

nationalist leadership. It was that failure that gave the Communists their opportunity. And there are also the victims: the proud, independence-loving people of Afghanistan who now must live under the heel of a repressive, Soviet-style regime.

The current Islamic revival is mistrusted by most Westerners and many Western-oriented elites in Muslim countries. It is widely viewed as a return to "the middle ages," to an era of religious dogmatism and intolerance. This is a grave misinterpretation of the Islamic tradition.

Islam provides a basis for effective, non-exploitative rule, unlike atheistic communism and liberal free-enterprise capitalism. These competing ideologies limit their vision to the economic sphere, and even in that sphere they have not provided adequate solutions for the Muslim nations of the third world. Islam provides instead a comprehensive system. Its goal is the harmony of man with himself, his fellow humans, his environment and, ultimately, with the total Order or Essence — Allah. On an individual level, to be a Muslim is to submit to the will of Allah. However, Islamic teachings extend far beyond this man-God relationship. They provide a basis for the ordering of society such that human harmony — essential for the realization of the ultimate goal of an all-encompassing harmony between man and God — may be advanced.

Muslim political influence remained fairly dormant during recent centuries until the rise of industrialism in the West and the extension of Western rule worldwide. Reaction to European rule first took the form of an intellectual movement for Islamic rejuvenation which attempted to adapt Islam to a Western orientation. The ideas of this movement are most forcefully expressed in the writings of famous Islamic reformers such as Jamal ad-Deen al-Afghani and Muhammad Adbuh in Egypt, Namik Kemal in Turkey, and Sayyid Amir Ali and Sayyid Ahmad Khan in the Indian sub-continent. The present rulers of most of the Muslim world are heirs to this Western orientation.

Parallel to that reformist movement and partly in reaction to it, a number of devout Islamic movements erupted. These included the Wahhabis in the Arabian Peninsula, the Fulani in Nigeria, the Jama'at-e Islami of Indo-Pakistan,

A Reaffirmation of Islam

ABDULAZIZ SAQQAF*

*Abdulaziz Saqqaf is a candidate for the Ph.D. degree at Fletcher. He also holds an M.P.A. from Harvard and a B.A. from Sana'a University.

the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Sanusis in Libya, the Mahdis in the Sudan, and the neo-Sufis of Buhkara and Tashkend. The thrust of these movements was that Muslims have no apologies to make and that strict adherence to Islam is a source of strength and dignity. While the reformists received the sympathy of much of the educated classes, the allegiance of the masses in the Muslim world was directed toward these fundamentalist movements.

Today, the fundamentalists and their followers oppose Western political and ideological domination and, increasingly, their own governments and leaders as well. Ruling elites, who are mostly Western-trained and whose programs and personalities reflect an uncomfortable amalgam of Islamic and Western ideas, are seen as unfaithful to Islam and unrepresentative of the Muslim peoples. In one Muslim country after another these elites are losing power to people who draw their ideals and inspiration from religious groups. Even Turkey, which Kemal Atatürk tried to Europeanize, is reverting to its place in the Islamic Ummah, the Community of the Faithful. Many of Atatürk's reforms were reversed during the 1950s, and pressure to shed the remaining facade continues.

The new fundamentalist vision is not, as is often charged, opposed to development. It does, however, seek to alter the Muslim-Western relationship as it has existed during the last three centuries. The fruits of that relationship for Muslims have been colonization, occupation, exploitation and, in general, confusion. In recent decades many Muslims sought to reverse this one-sided relationship with the West by building closer ties to the rising Communist nations. This trend is reflected in the plethora of writings on "Islamic Socialism," "Arab Socialism," and so forth. But this path has been recognized as another dead end. The alternative to both these paths is the experiment now begun to create a 20th century modern state modeled on the teachings of Islam. Libya and Pakistan have officially applied this experiment, and Iran now joins them. Mass agitation to follow these countries' examples is growing in Egypt, Indonesia, the Sudan, Afghanistan, and Turkey.

There are four sources of doctrine in Islam, and thus for the Islamic state: the Quran (Scriptures), the Sunnah (tradition) of the Prophet and the Salaf (early Muslims), the Ijma' (consensus of the community), and Ijtihad (personal reasoning or individual endeavor). Western fears and misperceptions of Islamic rule are based, in part, on ignorance of the contents of these teachings. Islamic rule will not promote inequality or the suppression of the individual. The equality of all humans is central to the teachings of the Prophet. His last words, repeated several times in his "Farewell Pilgrimage Address" were "All human beings are equal children of Adam."

Many Westerners and some Western-oriented elites within the Muslim world charge that Islamic rule will oppress women, but this is not consistent with Muslim teaching. The hijab (or veil) — often seen as a symbol of such oppres-

sion — is not a requirement in Islam. The Quran does dictate that no Muslim should dress or behave in such a way as to disrupt the activities and attention of others in society. Thus women are required to dress in a decent manner. In most Islamic communities the hijab is not worn. Historically, Islam was a force for the liberation of women. It imposed consistent pressure against polygamy, finally putting an impossible condition on it: absolute equality and justice among co-wives. The Quran declares: "You shall never be able to do justice among your women, no matter how much you desire." Thus, it effectively prohibits the practice. Furthermore, Islamic teachings state that marriage is a voluntary contract and that either party may end it if there is reason for doing so. Finally, women, like men, have a right to own property, do any kind of work, and even join the army — which they did in the early stages of Islamic history.

It is thought that Islamic rule will result in the oppression of minorities. In fact, there is no civilization in the history of mankind that has shown more tolerance to minorities than Islamic civilization. Slavery was repudiated by Islam; and Muslims were required to free their slaves, who in turn became sons of Islam. The Prophet repeatedly stressed this point. The nation was duty-bound to care for the weak, the hungry, and the disabled.

Islamic rule will not result in destruction of the freedom of the individual. One of the hadiths of the Prophet says, "The Nation of Islam shall flourish, for my people are blessed with a diversity of ideas and different opinions." Personal endeavor is one of the basic sources of doctrine. Thus, individuals are not only at liberty to pursue personal free thought; they are urged to do so. Private ownership of means of production is also permitted, although the hoarding of resources is illegal because it penalizes the society by depriving it of potential for greater welfare and growth.

Islamic rule is not autocratic. "O Prophet! Consult your people on the issues!" "Their affairs are decided after consultation among themselves!" Both of these are examples of numerous Islamic principles which proclaim that the nation's affairs are to be run in consultation with the people. Islam prohibits hereditary transfer of power. The Prophet told his people: "Choose the most qualified among yourselves to guide you, even if that be an Abyssinian ex-slave!" Bilal is a famous example of one who rose from slavery to high stature in the Muslim community.

Under Islamic rule the welfare of the poor must be advanced. The Quran explicitly states that wealth must be annually transferred from the rich to the poor: "And from your wealth is a definite share. A share for the needy and the deprived." If such a transfer is not peacefully made then the poor are urged to rise and wrench their rights by force. It is such a demand for justice that is being heard today throughout the Muslim world. It is within the light of the teachings of Islam that this uprising should be understood and supported by