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(English translation of Allama Parwez's article in Urdu entitled "Socha Karo")

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One of the marvels of the Quran is its style. When dealing with a subject, whether facts about the universe or the deep mysteries of the human brain, the language is simple, clear, eloquent, and highly focused. As a result of this highly focused way of expression, this comprehensive revealed book of nature and complete code of conduct is so small that if it is printed in fine English type, it will not spread over more than a few pages.

Here is an example of this highly focused way of expression: Prophet Mohammad (P) had been preaching the Quranic way of living to the people of Mecca for quite some time, and they had been vehemently opposing it. Finally one day the Prophet (P) told them that instead of having lengthy discussions he wanted to have a very brief word with them. The Meccans did not mind listening to a few words. When the Prophet (P) found them willing, he told them the word is very important and worthy of their full attention, but if it is inconvenient for everyone to pause, then one or two people at a time can stop and listen. When the people became psychologically attentive he told them that all he had to say was, "Be in the habit of reflecting." (34:46)

In these few words the Quran has brought to light many hidden facts of human life. The real significance and true import of these thought provoking words can only be appreciated by those people (nations) who are aware of the power and scope of human intellect and imagination. Suffice it to say that the Quran constantly exhorts Muslims to reason, think, reflect, and deliberate. It goes so far as to say, "the people who do not use these faculties are not human beings. They are living their lives on the animal level, even worse than that. These are the cursed people." (7:179)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THINKING

i. Just repetition or growth and development?

When the Quran says that those who do not utilize their mental faculties are living like animals, firstly it brings to light the power and importance of human intellect, and secondly, it gives insight into the history of creation and evolution. According to the Quran, as supported by modern scientific discoveries, life (not the life of an individual or a species) started with the creation of a single cell. This single cell, through evolutionary processes reached the human form. In this evolutionary journey of life there are two points worth noting:

- a. Any species that shuns the struggle of life at a particular stage of its evolution remains at that stage and does not evolve any further. Goats can only reproduce other goats like itself. In other words, when a species stagnates at a particular stage of evolutionary life, its life ceases to be evolutionary and it becomes cyclic.
- b. Every species that evolves into a higher form obtains more mental capability that it had in its previous form. When a species ceases to evolve, the growth in its power of thinking comes to a halt as well. When life evolved into human form, its mental capability was termed thought or imagination. The capability to reason and reflect is a human trait. Animals do not have this capability, this is why people who do not use their God given mental abilities are considered worse than animals animals have not been given creative thought, they use instinct.

i. Intellectual evolution

People with superficial knowledge usually reject the validity of the theory of evolution on the grounds that human beings did not evolve into a higher species. They ignore the fact that evolution no longer takes place in bodies or forms. The evolution of life into human form is the beginning of intellectual evolution and this evolution is still taking place. Consider from an intellectual point of view that the cave dwellers of hundreds of thousands of years ago and the moon conquering humans of today belong to the same species. When it comes to intelligence, today's humans are definitely different than the cave dwellers of long ago.

The purpose of divine revelation is to activate and polish the human intellect and increase its field of activity. The Quran constantly appeals to reason and experiment. It says, "These people do not ponder and reflect on the Quran. It seems as if their minds have locked themselves up from the inside so that nothing can get into them." (47:24). According to the Quran, those people who readily believe in anything without first questioning or thinking over it are not Mumineen. While describing the traits of the Mumineen Allah says, "these are the people who do not accept without scrutiny and deliberation." (25:73) They accept His signs on the basis of knowledge and insight. As far as the vastness of the field of human thought and reflection is concerned, the Quran says, "Allah brings forward the clues and hints in such a fashion thereby enabling you to reflect on this life and the hereafter." (2:219)

By bestowing human beings with mental abilities, Allah distinguished them from animals, and by bringing the hereafter into the purview of thought, believes have been differentiated from the nonbelievers. Thus Ad-Deen (Islam) means the use of thought and reflection in both lives, in this world and in the hereafter.

As we have already seen, according to the theory of evolution, human intelligence is ever developing and increasing. Therefore, the level of mental abilities of the people of a particular period in history cannot be considered the benchmark. The above mentioned verses (47:24, 25:73, 2:219) describe Allah's ordained way of living (Islam). Man made religion endorses quite the opposite view. It considers the intellectual achievements of a particular period in history as the benchmark and rules out any further progress and development. Such attitude brings human life down to the level of animals where the purpose of life is repetition and maintenance of the status quo. Following the footsteps of one's forefathers as the purpose of life and allowing no change or development is called conformity (taqleed). The word Taqleed is derived from the word qaladah (collar). A collar is used to keep animals under control and to use them as desired. Pondering the meaning of the word conformity (taqleed) shows its effect on human beings. It discourages thought and reflection because first, it is not based upon reason and second, century old thoughts cannot stand the test of modern times. Instead of admitting its own fallibility and incompleteness, religion forbids the use of reason. By this deception religion insulates itself from all the ill effects of "disbelief" and "heresy." If someone challenges and criticizes such an attitude, the religious establishment incites the masses to condemn the heretics because their ancestor's school of thought is being threatened. Conformity devoids the masses of thought and reason. When they are incited emotionally their fury erupts like a volcano. The worst thing in the world that can happen is when ignorance jumps into action and takes the law into its own hands. Religion can buy some time by using such tactics, but permanence is not its fortune. Religious minded nations always lag further behind nations that use their imagination. Modern nations keep progressing and gaining strength while "Islamic" nations stagnate and become weak to the point there they cannot defend themselves. With the passage of time they wither away and in the words of the Quran, "Neither heaven nor earth shed a tear over their demise." (44:29)*

ii. Studying and exploring the Universe

As mentioned earlier, the Quran stressed reflection on both worlds, i.e., this world and the hereafter. This world means the outer physical universe. Allah states that "the heavenly bodies and earth have been brought under control for you (human beings) by Allah. There are signs for those who think and reflect." (45:13)

The universe is controlled by the laws of nature, which are permanent and unchangeable. These laws are made by Allah but can be discovered by human thought. By discovering the laws of nature, hidden forces can be brought under control and utilized for the benefit of humanity. With the ongoing development of human knowledge, there will be more and more opportunities for the conquest of nature.

When religion declares the intellectual achievements of a particular time in history as the last word, human knowledge freezes at that level and intellectual stagnation sets in. Whenever a scholar or scientist makes a new discovery based on modern thought and knowledge he is condemned to death by the religious establishment on the grounds of heresy. This happens simply because these new revelations are not in line with the thoughts of ancestors. European Christian history of 16th and 17th century is the history of conflict between religion and science. In that era scientists like

Galileo and Copernicus were persecuted simply because they said that the earth was round and that it revolved around the sun. Finally western nations got tired of religious interference and emancipated themselves from its hold. As a result, today they are capable of reaching the moon. Their priests, even today, say the universe came into being on some specific date. Nobody pays attention to this kind of talk outside the four walls of the church.

DIVINE VALUES OF LIFE

Developed nations do not believe in the hereafter. In other words they do not believe in Allah's law of requital. This means that these nations do not believe the spiritual side of life, which checks the excessive forces of the material side and thus maintains equilibrium. As a result, the more these nations progress in conquering the forces of nature, the more they turn the world into a living hell, all the while dragging the whole of humanity into it because of the clash of their mutual self-interests. According to Dr. Iqbal, the modern civilization is suffering from self-inflicted wounds. It has made tremendous strides in the fields of science and technology but cannot solve human problems.

The Quran has brought both this world and the hereafter into the scope of human thought. Thought, pertaining to this world, represents various branches of scientific knowledge. Western nations, free from religious constraints, are working hard to acquire more and more scientific knowledge. Acquiring scientific knowledge is prescribed as a duty for every Muslim in the sixth century. From among many Quranic verses on the subject, only one is being quoted here. It says, "Have you ever pondered the system that brings rain (the water cycle)? What are the laws governing the production of various crops, and flowers and fruits of different varieties and colors? Have you ever pondered the structure of mountains? These mountains look like unwieldy heaps of rock, but their different colors point towards an evolutionary system. Human beings, animals and cattle are of many different kinds and each species has its unique properties." (35:27-28) These two verses cover quite a few different fields of scientific knowledge. After this statement the verse continues, "The Book of nature is for everyone but only those who bow to the awe-inspiring grandeur of its laws, who think and reflect upon these in the light of knowledge and discernment. These are the people who are really entitled to be called *ulema*." In light of the above verses the word *ulema* can only be translated as scientist. When Islam was practiced as a way of life, only a scientist was called an *aalim*.

When the Quranic way of life was downgraded to a religion, research in various branches of knowledge came to a halt. Scientific knowledge became synonymous with blasphemy and heresy. Whatever concepts about the universe were prevalent at that time became the last word on the subject. Thinking or saying anything against or different from those concepts was deemed as apostasy. For example, according to religious beliefs man was made of clay. A rib was cleaved to create woman from him. These two individuals initiated the spread of the human race. The first man (Adam) was 60 yards tall. The sky was a lump of glass and stars were studded in it like jewelry. The sun slept under Allah's throne every evening and angels brought it back up every morning. Hell is allowed to breathe only twice a year; when it breathes out, we get summer, when it breathes in, we get winter. The earth is flat and stationary. The tribes of Israel which were lost were borne in the form of mice, etc. etc. these are the saying of the ahadith in Bukhari. If anyone refuses to believe in even one of these sayings he or she is declared a kaafir by the religious establishment. The other nations of the world have progressed a lot, but because of intellectual inertia, we Muslims lag far behind and depend on these developed nations in every walk of life. The religious establishment not only opposes the acquiring of modern knowledge, it even does not allow one to benefit from scientific inventions. Use of the radio is undesirable. Watching t.v. is a sinful act, because it depicts human forms. Only the devil talks on the phone. Organ grafting is forbidden. When the astronauts landed on the moon our religious establishment refused to believe it on grounds that the moon's surface is such that no man can set foot on it. The Prophet (P) pointed his finger and broke the moon into two halves. One half passed from under his right arm and the other passed under his left arm. In our society people who present such "theories" are called *ulema* (scientists). The difference between an Islamic scientist and a religious scientist is vast.

PREPARATION FOR THE HEREAFTER: PROGRAM FOR THE FUTURE

This inactivity in the field of studying and exploring the world around us and failure to take advantage of the bounties of nature makes our life poor, miserable, and meaningless. Lack of thought and preparation for the life in the hereafter makes us losers in both worlds.

To prepare us for the hereafter, the Quran makes mandatory the establishment of a social structure based upon divine values. The characteristics of these values and principles are as follows:

- i. Like the laws of nature these values are not the creation of the human mind, they are made by Allah.
- ii. These values, like the laws of nature, are permanent and unchangeable.
- iii. Laws of nature can be discovered by human thought and experiment, but these values and principles are provided to humans by Allah through His prophets and revelations. These values in their final, complete, and unchangeable form can only be found in the Quran. Human thought and reflection with the passage of time, is testament to the truthfulness of these values and principles.

The laws of nature and the revealed values both work in the same manner. The laws of nature, like lasting principles, are firm and unchangeable. Human ingenuity, in the light of these laws, derives new theories, makes new revelations, and goes on making inventions of different kinds. Likewise, in a society that is established upon divine revelations, the revealed values and principles provide unchangeable boundaries. The society, within this framework draws up operational details as demanded by the needs of the permanent values. The operational details provide the society with up to date mechanisms to implement the revealed values, and are regularly updated in accordance with the changing times and the development of human thought. These values and principles are themselves are not subject to change. The operational or administrative details, in religious terminology, are called the Code of Religious Law (*Shariat*). The method through which deletion and addition, modification and reform, continues is called the exercise of judgement or innovation (*ijtihad*). This means to innovate through intellectual exertion, i.e., the use of thought and reflection, which the Quran so avidly supports.

CHANGE OF DIRECTION

As long as Islam retained its pristine form, i.e., a system of life based on divine values, the system functioned in the manner mentioned above. There was rule of human thought within the framework of divine values. Afterwards when the Muslims lost the thread of reality, Islam was degraded to a religion. The substance of Deen gave way to token beliefs and lifeless rituals. The ummah was shackled by tradition. At this juncture two things happened:

- i. Intellectual activities came to an end. Human thought among Muslims froze at the level of the time period when Islam was changed into a religion.
- ii. With this change, *ijtihad* became undesirable. The *shariat* which was enacted to fulfill the needs of that particular time, was declared permanent and immutable. This religious code of law is also known as *fiqh*. This change of direction as a whole took place during the period of the Abbassid monarchy. The imprint of this dictatorship on the laws of the land was inevitable.

Today the Muslim nations, when it comes to progress in the material world as well as in the world of values, stand exactly at the same spot as they did during the Abbassid period and this status quo is the result of self imposed intellectual paralysis. There is no curiosity, no motivation, no thought and reflection, no research, and no pondering. Laws and principles, customs and traditions, and the tenets of the Abbassid period have become the standard of judgement between things Islamic and non-Islamic. Anything different or modern is labeled non-Islamic. Living within the framework of God-given laws, principles and guidelines is not the Islamic way of life anymore. On the contrary, blindly following the customs and traditions and man-made laws of the Abbassid monarchial period is thought to be the "real Islam".

The code of law enacted during that period is called *fiqh* and the system is called the *fiqhi* school of thought. The original meaning of the words *tafaquh-fid-deen* was the understanding of the right program in the Quran. And this understanding meant that the entire purpose of the Quranic message to man should be kept in view. Thus the word *fiqh*, taken from that expression, which is now called Islamic jurisprudence, had an original meaning quite distinct from what is now attached to it.

HERO WORSHIP

The *fiqh* was compiled by human beings. No matter how venerable and reputable those individuals were, they were still humans. Only Allah's laws have the characteristic of being eternal and unchangeable (6:116). Giving the same status

to man-made laws is to equate them with the laws of Allah, and this is tantamount to shirk. One of the fundamentals of the Quran is that it does not assign sovereignty to any individual or group; sovereignty rests with Allah alone. The Quran states this fact unequivocally when it declares, "No human being, even if Allah blessed him with the code of law, administrative powers, and the office of prophethood, has the right to command the people to follow him and not to follow Allah. He can only tell them to follow the Book which they can read, reflect upon and to become the party of Allah." (3:79)

There is a practical flaw as well in making man made laws perpetual and unchangeable. The laws enacted a thousand years ago might have been good enough to fulfill and satisfy the needs of that time, but in no way can those laws serve the purpose and achieve the objectives of a time period of a thousand years. They cannot fit into changed environments. This is common regarding human lawmaking. A law is drafted very carefully, legislators discuss it thoroughly two or three times, amendments are made, legal experts scrutinize it point by point, and after going through this painstaking process, while it is being printed there arises the need for some new amendments. This is the state of affairs of human lawmaking today. And this kind of painstaking care in law making was not available a thousand years ago. We can get some devotional comfort by making the laws of a bygone era permanent and unchangeable. But we cannot get any practical help from them in dealing with the problems and needs of the daily life of today.

In the early days, dissent with fiqh was not objectionable. According to Dr. Iqbal's research from the first to the fourth century, not less than 19 schools of law and legal opinion appeared in Islam. Some of these schools of thought, like Hanafite, Hambilita, Shafiite, etc. etc. still exist. At a later stage the school of thought of our forefathers was given the status of deen itself, and any innovation through thought and reflection (ijtihad) became sinful. At that point in time each sect sanctified its own school of thought and in order to preserve and safeguard it, any deviation from it was made an un-Islamic act.

An interesting and very important question arises at this point. When nobody denies the fact that all the makers of these fiqhi laws were human beings, why do the laws made by them get such a sacred status? They did so because the Muslim masses were at that time (and still are) being made to believe that these laws were not the creation of these jurists but rather were based upon the sayings of the prophet Muhammad (P). Any dissent from or objection to these laws became synonymous with the rejection of the prophet's sayings and traditions (ahadith), and such an act is tantamount to blasphemy. By attributing these laws to the prophet Muhammad (P), any discussion of them is pushed out of the domain of thought and reflection and becomes a matter of feeling and emotion, and when this happens, the sanctity attached to it puts it beyond any criticism, thereby creating an explosive situation.

THE MYTH OF NON BELIEF IN THE PROPHETS (P) SAYINGS

(INKAAR-E-HADITH)

It was explained above how the fiqh has been sanctified and put beyond any criticism. As a result the moment someone questions or objects to these laws, which in reality were enacted by the jurists, it is publicized widely that such person does not believe in the sayings and traditions of prophet Muhammad (P). One can easily imagine to what extent such publicity can inflame the public's emotions. This is the technique being practiced so successfully to keep the fiqhi laws above any criticism.

This is an extremely delicate situation. With utmost regard for the feelings of the above-mentioned persons, I will try to explain and bring to light the truth regarding the supposed inkaar-e-hadith and inkaar-e-sunnah. Does this purported rejection really amount to the rejection of hadith and sunnah, or is it the rejection of something else? Let us examine this question carefully. I would like to mention at this point that I am only addressing those people who prefer thought and reflection to emotions.

IMAN (CONVICTION)

First of all it is important to express my Iman on the subject: as far as I am concerned, anyone who doesn't believe in the truthfulness of the Prophet's (P) sayings or deeds cannot be considered a Muslim. The reason is that the words and deeds of the Prophet (P) constitute the very model which has been designated by Allah as the "best role model" (uswah-I-hasanai) for Muslims to follow. Rejection of this model amounts to the rejection of the prophethood itself as well as the commands

of Allah. That is why Allah Himself has safeguarded that model (uawah) by preserving it in the Quran itself.

Having said this, a question arises: if the inkar-e-hadith and sunnah, which draws religious verdicts of blasphemy and heresy, is not the real issue (since both agree that it is incumbent on Muslims to follow the Prophet's (P) model), then what is the point of contention? To deal with this question we have to know the proper position of hadith and sunnah.

Nobody can deny the facts that:

- i. The Prophet (P) neither compiled a collection of his sayings nor put his seal of approval on a collection gathered by someone else. The only thing left by him for the ummah was the Quran.
- ii. The first four caliphs did not compile a collection of the sayings of the Prophet (P).
- iii. Approximately 200 years after the death of the prophet, some individuals by their own initiative, started collecting sayings that people attributed to the Prophet (P). There are six individuals whose collections are called "sihah sitah" by the Sunni Muslims. Shia's have their own collections. Incidentally, all the collectors of these ahadith were Iranian none of them was Arab. Amongst these venerable individuals, I will be specifically talking about only Imam Bukhari. What I say about him is also applicable to the others.

Imam Bukhari has written that the total number of sayings he verbally heard from people was 600,000. The people who narrated these sayings to Imam Bukhari were not contemporaries of the Prophet, because there was a 200 year lapse between them. None of these narrators claim that he personally heard the Prophet say such and such thing. What narrators actually did was hear a particular saying from one person who in turn heard it from another person, who heard it from yet another person, and in this way the chain is ultimately linked to the Prophet.

Suppose a witness testifies in a court of law that he himself did not see the actual crime, but that he is just recounting whatever he heard from another person. The court would throw out his testimony. This is because facts (and not hearsay) constitute acceptable testimony. Then how can the hearsay of several narrators spread over 200 years become reliable testimony?

However, besides this long chain of narrators (isnad) the sayings of the prophet have not been passed on verbatim. The first narrator passed on in his own words whatever he understood from the statement of the prophet. Every narrator in turn passed on his own summary of the account given by the previous narrator. In this way the process was repeated several times and the sayings of the prophet became available to Imam Bukhari.

To illustrate the effect of this oral passage, let's create a scenario. Suppose you are in a room. You whisper something to a friend sitting next to you. Then he whispers the same sentence as well as he can remember to the next person. This process goes on until the last person in the room whispers it back to you. You would be surprised how your statement can be completely altered and twisted. This is just one example of how meanings change in a single sitting. Just imagine what would have happened to the meaning of a statement by the time it reached a collector of hadith 200 years later. This is the process by which 600,000 statements of the Prophet (P) reached Imam Bukhari. He selected approximately 6000 of those and rejected all the others. If repetitions are not counted then we have close to 3000 ahadith. Imam Bukhari, not being a contemporary of the prophet, obviously could not get all these ahadith certified by the prophet. Bukhari included all those ahadith in his collection which *in his opinion* were acceptable and rejected all those which he thought were not genuine, his personal thoughts and opinions being the standard of judgement for the acceptability of a hadith. Case in point: there is a difference of opinion between Iman Abu Hanifah on whether iman can increase or decrease. Because of this difference, Imam Abu Hanifah is not reliable or trustworthy according to Bukhari. Furthermore, since Abu Hanifah was a resident of Koofa, all the people who resided in Koofa were unreliable as well. Iraq, being the country in which Koofa is located, fell into the same category. Imam Bukhari declared that if Iraqis narrate 100 ahadith, 99 of them should be rejected outright and the remaining one should be viewed with suspicion. Similarly, Imam Abu Zer'ah and Imam Abu Hatim questioned the credibility of Imam Bukhari. Bukhari and Muslim are considered to be the two most authentic collections of hadith, and yet Imam Muslim used to taunt Bukhari about his trustworthiness.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS AND THE SELECTION OF AHADITH

Mr. Abdus Samad Sarim wrote an article about the biography of Imam Bukhari in the June 1981 issue of a New Delhi magazine. He writes:

- i. Imam Bukhari invested his wealth, which he inherited from his father, in various sleeping partnerships. He lived on the proceeds from his investments and spent all his time in collecting the ahadith.
- ii. He used to make 500 dirhams a month by trading in slaves.

Evidently, while making selections from the ahadith he probably selected those that declared proceeds from sleeping partnerships and the slave trade as lawful. This is not restricted to these two circumstances; he selected only those ahadith which were in accordance with his personal thoughts and beliefs. The point is that Bukhari all the other collectors included only those ahadith in their collections which in their opinion were authentic and genuine.

THE EXAMINERS AND APRAISERS OF HADITH REPORTERS

(ARBAH-E-JARH-O-TA DIL)

Later on some scholars of hadith thought of checking on the credibility and trustworthiness of the isnad (chain of narrators). It was a good idea. But what means and resources did they have at their disposal to ascertain the credibility of reporters who died 150 to 200 years ago? Obviously they based their opinion on whatever sketchy information was available to them. Here again their opinion became the standard for testing reliability. In this regard Maulana Maududi says,

"The individuals who investigated the reliability of hadith reporters, they too were human beings with all the human weaknesses. It is questionable that a reporter considered to be reliable by these investigators was in fact reliable. To check the memory, credibility and accuracy in reporting of each and every reporter is a very, very difficult task."

(ISMA-UR-RIJAL)

Yet another aspect of hadith collecting was scrutinized by doctors of hadith literature. They tried to verify whether the reporter of a particular hadith and the narrator were contemporaries or not. If they were, had they met each other? And if they had, did the reporter get a particular hadith from the same narrator or some someone else? Maududi expresses his opinion as follows:

"Such investigative work cannot be considered to be totally accurate. It is reliable in the sense that it can be helpful in researching the traditions of the Holy Prophet (P) and the lifestyle of his companions. But it would be wrong to put our total trust in it."

The doctors of hadith classified them into various categories based upon their own opinion of the trustworthiness of the reporter. One category is called *sahih* (accurate), another *dhaif* (weak), and another is *hussan*. The six sunni collections of hadith are called *sahih*, although Bukhari is considered to be the most *sahih*.

The term *sahih* gives an impression that these ahadith are most accurate and authentic. But this is not the fact. These ahadith are called *sahih* because the hadith scholars used the term. Nobody can say with certainty that these are the sayings of our Prophet (P). That is why the words *au kama qala rasoolullah* are added at the end of every single hadith, and this means, "the Prophet said this or something similar to this".

POSITION OF HADITH

In light of these explanations it becomes clear that the way these ahadith were collected, scrutinized, and compiled, not even a single hadith can be definitely and positively considered to be the saying of the Prophet. At the most it can be said that this is a statement attributed to the Prophet.

In the words of Maulana Maududi, "the fact is, any hadith which is attributed to the Prophet can be questioned for accuracy and reliability. You (the hadith devotees) are bound to accept every saying of the prophet which is duly certified by the reporters. But this is not the criterion for us. A certificate in no way is the litmus test for the authenticity of a hadith."

In another place he says,

"The sayings of the prophet and the sayings we find in the books of ahadith are not necessarily one and the same. The ahadith, because of the authority of the reporters cannot be equal in status to the verses of the Quran. The Quranic verses, beyond any doubt, are Allah's revelations. On the contrary, in the case of the sayings, the attribution of any word or deed to the prophet is always in doubt."

Incidentally, Maulana Maududi and I have similar views. It is ironic that nobody labels Maududi as munkar-I-hadith, but my views are denounced and publicized wide and far. It is surprising that even Maududi himself and his jamat-e-islami are part and parcel of this groundless propaganda.

ANOTHER, BUT OPPOSITE VIEW

The correct position of hadith has been explained above. But there are people with different opinions:

"After due investigation and verification the place and status of hadith is exactly the same as that of the whole Quran itself. As a matter of fact the rejection of hadith has the same effect on Iman and faith as the rejection of the Quran)Refusal to believe in such ahadith, which meet the verification standards and are deemed to be genuine by the scholars of sunnah, is tantamount to profanity and synonymous with expulsion from the ummah. The ummah is in agreement on the accuracy of Imam Bukhari's and Muslim's collections. The accuracy of these ahadith is absolute." (Jamat-e-islami)

If any person who refuses to believe in even a single hadith from these two collections, he/she becomes a non-believer and loses membership in the Muslim ummah. For example, one of the hadith we are required to believe is from Bukhari, "When the angel of death came to seize the soul of Moses (P), Moses slapped the angel so hard that he went back to Allah." If you refuse to believe in the accuracy of this particular hadith, then according to the above-mentioned rule, you are no longer in the fold of Islam.

THE REAL MEANING OF INKAR-E-HADITH

When an individual refuses to acknowledge the authenticity of a hadith what is he actually refusing? As I have mentioned earlier, Imam Bukhari collected about 600,000 ahadith and approved only 3000 for his book, which in his opinion were accurate and reliable. When a person says that a certain hadith is unacceptable to him, then he is only refusing one thing: he is refusing to accept Imam Bukhari's opinion or verdict regarding that hadith. He is *not* refusing to accept the truthfulness of the prophet, nor is he rejecting hadith and sunnah as such. All he is doing is having a difference of opinion with Imam Bukhari on some particular hadith. And a valid ground for rejecting anything whether it be a hadith or practice or tradition or custom is if it is against the Quran, which is undeniably the only book which contains Allah's word. He is not prepared to accept Imam Bukhari's verdict as the end all and be all because if the hadith is against the teachings of the Quran, the Prophet (P) could never have said or done it in the first place. Therefore, inkar-e-hadith is not the refusal to believe in the words of the Prophet (P), but rather it is the refusal to blindly accept Imam Bukhari's opinions and verdicts. Therefore, how can someone become a non-believer just because he does not agree with Bukhari? Last time I checked this was not a requirement of iman. Allah never made us duty-bound to blindly accept the verdicts rendered by the hadith reporters and collectors. Allah never stipulated that you can only be a Muslim if you believe in the accuracy and soundness of Imam Bukhari's opinion. Such an attitude is hero worship with a heavy dose of emotionalism. To have Iman in the

infallibility of any human being is neither demanded in the Quran nor is a requirement of common sense. However, the ummah is consuming itself in exactly this emotionalism. The moment someone differs in opinion with Imam Bukhari he/she is labeled an apostate, and this commotion is being created and sustained by the religious establishment to the detriment of the Muslim nation.

CONTRADICTIONS IN FIQH

It has been explained earlier how the fiqhi laws were enacted and codified. These laws are said to be based upon hadith. When the hadith were declared everlasting the fiqhi laws got the same status automatically and turned into a very rigid code, creating lasting divisions in the ummah.

One of the proofs that the Quran is the word of Allah is that there are no contradictions in it (4:82). This is not the case for ahadith. Mutually contradictory ahadith can be found in any single collection of hadith. When there are many differences and contradictions in the ahadith themselves, then what of the fiqhi laws which are based on hadith? These contradictions are responsible for the existence of so many mutually quarrelling sects within the ummah. Ahadith provide the basis for the conflicting laws. Allama Mohammad Aslam Jairajpuri gives an example:

"The contradictions in the traditions were not limited to different geological regions, there used to be contradictory traditions in the same locality. A case in point is the statement of Abdul Waris bin Saeed. He said, upon his arrival in Mecca, that he found some distinguished Iraqi jurists in town to perform Hajj. I met Imam Abu Hanifah, Ibn-e-Abi-Laila, and Ibn-e-Shbermah. I asked them all the same question: in a sale, is it permissible for the seller to impose any conditions? The first reply was that both the sale and imposition of any conditions is forbidden. The second jurist replied that the sale is permissible but imposing conditions is not. The final jurist said that both are permissible. I was surprised that these three jurists came from the same place yet held such different opinions. I went back to the jurists and told them about the difference. They each quoted a hadith in support of their own view.

The differences and contradictions in the traditions are not totally responsible for this divisiveness in the ummah, religious individualism has to be blamed as well. If central authority (the government) had kept religious lawmaking under its own jurisdiction, the entire ummah would have had a single fiqha and been saved from sectarian divisions brought about by personal fiqhas. The same should have been done regarding the ahadith, and because of this centralism the ahadith would not have been in such a state of affairs as well. As long as the Quranic State existed, neither were ahadith collected or compiled nor were various personal fiqhas made and enforced. All of the disintegration was the result of the absence of central authority."

Anyway we were trying to point out that the divergent nature of the fiqhi laws is due to the contradictions in the ahadith on which these laws were based. Putting aside the religious debate among various sects in the past, let us have a look at the verdicts handed down by the Pakistani Federal Religious Court. In these verdicts, all the discussion and arguments and counterarguments revolve around the position of hadith, the contradictions in ahadith, and variance of ahadith from the Quran. The outcome of these deliberations is that the government appointed religious courts hand down their verdict and the same government that appointed these courts lodges an appeal against that verdict. The judgement of the Federal Religious Court is based on fiqh and ahadith and the grounds of appeal against the same judgement are based on fiqh and ahadith as well.

THOUGHTS OF DR. IQBAL

A thinking mind paused and reflected upon this pressing problem and came up with a solution according to his own Quranic insight. Dr. Iqbal, in his sixth lecture of the book Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, discussed the problem in detail and presented the solution to this problem. The most important issue was lawmaking. In this connection he presented his arguments in these words,

"Turning now to the groundwork of legal principles in the Quran, it is perfectly clear that far from leaving no scope for human thought and legislative activity the breadth of these principles virtually acts as an awakener of human thought)The teaching of the Quran that life is a process of progressive creation necessitates that each generation, guided but unhampered by the world of its predecessors, should be permitted to solve its own problems."

Incidentally Dr. Iqbal delivered these lectures in 1928 when his thoughts had matured. Recently I came across an article written by him when he was still (let us say) a student. This article was published in October 1904 of the magazine Makhzan. This illustrates how a thinking mind even in very early stages moves in the right direction. He says,

"The immense changes in life have brought about such conditions where the opinions of the past (ancient) jurists badly needs a revision. It is not my intent to suggest that because of some inherent weaknesses the religious principles can no longer fulfill the needs of the present civilization. My point is the past jurists from time to time made rules based on the broad principles of the Quran and hadith. Those rules were suitable and practicable in those particular periods of time, but are unable to satisfy the needs and demands of the present time. Just like, at present, there is a need of modern language and terminology to explain the religious principles, similarly there is a need for a jurist of high caliber for the latest interpretation of Islamic law. On the strength of his intellectual capabilities and power of his imagination, this great jurist should be able to rewrite and compile the Islamic law based on religious fundamentals in a modern fashion; with the sheer strength of his imagination, interpret the principles on such broad bases so as to satisfy the demands of modern times."

THE CONCEPT OF PAKISTAN

For rewriting the fiqh, Dr. Iqbal presented the concept of Pakistan in such a concise but precise manner that these few words serve as a guide for the intelligentsia. He said, with the creation of Pakistan, "Islam would rid itself of the foreign influences brought by the Arab imperialism." He beautifully explained Islam's past history and future in just a few words. A newly created Islamic state (Pakistan) will have to enact its own laws and thus Islamic law will be rewritten to fulfill the needs of the modern time while simultaneously ridding itself of the laws made under unIslamic influences. Dr. Iqbal did not live long after presenting this idea. He died before the creation of Pakistan.

Shortly after the creation of Pakistan, the elements who opposed the very concept it came to the forefront by intrigue and changed the course of events. The ugly imprint of Arab imperialism which was to be shed from the shining surface of Islam was now being made part of the body itself with the help of the theocracy. Traditions and fiqh principles and decrees which were slowly coming to an end with the passage of time are now being granted a new lease on life. No one knows how long these new shackles, which are being put on the Quran and human intellect, will keep crippling the nation. There is no doubt that such a state of affairs cannot last forever, but time is the critical factor. To what extent Islam will be twisted during this period is beyond imagination.

At the moment the only thing we can say is that whenever the Quran and human thought will be free of these shackles, the first task worth completing for the ummah will be to critically examine the traditions, Prophet's biography, history and Quranic exegesis, and fiqh in the light of Quranic teachings. All the material which is in accordance with the Quran should be accepted, and that which is against the teachings of the Quran should be discarded. Then within the framework of the Quranic laws, principles, and guidelines, the ummah should by mutual consultation, reconstruct the shariah according to the needs and demands of modern time. Only at such a time will the state truly be called an Islamic state and its laws the laws of shariah. Such a task can only be performed by a great revolutionary who, in the words of Dr. Iqbal, approaches the problem in the spirit of Omar (R), "the first critical and independent mind in Islam who, at the last moments of the Prophet (P), had the moral courage to utter these remarkable words, *The Book of God is sufficient for us.* "