the common word for a stranger, an alien, is afrangi, meaning Frankish, a left-over from the Crusades.⁶ True, the Arabic ash-Sharq al-Awsat means literally the Middle East - in contrast to the West. Yet there is also a genuine wish to be a partner to, even a part of, the European or Western World: "Egypt is an integral part of Europe," proclaimed the king of Egypt 130 years ago - wistfully.⁷ Western technology is welcomed with a gusto in all Arab lands.

There is a deeper basis for this phenomenon in Islam itself. While European civilization defines itself sharply off from Islamic/Arabic culture, the reverse is not the case - at least not to the same extent. The peoples of the Middle East and other Islamic countries certainly do not see themselves as part of European culture, yet they insist on being part of a common cultural heritage all the same.

Usually European and Western are taken to be synonymous concepts. Yet there is something to be said for extending the Westernness category to take in the Islamic World - in the sense that the European/Christian and the Islamic spheres of culture can be defined as two halves, each in its own right, two hemispheres of a joint mental world - though this has hitherto hardly been discovered by the European half.

2. ASPECTS OF A COMMON CULTURE

Just about all the fundamentals of Islamic dogma are to be refound within the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The Prophet Muhammed was in close contact with both Jews and Christians in his native Hijaz, and early expressed the view that his people needed a Scripture, a Book like the Torah and the New Testament. He and the first Muslims often expressed pride and gratitude that God now had spoken to them as He before had spoken to Jews and Christians. The Quran is full of references to, and comparisons with, the two older religions. And it explicitly states that all three believe in the same God - that they really are the same religion.

Monotheism is vehemently stressed in Islam. Man is individually accountable to the one omnipotent God. Belief in Him, plus good behaviour, gives Salvation, Paradise. The only alternative is Hell. Man has sinned, but God is merciful. Divinely inspired warners, or prophets, speak to mankind about the coming Judgment Day.

Originally the Muslims prayed toward Jerusalem, they were summoned by a wooden gong, like Christians, before the muezzin's cry was instituted - and the minaret, which the muezzin uses, is of Syro-Christian origin. The five 'pillars' of Islam, namely profession of faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage, are clearly modeled on Christian practises. The Koran retells a host of stories from the Old and New Testaments, including apocryphal traditions; some are incorporated in Islam in the form of hadiths, i.e. alleged sayings of Muhammed, outside of the Koran.

Europeans might well say that Islam in its essence is Christianity (or better, Judaism) as translated to an Arabic form. That Islam is what grew of a Mosaic and Christian germ in heathen Arabia.^{g)} We readily take a chronological view of this development, saying that Islam is a historic offshoot of an earlier tradition. Muslims heartily disagree with this - typically 'European Western'-way of putting it, yet stress the oneness of the Judaic-Christian-Islamic revelation phenomenon.

Europeans frequently overlook the Semitic-Hamitic origins of much of European and Western culture. Our religion is one thing (with Akhnaton as a possible influence on the later Mosaic and Christian tradition).⁹⁾ The alphabet is another - Egyptian hieroglyphs as adapted by **Sinai Semites** 1750 BC or earlier.¹⁰⁾ Paper is a third - first in the form of papyri, later, in the Middle Ages, as Arabic cloth paper. The 'Arabic numerals' are a fourth - partly a loan from India. The European Renaissance was inspired by, and to no little extent based on, Arabic and Arabic-transmitted learning. The characteristic campanile of North Italian cities are true copies of the minarets their tradesmen saw across the Mediterranean. Dante's Divina Comedia is a rewriting of Muhammed's miraculous night journey from Jerusalem.¹¹⁾ Cervantes said Don Quixote was inspired by a manuscript from Morocco.¹²⁾ And Columbus would have been an unknown today, had he not got hold of some other manuscripts saying the earth was round - and giving astoundingly precise data on its size!¹³⁾

"Seek ye learning, though be it in China," admonished the Prophet. So the Arabs did. In the sharpest possible contrast to present-day prejudice towards Middle Easterners as slovenly and brutish, all extant evidence gives the picture of a flowering early Middle Ages Middle East, with well irrigated fields and scientific husbandry, with paved, properly lighted roads plus public water and sewage services in the cities while London and Paris were muddy, benighted villages, with public baths and hospitals, including maternity wards, and some **30 academy** schools in Bagdad alone while Charles the Great was incapable of writing his own name.¹⁴⁾

Part of the reason that the strong interrelatedness of the Islamic and European hemispheres of culture is ignored, at least in Europe, is its dyschronic nature: When we had our ups, they had their downs, and vice versa.^{15a)} The once fertile plains of Syria and Iraq had become a desert by the 1750's.^{15b)} Today, when the Euro-American system is experiencing mounting internal problems, the Arab states seem dramatically on the upsurge.¹⁶⁾

This socio-economic seesaw situation should be understood as our being seated, both Christendom and Islam, culturally just as much as economically, on the same Western seesaw. What then is the basic nature of such common Westernism? And what marks the Islamic part off from the Euro-American part?

3. DIFFERENTIATION OF SUB-CULTURES WITHIN WESTERNISM

The most conspicuous cleavage of Westernism certainly is the abovesaid one. Yet neither Christendom or Islam, it should be stressed, are homogeneous entities. Europeans are taught that their culture springs from Palestine (religion), Greece (learning and democracy) and Rome (law). This multipolar origin should in itself point towards heterogeneity.¹⁰⁶⁾ Our most vaunted value, democracy, significantly evolved from a host of minuscule, mutually competitive states - each valley or island asserting its identity.

Perhaps there are other roots to this heterogeneity as well. Arnold Toynbee speaks of a 'Western' (meaning American and West European) civilization, an Orthodox Christian one and an Islamic one, plus 'affiliated' civilizations (such as the Russian, earlier affiliated to Orthodox Christendom, now to 'Western' culture), plus 'abortive civilizations' (such as the Viking Age Scandinavians one and the early Irish one in Europe, the Nestorian, Monophysite and Egyptian ones in the Middle East).¹⁰⁷⁾

I propose to enquire into the realities behind such concepts and classifications by first digging into the nature of Islam, and second by seeing whether the findings can bear some general theory.

One question Toynbee treats lightly indeed is that of the cleavage Europe-America. Is the dominant US culture merely a version of the West European (or British) one? If we classify cultures and subcultures according to dominant values and concepts, then to what extent are they the same? Another, related question is that of so-called abortive civilizations: Did they really die, or are there more or less important vestiges around even now?

Example: The question of the present civil war in Northern Ireland. It is evidently something much more complex and historically deep-rooted than a model Marxian class war between capitalists and industrial proletarians. But precisely what are the depths of this conflict between the Orange and the Green?

Example: In 1972 Norway in a national referendum said no to entry into the European Common Market - though entry was advocated by the government, large parts of the parliamentary opposition and some 90% of the press. Denmark did enter the Common Market, mainly on account of economic ties with Great Britain, but had to contend with powerful opposition, which is still (1975) manifestly alive. In both countries the pro-entry forces hammered on the theme: "Yes to Europe", "Do we wish to leave Europe?" - while the anti-movement was inspired by a measure of awareness that Scandinavia had values of its own which should be consolidated and protected. ¹⁸⁾ To explain the 1972 issue in classic Marxian terms is insufficient.

A long discredited alternative approach to the Marxist-materialist one is that of 'nation-souls' as the motive force of history. Its ultimate perversion this mould of thinking reached in the Nazi doctrine of 'Aryan' and more specifically Germanic superiority. This ethnocentric, 'collective-soul' oriented and largely self-congratulatory mode of history-writing should be rejected as unscientific and as innately dangerous.

The basic question however remains: How are we to relate cultural factors to economic ones? Why, for instance, leaving the field of Westernism, is the Indian religious 'superstructure' so different from the Chinese - when both according to traditional Marxian classification spring from 'feudal' bases which are rather similar?

The very purpose of this enquiry is to sketch out the tentative beginnings of an answer, avoiding both the 'Kraftdeutschtum' and economistic Marxian viewpoints. This is not to say that 'Marx was wrong' - in his fundamental approach, that is, for in not a few applications of his theory he was patently mistaken. It is rather written as a critical supplement: In the same way that 'Western' civilization does not consist of only European culture, as we are used to believe, but should be complemented with an Islamic counterpart, so too the now prevalent European materialist views of history (both Marxist-deterministic and liberal-evolutionist) should perhaps be tempered with some theory that could explore and explain basic nation-to-nation, people-to-people or culture-to-culture differences.

An ideational analysis of Islam just might turn up a clue or two as to how we should a) define Westernism, b) define its possible subcultures.

IDEATIONAL
ANALYSIS :
ISLAM
VERSUS
CHRISTENDOM

Three core concepts of European civilization are refound in Islam:¹⁹⁾

- 1) The Message of Progress, or Linear Time,
- 2) The Missionary Bidding, or Universalist Urge. (**Superstate**)
- 3) Emphasis on the Individual, but via Collectivist Virtues.

The theme of Progress is given as a succession of three major phases: al-Jahiliyya, al-Islam, al-Jinna - meaning Ignorance, Islam, Paradise. Mankind moves in time towards the Day of Judgment, most commonly called 'the last day', i.e. time is a corridor pointing towards a goal. Time (meaning change) stops in the third phase, eternity taking over; confer Marxist views of human 'prehistory' ending with the establishment of Communism. The Islamic phases correspond rather closely to the Christian: Ancient (defined as antediluvian, pre-Abrahamic or pre-Exodus), Old Testament, New Testament or Christian Era, and Civitas Dei. The Marxist view: Archaic, Feudal, Capitalist, Socialist, Communist. And the Liberal European view: Greek-Roman Era, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Modern Times, Future World Order.

The Universalist theme is closely related to this linear conception of history: the phases are not quantum leaps, the Hejira of the Prophet and the rise of Islam in the Hijaz was only one very important point on a long continuum: Gradually God's message permeates all mankind. It is the duty of Muslims to convince and to save fellow humans by making them Muslims too.

"One is a devil, two are devils, but three are a party," Muhammed is reported to have said, i.e. keeping to oneself is dangerous, even immoral. Pilgrims are enjoined to travel in groups, the Friday prayer is collective, and almsgiving and well-doing towards others is a prerequisite for salvation. "Every Muslim is brother to every Muslim." Yet it is the individual who must be converted, be responsible for fulfilling both private and collectivist duties - and be saved, his soul is the autonomous atom of the spiritual universe.

The abovesaid three core views, and other Islamic dogmatic elements too, are not however expressed in a European way. The traditional mode of analysis has been to identify Islam's main dogmas and rituals - and to compare them with Judaic-Christian ones. The more or less preordained, built-in result of such a method has been European dismissal of Islam as unoriginal, a mere plagiary of 'our' religion - badly digested, at that.

This 'dogmatic' approach is not conducive to a proper understanding of the nature of Islam. On the contrary, the method in itself tends to hide its true originality. This originality should not be sought in a series of dogmas conformant or non-conformant with European Christian teachings, but in the way they in Mecca-Medina were moulded into - or onto - an Arabic view of the world.

The concepts of plagiarism and originality are for that matter alien to the Arabic and Islamic mind: Ideas belong to all, good ideas being inspired by God, and a poet even today not only can, but should appropriate ideas from other poets with the purpose of giving them new and better expression.²⁰⁾ There is no chronological ("I was before you!") principle in operation.

It is not that Christian teachings are badly digested - take the Quranic verse that says about Christ: "They did not murder him, and they did not crucify him, but it seemed that way to them." It is simply that this tallies with, and in fact gives proper expression to, the world view of Arabian Hijaz.²¹⁾ This world view shaped the teachings of Islam - and can be deduced, trait by trait, therefrom. The elements of the original Arabian life attitude, as imprinted upon present-day Islam, are much deeper-set and more fundamental than individual dogmas - it is the very soil they struck root in. This explains what the average Christian sees as distortions. But precisely the pattern of these 'distortions' is what interests us.

(Of course Islam views Judaic and Christian differences from Islam as distortions - and offers well-argued explanations as to how they came about.)

4. INCLUSIVENESS VERSUS EXCLUSIVENESS

Hospitality is a prime characteristic of the Arab. Not that Arabs are more congenial and well-disposed than other peoples towards their fellow men; it is simply that hospitality is institutionalized among them. Not only is diāfa, service of guests, highly prized from pre-Islamic times in poetry and prose, but each Bedouin clan and sedentary village population alike keeps a common madāfa, a guesthouse.

A guest is inviolate. Any insult to him is an insult to his hosts. The crucial point is: You define yourself by your behaviour, as guest or alien, as friend or fiend. During the Crusades, any Christian who asked for a glass of water from the tent of a Muslim commander was automatically the commander's guest - and could thus escape status as prisoner-of-war, if circumspect.²²⁾ The Muslim is bound by his rules. So much so that even today impoverished Bedouins avoid trafficked routes in order to avoid having to slaughter camel or sheep or give their last scrap of bread to a stranger: a guest. If the stranger transgresses the rules of hospitality, he will be made to regret it. If not, there is no end of lavishing and friendliness.

This 'inclusiveness' is quite un-European. The dominant theme of European civilization the last couple of hundred years has been the rise of the exclusivist, singularist nation-state, from the French Revolution via the two World Wars (and Nazi doctrine) to the preoccupation of the authorities in the US settler state with 'un-American' activities. Is this exclusivist mentality absent from the Middle East?

The solution to the Middle East problem is simple:
The Israelis must be repatriated to Europe, and
Europe accept Islam. - Muammar Ghaddafi, 1973.

Words singularly suited to bolster European convictions as to Arab and Muslim intolerance. Yet the same voice from the desert also loftily proclaims: "The Jews and Christians are our brothers."²³⁾ This we readily construe as sheer hypocrisy. Which is where we go wrong.

Ghaddafi is a Bedouin. And the difference between Bedouins and settled people is as sharply felt in the Middle East as many a cleavage of nationality in Europe. The Bedouin is a man of simple categories, of simple problems and solutions. To Ghaddafi, the main thing is that European immigrants to Palestine, oblivious of Arabic and Islamic culture, transgressed the rules of hospitality with a vengeance.

"The natives greet us warmly, they take us to be pilgrims and refugees," the newcomers noted around 1880.²⁴⁾ Theodor Herzl, father of modern Israel, registered the 'friendly mien' of the natives²⁵⁾ - and proceeded to propose their expulsion.²⁶⁾ Documentation of some twenty such declarations and proposals,²⁷⁾ culminating in the mass flights of 1948 and 1967, is what every Arab today is made to know of.

Unlike Ghaddafi, however, the mainstream of Arab thought does not propose to reverse this historical tragedy. Excepting the most embittered Palestinians, there are few indeed who call for (or wish for) a new series of just as tragic wars to remove the alien body politic in their midst. All Arabs, though, are adamant that the Palestinian people be accorded its due rights. The strategy to be followed, which is monumentally misunderstood in the European world, is again one of inclusiveness.

This is how the Crusaders came to grief. Not mainly through military means, as one is led to believe by Arab and European schoolbooks alike, but by a gradual and general process of absorption. This too is an age-old Arab way: the institution of 'clients', mawali. A weak tribe may institute a treaty with a stronger one, and as time passes become part of the stronger tribe, as a clan among other clans. The same affiliation process operates individually: Weak persons in need of protection take the name of some person of note and are accepted into his 'family'. Slaves, i.e. prisoners of war, were usually enfranchised by and by and given the status of mawali.²⁸⁾

The first batch of Crusading invaders were described by shocked Muslim scholars as 'animals possessing the virtues of courage and fighting, but nothing else'.²⁹⁾ They came convinced that Muslims were base and vile heathens, worshipping Muhammed as a god. But they were quickly disabused of their European notions. Within decades they began to discard their old food and clothing customs, and came to depend on Muslim servants - and wives! In so many ways they were immersed in

Arabic culture, and came to look down upon the raw manners of Europe. Minstrelsy and chivalry were nurtured in Muslim lands, Arabic erudition and practical science, in medicine and agriculture, chemistry and mathematics, impressed itself on receptive minds.

The Crusaders were a heterogenous lot, and rapidly engaged in internal squabbles and rivalry. Often one party would secure aid from Muslim neighbours and allies. The first local Muslim-Christian treaty came about within ten years of Pope Urban's launching of the First Crusade.²⁹⁾ After a century of intermittent warfare, peace was made in 1192 on the general principle that the European invaders were to keep the littoral of Palestine, while the interior reverted to the Muslims and Jerusalem was made an 'open' town under Muslim rule with free access for Christians.³⁰⁾

Peace was broken in 1217 by a Crusader invasion of Egypt, prompted by economic lusts in the North Italian city states. The ruler of Egypt answered by isolating the Crusader forces, granting them safe passage - and signing commercial treaties with Europe. When the German emperor Fredric II arrived on a crusade, the Egyptian leader concluded peace with him, yielding him Jerusalem on condition that Fredric help him against his fellow-Muslim enemies!

The final dismantling of Latin rule in Palestine was a drawn-out process. When the Latins made common cause with the advancing Mongols (who were partly Christian), the Egyptians finally rose against both. The Crusader strongholds fell almost without resistance, many were simply abandoned. The gist of the matter, lost on so many analysts of later ages, is patently plain: The Crusading Europeans had really fallen apart long before, their missionary aggressiveness, their internal unity and their life-bonds with Europe had all been sapped by contact and peace with the Arabs and their ways.³¹⁾

Historical analogy is ever-present in Arab minds, in much the same way as with the Chinese. Yet there is a deeper basis than mere analogy, a basis in Islam itself which explains not only the actual fate of the Crusaders - and prevalent notions as to the withering-away of the Israeli state - but also the incongruous words of Ghaddāfi: "The Jews and Christians are our brothers."

Christianity is exclusive, in the sense that it excludes, totally and uncompromisingly, all of non-Christian mankind from redemption. Islam is exclusive too, in the sense that it condemns all 'heathens' ('polytheists' is the technical term) to perdition in Hell. Islamic theologians, like Christian ones, run the whole gamut of exegesis, from the most horrid portrayals of suffering in the netherworld to merely pointing out that evildoers are punished. (A few Quranic verses intimate that God may pull lesser sinners out of hell-fire after a due spell of time, cfr. Catholic dogma as to Purgatory.)³²⁾

Yet the dominant trait of Islam is its inclusiveness. Whereas the Christian Bible purports to be the sole word of God, the Quran is simply the last-but-best, so the tradition goes, of 104 books. Of these, 100 have been lost, implying that divine wisdom has had a host of different expressions through time immemorial. The four extant books are 1) the Pentateuch (the five Mosaic books seen as one unit), 2) the David and Solomon scriptures, 3) the New Testament (al-Angil, the Evangelium), 4) the Quran (Recitation).

Islam expressly includes Judaism and Christianity. The Koran mentions and ~~acclaims~~ all the 'prophets' anew: Adam and Nuh (Noa) come first. (Adam is not the first human, but the first to have been consecrated by God as a prophet. "There were 100000 generations of mankind before Adam.")³³⁾ But Ibrahim is certainly the most important: He submitted, aslama - hence Islam, to God when he accepted the divine order to sacrifice his son Ismail (not Isaac, according to the Quran). Thus Ibrahim became the first Muslim. Ismail is also a prophet in Islam, as are Yussuf and Yaqub, Shuaib (Jethro), Harun (Aaron), Musa (Moses, Moshe), Dawud and Sulaiman, Jesaia and Yunis, Ayyub (Job), Elias and Elisa, Zacharia, Yahya (John the Baptist), Isa (Jesus) 'who is son of Miriam' - and finally Muhammad, who is the last of all prophets, their 'seal' in the dual sense of confirmation/approval and termination, saying of himself: "I repeat only what all good men before me have said."

According to ancient Arabian tradition, echoed in the Pentateuch and stressed in the Quran, Ibrahim is the father of the Northern Arabians (but not the Yemenites)³⁴⁾ as well as of the Hebrews. He built the Kaaba (Cube) in Mecca.³⁵⁾ Jerusalem was hallowed

by his supreme sacrifice and is therefore simply called 'the holy' in Arabic. While Hebron, his burial-place, is called 'the Friend', because he was the friend of God himself.³⁶⁾

Interesting also is Shuaib, or Jethro, father-in-law of Moses and high priest of the Midianites. His influence on Moses and Mosaic law is mentioned in the Pentateuch, but stressed in Islam: He, an Arab (or so the view goes), led Moses to God on his tribe's holy mountain, Sinai. Finally, in the Arabic/Islamic interpretation, not only does Solomon's Song of Songs immortalize an Arabian woman³⁷⁾ (the Queen of Sheba being another such), but the two concluding chapters of his Proverbs too stem from Bedouin sages. While 'the children of the East' (Bene Qedem)³⁸⁾, lauded as paragons of wisdom, may have been Arabs of the Syrian desert; more probably, though, Chaldeans, to whose wisdom the Arabs later become heirs. Job, or Ayyub, on the evidence of the Bible, may well have been a chieftain of the Bedouin in the Syrian or North Arabian desert.

All this is important inasmuch as it shows, to Muslim Arabs, at least, the Hebrews to be part of a general Bedouin tradition. Part of, indeed, Islam. (Their having a mobile Ark of the Covenant, for instance, has its parallel in the camel-borne markab or litter of the modern Ruwala Bedouin in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria³⁹⁾ - and in the mahmil litters, likewise camel-borne, which until some decades ago were sent annually during the pilgrimage to Mecca as tokens of allegiance, one each from Iraq, Syria, Egypt and the Yemen.) The Hebrews were chosen as early heralds of truth. Yet they partly failed their task, because the 'Islam' of Abraham was constricted to a tribal religion, it ossified.

The Christians too distorted and compromised vital parts of God's teachings. Therefore the Koran was 'sent down' as a final correction. The Old and New Testaments (Pentateuch, Psalms, the Gospel) are the word of God except where they gainsay the Koran.⁴⁰⁾

"And when God made a compact with those to whom the Book was given, He said: You shall reveal it to all mankind and not conceal it. But they threw it behind their backs and sold it for a paltry price and bad is what they got instead." - Sura (chapter) 3, 188.

Large parts of suras 2-5 polemicize against Jewish and to a lesser extent Christian aberrations, but mainly in a defensive spirit. The Jewish tribes in Medina ridiculed Muhammad for saying he was a

prophet, and Muhammed retorted by underscoring how most Jews time and again had been mistaken, how they had disobeyed God and maltreated, even tried to kill prophets sent them. Yet there is no general condemnation. The Koran is very clear:

"Among the people of the Book are believers, but most of them are makers of strife.. Yet among them are a group who uphold justice. They read God's signs at night and bow down in prayer. They believe in God and the Last Day, they insist on what is right and forbid all wrong and emulate each other in doing good. Such are among the Righteous." - Sura 3, 111-115.

While Jews and Muslims are outside the pale of Christianity, excluded from salvation, Jews and Christians are acknowledged as autonomous religious communities 'inside' Islam: They, and the Sabians/Mandeans, are the Peoples of the Book, and their beliefs, which are primitive forms of Islam, are to be protected as emanations of divine wisdom - even if they sometimes err. The same principle quickly came to be applied to the fire-worshipping Zoroastrians and even to the heathen Berbers, out of sheer expediency. Today the easy spread of Islam in Africa and Indonesia is accounted for to a great extent by its adaptability to native forms and norms.

Though Jews and Christians may be mistaken in many points of theology, the Koran repeats again and again that God, not the Muslims, are to judge them. While 'coge intrare', 'compel them to enter the Church', was the Christian precept in the words of St Augustin. "Those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Sabians and the Christians, if they believe in God and the Last Day and act righteously' (sura 5, 70) - all these are equal before God. The Muslims are not even allowed to judge polytheists, only to turn their backs on them, says sura 6, 107-109: "We have not made ypu their guardian, and you are not responsible for them. And do not speak ill of the idols they worship, instead of God, lest they vilify God.." This however obtained only as long as the polytheists were in power in Arabia, **Later the whole peninsula (as opposed to the rest of the territories conquered by Islam) was Islamicized forcefully.**

Interesting in connection with inclusiveness is the way the Quran rejects the idea of having a monopoly on truth. All sects have some part in divine truth: "Be not of those who split up their religion and become divided into sects, each rejoicing in that which they have." The Quran and Islam simply fit the fragments together in complete and harmonious fashion: "They have cut up the teachings of the Prophets into bits; but they will all return to us."

For every people We appointed rites of sacrifice.. For every people have We appointed ways of worship which they observe, so let them not dispute with you over Islamic ways of worship; and invite them to your Lord, for surely you follow the right guidance. If they contend with you, say to them: God will judge between you and me on the Day of Judgment concerning that which you differ about. - Sura 22, 35 and 68-70.

There are different paths leading to the truth, Islam is simply the straightest and surest.⁴²⁾ Thus, says sura 16, 125: "The penalty for profaning the Sabbath was imposed only on those who had differed about it, and your Lord will surely judge them on the Day of Judgment concerning that wherein they differ." Their opinions are to be respected, and that which is acceptable to Islam encouraged: "Call to the way of God with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and contend with them on the basis of that which is best."

"Surely, We sent down the Torah full of guidance and light," God says in the Quran, adding that the Jews are under obligation to serve God by observing their specifically Jewish law. "We gave Jesus son of Mary the Gospel containing guidance and light; let the people of the Gospel judge according to that which God has revealed therein." Why then are people allowed to differ in this way?⁴³⁾

Now We have revealed to you this book comprising the truth, fulfilling that which was revealed before.. For each of you We have prepared, according to the capacity of each, a path or highway. Had God so willed, He would have made you all one denomination, but He wishes to try you by that which He has given you. Therefore, try to outstrip each other in the pursuit of good. To God shall you all return; then He will enlighten you in respect of all that wherein you differ. - Sura 5, 49.

Islam from the very outset was self-confident enough to proclaim: "There must be no compulsion in religion, for the truth is easily distinguished from falsehood." Respect is one thing though, but friendship with Christians and Jews is discouraged 'lest you become one of them'. What then about Islam's much publicized 'holy war'?⁴⁴⁾

Holy war is a duty incumbent on all Muslims, but not in the way Westerners are wont to see it. One early Muslim sect⁴⁶ elevated it to the status of a sixth 'pillar of Islam'; the Arabs indeed conquered most of the Byzantine empire plus Spain, Sicily and parts of France, and the Ottomans reached Vienna, but not because of any Koranic injunction. Jihad, which simply means 'struggle', is essentially defensive. Thus the Crusaders were certainly met with 'holy war'.⁴⁶

Fight for the sake of God against those that attack you, but be not the ones to attack, for God does not love the attackers. And kill them where you find them, and expel them from the place they expelled you from, for persecution is worse than war. But do not fight them near the Holy Mosque (Kaaba) before they fight you there. But if they fight you, then fight them. But if they desist from war, then God is merciful, forgiving. Fight them until there is no more persecution, and belief in God is free. - Sura 2, 191-194.

Permission to fight is given to those who are made war upon and who suffer injustice, those who have been expelled from their houses by injustice simply because they said: God is our Lord. And if God did not drive some people back by means of others, then surely monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques where God's name is much mentioned, would have been destroyed. - Sura 22, 40-41.

However, sura 9, 29 says: "Fight against those among the People of the Book who do not believe in God and the Last Day ...until they pay tribute and obey." This is contexted with specific malpractices, e.g. with priests and monks lording it over others, and should of course be hedged with the bidding: Be not the ones to attack. The key word jihad is not used here. But in the course of the Arab conquests, it was this verse that became operative: The vanquished were made to pay tribute (poll-tax) - which was less, however, than their taxes before the conquest, and less also than the zakat tax⁴⁷ all Muslims had to pay; moreover monks, women, children, beggars, the sick and the aged were exempt.

European subjugation of the rest of the world might just as well be explained by calling Christ's missionary urge our cry for holy war. There is something to it, if one looks at the way Church teachings have been used to justify conquest, but there is a vital difference from Islam: Christianity has never tolerated other religions (or cultures). Islam has. As Arabs often relate: When the Arabs took Jerusalem in 634, they guaranteed inviolate all property and churches. The Crusaders in 1099 made a point of slaughtering all men, women and children, with Jews a prime target. While Salah ad-din in 1187 re-established the rights of Christians to churches and property and let the defeated Crusaders leave in peace.

A few of the caliphs did introduce discriminatory practises, some of them very humiliating (orders that People of the Book affix images of devils to their houses, wear special clothes, level their graves even with the ground, ride donkeys only), but these were notable exceptions to a generally benign rule. There never were pogroms. And no professions were closed to Christians and Jews, they rose to the highest posts of government, as tutors of the caliphs, as ministers, even Premiers.⁴⁸⁾ When Muslim forces invaded Spain in 711, Europe saw it as 'the devilish work of the Jews'. A mad caliph in Cairo ordered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem demolished, thus sparking off the First Crusade; it is generally forgotten that the Prime Minister who signed and executed the order was Christian.

Autonomy was accorded in two ways: The various Christian and Jewish sects had their own jurisprudence and courts of law; and they were organized under and protected by their own Patriarchs. (In principle, though, if not always in practise, the word of a Muslim was worth more than that of a 'protected' person, the trustworthiness of the People of the Book having been compromised by their falsifying parts of the scriptures.⁴⁹⁾) It is a measure of this autonomy that the Jacobite Nestorian Church under the Abbasid caliphate 750-1258 sent missionaries abroad from its training college in the capital, Bagdad.⁵⁰⁾ Under Ottoman rule internal self-government for the People of the Book (along some ten sectarian lines) was elaborated in the milla system.

Though tolerant towards the People of the Book, Islam always stressed that it was superior. Precisely because it was so sure of its own superiority (as, we might say, the synthesis of a Jewish thesis and a Christian antithesis), it could afford to be tolerant.⁵¹⁾ The polltax, in itself light but often felt to be humiliating, of course contributed its quota of converts, but probably more decisive in bringing about a flood of newcomers from the two older monotheistic religions to Islam was the image it projected of really being superior.⁵²⁾ This in turn was, to my mind, a function of its simplicity.

5. SIMPLICITY VERSUS NERVOUSNESS

Islam criticizes Christianity for having compromised God's oneness. Our deification of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and of the Virgin in Catholicism to boot, is seen as the victory of Greek-Roman polytheism over Christ's original message. Muslims point out that close reading of al-Angil (New Testament) shows that Christ saw himself as a messenger of God, not as God himself. If he was 'son' of God (a most un-Semitic notion), it was in the sense that all humans are God's children.

Christ performed miracles (like speaking in the cradle and making birds out of clay in infancy), but this was in his capacity as prophet, preordained by God from birth, he was and is Messiah (Massih in Arabic and Hebrew meaning anointed) and will reappear⁵³⁾ on earth near the end of time together with Muhammed - in Jerusalem. And he shall rule for a brief, happy spell before Doomsday. But in principle he is no more than Muhammed, who always took pains to stress his role as a mortal human like all other humans.

Thus Islam purports to reinstate the real content of Judaism and Christianity alike. It is closest to Judaism, most evident in its stern, lofty monotheism. But though there is a host of injunctions (to wash before prayer, to refrain from eating pork and self-dead animals, for instance)⁵⁴⁾, the fundamentals are simple enough:

- 1) Profession of faith ("There is no god but God and Muhammed is his messenger"), which, once uttered, makes one a Muslim,
- 2) prayer five times daily, 3) almsgiving, 4) fasting, 5) pilgrimage.

Simplicity implies lack of serious internal contradictions. The conflict of church and state is peculiar to European history, seemingly lacking in all other societies, including Muslim ones. Dualism was elaborated in the writings and writs of the early Church fathers on the basis of Biblical verse: "Lord, here are two swords" (Luke 22, 38) was fundamental to medieval Christianity, as were Christ's words: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's due, render unto God what belongs to God."

Bishop Ambrose of Milan ca 400, the first to excommunicate an Emperor, juxtaposed Church and State. His pupil Augustin carried the argument further, and pope Gelasius clinched it before 500: "Two powers rule this world, priesthood and kingship." Cardinal Humbertus, who was to no mean extent responsible for the Great Schizma between Latin and Greek Orthodoxy and the upswing of conflict between Pope and Emperor (Gregory VII - Henry IV), was succinct (1058): "The priesthood should rule over kingship as soul rules the body."

Such thought, and the very dichotomy soul-body, is foreign to Islam. When man dies, his spirit dies. When man is resurrected, his body is too. Thus, according to Islamic theologians, Resurrection will seem to follow immediately upon death to every individual, there is no subjective space in-between.⁵³⁾

'Priesthood' never challenged kingship (the caliphate) in Islam, the caliph was both a religious and secular ruler, both an imam (leader of prayer) and an amir (prince). For that matter there never has been a monolithic and hierarchic 'priesthood' in Islam. (Such an organizational model would in itself seem to produce some measure of European-type dualism.) A mosque has no clerics in our sense of the word. There are no monasteries, no priestly orders. (The Sufi, that is ascetic, fraternities is the closest thing.)⁵⁴⁾ The Islamic ecclesiastical system is much more decentra-
lized, lighter manned and better integrated into both everyday life and the power structure of society (especially at a local level). Celibacy, for instance, would be regarded as queer, somewhat pitiable and a bit perverse. Generally speaking: While Christianity had two swords, Islam had one.

The basis for this difference should be clear: Islam grew up in a limited, homogeneous setting (Mecca-Medina), as a clear-cut monotheism of purely Arabic expression - whereupon it conquered and created an empire. Christianity on the other hand grew up in the womb of an already existing pagan Roman empire, gradually, through hundreds of years, feeding upon and absorbing Greek and Roman elements in addition to its Jewish nucleus. This had as its major consequence a drawn-out ideological and institutional fermentation.

The institutional side of this unrest or even schizophrenia inherent in European culture is witnessed in the conflicting claims of papal and royal power. Both initially claim supremacy. In the upshot both have to recognize the autonomy of the other. The idea of power being limited, shared, constitutional, was accentuated through feudal ties of dependence in Europe: both seigneur and vassal had claims on each other.⁵⁷⁾ England's Magna Charta and the scandinavian håndfestninger are such expressions of constitutional monarchy - unheard of outside Europe (with the notable exception of Japan, though here a written formalization was lacking). The fact that sovereigns in the 'Age of Absolutism' annulled the autonomy of aristocracy and priesthood does not vitiate the argument, as 'absolutism' is linked with the rise of the modern bourgeoisie - and the 'autonomy' of merchant and market economy, of capital as a prime mover.

While modern Euro-American democracy seems to have developed out of the seething contradictions of early Christendom, so does our Euro-American nervousness, which is both creative and destructive visavis nature and human life. Two poignant indicators of this nervousness, the rate of suicide and the rate of crimes of violence (i.e. theft excluded), are bafflingly low in Arab and Muslim lands.⁵⁸⁾

Instead of Euro-American democracy, which extols the right and even the duty of any and all individuals to 'lobby and petition', Arabs and Muslims have other traditions. It is no exaggeration to say that traditional Arabian (i.e. desert and Bedouin) society was and is extremely 'democratic': The tribal sheikh, a word meaning simply old man or senior (and senator in modern parliaments), is elected and acclaimed by all adult males. All decisions afterwards also require consensus. Every man is every other man's equal. The king of Saudiarabia dresses as humbly as his subjects, hears them out whenever they wish, in the way of any tribal sheikh, and is greeted with a simple "Ya Faisal", meaning "hallo, Faisal".

This society is extremely resistant to change. Europeans would think it authoritarian, which it in one sense certainly is, but in another certainly is not. Rules for behaviour are crystal-

clear. A nephew for instance has first right to a nubile girl, he can seize her and carry her away and there is no punishment whatsoever. On the other hand, Bedouin girls can say no to any suitor, even a nephew (!), and must then be returned untouched. A girl can traditionally both choose a husband and leave him. And Bedouin women do not wear the veil - except in cities.

Among the sedentary people of the Middle East other traditions are in force, both as to women and as to democracy. Women retain their maiden name and personal fortune, including dowry, all their life, they can freely engage in trade, and they are entitled to at least a year's sustenance and to keep minor-age children at divorce - but women are clearly relegated to a non-public, inferior role in general. The 'authoritarian hyper-democracy' of the tribal system is absent too.

When the ancient Arabians of Muhammed's moulding burst upon the Middle East, North Africa and India, it was mainly as a strong new flavour, but only a flavour, in a sea of peoples. The Abbasid empire was not Arabian. It was dominated by the elites of the vanquished peoples, intermarrying with the Arabians, both becoming thus increasingly Arab, or more precisely Syro-Arab, Egyptian Arab and so forth. This Arab (meaning Arabic-speaking) empire took up the tradition that is fittingly called Oriental despotism. Its self-legitimization was exceedingly simple - and 'Islamic': The House of Abbas, descended from Muhammed's own clan in Mecca, was to hold power until the second coming of Christ, so as to deliver it directly into his hands.⁵⁴⁾ It passed into other hands instead, ever farther away, first in Constantinople, then in London/Paris..

The tradition of rule outside Arabia proper, as codified in Islamic usage, is simple: Power is always representative of the people, in a good sense or bad. If rulers really degenerate into crime and cruelty, they will fall 'by the will of God', through mishap or mishealth, by revolution or by the hand of a solitary murderer. And whatever else happens, every century or so God sends an upright person (maba'uth, meaning simply 'sent') to rectify things according to time and occasion. Millions of people have been convinced that Nasser was the maba'uth of our age.

One does not need to be, or claim to be, a 'sent' one so as to achieve power. Anyone with charisma can rise to the top, much quicker and more dramatically than in Euro-American politics. **It is worthy of note that Qaddafi** characterizes the modern Arab political scene as 'hyper-democratic' on this special **basis** (which is quite another one than that of Arabian tribal tradition). The 'people' does rule: When the populace takes to the streets, that is the usual catalyst for a change of power.

Parliamentary democracy is generally discredited, having been institutionalized by the British and French with *divida-et-impera* designs and having served to entrench their local allies, a class of big landowners (effendis) as corrupted as it was moneyed. In any case it is as clear that a host of bickering, constantly changing parliamentarians cannot goad an underdeveloped region forward as it is clear that such European-style democracy is without historical roots in Arab and Islamic civilization. A rather loose, inclusive one-party system is in much better keeping with tradition. A monolithic power structure has always obtained in the Muslim world, in contrast to European dualism and constitutionalism.⁵⁷⁾

Islam lacks our juxtaposition of Church and State, of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, of Heaven and Earth (God is not 'in heaven'), even of God and human Sin, as will be shown. Islam caters to man's need for a simple, all-embracing, totally comprehensible truth in the chaos of life (cfr. Mao Tsetung's thoughts in modern China) which can explain all intricacies and ease all problems, scientific or moral.⁵⁸⁾ It would be strange if there were no connection between Euro-American democracy and creative-destructive 'Geschäftigkeit' on the one hand and the ideological and institutional tensions in Christendom on the other. This of course bears on the old problem (Mann-Weber) over what came first, the egg or the hen.

6. HARMONY VERSUS GROWTH

Islam literally means submission - to God, i.e. to cosmic harmony. The word itself derives from salam, peace, harmony. The Quran stresses Nature's submission to God as evidence that Man must submit likewise. The miracles of Nature, especially that of rain-fall, are constantly evoked: Clouds gather and water falls according to God's will, thus he makes the dead earth come alive (this is literal, not a metaphor). "He who makes life spring from dead matter, should this be too hard for Him?" asks the Quran time and again, referring to Resurrection. Cosmos is alive and full of divine power, the heavens are full of angels, the earth is full of spirits (jinn, hence majnun = mad, possessed by a spirit).

Angels mounted on kneighing, charging warsteeds helped the Muslims in the decisive desert battle to overcome the five-fold superior Meccan forces; an eyewitness report has come down to us of one 'in a turban of green' goading his horse "onward, Atlal!" - 'then I understood', says the eyewitness, 'that it was Gibril'.⁽²⁾ God's blessing is traditionally expressed as His sending a (usually large) number of angels to 'follow' a person. Large parts of the Quran expressly address 'both jinn and men'. Many a time, alone in the desert, Muhammad was helped or greeted or commiserated with by friendly spirits. And in his biographies (sira), the very stones and trees cry out, hailing the Prophet, "salam alaikum, you messenger of God."⁽²⁾ This animism goes to some interesting extremes:⁽³⁾

On that day their tongues and hands and feet will bear witness against them.. On the day when the enemies of God are gathered together and driven to the Fire, they will be sorted out, till when they approach it, their ears and their eyes and their skins will bear witness against them as to that which they used to do. They will inquire from their skins: Why bear ye witness against us? These will answer: God, who has made everything else to speak, has made us speak too. He it is who created you the first time, and to Him have you been brought back. You did not apprehend that your ears and eyes and skins would witness against you..
- Suras 24, 25 and 41, 20-25.

When Hellfire sees people, it will rage and roar, says the Quran.⁶⁴⁾ On Doomsday the earth itself will give its account. In a lighter vein, "whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth glorifies God". The breezes and winds are heralds of His mercy, the birds celebrate His majesty in song, the lightning is made to inspire fear and awe, and the thunder proclaims His praise. At the uttering of a monstrous lie, such as ascribing a son to God, the heavens are prone to burst, the earth cleave asunder and the mountains fall. Abraham commands fire to subside, David has the birds obey him, Solomo is followed by 'hosts of men and jinn and birds'⁶⁵⁾ in battle, he learns the speech of birds (we have a long conversation with his chief bird in the Quran), and the winds do his bidding. Disbelievers are told that 'the seven heavens and the earth and those that are therein celebrate His praise, and there is not a thing but glorifies Him with praise, but you do not comprehend their glorification'.

Then He turned to the heaven, which was all mist, and said to it and to the earth: Submit ye to my command, willingly or unwillingly. They said: We have submitted willingly. - Sura 41, 12.

We offered a compact to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined this responsibility and were afraid of it. But man took it up. For he is extremely benighted and ignorant. - Sura 33, 73.

These Quranic verses are peculiarly 'un-Western', patently contrary to Mosaic and Christian teachings; and typically Islamic. The implication is that Nature, animated and conscious, was wise (or reverent and awestruck enough towards its Creator) to choose to obey God's will and submit at once and unconditionally. While man was foolhardy and conceited enough to accept God's challenge that he do God's will of his own free will.

The animist streak is a logical extension of harmony between the Creator and the created (though it is pre-Islamic in origin). The theme of harmonious submission is all-pervading. "Have the disbelievers, despite their constant humiliation, never been impelled to observe that the shadows of everything God has created move from right and from left in submission to God?" asks sura 16, 49: "Whatever is in the heavens and whatever creature is in the earth, and the angels also, all submit humbly to God, and they behave not proudly."

"I love all good things," Solomo says in the Quran, stroking the legs of lovely horses, "because they are reminders of my Lord." The view of St. Augustine in Civitas Dei, that Nature is fallen and sinful, is utterly alien to Islam. While Europe has preached the selective character of salvation, where Nature is defined as the 'wilderness', as a domain for warfare and conquest, and even termed the 'massa perditionis' by several medieval theologians, Islam has clung to and continued the ancient doctrine (apokatastasis panton), espoused by the Eastern church, that all Nature shares in salvation.

A laws-of-nature conception is spelt out.⁶⁶⁾ "God has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with an eternal law, so that everyone may be requited for his doings."⁶⁷⁾ Everything is regulated: "No female conceives, nor does she give birth, nor is anyone's life prolonged or cut short, but it is in keeping with a law laid down." The fundamentals of Nature operate in harmonious majesty: "God is He who sends the winds, so that they raise the vapours in the form of clouds, which He spreads in the sky as He pleases, layer upon layer, and you see the rain issuing forth from their midst.." As for the heavens: "The sun moves towards an appointed goal. That is the decree of the Almighty and All-Knowing. We have appointed stages for the moon.. It is not permissible for the sun to approach the moon, nor may the night outstrip the day. All glide along in an orbit." And not only is there complete harmony in the cosmos, between the cosmos and its Creator, but also between the cosmos and man; "all things have an enduring purpose":

He has constrained to your service the night and the day, the sun and the moon, and the stars too.. In the earth He has created for you diverse types of articles.. He has constrained the sea to your service that you may eat fresh sea-food therefrom and take out things from it to wear as ornaments.. He has set in the earth firm mountains lest it roll beneath you, and made rivers and tracks that you may find your way.. - Sura 16, 13-17.

This human purpose and benefit orientation also goes to extremes: The planets and sun and moon, for instance, are placed in their orbits and stations so as to teach man calculation and time, facilitate his merchant travels and give him proper light for working. The whole universe is subjected to man (the angels and the jinn prostrate themselves before Adam at God's order) - but with the proviso that he be subject to God and respect Nature and its laws. This relationship is an established and thus harmonious fact; there is no actionist imperative.

Whereas Islam stresses God's domination (that is, animation) of Nature, Judaism and Christianity stress domination of Nature by Man: He is commanded to subject it and exploit it to his own human needs. Nature is, in this context, passive and inert, 'dead matter'. Being dead, it is resistant to Man's toil to wrest a better life from it, it might even be described as his adversary - yet Man shall prevail.⁷⁰⁾ Enshrined in Genesis, this view might be said to reflect the protracted struggle of the Hebrews for mastery of inhospitable enemy lands, it is a battle-cry for conquest.

Islam, however, arose in a static and tradition-bound, largely conflict-free society, a little merchant town surrounded by the desert and ever mindful of its dependence on a) the forces of Nature, b) far-off sources of wealth: "I wish to enter Paradise but once," Muhammed said in explanation of his refusal to enter the dazzling city of Damascus. To a desert Arabian such a place was Paradise on earth. Conquest of foreign lands came after the system in its entirety had been hammered out, conquest did not itself create and shape the system of thought.

I believe this is vital. It explains not only reverence for divine workings in Nature and the theme of submission, but also a different concept of the after-life. Early Judaism had no notions whatsoever of life after death, and what by and by developed was hazy - a murky, shadowy abode seems to have been the most that was envisaged. (Very close to pre-Islamic Bedouin ideas, by the way.)⁷¹⁾ In the face of national calamities, the Jews evolved the theme of a coming Redeemer, a Messiah; yet Paradise was never elaborated upon.

The Christian Paradise is equally anemic and sterile (as is the world itself), with some sectarian exceptions. It may be said with some justice that there is little to look forward to besides the wearing of dazzlingly white, look-alike gowns and participation in eternal choir practices. The apocalyptic Revelation of St. John and embellishments by later Syrian Church fathers are vivid enough,⁷²⁾ but beside descriptions of the majesty of the Lamb and the brilliance of the New Jerusalem, St. John has exceedingly little to say about life after Doomsday.

Paradise in Islam is called the Garden (al-Jinnah, whence somehow jinn, spirit), the Lush and Verdant (al-Khudairah) and the likes. It is vividly described, 'like the gardens of the Jordan'. On Doomsday all mankind is revived, just like Nature is revived by rainfall. There are the most terrifyingly vivid and concrete descriptions of Doomsday and Hell (more so than in our Christian Apocalypse) - it is now generally conceded that Dante's Inferno is a transcription of imagery in the Koran and Islamic tradition (with the ajoinder that Muhammed is to be found in one of the pits and circles of Hell!). But the Koran also abounds in portrayals of bliss in the Garden.

Reclining on couches and lovely carpets the very texture of which is described, the righteous shall drink wine 'which does not dull the senses or beget foolish speech', eat the most exquisite dates (the branches themselves bow down to offer their fruit, cfr. what has been noted of Nature as being a live force), and listen to the music of waterdrops in tranquil, limpid pools. Shadow and sunshine. Cooling breezes wafted through halls of repose. And should an ugly word fall from someone's lips (this possibility is not overlooked), the answer from the other shall be nought but: "Peace, peace." Conversation is dignified; giving joy by its enlightening contents. Fighting is inconceivable: The Garden is as far apart from the Nordic Valhalla as possible, though just as materialistically depicted.

Women are just as entitled to enter Paradise as men, being reborn chaste virgins. Sex in the after-life is not much discussed, promiscuous frolicking however is clearly not envisaged. Men and women shall enjoy eachother's company, but not as ~~mere sex objects~~, they meet on equal terms as human beings. The human body is as vividly present in the Garden as anything else.

Animals are not excluded. On the Day of Judgment they all appear before their Creator, resurrected. They are not judged in the sense that humans are, only entered in the registers of after-life, so to speak. But animals without horns, claws or sharp teeth, i.e. those who have largely been victimized by others, without means of defence, are given special solace and comfort upon entering the Garden. ²¹⁾

Is Paradise preordained? No, not according to the Quran, though early opportunists proclaimed that it did not matter how one behaved because God had decided on who was to be saved and who not long beforehand anyway. A strong fatalism by and by set in, both in the popular mind and in Islamic theology, a determinism with roots in pre-Islamic times. There were plenty of 'props' for such viewpoints in the Quran itself:

Truly, this is a reminder; so whoever wishes may take to the way that leads to his Lord. But you can wish only if God pleases. He admits to His mercy whom He pleases.. - Sura 76, 31-32.

God adjudges astray whom He will, and guides whom He will.. The blind and the seeing are not alike, nor the darkness and light, nor the shade and sun, nor the living and dead; God causes to hear whomsoever He wills.. - Sura 35, 8 and 20.

We have put round their necks chains of habit and custom, which reach up to their chins, thus forcing up their heads. We have set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, and have covered them up so they cannot see. - Sura 36, 8.

The Quranic view definitely is that man has free will and responsibility for his conduct. "If your Lord had enforced His will, all on earth without exception would have believed. But will you force people to become believers?" The crucial argument is that: "You have been made vicereagents in the earth; so he who disbelieves will bear the burden of his disbelief" - or the rewards of free belief. But within Islamic orthodoxy determinism came close to a full triumph. This development we could well describe as the victory of the overall conception of divine harmony over man as well as over the rest of Nature, a logical submission to the will of God the wise and omnipotent. 'B-ian Allah', 'in sha Allah', 'if God wills it', such expressions permeate Muslim conversation.

As with Nature, all human life has its rules. All details of life in a traditional Middle East village or town are regulated in the hadiths or sayings (supposedly of the Prophet) and in Islamic law, with four great law schools deriving from the Quran and hadiths. Here again, Islam is inclusive: Inasmuch as every action of man is subsumed under some explicit, casuistic rule, every eventuality is somehow provided for within the system. Use of toothpicks, for instance, is commendable because Muhammad cleaned his teeth

with one before death. There exists a prescribed way of cutting a water-melon, and even a Prophetic hadith as to which flowers are the most beautiful.⁷⁴⁾ All human actions are rubricized under one of five moral categories - obligatory, meritorious, permissible, reprehensible or forbidden, calling for various degrees of reward or punishment in both this life and at resurrection.

Though the message of Islam is exceedingly simple, the forms of this message are varied so as to appeal to all psychological types. Islam plays upon the most breathtaking poetry there is in Arabic (the Quran being simply called 'the miracle'), upon love of life and the wonders of nature, but also upon the basest fear of pain in Hell. It stresses compassion (for orphans, the poor, the sick and strangers, all who are lonely), but can also content itself with ritual observances (the five pillars of faith, only one, almsgiving, having to do with human commiseration). It stresses humility and denounces mindless hoarding of wealth, yet lauds the upright merchant who in serving man serves God - and adds that profit should be amassed in Paradise through good deeds here on earth.

Somewhat unfairly, Islam has been called the faith of the moral minimum. There is no talk in general terms of forsaking this life to win the next, no ideal (cfr. both Catholic monasticism in certain variants and the so-called Protestant ethos) of self-sacrificing asceticism.⁷⁵⁾ Self-sacrifice in jihad is too special a case to merit consideration in this connection; and the Sufi fraternities, which engaged in mysticism and had ascetic ideals inspired by the Christianity of the vanquished peoples within the caliphate, never became more than a fringe phenomenon outside of orthodoxy.

The overshadowing ethical ideal, in keeping with the theme of harmony, is that of moderation.⁷⁶⁾ "Do not speak too loudly, and do not speak too low," is a typical exhortation.⁷⁷⁾ People are to spend of their belongings for charity, but not too much 'so that you become an object of charity yourself'.⁷⁸⁾ Squandering is just as bad as being niggardly, says the Quran; and self-imposed suffering, used in the Christian church for chastisement of soul and body, is discouraged and frowned upon, even treated with some overbearing mirth. If you chance upon something indecent or disagreeable, or if you are insulted then 'walk on with dignity'. Do not be hasty, and do not be slow,

"and walk at a moderate pace". In verse upon verse, man is enjoined to 'restraint and moderation', and to follow The straight Path, 'for God loves not the immoderate'. The weighing scales are often used as a simile, and the ideal person according to scripture is one who in all things 'is neither extravagant nor niggardly, but keeps a balance between the two'.

Like the overriding ideal of harmony in Islam, this ethical emphasis mirrors what must have been the flavour of life in merchant Mecca: The township was woven into a pattern of well-established commercial treks between South Arabia and Syria, and all had its ordered pace.

It is often said that Islam developed a shell of scolasticism. Science progressed mightily - up to a point, then stopped: Greek and other elements of learning had been 'harmonized' with Quranic teachings. According to the Quran, God taught man agriculture and metalworking, navigation and commerce - and literature. Urbanization and trade reached sizeable proportions in Muslim lands of the Middle Ages, but capitalism and industrialization never came about.

Christianity too developed a scholastic shell, culminating in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Research shows that Thomas (and later Pascal) were influenced by al-Ghazzali (Algazel) and other Muslim scholasticists. Yet Christendom broke through its shell, partly inspired by other pieces of Muslim thought - the Renaissance thrived on Arab and Arab-transmitted science (Aristotle, Galen, Averroes). Why Christendom, why not the Muslim Middle East itself?

Christianity never had an all-embracing and harmonious set of divine, impugnable laws for man and cosmos alike (though Judaism comes close) despite authoritarian church dogma the system was much more pronouncedly open-ended.⁷⁸⁾ And in Judaism and Christianity human rebelliousness disrupts harmony. A tug-of-war between God and Man through the ages, with Man defying God's will and being chastized time and again, does not in Islam point toward a theme of human development and growth: God does not mellow with the ages. He does not change from a desert Yahwe without pity into a post-exilic figure of compassion - who even, in Christianity, sends himself to die a horrible death in order to save mankind. And there is no corresponding human progression by way of trial and error, or more exactly, sin and punishment, i.e. education of a strong-willed and hence 'difficult', recalcitrant child.

WEAKNESS VERSUS SINFULNESS

Man sins. Because of sinfulness, says Christianity. Because of weakness, foolishness, says in effect Islam. While Europe is taught that sin is man's nature, inherent and inherited, bred into the very flesh and bones of each newborn child, the Middle East is not: Man was 'made from a clot of clay', like Nature in general, yet he has freedom (or foolishness) to stray from the paths of God. Sinning is most commonly described as simply straying, going amiss and losing one's way in a wilderness - as not being guided (like the rest of Nature). Islam is guidance.

"In the conception of the nature of depravity (Verderbung) importance of grace there was a decisive difference between East and West. The ancient Eastern Church fathers looked upon sin as something of a worldly power, that as such would be annihilated at the time of Resurrection and the reestablishing of all things, and they talked more about cleansing of dirt from sin than of sin being forgiven. They usually described sin as the preponderance of sensuousness and the flesh, as wrongsightedness (Verblindung) or dullness, and many of them were of the opinion that some people had lived free of sin.. On the whole they saw human corruptedness more as frailty than as sin, and the concept of original sin was alien to them.. None of the Eastern Church fathers has developed a clear doctrine of original sin.

And just as these Oriental theologians lacked proper depth in their understanding of sin, their view of grace too was full of shortcomings. Sometimes they strongly stressed man's craving for grace.. but grace they understood as a form of enlightenment, a divulging of truth.. They asserted that all good is an emanation from God, and that man has all his springs in God.

In the West, though, already Tertullian had spoken of an inborn sinfulness, and this thought was further developed by succeeding Church fathers.."We have all sinned in Adam." 79

The 'Islamic' view of human nature as being frail and needing enlightened guidance is evidently older than Muhammed's revelations. So is the view of freedom as being devoid of any positive, absolute worth or meaning in itself: Freedom is absence - of God, from God.

The difference between Islam and Christianity is striking in the description of Adam - and Jesus Christ. Whereas Adam to us epitomizes sin, the fall from grace, in Islam he is a revered

prophet. He did sin, being lured by Satan, who was an angel who refused God's order that all angels serve Adam, saying: "I am better than he, you created me from fire, but him from clay." Adam and his wife tasted fruit from a forbidden tree (which is not said), and 'saw their own shame'. Thus Satan 'brought them out of the Garden'. They asked forgiveness of God, who naturally forgave them, giving them 'clothing to cover their shame and be a sumptuous garment', saying: "On earth you shall have a livelihood and lodging for some time, there you shall live, there you shall die, thence you shall be resurrected." ⁸⁰⁾

Man is weak (in contrast to Satan), having been made of clay. The Koran shows how God took the consequence: "God pulled the offspring of Adam's children from out of their loins and let them testify against each other, and He said: Am I not your Lord? They answered: Yes, this we testify. And this He did so that they on the Day of Resurrection cannot say: We were ignorant of this." ⁸¹⁾ Then He put them all back in again. Yet the problem remains: Man is ignorant, with weak sight and weak memory.

Whereas Jesus to us washes away our sins once and for all by dying a horrible death, such thought is sacrilege and blasphemy to Islam: A prophet, let alone God's purported son, is not done to death like the lowliest murderer or thief. And the idea that our wrongdoings can be righted by committing a new, extra outrage (murder), is too horrendous to be comprehensible. It is an unmitigated barbarism in Muslim eyes. Thus the prophet 'Isa was not crucified, but died a natural death. ⁸²⁾

Because man is weak and foolish, God is merciful, lenient, not vengeful and exacting. All sins except shirk (polytheism, the renunciation of the one, omnipotent God) are forgivable. ⁸³⁾ And it is completely feasible to lead a good and proper life, to be 'among the righteous' and sinfree, given God's guidance.

"But those who believe and act righteously - We burden no soul beyond its capacity - shall be the inhabitants of the Garden, in it they shall dwell.. Under them rivers shall run, and they shall say: Praised be God, who led us to this, we would not have been rightly guided had not God guided us.. To them it shall be said: This is the Garden, given you as an inheritance in reward for your deeds." - Sura 7, 43-44.

There is no original sin. "Nobody who carries a burden shall carry another's burden," says sura 6, 165. And there is no talk of man being hopelessly sinful and debased - until a 'deus ex machina' by way of a miraculous divine sacrifice pulls him up, quite undeservedly. In Islam God sets a lower, attainable level of acceptability for human performance: "No soul shall be burdened beyond its capacity" is a fundamental precept of the Koran and Islamic law. A father is to sustain a minor child belonging to his divorced wife, for instance, 'but the father shall not be burdened beyond his capacity, nor shall the mother be burdened beyond her capacity'. The same is the case in relation to God:

"God does not burden any soul beyond its means. It gets what it deserves. O God, punish us not if we forget or falter. O God, lay not a responsibility upon us like the one you laid on people before us. O God, lay not a burden upon us which we are not strong enough to bear. And cleanse us, forgive us, be merciful towards us."
- Sura 2, 287.

"Hell shall be their refuge, and a nasty destination is Hell. Except the weak among men, women and children, those who could not procure the means nor find the way. These God may forgive..
- Sura 4, 100.

When Muhammed was in heaven on his miraculous flight by night, God instructed him that the Muslims were to pray fifty times daily. On his way down he met Moses, and told about God's bidding. Moses was shocked; relating his own bad experience with the Jews in regard of prayer, he made Muhammed return and ask for something more realistic. In his best, most tactful merchant manner Muhammed manages to lower the number, step by step. Five is the final bargain.

These five prayers are prescribed (one each Friday as public). Extra, personal prayers of course are welcomed by God, but excessive performances, especially drawn-out vigils, are discouraged. The Koran says, mischievously: "God knows that the Prophet and his comrades wake and pray less than one third of the night!"

Human frailty is certainly taken into consideration:⁸⁴⁾ Coitus during fasting, says the Koran, ought to have been forbidden, but man's nature being what it is, God has relented.⁸⁵⁾ Fasting is to be dispensed from by the sick also, health should not be endangered. Pilgrimage is incumbent only on those who can afford it - and are well. If you

cannot perform the hajj, then shave your head (part of the hajj ceremony) 'except if you have some ailment in the head', 'make an offering which is easy according to your means', do some fasting or give out alms, and pray that you can make it some other year.

The Islamic categorization of both sins and virtues seems modelled on the assumption that man indeed is weak and ignorant and needs few, simple and explicit do's and don't's. According to sura 4, 29-32: "God wishes to lighten your burden, since man is created weak.. If you shy away from the biggest things that have been forbidden for you, then We shall relieve you of the other evils and lead you into the Garden in full honour." God will not, for instance, 'make you responsible for ill-judged words in your oaths'.

O you who believe, do not enquire about things which, if they were disclosed to you, would become burdensome for you; though if you enquire about them while the Quran is being sent down, they will be disclosed to you. God has left them out on purpose. A people before you enquired about such things, but when they were disclosed to them, they refused to carry them out. - Sura 5, 102-103. ⁸⁷

Of all things, baffling to a European, there is even the assertion that: "He will give you your due and will not require of you your belongings. Were He to require them of you and to press you for them, you would be niggardly, and He would bring to light your ill-will." This analysis (in sura 47), it should be noted, concerns the righteous. It ends with the equally characteristic: "If you turn away, He will bring in your stead another people who will not be such laggards as you." Being omniscient and forbearing (two of His names), God does not want such uncomely and undignified leanings in man made manifest. In fact: "He covers up the undesirable portions of their acts and rewards according to the best of their actions." But there must be limits to leniency; God scolds Muhammad for the same mentality in time of dire need, for bearing over with hypocrisy in a crisis:

God has safeguarded you against the consequences of your over-lenieny towards them and has exalted you, but why did you permit them to stay back, before those who spoke the truth had become known to you and before you had known the liars? - Sura 9, 43.

"We have made the Quran easy to follow," God says time and again, in glaring contrast to Mosaic and Christian conviction: "Follow the religion of your father Abraham, We have laid no hardships on you in

the way of religion." Though man is definitely weak in comparison to God, and this weakness expresses itself in a number of shortcomings, he is also free of positive fault: "God created and made man flawless, determined the measures of his faculties and guided him accordingly. We shall teach you in a manner that you shall not forget, except as God wills. We shall facilitate for you the way to success and ease."⁸⁸ Built into man, as the proof and guarantee of this basic flawlessness, beneath all sin and shortcoming, there is the safety valve: "I call to witness the Judgment Day, and in support thereof I call to witness the self-accusing faculty."⁸⁹

"A person who does good will be given better than that, and he who does evil, such shall not be punished but in proportion to their deeds." People are judged by their doings, which prove their sincerity of faith; and whosoever really strives sincerely, despite all shortcomings, 'his evil deeds God will convert into good ones' in the afterlife. On man's right shoulder an angel is perched, taking number of his laudable deeds, on his left another jots down the bad ones. Every being on earth actually has a guardian angel. Thus the question is how many 'good conduct marks' versus how many 'black marks' you get in your lifetime (much in the way of British elementary schools).

In the popular European mind of the Middle Ages too, good behaviour was tied up with clear expectations of 'reward' (even called wages) in heaven. In Islam, merchant mentality, as is to be expected in the town of Mecca, crops up not only in such notions as that of good and bad marks being protocolled as credit and debit, but also in Quranic exhortations of the type: "By giving alms you assure yourself of a lucrative repayment in the afterlife."

There is no talk of earth being a vale of misery or of human life being full of trials and tribulations, as in Judaism and Christianity. Nor is Paradise 'in heaven'. "The Garden, its width is the heavens and the earth," says sura 3, 134. Muhammad was promptly asked where Hell was if Paradise consisted of heaven and earth. He answered: "Where is the night when it is day?" Life is good, but man is ungrateful. Life should be enjoyed ('eat and drink, but with moderation') as a foretaste of the Garden.⁹⁰

"Beautiful in the eyes of mankind is love of all things desired: of women and children and fortunes amassed of gold and silver and welltended horses and livestock and fields. This is a good livelihood for the present life. But the loveliest home of all is God's.." - Sura 3, 15.

"And among humans there are those who say: Lord, give us here on earth - but they have no part in the coming world. And among them are those who say: Lord, give us good things in this world and give us good things in the next, and save us from the scourge of Hellfire. These shall have a good allotment as reward for their deeds, and God is quick to calculate." - Sura 2, 201-203.

Human weakness and sinfulness is something you are cleansed of (cfr. page 27) through the prescribed ablutions before each of the daily prayers; through fasting during the holy month of Ramadan; and through the preparations for pilgrimage (hajj), when the pilgrim abstains from sex and immoderation and, shaving and donning a simple, seamless white garment, enters the special state of ihrām (hallowedness).

What a far cry from Christianity, from both the Pauline and the Protestant ethos, this 'behaviourist' approach of Islam is. What might be termed the archetypic trends in Islam, towards inclusiveness, simplicity, cosmic harmony and human frailty, all aspects of one cosmology, seem to stem from and reflect the very nature of Meccan society of old. Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism are beset with much greater inner tensions. Especially Protestantism appears to be uniquely European in its emotional and ideological contents. (The Sunna/Shia controversy in Islam, only superficially analogous, will be surveyed later.) All of a sudden the old Christian-Jewish notions of singularism (or intolerance), growth and sinfulness come dramatically alive.

God made man in His image, says Genesis - an idea alien to Islam. Man is God's child (another abhorrent imagery). And man has tasted the Apple of Knowledge, i.e. God's own wisdom. (This too is unspecified in the Koran.) The implication of Christian as opposed to Islamic teachings is that the child, given the right maturity and opportunity, can grow up. He can in a sense become (or aspire to become) God. This is the implication of Adam's original sin.

Such thought would have been sheer blasphemy to Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and all their contemporaries. Yet in so many ways what they exhibit is the pain of 'growing up', the problems of

adolescence. They redefine their relationship to their 'parents': Mary, the Catholic Mother-of-God, the immaculate mother figure of Christendom, is disowned, renounced. God himself is changing, from being a distant, inscrutable, unapproachable Father to a closer (yet more troubled) talking relationship.

In Catholic scholasticism a concept of sin very much akin to the Islamic one can be traced, particularly in Thomas Aquinas: Sin is no independent force, in a way it simply does not exist - it is a negation of existence, of God, it is the absence of God, it is mindlessness of His guidance. The story of man's ouster from Paradise, and the concept of original sin, cannot however be shoved under the carpet by scholasticism. And in Protestantism sin erupts anew, ideologically speaking. Gone is St. Thomas' harmony model. Gone too is the gentle love of Nature, of birds and trees, of St. Francis of Assisi. (Without belabouring the point, let us note that St. Francis spent one of his formative years in Cairo, discussing religion with the sultan - and that key expressions in his hymns to Nature, such as 'brother bird' and 'sister sun' are very much native to Arabic.)

And finally, let us note the obvious: The feeling of being sinful creates tension - and can be a potent force, a dynamic factor making for restless development, be it positive or negative. The concept of sinfulness, as given in Protestant dogma, is in close accord with the ideal of human growth and exploitation of Nature.

Luther is perhaps the most intriguing character among the great reformers. He is full of fits and bouts of bad humour, then cries for joy, he is morose, on and off he is serene, he is, briefly put, emotionally unstable. Sometimes he confides in and receives strength from God, as an adolescent might in his relationship to a father; sometimes he feels completely lost and alone. He has great trouble with the lusting of the flesh, sex and women are abominable - Luther is the man to really conjure up hatred and fear of witches. He hates 'others' with a vengeance, whether Papists, Jews or rebellious peasants. And he has great trouble with his own private conscience: with sin.

Catholicism, even more than Islam, stressed more or less ritualized deeds, including ritualized repentance - in the two forms of shriftstool and payment of conscience-money. Protestantism underlines man's inherent sinfulness and unmitigated depravity anew: We are hopelessly damned - were it not for personal faith, and faith alone. This is Luther's newfound inner power - and problem. Gone is the simplistic, naive, unhesitating acceptance of norms and forms, gone is the behaviouristic ethos of childhood, i.e.: Such and such is the Law, ordained by parents, follow it and be rewarded, disobey and be punished.

Blind submission is no longer enough, the precepts of faith are taken up in a conscious battle with oneself, internalized. Some things are rejected, others vehemently affirmed. The time for questioning, for inner and outward restlessness, has come. It has continued ever since. With his probing restiveness European man has conquered both Nature and the rest of mankind. The age of religious rebellion was but a beginning.

Many observers have reflected on the Muslim Arab character being extroverted, or prestige- and norm-oriented, behaviouristic, in contrast to the introverted, or conscience-oriented, European. (The observers themselves of course mainly being European.) Such reflections should be hedged, and such words perhaps avoided; yet this does touch on what has been noted above.

The question of 'extrovertedness' is very much bound up with that of language. There is much to the proposition that "...language for Arabs is not a means to describe reality, it is reality itself."⁹⁰ The Quran is the wonder of Arabic, a miracle of beauty to Arab and Muslim ears, inculcated into everyone from the earliest years; it is a most powerful force in shaping Muslim and especially Arab expression. Reality indeed is often, or wherever possible, channeled and fitted into pre-set forms.

This point, and generally speaking the whole analysis of Islam versus Westernness or European ideals, is in need of some sound theoretical underpinning. The time for questioning has come: Precisely Protestantism has inspired a debate over one of the fundamentals of history.

T H E O R Y O F
C U L T U R A L
G R I D S

8. CULTURE VERSUS PRODUCTIVE BASE

In the 1830-40's J. Feuerbach reversed the old dictum that man was created in God's image, saying that the Paradise of religion was but a dream, an idealization of life in counterpoint to human misery on earth. Karl Marx elaborated on this: Religion does propagate a fiction, an illusion, a fata morgana sprung from the misery of existence, true, and this illusion serves to prolong the state of misery by showing people a false escape, true too, but at the same time the strength of religion consists in its being a veiled protest by the masses against their lot. This is the dual nature of religion. A nature, says Marx, which is wholly dictated by the material conditions of human life, or rather, the productive forces of society.

Marx never really discussed why capitalism arose in the time and place it did, instead of for instance in the Roman Empire or the Arab-Muslim caliphates. And he never asked how Christianity managed to uphold such an unchanging character as it did through two thousand years of dramatic upheavals in the productive base of society - which changed from 'archaic' or ancient through 'feudal' to bourgeois-capitalist.

In contrast to Marx, Max Weber sought the origins of modern capitalism in precisely what Marx called the ideological super-structure, more specifically in what Weber termed the 'Protestant ethos' of asceticism, frugality and hard work - especially as evinced in Calvinism. (Capitalism does not have its roots in Renaissance Italy, according to Weber.)

In a vulgarized form countless educational textbooks in so many countries express opinions akin to Weber's: Progress is due to more or less intrinsic human qualities, Norway is rich because the Norwegian people is quick-witted and industrious, and so forth. A much acclaimed study like Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* too explains history on the basis of ideology and ethics, i.e. the upsurge of Christianity, with its otherworldliness and lack of patriotism, sapped the Roman Empire of its strength.

What we may call the Marx-Weber controversy may however admit of a solution; both positions may prove to be grounded, or groundable, in common soil. On the one hand, Weber's Protestant ethos has a murky origin, there are some indications that a pro-capitalist mentality was a pre-capitalist phenomenon in certain parts, but why, how did this mentality in itself arise? Because of material conditions perhaps, in the widest sense of the word, climate included. On the other hand, the Marxist 'productive forces' of society may be defined so as to include human consciousness, e.g. the brainpower of an intellectual is according to most criteria a productive force. (Cfr. the power of Marx' own thoughts.) And while society on the one hand produces ideology to justify itself, it is often enough replete with rebellious ideologists; cfr. Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin, Mao Tsetung and Chou En-lai, who according to class background are unlikely Communists. By what criteria are their views 'objective', how can they 'step outside' the general law they themselves describe?

Later historians have sought far back beyond Weber's and Calvin's or Luther's Protestant ethos for the roots of capitalism, back to the trickle of trade that made for the wane of feudalism after the year 1000. There is Sohm's (now largely abandoned) theory of a host of local markets gradually expanding and by and by intertrading. There is Sombart's theory of the land-owners (Grundherren) and not artisans or traders being the prime movers, attracting artisans and traders through their landed wealth. There is Stephenson's study of early urbanism in England, and Strieder's of Augsburg's self-made men - adventurist upstarts. Henri Pirenne paints a picture of such 'piepowder' traders, travelling in small companies through vast, unsafe stretches of land, risking their lives and their wares for ungodly-sized profits.

The great upswing in commerce, however, following discovery and plundering of the New World, and later developing into modern urban capitalism, certainly did not precede Protestantism. When European man began to conquer both nature and the rest of mankind, his 'ethos' was there already - surprisingly ready for the job.

The fundamentals of this Lutheran and Calvinist ethos, it is my contention, were embedded in Christian and Mosaic thought from the earliest times, latent, and activated when the opportunity (the modern merchant upswing) came along. Arnold Toynbee has made the very apt observation that Protestantism reaches back to and activates Mosaic ideals, from beyond the chasm of Catholicism.

This entails two clear modifications of (vulgar-) Marxian doctrine on the correspondence of ideological superstructure with material basis:⁹⁾ 1) The superstructure is certainly shaped by a material basis, but this may be an ancient one; the superstructure can easily outlive its original historical setting. 2) Elements in this superstructure, dormant since its creation, can come very much alive in a new historical setting (more or less akin to the original one) and become a major force in shaping this setting.

Is this a way of preaching the autonomy of the superstructure? Admittedly yes, with the proviso that the word superstructure be open to criticism. I would much prefer using a simile from the deserts where Islam arose: if the live energy of human society of the present is seen as onrushing water, then what I am speaking of is the dried-out wadi, itself formed often ages ago by other torrents, itself 'dead', yet channeling the water of life.

Is this a way of preaching idealism versus historical materialism? On the contrary, it means an extended historical materialism. Just as the first few years of a human being's life lay a basis upon which later experiences superimpose themselves, so too the formative periods in the life of a collective entity such as a nation may shape patterns and norms, set precedents, that is, for later behaviour. Some examples will hopefully clarify what this historically extended materialism entails. Such long-life patterns are here tentatively termed culture grids.

9. A CASE IN POINT : THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

Besides the Protestant upheaval, and in counterpoint to it, a prime example obtains in the Jewish/Zionist story: Christianity is on the wane in the European world, and nationalism has sprung up as one of several inter-linked substitutes. In the context of competitive capitalism and singularist, intolerant nationalism (viz. Tsarist pogroms and rise of the Third Reich) anti-Jewish sentiment was nurtured; so was a reaction among Jews themselves: Jewishness as religion can and should change into Jewishness as peoplehood, as Israeli-ness, says the Zionist Movement and the government of Israel.

But the Zionist enterprise is very much enforced by long dormant elements of Mosaic tradition. The Pentateuch story of military conquest in Palestine, long encapsuled in the pacific tradition of Orthodox Judaism (i.e. as the beginning of Israel's chastisement by God, of education in humility and morality), now suddenly appears as a blueprint for the new conquest of Palestine - nearly three thousand years later. "The Golan hills are part of Israel, for did not Jephtha sit as a judge here for **several** years?" says Vice-Premier Yigal Allon,¹²⁾ to take but one example. Washed away are two thousand years of downtroddenness and debasement at the hands of others. Gone is humility, liberated from the bonds of ages are Joshua and the Maccabees.

Vehemently rejected - naturally - is the European-Jewish tradition that led to the gas-ovens.¹³⁷⁾ Yet precisely because such pictures are concentrated upon in Israeli propaganda, and because the concept of 'Jew' in so many Europeans (Jews and Israelis included) evokes an automatic counter-concept of 'Nazi', a powerful and most dangerous culture grid tightens over the Middle East scenario: a stereotype, transferred from Europe, that very effectively can block any meaningful peace. When Yassir Arafat of the PLO spoke in the United Nations in 1974, newspaper cartoonists in Europe, the USA and Israel portrayed him giving a Nazi salute, having Hitler's shadow, etc.

Such stereotypes come all the easier because to the European, and the Israeli too, 'Arab' or 'Palestinian' is no well-filled, meaningful concept. My point is: People need, and seek, simple categories. Collective conflicts can most easily (and often wrongly) be understood by reference to a collective past experience, which thus is activated as a 'grid'. New wine into old bottles. Besides the Nazi reference, a popular one among both Israelis and Europeans has been the David-versus-Goliath theme.⁹³⁾ Russian-born David Ben-Gurion gives another striking example of reality seen through a culture grid when noting in his diary for 21st of May 1948:

"A Christian state ought to be set up in Lebanon, with its southern frontier on the Litani river. We would sign a treaty with this state. Then, when we have bombed Amman and broken the Arab Legion we could wipe out Transjordan. After that Syria would fall. And if Egypt still dared make war on us, we would bomb Port Said, Alexandria and Cairo. We should thus end the war, and would have put paid to Egypt, Assyria and Chaldea on behalf of our ancestors."⁹⁴⁾

American sympathy and empathy for Israel, as against that of Europe, can be explained in some measure with reference to a specifically American culture grid (which will be discussed later), namely the pioneering, frontier ideal. In arguing for membership in the UN December 1948, the Israeli delegate dismissed the need for specified borders, saying that "when the USA came into existence the land had not even been explored and no-one knew where the American claims ended and where the British, French and Spanish claims began."⁹⁵⁾

In any colonization and conquest enterprise the native victims are 'non-persons', an impediment one would like to ignore, since taking them into consideration invariably complicates matters. This unhappily is enforced by Mosaic tradition, where native non-Jews of Palestine are only fleetingly mentioned.⁹⁶⁾ For years 'Arabs' were non-existent in European eyes. Post-war Europe atoned for its guilt towards the Jews by inflicting a new gross injustice on the just as guiltless natives of Palestine, and the very 'atonement' was dependent on these natives being and staying invisible and untroubling to the European conscience. When they do revolt and make themselves seen, disturbing our peace of mind, the immediate reaction of Europe is hostility - and use of culture grids of the Jew-Nazi type. At the same time, however, and slower, more gropingly, an understanding of the conflict along imperialist and colonist-versus-colonized lines is developing.

With the rise of Palestinian nationalism, two interesting themes emerge: a) It is impossible to retain the cliché of 'the Arabs' being one monolithic 'Goliath'. Rather, with all Israel's Arab neighbour states now proclaiming their willingness to make peace and have done with, the conflict narrows down to a confrontation between two peoples or nations on the same soil (cfr. Hebrews v. Philistines) - only this time it is Israel which has advanced and abundant technology for warfare, plus money and superpower backing, while the Palestinians have only their determination to fight, be it in unorthodox ways (hijacking being one of them). Resources v. resourcefulness. Israel as Goliath, the Palestinians as David.

b) The Palestinians themselves are groping for an imagery to express their identity. At the core of this identity is their common homelessness, a widespread feeling of being thoroughly unwanted not only in the settler state which has usurped their soil, but also among Arab 'brethren'. There is little in their Arab past they can use⁷⁷⁾ (the concept of fida'i, which was in use in the context of the Crusades, is one of the few things)⁷⁸⁾. Ethnic separatism has always been anathema to Islam and the predominantly Muslim Middle East. They have to look in another heritage.

Israel has shaped both their predicament and their identity, from Israel too they get some of the basic concepts they need: "We are the new Jews, living and suffering in our diaspora," is a common theme with Palestinians, especially intellectuals, "we are the Zionists of the Arab world." The refugee camps, like the ghettos of yore, strengthen and preserve this common identity.

The Israeli reaction, however, to the tilt of power in the Middle East and the rise of the Palestinians, has so far developed along the lines of a new cultural grid: The David-and-Goliath theme is, it seems, increasingly abandoned - partly because the Arab armies fought bravely in 1973, partly because there is no personification of Goliath around any more (Nasser), and partly because of the spectacular rise of the PLO in world standing. Instead a much more ill-boding Massada complex is on the rise.⁷⁹⁾ A feeling that 'the whole world is against us', vividly visualized in the UN tally of votes during the Palestine debates of 1974.

The nearly inaccessible hillside fortress of Massada in the bleak and desolate mountains near the Dead Sea was the site of the final desperate Jewish stand against the Roman legions in the year 70 A.D. It is an Israeli national monument of the first order - used to instill pride and defiance into every Israeli schoolchild. It is the very archetype of the embattled ghetto - which dies fighting rather than give in peacefully-but-shamefully. The defenders, seeing that their case was hopeless, killed each other, the last man throwing himself on his sword, rather than accept slavery and death (or execution) in captivity.

In Israel today there is a strong tendency to distrust any Arab peace offer as a ruse, a stratagem en route for Arab domination and the abolishment of Israel - by violent means, if need be. (The Romans of old actually came to Palestine on the pretext of protecting the Jews.) By peace, meaning an Israeli pullback from the territories occupied in 1967, it is felt that Arab leaders want to inflict a psychological defeat (pullback = setback) on the Israelis - thus preparing an eventual cave-in of pre-1967 Israel as well. A view that does have some merit.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

Searching in past Jewish experience for a model situation with which to understand their present predicament, Israelis may draw a facile parallel with the way it all ended in Palestine 'last time', i.e. 2000 years ago. Because of its very strength in Jewish/Israel cosmology, this culture grid may direct options today: an apocalyptic, technologically devastating Massada (with a desperate Israel using atomic weapons against an Arab onslaught, and incidentally triggering a Third World War) is a possible 'way out'.

Summing up: Such religious factors as the Palestine question is full of have a weight of their own simply because religion is hammered into generations and generations, vast numbers of people, because of its cohesive function in general and regardless of such concrete contents as it may have, until one day specific contents appear as dramatically relevant; as the order of the day.

The ideological complexity (and flexibility) of both Christianity and Judaism give them a practical edge over Islam in this context. Yet culture grids are certainly not modelled through religion only.

The main grid or paradigm on the Arab side, that of the Crusades. is a-religious. Or rather, it has no basis in the Koran or Islamic tradition as such. Yet it certainly is interpreted from an Islamic basis. Muslims of course do not view the Crusades as merely a Christian attack on their heartlands: they were a European attack, an imperialist attack, an attack motivated by overpopulation, by lust for gain and adventure, by mercantile interests, by dynastic intrigues etc. Yet all of this, adventurism, imperialism and what not, was an attack on one thing only: Islam. By this, Muslims mean to say that their civilization is one and indivisible. There is no Arab civilization.⁽³⁶⁾ There is an Islamic one.

Native Christians in predominantly Muslim lands are a part of this civilization, even unhesitantly confess themselves to be so. In the words of Michel Aflaq, the Greek-Orthodox founder and chief ideologist of the Baath ('Renaissance') Party: "The historical mission of Islam now is the renaissance and perfection of Arabism.. When the national conscience of Christian Arabs awakens, they will realise that Islam for them too is a national culture which they can wholly immerse themselves in and in which they can find their identity."⁽³⁷⁾

This view is widespread among Christian Arabs: Islam is a culture within which it is quite possible to be Christian. I.e. by taking an a-religious view of Islam, they can define themselves as part of it. In any case they are islands in a Muslim sea, the sea being what defines them. There is no Christian civilization in Europe any longer; rather, Christianity is a relic (cfr. the Middle East!) within a non-Christian whole. In 1947 Toynbee prophesied some sort of Islamic renaissance. What is developing, in reaction to the Euro-American impact, is a stress on Islamic ways and values, i.e. on Islam as the expression of a collective human identity (especially 'Arabism', but also Pakistani nationalism, Indonesian nationalism etc.) - as opposed to Islam as solely the expression of divine will. Thus, while in the Koran God is mentioned 2338 times and Islam only 8, in modern writings and speeches on society just about the reverse is the case. What then is the relationship between Islam, nationalism - and culture grids?

10. DAR AL-ISLAM AND NATIONALISM

The question of political unity and diverseness shows up marked similarities within the European and the Islamic hemispheres of the Western world. On the one hand we have (or had) 'Christendom' (die Christenheit), embracing all baptized peoples and countries, all those who believe in Christ as the true Son of God, Redeemer of men. On the other hand there is the completely analogous notion of the Umma or Dar of Islam. Umma means approximately community, and is often translated nation, which it can equate in some contexts. It derives from umm, meaning mother. So al-Umma al-Islamiyya is the sum of all 'brethren-in-Islam'.

Dar al-Islam translates as the House of Islam. Within this realm, which comprises the whole Umma of believers plus subjugated or protected peoples, i.e. the geographical area under the sway of Islam, warfare is prohibited by the Koran: Muslim must never fight Muslim. Hence Dar al-Islam is also a Dar as-salam, an abode of peace. Everything outside Dar al-Islam is called, accordingly, Dar al-Harb, the House of War.

Dar al-Harb is in constant confrontation with Dar al-Islam. While the Koran emphasizes the defensive nature of jihad, Muhammed's successors ('caliphs') pursued the attack in the next century (632 death of the Prophet, 732 defeat at Tours/Poitiers), then resigned themselves to generally peaceful coexistence. (Each year three forays were still undertaken into 'the lands of the Romans', one of about ten days in the end of February, one of 30 days from May 10, and one of 60 days from July 10 - to keep the soldiery welltrimmed and content.)¹⁰² Muslim theology evolved hadiths (purported sayings of the Prophet) which justified each and every twist of practical policy - much in the same way that European Realpolitik constantly has invoked Church approval ('Gott mit uns'); and much in the way that present Soviet policy is justified by recourse to Lenin and Marx.

The bipartite division of the world into an Abode of Peace and an Abode of War as found in Islam closely resembles the medieval European dichotomy of Christendom versus heathendom, the modern Euro-American ('liberal' or 'Western') one of Democracy versus Dictatorship, economic Progress versus Backwardness (i.e. Developed versus Underdeveloped); and the Communist/Marxist one of the Socialist bloc versus the Capitalist bloc.

Is this type of dichotomy uniquely Western? China to wit has called itself the Middle Kingdom¹⁰³⁾ for thousands of years, regarding all outsiders as barbarians; but the aggressive, missionary impulse, the urge to overcome the dichotomy, through war or persuasion or societal dynamics, this is what makes the abovesaid dichotomies (unlike the Chinese one) specifically Western.

In this regard, Islam too is Western. And not only the original definitions and the missionary expansionism, but also later developments are closely akin: From an initial position of internationalism what develops is a species of inter-nationalism.

Christianity set out to conquer the world, and all Christians were inculcated with a strong sense of belonging to one Imperium Christianum (first the Roman Empire; later the Empire of Charlemagne, the Byzantine one and the Holy Roman i.e. German one had such pretensions). Modern Communism started out in the same monolithic fashion: Stalin was the 'father' of not only all the Soviet Union peoples, but also of all other countries in the Socialist 'Camp'.¹⁰⁴⁾ But what happened?

Titoism was only the first of many schismatic, nationalist reactions within World Communism. Today there is a Rumanian Communism and a Cuban one, a Korean Communism and a Cambodian one, Poland does not tally all too well with the East German model, and on the Sinkiang-Ussuri border a couple of million Soviet and Chinese troops poke rifles at each other.

Christendom of old was likewise beset by factionalism in the guise of ideology. The Christological disputes in the centuries before the coming of Islam showed up more or less regional distinctions: Pelagianism struck root in Britain, Donatism in

North Africa; and in Syria, Iraq and Egypt the Byzantine Empire, with its dogma of Christ's dual nature, in vain tried to smother the native Monophysite churches, who proclaimed Christ's oneness. The Monophysite ideology of the Semitic-Hamitic regions of the East Roman Empire had the same simplicity as Islam, while the official Greek position (Monothelite, emphasizing two natures but one will!) was embroiled in what Islam derides as masked polytheism.⁽¹⁵⁾ In its Christology the Visigothic Arianism of Spain also agreed well with Islam.

Both in North Africa and the Fertile Crescent Byzantine rule was hated, all sources tell us, on the eve of Islam. In Syria whole villages and towns came dancing and singing to meet the Arab invaders, hailing deliverance from the Greek yoke.⁽¹⁶⁾ In Egypt the native Patriarch instructed the people to assist the invaders, so as to cast off Monothelite/Byzantine tyranny.⁽¹⁷⁾ Hellenic civilization was but skindeep, and confined to the towns; the rural bulk of the population was ever aware of racial and linguistic differences from their masters, and this underlying antipathy, a submerged, semi-articulate feeling of nationality, expressed itself in the Monophysite heresy. In what is now Libya and Tunis too the Arab conquest was miraculously easy, for the same reason.

Islam thus manifested itself initially in the eyes of the new-won peoples as something of an Eastern or Semitic liberation (Syrians etc. being Semites and speaking a cognate language) from an alien, European hegemony. Soon, however, new discontent was rife, this time against the Arabs: The new masters set themselves up as a new, exclusively Arabian ruling class, with generous pensions and (initially) land-tax exemptions. In particular soldiering was well-paid - with regular allowances given to dependent women and children. Many converts to Islam, attracted by the fair words of the Koran that all Muslims are brothers, tried to join the army. They soon discovered that reality was somewhat different. What developed among these malcontent neo-Muslims was a new variety of Islam: Against orthodoxy, 'Sunna', rose the heresy called 'Shi'a'.

The rallying point of the Shi'a seems a trivial matter: Namely, a practical question of caliphal succession. The fifth 'khalifa'

(= successor, i.e. of Muhammad), who initiated the Umayyad reign 660-750, is seen as a rogue by the Shi'a: He is accused of having done away with his predecessor Ali (Muhammad's son-in-law) and Ali's two sons. Thus, 'Shi'a' means simply 'the Party', i.e. of Ali and his descendants - who are termed imams rather than caliphs, the imamate being the spiritual office of the caliph, as opposed to the military-administrative office, the amirate. The last of these imams is thought of as being in a temporary state of occultation: He shall return guided (mahdi) by God to conquer the world, establish a millennium of Golden rule and restore true Islam. A number of 'mahdis' have of course appeared - one being killed by Sudanese government forces in 1970.

Shi'a/neo-Muslim discontent broke into rebellion, and the Umayyads were exterminated in the rise of the new Abbāsid empire 750-1258 - which was neo-Muslim rather than Arabian. The controversy over Ali was trifling in itself - the Umayyads, Alids and Abbāsids (or Hāshimis, hence Hashimite rule in Jordan today) were all relatives from Mecca. Yet a trifling spark was all that was needed. All the more conspicuous was the violence of the fighting and the vast number of people involved. Moreover, the Shi'a did not disband after the fall of the Umayyad dynasty. 1200 years later it is still a potent force. Why?

In the same way as with the Christological disputes that marked off the Monophysite (Middle East) churches from the Monothelite (Greek, oppressor) church before the rise of Islam, the Shi'a can best be understood as a series of semi-nationalist reactions against alien, that is Arabian rule. A series, mark you, because the Shi'a itself quickly split up geographically: the touchstone being the question of, mainly, how many imams there were.

The 'Twelvers', supporters of the theory that the twelfth direct male descendant of Ali is the hidden, coming mahdi, were and are predominant. One version (Zaidism), which otherwise is hardly distinguishable from Sunna Islam, is the 'national religion' of the Yemen.⁽¹⁰³⁾ This corresponds to the age-old expression of a separate South Arabian identity set apart from the Northern one.

Another version of the Twelver Shi'a rules supreme in Iran. Persian nationalist rancour against the desert invaders,

heightened by the juxtaposition of Indo-Aryans against Semites, quickly found expression in the longing for a hidden saviour and avenger, in the guise of the imam-mahdi. Since the establishment of a national Persian dynasty in 1502, the Shah has been officially defined as the locum tenens of the hidden imam, with the top theologians as his spokesmen and intermediaries with mere mortal men.

A majority of Iraqi Arabs are Shi'ites too. (The Kurds are Sunnites.) Expectations in both Iraq and Syria as to the coming of the imam-saviour, the restorer of the true faith, clearly go back to Christian teachings prevailing before the advent of Islam. In other words: The true faith which is to be reestablished, though officially defined as Islam, smacks of ancient Eastern Christianity.

In Syria strong minorities adhere to various forms of this Christianity still (some 15%) and to various forms of the Severer Shi'a (also 15%), generally called Isma'ilism after its seventh-and-last imam, and influenced by Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism. The Isma'ilites are considered extremists by the main (Twelver) body of the Shi'a, and comprise such communities as the Druzes, the Assassins and the Alawites, the last of which retains clear elements of its original paganism.

North Africa too was once under the sway of Isma'ilism, but only briefly and superficially. Its population is, with the exception of Egypt's perhaps 15% Coptic Christians, almost wholly Sunni; yet sects and fraternities within Sunna Islam flourish, especially diverse Sufi orders - indebted to Neo-Platonism and Christianity in their mysticism and monasticism. Morocco, the Sharifian regime of which is mildly Shi'ite, is characterized by extensive saint worship and the strong presence of the Shadhilite Sufi fraternity. The 'Ibadite sect, which antedates the Shi'a, is present in Algeria. While in Libya the Sanusi Sufi leader held power as king until 1970

"The Israelites and the Christians have been divided into seventy-one or seventy-two sects," the Prophet says in a hadith, "but my community shall be divided into seventy-three." Though only 15% of all Muslims are Shi'ites, only the cradle of both Arabism and Islam, the territory of Saudiarabia (plus minor adjacent areas) is pure - or rather puristic - in its Wahhabi version of orthodoxy.

The Shi'a and other Islamic sects were, in the first centuries after their inception, tied up with a literary and cultural movement which bore the interesting name of al-Shu'ubiyya: the Peoples or Nationalities movement. It based itself on Sura 49, 14 of the Koran: "O mankind, we have made you man and woman and made you peoples and tribes that you may know each other." It asserted that the non-Arab (or non-Arabian) peoples were not inferior to the conquerors - quite the contrary.

The word Shu'ubiyya has since come to denote all sorts of separatism and narrow nationalism (as opposed to pan-Arabism or pan-Islamism). "The solution to the problems of the Middle East is not a uniform and centralistic Arabism," Abba Eban ventured to say a few years ago, "it is diversity and tolerance." More precisely: "There is not only one single Arab nationalism. There are many Arab nations, with a host of regional and cultural variances."¹⁰⁹ A common Arab reaction was: "In Shu'ubiyya the leaders of Israel have found a basis for their existence."¹¹⁰

In sum: The Shi'a phenomenon in particular shows us that a group feeling of separateness can be expressed and conserved through the medium or language of a religion, in this case Islam. This goes for pre-capitalist societies and civilizations. To be precise: Their language and essence is religion. Religion is civilization. Which means that any European-type analysis ('compartmentalization') of religion versus other phenomena within such cultures is wrong in its basic approach - and reflective of precisely modern European culture. While there is an Islamic civilization, there is today little sense in speaking of a Christian one. Why?

"Religion is the opium of the people." If this be taken seriously, other than as a mere piece of polemics, then Marx was monumentally wrong - at least as to both pre-capitalist and late capitalist societies. An opiate is something you can get addicted to, rather incidentally, and weaned away from too. It is not a necessary or natural basis for life. On the contrary, it destroys bodily and mental tissues and leads to premature death. A pre-capitalist society does not somehow get 'addicted' to religion, nor can it be weaned from it without losing its very character of a pre-capitalist society. Christianity did not lead to collective disintegration (our 'time of troubles' might of course be construed

that way, but this is not a Marxist view); from its womb arose latter-day Euro-American, that is capitalist, civilization - whatever the causes. This civilization, as opposed to the preceding Christian one, is marked by economic, political and ideological free-enterprise. And the everyday life of the ordinary citizen is certainly not defined or made meaningful by religion. Suffice it to say that today quite other things are opium for the people.

In Marx' own time, though, there was definitely something to his famous dictum - even if this was not the case either before or after. In the mid-1800's, before the rise of consumer capitalism, there was little that could act as a palliative to the material privations of the working-class - except religion, which lingered on from pre-capitalist times. At this critical juncture, before consumer capitalist ideology permeated (and partly changed) the proletariat, religion was still a potent force, filling the vacuum a revolutionary movement needed so dearly.

Though there is no longer any Christian civilization, in the sense that explicitly Christian ideology regulates and motivates everyday acts and thoughts, everybody is more or less conversant with its factual contents - which means that Christianity still can serve our a-religious societies with powerful culture grids.

Before delving into that problem, and the question of its bearing on a common Westernness, let us note that within Christendom, as within Islam, proto-national separateness has expressed itself through religious schisms. Without going into details, we may take note of not only the cleavage between the ancient Monothelite (Greek) and Monophysite (Middle Eastern) churches, and the cleavage between Arianism (Gothic/Germanic) and Catholicism, but also the Great Schism between Greek and Roman Catholicism; rise of the Gallican (French) church ca. 1270; rise of heretical movements using the vernacular in a number of countries; and of course the Reformation: It came close to reestablishing the ancient limes between the Roman Empire (i.e. Latin peoples) and the Germanic peoples, and underscored the separate identities of England, Scotland and Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary etc.

Expressions of such separateness, whether via religion or in modern mass nationalism, are one thing; but what about its essence? It does not necessarily have anything to do with language; though linguistic variations can serve as useful pegs of reference and justification for separatism. With its four official languages, three of which are national tongues across the borders, Switzerland is still a viable entity. On the contrary, national tongues are often (or always) themselves the products of an institutionalized separateness. On linguistic grounds, North Germany and the Netherlands might have formed one (Plattdeutsch) nation, as against a Southern (Hochdeutsch) one; the south of France (with Occitania) might have been a state by itself; while Denmark-Norway-Sweden could well have been one quite homogeneous nation - though West Norway and Denmark's Jylland province on second thoughts would perhaps have qualified for secession.

The Arabic-Islamic world can give us a useful perspective on this. The dialects of Arabic vary greatly from country to country. Yet modern nationalisms do not base themselves on this, on the contrary, there is much being done to foster the use of classical Arabic as sole medium of writing. At the same time a number of nationalisms are vigorously asserting themselves within the area. What do they base themselves on? There is only one possible and obvious answer: cultural (historical) grids. These again are grounded, in ancient times, on facts of geography.

Take Egypt. The Egyptian colloquial draws linguistic borderlines with Libya, the Sudan, Palestine and Arabia - cfr. variations in speech between the Scandinavian countries. Egyptians do have, whatever orthodox Marxists might say, other patterns of thought and behaviour than their diverse neighbours. And they have a rather distinct physionomy, still remarkably similar to pictures and statues from Pharaonic times. All this, however, does not create modern Egyptian nationalism. Nor does religion, though Coptic elements (e.g. the spring-time feast of 'Smelling the Breeze') and relics of Pharaonic culture (e.g. burial customs and feast of the Nile God) are incorporated in Sunni Muslim life. What constitutes a basis for nationalism is rather an awareness of 'eternal Egypt' - back to Pharaonic times. "Misr umm id-dunia" - "Egypt mother of the world", as the national anthem says.

In speeches and writings, President Nasser strove to reconcile this culture grid with Arabism by asserting, as is still done in all Egyptian schools, that Pharaonic Egypt was 'fully conscious of being a part of the Arab homeland'.¹¹¹⁾ On the one hand: "Egypt is the stuff of all religions. I love the word Egypt." On the other: "Among the Arabs there is one conscience which is the result of one history." The implication being, according to Nasser, that Pan-Arab socialism and Middle East solidarity in the face of imperialism can best be brought about by mobilizing this culture grid, that of a common Arab Golden Age. As Renan defined nationhood once in a famous adage, it consists in 'avoir fait de grands choses ensemble, et en vouloir faire encore'. Such sentiments are echoed by many Middle East thinkers:

Language binds us together.. But Arab nationalism is above all the expression by our nation of our collective recollection and memory and our historical self-awareness.
- Sati al-Husri 1963.

Thus the question of nationhood and nationalism can tentatively be reduced to that of dominant culture grids. Tunisian nationalism, in a country 100% Muslim, mobilizes pride in heathen Carthage (and for that matter the Christian Augustine). The Christians of Lebanon are adamant in their claims to a 'Phoenician' identity.¹¹²⁾ There are Syrians calling for the revival of Greater Syria, such as it existed in olden days - and for a brief spell in 1917.

One need not 'have done things together', not even great things (Renan). One may just as well have been done things to. The Palestinian nation, as has been noted, is being shaped by the collective traumas of an immediate past¹²⁸⁾ - and under the weight of Zionism seeking back through the centuries to its own ancient roots.

What is constitutive is the feeling of a common past. Take the Kalb-Mudar case: The banu-Kalb were South Arabians and the banu-Mudar North Arabians who both settled in Iraq and Syria before Islam - and which Islam spread even farther abroad. They spoke the same language yet their mutual enmity precipitated the downfall of the Umayyad caliphate in Damascus, slowed down the Muslim advance into France and spurred the decline of the caliphate in Spain. In the district of Damascus, in the words of Hitti,¹¹³⁾ relentless warfare raged for two years because a Mudarite filched a watermelon from a Kalbite garden, while in distant Murcia the picking of a vineleaf proved enough.

In Lebanon and Palestine we know of pitched battles between the two parties as late as the early part of the eighteenth century.¹¹³⁾ Why? "Conscious of some deeprooted national distinction, the North Arabians, who traced their descent to Ismael, were never amalgamated fully with the South Arabians, who carried their pedigree back to Qahtan (Joktan)," says Hitti. In this case then the theme of a mythical forefather was the culture grid catalyst for strife.

While 'nation' is an exclusivist, singularist term, our 'grid' concept is inclusive and flexible: On the strength of different grids you can be both Egyptian and Arab at the same time, both Scotch and British, both Croat and Yugoslavian. Or, say, both Jew and German. The point about culture grids is that they are not confined to ethnicity - in any biological/linguistic sense at least. The Croats and the Serbs speak the same language (though using different alphabets), as do Czechs and Slovaks, Austrians and Germans, Americans and most Canadians, Peruvians and Colombians, Indian Bengalis and the people of Bangla Desh, yet different pasts have parted their ways.

Our two operative concepts, civilization and culture (or historical) grid, show up their flexibility precisely where the notion of nation is rigid. Take the Jews. In the Middle Ages the Jews of Europe formed one sub-civilization, in the midst of Christendom, those of the Muslim Middle East and North Africa another - with their own living quarters, their own code of behaviour and law, with peculiar ways of dress and of speech (Yiddish, Morisco; Baghdadi and Tunesian Jewish dialect), and so forth. All this was predicated on a mythical common past, the culture grid of God giving a chosen people the Law. In the last few centuries of secularization, however, the specific European Jewish civilization has broken down - along with the European Christian one. What is left is simply a culture grid: One is Jewish because one's forebears were. And under the impetus of modern Western nationalism, based on ethnico-territorial grids of history (e.g. Hitler's Third Reich, modelled on the 'first' and 'second' and on past Germanic glory), this Jewishness is being defined in an increasingly a-religious, territorial direction. This is what is meant by the common Zionist assertion that the survival of Israel as a state, a focus on the map so to speak, is necessary for the survival of Jewishness at large.

Though speaking German and Polish, German and Polish Jews in the 1930's could not identify very well with the racist, ethnically exclusive grids being activated in these countries. In the mass economic desperation prevailing at the time, nothing could be more opportune for national leaders and masses alike than to find a cause that a) was personified and readily at hand, b) could be defined as extraneous, alien - thus psychologically freeing both leaders and society at large from analysis.

Intermarriage with Gentiles and proselytizing has characterized Jewish history from the oldest times, to the despair of elders and prophets. By all stretchings of anthropology there is no such thing as a Jewish race or people. Grouping Henry Kissinger along with the black-skinned Falashas of Ethiopia is absurd. Yet there definitely is a culture grid, i.e. a mass subjective feeling of a common historical bond, that is powerful enough, on the strength of European anti-semitism and imperialism, to create an Israeli Jewish nation. At the same time, paradoxically, this nation is very 'un-Jewish'¹¹³⁾ by Orthodox standards: It is generally a-religious, secularized and permeated by Euro-American technology and capitalist, consumerist ideals.

This modern Euro-American civilization is not territorially identical with the preceding medieval Christian one. Looking through publications after the Second World War one notes a gradual shift from a concept of 'European' civilization to a so-called 'Western' one.¹¹⁵⁾ This of course better takes in the Americas - and is a way of acknowledging US hegemony; yet the full implication of the shift is brought out when one sees what this civilization is contrasted with, what it is said to be imperilled by, namely the Communist East. All that is valuable (and all valuables), producer-and-consumerist free enterprise, economic and political liberalism, is threatened by 'anti-Western' fiends, externally and internally. Just like Eastern Europe's officially designated 'Socialist culture' is constantly, according to its champions, assailed by agents of bourgeois mentality and capitalist culture.

What this boils down to is a trichotomy of Islamic, capitalist Euro-American and Communist East European civilization. What, if anything, is common?

11. WESTERNNESS

Marx showed that mankind can realize its dream, that the dream must become reality! That Paradise can be founded here on earth, and indeed will be. He proved this, having researched history and human conditions of life. Engels said at his grave: "Just like Darwin discovered the law of development in organic nature, Marx discovered the law of development in human history." He answered the questions of mankind as to 'Paradise' with clear, provable prophecies. - From a children's book in DDR. (16)

The success of an answer depends on its relevance to a pre-set question. All work to prove that humans can realize their fundamental dream is a product and expression of that dream. Questions channel answers.

Such state-authorized use of concepts like 'prophecy' and 'the dream of Paradise', adoration of Lenin's earthly remains in the Red Square, First of May parades in Moscow with giant effigies of Lenin with children on his lap, Lenin carrying a steel bar for a worker, the banner slogan 'Lenin - more living than all living', the naming or renaming of hundreds of towns and villages, from Karl Marxstadt to Stalinabad, these are but outward pointers to a fundamental phenomenon: In the effort to replace the old, oppressive defunct Christian civilization, the new Socialist one has to literally take its place, cater to the same fundamental dreams and needs. Formulated by way of our simile from the Arabian desert: A new torrent gushes forth, a new watershed of history, but through the same ancient wadis.

Characterization of Marxism-Leninism as a new religion is often meant as opprobrium, as an accusation levelled at it by adversaries. Here, though, the term is not used in any derogatory sense. Rather the contention is that East European Marxist Socialism is an ideological variant on a common theme, along with Euro-American liberalism, their common predecessor Christianity, and Islam.

Marx has continued and in an ingenuous way perfected the three main spiritual currents of the 19th century such as we find them in the three most historically advanced countries of mankind: Classical German philosophy, classical English political economy and French socialism together with French revolutionary doctrines in general. - Lenin. (17)

In showing Marxism to be a thoroughly European doctrine, Lenin of course is right. Yet there is more to this continuum theory than Lenin explicitly states. Firstly, these three currents may be seen as secular continuations and elaborations of implicit Christian teachings: *Liberté*, *fraternité*, *égalité*, i.e. freedom (through Christ, from sin and hence oppression), brotherhood (of all believers, the oecumene), equality (before the law - of God). Economics of Adam Smith et alia, cfr. ideas of divine optimality and maximization of common good as presupposing an amount of wickedness and suffering in the world. Philosophy of Hegel, viz. his Cosmic Spirit and Christian dialectics of God (thesis), suffering in the world (antithesis), and Paradise (synthesis, through the supreme suffering of Christ).

Secondly, transcending this traditional ideohistorical approach, we find a clue in Lenin's words: the most historically advanced countries of mankind. The theme of historical progress towards an absolute and all-embracing goal according to a pre-set, predictable and well-defined timetable is refound in the Quran:

God is He who created the heavens and the earth, and that which is between the two, in six periods.. He will establish His command from the heaven to the earth according to His plan, then it will ascend to Him during a period which, according to your reckoning, will extend to a thousand years. - Sura 32, 4-6.

The teleological, linear concept of history as starting from a specific point and moving on through successive, readily identifiable stages towards a final goal, is uniquely Western. One example might be Darwinism: Life began in the lowliest, simplest possible forms in water (cfr. incidentally the Quran, sura 11, 8), growing through stages of complexity (sura 41, 11, and better still, Genesis 1), towards the best possible condition (sura 32, 8). Another example is the Big Bang theory of leading modern astronomers: All cosmic matter is supposed to have formed one solid mass, which then (!) exploded, and has continued to explode and expand ever since, stars and galaxies receding ever farther away - until it all begins to contract again, ending in a cosmic catastrophe the way it began. In the words of the Quran: "Do not the disbelievers realize that the heavens and the earth were a solid mass, then We split them asunder, and We made from water every living thing?"

A third instance might be the mathematical axiom that a straight line projected into infinity will return to its point of departure (in the way of a circle) - though remaining as straight as ever.¹¹⁸⁾

Neither Darwinism, the Big Bang theory or the mathematical axiom are proved - or provable. Which makes the question of how they came about all the more interesting. Yet they cannot serve as more than indicators, more or less pat illustrations, of a general cast of mind, namely what we call the Western reality structure. Or rather: the main common Western culture grid.

The concept of a linear, goal-oriented trajectory of history would have been totally alien to Aristotle. To him and to the ancient Greeks in general the cyclical nature of things was selfevident. What is the connexion then between Westernness and the Greeks of old? Democracy, say all Euro-American primers. And science to boot, say some. Yet parliamentary democracy is practically confined to a number of the most advanced capitalist states, to the exclusion of not only Eastern Europe but also Latin America and the Iberian peninsula. (Is Japan 'Western'?) In ancient Greece so-called democracy showed some stability in Athens only, and even there upwards of 33% of the population are estimated to have been slaves (and metoics, foreigners);¹¹⁹⁾ women too were without democratic rights. Though the word is Greek in origin, one should not forget similar phenomena other places, such as ancient Germanic wapentake, Arabian (Bedouin) majlis (tribal council, with elected sheikh) and African parleying customs. The vision of Athenian democracy, however, is embedded in West European and North American consciousness: it is a specifically West European and North American culture grid.

As for science, the Greeks took a purely contemplative view of nature; they were not oriented towards practical aims and goals. But via the Arabs Greek learning was incorporated in Christian teachings. And in Christianity, waiting to be activated in an opportune moment, lay a missionary command prior to that of Christ: "Be fecund and prolific, and fill up the earth and subject it to yourselves, and make yourselves masters over the fishes in the sea, the birds in the sky and every animal that moves on the earth!"

The view of a progressive, measured sequence in history is spelt out in the Judeo-Christian tradition as follows: a) Man is in

Paradise, in a state of innocence, ignorance and bliss.

b) Man falls from grace, through Sin, and is of a sudden in Misery.

c) Gradually and in great travail man again rises, stage by stage.

At the same time wickedness is perfected by degrees also.

d) In a sudden, dramatic apocalypse both the good and the bad comes to a head. This is the critical point in history, the moment of truth. After this, e) the class of righteous workers in the vineyard of history again enter Paradise, the state of bliss; while the other group of people, those who have worked iniquity, those who have reigned on high without having either ethics or History on their side, are committed to perdition and oblivion. This is the end of history - or 'pre-history'.

All major ideologies that have hitherto succeeded - and succeeded each other - in the Western world have been overlays over this same ancient culture grid. The Mosaic, Christian and Islamic faiths are but the oldest variants on this theme. A number of French and English Enlightenment thinkers subscribed to the idea of 'linear' progress through successive stages towards a finite, foreseeable and supremely good goal, the 'laws of God' or the Divine Plan now being conceptualized as the 'laws of Nature' or the workings of a cosmic Substance, Spirit or Force. In the 19th century Hegel's system, structured along these lines, became widely popular. But his pupil Karl Marx fashioned not merely a philosophy but a major ideology which is challenging both the three ancient Western religions and modern Euro-American liberalism

Marx vehemently rejected what he saw as his Jewish heritage, the way of 'huckstering and money', i.e. the unbecoming role Jews had been forced into by medieval Christendom. Yet he seems to have carried along, unwittingly, the Judeo-Christian metaphysics of History - submerged under a thousands of years old coating of theological dogmas; what he cast off was the coating.

One quaint, ahistorical telltale detail is his insistence on man's beginnings in a primeval Communism of sorts, 'das Urkommunismus'. Cfr. the theologic 'from Paradise we come, to Paradise we return'. The other stages are readily recognizable too, from Original Sin (the first establishment of private property rights) to the final Apocalypse.

The concept of such stages has always been bound up with an understanding of the nature of life and progress. The Marxist insistence on the primacy of human work can be traced back into the tradition that good actions are productive of grace and salvation, that work for the betterment of other people's condition, guided by and coupled with insight in the 'divine' laws of society and the universe, is the imperative above all others. The view that the rule of capital is inherently evil and will bring on the Apocalypse is refound in the Christian view on Mammon and the Islamic on interest. Marxist instrumentalism has its ancient antecedents: theological insistence that individuals are not good or evil in themselves, they are members of one out of two classes of people, the one having God and history on its side, the other being the instruments of the Devil, and doomed.

Again I say unto you: It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.. Many who are the first shall become the last, and the last become the first. - Matthew 19, 24-30.⁽¹²⁾

The same peculiar mixture of historical determinism, even fatalism, and actionist thinking pervades both the older religions and Marxism: The 'divine plan' will reach fruition inevitably, inexorably, whatever you do. At the same time you should, you must act to hasten it, to prepare people for the final cataclysm, to weaken the devilish forces that stand in the way of Paradise. You are helping to reveal a higher order of instrumentality: The evil and reactionary are 'possessed', be it by the Fiend or by Capital, yet both the Fiend and Capital are in their turn but instruments, necessary and even valuable driving forces in the machinations of the Master Plan.

Just as there is a House of Islam and there was a likewise welldefined Christendom, there exists a self-styled Socialist Camp. But so does a 'Western Democratic' one. Its ideology, though never stamped out in the same formal, official way, is structured along much the same lines: There once upon a time was a brilliant Antiquity, followed by a Fall and, after a Dark Age, a gradual progress up towards a now quite imminent Ideal Society on earth - when the forces of evil are routed. Evil is defined as ignorance, debasement and despotism in all forms, and frequently portrayed in the spectre of Communism. Perfection is seen as Democracy, meaning freedom of thought and speech, and a theoretically limitless technological standard of living, meaning freedom from all want and material compulsion.

This Euro-American democratic Liberalism is just as missionary as the four other varieties of Westernness mentioned; it is in this sense just as totalitarian in its global pretensions. All peoples should be 'saved'; by whatever the means, say some, by throwing off despotism and becoming like us when mature, say others.

Thoughts about an apocalypse, defined as a great, final battle with the forces that want to subvert our material and spiritual standard of life, have centered on the imminence of an atom-bomb holocaust; U.S. authorities have even codified a so-called Level of Acceptability in regard to casualties, counted in 'mega-dead'.

Such instrumentalism is common to all the abovesaid types of Westernness: Somebody has to foot the bill of Destiny. "A couple of generations will have to sacrifice (or be sacrificed) to build Socialism." Or in the language of the more traditional faiths: Many towns, peoples and generations have been 'reduced to rubble, utterly ruined, becoming mere tales' (says the Quran), the goal being that a class of righteous workers shall enjoy boundless pleasures in 'gardens underneath which rivers flow' in some future society and age.

Democratic Liberalism, Marxism and the older religions all have a self-declared enemy in Fascism. Here the instrumentalist approach to life of course is exalted in all possible vicious consequence. Yet the metaphysical historicism of Fascism are again but an overlay on the same old common themes. An ancient barbaric golden age or Paradise is glorified; a fall from innocence and grace is envisaged (fall of the Roman Empire, rise of Christianity); a gradual ascent in the form of a national reawakening has long been under way; vice in the form of national and international depravity and cunning conspiracies is reaching an apex - and in a dramatic apocalypse of surging energy and uncompromising battles the Nation again enters upon a new barbaric golden age 'of a thousand years' in the words of Hitler and Mussolini. The critical moment of truth and reckoning is nigh. Not only is the ancient millenarian dream refurbished, but so is the vision of a Saviour or Messiah, the great Führer or Duce: In a mathematical simile of dubious quality the masses of the people are said to be a collection of nils in themselves, but with the digit 1 in front they become 1000000.. In vulgar-Marxism too Messianic tendencies are apparent, but never in such gross forms, nor in the way of an officially codified, pivotal dogma. (Cfr.

Sunni Islam, where belief in the coming Messiah is retained but not prominent - in contrast to the Shia doctrine.)

Whereas in democratic Liberalism, Marxism and the three older religions it is the 'righteous workers' who shall be rewarded with an earthly or heavenly paradise for their pains, in Fascism it is the Nation - with other peoples and nations being downtrodden and even downright doomed from life, cfr. the fate of the unrighteous or in modern parlance the unrighteous capitalist class. According to Fascism, in its most prominent and elaborated version, Nazism, it is not a small class of capitalists that holds down the great virtuous masses; rather it is a likewise small 'class' of capitalist-and-Communist Jews who hold down the great virtuous masses of Aryans

This of course begs the question: How can such fiends, so utterly unfit for a strong, healthy, domineering life, manage to hold down the Aryan masses who are strong, healthy, of domineering character, fit to rule? Because, one answer runs, the Aryans have not yet been made to recognize their Aryanness, they must be made conscious of their fundamental, objective nature. Just as proletarians must be made conscious of theirs, according to Marxism. Just as ordinary people must be made to see their objective, fundamental nature, contrary to ruling Satanic illusions, says for instance the Quran. And just like the mischief of Satan is really part of the Plan for trial and thence salvation, just like the sufferings under the mischief of capitalism is necessary and capitalism even is valuable when seen in the proper long-term context, so too the purported mischief of the Jews is expressly necessary and conducive to the awakening of the Aryans.

Here a hedging is called for, so as to avoid misunderstandings: While the underlying reality structure of all these Western ideologies is next to identical, its applications and elaborations differ widely. While Marxism and Christianity, Liberalism, Judaism and Islam all are and have been, each in its way, highly civilized, culturally stimulating phenomena, Fascism with its outspokenly anti-intellectual stance and its glorification of violence and physical dominance is evidently not quite the same thing. They are poles apart: but precisely this fact is the best attestation of the sweep and strength of the basic common culture grid.

Fascism is in fact acutely illustrative of this point. The Nazis roused the German nation and a number of allies (in Slovakia and Hungary, Roumania and Ukraina inter alia) with their purported rejection of everything Jewish. At the same time none of the other Western ideologies come as close to their originally Jewish substructure as Nazism: Here is emphasis, literally, on a Chosen People. Here is glorification of conquest and colonisation in the most concrete, down-to-earth sense, the ideals of the Hebrew fathers before Judaism mellowed. Here is belief in the ancient Messiah: a political leader who sword in hand chastens and humiliates the enemies of his glorious Nation.

Thus the Nazi doctrine with all its self-assertive bragging and denigration of the Mosaic faith, itself turns out to be merely a secularized and vulgarized, brutalized and singularly shoddy copy of Judaism; a slavish but inferior overlay. Chaim Weizmann, first president of Israel, told Europeans after the war: "Hitler was defeated by the Allies, but in regard to the Jews he won a total victory."⁽²⁾ On the contrary. In spite of all the horrors he and his henchmen could contrive, the 'Nordic barbarian' was defeated from the very outset, by the thoughts of those he hated and despised the most. Just like a worker can have a capitalist mentality without being a capitalist according to Marxism, a so-called Aryan could be (his 'superiority' notwithstanding) 'verjudet' spiritually according to Hitler. So much for Hitler.

Thus what the concept of Westernness in sum boils down to is a certain mentality shaped by and expressed in the abovesaid common culture grid. This grid is Jewish in origin; for in its own turn it was shaped by the vicissitudes of Hebrew history as recorded in the Old Testament and incorporated in the Bible and general doctrines of the Christian Church. The question of defining Westernness in other words is a question of understanding a fundamental case of what is termed here historically extended materialism. Does this mean dismissing the Greek and Roman heritage? No, but it does mean relegating them to an inferior standing, saying that they concern a smaller region within the Western spiritual world and that they are not of the same basic interest. The Roman Empire did not leave much of a legacy besides the Superstate idea, which in any case was inherent in the Judeo-Christian tradition (the missionary command).

Greece did leave a great heritage. Yet neither this heritage nor ancient Greece was 'Western' in any conceivable sense. What was Western was the application by Christendom of Greek ideas some one and a half thousand years later. The basic Western culture grid was shaped in the context of physical conquest of a land and its resources (both natural and human). The concept of specific (a-e) historical stages as outlined above is just the graphical curve of progress. Quite as important is the vision of what Progress is.

It appears to consist in an ever-increasing physical and mental dominance over and mastery of resources (both natural and human) through understanding of their fundamental, divine laws. This of course goes for ancient Judaism and the Protestant ethos, for modern economic and scientific Liberalism and Marxism - and for Fascism. But at closer scrutiny the ascetic traditions in later Judaism and ancient Christianity too could be seen as a way of gaining mastery of the will over physical reality.

An X-ray insight might be culled from the story of the Tree of Knowledge: The progress of both Good and Bad stems from man's knowledge of reality, wisdom of the same divine, fundamental kind as that which created reality. Man thus, 'through the grace of God' (i.e. through the grace of this fundamental reality), can himself create reality. A proviso as to Islam, though: Here there is no missionary bidding to subject the world to man. But there is a statement of fact: "God is He who has subjected the sea to you.. He has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth, all of it."¹²²⁾ "He has constrained to your service the winds that vessels may sail through the sea by His command, and the rivers also. He has constrained to your service the sun and the moon, both carrying out their functions incessantly; and He has subjected to you the night as well as the day. He has given you all that you asked of Him." There is the bidding: "Work so you shall prosper!" And there is the very 'Western', but orientally couched assurance:

I call to witness the lingering glow after sunset, and the night and all that it envelops, and the moon when it becomes full, that you shall assuredly ascend from stage to stage. - Sura 84, 17-20.

All this is merely meant to indicate the general import of the concept of Westernness. It in no way purports to give the explana-

tion of modern Euro-American industrialism. It is simply a sketch of the landscape in which this phenomenon could flourish; a map of the mental world in which Columbus could set sail.⁽¹²³⁾

Today a seventh ideology appears to be on the rise, in addition to the three ancient and three modern ones mentioned. We may call it Ecologism for the time being. It is a novel and independent interpretation of the Western reality structure or culture grid, an overlay with fresh colouring, but all the same an overlay.

Ecologism resembles a Liberalism on the reverse: the dream of Progress has gone sour. Yet just as Liberalism posits the enterprising free-thinking individual as mainstay of an enlightened world order (with a UN 'World Parliament' on top, as the Superstate embodiment of democracy), so too Ecologism posits individualistic, self-sufficient, highly diversified 'local communities' as the mainstay of a just and stable, peaceful and harmonious future. Paraphrasing the traditional religious Paradise theme: As local communities we began, to local communities we must return for salvation.

The universalism of this ideology expresses itself not only in cries for world solidarity and equity between rich and poor (nations, districts, local communities), but also in the insistence on the we-are-all-in-the-same-boat theme: the earth is a closed 'space vehicle', it is characterized by oneness of fate and finiteness of resources, we need a space vehicle economy as against our present heedless expansionism. There is a growing insistence too on the obsolescence of both capitalism and Communism as monolithic, economically expansionist systems racked by ecological and centre-periphery contradictions: They are perhaps the two moribund parents of a new universal system.

Above all there is the apocalyptic vision. Progress and insight, for good and for evil, is reaching the point of a Doomsday crisis. Man has been breaking the law - no longer of God but of Nature. Whatever he subjectively believes, man is completely subject to Nature - the nature outside him and the nature inside. But he has been vouchsafed insight, and he can still cooperate willingly, in the nick of time, thus earning Paradise instead of Hell on earth. Muslims of course would be prone to read ecology out of the Quran:

Have you not seen that to God submits whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon and the stars and the mountains and the trees and the beasts and many of mankind? To God submits whosoever is in the heavens and in the earth willingly or unwillingly, just as their shadows do in the mornings and the evenings. - Suras 22, 19 and 13, 16.

To Islam Nature is a live force that submits to its ordained laws. Man can, as the only part of creation, transgress them. But this transgression is punished. Or rather: it punishes itself, it is self-destructive. God speaks of peoples He has destroyed by earthquakes, inundations and other natural calamities: "We did not wrong them; they wronged themselves," runs the Quranic refrain. Man can decide whether he wants to submit to the same laws as Nature - but he must submit in the end all the same. If he submits willingly, he shall enjoy all the rest of creation. If not, he shall submit through fire and torment, submit in the sense of succumbing, and no remorse or lamentation or hindsight will help him then. All that man spends in pursuit of a shortsighted, exaggerated living standard, in mindlessness of these laws, out of 'lack of knowledge', says the Quran, 'is like a biting frosty blast which smites the harvest of a people who have wronged themselves, and destroys it utterly - God does not wrong them; they wrong themselves'.

Thus does Nature strike back against heedless human transgression, says Ecologism. This goes to show once more that ideologies such as Islam and Ecologism are of the same ilk, at least as far as substructure is concerned. What was deified as God in the three older religions, and as the primacy and enterprise of man (as individual, as class, as race) in Liberalism, Marxism and Fascism, is in Ecologism discernible as the primacy of Nature.

The three ancient religions speak of personal resurrection as the meaning of salvation. Is not this at variance with the modern view? Certainly. But the substructure of this line of thought is still the same: the bond of causality and solidarity between present acts and future life is painted just as thick. We must sacrifice in building socialism, so that future generations can have their Paradise, says Marxism. Solidarity with the future, with our progeny who shall inherit the consequences of our deeds, good or bad, says Ecologism. This latter ideology is still in the process of working itself out. It has not as yet got its Muhammad or Marx. It can be the object of a guess - and a piece of advice: The closer it gets to the substructure or culture grid outlined above, the bigger following will it have.

12. ISLAMIC SOCIALISM

Who is he who will lend to God a goodly loan that He may increase it for him manifold, and he will have a generous reward? For the men who give alms and the women who give alms, and for those who lend to God a goodly loan, that which they spend will be increased manifold, and theirs will be a generous reward. - Sura 57, 12 & 19.

God has purchased of the believers their persons and their belongings in return for the promise that they shall have Paradise.. Rejoice then in the bargain you have struck with Him. - Sura 9, 111.

Islam is a religion of bookkeeping and accountancy - divine and moral. "Nobody spends any sum, small or big, in the cause of God, except that it is written down for them, that God may bestow upon them the best reward for what they do." There is a book of losses and a book of gains: "The record of the wicked is in Sijjin, a Book inscribed. The record of the virtuous is in Illiyyin a Book inscribed." In fact the existence of every creature and every atom is 'recorded in a clear book'.

If you lend to God a goodly loan, He will multiply it for you, and will forgive you.. The day when He shall gather you for the Day of Gathering, that will be the day for the calculation of gains and losses. - Sura 64, 18 & 9.

The economic propensities of both Mecca and Muhammad, the quality of the soil in which the Revelation struck root so to speak, shines through: not only heathen Arabia, but also commercial Arabia. "Whatever you spend in the way of God, it shall be repaid to you in full." Disbelievers are those who 'barter God's signs for small profits', those who 'barter the Covenant for a paltry price'. They are 'the losers'. "To every soul shall be paid out what it has earned up." Thus, 'he who spends for God shall have an easy way to prosperity'.⁽²⁴⁾ In the purported admonition from the prophet Shuaib in the Quran one rather senses a certain merchant from Mecca speaking: "O my people, worship God alone, give full

measure and full weight with justice, and do not defraud people by making short delivery.. You should realize that the profits that God permits you to retain lawfully are the best for you." ⁽¹²⁵⁾

This commercial mentality is no superficial trait in the Quran; it is just as fundamental as the aforementioned characteristics of inclusiveness, simplicity, harmony and the view of human weakness. Thus, morals and religion are a frankly long-range business matter. "Whoso acts righteously, it is for the good of his own self." Another verse underscores that serving God is merely the best way of striving for personal advantage in the long run. ⁽¹²⁶⁾ In sum, according to the Quran: "Those who follow God's Book and pray and spend out of what We have provided them with, are pursuing a commerce that suffers no loss, for God will give them their full rewards, and will add to them out of His bounty." God's Prophet appeals: "O ye believers, shall I guide you to a commerce that will save you from a painful chastisement?"

The question is: Can Islam be said to dispose towards, or morally underwrite, capitalism, or for that matter a variant of socialism? The God of Islam might be likened to a bank; on the Day of Reckoning credit will depend on your record sheet as a customer in the past. "Lend to God a goodly loan. Whatever of good you send on for yourselves beforehand, you will find it with God. He is the best and greatest in bestowing reward."

Wealth and children are an ornament of the life of this world; then of these that which is converted into a source of permanent beneficence is best in the sight of thy Lord, both in respect of immediate reward and in respect of expected benefits.
- Sura 73, 21.

The very reasoning behind capital accumulation and the laying up of funds and trusts! It also gives adequate expression of the pre- or proto-capitalist mentality involved in the waqf trusts which by and by developed in all Islamic lands. Waqf is a term applied to landed property 'given to God' by pious people and hence mortmain, i.e. untouchable, unsaleable, untaxable. The descendants of the donator, though, could usually continue in their rights of usufruct (use of the land) until the line became extinct and the land 'reverted to God'. Now the withdrawal of lands from the market system (saleability) of course is not conversant with capitalism. But the system of 'hidden deposits', the use of un-

taxable funds in long-term dispositions, certainly is. Or rather, it is in step with a rather advanced form of capitalism. Indeed, in nearly all Arab states the approximately 15% waqf lands have been nationalized and put into the service of the state: into the service of state capitalism.

Cfr. two other points of Islamic dogma. Of the five pillars of faith one is the payment of zakat, meaning alms or poor tax. In the early days of the Caliphate zakat was institutionalized and made obligatory on every Muslim according to property, meaning mainly money, cattle, corn, fruit and merchandise. It was administered from a central treasury, and was used to defray government costs, build and keep up mosques, support the indigent etc. Says sura 9,60: "It is only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed in connection with its collection and distribution, and for those whose hearts are to be comforted, and for the freeing of slaves, and for those burdened with debt, and for those striving in the cause of God, and for wayfarers. This is a decree from God." Thus the strong state of our times is given carte blanche from God as not only tax collector, work-giver and, to an extent, leveller of wealth, but also as remediator of the ills of capitalism - and hence the maintainer of capitalism. It is the palliative and lubricant of the system. Islam has something to say on another point of interest too, concerning capital:

Those who devour interest shall not rise up except as one rises up whom Satan has smitten with insanity. Thus it is because they keep saying: Trading is the same as lending money on interest - whereas God has made trade lawful, but forbidden the taking of interest. Remember, therefore, that he who desists because of the admonition that has come to him from his Lord, may keep what he received in the past, and his affair is with God. But those who return to the taking of interest, they are the inmates of the Fire.. God will wipe out interest and multiply alms. - Sura 2, 276-7.

That ought to be final enough! (This affords another example, though, of the Islamic tendency to harmonize and bear over with human weakness: You may keep your illgotten gains!) An explanation of sorts is offered also, in sura 3, 131: "O ye who believe, devour not interest, for it goes on multiplying itself; and be mindful of your obligation to God that you may prosper." Meaning, probably, that those who take interest undermine themselves and society in the long run, since interest easily becomes an autonomous force (capital in the Marxian sense) that dictates human actions in

ever worse directions. Once some traders begin taking undue profits, thus acquiring a basis for expanding their transactions, others will be tempted to follow. And profits of course express themselves also by way of inflation - interest 'multiplies itself' in this long-term and socially negative sense. It is quite possibly anachronistic to read an understanding of this specific point into the Quran. But what is highly interesting - and patent - in this verse is the premonition of how a capitalist economy will work (Muhammad being a tradesman) and of how inimical it will be to religious values and theocratic ideals.

No Islamic state, however, has adhered to this Quranic behest in modern times. Only Qaddafi in Libya has announced his good intentions in this regard. The Egyptian founding father of the Muslim Brotherhood once sent a circular to banks bidding them reorganize so as not to violate the prohibition on interest, but prudently and realistically never pressed the point. And in Saudi-Arabia, where the Quran reigns supreme as the law of the land, recent supplementary legislation on commerce does not mention any such prohibition. A certain discomfiture there has been, though. A fatwa or judicial pronouncement from the millenarian university of al-Azhar, the foremost stool of Islam, has pointed a way out: The taking of interest, said al-Azhar, is lawful for the state - in the service of, and as the expression of, the collectivity of Islam - but bad for individuals. Together with the tendency in so many Middle East lands, not only 'socialist' ones, towards state control over the banking system and price regulations in commerce, this too moves in the direction of state capitalism.

The recognized name of the game is, strangely enough to European ears, Arab or Islamic Socialism. European social-democrats and Marxists alike have had a habit of slighting this special brand of socialism as a partly muddleheaded and half-digested, partly insignificant adaptation of a progressive-sounding banner slogan; while in fact it is a resuscitation, in the face of European imperialism, of indigenous values. This is not to suggest, anachronistically, that state capitalism, any other brand of capitalism or socialism existed in Islamic days of old; only that the application of principles and ideals from this subjective past lead in this direction today, being mobilized by the challenge of the times.

There does exist, though, a strong anachronistic tendency (Europeans would say) to project expressly modern phenomena like capitalism or socialism back into the beginnings of Islam. Cfr. insistence that Islam itself did not begin with Muhammad in Mecca, since Moses and Abraham and all the prophets were muslims, and Adam, the angels and the jinn and all creation submitted at the dawn of the worlds. Cfr. insistence too that the Kaaba was built by both Abraham and Adam and circumnavigated seven times by Noah's Ark.

Moreover this tendency in Islamic Socialism is firmly rooted in the Arabian and Islamic basic characteristic that here has been termed inclusiveness. All that is valuable in European capitalism, socialism and communism, says for instance Qaddafi, was inherent in and anticipated by Islam: "Islam is a continuous revolution. Islam is the mother of all ideologies." Or in the words of the pioneer of the modern Arab-Muslim awakening Gamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1895):

Western Socialism owes its being solely to vindictiveness against injustice and the workers' jealousy of those who have grown rich from their toil.. Lack of moderation must result in abuses. The rich in the West have grossly trifled with the rights of the workers and the poor, and these in turn have gone too far in defiance of those who have robbed them of their rights. Socialism with no religious foundation must eventually suffer a reverse.

Socialism is part and parcel of the religion of Islam; it is also related to the character of its people from the time when they were nomad pagans. The first to practice socialism were the great Caliphs, the Prophet's Companions who were its most zealous promulgators, as we shall go on to prove.¹²⁷⁾

Here we refind not only the principle of inclusiveness (which as we have noted obtains in literature as well, in contrast to European notions of plagiarism); we meet also the basic Islamic belief in harmony - witness the call for moderation, as underscored in the Quran; and the belief that man is inherently weak, but good and pliable too - when rightly and authoritarially guided. As to the authoritarian nature of Islamic Socialism, sura 3, 155 is a pointer: "They muttered: Have we any say in matters of administration? Tell them: All government belongs to God."

According to Christianity one should do good and desist from evil. What has been called the more extrovert and communal character of Islam is to be spotted in the Quranic bidding instead, time and again, that one must 'enjoin good and forbid evil'. That is the

very mark of the believers - and of the righteous state. Personal deviations and weaknesses must be actively combated by the law of the land. In this rather rigid system there is a safety valve though. The believers are defined as 'those who eschew the graver sins and indecencies, and when they are wroth they forgive, those who hearken to their Lord and observe prayer and whose affairs are administered by mutual consultation' (sura 42, 39). The reasoning behind this institution of mutual consultation and the call for harmony and tolerance is given Muhammad by God in an interesting passage:

It is by the great mercy of God that you are gentle with them, for if you had been rough and hard-hearted they would surely have dispersed from around you. So bear with them and pray for forgiveness for them and take counsel with them in matters of administration. Then when you have made up your mind concerning a matter, put your trust in God. - Sura 3, 160.

Embedded in the Quran there is this one admission of the need to acquiesce in ancient Arabian usage. Or as noted earlier, the inevitability of Islam's being coloured and shaped by the quality of the soil it struck root in. The same naturally goes for modern Islamic Socialism; the verse above actually describes its practice and organisational structure, be it of the Nasserite or Baathist (i.e. Renaissance Party) type. "We put our trust in God" is a legitimizing commonplace with nearly all rulers in Islamic lands. Rule is universally based on the 'inclusivist one-party system' with a hierarchy of councils, beginning in each local community and/or working unit (e.g. factory) and ascending to the national level - where the congress or council (majlis) bears Quranic names like Majlis al-Umma or Majlis ash-Shura (Council of mutual consultation). But as the Quranic verse intimates, all this mutual consultation is more often than not simply a silken glove on a strongman's fist; it is something he must 'bear with', a series of part debating and part rubber-stamp organs. Here the ruler can sound out his ideas, and new ideas from the masses can filter up to him.

A multiparty system and parliamentarism in the European tradition would be entirely out of keeping with the spirit of Islam, and hence Islamic Socialism. A number of contending parties would be viewed as so many exclusivist, careerist cliques, opportunist and narrowly interest-oriented; only one all-embracing organisation can be expressive of one all-embracing umma or nation.

While insistence on a unitary framework for decision-making is in line with classical Islamic and Bedouin pre-Islamic tribal tradition, and much more effective in an era of anti-imperialist nation-building than any multiparty system, there does exist a notion of another type of plurality within this framework, even as a basis for it - just like a Bedouin tribe is made up of clans and families, each with its head and representative within the tribal majlis. The ideals of inclusiveness, harmony and structural simplicity open up for an inbuilt diversity: the lack of party plurality is countervailed by the recognition of class or functional plurality.

"Our socialism rejects the rule of one class. It shall not fall under the domination of any class," vowed Nasser.⁽¹²⁸⁾ "We will not allow capitalism or feudalism to return, because they represent the rule of a minority, of one class, nor will we allow a dictatorship of the proletariat, as envisaged by communism."⁽¹²⁹⁾ The aim of this socialism is the dissolution of antagonistic and hereditary class distinctions, not the dissolution of classes as such. It is a social order 'in which both the diversity and the harmony of the working powers obtain, an order based on the alliance of the working powers of the people, not on their fusion'.⁽¹³⁰⁾ These working powers are defined as farmers, workers, soldiers, intellectuals and national capital - the latter being private small enterprise. Banking, heavy and medium industry and foreign trade is to be under state control, and workers are guaranteed a share of profits. Workers and farmers are secured majority representation in all political organs. Conflicts between the classes may still occur under socialism, but they will no longer be antagonistic.

There is no dream of a classless society - or of the end of private property. On the contrary, extensive small-scale and hence 'non-exploitative' private property, especially that of fellahin (small-holders) is a mainstay of Middle East socialism. This is explained with reference to the Quranic laws of inheritance, which hinder longterm accumulation of wealth and means of production by subdivision among heirs, there being no primogeniture rights. The aim of this socialism is not to abolish or restrict private ownership, but to widen it out and broaden it down to the masses of the people.

The distribution of immovable (landed) property in our Arab homeland is unjust. Therefore this distribution will be resurveyed and such property will be redistributed among the citizens on a just basis. Ownership and inheritance are natural and protected rights within the limits of national interest. Lending at interest among the citizens will be abolished, and a single bank will be established which

will issue credit and banknotes guaranteed by national production. The state will supervise domestic and foreign commerce in order to eliminate exploitation.. A comprehensive plan will be laid on the basis of economic theory for industrialization, increasing national production, creating new economic horizons, and so as to direct the economy in all spheres in accordance with its capacity.

- From the Constitution of the Baath (Renaissance) Socialist Party, articles 27, 34-37, 1959.

Middle East socialism, whether called Islamic or not, is a pursuit of not merely a state capitalism protecting widespread small-scale private property, but also of a social renaissance: a re-awakening defined on the basis of an earlier awakening, the Islamic one. This goes for Nasser's ideology; and it goes for that of the religiously indifferent Baath or Renaissance Party - where Islam is viewed as a nationalist or cultural phenomenon rather than a religious one, its Christian founder stressing the 'revolutionary quality of Islam' as a basis for the party. Thus there is explicitly Islamic socialism in countries like Libya and Algeria, and more or less implicitly Islamic socialism in countries like Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

Middle East phraseology is tied up with Islam. Concepts have been shaped if not by Islam then through it. The central word freedom for instance has quite another connotation than in Europe: freedom for a person is his participation in building a righteous and harmonious society. "We are realizing socialism by means which match our own nature. We had to disarm the class that controlled us, but we did so in our own way, in line with our nature and Arab traditions," Nasser said to his people, giving an explanation Quranic in both phrasing and content: "For this people is generous, merciful and forgiving."⁽³¹⁾ "For hundreds of years our countrymen suffered oppression and injustice. When they regained their rights, they were generous and just." Words which to Europeans are simply self-congratulatory ring a Quranic bell "Our maltreaters have not been made destitute. For our people are good by nature."⁽³²⁾

One last question as to Islamic Socialism: How is the archetypic ideal society, meaning Paradise, organized? There is the assertion: "Everyone will be paid in full that which he has earned." Is this sacralized meritocracy hierarchical? The Quran gives an interesting answer in sura 17, 22: "We have exalted some over others in respect of the provisions of this life; and surely, the life of the Hereafter will be more varied in degrees of ranks and degrees of excellence."⁽³³⁾

Those who have believed and migrated and striven in the cause of God with their belongings and their persons have the highest rank in the sight of God. It is they who shall triumph. Those of you who spent in the cause of God and fought before the victory are higher in rank than those who spent and fought after the victory; the two are not equal. To both has God promised a good reward. - Suras 9, 21; 57, 11.

Salvation is often described as 'having high ranks with your Lord'. Now in modern Arab countries under the sway of Islamic Socialism, be it explicit or implicit, not only are public services such as buses and trains graded by economy and comfort in two or more 'ranks' (the same word as in the Quran), but so are all public officials and employees. By merit or simply by the years you rise from rank to rank. This of course is much the same system as in both Western and Eastern Europe. But the Quran gives sanction to such an order of society.

Thus the righteous are graded in the Hereafter.⁽³⁴⁾ Next to highest in rank are the 'blessed' or holy persons who have devoted their whole life to God, what Europeans would call saints; among them, in special favour, are the Prophet Muhammad's Companions. Above them are the Prophets. But as the Quran says, in addition "We exalted some of the Prophets over the others". The angels too are hierarchically organized, with Arch-angels Mikha'il, Israfil etc on top - and Gibril as the very apex. The whole universe in fact is stratified: "We exalted the offspring of Adam over the most part of our creation."

The gradation principle can easily be mistaken for support of traditional class lines, and has naturally been abused to this end. It carries quite other implications however. "When it is enjoined: Strive in the cause of God, those who are affluent start asking for exemption, and say: Leave us with those who stay at home. They are content to be with the womenfolk. But those who strive with their belongings and their persons, it is they who shall have all kinds of good, and it is they who shall prosper," says sura 9, 88, adding with regard to those affluent shirkers: "Their abode is Hell." In Hell the sinners shall be asked: For what reason are you here? They shall answer: "We prayed not, nor did we feed the poor."⁽³⁵⁾

Before We decide to destroy a township, We command the affluent section of its people to adopt the ways of righteousness, whereupon they decide on disobedience. Thus the sentence becomes due, and we destroy them utterly. - Sura 17, 17.

Thus there is Quranic precedence for the destruction of a class of affluent unrighteous; not because they are rich alone - "do not look covetously upon that which We have bestowed upon some classes for a brief enjoyment, of the embellishments of worldly life, that We may try them thereby" - but because they fail the trial, by amassing and using their riches in a wrong way. The point is: There is a right way. Proper prosperity, without any ulterior punishment attached, is achieved through the service of God; meaning profession of faith, which defines one as a member of the umma, and the prescribed good deeds, deeds of solidarity, towards other members of the umma. The duty of thus serving God is easily transposed into the duty of serving simply the umma - in the sense of one's people, one's nation, one's state.

The rewards a diligent striver can hope for are spelt out in the Quran. They are highly material. In connection with the phenomenon of merit-rankings it is worthy of notice that Paradise in Islam is not really 'the Garden' - it is Gardens, a graded plural:

When the earth shakes, and the mountains are crumbled into dust and become like motes floating in the air, you will be divided into three groups: those on the right (and what will those on the right be?), those on the left (and what will those on the left be?) and those who are foremost - they in truth are foremost. They will be the honoured ones, dwelling in the Gardens of Bliss: a large party from the early believers and a few from the latecomers, reclining on couches inwrought with gold and jewels, facing one another. They will be waited on by ageless youths carrying goblets and ewers and cups filled out of a flowing spring, neither causing headache nor inebriating, and such fruits as they choose, and the flesh of birds as they may desire. They will have as companions maidens with lovely black eyes, pure as pearls well guarded..

Those on the right: how fortunate will those on the right be! They will be amidst thornless lote-trees, and clustered bananas, and extensive shades, and falling water, and varieties of fruit, endless and unforbidden. They will have noble spouses, specially created and made virgins, loving and matching in age, for those on the right: they will be a large party from the early believers and a large party from the latecomers. - Sura 56, 3-41.

There are four Gardens all in all, says sura 55, describing them in even greater detail. They are, to mortals, just about equally paradisaical. But there is one crass class cleavage in the Muslim dream: The houris are clearly seen in a servant role. They are described as chaste-but-oh-so-beautiful maidens, or more generally, as above, youths, of dignified speech and demeanour, who wait on the righteous. For this purpose they are especially created. They have not lived human lives on earth, they are a rather special 'proletariat' made to serve on those who have.

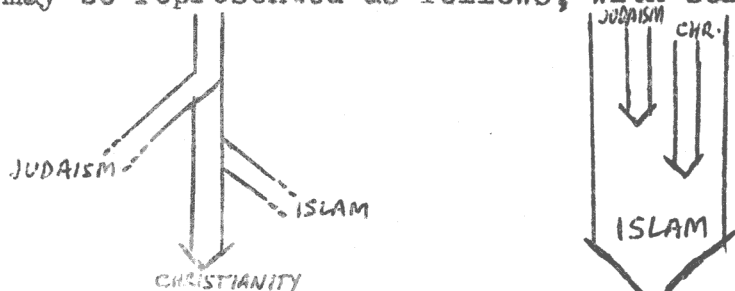
The functions of these ageless personifications, however, are such as in a highly 'developed' society are apt to be carried out by machines. And it is stressed that they neither are nor have been proper humans, they are simply endowed with certain human powers - as are machines. Naturally machines as created by latterday industrialization were not envisaged by the Quran. But Islam is not averse to them. Whether machine culture in the long run is averse to Islam is another question.

The primary causes of capitalism and industrialization are not to be sought in Christianity; nor is Islamic Socialism explicable solely on the basis of an ideology that took shape thirteen centuries ago. But these ancient world views are the landscape and the soil which nurtured later germinations. Thus Christianity proved propitious to early capitalism, in contrast to Islam. And thus Islam, surprisingly enough, even paradoxically, is well attuned to modern corporate capitalism - and singularly well attuned to state capitalism.

This is the religion of a million minarets that five times daily summon the faithful through the cry of the muezzin: "Hayya 'ala-l-falāh! Come ye to the abundance!" A good life painted in glowing materialistic pictures of consumerist prosperity and ease. This is the religion that admonishes one to keep mind of one's best merchant interests even when paying God His 'wages', incredible though it may sound to European ears - viz. sura 6, 142: "He it is who has produced trellised and untrellised gardens and date-palms and crops.. Eat of each when it bears fruit, and pay His due on the day of harvesting - but be not extravagant. Surely, He loves not the extravagant." This is the faith that tells you: "Everyone ranks according to his conduct," - adding that God is 'swift in reckoning', 'quick in calculation'. This is the background to a modern social order, just as indigenous to the Middle East, called Arab or Islamic Socialism. And lastly: This is a culture, little appreciated and little understood in the self-styled Western world, that has its own wholeness and self-contained integrity; a culture that by way of some in-depth scrutiny can show up the essence of related cultures, and beneath them again, the breadth and the sweep of a common Westernness.

NOTES

1. 'Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar.' - Toynbee, Study of History, Abridged Version (2 vols.), Oxford Univ. Press 1957, p. 159. Cfr the works of Plekhanov (defining tsarism as a form of oriental despotism, and tsarist peasant-state relationships as 'noticeably oriental') and Trotsky (Russian handicrafts development 'closer to India than to Europe', Russian cities 'more like the Asiatic', Russian autocracy 'closer to Asiatic despotism' etc.), in SM Dubrovskij, K voprosu o suchnosti 'aziatskogo' sposoba proizvodstva, Moskva 1929.
2. Or rather, Europeans think they see such a discontinuity on visiting Arab North Africa; yet the really deep-set breaking line, easily disregarded because of facile assumptions as to Africa being one block versus Europe as another block, runs through the Sahara - cfr. overleaf on Arab consciousness of cultural unity with Europe.
3. 'Allahu 'azza wa galla'. Cfr expressions such as Allāhu ta'āla, Salla Allahu 'alaihi wa sallama, Radia allahu 'alaihi.
4. The US having suddenly demanded that Egypt recognize Israel in return for the loan - which Nasser refused. Details in: Kennet Love, SUEZ the Twice-Fought War, Longman 1970, p. 308.
5. 'Arabs' should preferably be taken as a linguistic, not an ethnic or national category. Egyptians are Arabs in the sense that Frenchmen are Latins. Cfr note 136 and p. 56 on c. grids.
6. The Hanafi school with some 200 million or more adepts is the most 'liberal', allowing departures from laws formed by analogy from the hadiths, on grounds of equity. The Shafi'i school numbers some 120 million adherents, the more conservative Maliki nearly 60 million; and the reactionary Hanbali one, which dominates Saudiarabia, 7 million.
7. Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, et alia.
8. The general European/Christian and Muslim views on development may be represented as follows, with some reservation:



9. Akhnaton's Hymn to Aton closely resembles Psalm 104 of the Old T.; other elements of 18th Dynasty literature are 'refound' in both Psalms and Proverbs. The Hebrew Exodus probably took place ca 1250-1215 BC, Akhnaton having ruled Egypt less than 100 years before. - Cfr C Grimberg, History of the World, Copenhagen 1974, I, p. 526.
10. Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, pp. 53, 70. Macmillan 1970.
- 10b Cfr remark of a sultan to the Christians (Latin Crusaders): "I am a serpent with one head, whose tails follow. You are a serpent with many heads, and scarcely a tail to follow you at all." - Fidenzio of Padua, Liber recuperationis Terrae Sanctae, in Gol, Biblioteca Bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'oriente Franceseano (Quarnachi 1906-) II

11. Probably from the version of Ibn-Arabi of Murcia ca 1200, al-Isra' ila Maqam al-Aqsa; cfr. Miguel Asin, Islam and the Divine Comedy, tr. H Sutherland, London 1926.
12. PK Hitti, History of the Arabs, Macmillan 1970, p. 559.
13. Hitti, pp 384, 570.
14. Ibn-Jubair, Riqla, 1184; ed. de Goeje, Leyden 1907. Damascus had some 20 such madaris, or academies, Mosul 6, Hims only one. Though late, Ibn-Jubair's report reflects conditions in preceding centuries. - The Caliph al-Hakam II of Spain (961-76) gathered a collection of 400000 MS, listed in a 44-volume index. Maqqari, I, p 249, Ibn-Haldun, IV, p 146; while the celebrated Dutch scholar Dozy asserts that in Muslim Spain of that age 'nearly everyone could read and write'. Dozy, Histoire des Musulmans, ed. Levi-Provençal, II, p 184. Nicholson (Literary History of the Arabs, p 419) and Rafael Altamira (Cambridge Medieval History, NY 1922, III, p 434) concur.
- 15.a Gerard of Strasbourg, Frederick I's ambassador to Salāh ad-Din: "The Lord in his justice allows to some the rewards of eternal life, but to the impious the rewards of this. The best regions, abounding in corn and oil, gold, silver, jewels, silk clothing, aromatic pigments and balsams, and all that the eye can desire, are in the hands of the reprobate." - Arnold of Lübeck, Chronicon Slavorum, in MGH Ss. XXI, pp. 235-241. Ricolto di Monte Croce, the 13th century itinerant monk and polemicist who traversed the Middle East, was likewise worried that the Muslims should have the most fertile parts of the world (or so it seemed), and the Christians be given the second-best parts. And an imaginary correspondence of the Sultan with Pope Clement V, from early 14th century France, harps greatly on the wealth and power of the Arabs: "As we have gold and silver and choice statues and most precious jewels in superabundance, thirsting for nothing except the blood of Christians: Come quickly, if you want, with your people.." - Archiv - Archives de L Orient Latin, "Correspondance fausse du Sultan", ed. W Wattenbach, I, p 299.
- 15b Christina P. Grant, The Syrian Desert, N.Y. 1938, p. 161.
16. Cfr European government reactions to oil blockade 1973-74 ('appeasement of the Arabs' according to much of the press); recognition of Arabic as sixth official UN language 1973; emotional reception of PLO leader Arafat at UN 1974 to the dismay of the US government.
17. Toynbee, Study of History, 1972
18. Discussion in forthcoming paper, 'Expanding historical materialism', Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, Oslo.
19. Adapted from Galtung, On Macro-History and Western Civilization, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, Oslo 1974, p.33. My point 3 is however at variance with Galtung's. For a discussion of nationalisms and 'Super-states', see below p. 50.
20. G.E. von Grunebaum, Concept of Plagiarism, J.N.E.S., III, Oct.1944, pp.234-253.
21. Below, p. 34
22. The 'war criminal' Reginald of Chatillon in 1187 thus secured a glass of water from Saladdin's tent - but was executed all the same because Saladdin had not offered it or known of it, hence no host-guest relationship had been instituted. Abu-Shama, in Erneul & B. le Tresorier, Chronique, ed. ML de Mas Latrie, Paris 1871.

23. Less widely quoted is his conviction: "All believers within the monotheistic religions are Muslims. Judaism and Christianity are but sects within Islam. All are the sons of Abraham." Jeune Afrique 1973/637 p.14, quoting G.'s 6-hour dialogue with 4000 students in Benghazi. Yet since Christianity is only a close replica of Islam, why not choose the 'real thing'? "Throw Christianity... tool of imperialism... out of Africa. Choose Islam!" From speech at 4th Conference of African Youth Movements, Arab Report and Record 1974/6 p.106. 84
24. Oscar Rabinowitz, Fifty Years of Zionism, Anscombe, London 1950
25. T. Herzl, 'Der Baseler Kongress', Ges.Schriften, Berlin 1920. Gesammelte Zionistische Werke, Tel Aviv 1934, p.164.
26. Same; "We shall spirit the penniless natives across the border by refusing them all employment in our land." (p.98) "All property shall be gently expropriated, to remain in exclusively Jewish hands." (p.99) et alia. A draft charter for a Jüdisch-Ottomanische Land-Compagnie, proposed by Herzl 1901, envisaged (Article III) Jewish deportation of the native population. (Adolf Böhm, Die Zionistische Bewegung, Jerusalem 1937, p.706.)
27. E.g. Israel Zangwill, Jewish Chronicle, Dec. 13, 20, 1918. Chaim Weizmann, Jewish Chronicle 13/8-37 (referring talks with British govt). And programme of Zionist Federation in Palestine presented to US govt 1943, in Foreign Relations of the US 1943, Near East and Africa, Wash.DC 1964, vol IV p. 776: "A sovereign Jewish state embracing Palestine and probably Transjordan, transfer of the Arab population to Iraq, and Jewish leadership for the whole Middle East in the fields of economic development and control."
28. Cfr. ancient Roman 'clientela' and 'familia'. Manumission of slaves is enjoined a number of times in the Quran as a good deed. Children of a freeborn and a slave are freeborn.
29. Treaty between Tuğtigin of Damascus and Baldwin; Hitti, p. 641
30. Cfr. present Arab proposals for peace with Israel.
31. Hitti, p 656.
The most famous depiction of life in the Crusader East, by James of Vitry, Bishop of Acre, distinguishes between Latini (or Franks), Pullani (de-Europeanized descendants of mixed marriages) and Suriani (Christian Arabs). The Suriani are 'traitors and really corrupt, they are more than half on the side of the Saracens'. The Pullani, or de-latinized Latins, are described as cultural defectors, effeminate, given to 'Saracenic' ways and even 'entering into alliance with the Muslim Arabs and rejoicing in the peace of the enemies of Christ'. - Vitry, Epistolae II, in Lettres de Jacques de Vitry, ed. RBL Huygens, Leiden 1960, p.86.
32. Suras 3, 89 and 4, 147; cfr also 28, 85 et alia as to punishment being meted out in proportion to deeds, and the hadith of Muhammad that 'there will come a time when Hell will be empty'.
IN Islamic tradition both Limbo and Purgatory were intermediate states between Heaven and Hell, and vividly portrayed. Cfr Asin, Islam and the Divine Comedy, pp 80, 111-121.
33. A hadith; another tradition has it that 'Adam spoke 700 languages, of which Arabic was the most perfect' (Ibn-'Arabi, Futuhât, III, 607). Cfr sura 31, 28: "If all the trees on earth became pens, and the ocean, reinforced by seven oceans, became ink for transcribing the words of God, these would not be exhausted."

34. The Yemenites or South Arabians have Qahtan, the Joktan of Genesis 10, 25, as their 'father figure'. Hamu-Qahtan is still a tribal name in Southern Arabia.
 35. As a shelter for Hagar and Ismael; the town well of Mecca, Zemzem, was made for their benefit, and the 'running' ceremony of the hajj takes place between the two hillocks where Hagar ran desperately to and fro after water under the blazing sun.
 36. al-Halil = Friend, from the Quran
 37. "Kiss me with kisses of thy mouth, for thy kisses are sweeter than wine.." - "black am I, oh daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar.." - which was a North Arabian tribe.
 38. Genesis 29, 1 is the first Biblical reference to these Arabs. Their wisdom is extolled in Kings I 4,30. The 'wise men from the East' in Matt. 2,1, may well have been such Bedouin sheikhs.
 39. The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins, N.York 1928
 40. Cfr Al-Ghazzali (Algazel), Qistās al-Mustaqim, Cairo 1900, p. 60: "Should someone say to you 'Say there is but one God and Jesus is His Prophet', your mind would instinctively reject this as being proper to a Christian only. But that would be only because you do not have enough understanding to grasp that the statement in itself is true and that no reproach can be made to the Christian for this or any other article of his faith, save two - that God is the third of three, and that Muhammad is not a prophet of God. Apart from these two all the other articles of Christian faith are true."
- Cfr St. John of Damascus, who held Islam to be but a heretical form of Christianity, since it denied the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ. - De Haeresibus, Opera Omnia, Paris, vol 1, 110-115.
41. Sura 2, 257
 42. The trait of inclusiveness is reflected in the exegesis of both Algazel and Averroes (al-Ghazzali and Ibn-Rushd) that heaven (paradise), as the supreme aim and ultimate bliss of all men, would be a state in which each would attain his particular desire. Those who in this life were tied down to things material, would in heaven be capable of deriving joy only from sensual delights.. whilst those whose conceptions and desires were free from all material taint, would find delight in the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision alone. Thus Algazel and Averroes provide us with two heavens - the one, material, the other, ideal.
- Miguel Asin, Islam and the Divine Comedy, London 1926, p. 138.
- Cfr Ibn 'Arabi of Murcia, al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya, Bulaq 1293 A.H., II, p. 809: "There are two heavens - the one, sensible, and the other, ideal. In the one, both the animal spirits and the rational souls enjoy bliss; in the other, the rational souls alone. The latter paradise is the heaven of knowledge and intuition."
43. An interesting acknowledgement of Christianity and Islam as different ways to the same truth is found in Ibn 'Arabi, al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya, as quoted by 'Abd al-Wahhab ash-Sha'rani, al-Yawāqit, II, p. 195 and al-Kibrit, II, p. 194:

"God has depicted paradise in accordance with the different 86 degrees of man's understanding. The Messiah defined the delights of paradise as purely spiritual, when, in concluding the instructions given to his disciples in his testament, he said: "Should ye do as I have bidden you, ye will sit with me tomorrow in the Kingdom of Heaven by the side of my Lord and your Lord and behold around His throne the angels singing His praise and glorifying His holiness. And there ye will enjoy all manner of delights, and yet will not partake of either food or drink."

But if the Messiah was so explicit on this point and had recourse to none of the allegories found in our Book, it was simply because his words were spoken to a people conversant with the Torah and the books of the prophets, whose mind was thus prepared for his words. Not so with our prophet Muhammad. His Divine Mission fell among a rude people, who dwelt in deserts and on mountains; who lacked the discipline of learning and believed neither in the resurrection nor in the future life; who were ignorant even of the pleasures of the princes of this world, let alone those of the kings in heaven! Accordingly, most of the descriptions of paradise in his book are based on the body, in order that they might be understood by the people and serve as an incentive to their minds."

44. 'Holy war' was presented as a duty by the Latin Church as well, especially at the time of the Crusades. 'Martyrdom' is seen in precisely the same way as in Islam. Gesta Dei per Francos, 'Acts of God by means of the Franks' is a telling title. In this and other narratives death by hunger, accident etc while on active service for God is martyrdom: "Many of our people received martyrdom there, and many of the poorest people died of hunger for the name of Christ. When they entered Heaven they were wearing the robe of martyrdom." (GDF)
As for intercourse with Muslims (and Jews) St Bernard is typical of the church position: "This we altogether forbid, that for any reason they should enter into an alliance with (the Muslims) ..until with the help of God either their religion or their nation has been destroyed." Cfr also St Bernard's 'Book of Praise of the New Army', exhorting the soldier of Christ to kill any non-Christian 'for the profit of Christ'..'better than that the rod of sinners be left over the just..lest the just reach out their hands to iniquity' - i.e. Christians may begin to pick up the ways of the Arabs.
- Migne, Patrologia Latina, 182, coll. 652.

45. The Ḥarijites

46. Jihad today is also interpreted as legitimate societal defence against structural violence - or against consumerism and sloth, viz. speeches by Bourguiba, Qaddafi.
47. The first 80 years or so only non-Muslims had to pay land-tax. This contributed some converts, but the bulk of the population remained non-Muslim. Later both groups paid the same land-tax, which was the main source of state income - together with zakat (prescribed alms) from Muslims, the jizya (tribute, poll-tax) being a comparatively minor affair. - Encyclopedia of Islam, jizya and ḥarāj; Hitti, p 218.
48. Cecil Roth, Short History of the Jewish People, London 1936. Cfr Hitti, pp 355-6, 498; and correspondence between vizir Hasdai ben-Shaprut of Spain and king of the Ḥazars ca 950, in al-Bakri.

49. Suras 2, 70 and 5, 16-18
50. an-Nadim, Fihrist p 349. Stela at Sian Fu, China, erected 781, reproduced in J. Needham, Science and Civilization in China, vol II.
51. E.g. in the Yugoslav town of Mostar there is a church funded and built by the Ottomans. On the Golan heights the Muslims had contributed all costs for the erection of a cathedral in Qunaitra for their Christian neighbours; it was completed just before the 1967 war, and promptly razed by the occupation authorities.
52. "When the last cities of the coast fell in the 13th century it was taken for granted that the captives would pass into Islam, and not by compulsion so much as by inevitable attraction and absorption." - Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe*, Longman (Librairie du Liban) 1975, p 198; cfr pp 14, 33; cfr note 140
53. Hadith, cfr Burhān ad-Dīn al-Fazārī, *Kitab Ba'ith an-Nufus*, ca 1300; in CD Matthews, *Palestine - Mohammedan Holy Land*, Yale 1949, London 1949.
54. Suras 2, 174; 5, 4; 6, 146; 16, 116
55. At least this was the original and literal reading of the Quran, yet by and by a plethora of hadiths and legends grew up concerning the fate of the soul after death and before resurrection in al-'Araf (Limbo). Cfr Suyūṭī, *Ṣudūr* 126-131.
56. Cfr Ricolto: "They have in Baghdad many places devoted to study and contemplation alone, in the manner of our great monasteries.." - *Itinerarius XXIV*, op.cit. - There were, however, no centralized monastic orders, and the stress was and is on mysticism rather than asceticism.
57. Cfr Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, "Growth of Ties of Dependence", RKP, London 1971; FL Ganshof, *Feudalism*, London 1952
58. UN Statistics; local data are often untrustworthy, but the point has been noted by most M-East anthropologists
59. Tabari, III, p 33; ibn-al-Athir, V, p 318
60. Cfr Sania Hamady, *Temperament and character of the Arabs*, Twayne, NY 1971; and Arab Socialist Union and Ba'ath Party documents in Hanna/Gardner, *Arab Socialism* cfr decree of Qaddafi banning political parties in Libya 1972 and stressing 'constructive democracy' in one new Arab Socialist Union party
61. Cfr 'China Reconstructs' 1969-70, with articles on how to solve all manner of practical problems (e.g. how to win ping-pong world championship) by applying Maoist dialectics. An interesting parallel to the Islamic how-to-cut-a-water-melon (below p 31) is an article on how to preserve water-melons over a span of time for sale, according to Mao.
62. Ibn-Ishāq, *Sīrat rasūl Illāhī*

63. This applies even more to the hadiths: "No man dies but his good and evil deeds appear in person before him.." "At the judgement of the soul the Quran will appear in its defence before the angels Munkar and Nakir. It will ask the soul: Do you know me? I am the Quran which you recited and which delivered you from evil. Fear not." Many hadiths enlarge upon the scene where members of the body confess their sins: "The thigh relates the adultery it has committed. The accused indignantly refutes the charge but God silences the lying tongue. Whereupon each member of his body confesses its share.." - From Suyuṭī, *Sharḥ as-Ṣudūr*, Cairo 1329 H. In Arabic tales of miraculous journeys to Hell there are frequent descriptions of trees with foliage like human heads which cry out when torn. - V Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages Arabes..publies dans l'Europe 1810-1885*, Liege 1892-1913, VII, 33, 56; *Talabi, Kitab qīṣaṣ al-anbiā'*, Cairo 1324 H., p 222.
64. "The fire, which is cognizant of the degree of their guilt, in some reaches to the ankles, in others to the knees, and in others again, to the breast." - Legend on the fire of purgatory, in *Muḥtaṣir taḍkirat al-Qurṭubī li-sh-Sha'rānī*, Cairo 1308 H., p 81.
65. Martyrs of jihad and Muslim children also reincarnate in birds, according to hadiths (Suyuṭī, *Ṣudūr*, 96-98), living in a garden or wood at the gates of Paradise; occasionally mystics and ascetics revisit the earth in this form. Cfr Asin, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, p 182. The great (ca 5000 pages) *Geographical Dictionary* (*Mu'jam al-Buldan*) of Yaqut contains, in dry scientific prose, several entries on jinn, e.g. volume IV, under the word *Madinat an-Nuḥas* (p 455) and the word *Wābar* (p 896), from ca 1200.
66. Joseph Needham remarks: "On Islamic thought concerning 'laws of Nature' I have been able to find out very little. Dr Zaki Validi Togan informs me that there is some discussion of the subject in the *Tukhfat al-Faqir* (The Gift of the Poor Man) written by Shams al-Ijī in Persia ca. 1397 (unique MS in Jami Library, Istanbul, no. 231). The whole question would repay attention by Arabists and Iranists." - A laws-of-Nature concept is manifestly present in the Quran, viz. above; and is also expressed in a number of medieval MS titles, e.g: ibn-Sina's (Avicenna's) *al-Qanun fi aṭ-Ṭibb*, The Law in Medicine, which in translation dominated medical science in Europe from the 12th to 17th centuries; abu-r-Raiḥān al-Biruni's *al-Qanun al-Ma'sūdi fi l-Hay'ah wa-l-Nujum*, The Ma'sūdi Law in Physionomy and Astronomy (literally: the Stars). - Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Cambridge Univ.Press 1956, vol II, p. 534. Needham himself makes the point that the laws-of-Nature concept can be traced back to ancient Babylon, 'being natural..in a centralized Oriental despotism'. He also contends that Chinese notions of science were transmitted to Europe by Arabs and Jews, especially that of the microcosmos and macrocosmos as being mutually reflective. Vol II, p. 296.

70. "Modern technology is the result - very indirect no doubt - of a perspective which, having banished from Nature the gods and the genies, and having also by this very fact rendered it profane, has ended by allowing it to be 'profaned' in the most brutal sense of the word. The Promethean Westerner - but not every Westerner - is affected by a kind of innate contempt for Nature. For him it is a property to be enjoyed or exploited, or even an enemy to conquer." - F Schuon, 'The Symbolist Outlook', Tomorrow, Winter issue 1966, p 55. An instance of this Promethean attitude; from Norway's leading newspaper Aftenposten 8/12-75, the opening words of a eulogy on an octogenarian: "When he started out in the State Road Works the countryside tracks eked themselves along in the terrain in the way topography decided. When he bid the department goodbye half a century later, scenery was something one carted away on trucks."
71. Cfr. Abu-l-Faraj al-Isbahani, Kitab al-Agani; "We spin about and whirl our way through life, Then rich and poor alike, at last seek rest, Below the ground in hollow pits slate-covered, And there do we abide.." - Abu-Tammam, Diwan, Beirut 1889, p 562.
72. A Swedish Islamist has demonstrated the Syrian Christian origin of the houris and servant youths in the Paradise of Islam; a number of apocryphal traditions, and proper names such as Isa, betray Syrian origin. - Tor Andre, Life of Muhammad, Islam.
73. Hadith, based on sura
74. Or rather, several hadiths. E.g.: "The excellence of the extract of violets above all other extracts is as the excellence of me above all the rest of creation" (!) "Adam was hurled down from Paradise with three things, a myrtle tree, which is the chief of sweet-scented plants in the world, an ear of wheat, the chief food of the world, and a date, chief fruit of this world" - "The white rose was created from my sweat on the night of the nocturnal journey (mi raj), the red rose from the sweat of Gabriel, and the yellow from that of al-Buraq" - Suyuti, Husein al-Mubadara fi Ahbar Misr, II, 236-245, Cairo, 1321 H.
75. Ca 850-60 some 50 Christians of Cordoba deliberately sought and received martyrdom by the one means available - publicly blaspheming the Prophet. In Alvaro's hagiography of Eulogio, the man behind the scheme, Muslim lack of understanding of the Christian mentality is brought out in the words of a member of the amir's council, who begs Eulogio to desist: "If fools and idiots are carried away into this deplorable and fatal self-destruction, whereas you are endowed with suitable wisdom and are renowned for your way of life, what madness has compelled you to risk a fatal misfortune and to forget the natural love of life? I beg you to listen to me and I ask you not to destroy yourself as a result of something you have not properly considered. Just say one word in your hour of need, and afterwards you can enjoy your faith wherever you wish. We promise never to examine you any further." - Alvarus Cordubiensis, Vita vel Passio S.Eulogii, in Migne, Patrologia Latina, 115.

The great eccentric and Catalan scholar Raymond Lull twice tried to achieve martyrdom in North Africa by attacking the Prophet, but was shipped off by the local qadis. - A life of Roman Lull, tr.EA Peers, London 1925, p 310-312.

76. Not only ethical, but practical and scientific also.
Cfr the *Taqwin as-Sihha* of the Christian Arab physician Ibn-Butlan: "The first care of health is the preparation of the air, which affects the heart. The second is the regulation of food and drink. The third, of movement and rest. The fourth is restraint from too much sleep and too much watching. The fifth, the regulation of the relaxation and constriction of the humours. The sixth is regulation of the person to moderate joy, anger, fear and anxiety. So the preservation of health will be in these methods of balance, and the removal of these six from that balance makes illness." - *Tacuinum Sanitatis*, in *De Virtutibus Medicinarum*, Strasbourg 1531.
77. Sura
78. "The rise of a purely material and quantitative science of nature in the West...and the illimitable and unrestricted application of modern science in the West in the form of technology depends on the fact that Christianity is a religion without a Sacred Law or as Muslims would say without a Shari'ah. ..The lack of a Sacred Law in Christianity not only made social upheavals easier but also facilitated the upheaval of nature through its unrestricted and unlimited exploitation." - Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *The Encounter of Man and Nature*, Allen & Unwin, London 1968, p. 133-4.
79. Fredrik Nielsen, *Kirkehistorie*, Gyldendal, Copenhagen 1902.
80. The story is related 7 or 8 times in the Quran; this is from the most detailed narrative
81. Sura
82. The Islamic tendency to 'rehabilitate' Christ from the Christian picture of him may also be discerned in the insistence that he at least in the future will lead a 'normal' life, i.e. after his Second Coming he shall rule the earth - and marry and beget children (hadith)
If Jesus died, it was by the breaking of his bones, not by crucifixion (orthodox reading of the Quran)
83. Only shirk leads to 'eternal' condemnation, i.e. Hell; other sins are expiable in Purgatory
84. An early view of Islam as pandering to human weakness is found in the 13th century itinerant monk and polemicist Ricoldo di Monte Croce: "The Muslim religion is wide (= easygoing, liberal) and confused, hidden, most deceitful, irrational and violent. It is confused because it cannot be reduced to order - and confused in its confusion: It says, 'Do not do such and such, because it is forbidden by God; and if you do it, God is merciful and compassionate and knows that you are weak'."
By the word 'hidden' R. means that it is hard to know what Islam really says, e.g. the prohibition of usury and fornication according to R. is accompanied by legal means of evading the law.
- Ricoldo, *Itinerarius*, X, p.117,
85. Sura
86. Cfr Alvaro of Cordoba, who characteristically but quite inaccurately avers that Islam dedicates Friday 'to the stomach and to lust, when it ought to be given to sadness and fasting', Islam teaches 'jollity and the allurements of feasting.. it applies no legal brake for the repression of shamelessness'. - Alvarus Cordubensis, *op.cit.*

87. A key passage in Ibn Tufail's famous Hayy Ibn Yaqzan sums up much of the same argument; Hayy has, through years of reflection come to understand the Truth, he manages to guide one friend, Absal, and fails to guide another, Salaman:

"Hayy now understood the human condition. He saw that most men are no better than unreasoning animals, and realized that all wisdom and guidance, all that could possibly help them was contained already in the words of the prophets and the religious traditions. None of this could be different. There was nothing to be added. There is a man for every task and everyone belongs to the life for which he was created. "This was God's way with those who came before, and never will you find a change in the ways of God."

So Hayy went to Salaman and his friends and apologized, dissociating himself from what he had said. He told them that he had seen the light and realized they were right. He urged them to hold fast to their observance of all the statutes regulating outward behaviour and not delve into things that did not concern them, submissively to accept all the most problematical elements of the tradition and shun originality and innovation, follow in the footsteps of their righteous forebears and leave behind everything modern. He cautioned them most emphatically not to neglect religion or pursue the world as the vast majority of people do.

Hayy and Absal now knew that even this aspiring group fell short and could be saved only in their own way. If ever they were to venture beyond their present level to the vantage point of insight, what they had would be shattered, and even so they would be unable to reach the level of the blessed. They would waver and slip and their end would be all the worse. But if they went along as they were until overtaken by death, they would win salvation and come to sit on the right.

- Ed. L E Goodman, Twayne, NY 1972, p. 164-5.

88. Sura 83

89. Sura 75, 1

90. Cfr

in Loutfiyya and Churchill,
The point is made by St Eulogio of Cordoba (850's AD) and his hagiographer Alvaro: "All his (Muhammad's) uncouth people make the admirable style of Arabic into something senseless.. Like metal they have the style of speaking well, without the sense.."
- Alvarus Cord., op.cit.

91. In counterpoint to this simplicist view of the superstructure as being merely the product and expression of a material basis, there is the development of historical analysis under Stalin into the opposite extreme, equally 'vulgar-Marxist', stressing the active role of the superstructure on the basis, and ending in canonization of the 'primordial progressiveness' and 'creative genius' of the Great Russian people. - Cfr KF Shtepa, Russian Historians and the Soviet State, Rutgers, NHaven 1962, esp. pp 203-4, 210, 230, 233-240, 245, 255-6, 264-6, 268-9, 271, 281-3, 295

92. Jerusalem Post 16/8-67

Cfr General Ezer Weizman, head of Herut Party, Reuter 15/3-70: "Hebron was, is and will be part of Israel. King David was crowned in Hebron and reigned there for seven years and six months." Cfr remarks on 'Historic Ties' and 'Archeology' in the official yearbook 'Facts about Israel', distributed by all Israeli embassies.

The leading Palestinian poet of today, Mahmud Darwish, has pointed up Israeli historical grids in diverse contexts, e.g. in the conflict over Baram and Ikrit in North Galilee 1972, where the native Maronite Arabs petitioned for the right to return, having been evicted in 1950: "What is Kafr Bar'am? There is a placard in Kafr Bar'am put up by the Office of the Prime Minister which reads: "During the days of the Second Temple this was one of many Jewish settlements in upper Galilee. The ruins of the synagogue bear witness to the very high standard of living here even after the destruction of the Temple." At this point history abruptly ceases and the many centuries of after are ignored by the Israeli placard. It is as though Kafr Bar'am had moved with one stride from the Second Temple to the state of Israel. As though history had slept for centuries." - Shu'un Filastiniyya, September 1972.

93. Cfr interview with P.M. Rabin, der Spiegel 1974
94. Michel Bar-Zohar, The Armed Prophet: A Biography of David Ben-Gurion, London 1967, p. 151.
95. Lausanne (UN Special Committee) mediation records
- Note the state-versus-state (and European-versus-European) approach, and non-cognizance of native 'claims' (and UN Partition resolution of 1947)
96. Cfr the Israeli writer Amos Oz on 'the common view of both the Canaanite movement in Israel and the advocates of Jewish nationalism (in general) towards the Arabs, which they consider the new and direct materialization of the Amorites, Ammonites, Arameans..' - 'Meaning of a Homeland', New Outlook, Tel Aviv, vol. X no.9, p 14.
97. Other elements: The militia and youth brigades which were assembled in 1947-48 among the Palestinian Arabs were called al-Futuwa, meaning approximately chivalry - the name of several knightly associations in the Middle Ages; the expression that fallen fighters are 'martyrs', and the naming of all fighting units after 'the martyred NN' ('martyr', or literally 'witness' is in common usage in Arabic, also among Christians, cfr 'Martyrs' Square' in Beirut; and above all: the call for a 'secular democratic unitary Palestine in which Muslims, Jews and Christians have equal rights and obligations' betrays an inclusivist culture grid, being often explicitly coupled with (somewhat idealized!) references to the tolerant Arab/Islamic past; the word 'secular' (a wishful catchword) apart, the insistence on a unitary-pluralist formula - and even more, on 'equal rights within an Arab Palestine', which sounds absurd to many Europeans - reflects this grid quite accurately
Cfr also note
98. meaning one who sacrifices his life for a cause; used esp. of the lowest grade in the Assassin hierarchy, and described by Marco Polo (The Book of Ser M. Polo, the Venetian, tr. H Yule London 1875, I, pp 146-9) - Cfr ibn-Battuta, I, p 166.
99. P. Jacobs, The Mood in Tel Aviv, Ramparts, Jan. 1974

100. The long-term view of President Sadat, envisaging a withering away of the Israeli state, or its qualitative change, as a result of the dynamics set in motion by a peace conclusion, can only be inferred by analysing the whole mosaic of his acts and statements; but cfr statement by Egyptian Presidential spokesman Tahsin Bashir Jan-Feb 1975 to the effect that the PLO may get a mini-state in the West Bank and Gaza in the short run, through Egyptian support, and together with the right forces in Israel establish a common state through growing recognition of common interests in the long run. - Note that both this and the PLO strategy are 'inclusivist'.
101. Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age
The same view is expressed by Qusṭanṭīn Zurāiq, Clovis Maqṣūd and other Christian writers
102. Qudāma, Kitāb al-Haraj, ed. de Goeje, Leyden 1889, p 259
103. The Quran itself refers to the Muslims as (inter alia) the umma waṣāta, or 'middle people'
(cfr Seyyed Hossein Naṣr, Encounter of Man and Nature, Allen & Unwin, London 1968, p 93)
104. Stalin, The Problems of Leninism (speeches), Moscow 1951 (Swedish version), p 524: "We must march forward in such a way that the working class of the whole world when it sees us can say: That is my vanguard, that is my shock battalion, that is my proletarian power, that is my fatherland."
105. The cultural proximity of the Eastern churches to Islam was noted by Ricolto di Monte Croce; the inaccuracy of the passage merely underlines the cleavage with Europe: "Their (the Nestorian) position about Christ empties the whole mystery out of the Incarnation, and they assert the same about Christ as the Muslims do. Whence also I found among old and authentic stories, which the Muslims had, that these very Nestorians were the friends and allies of Muhammad." - Ricolto, Itinerarius, XXX-XXXII, p.135-6.
106. Balāḍuri, pp 116, 131, 137 especially
(ed. de Goeje, Leyden 1866; tr. Hitti, Origins of the Islamic State, NY 1916/1924, pp 179, 201, 211)
107. ibn-'Abd-al-Hakam, Futūḥ Miṣr wa aḥbārūhu, ed. CC Torrey, NHaven 1922, p 82
108. A strong minority is Shafi'aite Orthodox Muslim, though, and their pent-up rage broke out in the 1962 coup against the Zaidite Imam
109. Eban, Tide of Nationalism, Horizon Press 1959 p 38, cfr Foreign Affairs
110. 'Abd al-Qādir Ḥātīm, ash-Shu'ubiyya, Dar al-Qaṣbiyya, July 1965
111. The National Charter (al-Mitaq al-Waṭani), Cairo 1962, the 'Bible' of the Arab Socialist Movement in Egypt, is one example
112. Interview with Information Minister of Lebanon 1971:
"We are certainly not afraid of Israeli economic dominance in the event of peace. We will even say welcome to the Israelis, and you shall see who will get the better of whom. Remember, we are Phoenicians."
113. Hitti, History of the Arabs, p 281
114. Cfr Isaac Deutscher, The Un-Jewish Jew and Other Essays.

115. The shift is paralleled, or rather anticipated, in Soviet writings from the eve of World War II, which incidentally merge 'socialist culture' with Great Russian chauvinism:
 "No less dangerous and harmful are mistakes along the lines of blackening the past of the Great Russian people and understating its role in world history. Experience proves that any undervaluation of the role and significance of the Russian people in world history is directly tied in with admiration for foreign lands. Nihilism in the evaluation of the great achievements of Russian culture and the culture of the other peoples of the USSR is the reverse side of fawning before the bourgeois culture of the West." - Editorial, Voprosy Istorii 12/1948 (Problems of History, the leading Soviet h. magazine)
 The dichotomy is generally seen as one of 'the most progressive socialist culture and its conquest over the reactionary ideas of the capitalistic world' (- Vestnik drevnej istorii, 4/1946 p 3), stressing 'sharp, relentless, ruthless struggle towards all that is foreign..and against bourgeois ideology' (Speech of Politburo member and chief ideologist Zhdanov, in Voprosy filosofii 1/1947 p 143).
 "A new course of Russian history.. shall reveal the significance and role of the Great Russian people in the development of the science and culture of humanity and reflect the priority of Soviet science and culture over the decaying culture of the capitalistic world."
 - Voprosy Istorii 3/1949 p 155.
 'Fawning before the West' became a standard expression:
 "A no less important task is the relentless criticism of all manifestations of cosmopolitanism and fawning before the corrupt Western culture of rotten capitalism. Admiration for foreign lands..this national nihilism and antipatriotism aids American imperialism.." - Voprosy Istorii 11/1949 p 4.
116. Walter Victor, Karl Marx, Berlin 1953, s 14.
117. Marx/Engels Marxisme, overs. Oslo 1952, p 10.
118. This Euclidian axiom, though, corresponds just as well to the ancient Greek cosmology, viz. the cyclical view; cfr the interesting attempt of A. Toynbee to combine the cyclical (rotating) and linear movements (towards God, progress) in the concept of the 'wheel of history moving ever forward'.
119. M Finley, Slavery in Classical Antiquity, Heffer, London ca 1972
120. The Quran uses the same simile, but without singling out the 'rich man' (sura 7, 38)
121. Weizmann, Trial and Error; Christopher Sykes, Crossroads to Israel, London 1968
122. Sura 45, 13-14
123. The point is, there are a number of maps, all akin, but all somewhat different - viz., literally, the Columbus expedition versus Arab/Islamic complaisance, expressed in the words 'on this side of the world no-one knows what is' (regarding the Western hemisphere) - though the world was acknowledged to be round
124. Sura 92

125. Sura 11, 85-86
126. Sura 29, 7
127. Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, *al-Ishtirakiyya*, Hatirat, ed. al-Mahzumi, Beirut 1931, p 188.
128. al-Mitāq al-Watani; and Speech 18/12-61 in F Sayegh, *Theoretical Structure of Nasser's Socialism*, in Hanna Gardner, *Arab Socialism*, Brill, Leiden 1969, pp 99-.
- 129/132. same
133. The famous 12th century theologian Fahr ad-Din ar-Razi on the basis of the Quran and hadiths described Paradise as consisting of 8 main divisions, subdivided into 100 stages. - Ibn-Maḥlūf, *Kitab al-'Ulum al-Fāhirati fi-n-Naḥr fi Umur al-Aḥirati*, Cairo 1317 H, II, p 58.
Another hierarchical exposition of Paradise:
"There are as many grades as there are virtues, each of these again is subdivided into the lowest, the intermediate and the highest grades. Thus, the martyrs of Islam occupy the hundred highest grades as a reward for faith; another hundred correspond to each of the other virtues; then come a hundred grades for just rulers; then a hundred for sincere witnesses, and so forth. If two of the elect are equally deserving by reason of faith (whether mystic or theological), both occupy the same grade; but if there is any difference in either the quantity or the quality of their faith, then they are placed apart. And so it is with the other virtues." - 'Izz ad-Dīn ibn-'Abd as-Salām, in ibn-Maḥlūf, op.cit. (14th century) Cfr Asin p 149.
134. "In each grade of vision a relative degree of bliss will be experienced. Thus, the joy of some of the saints will be purely intellectual and that of others, emotional, physical, or imaginative, as the case may be. As for the mass of the faithful, the enjoyment derived by each from the Beatific Vision will also be proportional to his capacity for understanding the theological dogmas of his master."
- Ibn-'Arabi, *Futūḥāt*, II, 112, op.cit.
Above all, as to class differentiation and specialization:
"Each knows his allotted grade and seeks it as a child seeks its mother's breast, and iron, the lodestone. To occupy or even aspire to a higher grade is impossible. In the grade in which he is placed each sees the realisation of his highest hopes. He loves his own grade passionately and cannot conceive that a higher could exist. If it were not so, heaven would not be heaven but a mansion of grief and bitter disillusion. Nevertheless, those in the superior grades participate in the enjoyment of the lower grades."
- Ibn-'Arabi, *Futūḥāt*, III, 577, op.cit.

136. The word 'Arab' until less than a century ago was generally synonymous with Bedouin to townsmen in the Middle East. In the Quran it has the same meaning (esp. the form ikrāb). In 1970 I interviewed 20 officials of the Arab League + 30 of the staff at the Cairo university on the implications of the word Arab: 23 defined it as mainly a question of language, 15 as a 'subjective' phenomenon ('who calls himself Arab is Arab'), 8 as ethnicity (blood, race, peoplehood) 4 as religion (Islam).
137. "Many of the young Israeli generation not only look down on the native Arabs; they turn also, with pride in their own valor and in bitter disgust, from the two thousand years of the diaspora, from the life of their fathers and grandfathers which they reject. They have cut themselves off from the 'ghetto' and they try to restore a link with a far-off primitive past. Over thousands of years they stretch out their hands to reach the zealots who died defending Bethar, Massada and Jerusalem; the Maccabees who threw off the foreign yoke; the proud kings who conquered neighboring lands and against whom the prophets rose, and the desert tribes who subjugated and exterminated the natural population of Canaan. Out of opposition to the spiritual foundations of prophetic Judaism and Jewish life in the diaspora, the youth wishes to be the more 'valiant', the more thoroughminded. From one extreme they have gone to another."
- Hans Kohn, Zion and the Jewish National idea, Menorah Journal, autumn-winter 1958.
138. The 1970 massacres in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan are perhaps just as constitutive as the impact of Zionism. Yassir Arafat mobilized (or was the medium of) a grid of primary importance when he appealed to the Arab states for intervention in Jordan: "This is worse than Karbala!" - Karbala being the place in Iraq where 'Ali's son Hussein with some 200 adherents, mostly unarmed, were butchered by the 'Umayyad forces, having declined to surrender peacefully. This seemingly insignificant battle in the year 680 became the starting point of the Shi'a - and gave expression to a Palestinian's feeling of separateness from Jordan 1300 years later.
139. Verbal 'hedgings' are widespread in modern Arabic usage too. Exasperating to Europeans is the common answer when one calls at a house to hear whether NN is at home: 'taqriban' - meaning 'approximately', meaning again that NN either has just left, will return shortly, or is busy inside. President Sadat was asked in an American interview whether he was following the same course as Nasser. Answer: "I am quite sure that if Nasser had been alive he would have been doing the same as I am, perhaps." - Time magazine 1974
140. Alvaro of Cordoba reviles those Christians (quite a few) who become Muslims 'of their free will'. He admits reluctantly that Christians 'are allowed to freely bear the standard of the Christian faith by the followers of the same prophet, as one of the privileges of their rule', but this must be explained not out of Muslim patience but the providence of God. Christians are oppressed, says Alvaro, whose Christian critics 'say that the martyrs proceeded without any hostile stimulus; I will confirm that they were oppressed by the zeal of the Arabs'. - Alvarus, op.cit.708-762.