

Quest for the Shari'a's Past and Future

"*Tamaddun, Tasawwuf, Shari'at, Kalam, Butan-i-'Ajam ke pujaari Tamam*"

(Civilisation, Mysticism, Law and Theology are foreign idols, all of them).

With these, rather shocking, words dismisses Muhammad Iqbal, the poet-philosopher of Islam of our century, the entire gamut of secondary Islamic sciences. No doubt, from the purist's vision all intellectual enterprises of derivation and deduction appear as seductions of the pure soul of faith by the foreign devils of sophistry and dialectics and Iqbal, who too was a fundamentalist at heart, was merely giving the poet's exaggerated expression to the iconoclast's rage. Nonetheless, the Shari'a that Iqbal dubs as 'the votary of the Iranian idol' is not *The Shari'a* of the Muslim's faith; it is not the supreme expression of the religious values of Islam. No, Iqbal is alluding to the corpus of derived rulings, congealed and frozen in a historic consensus of the learned, that also goes under the name of the Shari'a (and for which reason it is preferable to translate the Urduised *shari'at* of Iqbal's couplet as 'Law' rather than anything else). Be that as it may, Iqbal certainly brings us face to face with the tensions and ambiguities inherent in the most pivotal concept of Islam. In fact, he achieves more than that: he even manages to cast a shadow on the wisdom of the excessively legalised conceptions of faith as the Shari'a as well as gives vent to the acute sense of frustration which the modernised Muslim indubitably feels at the confrontation of the actual bequest of the Shari'a in history.

Iqbal's irreverential verse may also act as a reminder to us that the history and development of the Shari'a enshrines many dissenting views, that the concept has been made the receptacle of divergent, often contradictory, set of ideas in accordance with the changing perceptions of the historical Muslim community and that the syn-

The most original and comprehensive concept of Islam, the Shari'a, has been appropriated in Muslim history in a variety of ways: as a paradigm of truth, as a method of acquiring religious knowledge and as a body of legalistic rulings and disciplines. However, through centuries of intellectual stupor, the creative faculties of the Shari'a epistemology have come to a halt, making contemporary Muslim thought either patently out-of-date or pathetically dependent on alien sources. One sure way of ending the impasse of the reacting and retrospective Shari'a intellectualism is to attempt a systematic ethics of the Qur'an and through it relate Muslim conscience to the most pressing and advanced moral issues of our time, argues, **S Parvez Manzoor**.

thesis and the consensus it represents does not date from the earliest, Medines, phase of Islam's history. Given this insight, namely that the most seminal concept of Islam, Al-Shari'a, like every other all-embracing symbol is not without its semantic inconsistencies and historical contradictions, we are thus obliged to closely examine the conceptual framework within which it has been appropriated in Muslim history before attempting any discussion on its role in the present or the future civilisation of Islam. The task entails, thus, schematizing various strands of meanings constituting of the paradigm of the Shari'a for the sake of disengaging all the variegated conceptual threads leading to the present tangle.

Muslim consciousness conceives of the Shari'a in three complementary ways: as *truth*, *method* and *history*. At the heart of the Islamic vision of the Shari'a thus lies the identity of faith (*Din*) and deeds (*Shari'a*): Islam is submission to the Will of the Creator and the Shari'a is the path of that submission. Indeed, the terms *Islam*, *Din* and *Shari'a* are to some extent synonymous and coterminous. *Din* is the *following* of the Way by man; *Shari'a* is the *ordaining* of the Way by God. Hence, it is in this spirit of reciprocation and complementarity that the Qur'an speaks: "We have ordained for you a Way-to-be-followed" (45:18) and, "Do they, then, have any partners of God who have ordained for them the Way-to-be-followed?" (42:21). True enough, the Qur'an speaks far more frequently

of *Din* and *Islam* than of the *Shari'a*; however, for the Muslim community, which has 'submitted' so to say, the primary task is to understand the Shari'a - the-Way-of-God-to-be-followed. The Shari'a thus has come to be the elaboration of the God's revealed truth and commandment by human effort and intelligence.

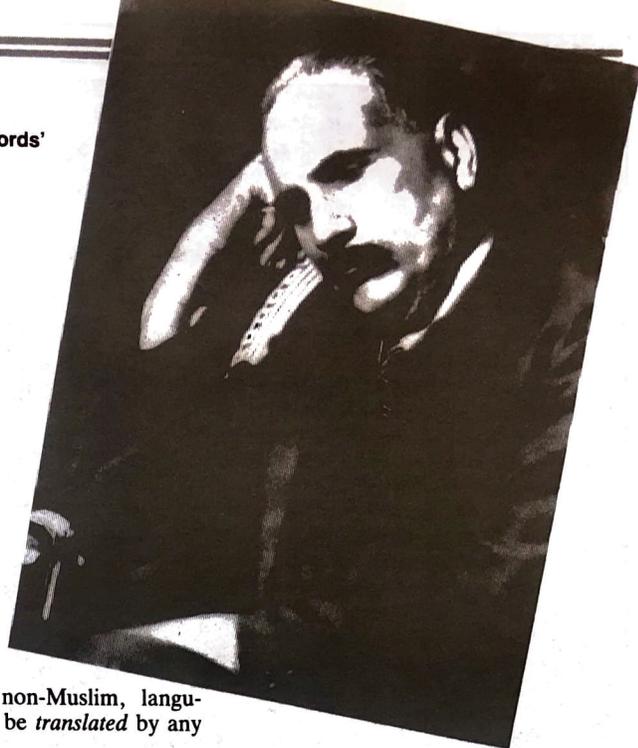
The worldview of the Shari'a, it is generally claimed, is moral and legalistic. More than that, the Shari'a makes no distinctions between *ethics* and *law*, indeed between *religion* and *law*. The pre-eminence of 'law' in the faith of Islam, universally recognised and endlessly debated, however, requires some reflection and deliberation. That 'morality', nay 'religion', is conceived as 'law' in Islam is due to the perceived nature of the Divine Revelation itself. The 'Truth' of God that is revealed to man is His 'Will' and its function is man's 'Guidance'. The Divine Will according to Islam is thus a Command and the proper response of man is submission to that Command. Herein is summed up the whole rationale for the 'legalism' of the Shari'a: Man's covenant with God is that of his trusteeship of the natural world, God's creation. The ultimate consequence of man's acceptance of the trust is the arbitration of his conduct by Divine Judgement. Human life thus is nothing but a preparation for the Final Trial, the Ultimate Judgement. It is from this perspective that every human act, humble and grand, public or private, sacred or secular, becomes charged with 'legal' consequences and responsibilities.

Everything that man may do, therefore, bears a *moral quotient* so to speak. There is an 'ought' (*Halal*) and 'ought-not' (*Haram*) of every conceivable human situation (In reality, the Shari'a grades the moral scale, its moral quotients, into five units: *Halal* (approved), *Mandub* (recommended), *Mubah* (indifferent), *Makruh* (reprehensible) and *Haram* (forbidden).) Surely, such a state of mind cannot be called legalistic. If anything at all, the Shari'a is *trans-legal moralism*.

All contradictions of *internalised* ethics and *externalised* law, of concealed intentions and revealed actions, indeed of faith and deeds, are thus resolved in the all-embracing *actionalism* of the Shari'a. All paradoxes of life, all antinomies of thought, all anomalies of time are transcended in a moment of action, the 'how' of action being itself elicited from the 'reading' and 'understanding' of the Divine Will. The Shari'a may thus be construed as a propitious synthesis of 'intellect' and 'will'; God's Command is both to be 'discovered' in the light of human reason and to be obeyed according to the dictates of morality. From this it would also follow that the Shari'a is both a *doctrine* and a *path*. It is simultaneously a manifestation of divine will and that of human resolve to be an agent of that will. It is *eternal* (anchored in God's revelation) and *temporal* (enacted in human history); *stable* (The Qur'an and Sunna) and *dynamic* (Ijma' and Ijtihad); *Din* (religion) and *Mu'amala* (social interaction); Divine gift and human prayer all at once. Indeed, the Shari'a represents the supreme human effort at synthesis: it is an all-embracing system of religion, morality, law, sociology and even politics that is the most formidable achievement of the religious genius of Islam.

Given the peculiarity of the Shari'a perception that the world is *history* rather than *cosmos*, that morality is an *event* rather than an *idea*, that faith is *acting* the Will of God rather than *knowing* His Essence, the most felicitous way of describing it would be as 'the ethics of action'. The moral perspective of the Shari'a, for instance, demands 'doing right' rather than 'being good': it is therefore not a *soteriological ontology* but a *moral existentialism*. To call the Shari'a 'law', thus, is not to fully comprehend its metaphysics. Indeed, so comprehensive and unique is the semantic content of the notion of the Shari'a that it cannot be adequately covered by any single term in any other tongue: its worldview may be *explained* or *elab-*

Iqbal: 'Shocking Words'



orated in other, non-Muslim, languages but it cannot be *translated* by any other term.

Within the above-outlined paradigm of the Shari'a as Truth no dissent is possible for a Muslim. To be a Muslim is to affirm the essential verities of the Shari'a, namely that God commands and man obeys, that God's Will has been revealed to the Prophet in the form of the Qur'an, that the conduct of the Prophet, his Sunna, has a normative authority for the Muslim and that the Muslim community as a whole has the obligation to obey God's will, not only as exemplified in the conduct of the Prophet but as discerned by the collective reasoning of its learned as well. The Divine Will which is the source of guidance for man is to be obeyed in its entirety; all spiritual, mental and even physical behaviour of the Muslim is to be regulated by the injunctions of the Shari'a, which, anyway, are nothing but the elaborations of God's revealed commandments in the light of human reason. The aim and the purpose of the Shari'a, in fact its ambition, is to pronounce God's Will for every conceivable life-situation, to provide a code of 'oughts' and 'ought-nots' for all human actions, indeed to prescribe a total way of life. The problem however is: how is the Shari'a - the Way of God to be followed - *to be known*? It is here, in confronting this question, that we are brought in contact with its second conception - the Shari'a as Method, indeed as the *methodology of Islam*.

Theoretically speaking, the Shari'a is the proper methodology and epistemology of Islam in history. By its application temporal contingencies are

judged by eternal imperatives, moral choices are transformed into options for concrete action and ethical sentiment is objectified into law. The Shari'a is in fact the *problem-solving methodology par excellence* of Islam and the most authentic tool for decision-making within an Islamic context. It decides upon the criterion of *Islamicity* as well as *Islamizes* alien thought and institutions. For the ideational, intellectual and moral continuity of the Muslim community, the application of the Shari'a method is indispensable. Any theoretical, innovative and speculative Muslim thinking must pass through the objective methodological framework of the Shari'a in order to become an operative part of Muslim history. The methodology of the Shari'a forms so to speak the bridge that links the community's past to its future.

The problem of the method of the Shari'a ushers us right back in the thick of the legal and doctrinal controversies of early Islam and is inextricably bound with the perception of Shari'a *in* and *as* history. At the very outset, the Muslim community recognised two sources for the elaboration of the Shari'a, ie the methods by which the 'given' authority of the Qur'an and the Sunna become *known*. The first principle was that of *learning* ('ilm) and required the actual study of the two authoritative sources; the second was the principle of *understanding* and was denoted by the term *fiqh*. The former method or discipline, in other words, preoccupied itself with the 'identification' of the specifically



Learning and listening: Devotees search for an understanding of the 'Will of Allah' on the footsteps of a traditional seminary in Iran; and a mosque class in Bangladesh

legal texts and the latter was concerned with their 'application' in actual social milieu. The principle of human intelligence and reasoning, it must be pointed out, was integral to the interpretative methodology of the Shari'a in its formative phase. The polarity of 'ilm and fiqh in the nascent methodology of the Shari'a, however, is worth noticing: whilst 'ilm is something objective and given, fiqh is something subjective and fluid (Fiqh at this stage represented nothing more than the considered personal opinion (*ra'y*) of an individual scholar and was a far cry from the highly elaborate and stringent method of jurisprudence that it came to be at the time of the maturity of the Shari'a.) The striking fact here is that the subject-matter of both 'ilm and fiqh is identical; the restriction of fiqh to the religious, mainly juristic, sciences came later.

At this early phase, say, lasting upto the 2nd Islamic century, the

accumulated ensemble of the exercise of 'learning' and 'understanding' which was the religious knowledge of Islam was not called the Shari'a. The Shari'a was the intellectual activity, the result of which was the *Din*; similarly, fiqh or 'understanding' was a process and not a consolidated body of knowledge. The earliest fiqh, observes, Fazlur Rahman, 'was personal, free and somewhat subjective rather than an objective discipline. It would be impossible for any single person to claim that the result of his thought was the unique content of the Shari'a. The task of spelling out the Shari'a should rather devolve upon the Community as a whole, through the guidance of the Ulama.' (author's emphasis). Such, it appears, was the community's understanding of the key concepts of Islam before their inevitable reification made them appear identical with the religious knowledge itself. Parallel to the objectification

and reification of the concept of Islam - from being an act of submission, a path to a goal, an effort to an end to that of the result of that conviction or the fruit of that effort - took place the confusion of the Shari'a with history. It was no longer the history-making enterprise of Islam but a product of Muslim history; not the method which makes the Will of God known to man but the actual Will of God expressed as injunctions and prohibitions, not the process of reasoning and understanding but the historically frozen corpus of juristic rulings, not a methodology, in short, but a conglomeration of disciplines. It is this reification of the concept of the Shari'a that I understand as the perception of the Shari'a as history and perhaps, it was this 'finished' product of aborted *ijihad* (!) that Iqbal dismissed as 'the idol of history'.

From the second century onwards, as if necessitated by the inner logic of Islam, there emerged a set of mechanisms for the understanding of the Word of God and its exposition in the Sunna of the Prophet that later came to constitute as 'the methodology of Islam' and which entirely determined the form and content of the Shari'a. Though the genesis of this movement is found submerged in intense doctrinal and legalistic controversies, such is the force of the 'orthodox' consensus that emerged at the end of this debate that the method for the determination of the 'Islamicity' of any idea or thought is seen to have been settled then, once and for all. In fact, the 'method' of the Shari'a became indistinguishable from the 'truth' of Islam itself. Thus, despite the intermittent emergence of movements and individual thinkers, all seeking alternatives to the Shari'a-method, none has had the courage - or impudence - to challenge the authority of the Shari'a itself because of its universal identification with the normative content of the faith of Islam. In fact, the very perception of the Shari'a as the methodology of Islam is a recent acquisition of the Muslim mind.

The establishment of the Islamic methodology crystallised, and hierarchically structured one may add, in the inter-relationship between Sunna, Ijtihad and Ijma'. Whereas in the early period the supremacy and validity of the Ijma' (consensus) for the understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunna remained unquestioned, with Al-Shafi'i came the new principle that Hadith and Hadith alone would determine the content of the Sunna. The most notable consequence of this dev-

elopment was to dislodge *qiyas* (or *ijthad*) from the intermediary position between the Qur'an and the Sunna on the one hand and *Ijma'* on the other. Secondly, the nature of *fiqh* also underwent radical changes at this time. From being a personal activity, it came to mean 'a structured discipline' and its 'resultant body of knowledge'. Furthermore, *fiqh* also became identified with the science of law and its present meaning as jurisprudence dates from this change. As for the *Ijma'*, though it accepted Hadith on its own terms (it alone could arbitrate on their authenticity), in the end it was ousted by the Hadith, for such was the logic inherent in the acceptance of the principle of Hadith. The principle of *Ijthad* suffered equally due to the introduction of the novel category: deprived of its function as a pathway leading to *Ijma'*, it lost its vitality till its 'gates' were formally announced 'closed' in the beginning of the fourth century.

The results of this momentous development have been perceptively analysed by Professor Fazlur Rahman as such: 'The body of the Hadith, sanctioned by *Ijma'*, relegated *ijthad* to a subsidiary place cut off from *Ijma'*; in its turn, *Ijma'*, which was originally a function of the 'living tradition' dislodged from fresh thought or *Ijthad*, could not continue its function for the organism needed, both for its growth and vitality. A stabilising principle without a principle of expansion necessarily becomes a static tool of oppression. Now a theory of the infallibility of the *Ijma'* was developed whereby the early concept of a *pragmatic authority* of the Community's consensus was changed into a theoretical absoluteness of the Community in terms of truth-values. A Hadith was circulated according to which the Prophet said: "My Community shall never agree on an error". Thus, *Ijma'* became a theoretically founded mechanism of traditional authoritarianism' (all emphasis is by the author). Little wonder, Islamic law and theology have developed little since then.

Though the concept of the Shari'a seems to have integrated the four main currents of the religious life in Islam, viz rationalism, mysticism, law and theology, the tension between these and the Shari'a have also been a noticeable feature of Muslim history. The rationalists, for instance, used the term *shari'a* in the narrow sense of the 'law' and opposed it to the notion of universal human reason. The supposed antinomy between 'reason' and 'revelation' in Islam is in fact the

discordance between the Shari'a's reading of the scripture and that of it by philosophy. After the Mu'tazili controversy had settled down, thus, the concept of morality that survived in the Shari'a was scriptural through and through. It came to be recognised that pure reason in its natural state is incapable of yielding any universal moral principles, let alone the positive obligations (*wajibat*) of faith. Hence, Al-Ghazali's famous dictum that 'No obligations follow from reason but from the Shari'a'. The methodology of the Shari'a, acknowledges as it does the Qur'an and Sunna as its primary sources of authority, therefore reaffirms this principle, namely that the historically specific concepts of morality that are found in the scripture are superior to any claims of universal reason. In other words, it conceives of morality not in terms of any abstract principles and values but as concrete injunctions and prohibitions. Or, inasmuch as it is not inimical to theoretical ethics, it claims that universal moral values can only be *abstracted* from the concrete text of the scripture. In sum, the tension between the conceptions of morality enshrined in the Shari'a and those based on the claim of universal reason is very real and lives upto our days.

Sufism too relates itself to the Shari'a in a spirit of ambivalence. For the mystic, the rules and injunctions of the Shari'a represent nothing but the outer shell of the living reality of faith whose innermost truth (*Haqiqa*) is accessible only through the mystical Way (*Tariqa*). Hence, it is not unusual that in speaking of the Shari'a the Sufi adopts a derogatory expression, as, for instance, in the following

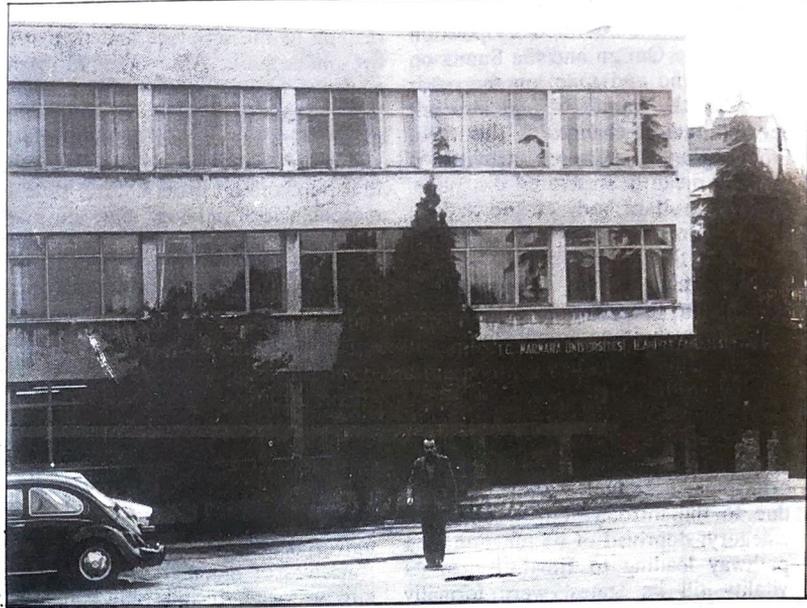
statement by S.H. Nasr: 'The *Shari'a* is the wider road which is meant for all men by virtue of what they are able to attain the total possibilities of the individual human state. The *Tariqa* is the narrower path for the few who have the capability and profound urge to attain sanctity here and now and seek a path whose end is full realisation of the reality of Universal Man transcending the individual domain'. Historically, of course, the classic 'synthesis' between Sufism and the Shari'a was wrought by Al-Ghazali. Nonetheless, even Al-Ghazali's system, the core of which is the Sufi notion of the love of God - identified by him with the essence of *Din*, could not fully restore the pristine and original identity between the *Din* and the Shari'a. Later, Ibn Taymiya also upheld the paramountcy of the Shari'a, claiming that its religious values incorporate the spiritual truth (*Haqiqa*) of the Sufis as well as well as the rational truth (*Aql*) of the philosophers, theologians and legalists. In no meaningful way, Ibn Taymiya argued, may Shari'a values be opposed to those of 'reason' or 'spirituality'. Ibn Taymiya may have been the last 'landmark of religious integrative capacity of Islam', he has been accepted as a great adversary of the mystical path, and, hence, the emotional divide between the Shari'a and the *Tariqa* is still very much the part of the contemporary religious landscape of Islam.

Though the tension between the dictates of the Shari'a and the claims of rationalism or mysticism is all too real and has been brought out 'in the open' through historic controversies, the discord between theology and the



Shari'a, perceived as the basis of law, is no less real, even if the tension between the two remains largely hidden and unrecognized. The principal tenet of Ash'arism, which has been the mainstay of the Sunni theological thought, overemphasizes God's omnipotence to the extent of denying man his freedom of action. The entire rationale of the Shari'a as Moral Order and law, however, rests on the assumption that man is both free and morally responsible for his actions. It further presupposes that God's Commandments, ie His guidance to man, may only be understood in terms of His 'purpose' and 'justice' - the Divine attributes strenuously denied by Ash'arism! Given this obvious antinomy between the theological and the moral parameters of the Shari'a, it is hardly surprising then the greater part of the religious history of 'medieval' Islam is characterised by an effective coalition between *kalam* and sufism, the net result of which was to substitute the Will and Efficacy of God for His Shari'a or Command! Here again, it was the genius of Ibn Taymiya who restored the theological and moral unity of the Shari'a worldview by re-instating the doctrine of purposiveness of Divine behaviour in its theology. The Shari'a as the Wisdom and Commandment of God, he maintained, cannot be comprehended without 'looking forward' towards the 'end' and the 'purpose' of God's creation.

Even from this rather schematic survey of the ideational and historical matrix of the Shari'a, it becomes obvious that not only is the concept itself extremely comprehensive and of stupendous semantic and epistemic richness, it is also so intimately connected with the very understanding of Islam as Din that any off-handed or reductionist treatment of it would be almost tantamount to blasphemy. At the same time, it cannot be maintained either that upholding the excessively pietistic and sacrosanct views of the actual legacy of the Shari'a thought that tend to discourage all intellectual, even normative, comprehension of its dynamics and history, serve any beneficial purpose for the present community of Islam. Clearly, the legacy of the Shari'a as well as Shari'a-mindedness has to be assessed and evaluated and, where necessary, reformed and reformulated. Needless to say that the task has to be accomplished with great earnestness, clarity of mind and devotional humility; for to tamper with the Shari'a is to meddle with the House of Islam itself. Stating this, it is clear,

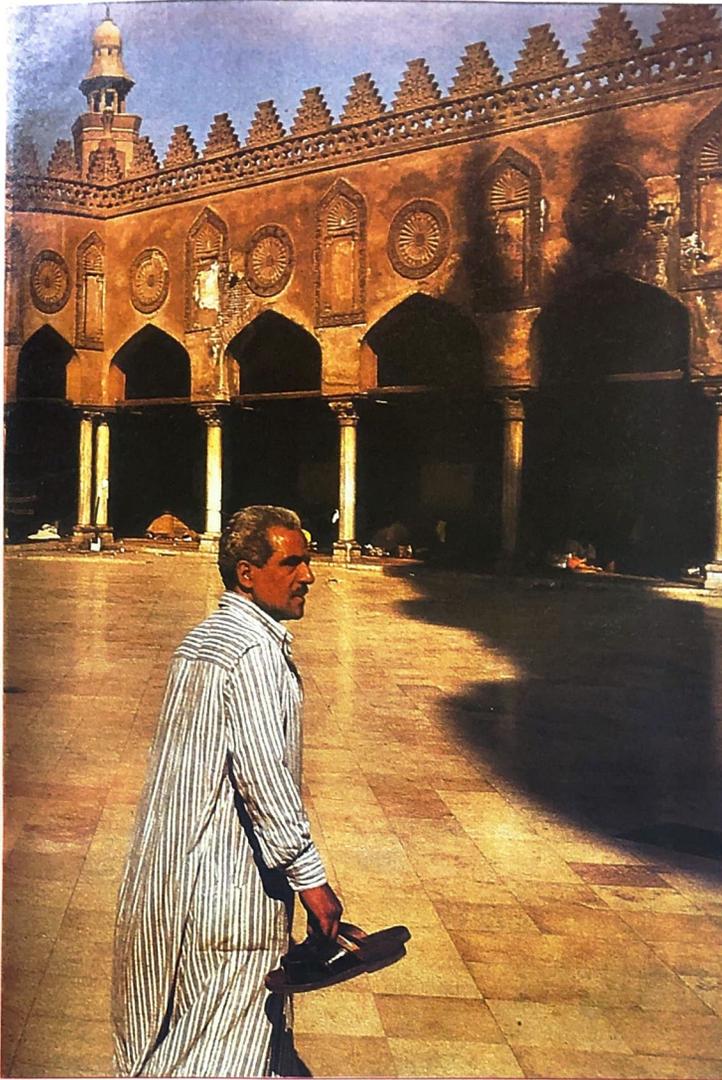


The old and the new: The content of Shari'a curriculum is exactly the same, whether it is taught at Al-Azhar (opposite), or at the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Istanbul (above)

makes me part company with those for whom the legacy of the Shari'a is as sacred as its truth; who believe that not only the principles but also the accumulated knowledge of the Shari'a has a binding authority on every Muslim, and for whom the Shari'a thought in its entirety is divinely-guided and hence above scrutiny and censure. My stance also differs from the one adopted by the so-called 'fundamentalists' of our time who sincerely hold that the system of the Shari'a is 'out there', complete and fully evolved, to be implemented by political means without any further reflection or deliberation. Such attitudes, in my opinion, do violence to the Shari'a's own understanding of its nature and purpose. At this juncture of our history, thus, it is imperative that the original thread of the pristine Muslim understanding of the Shari'a as a *paradigm of truth* be fully disentangled from all subsequent strands of historic accretion in order to secure its future. It would also follow from this that the 'problems' which the modern consciousness experiences with respect to the Shari'a may not be attributed to the inadequacy of the original vision: what is felt today as the 'failure' of the Shari'a is in reality the failure of the Umma's *ijtihad*.

With the verdict of history in hand, we are justified in making some observations concerning the limitations of the Shari'a worldview. The very practicality and moral rigour of the Shari'a paradigm, it must be asserted at the

very outset, is not without its own Achille's heel. It can no longer be contested that the Shari'a method does not encourage bold, innovative and speculative thought. Its pre-occupations with existentially concrete 'dos' and 'don'ts' - an invaluable asset in terms of practical morality - stifles creative imagination and, as a consequence, makes Shari'a-minded individuals and cultures conservative and backward-looking in their general outlook on life. (It ought to be remembered that the imaginative fecundity of Sufism, with its wealth of artistic expression, has served, for the most part of the Muslim history, as the much-needed safety-valve against the stern and dry moralism of the Shari'a.) As long as Muslims were the leading actors on the stage of human civilisation, the ideational timidity of the Shari'a could be compensated by the other, creative, impulses of a growing, evolving culture. Today, with other cultures in the lead, the situation has become insufferable. Shari'a-mindedness can only follow, can only react to foreign impulses; it shows no capacity to lead, to determine its own issues, to make its own mark on other civilisations. It is thus with pain that one reads a non-Muslim critic retorting to the usual, facile and apologetic, claim by a pious-minded Muslim that the Shari'a 'possesses all the answers to the current and the future legal issues of mankind': 'But several questions arise which thoughtful Muslims must at some point raise and face.'



writes Charles Malik in response to Ahmad Yaki Zamani's listless defence of the Shari'a-consciousness, 'Who determines "contemporary issues", Islam or the outside world - I mean Europe, Russia, America? If "the contemporaneity of issues" - or simply if "issues", because no issue is an issue except in the present - is the determination of the non-Islamic world, whether Christian-religious or secular or atheistic, then the source of action is from outside Islam and Islam is only reacting. It is one thing to find an issue (development, social justice, political organisation, etc) forced upon you from outside, and then turn around and seek in your tradition for some verse or saying or precedent and show that on its basis you can self-sufficiently handle it; it is quite an-

other to be the active source of the determination of the issue yourself. In the first case the relevance of your tradition is only a defensive afterthought; in the second your tradition is creative of its own destiny'. (Malik, C: (ed) *God and Man in Contemporary Islamic Thought*; Beirut 1972, p 12)

One way out of the current impasse of the Shari'i thought is to attempt a systematic ethics of the Qur'an. That Muslim scholars have never done this in a comprehensive manner comes as a shock. True enough, the Qur'an is not a text-book of theoretical ethics. Its moral fervour is never content with the merely generalizable ethical sentiment; it is also very keen to present concretised moral paradigms. Nonetheless, ethics indeed is the essence

of the Qur'an and is also the necessary link between its theology and law. Qur'anic ethics, therefore, may not only supply an authentic Islamic alternative to the concrete, albeit reacting and retrospective, moralism of the Shari'a, it will also enable Muslim thinkers to appropriate the most intriguing and advanced moral issues of our age. A systematic ethics of the Qur'an will also act as our window to the outside world and help end our self-imposed ideational isolation. The problem of the methodology of Islam will also get addressed by the Muslim delineation of the comprehensive ethics of the Qur'an. By this exercise, the original purpose of *fiqh* as the process of the *understanding* of the scripture will also be recovered. Distilling the ethics of the Qur'an will be an application of the traditional method of *qiyas* or *ijtihad* and its role as gateway of individual reasoning leading to the consensus of the learned (*ijma'*) will become reinstated by this collective activity of the Muslims. Moreover, as ethics is the foundation-stone of all epistemology, it is not inconceivable that a new Qur'anic epistemology may be the outcome of this intellectual activity. Given the obdurance of the traditional ulama' against the adoption of new intellectual tools and techniques, one must caution, the responsibility of executing this task devolves on lay thinkers and intellectuals of Islam. Ultimately, of course, a new kind of scholarly personality which is equally conversant with *shar'iyya* and *'aqliyya* sciences will have to be evolved through a novel system of education.

Whatever the rewards and fruits of the delineation of the Qur'anic ethics, the ultimate aim of this enterprise is, of course, to relate it to the Shari'a framework. Genuine Muslim thought does not terminate at ethics; it charts a practical course for the moral man. And so must it be with this effort. As Muslims we may certainly discard some of the historic legacy of the Shari'a, we may justifiably modify its traditional methodology but we cannot under any circumstances renounce its truth. The goal of all human reasoning, according to the Shari'a, is to make the Will of God known to man and restate it as Commandment. However, our present response to the calling of 'knowing the Will of God' must come from the depth of the Islamic conscience and not out of the blind imitation of the past. That, for a Muslim intellectual, is the true meaning of the quest for the Shari'a's past and future. ■