A CRITIQUE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIST POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY WITH SPECIFIC REGARD TO THE CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC STATE

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A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The Arabic alphabet and its transliteration symbols are presented on the following page. I have confined the use of diacritical marks to those Arabic terms that are not used very frequently in English literature. Hence, I have chosen to omit their usage in commonly known words such as Qur'an, *Shari'a*, and *'ulama*, except for the symbols (') and (') which denote the *hamzah* and the *'ayn* respectively. Arabic proper names have not been transliterated.

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A Critique of Contemporary Islamist Political Philosophy

with Specific Regard to the Concept of Islamic State

ABSTRACT

The Islamist/fundamentalist movements of the twentieth century, such as the Jama'ate Islami of Pakistan, the Ikhwan al Muslimin of Egypt, and the FIS of Algeria, have committed themselves to the ideal of attaining an 'Islamic state'. In their quest for the realization of this objective, they envisage a total mobilization of Muslim societies in accordance with "the Islamic *shari'a* law" under a universal state. The main architects of this ideal of Islamic state in recent times have been Sayyid Abu al-A'la Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb.

This thesis is an attempt to appraise these Islamist theories of statehood and governance in the light of traditional juristic theories of governance as well as modern and postmodern forms of democratic political formations. In this thesis I assert that the contemporary Islamist political blueprint, like traditional Muslim political philosophy is geared towards the establishment of *Gemeinschaft* (community) in the traditional sense, and not *Gesellschaft* (society/state) in the modern sense. State in the modern sense is to be understood as a complex form of social organization and public power that has authority independent from any particular office holder such as a king. The modern state is an association between the members of a society which assumes supreme authority to make and enforce laws that

regulate social arrangements and social relationships.[1] It encompasses various diverse groups, a multiplicity of religious communities, and largely disparate interests, under certain broad common goals.

It is also a contention of this thesis that while Islamist political ideology condemns and challenges modernity and its modern forms of political and social organization, it has itself acquired very 'modern' traits of power, control, and statehood. It is further asserted that the juristic model of state, upon which the Islamist worldview is selectively based, is incapable of functioning as a power polity in the world of territorial states.[1]

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[1]It should be noted at the outset that the writer of this thesis supports the freedom struggles of the Palestinian people, as well as the struggles of the Muslim masses in other parts of the world against state tyranny, oppression, the denial of basic human rights and liberty, and the suppression of democracy, be they in Muslim countries or non-Muslim ones.

What this thesis attempts to critique, is the ideological stance of those 'Islamist/fundamentalist' movements that have become the 'vanguards of Islamic resistance', with reference to how they envision replacing the contemporary regimes in Muslim countries, whom they believe to be secular, undemocratic, unrepresentative, and unjust towards their own people.

INTRODUCTION

Through human history, many civilizations have been bedeviled by contestation and confrontation between two forces. The one force being that of the governmental or political authority, and the other being the force of religion represented by ecclesiastical authorities. A study of history will reveal that politics and religion have been very intimately related, and politics influences religion as much as religion influences politics. But what is politics, and what is religion?

Politics and governance are:

> usually understood to refer to the accumulation, organization, and utilization of power in a region, territory, or society--especially the power to govern, to decide who controls the common institutions of society and on what terms.[2]

Politics is about power, influence and authority. Power entails the mobilization of muscle, numbers, weaponry, and force, at times coupled with the influence of wealth and intelligence. Even if power is understood to be a combination of force and influence, it still requires legitimacy in the eyes of the governed, with respect to a particular basic vision of the world that it possesses. If a political force is perceived to be illegitimate, serious attempts will be made by the subjects to resist that force. Many a times, this basic vision or worldview is provided by religion. Hence, religion prescribes the limits of authority. It also provides the contours of acceptable wisdom, and defines which interests and which forms of rationality are to be given approval and which are to be repressed. These are fundamentally shaped by a governing metaphysical-moral vision.[3]

However, religion cannot remain oblivious to political ambitions, for many a religion was succeeded or relegated to the dustbins of history, depending on the political patronage it received. Political leaders can and do influence which religions are acceptable in a

particular region. Religions are also sometimes spread by political conquest.[4]

Defining religion seems a more elusive task. For practical purposes, it could be said that religion refers to those engagements that pertain to the holy, or the interaction that takes place between humans and a metaphysical being, what Rudolf Otto referred to as "the idea of the Holy."[5] In other words, that system of teachings and principles that pertains to those objects or beings that are venerated and worshipped by humans. It is also at the same time a system of formalized doctrine that serves as a source for morals and values. A system of ideas and beliefs which binds certain members of the human race into a common worldview, a common identity, and a social glue, in a particular manner that is believed to enjoy supernatural origins and supernatural sanction and support. Or, as referred to in popular jargon within Muslim circles, that Islam was "a way of life", a system of thoughts and beliefs that provides a 'complete framework for living', and not just the performance of rituals and liturgical practices.

But is there really such a strict divide between the political and the religious realms? This thesis is premised on the assumption that all areas and branches of life are *interconnected*, and that no one part is really separate from any other. We are interconnected in a such a system that, whatever happens in any part of the system reverberates throughout the system. All of life is profoundly interconnected and interdependent just as cells of a large body are intricately connected.[6]

In any event, it is these two major sub-systems, politics and religion, that make ever-competing claims of legitimacy upon their human subjects and make demands for obedience and adherence to their respective laws and institutions. On the one hand, the religious sphere has its representatives (the '*ulama* and the *sufis* in the case of Islam), who make particular claims about how mankind should behave, and about how society should be fashioned. They

propagate a specific vision with regard to what would be considered to be good, what would be considered to be morally sound, and what would be considered to be just and fair in the course of social interaction.

Side by side with the religious visionaries, one finds other human actors in the equation, who conjure up alternative designs and visions of what constitutes the good life, pleasure, prosperity, happiness, justice, evil, exploitation, immorality, etc. These 'alternative' actors may be motivated by anything from philosophical, to 'rational', or cultural, personal, or even particular sectional interests, in the determination of what is fair, moral and just.

The various actors represent diverse interests and motivations. For example, business-people may have a particular vision of things that represent primarily economic interests, such as the maximization of profit or economic prosperity. Property-owners may bear the primary concern of the security of private ownership. Others may be concerned with the plight of human suffering, destruction of the environment, problems of violence, unequal distribution of resources, etc. Yet others may be preoccupied with political matters and matters of governance, and the maintenance of law and order, for which they contemplate specific ways of dealing with the issues that they confront.

It does not mean that people are strictly compartmentalized, for it is possible to have a religious vision and at the same time carry out political or economic functions, and intermingle various precepts from various sub-systems. For example, it is possible to find one political ruler who has a more 'religious' bent to the way he governs, while others may not give much consideration to a particular religious norm or code. In the same way, while one business-person may organize his/her business activities on purely economic pragmatism and give little regard to religious values, another may be of the disposition to give greater

regard to a religious code of ethics in his deliberations.

However, since the advent of colonialism, industrialization, and the resulting 'modernization' of life-styles, matters have become more complex. The various sub-systems that make up human life have asserted greater independence from particularly religious precepts. So while in traditional times, there was a great deal of integration between politics and religion, and economic and religious policies, in the modern world there appear to be greater attempts to dislodge the two from religious beliefs, customs, and taboos.

Gemeinschaft and *Gesellschaft*

Modern industrial life and its 'rationalist' principles have posed a serious challenge to every culture and civilization on earth. In an attempt to make some sense of the serious rupture that has been caused by the modern age, Ferdinand Tonnies developed the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as a central idea upon which two different modes of mentality and behaviour could be characterised. These concepts have been defined in various ways.

Gemeinschaft has been translated as community, and *Gesellschaft*, as society. Some sociologists have defined *Gemeinschaft* as being a traditional type of folk community, where relations are based on a simple face-to-face basis. Such communities are technologically small-scale, with strong emphasis on family ties, and individual status and social roles predetermined largely by virtue of birth or one's sex.[7] *Gesellschaft* is taken to be the opposite. It takes the form of modern society which challenges traditional patterns of ideas, family structures, and political economy. It has created an "impersonal, fast-moving, fast-changing society, bound together not by ties of blood or place or friendship, but by self-interest, by contracts, by the division of labour."[8]

Gemeinschaft has also been described as *natural will*, that is an attitude governed primarily by habit, love, sympathy and fellowship, which is brotherly, comradely and friendly. It is also of the authoritative type, authority such as that between father and son. *Gesellschaft* on the other hand is described as an attitude that is conditioned more by *rational will*, which makes more of an impersonal relationship that is based on a contract between individuals, or a service contract between natural persons or collective persons whereby they recognize a master or head over them. This type of relationship predominates in the modern state. This, of course, does not necessarily mean that traditional communities were predominantly irrational.[9]

It should be understood that social scientists have not considered these to be absolute categories. It is possible to find certain elements of *Gesellschaft* in traditional communities, while certain characteristics that have been defined as belonging to the *Gemeinschaft* type would also be found in modern societies. Nevertheless, how do these concepts impact on contemporary Muslim politics? It is my contention in this study that the traditional theories of government adopted by the jurists, as well as the positions adopted by contemporary Islamist ideologues are paradigms which are designed and framed within the context of *Gemeinschaft*, that is in the context of a close-knit, small-scale community, based on relationships which are more of a personal kind. However, the reality of contemporary Islamic societies is that they have been plunged into a situation of *Gesellschaft* with regard to how they wish to choose their leaders, how they wish to pursue socio-economic development, and how they wish to govern social relationships on the basis of a shared morality. This changed state of affairs demands a fresh, innovative look at current political trends in the broader world, of which Muslims constitute a significant proportion.

Contemporary Muslim Responses

How have Muslim societies responded to these challenges and changed circumstances? The one approach was that of the traditionalists, who are made up of the 'ulama, the *sufis* (mystics), and other pious lay-people, who could be described as 'ordinary folk'. They responded to the problem of modernity by practising withdrawal. They adopted a strategy of withdrawing from participating in the political process, and at times, even to the extent of avoiding any engagement in the political discourse. If they had made any contribution at all to the political debate, then it was only to the extent of prescribing extremely pietistic, and perhaps unrealistic conditions for those aspiring to political office. Apprehension towards the turmoil they found in the world lead them to insulate themselves from the 'corrupt world of politics' and concentrate on religious education and religious practices. It was a mindset which felt that the best thing to do under the circumstances to get on with one's work as Allah has commanded, and not be distracted in one's quest for eternal bliss in the life hereafter by what is going on in the secular world. It was, and still is a worldview that advocates acquiescence rather than resistance to those who possess hegemonic power, so long as they allow religious activities.

This worldview, perhaps, has its origins in the political theories of the jurists. The juristic conception of what constitutes legitimate Islamic government, is the very first attempt at formulating a systematic 'Islamic' political theory. The first chapter of this thesis examines these juristic political theories, as well as traditional modes of succession to political authority in the early period of Islam. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the absence of an official Islamic political theory in the original sources, the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (the Prophet's articulations). What the chapter demonstrates is how the jurists improvised theories in attempting to address the political and social problems of their times.

In the second chapter, we look at another approach that emerged within Islamdom during the post-colonial period. This approach was believed by some to be one of near total acceptance of, and assimilation into the new order of things. This was the position that was adopted by the 'secularists', especially in the Middle East, such as the Ba'athists of Iraq and Syria, as well as avowed nationalists such as Jinnah in Pakistan, Nasser in Egypt, and Ataturk (one of the most renowned secularists) in Turkey. The secularists, who have come to dominate most Muslim polities since independence, were inclined to emasculate religion from influencing the political, economic, and social order of the new-found nations. They attempted to relegate religion to the private domain, and sought to ensure that it does not interfere in the process of bringing the Muslim nations into the modern age as puissant competitors with the already mighty Western powers, in the global arena. To some, this was considered to be too 'radical', in that it was prepared to sacrifice the entire Islamic heritage and tradition, and catapult to an undoubtedly Western, secular value-system. The opening discussion of this chapter is centred around defining secular democracy and Western political theory. Later, we look at how these Western political norms were introduced into Muslim lands by the 'secularly' orientated political elites such as Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah of Pakistan.

Chapter three of this thesis examines the third force in this configuration, the Islamists, or those that have been labelled by the Western media as fundamentalists. Sayyid Abu al-A'la Mawdudi (1903-79) who founded the Jamā'at-i Islami in Pakistan in 1941, and Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), who was one of the chief exponents of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, could be described as the principal ideologues of the global Islamist movement. It is from these two revolutionaries that Islamists around the Muslim world take their inspiration; be they the Muslim youth of South Africa, disgruntled with apartheid, or the university

graduates of major Muslim cities who feel betrayed by modernity.

The Islamist vision, in short, is one of rejecting certain aspects of tradition such as sufism (mysticism) and the cultic aspects of traditional Islam, that are seen to be accretions to the true and pristine faith, as well as politically and socially debilitating. It is felt that these traditional movements were responsible for the weakness of the Muslim *ummah* that made them susceptible to colonization by the Western powers. On the other hand, the Islamist movements also condemn the modern paradigms of nationalism, liberalism, and thoroughly Western-style democracy. The Islamist movement has taken on a puritanical approach, in that it claims to return to the pure Islam of the Prophet and his immediate successors, free from accretions and innovations.

It is this third form of response that constitutes the principal subject matter of this thesis, and will be discussed in chapter three, which provides a detailed description of the main articulations of Mawdudi and Qutb on their vision of an Islamic state. This chapter also defines and analyzes the key characteristics of not only 'Islamic fundamentalism', but religious fundamentalism in general, its utopian notions of power, and its practice of shrewd selectivity in appropriating certain aspects of modernity and rejecting others.

It is the concern of this thesis to analyze the Islamists' rejection of the notion of geopolitically limited states. Islamist theorists devised their political theories in response to what they had witnessed happening around them. They had seen the development of new nation-states in the Muslim world who considered themselves to be totally independent entities, and motivated purely by nationalistic ambitions. Such nationalistic passions, in the likelihood of competition or conflict between the interests of sister-states within the *ummah* of Islam, had the potential for conflict and war between people of the same faith. Mawdudi had seen that the creation of Pakistan, though it had religious motivations, was also based

on nationality. He found this to be in conflict with how Muslims ought to organize themselves on the basis of their common faith. It is for this reason that both he and Qutb condemned nationalism as being *jāhilī* (oriented towards the pre-Islamic era of ignorance of divine revelation).

Mawdudi and Qutb, in spite of their rejection of geopolitically limited states perhaps cannot be completely dislocated from their own 'nations', Pakistan and Egypt respectively. The most likely reason for their rejection of separate national entities within the house of Islam could perhaps be that they solicited a more preponderate or transcendent critique of the ruling elites. Qutb bore a repugnance towards the ruling elites of Egypt, whom he believed were corrupt, and instruments of neo-colonial powers who were perpetuating the misery and deprivation of the people of Egypt. Probably every Muslim polity since the 1950's proved to be worthy of such a judgment. Their horrendous human rights records, their insensitivity to the plight of their populations, and their involvement in rampant corruption, provided reasonable grounds to appeal to the 'conscience of the global Muslim community' to mobilize against ruling cliques, and overthrow them on the basis of a universal Muslim consciousness that all the oppressed Muslim populations of the world could rally around.

Mawdudi, Qutb, and the Islamist fold in general felt that the governing elites of Muslim states did not conform to the religious criteria required of rulers of an Islamic polity. They were thought to be too 'secular' and worldly, and bereft of religious motivation. This led them to attack the very idea of a secular state, as it was believed that secular ideology was essentially a ploy by the Western world to undermine Islamic societies of their tradition, their culture, and in fact their entire faith. Since the modern secular state's task was primarily perceived to be a legislative one, it brought in the whole question of the scope for

humans to legislate on issues of morals and values that have already been laid down by God in scripture, and in the divine law of the *Shari'a*.

In short, as will be demonstrated later in the study, the Islamist vision, which is a very creative adaptation to modern political trends, is riddled with 'ideology' and Islamist polemics. What Muslim societies need is to move beyond ideology and polemics, and pragmatically investigate new possibilities that would make possible the development of a strong and vibrant Islamic civilization that would be attuned to contemporary needs and aspirations.

Notes and References:

1. Andrew Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1992) p.47-8

2. *Encyclopedia of Religion,* s. v. "Politics and Religion." by Max L. Stackhouse.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. s. v. "Religion." by Winston L. King.

6. David Ray Griffin, (ed.) *Sacred Interconnections: Postmodern Spirituality, Political Economy, and Art* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 1-2.

7. Gamble, op. cit., p. 147.

8. Ibid., p. 148.

9. Ferdinand Tonnies, *Community and Association (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)* translated by Charles P. Loomis (London: Routledge, 1955), pp. xv, 17, 23, 37-8.9.22.

CHAPTER 1

The Evolution of Traditional Muslim Political Thinking and Political Practice

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that in the Islamic tradition, no specific directives prescribe any one particular political theory. In fact, this chapter unpacks the level of diversity that one finds when conducting a historical analysis of the Islamic political tradition. To elucidate this point, this chapter analyzes those verses of the Qur'an that are understood by some scholars to constitute the 'Qur'anic political principles'. I also briefly examine the method of succession of the *Rāshidūn* Caliphs, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, followed by a brief exposition of Shi'i and Khariji political theories, and lastly, Sunni political theory and the role of the jurists as a particular interest group.

What is the basis of Islamic political thinking? Are there any specific directives in the primary sources of Islamic knowledge that dictate any particular form of government? As far as the Qur'an and Sunnah are concerned, they do not contain any specific regulations concerning political theory as such. However, what we do find are verses which allude to 'enforcing the command of Allah on earth'.

For example the Qur'anic verses: "O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah as witnesses to fair dealing." (ch. 5 v.8); and "And he commands you to judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their vain desires." (ch.5 v.49); and "And whoever fails to judge by what Allah has revealed, they are the unbelievers. (ch.5 v.44) The verses do not prescribe any particular method of choosing those who will govern the affairs of humans. What they do contain is a principle that whoever happens to be in power, ought to govern their subjects, and judge in their disputes, on the basis of Allah's revealed

teachings.

Muslim political theory stems largely from the debates surrounding the method of succession of the four rightly-guided caliphs (the *Rāshidūn*). The Islamic community after Muhammad searched for the best qualified person in their midst. The election or nomination of a leader was conducted by a council of respected and notable elders, later known as the *ahl al-hall wa'l- 'aqd* (people who loose and bind).

In the very first case of selection that faced the newly emerging Muslim community, the selection of Abu Bakr, no prophetic pronouncement on how the Muslim community should continue the governing of their political affairs after him was cited. Sunni scholars later deduced that the Prophet's appointment of Abu Bakr as the leader for the prayers during his illness was an indication that the Prophet thought him to be the most worthy person to continue as his successor. However, this retrospective justification seems doubtful, as the Prophet had often delegated that task, and in fact even the task of running the actual affairs of Medina to other persons on other occasions. The only conclusion one could then come to is that the Prophet intended that his followers should settle the problem of succession on their own, if there was to be any successor at all.[1]

The most likely reasons for the general acceptance of Abu Bakr as the most worthy candidate to succeed the Prophet could have been that he was the closest friend of the Prophet and the person that was most familiar with his thinking. In addition to that, he was also an expert genealogist, most familiar with the Arabian tribal structures, and hence most effective in dealing with their tribal intrigues. He was also a man who was firm, decisive and yet amiable in his manner. It was good political sense on the part of the community that led them to appoint Abu Bakr as the leader of the Muslims.[2] His appointment was not based on any particular religious directive.

In the case of 'Umar's succession, Abu Bakr designated him as his successor. This again was an unprecedented act, which found general acceptance in the community. Abu Bakr's designation of 'Umar was not an imposition, but a recommendation that was subject to the approval of the community. Since 'Umar was also a man of great leadership qualities, his appointment also found popular approval.[3]

However, there arose in Islam a dissenting group called the Shi'a who had a different view of political succession. The Shi'a claimed that the Prophet did not leave the question of political succession open, and had in fact designated a person, namely his son-in-law and cousin 'Ali. This designation is believed to have taken place during the Prophet's last pilgrimage at a place called Ghadīr (pool) of Khumm, where he proclaimed that: "He for whom I was the master, should hence have 'Ali as his master."[4]

Besides the person of 'Ali, the Shi'i position was also based on the rationale that it was inconceivable that given God's justice and benevolence towards his servants, the issue of leadership (*imāmah*) was left undecided. If God sent *ma'ṣūm* (faultless and sinless) prophets to guide mankind, then it was equally necessary for the latter to appoint such people as custodians of their followers, who would also be faultless and knowledgeable of the true meaning of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Tradition. Such candidates were best chosen from among those who were near and dear to the Prophet, and hence 'Ali and his male descendants were the best candidates for succession.[5] The Shi'is also argued that succession to the Prophet was not something that could be left to election by ordinary individuals, It was such a vital issue that only God knew who was most worthy of succession, which he then disclosed to his emissaries through revelation.[6]

Another political trend that existed in the early period of Islam was that of the *Khawārij* (plural of *khāriji*, meaning seceder). The Kharijis came into existence twenty-five

years after the demise of the Prophet. Their rebellion was prompted by the Caliph 'Ali's intention to refer his dispute with Mu'awiyah to arbitration. Since they saw the dispute as a clear-cut conflict between right and wrong, they argued that '*ḥukm* (the right of arbitration and judgement) belonged to Allah alone.' In other words, they believed that the dispute had to be simply judged by the Qur'an. On the issue of succession, the Kharijites insisted that all Muslims, irrespective of their tribal, racial and class distinctions, enjoyed the right to elect or to depose, or to be elected or be deposed as rulers.[7]

After the rule of the rightly-guided caliphs, a new model of governance ushered in. The Umayyad and 'Abbasid Dynasties justified the legitimacy of hereditary rule, backed by the notion of the divine right of kingship. This theory existed long before Islam in the domains of the Byzantines and the Sassanids. According to this theory, the 'state' was a divine ordinance personified by the king. The king was directly chosen by, and responsible to, God alone. He stood between God and the people and ensured stability by maintaining both in their proper places. He was considered to be the 'Shadow of God on Earth'.[8]

In Islamic terms, this divine right of kingship was formulated by notions of *qadr* (destiny) and *khilāfah* (successorship). Whereas the *rāshidūn* caliphs had been regarded as the representatives or the successors of the Prophet of God (*khalīfat rasūl allāh)*, the Umayyads appear to have used the title *khalīfat allah* (representative of God), and to have claimed to reign by the *qadr* and will of God and his vicegerents. 'Abd al-Malik (65-86/685-705), who supported such ideas of *qadr*, wanted his subjects to believe that the power and the kingship (*mulk*) given to him and his family was granted by God, and was inalienable according to divine will. This meant that disobedience to the caliph and his subordinate officers was tantamount to disobedience to God, which was tantamount to disbelief.[9]

In their opposition to the Umayyads, the 'Abbasids, raised the issue of the deviance

of Umayyad rulers in their personal behaviour. They accused the Umayyads of degrading the caliphate, and claimed to restore proper Islamic government by the family of the Prophet.[10] As soon as they obtained power, the 'Abbasids took autocracy to its limits. They eliminated all opposition and assumed the role of divine kings.

The 'Abbasids legitimated their rule as a restoration of the caliphate on the basis of their kinship with the Prophet in the male line. They were known in the 2nd-3rd/8th-9th centuries as the Hashimiyya, the descendants of Hashim ibn 'Abd Manaf. At the same time, the 'Abbasids also emphasized the religious nature of their authority. They claimed to be the *ahl al-bayt*, the legitimate heirs of the Prophet, the warriors of God, and the upholders of his law *par excellence*. They wooed the 'ulama and recognised the *shari'a* law as the only legitimate norm of the state.[11]

The Role and Influence of the Sunni Jurists

As discussed earlier, Muslim political practice evolved in a rather ad hoc manner, based on what could be described as "pragmatic experimentation". It could be said that the theorizing of Islamic political thought began with the dissentions that occurred with the advent of the Shi'a and the Khawarij. It was natural for those opposed to the status quo, or those deprived of actual political power, to theorize political thought in order to challenge the legitimacy of the holders of power. On the other hand, in response to those challenges, the power elites justified their possession of power in terms of the very same religious underpinnings. This process of legitimation and delegitimation was also undertaken by Sunni jurists during the late Umayyad and early 'Abbasid periods.[12]

The primary task of the *'ulama* and the *fuqaha'* (jurists) was to establish the authenticity of the tradition. Their knowledge of the religious sciences put them in a

privileged position of authority, for, behind them stood the authority of the Prophet, or, as in the case of the Shi'i *'ulama*, the *imāms*. The *'ulama* came to be regarded as the heirs of the Prophet. The Sunni *'ulama* imagined their function to appraise the enactments of the government and the practice of the community by the standards of the *Shari'a* which they developed. Their principal political function was to interpret revelation for the problems facing the community. The authority of the *'ulama* stood alongside that of the caliph, the bearer of authority, and the sultan, the holder of power. However, the *'ulama* were not able to exercise effective political functions, as they did not enjoy tangible political power.[13]

The influence of the *'ulama* in either legitimating the powers-that-be or in delegitimating them in the eyes of the masses, was crucial for themselves. Abu Yusuf, a pupil of Abu Hanifa, was a prominent Sunni jurist who was the first person to receive the title of *qāḍi al-qudāt* (judge of judges) in the 'Abbasid court. He held that the actual possession of power was the necessary and sufficient argument for the exercise of authority. He justified the religious obligation of absolute obedience to the existing authorities, citing the hadith, "Fear God and obey Him; and if a flat-nosed shrunken-headed Abyssinian slave is vested with power over you, harken to him and obey him."[14] He used it as an argument in defence of blind submission to authority. Similarly, Abu Yusuf records some scholars as saying "Nothing in the tradition permits you to take up arms against your *imam*." This obligation was not limited to a good *imam*, for he states, "If the *imam* is just, then reward is due to him, and gratitude from you. If he is tyrannical, then the burden of sin is his, and it is yours to be patient."[15]

Another key figure in the formulation of Sunni juristic political theory was al-Mawardi, who died in 450/1058 in Baghdad. His *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya* is a key document on the theory of government in juristic circles. He was a Shafi'i and taught in Basra and

Baghdad, and also held the office of *qādī* in several towns.[16]

Al-Mawardi was of the view that the office of *imam* ought to be filled by election. This election had to be carried out by 'qualified' electors (*ahl al-ikhtiyār*), but not by the community at large. Within the framework of his theory, al-Mawardi laid down certain qualities that he considered necessary for the electors. The first quality was *'adāla* (i.e. a state of moral and religious integrity). Secondly he demanded *'ilm*, religious learning, so that the electors would know whether the person they were electing, possessed the qualities of *imāmate*; and thirdly, judgement and wisdom, so that they could choose the one who was most worthy of the *imāmate*.[17] The qualities that al-Mawardi required of the *imam* were manifold: First came *'adāla* (to exercise justice), then, *'ilm* (knowledge), and then, the ability to exercise independent judgement (*ijtihād*). He should also possess bravery so that he could protect the territory of the Muslims and undertake *jihad* against the enemy. Mawardi also stipulated that an *imam* should be a descendent of Quraysh. This last condition was probably laid down to counter contemporaneous Fatimid propaganda on the question of who were the rightful *ahl al-bayt* (family of the Prophet).[18] The *imam* could be chosen either by election by the *ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd*, which is election by the elite, or by nomination. Since nominating of the *imam* had been a common practice of the time, he sought to give validity to the practice.[19] Mawardi's theory was more of an attempt to justify historical political precedents, as well as contemporary political practices, instead of proposing changes to them.

For al-Ghazali, politics rested on theology (*usūl al-dīn*) and juridical methodology (*usūl al-fiqh*). But overarching all this was the eschatological destiny of man: this world was a field in which man prepared for the future life, and the object of politics was to prepare man for final happiness in the next world. The Sasanian maxim that *dīn* (religion) and *dawlat* (temporal power) were twins, was accepted by al-Ghazali: if religion was the base, *dawlat*

was its guardian and charged with its preservation. Men needed a principle of power (*sultān*) to guide them and arbitrate in their disputes, as society was incessantly exposed to quarrels and conflict. But this principle of power required a norm, a *qānūn* (law), upon which to resolve the differences. This norm was provided by *fiqh* (jurisprudence). The *faqih* therefore performed an essential function in the state. Without him, order and justice would fail.[20] In Ghazali's theory, the *imāmate* was the necessary power to maintain order. Secondly, it symbolized the collective unity of the Muslim community and its historical continuity, and thirdly, it derived its functional and institutional authority from the *shari'a*. It was the only legitimate form of government in Islam.[21]

However, faced with the realities of political life, the austere might of the caliphs, and the practical constraints for launching successful rebellion against existing powers, the jurists were forced into a position of extreme compromise. They jettisoned all the qualifications that they proposed in theory, and justified this compromise by arguing that the alternative was chaos and tyranny at an inter-societal level.

This compromise was most amplified by none other than al-Ghazali. He advised that the security of the faith was dependent on the security of the world, and the security of the world could not be assured without the existence of a ruler to whom obedience was shown. Civil disorder, violence, death and scarcity that accompanied the death of rulers and *imams* until the nomination of another, was proof of the fact that 'the tyranny of a sultan for a hundred years was preferred over the tyranny that members of society would unleash against one another in one year'. The damage that would be caused by austere and absolute rule far outweighed the absence of such rule. The preservation of the *ummah* was a higher political value than the liberty to express an individual opinion which might lead to dissension, and the disruption of communal solidarity.[22]

The jurists, in order to secure religious life, legitimated the exercise of arbitrary power. The jurists went so far as to consider politics as an autonomous activity, which was no more subject to the rigorous demands of piety and good behaviour that they had initially subscribed to. This could be seen in the jurists' injunction that *jihād* (holy war) was to be pursued alongside all *imams* whatever their conduct, and that the rulers were entitled to levy taxes on the populace, without any questions being asked as to how they would be spent. The Friday prayers and other public religious rites ought to be performed by those who were in power, whatever their conduct or reputation.[23]

However, not all scholars were supportive of the unquestioned and unchallenged authority of the ruler, irrespective of his track-record. Al-Jahiz, a scholar who adhered to the 'rational' Mu'tazili school, rejected the doctrine of unconditional obedience to the *imam*. He believed that the wrong-doer was accursed, and whoever forbids the cursing of the wrong-doer was himself accursed. He criticized those who alleged that abuse of bad rulers was sedition (*fitna*), even if these rulers terrorize the good and reassure the bad. Al-Jahiz also regarded knowledge as being the most marked quality that an *imam* should posses.[24]

Al-Jahiz's contribution to the theory of *imāmate* is considerable. For him the *imamate* was necessary in the interests of the community, whose duty it was to provide themselves with an *imam*, even if it necessitated the overthrow of a tyrant or a usurper. Ideally, the *imam* was to possess outstanding intellectual and moral qualities. He was to be the most excellent (*afḍal*) of the community.[25]

The common denominator that emerges from the foregoing discussion is that practically all the Muslim jurists were inclined to the theory of election or nomination by an elite. The "people who loose and bind" form the core of their political thinking. Government based on religious norms, or sacralized authority as we may refer to it, was considered a

very special and exclusive task which could only be administered by special people.

The jurists had conceived of a broad category to oversee the political process which they termed *ahl al-hall wa 'l-'aqd*. The identification of this group remained elusive. Juristic literature only gives general descriptions. In the case of the caliph 'Umar, he nominated six persons for the caliphate and asked them to choose one among themselves. This does not mean that the "people who loose and bind" were restricted to those six persons.[26] Some commentators of the Qur'an say that the phrase *ulū 'l-'amr* (those entrusted with authority) which appears in al-Nisa: 59 applies to 'the people who loose and bind'. Other commentators believe *ulu 'l-'amr* refers to the scholars of religion, namely the *'ulama*, while others understood it to refer to the rulers.[27] Al-Nisaburi considered them to be "those of distinguished ranks and considerable opinions."[28] The number of individuals that constituted the *ahl al-hall wa 'l-'aqd* was also in dispute. While some jurists formulated a certain quorum for making binding decisions, others believed that any number of the *ahl al-hall wa 'l-'aqd* --even a single person -- could carry out the *bay'ah* (pledge of allegiance) as long as it was accepted by others. Those who stipulated a quorum mention the numbers five, three, and forty. However, the *bay'ah* was binding, irrespective of the number of the *ahl al-hall wa 'l-'aqd* who participate in it.[29]

All these juristic requirements were merely theoretical. The jurists were aware of the fact that those who had the power to appoint an *imam* did not actually fulfil the requirements of *ahl al-hall wa 'l-'aqd*. In practice, the jurists compromised their position, considering the existing realities on the basis of *'umūm al-balwā* (public affliction) and *darūrah* (necessity).[30] These are two terms that have been coined in Islamic legal philosophy in order overcome the severity of a legal Shar'ia injunction due to public affliction and popular necessity. They could be understood as a concession granted by the jurists. On the basis of

the concept of *darūrah* (necessity), the Muslim populace had no choice but to obey the rulers, even though in theory they did not stand up to the '*shar'i*' or rather juristic requirements. The Muslim public was also absolved of the responsibility of having to depose an immoral ruler or a tyrant, which in principle they would be morally duty-bound to do.

A crucial question to be asked at this stage is: what was the political motivation that inspired the *'ulama* to prescribe such idealistic and legalistic qualifications? One likely answer to this question could be the notion that the political thinking of the jurists was fashioned by the social standing that they enjoyed in society, and also the political role that they were able to play at the time. To take the early period of juristic thinking, during the time of the Umayyads, and the 'Abbasids, it is a fact that the scholars had not yet arrived at a satisfactory accommodation with the state, and their political thinking was in a real sense utopian, backward-looking, and idealistic.[31]

However, the collapse of the early caliphate, left a political void for joint political and religious authority. This presented the *'ulama* with an opportunity to promote their own image as the guarantors and guardians of the *shari'a*, a role that was hitherto assumed by the caliphate. The *'ulama* exploited the void by elevating themselves over whoever now assumed political leadership. The political authorities were to be subservient to the advice and the dictates of the *'ulama* class. Ibn Taymiya (d. 1328) was most explicit in exalting the role of the *'ulama* over the 'secular' political authorities. It was the *'ulama* who were considered to be the principal actors rather than the caliphs.[32]

So, in actual fact, the *'ulama*, in their political theory, were laying the ground for their own preservation, rather than the caliphate. They considered themselves to be the elect of God, or "the witnesses of God on earth," immortalized in huge and voluminous biographical dictionaries. They became more active in political turmoil, and served as judges

and governors of cities and regions in a quite independent manner. With time, the qualifications of the caliphate became increasingly those of the scholar.[33]

This is proven by the way Ghazali, in the eleventh century, lowered the requirements for holding the office of caliph, in order to make room for any other possible candidate. While someone of Quraysh ancestry retained the position of caliph, the actual functions were taken away from the caliph and were now fulfilled by others. With the military function going to the Turks, the legal scholars were in effect in charge of the judiciary. In order to deal with political problems, good advisors, such as Nizam al-Mulk were sufficient. So, for Ghazali, the caliph was more of a spiritual symbol rather than a power base. The caliph was reduced to a figurehead of the Muslim community as a symbol of unity. All the other minute, detailed conditions of the office of the caliphate were shelved, as the advisors and the *'ulama* now fulfilled those roles'.[34]

The paradox that emerges from the above discussion is that the *'ulama* were involved in a process of legitimization as well as delegitimization of the political state of affairs. On the one hand, they delegitimized the status quo by criticising the caliphs for their irreligious practices and policies, and for their failure to live up to the Islamic ideal espoused by the *'ulama*. On the other hand, they legitimized the status quo on the basis that, notwithstanding all the shortcomings of the caliphs, they were more preferable in the context of the nonexistence of the ideal Islamic person who could assume the mantle of political leadership. In other words, it was a case of 'tolerating the devil you know', rather than risking the future of the polity by calling for insurrection against a bad caliph. Moreover, this bad state of affairs left ample room for the jurists.

If one examines the political theories of the Sunni jurists, one finds that the primary emphasis was on the piety of the ruler, and on his adherence to the *shari'a*. Adherence to

the *shari'a* formed a cardinal principle of juristic political thinking. It was premised on the jurists' desire to secure a Muslim community that would be unified and strait-jacketed into following the juristic expression of Islamic life. That was the *Gemeinschaft* tendency that the jurists wished could be realized in Muslim lands. However, the jurists were but one strand among the many streams of thought that existed even in the classical period of Islam. Muslim society at the time had already acquired the character of *Gesellschaft* in many respects, and this is what overwhelmed the *'ulama* dream which was hardly ever realized. The *shari'a* was seldom the guiding principle of the state.

The juristic theory of the Islamic state, emerged mainly, and flourished particularly at a time when the caliphate was weakening and withering. Juristic theory was therefore obsessed with trying to rescue the community from its unhappy destiny. This it did by overemphasizing its presumed religious character. It envisaged a utopia of how things should be, rather than describe how things were in reality. The jurists utopia of trying to incorporate the state into the *shari'a* was a product of their own juristic endeavours, since the Qur'an and *Sunnah* had very little to say about politics and the state. As the utopian idea of an 'Islamic state' was elaborated upon, repeated and reiterated, in volume after volume, subsequent generations did not view it as a mere ideal that should be aspired to, but believed it to be a reality that did exist. With the passage of time, as the gap between the juristic theories and the social and political realities widened, ironically, the juristic theory became one of the main intellectual tools used by the politico-religious opposition against colonial rule, and nationalist, secularist governments, in modern times. What the politico-religious organizations do not realize, is that the political theory of the jurists was but one of a variety of genres from the Islamic intellectual legacy.[35]

This chapter has provided an analysis of the degree of diversity that existed in

traditional political thinking and political practice. It has shed some light on the diverse approaches that were employed through different periods in Muslim political experience. In chapter three, we contrast this with the unilinear and utopian approach adopted by Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb's notions of how the ideal Islamic polity ought to be constituted. However, in the following chapter, we look at the emergence and formation of the modern state in the West, as well as in the Muslim World, as a means of coping with an even more advanced condition of *Gesellschaft*.

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CHAPTER 2

The Idea of the Modern/Secular State

Introduction

Contemporary Islamist political thinking could be described as primarily a reaction and a challenge to the secular governments of Muslim countries. It is also a rejection of modern forms of political organization, and principles of government, on which modern democratic regimes are based. What the Islamist visionaries advocate is a system of government based on *shūrā* (mutual consultation) among such people who are chosen/elected on the basis of merit. Such merit is determined by the level of piety, knowledge of religious tenets, and adherence to the *shari'a*, by those members who seek political office.

Since the two Islamists, Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb who form the subject of this study, were particularly concerned about the modern form of the democratic state, and directed their criticisms primarily against modern political philosophy, this chapter provides a brief overview of the basic foundation of the modern democratic state as it emerged firstly in the Western world, and then later found its roots in other parts of the world.

2.1 The Emergence of Modern Political Theories

It should be remembered that political philosophy, or the art of government for that matter, is something that has always been debated by humans. People have argued over who has the right to command other fellow humans, and to what extent they should enjoy political or legislative authority. They also delved into the problem of the limits of obedience, and to whom is absolute obedience justified. Is the absolute ruler and sovereign, a metaphysical

being, or are certain members of society who enjoy power and authority over their human subjects, worthy of sovereignty?

In response to these problems, no two societies or civilizations came to exact agreement over theories of governance. Different philosophers, thinkers, and even ordinary people, conditioned by different social circumstances and different historical experiences, arrived at different theories about how to govern human beings. Even so-called primitive, small-scaled, and nomadic tribes have had some form of 'government' in the sense that they had certain accepted rules of conduct by which law and order was maintained, even though they did not constitute a "state" in the modern sense of the word.[1]

Even democracy, as a modern form of government and statehood has not been without its various derivatives. For example, French theorists differed from British thinkers on how to apply democracy. Even within one country, Britain, Locke differed from Hobbes on theories of government and politics. Hobbes was of the idea that the ruler should enjoy strong powers, as this was the only way to prevent anarchy. Hobbes grew up in the years preceding the Civil Wars, and was obsessed with the idea of law and order. He developed a personal conviction that men were naturally evil and quarrelsome, and therefore had to be strictly controlled. His younger contemporary, Locke, saw his fellow men in a different light. He thought humans were naturally pleasant and peaceable, and could be trusted to govern themselves. He was concerned with working out methods by which people could be safeguarded from the dangers of the abuse of power by their rulers.[2]

With the advent of the modern state, and the relaxation of religious and metaphysical control that Christianity exercised over Europe, even more people began to freely debate the constitution of the state. Now that the very definite, absolute, and certain doctrines of the Church on matters of state and government were overturned, and humans began exercising

their minds on the issues of governmental authority and political power, the debates grew even more intensive. One person's theory was as valid as another's. The issue now was which elite group could successfully impose its political ideology, or convince the people it was governing, as to which was the best method of government. This is what became known as the secularization of politics. In other words, the dislodging of the church with its absolute metaphysical claims, now became the precursor to theories of state and government being discussed in human terms on the basis of 'rational' and empirical criteria. This secularization of politics should be understood as being part of a larger process of secularization in other spheres of life also, such as in theology, culture, and indeed the Church itself. The following discussion deals specifically with the issue of secularization as an overall process in a changing society.

2.2 The Process of Secularization

Firstly, we tackle the question of what do the two terms secularization and secularism mean.[3] How have they been defined by social scientists as well as scholars of religion who are addressing the problems of what has been called 'modernity' especially since the 'industrial age'. Harvey Cox, in his book *The Secular City* quotes the Dutch theologian C. A. van Peursen who defines secularization as the deliverance of man "first from religious and then from metaphysical control over his reason and his language."[4] He further explains that "it is the loosening of the world from religious and quasi-religious understandings of itself, the dispelling of all closed worldviews, the breaking of all supernatural myths and sacred symbols." Secularization is man turning his attention away from worlds beyond and toward this world and this time (*saeculum* = "this present age").[5]

Van Peursen says that the forces of secularization have no interest in persecuting

religion. Secularization simply bypasses and undercuts religion and goes on to other things. A metropolis based on secular lines does not look to religious rules and rituals for its morality or its meanings. Religion becomes a hobby for some, or a mark of national or ethnic identity for others. Religion looses its ability to provide an inclusive and commanding system of personal and cosmic values and explanations.[6]

Harvey Cox locates the origins of secularization as the process by which a "religious" priest was transferred to a parish responsibility. Such a person was secularized. Gradually the meaning of the term widened. When the separation of pope and emperor became a fact of life, the spiritual and the secular also became institutionally separate. The passing of certain responsibilities from ecclesiastical to political authorities was designated as "secularization." Up to this day, when a school or hospital passes from ecclesiastical to public administration, the procedure is called secularization.[7]

This is secularization at the political level. However, political secularization soon brought in its wake cultural and social secularization. It followed as an inevitable result. Cultural secularization denotes the disappearance of the religious determination of the symbols of cultural integration.[8] Hence we find that political secularization had a ripple effect on many other areas of life, be it culture, or the determining of moral codes, or ideas regarding the structure of the cosmos. This does not mean that there is necessarily a linear evolutionary relationship between the various forms of secularization. One can occur before the other. However, there cannot remain a large degree of imbalance between them.

However, religious people do not share the same positive impression of the project of secularism. They feel that secularization was rooted in Enlightenment philosophy, and that it marginalized religion and gave the state jurisdiction over certain affairs previously considered religious. Secularism as a movement was in fact the complete antithesis of

'religion'.

Nevertheless, the move towards secularism was intimately connected with nationalism. Certain nations wished to promote their own specific interests within a geographically limited area, independently from an imperial Church. The German nation for example, wished to establish for itself an entirely separate political apparatus without any interference from other institutions that happened to have their headquarters in Rome. The ecclesiastical authority also had a different approach to matters of everyday life that differed from national German aspirations.

George Sabine portrays the emergence of the modern state in the West as being part of the overall evolution of Western civilization. He says that the "current secular content" of the modern state is a result of several centuries of conflict between the Church and the secular establishment over who would enjoy dominance in the state. The nation-state with the king as the supreme authority arose in many parts of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a result of the revolt against the overlordship of the Roman Catholic Church.[9] The Catholic Church was undermined by the rise of Protestantism which maintained that salvation could be achieved by individuals through direct prayers without the mediation of the Church. Such ideas contributed towards the secularization of political authority.[10]

2.3 The Modern State

"In modern Western political thought, the idea of the state is often linked to the notion of an impersonal and privileged legal or constitutional order with the capability of administering and controlling a given territory."[11] This notion of an impersonal legal or constitutional order found its earliest expression in the ancient world (especially in Rome) but it did not

become a major object of concern until the development of the European state system from the sixteenth century onwards. Under this system, human beings as 'individuals' or 'people' could be active citizens of this order - citizens of their state - and not merely dutiful subjects of a monarch or emperor.[12]

Controversies among European thinkers around the issue of the state vis a vis society, attempted to grapple with the following questions: What is the state? What should it be? What are its origins? What is the relationship between state and society? How should this relationship be? Whose interests does the state represent, and whose should it represent? What is to be the relationship among states?

Among the various strands that emerged in response to these questions, David Held has specified four major traditions of analysis in this regard: (1) *liberalism*; (2) *liberal democracy*; (3) *Marxism*; and (4) so-called *political sociology*. An important distinction to be made is the distinction between normative political theory or political philosophy on the one hand, and descriptive-explanatory theories of the social sciences on the other hand. Theorists that fall into the first category are Hobbes, Locke and Mill, who were more concerned with what is desirable, and what should or ought to be the case. Other theorists, such as Weber, focused on what was the case. Marx sometimes occupied one domain, and sometimes the other. However, the two camps cannot possibly be so neatly compartmentalized, since many political philosophers see what they think the state ought to be like, in the state as it is. Social scientists on the other hand, cannot escape the fact that facts do not just 'speak for themselves': theorists interpret them, and in fact they have to be interpreted; and the framework we bring to the process of interpretation determines what we 'see' as important.[13]

In order to provide an overview of the four different strands in political thinking, I

shall render a summary of David Held's description of the four traditions below. Liberalism, which was the political philosophy of Hobbes and Locke, is a highly controversial concept, the meaning of which has shifted historically, but suffice to say that it signified "the attempt to define a private sphere independent of the state and thus redefine the state itself, that is, the freeing of civil society - personal, family and business life - from political interference and the simultaneous delimitation of the state's authority."[14]

With the growing division between state and society, the struggle for a range of freedoms and rights became more acute. Liberalism began as a concept that wished to see the arbitrary abuse of power being checked by the citizens who were subject to the particular political authority in question. It gradually became associated with the doctrine that freedom of choice should be applied to matters as diverse as marriage, religion, economic and political affairs, in fact, to all matters of daily life. Liberalism upheld the values of reason and toleration in the face of tradition and absolutism. It was of the view that the world consisted of 'free and equal' individuals with natural rights. According to the liberalist school, politics should be about the defence of the rights of these individuals, so that they may be in a position to realize their own capacities. The mechanisms for regulating individuals' pursuit of their interests were to be the constitutional state, private property, the competitive economy and the distinctively patriarchal family. Attention at this stage was primarily focused on the male property-owning individuals. The Western world was not yet *liberal democratic* or *democratic*, in that it did not yet grant universal franchise to all mature adults.[15]

The second school, that of liberal democracy, was that of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and James Mill (1773-1836). For them:

> liberal democracy was associated with a political apparatus that would ensure the accountability of the governors to the governed. Only through democratic

> government would there be a satisfactory means for choosing, authorizing and controlling political decisions commensurate with the public interest, that is, the interests of the mass of individuals.[16]

They believed that it was only through the vote, secret ballot, competition between political leaders, elections, the liberty of the press, speech and public association, that the interests of the community in general could be sustained. Nineteenth-century liberalism was engineered to ensure the conditions that were necessary for individuals to pursue their interests without the risk of political interference, to participate freely in economic transactions, to exchange labour and goods and appropriate resources privately. The state was to play the role of umpire or referee while individuals pursued, according to the rules of free exchange, their own interests. It was believed that the collective good (utility) would be best achieved with minimal state interference. Although the state's scope and power had to be drastically minimized in this regard (i.e. economic exchange), it was expected to intervene in other spheres such as punishment for disobedient behaviour, whether it came from individuals or groups or classes. Why was this so? Because it was thought that such deviant individuals or groups, by challenging the security of property or the market society, undermined the realization of the public good, and therefore should be punished. Prisons became the hallmark of this new age. So, whenever *laissez-faire* was inadequate to ensure the best possible outcomes, coercive state intervention and the creation of draconian state institutions was justified, with the rationale that it upheld the general principle of utility.[17]

What distinguished liberalism from liberal democracy was that while liberalism denied women the vote, liberal democracy secured this right for women. While liberalism granted the new freedoms to the men of the new middle classes and the bourgeoisie, liberal democracy wished to grant universal franchise to all mature adults.[18]

The third political tradition was that of Marxism. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-

95) relentlessly opposed the theory of liberalism which made the relation of the individual vis a vis the state the starting-point of their analysis of the state. As Marx put it, 'man is not an abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the human world, the state, society.' It is not isolated human beings who are active in historical and political processes, but rather human beings who live in definite relations with others. In other words, the relationships between people in society have to be analyzed on the basis of class divisions. Class divisions are not found in all societies, and are a creation of history, and will disappear in the future. The earliest types of 'tribal' society were classless. This is because in such types of society, there was no surplus production and no private property. The fruits of production were distributed through the community as a whole. Class divisions arose when a surplus was generated, which created a situation where non-producers lived off the productive activity of others. Those who are able to gain control of the means of production form a dominant or ruling class both economically and politically. For Marx and Engels, class relations are necessarily exploitative and imply divisions of interest between ruling and subordinate classes. These class divisions are inherently conflictual and frequently give rise to active class struggles which form the 'motor' of historical development.[19]

How then should the nature of the state be understood? According to Marx and Engels, liberalism and liberal democracy claims to represent the community or public interest, in contrast to individuals' private aims and concerns. But, the opposition between interests that are public and general, and those that are private and particular, is to a large extent illusory.

> The state defends the 'public' or the 'community' as if: classes did not exist; the relations between classes were not exploitative; classes did not have fundamental differences of interest; these differences of interest did not define economic and political life. In treating everyone in the same way, according to principles which protect the freedom of individuals and defend their right to property, the state may act 'neutrally' while generating effects which are

partial - sustaining the privileges of those with property.[20]

Marxism considers the distinction between private and public, and state and civil society as dubious. Private property is treated as if it is not a subject for politics, and the state ought not to interfere in the economy. But by defending private property, Marxists argue, the state has already taken sides. The state, therefore, is not an independent structure above society, a 'public power' acting for 'the public', but deeply embedded in socio-economic relations and linked to particular interests.[21]

The fourth position is that of 'political sociology' or political pluralism which was advocated by Max Weber as a critical response to the Marxist notion of the state being a 'parasitic' organ that was a direct product of class activity. Weber also resisted the idea that institutions of the modern state should be 'smashed' in a revolutionary process of transformation. He considered this to be a foolhardy strategy.[22]

In his definition of the state, Weber emphasized two distinctive elements in the history of states: territoriality and violence. This means that the modern state, unlike its predecessors which were constantly troubled by warring factions, has a capability of monopolizing violence within a given territory. The modern state is a nation-state that is involved in embattled relations with other nation-states rather than with armed groups within its own population.[23]

A third key term in Weber's definition of the state is legitimacy, which means that "the state is based on a monopoly of physical coercion which is legitimized (that is, sustained) by a belief in the justifiability and/or legality of this monopoly." Weber argued that nowadays people do not obey authority on the basis of habit, tradition or the charisma and personal appeal of individual leaders. Rather, obedience is based on a belief in the validity of legal statute and functional "competence" based on rationally created *rules*. So,

the authority of the modern state is founded on its commitment to a 'code of legal regulations'.[24]

The essence of the pluralist position is that 'there are many determinants of the distribution of power other than class and therefore, many power centres.' This idea is now taken much further than Weber. According to modern pluralists:

> power is non-hierarchically and competitively arranged. It is an inextricable part of an 'endless process of bargaining' between numerous groups representing different interests, for example, business organizations, trade unions, parties, ethnic groups, students, prisons officers, women's institutes, religious groups...[25]

Therefore, according to democratic pluralism, all the different 'interest groups' mobilize and compete for equal access to scarce resources. What government does is mediate and adjudicate between competing demands. The rules of democratic procedure have to ensure that the competition between the various social groups is fair, which would result in creating government by multiple groups or multiple minorities which, in turn, secures the democratic character of the regime. Dahl calls this 'polyarchy', which means 'minorities government'. This position can be highly criticized on the grounds that:

> the existence of disparate power centres hardly guarantees that government will (1) listen to them all equally; (2) do anything other than to communicate with the leaders of such groups; (3) be susceptible to influence by anybody other than those in powerful positions; (4) do anything about the issues under discussion, and so on.[26]

In addition to these criticisms, Marxists also contend that many groups do not have the resources to compete in the national political arena. They do not have the same clout as, say, multinational corporations. Neo-pluralists increasingly accept that there are such constraints placed on Western governments and state institutions by the requirements of private accumulation.[27]

The foregoing has been a summary of the evolution of modern political theory in the

Western world in recent times. It has also highlighted the *Gesellschaft* characteristics of modern political theory. The crucial issues that face Islamist/Muslim political theorists of the modern age is: how would they theoretically respond to the problems of disparate interest groups within a Muslim nation-state? How could some form of balance be generated between the state and civil society? And, moreover, how could public life be effectively regulated in the complex social arena Muslim societies find themselves in?

The following section of this chapter examines certain trends that developed in the Muslim world during the early part of the twentieth century. We look at the emergence of secular political ideologies in Pakistan and Egypt. To do this, I have chosen two prominent political figures from the Muslim world, Muhammad Ali Jinnah of Pakistan, and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. These two personalities were most responsible for leading their two respective nations into the modern post-colonial era. We briefly look at how they approached the issues facing the newly emerging Muslim 'nations', as well as other currents of thought (Islamist) that contested the positions adopted by them. A detailed discussion of the Islamist vision follows in chapter three.

2.4 The Emergence of Secular Politics in the Muslim World

Jinnah and the Creation of a Secular Pakistan

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there arose in India a political leader who was considered as an 'ambassador for Hindu-Muslim unity'. Muhammad Ali Jinnah led the All-India Muslim League, and became associated with the demand for the independent Muslim state of Pakistan. In principle, he was a nationalist, and opposed to creating a state on the basis of religious ideology. He opposed Mahatma Gandhi for his support of the Khilafat movement which brought Gandhi support from some *'ulama* and other Muslim political

activists.[28] Jinnah was a centrist and not keen on the idea of separate Muslim provinces. Instead, he wanted to secure power for Muslims at a strong centre, where he demanded that up to one third of the seats of the central legislature should be reserved for them. After being overwhelmed by those who advocated separate provinces for Muslims, he made a tactical concession by appearing to favour a weak federal structure.[29]

Initially, Jinnah's vision was closer to that of the Hindu-led Congress which was committed to a strong unitary centre. He had to reconcile this with the conflicting demands of the Muslim provinces, whom he tried to persuade that real security for the Muslims, especially in the minority provinces, lay not in separate electorates, but in an agreement with the Congress at the centre.[30] Jinnah was faced with the dilemma of his own political vision of a *non-ideological* state on the one hand, and the expectations and aspirations of his constituency, the Muslim masses, who favoured a separate state, on the other hand. Secondly, he had to deal with the contradiction between securing Muslim interests in the majority provinces as well as the minority provinces. If those provinces who had Muslim majority populations separated from a greater India, who would champion the course of those Muslims who would be left behind in those provinces where they constituted a minority? The demand for autonomous Muslim states conflicted with the need for a centre capable of ensuring the interests of Muslims in the rest of India.[31] Eventually, Jinnah acquiesced to the idea of a separate Pakistan, since the Muslim electorate chose so.[32]

Jinnah later also saw that the cultural and social differences between Hindus and Muslims were too deep-rooted. They had two opposite worldviews. Besides, the Hindus had gained the upper hand during British rule in both economic and political matters, so it became clear that Muslim interests would be vulnerable in a united India. Consequently, Jinnah associated himself with the demand for a separate Muslim state, in order to save

Muslim identity in a Hindu-dominated united India. However, Jinnah did not have any plans to establish a theocratic state. In fact, he steadfastly supported the idea of a secular state. In this he was opposed by most of the *'ulama* who were not keen on the idea of a national secular state.[33]

Jinnah was concerned that 'religion should not enter politics'. He wished to deal with the problem of minorities through a political approach. By minorities, he understood not only those minorities that were separate from the mainstream on the basis of religion, but who were different on the basis of language, culture, race, art, music and so forth. He felt that "the solutions to these communal problems were cast in political, not religious terms."[34] Jinnah, in his address to the members of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, appealed to them to concentrate on the well-being of the people, especially the poor, no matter what community they belonged to, and 'no matter what was their colour, cast or creed'. He believed that the religious affiliation of the people had nothing to do with the affairs of the State. Everyone had to be an equal citizen of one state. He appealed to Hindus and Muslims to cease to be Hindus and Muslims in the political sense, but maintain their religious identity and personal faith in the religious sense.[35]

Jinnah distanced himself from calls made by influential people such as Iqbal, that Pakistan's social and economic programme should be based on the 'Law of Islam'. He feared that the task of interpreting the 'Law' would go to the *'ulama* who were the traditional guardians of the law.[36] Jinnah even went to the extent of insisting that a draft resolution basing the future constitution of Pakistan on Islamic principles be withdrawn, and replaced with the clause that 'The Constitution of the Government [of Pakistan] will be what the people will decide.'[37]

Nasser and the Unfolding of Modern Politics in Egypt

In the liberation of Egypt from the clutches of European colonial domination, several movements emerged. These movements embraced different ideologies. They ranged from secularly orientated parties such as the *Wafd* (delegation), *Misr al-Fatat* (Young Egypt), and communist parties, to the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (The Muslim Brotherhood) who championed the idea of establishing an Islamic state.

Among these various movements, the Free Officers movement, was founded by the sons of junior military officials and middle peasant families. They were the first officers to be drawn from more modest origins. Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat were affiliated to them. Later, Nasser was destined to make the greatest impact on modern Egyptian politics. Nasser was born in January 1918 in Alexandria. He grew up witnessing the political turmoil around him, and the poverty of the peasants along the Nile. These conditions made an imprint on his mind and shaped his political ambitions, beginning dramatically with the coup of 1952 which deposed King Farouk.[38]

British domination disrupted the Egyptian economy, and caused resentment amongst the people. In their quest for self-determination, some senior Egyptians requested that a *wafd* (delegation), led by Sa'ad Zaghlul, represent Egypt at the peace conference in Paris in 1918. This request was not granted. After much public agitation, limited 'independence' was granted in 1922. Egypt had its King Fuad, who was an autocratic character, as well as a nominal parliament dominated by the Wafd party. Zaghlul who led the Wafd until 1927, was opposed to Fuad.[39] After Zaghlul's death, during the 1930's, the once popular Wafd party largely represented the interests of the landed classes. As a result, the gap between the politicians and the people widened, with political repression adding to the burden of low standards of living due to a world recession. There was no regard for democracy. New

organisations appeared and created an appeal among the masses. Among these organizations was the Ikhwan, which appealed to a return to Islamic values. Their ideas spread rapidly among the displaced urban masses. The Ikhwan was a political as well as a social movement which established a network of social organizations to help with the hardships of life. Later, they became identified as a fanatical fundamentalist movement.[40] The Ikhwan wanted to fight both 'external' as well as 'internal' imperialism. By 'internal' imperialism, they meant those local people who were indifferent to the Muslim community's needs, and served the needs of the 'external' imperialists instead. These 'internal' imperialists were also held responsible for spreading moral corruption, and diverting people from their traditional faith.[41]

Another smaller organization, Young Egypt, followed the model of the young fascist movements of Europe. Nasser joined them in 1934. Nasser himself did not have a particular ideology in the strict sense of the word. His political vision lacked clarity, and he vacillated between radical nationalism and socialism. Nevertheless, his advocacy of Arab nationalism was his hallmark, since it greatly appealed not only to the Egyptian masses, but later won him adoration across the Arab world.[42]

Nasser, unlike Ataturk, was not particularly wedded to the idea of a secular state. He and the Free Officers had no plan to eliminate Islam from Egyptian life. In fact, they made their adherence to Islam clear by preaching in the Friday sermons, and legitimating their policies and directions. Prayer, fasts, and pilgrimage were consistent images which the Free Officers projected of themselves. Although they opposed the Ikhwan politically, they wanted to make it clear to them that they were no lesser Muslims.[43]

Later, in 1962 Nasser came to believe that socialism was the only solution for Egypt and he adopted it as a policy. 'Scientific socialism' he believed was the chosen path, since

capitalism was responsible for exploiting the country, and was associated with imperialism. However, he made it clear that his type of socialism was to be different from Marxist communism. The introduction of a thoroughgoing godless communist system was unamicable to Egypt, and therefore had to be adapted.[44]

Ideologically, Nasser could be described as pragmatic, since he picked his way through different currents of thought. He embraced in part the Islamic reformism of Abduh, and also selected opinions from fascists, communists, radical socialists, and Islamic fundamentalists. However, he embraced none of them entirely.[45]

Notes and References:

1. Dorothy Pickles, *Introduction to Politics* (Britain: Methuen & Co., 1977), p. 34.

2. Ibid., p. 23-4.

3. Although Harvey Cox has posited a distinction between *secularization*, which he describes as a process, and *secularism* which takes on the form of an ideology, as will be discussed later, I will choose to use the two terms interchangeably.

4. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 2.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

7. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

8. Ibid., p. 20.

9. George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1950), pp. 331-6.

10. Ibid., pp. 355-62.

11. David Held, *Political Theory and the Modern State* (California: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 11.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., pp. 12-3.

14. Ibid., p. 13.

15. Ibid., pp. 13-4.

16. Ibid., p. 23.

17. Ibid., pp. 24-5.

18. Ibid., p. 14.

19. Ibid., pp. 31-2.

20. Ibid., p. 33.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., p. 39.

23. Ibid., p. 40.

24. Ibid., p. 41.

25. Ibid., p. 45.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 8-9.

29. Ibid., p. 10.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., pp. 59-60.

32. Ibid., p. 174.

33. Muhammad Munir, *From Jinnah to Zia* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1979), pp. 19-32.

34. Jalal, op. cit., p. 14.

35. Jamiluddin Ahmad, (ed.) *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah, Volume 2* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1976), pp. 400-4.

36. Jalal, op. cit., p. 42.

37. Ibid., pp. 95-6.

38. Peter Woodward, *Nasser* (London: Longman Books, 1992), pp. 11-12.

39. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

40. Ibid., p. 14.

41. Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), pp. 21-2.

42. Woodward, op. cit., p. 62.

43. Hopwood, op. cit., p. 95.

44. Ibid., p. 99.

45. Ibid., p. 101.

CHAPTER 3

The Islamist Utopia

Introduction

Since Islamists such as Mawdudi and Qutb have been dubbed "fundamentalist" by scholars, political analysts, as well as journalists, this chapter first tries to define the phenomenon of *fundamentalism* as a problem in religious and political discourse. Some writers have referred to the fundamentalist phenomenon as Islamic 'resurgence'. Later, an appraisal of Mawdudi and Qutb's political philosophy will depict the 'fundamentalist' traits that are manifest in their worldview.

3.1 Defining Fundamentalism

As it would be with any other religious tradition, defining and categorizing the different trends one finds amongst Muslim societies is highly problematic. Within the discipline of sociology of religion, scholars normally categorize religious divisions into 'orthodox', 'heterodox', 'fundamentalist', or 'progressive'. However, the term fundamentalism has attracted a lot of controversy and fierce reaction from Muslims. It seems to have assumed a supreme derogatory status in modern times. As applied by the Western media, sometimes, Muslims who are fighting for self-determination from alien rule, such as the Palestinians against the Israelis, are branded as fundamentalists and terrorists, whereas they see themselves as freedom fighters in a legitimate cause. If they resort to violence to achieve their aims, then it is as a result of other avenues being closed to them. Those advocating a return to traditional religious principles of law and morality are also labelled fundamentalist.

Examples of these are the Hamas in Palestine, the Jama'at of Egypt, and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) of Algeria.

Some scholars have suggested alternative terms to escape fundamentalism's negative connotations. The term 'literalists' has been proposed by some, in order to point to the fundamentalist tendency of turning to divine texts and interpreting them "literally." Aqeel Bilgrami has preferred the term 'absolutist', to point to the tendency to absolutize particular positions and particular interpretations. Yet others have referred to them as 'technists' (Eric Winkel) for the reason that they adopt a technical approach and attitude towards the issues that they emphasize. I prefer to use the term fundamentalist since it is the most widely used one. It should be noted that in academic circles, Fundamentalism is employed as a generic term that is applied not only to Muslims specifically, but to all religious trends that display some common "family traits."

Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby suggest the following definition:

> Religious fundamentalism has appeared in the twentieth century as a tendency, a habit of mind, found within religious communities and paradigmatically embodied in certain representatives individual movements, which manifests itself as a strategy, or set of strategies, by which beleaguered believers attempt to preserve their distinctive identity as a people or group. Feeling this identity to be at risk in the contemporary era, they fortify it by a selective retrieval of doctrines, beliefs, and practices from a sacred past. These retrieved "fundamentals" are refined, modified, and sanctioned in a spirit of shrewd pragmatism: they are to serve as a bulwark against the encroachment of outsiders who threaten to draw the believers into a syncretistic, areligious, or irreligious cultural milieu.[1]

The problem that Islamist organizations have with the concept of fundamentalism is that "it is an ethnocentric, militantly secularist sociological categorization based on specious cross-cultural analogies."[2] While the notion of fundamentalism first gained currency in discussions of nineteenth-century American religious movements, it was Talcott Parsons's study of the "fundamentalist reaction"--an attempt to explain the rise of European Fascist movements--

which has come to colour use of the term, particularly when it was extended to the sociology of religion. For Parsons, the fundamentalist reaction was a pathological, authoritarian reconstruction of an idealized social status quo in response to increasingly high levels of dysfunction in the existing social status quo.[3]

Fundamentalism rejects the 'modern' method of political organization. Fundamentalists believe religion to be inseparable from law and politics or governance, and therefore reject the private/public dichotomy. This public/private distinction stands as a hallmark of modern democratic systems, since the populations of polities are no more homogeneous. There are certain matters that pertain to specific religious groups, such as those affairs that matter only to individuals, families, and churches, and matters of devotion and worship. Then there are other more general issues that are common to all the disparate groups that live under the ambit of the polity, such as defence, commerce, education, health policy, transportation, etc. This is precisely what fundamentalists reject. They feel strongly that there is no such thing as a private matter. Everything and every area of the lives of humans is prescribed by God's will. For them, the very notion that religion is a private affair smacks of blasphemy.[4]

Consequently, real freedom is rejected by fundamentalists. They are of the view that everyone residing within the confines of the polity should submit to the superiority and ascendancy of their particular faith.[5]

Fundamentalists are called thus because they select certain fundamentals from religion. These "fundamentals" are considered to constitute the core of the faith. The "fundamentals" that are retrieved by them usually do not "fit" in with modern society. For instance, just when "modern" Muslims attempt to present Islam as a faith that is compatible with "modern" notions of human rights and respect for the due process of law, the

fundamentalists come along calling for the stoning of adulterers, the execution of those whom they consider to be apostates, and the imprisoning of dissenters. All this is advocated in the name of Islam. Likewise, just when the Zionists establish the State of Israel on secular principles, radical religious Jews raise a storm that the Zionist state is ultimately religious, and in truth, it is the land that was promised to Abraham by God in the Torah.[6]

Fundamentalists deplore the secularization of lands or movements that they believe are sacred at the very core. In their reaction, they stress beliefs or practices they feel are ignored, eclipsed or de-emphasized. The doctrines and rituals de-emphasized are often the ones that would embarrass people who wish that their religious life ought to be compatible with their modern way of life. But for fundamentalists, those very points which are extraordinary and apparently "irrational", are what religion and existence are all about. Fundamentalists do not wish to subject themselves to enlightenment "rationality." Religion after all has to remain mysterious and unexplainable by humans.[7]

Fundamentalists detest and reject the modern liberal approach that there are different ways of believing and acting, and therefore admit the possibility of many different, equally valid expressions of religious faith and identity. This is regarded as a recipe for confusion and disorientation. Once allowance is made for different formulations and different interpretations, you open up a slippery rode to relativism--the notion that no belief has the right to claim absolute truth, and pluralism--the notion that the existence of many different expressions of belief is in itself a good thing.[8]

Fundamentalists also have a deep-rooted desire to gain political ascendency. They possess a will to rule the land they inhabit according to the fundamentals they have set out.[9] For them, it is the only way they could design a polity based on their worldview, which would consequently banish the heretical ways of modernity.

Ironically, while fundamentalism condemns modernity at every turn, it is very much a modern phenomenon. What also makes it so modern is the fact that it imitates and employs all the conveniences that modernity has to offer, such as modern telecommunications systems and the like. American Protestant televangelists as well as fundamentalist Muslims in the Middle East have used modern media to their advantage. As Marty and Appleby put it: "Let Westerners subvert Islamic villages with the secular sounds of cassettes and transistor radios--the Ayatollahs will fight back with revolutionary cassettes of their own."[10]

Besides the material technology of modernity that the fundamentalists appropriate, they also manipulate the use of modern forms of arguments. "Fundamentalists often fight modernity by seizing the concept of reason and 'throwing it back,' using not unreason but a different modality of rationalism."[11] In the Islamic case, this could be born out by the way fundamentalist organizations manipulate the word *shura* (consultation), and try to present it as equivalent to democracy.

3.2 Islamic Political Resurgence as Fundamentalism

Islam is no stranger to the competing claims between those who battle to secure religious interests, and those who enjoy political power. The post-colonial period of Islamic history has seen a tremendous conflict of discourses between what has now become different sub-systems. While on the one hand, politicians or economists who are trained in 'secular' institutions, may envisage a particular areligious manner of approaching matters of concern to them, religious scholars, as well as many of their lay followers condemn this and propagate instead, religious teachings and laws which they invoke from a past tradition.

The crucial question that arises is: what are the motivations for such an appeal to what are presumed to be religious fundamentals? What is it that causes both lay people as

well as 'educated' and 'enlightened' people to invoke a past religious tradition, and absolutize its status, as a blueprint for the way forward, for contemporary society?

Some analysts have attributed this resurgence of religious fervour to purely religious factors, or factors pertaining to a rise in the religious mood. Other observers have attributed it to the fact that communities feel that the very foundations of their moral fibre are being threatened by the modern age and its mode of life. In other words, their spirituality and their value-system are threatened. Yet others such as Shireen Hunter[12] present the hypothesis that what actually causes Islamic resurgence is discontent with the modern world. According to this view, it is social, economic and political discontentment rather than religious reasons that give rise to the 'fundamentalist' phenomenon. The majority of Muslim populations have been left deprived, disgruntled and betrayed by modernity, which motivates them to resuscitate a bygone order.

Such discontent stems from many different social groups. Bazaar merchants resent socialist controls as well as unbridled capitalist development that threatens to pass them by. Ordinary people, as well as labour unions resent the repression of an authoritarian state. Rural people find no comfort and opportunity in the cities, after the disruption of their farming networks and support systems. Modern education produces more dropouts due to lack of opportunity in the markets. Graduates of religious schools lose career opportunities to graduates from secular institutions. Males resent female emancipation, and international politics only adds to the frustrating woes of the Muslim populations.[13]

In my view, attempting to explain the motivations for religious resurgence solely on the basis of socio-economic and political factors, would be reductionist. It is my contention that religious resurgence in the form of a call for the establishment of an Islamic state can be inspired by a variety of reasons. These could at times be socio-economic and political

factors, and at times it could be aroused by purely religious or cultural considerations. In other words, when a society feels that the very foundations of its morality, and its ethical values are facing serious challenges from an alien value-system, it resists the encroaching system. Some people invoke religion in their renunciation of the invading order, while others may solicit their cultural traditions, or the practices of their forefathers, in articulating their abhorrence to the invading culture. It is possible that people who may be socially, economically and politically privileged, may at times rebuke foreign influences, purely on the basis of religious or cultural considerations. Therefore, it cannot be said that the rejection of modernity is entirely out of socio-economic and political impoverishment. At times there could be a preponderance of one factor over others. However, one could concur with those analysts who posit the view that in modern times, the predominant stimulus to Islamic resurgence, and the call for the restoration of Islamic government in the form of the caliphate, could be the socio-economic and political damage that has been wrought by the advent of modernity in Muslim lands.

Why then do the 'fundamentalists' or those seeking a resurgence of the glorious past invoke religious fundamentals in order to overcome their predicament? For them, religion serves as the highest source for values such as justice, equality and fairness. The injustice in their past situations are evaluated against these criteria, presented as the legitimate aspirations of the subject peoples.

It is for this reason that, to their credit, some fundamentalists movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, do not just confine themselves to waging a negative diatribe against the ruling elites. In order to 'rectify' the socio-economic imbalances, they engage in community-building projects which serve useful functions in society, at a time when modern life is characterized by individualist anomie in many parts of the world. This is despite the

fact that one may raise the criticism that these communities are based on strong religious authoritarianism.[14] Fundamentalists have overtaken their liberal counterparts in effectively building communities which have succeeded to some extent in cushioning the harsh carelessness that modern society displays towards impoverished peoples. For example, in Egypt, they have set up Islamic banks that operate on interest-free, Islamic principles. By so doing, they have made possible access to capital to those people who would normally be disqualified by banking institutions that operate on "Western" principles of usury, and are connected to the world banking system controlled by the Western powers. They also provide job opportunities to fellow "fundamentalists." Besides banks, they are also responsible for setting up other much needed community organizations such as schools, clinics, orphanages and mosques.[15] They have filled a void where the state has failed in its responsibilities. The fundamentalists have formed a kind of civil society of their own.

The Islamist/fundamentalist worldview that has been briefly described in the aforegoing part of this chapter has its ideological source in the writings of Abu al A'la Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb. The following part of this chapter therefore analyzes the political theories of these two ideologues. It must be noted that their political theories provide us with significant insights into their overall social theories.

3.3 Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb's Conceptions of Islamic Political Theory

Abu al-A'la Mawdudi was a prolific journalist and editor of several Muslim newspapers in the city of Lahore. He was also a diligent writer and speaker advocating the cause of Islam and Pan-Islamism. Mawdudi, a staunch advocate of Pan-Islamism, attacked patriotism based on race, territory, language, and culture. In its place, he promoted the idea of an Islamic community which for him meant that the bond between Muslims must be found primarily on

the basis of their Islamic allegiance. This bond should lead to a world Islamic union superseding all other ties. He strongly felt that only if Islam formed the basis of Muslim global solidarity, would the Muslims be in a position to solve the immense socio-economic and political problems that they faced, and be able to counter the hegemony of Western civilization.[16]

Nationalism: Islam's Antithesis?

Mawdudi considered the only legitimate bond that was worthy of binding all the Muslims of the world to be Islam. For Mawdudi, nationalism was the total antithesis of Islam, whose very spirit and goals were distinct from those of Islam. Islam presented to all mankind one collective system of doctrine, morality, piety and justice. Whoever accepted this system, was equally obliged by its rights and duties, whether they pertained to matters of devotion, social life, politics, economics or law, without any scope for geographical or ethnic distinctions.[17]

The ultimate objective, he said, was to attain a "world state" in which all humans will enjoy equal rights and be equally stratified into one single civilization and one single political system, which will replace "adversarial competition" with "friendly cooperation", so that people would assist one another towards material and spiritual prosperity. This system will only appeal to the multitudes of mankind when they have freed themselves from the prejudices of *jāhiliyyah* (the age of ignorance) and ethnic arrogance, and begin relating to people solely on the basis of their humanity.[18]

On the other hand, Mawdudi elaborated, nationalism distinguished between humans on spurious grounds. The minimum requirement of nationalism was that one discriminates between one's own nation and "others" in socio-cultural and political matters. One was driven towards maximizing economic benefits for one's own nation, by setting up barriers

for other nations. The historical narratives that engendered national prejudice were jealously preserved. This competition for resources between nations blinded them on issues of justice and fairness, since their ultimate goal was confined to the supremacy of the "national state." And if the particular nation-state in question had any extra-territorial intentions, then such intentions were motivated solely for the imperialistic purpose of enslaving other nations for their own selfish objectives.[19] Mawdudi concluded that the two systems of Islam and nationalism were diametrically opposed to one another. Wherever nationalism existed, there was no room for Islam, and vice versa.[20]

Mawdudi traced the roots of European nationalism to ancient Greece. He quotes Aristotle in his book *Politics* as saying that "nature has created the Barbarians only to serve as slaves ... By Barbarians, he meant, all non-Greeks."[21] Subsequent to that, says Mawdudi, Christianity, as corrupted as it may have become, thwarted the spread of nationalism for a time by maintaining a broad view of humanity. For centuries, the effect of the Roman Empire, coupled with the teachings of Christianity, was that it united disparate groups and subjected them to a single authority. The spiritual realm of the Pope, and the temporal world of the king remained in unison. However, this cooperative arrangement between these two spheres was confined to their opposition to intellectual progress. With regard to the distribution of worldly power and worldly benefits, they were fierce contenders.[22]

While the sixteenth century Reformation had the benefit of deposing the Pope and the Emperor, it had the adverse effect of splitting up the diverse nations that were hitherto held together. The Reformation was unable to provide the spiritual bond that the Church once provided. Eventually, every nation went about enhancing its literature, its politics and its socio-economic system. In this way, it created a new-found national pride, and rekindled old ethnic prejudices. This led to conflict and competition between nations.[23]

In analyzing the genesis of nationalistic fervour, Mawdudi opined that even though it may be inspired by a need to eliminate injustices that were perpetrated on one's own nation by some other nation, if nationalism were not constrained by a divine code of spiritual teachings and moral guidance it would result in imperialism and in what he calls "economic nationalism." Eventually it heralds in the principle of: "the survival of the fittest nations."[24]

Sayyid Qutb, influenced by Mawdudi, also condemned nationalism, secularism, socialism, communism, democracy and capitalism. In his book *Milestones*, he vehemently employs the use of the term *jāhiliyya* (the state of ignorance prior to the rise of Islam in Arabia), as a motif with which to attack these alien systems.

Allah the Sole Sovereign

Fundamentally, for Mawdudi and for Sayyid Qutb, the Islamic social and moral system is based on the unity and the sole sovereignty of Allah. Mawdudi states:

> It is the very starting-point of the Islamic political philosophy. The basic principle of Islam is that human beings must individually and collectively surrender all rights of lordship, legislation and exercising of authority over others. No one should be allowed to pass orders or make commands *on his own right* and no one ought to accept the obligation to carry out such commands and obey such orders. None is entitled to make laws on his own authority and none is obliged to abide by them.[25]

Mawdudi quotes verses from the Qur'an which read as:

> Authority rests with none but Allah. He commands you not to surrender to any one save Him. This is the right way (of life). (ch.XII v.40)
>
> They ask: 'have we also got some authority?' Say: 'all authority belongs to God alone'. (ch.III v.154)
>
> Who so does not establish and decide by that which Allah revealed, such are disbelievers. (ch.V v.44)[26]

He then elaborates, that according to this theory, sovereignty belongs to Allah, who alone is the law-giver. No man, even if he be a prophet, has the right to order others *in his own*

right (unless working on God's orders), to do or not to do certain things. The Prophet himself is subject to God's commands.[27] He concludes that:

> 1) No person, class or group, not even the entire population of the state as a whole, can lay claim to sovereignty. God alone is the sovereign; all others are merely his subjects;
> 2) God is the real law-giver and the authority of absolute legislation vests in Him. The believers cannot resort to totally independent legislation nor can they modify any law which God has laid down, even if the desire to effect such legislation or change in Divine laws is unanimous.[28]

Sayyid Qutb also emphasized the sole sovereignty of Allah in order to contest the claim to sovereignty as well as the legitimacy of the nation-state and its institutions. He is quoted to have said:

> The universe is regulated by one single law which binds all its parts in a harmonious and orderly sequence. This systematic and congruent arrangement is the creation of one will, or the expression of one God. The multiplicity of beings, or essences, leads to a multiplicity of wills, and gives rise to diverse rules and judgements. The will is the manifest expression of an active essence, and law is the aspect of the effective will. For were it not so, the unity which co-ordinates the whole cosmic order, and regularizes its course, direction, and conduct, would disappear, and disorder would follow the disruption of harmony[29]

According to Qutb, God has imprinted his signs throughout the universe in order to announce his oneness, authority and lordship. Man's responsibility in performing the act of submission is not the mere belief in God's existence; rather, it is the admission of his exclusive authority in determining the moral, political and economic aspects of all societies. "The function of the human being is to receive, respond to, adapt and apply the immutable characteristics of divine rules."[30]

Mawdudi contends that thousands of years of experience has confirmed that humanity cannot help but set up someone or other as a 'god' '*ilāh*' and '*rabb*', as someone to look towards for guidance and help. And, if mankind does not believe in the one supreme God, then they will create some artificial and false god in His place. These false and self-styled

gods, who enslave and control other humans, assume the position of '*ilah*', God. They come in the shape of political party leaders, money-magnates, dictators, and arbiters of man's destiny, who subject other humans to their will.[31]

The consequences of this domination of man by man, Mawdudi elaborates, is that these men attempt to play the role of divinity. Hence, we find for example, a mean and incompetent person being appointed as a police commissioner, or an "ignorant and narrow-minded politician being exalted to the rank of a prime minister."[32] The effect of godhood is so intoxicating that whoever has a taste of it can never keep himself under control. When man's overlordship over man was established, tyranny, despotism, unlawful exploitation, and inequality reigned supreme. In fact the qualities required for fulfilling the task of godhood will always remain out of the reach of humans.[33]

The conclusion that Qutb and Mawdudi derive from asserting the exclusive sovereignty (*ḥākimiyya*) of God is to negate the concept of the legal and political sovereignty of human beings, individually or collectively. For them, God alone is the Sovereign and his Commandments are the Law of Islam'[34] At another instance, Qutb has said that: "When in a society, sovereignty belongs to God alone, then only is every person in that society free from the servitude of others .... On the other hand, in a society in which some people are lords who legislate and some others are slaves who obey them, then there is no freedom in the real sense, nor dignity for each and every individual."[35]

Qutb employed the central ideas of Mawdudi, and served as a transmitter of his ideas, but what distinguished Mawdudi from him is that he was more emotional in his rhetoric. Qutb employed a "repetitious and wordy style." Mawdudi on the other hand was more legalistic in his approach. He used deductive reasoning, and had a "tighter logic and leaner rhetoric."[36] Mawdudi believed in the sole sovereignty of Allah, but as an ultimate

sovereign: something like the relationship between a master and a slave. Qutb's idea of divine sovereignty precluded all human sovereignty. For him, any non-divine sovereignty is *ṭāghūt* (a false god, illegitimate).[37]

However, the concept of Allah's sovereignty as mentioned in several Qur'anic verses, has been misinterpreted by Mawdudi and Qutb. What those verses refer to is that Allah exercises his general power over the entire creation as Creator, Sustainer, Guide, and Judge, and has nothing to do with the specific concept of political sovereignty. Political sovereignty in the 'modern' sense is the possession of the necessary coercive power to ensure obedience to the laws of the polity. Since Allah does not exercise political power directly by himself, he cannot be regarded as sovereign in this political sense. This is precisely why humans require a *khalīfa* (vicegerent) who practically exercises that power. Therefore, Mawdudi's designation of Allah as the sovereign is a misunderstanding, because Allah does not directly exercise effective political power.[38] Alternatively, if it is said that the *shari'a* is the sovereign, then that is also mistaken, as the *shari'a* as a law is an impersonal thing and cannot by itself be said to exercise political power. Instead, the *shari'a* is something that has to be implemented and enforced by a sovereign power.[39]

However one may understand God's sovereignty, ultimately power has to be exercised by some mortal being. In order to deal with that problem, the Islamic tradition conceived of the concept of *khilāfa* (vicegerency). The office of *khilāfa* or the caliph, as discussed in chapter one, is understood to be God's representative on earth. His function is merely to implement the 'will of Allah' in the land.

Mawdudi has invoked the concept of *khilāfa* from traditional political philosophy. He states that Islam uses the term 'vicegerency' (*khilāfa*) instead of sovereignty, since sovereignty belongs to God alone. Anyone who holds power is the vicegerent of the Supreme

Ruler, God, and will not be authorized to exercise any powers other than those delegated to him. And who is the caliph of God? The whole community of believers are worthy of what Mawdudi calls 'popular vicegerency', which makes everyone a caliph of God.[40] The purpose behind popular vicegerency is to render all members of the community equal, without any distinction based on birth, profession, or social position. "So no Arab can claim superiority over a non-Arab, nor can a white man claim superiority over a black man." The ultimate purpose of popular sovereignty is to leave no room for dictatorship by any person or group, since everyone is God's caliph. No person is entitled to become an absolute ruler.[41]

Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb were very much opposed to the concept of democracy. However, it must be understood that the democracy they opposed was that form of democracy that was practised in the Western countries, a democracy that could be described as *laissez faire* democracy. At the same time, Mawdudi and Qutb abhorred arbitrary dictatorship as practised in Muslim countries. In its place, they advocated such a political system that would be more reflective of the popular will of the masses to a limited extent. It is this "Islamized form of democracy" that Mawdudi described as a *theo-democracy*. He explained his notion of a theo-democracy as a system in which -- unlike the bitter experience of medieval theocracy in Europe under the priests -- the entire Muslim population would run the state in accordance with the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet. This would be a divine form of democratic government in which the Muslims were given a limited amount of popular sovereignty under the suzerainty of God. The executive under this system of government is constituted by the general will of the Muslims who also have the right to depose it. All administrative matters and all questions about which no explicit injunctions are found in the *shari'a* are to be settled by consensus of opinion. Every Muslim who is capable

and qualified to give a sound opinion on matters of Islamic law, is entitled to interpret god's law when such interpretation becomes necessary. But, where an explicit command exists, no Muslim leader or legislator, not even all the Muslims of the world put together, have any right to make the least alteration.[42]

Qutb also believed the Islamic system to be of a 'democratic' nature. Accordingly, authority in Islam was exercised on the basis of consultation. The methods and procedures of consultation were purely technical, and might vary and diverge in order to gauge the opinion of the entire nation. The principle of electing a Muslim ruler according to the will of the people was firmly established by an explicit text of the Qur'an. In the early days of Islam, *shūrā* (consultation) was confined to the city of Medina. After the death of the Prophet the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, extended this procedure to encompass both Medina and Mecca. Nowadays, it is necessary to get the opinion of the masses as a whole. All that remains is to work out the technical details of how to implement *shura* (consultation). This freedom of choice, for Qutb, was limited to electing a ruler already committed to the application of the *shari'a*. With the exception of theoretical and applied sciences, such as technical skills, the art of war and the cultivation of land, Islamic law must be paramount, binding both the ruler and the ruled. So, obedience to an Islamic ruler was only dependent on his implementation of the *shari'a*. If he violated the *shari'a* then he was not deserving of obedience.[43]

Qutb judged purely 'scientific subjects' to fall beyond the legal sphere of Islam, while social matters, acts of devotion, and 'all that pertains to man's soul and mind' were under the jurisdiction of the *shari'a*. Thus, punishments ordained by the Qur'an, such as amputating a thief's hand, stoning or flogging an adulterer, and whipping a drunkard, had to be carried out. He thought that mitigating circumstances such as hunger in the case of theft was proof of the adaptability of Islamic legal injunctions. Other than that, he felt that the stipulations

and provisions of the *shari'a* were clear-cut, leaving no room for ambiguity and complications. In fact he accused the *'ulama* of complicating Islamic law by innovating a host of new terms and by writing commentaries upon commentaries. They are the ones who obscured the pure and simple origins of Islam.[44]

What Qutb did not seem to give a serious thought to is that the very process of electing a ruler--which he acknowledges has to be specifically worked out for any given context--is a product of human intellectual endeavour, and is subject to various motivations and influences. The same is true, however, for the *shar'i* laws that he thinks form the bedrock of Muslim rule. It is a fact that *shari'a* law has never been one homogeneous set of clear-cut rules that were never disputed, interpreted, and argued by different scholars as well as different power groups at different times and places in the whole of Muslim history. It was never as simple as just referring to some perfectly complete *shar'i* law code, that could be applied, without having to consider its socio-economic and political context, and practical constraints.

> To Qutb, legislators are God's agents and His trusted functionaries; their utterances and decisions should on no account express their free will, or reflect the desires of secular majorities. By devising their own laws without reference to the authentic authority of the Holy Book, deputies and judges engage in blasphemous activities synonymous with the worship of idols or man-made images. In this sense, secular democracy is a deliberate violation of divine laws and a reversion to the days of pagan ignorance (*jahiliyya*).[45]

Mawdudi and Qutb are apprehensive over the role of humans in the legislative process. This lead them to the conclusion that God is the sole being worthy of enjoying sovereignty. Consequently, modern democracy and liberalism, which attempt to accentuate the role of humans over the divine, can only result in social disorder. Equality among humans, for the Islamists, can only be achieved if all of humanity subjects itself to a higher authority, namely God. However, the problem remains, that the law which is claimed to be of divine origin,

still has to be interpreted, mediated, and applied by humans. Who is to play this role most effectively? Will it be the *'ulama*, or will it be an "intellectual" class of people such as judges and lawyers, or will it be those who wield effective power, the politicians?

With respect to modern, Western-style democracy, Mawdudi states that Islamic political philosophy is the very antithesis of secular Western democracy. The foundation of Western democracy is the sovereignty of the people. In such a system, powers of legislation and the determining of values and norms rest in the hands of the people. Law-making has to correspond to the mood and temper of their opinion. If the masses desire a particular piece of legislation, steps have to be taken to implement it howsoever ill-conceived it may be from a religious and moral standpoint. If the people dislike any law and demand that it be repealed, then so will be the case howsoever right and just it may be. This is not the case in Islam.[46]

He also believed that in Western democracy, the people are sovereign, while in Islam, sovereignty is vested in God, and the people were his caliphs or representatives. In democracy, the people make their own laws, and undertake to fulfil the will of the people. In Islam they have to obey the laws of God and fulfil his purpose: "Western democracy is a kind of absolute authority which exercises its powers in a free and uncontrolled manner whereas the Islamic democracy is subservient to the Divine Law."[47]

While Mawdudi has expressed the necessity to curb the possibility of absolute power that a ruler could enjoy, which could result in a dictatorship to the detriment of the Muslim populace as a whole, he has on the other hand effectively excluded the "unqualified" Muslim masses from playing any role in the legislative process. Firstly, Mawdudi does not consider the opinions of the *shūrā* (consultative body or Muslim parliament) to be binding on the Muslim ruler. If the opinions of the *shura* conflict with the ruler's understanding and

interpretation of the *shari'a*, then he may overrule their opinions. So, by disallowing decisive *ijtihad* (juristic endeavour) to the community or its effective leaders, the task of law-making is arrogated exclusively to one individual, the head of state, which in effect amounts to dictatorship. Secondly, according to his initial theory, Mawdudi wished to exclude the masses from the electoral process. According to Fazlur Rahman, before Mawdudi condescended to accept the idea of a parliament, he believed that the *shura* was to be appointed by the head of state rather than be elected. This is a clear retrogression from the classical Sunni theory of the state which allowed the "people who loosen and bind" to elect the head of state which would of course preexist him, rather than be appointed by him. Thirdly, Mawdudi grants the head of state the power to veto decisions made by the *shura*. This also in effect prepares a recipe for dictatorship and the concentration of absolute power in one individual's hand.[48]

What is the purpose of establishing an Islamic state according to Mawdudi? He states that the verse: "[Muslims are] those who, if we give them power in the land, establish the system of *salat* (worship) and *zakat* (poor-due) and enjoin virtue and forbid evil." (Qur'an ch. 22:41) clearly states the aims, objects and duties of an Islamic State.[49] He further states that:

> Unlike a Secular State, its duty is not merely to maintain internal order, to defend the frontiers and to work for the material prosperity of the country. Rather its first and foremost obligation is to establish the system of *salat* and *zakat*, to propagate and establish those things which have been declared to be 'virtues' by God and His Messenger, and to eradicate those things which have been declared to be 'vices' by them.[50]

He goes on to say:

> In other words, no state can be called Islamic if it does not fulfil this fundamental objective of an Islamic State. Thus a state which does not take interest in establishing virtue and eradicating vice and in which adultery, drinking, gambling, obscene literature, indecent films, vulgar songs, immoral display of beauty, promiscuous mingling of men and women, co-education, etc., flourish without let or hindrance, cannot be called an Islamic State. An

> Islamic Constitution must declare the above-mentioned objective as the primary duty of the State.[51]

Mawdudi's all-embracing philosophy emphasizes that a true Muslim polity can never break away from the law of their Lord. The political order, the social policy, the culture, the economic ideology, the legal system together with its international policy "must all be in tone with the Code of Guidance revealed by Allah and must, in no way, contravene it."[52]

A cautious assessment of Mawdudi and Qutb's ideological stance on the formation of an Islamic state would reveal the level of selectivity contained in their argument. Firstly, the Islamists isolate those verses of the Qur'an that mention Allah's sovereignty. These verses are then interpreted to connote the sole political sovereignty of Allah. In asserting this position, the Islamists fail to provide an account for the historical actuality of human sovereignty that was exercised all through the long period of Muslim political history.

Secondly, the Islamist argument limits the scope for legislation that the elected political representatives would enjoy, to carry out *ijtihād* (original law-making) only on such matters that are not explicitly decreed in the holy texts. Wherever such categorical texts exist (*manṣūṣ 'alaih*), the legislative assembly of the Islamic state would have no right to venture into any independent law-making. It would be circumscribed by the requirements of the texts. This is precisely contrary to the whole purpose of a legislative body which has to perform the task of "law-making" instead of mere "law-finding". This process of "law-making" is especially necessary in situations of drastic social change.

Thirdly, the contemporary Islamist paradigm emphasizes the level of piety of the Muslim ruler, his benevolence, and his adherence to the *shari'a*. This is a concept they have borrowed from the juristic theories, as has been discussed in chapter (1). However, on the other hand, the Islamists frequently refer to the jurists' contributions to the Islamic jurisprudential legacy as 'accretions'. In fact, the main body of official jurisprudence, apart

from a few exceptions such as Ibn Taymiya, is of no interest to the Islamists. In spite of them being Sunnis, they have no qualms about borrowing concepts and practices from the anti-Sunni sects: their major concept of *ḥākimiyya* (the sole sovereignty of God) seems to be of Kharijite inspiration.[53] Islamists advocate a return to the 'fundamental message of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* by purging it from the debris of centuries of accretions that burden the Muslim heritage.'[54] In fact, political Islam is a new invention. It does not represent any 'going back' to any situation or theory that existed in the past. All it secures from the past juridic tradition is the linking of politics and religion. The difference being, that while the traditional jurists linked religion to politics by either providing religious legitimacy for political power or questioning that legitimacy in terms of religion, the Islamists seek the politicization of a particular vision of religion that they have in mind. To do this, they invoke holy texts very selectively, with remarkable innovation.[55]

Fourthly, the Islamists refuse to concede the territorial integrity of a particular people based on their particular cultural or ethnic affiliation. This is a position that belies the historical verities replete within Islamdom of separate sections of Muslim societies governing their own affairs independently of any central authority. For example, the Indians, for most of their history under Islam, remained politically independent. The same was the case with the Muslims of North Africa, Spain, and East Africa.

Fifthly, the 'modern' Islamist model of state, champions very separatist policies with regard to non-Muslim populations, both within, and outside of the Islamic polity. Again, reflection on the Islamic historical legacy would prove that the hallmark of Islam's military expansion and its political success, was its ability to integrate with the subject peoples of the conquered territories.

Finally, the Islamist blueprint emphasizes that the Islamic state proposed to steadfastly

adhere to, and apply the *shari'a*. This presupposes that their exists in Muslim society, a single universal understanding and interpretation of the *shari'a*, which in turn presupposes the existence of a single homogeneous community of Muslims who adopt a unified approach to all aspects of life. However, we have seen in chapter (1) that the dream of a single homogeneous *ummah* (community) was but a cherished hope and never a reality. Similarly, in the modern era of Muslim history, the Islamists harbour illusions of a homogeneous global *ummah* of Muslims who will submit to a unilinear understanding of the *shari'a*. This is precisely the approach of *Gemeinschaft*.

The reality of modern Muslim societies is that they have become even more complex. There proliferates a multitude of diverse interest-groups with different life-experiences and social situations, propounding variant, and sometimes competing ideologies, worldviews, outlooks and orientations. Their expectations out of life differ markedly, and consequently, their interpretations of what constitutes the 'true *shari'a*' would also differ, perhaps substantially.

The modern secular state, based on the principle of *Gesellschaft*, is designed precisely to cater for such divergent interests, in order to reduce tensions and conflicts between different groups, by granting each group the right to implement its worldview within certain broad principles that modern societies agree to subscribe to.

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ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

In order to sum up the preceding debates, an attempt is made at appraising the questions raised earlier in this work. I have attempted to illustrate a broad picture of three dominant political trends, namely, traditional juristic political philosophy, secularized liberal democracy, and the contemporary Islamist vision of how the ideal polity ought to be shaped. Each one of these trends has its advocates in Muslim political discourse.

Among the crucial questions in the path of Muslim politics is: How do Muslim societies transcend from the *Gemeinschaft* mentality to a situation which demands such solutions that are compatible with the nature of current societies. Current societies are very much more complex, diverse and susceptible to change. What programme of action should Muslims execute in order to be in step with current global developments, in order that they may effectively secure their Islamic civilizational interests?

We have seen that the one procurable model, as discussed in chapter (1), is that of the traditional jurists. However, the juristic models have fixed their emphasis on the person of the ruler. Is the ruler pious, knowledgable, morally sound and upright in order to execute the trust of governing his subjects according to the will of God? Juristic political thinking did not attempt to elaborate on institutions of government, how they should be established, and on what principles they should be run. It was thought that a pious and just ruler, who fulfilled the commands of God, would be an example to his subjects, and would give rise to a citizenry that would be equally conscious of their obligation to God, and behave in a good and just manner. The juristic model, paradoxically, served both as a legitimizing tool, as well

as one of delegitimizing the existing status quo by which it found itself circumscribed. The other factor in the juristic model was its other-worldly emphasis; that the primary aim of the political process was to prepare the souls for everlasting bliss in the life hereafter. This model was extremely utopian in character. The overriding concern with *Gemeinschaft* (community) is also quite evident in their theories.

The second option, that of secular liberal democracy, has been implemented by the majority of Muslim political elites currently in power in muslim lands. This option, which has been analyzed in chapter (2), is a product of an important movement, the movement towards the secularization of politics and the separation of religion from politics. It was a movement which found its Muslim advocates in the form of Ataturk, Nasser, and Jinnah, who strongly felt that Muslim populations ought to practice Islamic religiosity to whatever extent they desired in their private lives, but should not allow that sentiment to impede socio-economic and political development of the Muslim nations. It could be said that this approach was somewhat of a recognition of the *Gesellschaft* character of Muslim societies.

The third and significant political paradigm that was discussed in chapter (3), which is even more radically utopian, was the Islamist paradigm as it took shape in the twentieth century. The principal notion of the Islamist paradigm was the sole sovereignty of Allah, as well as Allah's role as the sole legislator. Allah's role as legislator was exercised by the elected human representatives, who implement the will of Allah by adhering to the Qur'an and Sunnah, and by applying its immutable laws.

As far as the Islamist utopia of the Islamists is concerned, it is based on the idea of creating a society that would uphold the sacred texts (Qur'an and Sunnah) in their moral life-style. With regard to the rulers, the Islamist also focuses on the personality of the ruler. Whoever presented himself as the most religious, and promised to implement the Qur'an and

Sunnah, was considered worthy of governing the population, and was guaranteed power. In addition, however, the Islamists also emphasize the religious character of the institution of government as a whole. They accept the idea of a parliament made up of representatives elected by the masses, albeit a parliament based on theocratic lines.

The Islamists have attempted to challenge the notion of democracy as well as the way it was implemented by the secular political elites. But what does democracy hold for Muslim populations? Democracy should be understood as a process. It is a process which allows for open debate, and transparency in decision making and in the running of affairs of state. Democracy is designed to be a system that demands accountability. It is tailor-made to provide checks and balances to ensure that power is not abused.

What does democracy mean for Muslims particularly? The Qur'anic verse "(and those) who conduct their affairs between them by mutual consultation (*shūrā*)" (ch. 42:38), while recommending mutual consultation, does not provide any specific framework as to how rulers should be chosen: by succession, by forceful usurpation of power, or by adult, universal franchise. Besides, the verse does not specifically refer to consultation in political matters. It speaks of consultation generally, whether it be applied between members of a family with regard to private domestic affairs; between partners in business, or between rulers and the ruled with regard to affairs of state.

Modern experience demonstrates that democracy was founded precisely for the purposes of entrenching liberalism and freedom of thought, freedom of action, and freedom of conscience. By liberalism is meant, total autonomy for human legislatures to legislate in such a way that the above mentioned freedoms could be guaranteed, providing they do not impinge on those same freedoms for others. Democracy was also a political programme that was designed to cope with a plural world. A world in which diverse cultures and faiths had

to coexist within a specific geopolitical area, without one religious denomination or cultural group dominating another, or denying them social and political space commensurate with their numbers.

However, these are precisely the problems that the Islamists have with Western-style democracy. They believe that liberal values and pluralism are incompatible with Islamic values. Islamists are of the belief that only the Islamic value-system (as conceived by them) can operate in a Muslim polity. Hence we find the persecution of the Copts by Islamists in Egypt. However, the early history of Islam belies the above tendency, for the classical Muslim polities including the Prophet, allowed non-Muslims living under the Islamic polity to conduct their worship (in their synagogues, monasteries and churches), their family life, and their business or commercial life according to their religious norms, without any interference from the Islamic order. In other words, they were granted independence with regard to their "private" affairs, providing they submitted in some measure to certain "public" norms and requirements; such as the payment of *jizya* (a form of tax), and the prohibition of some forms of dress in public.

Contemporary Islamists also reject one-man dictatorships as well as hereditary rule (such as the Saudi monarchy). In this respect, the Islamists have adopted political modernism by advocating their own peculiar brand of 'democracy'. We have discussed that Islamists advocate democracy at the level of allowing for universal adult suffrage, which allows for mass participation in the electing of political leaders. In that instance, the Islamists effectively rule out dictatorships based on hereditary rule. However, where Islamists differ from liberal democracy, is in the extent to which a popularly elected Muslim government enjoys freedom of scope in the process of legislation. This is where the Islamists part company with the liberal democrats. They believe that it is incumbent for the Islamic state to legislate according

to the specific dictates of the Qur'an, and the Prophetic model. *Ijtihād*, or original legislation, also has to be in conformity with the "general spirit" of the sacred law. It also has to conform to the explicit dictates of the *shari'a*, which are quite extensive.

As far as the sociological reasons for the Islamists abhorrence of liberal democracy is concerned, it has been outlined earlier, that the post-colonial conditions that prevailed in the Muslim world gave rise to a distrust of 'liberals' and 'democrats', or rather, the 'secular' rulers. Most sections of the Muslim populations were subject to repression, tyranny, and neglect, not only by their own governments, but also by the former colonial masters. The indigenous rulers were believed to be (and rightly so) surrogates of their colonial masters. It was the local rulers that made possible the unfair appropriation of the natural resources of Muslim lands, as well as the labour of its people. These former colonial powers were also believed to be guilty of destabilization of Muslim territories, especially born out by their continued support for the state of Israel despite its human rights record, and its maltreatment of the indigenous Palestinian people. The local rulers were believed to work only to secure their own privileges, and the interests of their mentors, the Western powers.

At the global level, the problems that prompt the Islamists towards 'fundamentalism' is the continued hegemony of the Western powers. Besides the destabilization mentioned above, the Western mass media appears, in the eyes of ordinary Muslims, to be extremely hostile towards their values and traditions. In fact, there is a great deal of misunderstanding, and lack of empathy towards the real problems faced by Muslim populations, their grievances and their aspirations.

Besides the economic and political reasons that provide an impetus to the rise of 'fundamentalism', some people were primarily motivated by the moral corruption they witnessed in modern society. It has been observed that Mawdudi, for instance, was not really

concerned with the economic peril of imperialism and the problem of Muslim poverty. Instead, he was more concerned with the "modern corruptions entering into Muslim society as a result of the colonial impact." For him, modern corruption included, "democracy, participation of women in public affairs, and the secularization of culture."[1] Mawdudi's main thrust was not on "achieving profane goals but on the spiritualization of worldly life."[2]

Islamists such as Mawdudi can be charged with being eclectic and selective in their citation of Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and juristic opinions, in substantiation of their theory of Islamic state, as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter. On the one hand, the Islamists advocate the sole sovereignty of God, and solicit holy texts in support of such a claim. On the other hand, they also advocate some sort of 'democratic caliphate' that could possibly combine the best of two worlds. This means that on the one hand, the Islamists wish to promote the 'modern' aspect of granting all the adult masses of a Muslim polity a say in choosing their rulers, but once the rulers are chosen, it is not human reason, human preferences, and social norms that are allowed to dictate the policies of government. The democratically elected leaders are to follow the *shari'a* law as propounded by the jurists. This makes the jurists a distinguished power elite who determine the course of Muslim destiny, since even the jurists arrive at their juridical decisions not untainted by their social surroundings, their peculiar prejudices, and their particular power interests.

More importantly, despite the opportunities for practical reflection that were afforded by some instances of Islamic rule in countries such as Pakistan and Iran, the Islamists have yet to set forth clear ideas about how Islamic government should function. Their rhetoric which is directed now more than ever before to the unlearned masses, speaks only of what might be, and ignores the practical, procedural issues of how these goals are to be achieved without causing a great deal of harm along the way. It also ignores the major question of

how to provide prudent decisions once the goal of Islamic government has been achieved. Perhaps the failure to address such issues comes as a result of bearing an overriding concern with reaching the goal of Islamic government.[3] Thus we find contemporary Islamist movements frequently calling for a restoration of the caliphate, as if it were the only religiously sanctioned manner of conferring legitimacy upon the ruler.

This study has demonstrated how religion serves as a vehicle for social and political change. Religious resurgence is too complex an issue to be explained by providing simple causes. However, it has been established how the failure of secularism to address the serious socio-economic and political imbalances that exist in the Muslim world, has contributed to the proliferation of the Islamist vision of the 'true Islamic social and political order'. Added to that, the spiritual emptiness of secularism and modernity gave further impetus to the disillusioned Muslim masses.

It has been pointed out in this study how the Islamists exercise a shrewd brand of selectivity. On the one hand, certain aspects of modernity are selectively appropriated, such as the skilful exploitation of modern technology like television, radio, and the modern media, while the philosophical and value-system underpinning modern technology is rejected. On the other hand, they selectively invoke the Islamic tradition in order to reiterate the socio-economic and political goals they aspire to.

It can be rightly said that the Islamists wish to re-enact the ideals of *Gemeinschaft* (community) within the context of a complex *Gesellschaft* (association/society) in which they find themselves. This ideal of recreating community is precisely the stimulus for the Islamist utopia. In its crusade to achieve this, Islamist absolutism has the potent potential to establish totalitarian states that are modernized only to the extent that they possess technological development: states such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and some other Gulf States. More

importantly, the Islamist approach to politics serves only to divest Muslims of the rich diversity of approaches their forbearers had adopted. It also deprives Muslims from continuing with that creative spirit, which is certainly the hallmark of their past heritage.

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2. Ibid., p. 114.

3. Charles E. Butterworth, "Political Islam: The Origins" in C. E. Butterworth & I. W. Zartman (eds.) *Political Islam* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), p. 36.

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