

## REFERENCES & FOOTNOTES

- 1 This fact is amply borne out by a study of contemporary Anglo-American analytical and linguistic moral writers, e.g., Ayer, Hare, Toulmin, Stevenson, and others.
- 2 Emil Durkheim, the eminent sociologist, introduced the term 'anomie' which looms large among his many contributions. 'Anomie' means a condition of normlessness, a moral vacuum, the suspension of normative ethical rules, a state sometimes referred to as de-regulation.
- 3 Cf. Quranic verses 57:27, 3:105, 4:76.
- 4 Iqbal: *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in islam*, Sheikh Ashraf Publisher, Lahore, p. 81.
- 5 Buber, Berdyaev, Paul Tillich and H.D. Lewis are some of the eminent contemporary philosophers who have written in this vein.
- 6 See Surah Al-Furqan verses 47-54.
- 7 Numerous excellent works of Jung, Erich Fromm and others amply prove this claim.
- 8 The parallelism between the Arabic words 'Birr' and 'Bahar' as used in Urdu also and the consequent sense of insecurity and discomfort experienced while indulging in immoral acts is supported by a great Quranic scholar, Imam Raghīb. Cf. his *Mufridats*, p.39.
- 9 The nature conceived by the Holy quran is governed by a primordial, universal law which is fundamentally rational.
- 10 Here the Quran refers to ideal human nature, i.e., the nature bestowed on humanity by God at the dawn of creation. It is not the same thing as Rousseau and some other moralists speak of in terms of 'primitive' or 'original' nature, because their view does not go beyond the spatio-temporal dimensions.
- 11 Cf. Cicero: "True law is right reson in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and

love for, other human beings lose all their moral worth unless inspired by pure sense of duty and unless emptied of all desire to be benevolent towards fellow-beings. According to the Quranic view, on the other hand, neither desire as such, nor the higher desires that relate to high and noble ends, are condemned. Only the desires relating to the unregulated instinctive urges, called *hawa* in Quranic terminology, are subjected to moral disapproval.

## Conclusion

In the foregoing pages I have discussed in detail the Islamic notion of ethical virtue as depicted in the two Quranic locutions—*Birr* and *Saleh*. Islam identifies virtue with good works based on religious beliefs. As such, morality is an inner quality, a property of motive or intention rather of mere consequences or outward form of one's actions. On this view, the promptings of informed reason and moral conscience represent an inherent tendency in the truly authentic nature of man, and the conformity to this nature fulfils both the cosmic plan of the Creator and the direct commands of God revealed in the Quran. The moral precepts of the Quran and scientific/psychological knowledge of the universal needs and tendencies of man, provide complementary rather than competing standards of ethical judgement. Good as fulfilment of genuine natural tendencies is subordinated to attaining God's pleasure, or to use a philosophical expression—eternal beatitude—the fulfilment of the aspirations of the virtuous soul. The notion of righteousness that is the pride possession of a Muslim is the ever-present sense of moral responsibility, an inner calling that is both intimately personal and ineluctably trans-institutional.



intellect and conscience are capable of making genuine discrimination between good and evil. Quranic theology has dealt with the problem of the concrete moral decision in terms of the doctrine of the divine presence. The sense of "Divine Presence every-where" opens man's eyes and ears to the moral demand implicit in the concrete situation. Tables of laws can never wholly apply to the unique situation. Belief in God, on the contrary, opens the mind to these potentialities and guides decision in a particular situation.

The plural nominative of 'saleh' used in the Quran is 'salehat'. It means good deeds. Its semantic constitution contains emphatic reference to belief in God, prayer, and good will and love for humanity. However, the practice of *salihat* is repeatedly joined to Faith. Thus this term connotes 'faith expressed in outward conduct'. If we take into consideration the facts of human psychology in reference to the proper realisation of the moral ideal, we are bound to hold to the Quranic view that some desires deserve to be suppressed, some to be moderated, and some to be encouraged and enhanced, ultimately subordinating all to the spiritual yearning of obtaining Divine Pleasure,—keeping the sense of duty always dynamically alive and the action entrenched in the purest motivation. In this sense, the soundness of the Quranic view is self-evident even though certain religions like Buddhism, and certain great moral philosophers like Kant are opposed to it. For instance, maintaining that all desire is bad, Kant says: "The inclinations themselves being sources of want, are so far from having an absolute worth for which they should be desired, that on the contrary it must be the universal wish of every rational being to be wholly free from them".<sup>14</sup> Schopenhauer rightly terms Kant's view as the 'apotheosis of lovelessness', because in Kant's estimation even the most unselfish acts of benevolence towards, and

true being is gradually silenced until it reaches a state of total depersonalization, described by the Quran as the state in which:

‘God hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they incur’. (2 : 7)

One cannot discard the moral imperative itself without the self-destruction of one’s essential nature and one’s manifold relationships. Moreover, the Quranic word ‘amal’ too is very significant. The two locutions ‘action’ and ‘activity’ are both generally taken to convey the sense of the Arabic word ‘amal’. But there is a subtle difference in their connotation. Any kind of movement or work can be called activity, but the word action usually implies some strenuous or arduous task and it, as such, better expresses the meaning of ‘amal’. By combining the connotations of ‘Saleh’ as explained above and that of ‘amal’, we would realize that the real significance of this term is: it is necessary for man to put up a hard struggle to achieve that real goal for which he was potentially created, and he has to ascend certain heights to attain that goal. All this is conveyed by the comprehensive word ‘amal Saleh’.

The basic and poignant concern of the Islamic faith is to point to, and overcome, the crisis of our age—the crisis of man’s separation from man and of man’s separation from God. Islam recognizes that human morality and human ideals thrive only when set in a context of a transcendent attitude. A religious person commands a depth of consciousness inaccessible to the profane man. The Quran emphasizes the moral dynamic of man. Its image of man as the vicegerent of God on earth, *Homo cum Deo*, implies the heightest conceivable freedom, the freedom to collaborate with the very creative process. This image implies further that the

enhancement. By means of good deeds alone man can attain those highest stages of development to which he aspires while sticking to his true and ideal nature ..... This point can be put alternatively thus: Since man is an integral part of the total scheme of universe, only those of his deeds will be righteous which accord with the grand design on which the universe has been fashioned by its Creator".<sup>13</sup>

These ideas can be explained philosophically thus. Man, like any other being, has environment; but in contrast to brute animals, he is not bound to it. He can transcend it, in imagination, thought and action. His encounter with any of the objects and situations surrounding him is always active and creative. Such an encounter presupposes ability to transcend and overcome both psychological inclination and outer compulsion, the ability to see the universal within the particular. The Quranic moral imperative, in this sense, is the demand to realize one's true nature actually which he has potentially. Every act is a morally good action in which an individual self establishes itself as a true person. In this way, a moral act is not an act in obedience to an externally imposed law; it is the inner law of our true being, of our essential nature. Conversely, an antimoral act is not the transgression of one or several prescribed commands, but an act that contradicts the self-realization of the person as a person and drives towards disintegration—'*fasad*' in Qur'anic usage. It disrupts and corrupts the centredness of the person by giving predominance to degenerate passions, desires and cravings. And when this happens, the self as an active being is split and the conflicting trends make it their battlefield. The 'will', in the sense of a self that acts from the centered totality of its being, is enslaved. Freedom is replaced by compulsion. The voice of man's essential and

all the passages of the Quran and the moral teachings are repeatedly stressed in various contexts throughout the Holy Book. Every Quranic moral principal is mentioned either as a single significant principle or as an element of a total system of morality, which itself is an element of a complete religious supersystem. The basic morals of the Quran are meant to help the individual to develop his personality and cultivate his character in the most wholesome manner, to strengthen his bonds and consolidate his association both with the Creator and the creatures. The Quranic ethic is not simply an abstract ideal conceived just for nominal adoration or a stagnant idol to be frequented by admirers every now and then. It represents a code of life, a living force manifest in every aspect of human life.

### ‘Amal Saleh’

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Understanding the Quranic term ‘Amal Saleh’—righteous or good deeds—requires deep thought and reflection. The Quran includes under this blanket term all its moral and spiritual teachings including the laws of individual and social conduct. It also makes an allusion to the fact that the secret of man’s real development and progress lies in performing these very acts. Righteous deeds alone can guarantee the growth of man’s natural capacities and potentialities on the right lines. To quote Maulana Farahi, an eminent scholar, on this point:-

"Almighty Allah has designated good and righteous deeds with the word ‘Salehat’. This term itself guides us to the great truth that the whole of man’s development and rectitude—be it outward or inner, wordly or spiritual, personal or collective, bodily or intellectual—depends upon good and righteous deeds. Righteous action is life-giving and a source of maturity and

the urge to promote the right and to destroy the wrong, is a gross immorality in itself.

Moral righteousness, according to the Quran and the teachings of the Holy Prophet, is an organic whole. Every single element of it appears living and meaningful when intact with the basic underlying grid, the life impulse of '*iman*'. When we take out a part, we negate and nullify the entire edifice of righteousness. To pass a moral judgment on a man, we shall have to take into account his total behaviour, character and beliefs, not just a few discrete actions.

The Quran places equal emphasis on the sensate and the transcendental yearnings of man, and harmonises them; and thus it lays down for humanity a comprehensive Ideal which consists in the cultivation of: (i) Piety based on a dynamic, vibrant and living faith in God, an earnest and courageous pursuit of Truth, and an ever-present consciousness of Final Accountability; (ii) sound and comprehensive Morality; (iii) social, economic and political Justice; and, finally, Knowledge in all its dimensions,—all of these resulting in the conquest of harmful and vicious propensities within the individual, the conquest of evil within the society, and the conquest of the treasures of physical environment or Nature. In the pursuit of this Ideal, moral virtue, love for humanity, truth, justice, beauty, discipline and progress are the watchwords, while the concept of Unity permeates the entire movement towards the Ideal.

The range of morality in Islam is so inclusive and integrative that it combines at once faith in God, religious rites, spiritual observances, social conduct, decision making, intellectual pursuits, business transactions, habits of consumption, manners of speech, and all other aspects of human life. Because morality is such an integral part of Islam, the moral tone underlies

## A Whole Life-Pattern

A very important truth that one gets from a perusal of the above 'Ayah Birr' is that the Quranic definition of moral righteousness and virtue depicts a whole life-pattern that may not be reduced or adulterated. According to the Quran, moral behaviour is essentially a function of the total human person or spirit. And by 'spirit' the reference is here to the dynamic unity of body and mind, of vitality and rationality, of the emotional and the intellectual. In every function of the human spirit the whole person is involved, and not merely one part or one element. All elements of man's being participate in every moral decision and action. In this sense righteousness admits of no division: it is an expression of the total personality of a man. This becomes clear when we concentrate on the first part of the verse in which moral worth or value has been negated in respect of a particular type of action performed ritualistically. Whereas the positive declaration starts with the words 'righteous is he ....., ' or 'righteousness is of that person .....,

Matter (or desire) is not an antidivine principle from which the soul has to be liberated. Islam leads man towards a consciousness of moral responsibility in everything he does, whether great or small. The well-known injunction of the Gospel: 'Give Caesar that what belongs to Caesar, and give God that what belongs to God'—has no room in the ethical structure of Islam, because Islam does not allow a differentiation between the 'moral' and 'practical' requirements of our existence. Hence the intense insistence on action as an indispensable element of morality. Moral knowledge, according to the teachings of the Quran, automatically forces a moral responsibility upon a man. A mere Platonic discernment between right and wrong, without



In order to emphasise the importance of benevolence and kindness in the moral life, Quran projects them into the very being of God. "Be good to others as God is good to you" (28:77). God, according to the Quran, is just, merciful and kind. It is this benevolence or '*ihsan*' which helps to bring about greater cohesion, greater harmony, and greater cooperation among members of a society.

Practical deeds of charity are of value when they proceed from the love of God and from no other motive. In this respect also we must stick to the logical order mentioned very elaborately in the above quoted ayah 'Birr': our kith and kin; orphans (including any persons who are without support or help); people who are in real need but who never ask (it is our duty to find them out, and they come before those who ask); the stranger, who is entitled by laws of hospitality; the people who ask and are entitled to ask, i.e., not merely lazy beggars, but those who seek our assistance in dire necessity in some form or another, (it is our duty to respond to them); and the slaves, (we must do all we can to give or buy their freedom). Moreover, charity and piety in individual capacity do not complete the moral obligation. Both in prayer and charity, we must look to our organised efforts as well. Where there is a Muslim state, these are made through the state, facilities for public assistance, and for the maintenance of contracts and fair dealings in all matters. Indeed, according to the Quran, actual generosity and compassion is a duty to others. But the cultivation and maintenance of the spirit and the attitude of generosity is a duty towards self because of the purity and enrichment that it acquires thereby. It is this spirit and this attitude that have been emphasised together with actual benevolence in the above quoted verse.

same, and has been always the same, in all human beings, of whatever race or tribe or country. This is implied in the fact that Divine Law relating to the 'ideal nature' has been revealed to all the communities of the world at one or the other period of human history. As a matter of historical fact, it is confirmed by the observation that basic moral concepts have been the same in different civilisations and different ages—their apparent differences consisting basically in the imperfect understanding of those concepts, or in their application to concrete problems of life.

### **Benevolence.—The Foremost Moral Virtue**

We must clearly appreciate the true connotation of the word *birr* or righteousness in the light of the above quoted Quranic verse. A righteous or moral person, accordingly, is not one who offers suprarogatory prayers or engages in sufi practices or meditation. Rather, a righteous person is one who is benevolent and compassionate to others. An inconsiderate, cruel and miser person thus cannot be a morally virtuous man. The natural outcome of faith and belief in the unity of God is the love of creation.<sup>12</sup> The essence of Islam is to serve Allah and do good to one's fellow creatures. This is wider and more comprehensive than 'Love God and love your neighbour'. For it includes duties even to animals as our fellow creatures, and emphasizes practical service rather than mere sentiment. Kindness and humane treatment of those who are dependent on us, love to our neighbours and children are essential according to the Quranic moral law. It is this element of loving-kindness which helps sustain the poor and unfortunate sections of society at par with the rich. It is this moral provision which cuts at the root of class struggle. The poor members of the society and one's relations have a natural right of protection and support, so that mere lack of opportunity may not ruin their general welfare.

"..... and afterwards We reduced him to the lowest of low: with the exception of those who have faith and do good works," (106:4)

Thus, according to the Quran, evil never is essential or even original; it is a later acquisition and is due to a misuse of the innate, positive qualities with which God has endowed every human being. The moral law, as distinguished from the political law, is surely a law that our own moral consciousness—our own conscience, and not any other factor, should make us incline to obey. It should form the behest of our higher self. Yet moral law should not be accepted as merely self-imposed, because the self can also dispense with it even as it can impose. Consequently it should be combined with the element of absolute authority, and such an authority can only be the authority of God. For the Muslim, the intermediary between man and God is righteousness. And Islamic *Sharia* is the supreme expression of that righteousness. Being of divine origin should not be taken to mean, according to the Quranic teaching, that the Divine Law is foreign to the nature of man and is merely thrust from outside on him by God to be obeyed. Rather, it is simultaneously the 'Divine Law' as well as the 'Law of ideal Human Nature' and constitutes therefore the very behest of the higher human self.

The identity of the 'Divine Law' and the 'Law of the ideal Human Nature' has been explicitly proclaimed thus in the Quran:

"So set thy purpose for religion as by nature<sup>9</sup> upright—the nature (framed) of Allah in which He hath created the human beings.<sup>10</sup> There is no altering the laws of Allah's creation. That is the right religion, but most men know not".<sup>11</sup> (30: 30)

Here it should be noted that the 'ideal nature' is the

"Give up whatever pricks your heart". (al-Bukhari)

The moral act as the self-actualization of the centred self or the constitution of a person as a person, has analogies in the living beings. The analogy to the diminution or loss of centredness is the psychosomatic phenomena of disease. The analogy between the antimoral act and bodily disease is in many cases more than analogy. The Quran also employs this and calls an immoral act the symptom of a diseased and morbid heart. In other words, the process of self-integration are continuously combated by movements towards disintegration. This means that the moral act is always a victory over disintegrating forces and that its aim is the actualization of man as a centred, composed and healthy person.

In Islam, man by nature (i.e., *fitrah*) has an awareness of the universally valid moral norms. To every man this awareness is potentially given, even though actually distorted by culture, education, and his existential estrangement from his true being. The Divine law is creatively present both in the laws of nature and in the natural moral laws of the human mind. A man who performs morally vicious actions, feels a consciousness of estrangement from, and contradiction of, his essential being. According to the Quran, the original nature of man is essentially good. Contrary to the Christian idea that man is born sinful, or the teachings of Hinduism that he is originally low and impure, the Islamic teachings contend that man is born pure and in the best of mould. The Quran says:

"Surely We created man in the best structure"—but in the same breath the verse continues:

Muslim's faith in God is not merely a matter of verbal profession, he must realise the Presence and Goodness of God. When he does so the scale fall from his eyes; all the falsities and glittering nature of the material existence cease to enslave him: he sees God's working in His world and in himself. Once a man is emancipated from everything but God, he arrives at a stage of development where he feels perfect repose. He finds his Lord as all loving and all merciful. He sees God's wisdom at work everywhere and becomes his instrument of action in every sphere of life. Inspired by the idea that God is sufficient unto him, he moves to action. Freed as he is from fear, he ventures on every virtuous action and meets with success. The energising words of the Quran which declare that the entire heavens and earth are made subservient to him ring in his ears and encourage him. Egotism, lust and greed touch him not, and he moves forward by the dynamic force of the Quranic message of peace, equality and fraternity.

### "Birr"—or Personal Centredness of a Person

The Term 'Birr' (بِرّ) is derived from the root (بر) which means Godliness, righteousness, probity, kindness, charitable gift. The semantic constitution of this term seems to be similar to that of 'salih' which I shall discuss in the later part of this study. A very important clue to the subtle meaning of this word is provided by concentrating on another meaning of this word and contrasting it with its opposite, viz., land or ground and ocean. In this sense these locutions are also used in Urdu : 'barr' and 'bahar'.<sup>8</sup> It is common knowledge that when a person sets his feet on shore after a long sailing in rough seas he feels a great relief. He is never sure of his safety in the ocean, but he feels sure-footed and comfortable when he has landed on the ground. This very sense of righteousness (or charity) has been beautifully conveyed thus by the Prophet's saying:

(Hikmat-E-Quran)

indifference, are distasteful, offensive, and displeasing to God.<sup>6</sup>

In the verse quoted above there is a comprehensive and clear description of the righteous man. He should obey all the salutary regulations, and should make his sincere motive the love of God and the love of his fellow man for the sake of God. Here we have four elements of righteousness : (a) One's faith should be true and sincere, (b) one should be prepared to show it in deeds of charity and kindness to fellow men, (c) one must be a good citizen by supporting charitable institutions and social organizations, and (d) one must be steadfast and unshakeable in all circumstances. It is clear, therefore, that righteousness is not merely a matter of void utterances, it must be found on strong Faith and constant practice. It must cover the person's thinking and action and extend to his inside and outside life, to his individual and social affairs. When the Islamic principle of righteousness is established, it provides the individual with peace in all circumstances, the society with security on all levels, the nation with solidarity, and the international community with hope and harmony. How peaceful and enjoyable life can be when people implement the Islamic concept of righteousness!

According to the latest researches of psychologists, human moral character is a system of such beliefs and convictions that guide the actions of an individual and distinguish him from other.<sup>7</sup> Actions are caused by motives. The sources of motives are thoughts and beliefs which a man acquires from the experiences of his life, his education and other sources as well. The knowledge provided by the Quran or "scientia intuitiva" is the certain knowledge that there is no object worthy of adoration or Ideal to be pursued save God. The believer turns to God as his only point of reference and approaches Him in joy or sorrow, hope or fear. A true

religious people, turn to secular ethics. Islam, on the other hand, always warns against superficial concepts and rituals, against lifeless formalities and non-effective beliefs.

The concept of morality in Islam centres around certain basic metaphysical beliefs and principles. Among these are the following :

1. God is the creator and Source of all goodness, truth and beauty.
2. Man is a responsible, dignified, and honorable agent of his Creator.
3. By His Mercy and Wisdom, God does not expect the impossible from man or hold him accountable for anything beyond his power. Nor does God forbid man to enjoy the good things of life.
4. Moderation, practicality, and balance are the guarantees of high integrity and sound morality.
5. Man's ultimate responsibility is to God and his highest goal is the pleasure of his Creator.

The dimensions of moral righteousness in Islam are numerous, far reaching and comprehensive. The Islamic morals deal with the relationship between man and God, man and his fellow-men, man and other elements and creatures of the universe, man and his innermost self. A Muslim has to guard his external behaviour and his manifest deeds, his words and his thoughts, his feelings and intentions. In a general sense, his role is to champion what is right and fight what is wrong, seek what is true and abandon what is false, cherish what is beautiful and wholesome and avoid what is indecent. Truth and moral virtue are his goal. Humility and simplicity, courtesy and compassion, are his second nature. To him, arrogance and vanity, harshness and

human dispositions?" and 'What is the golden mean that secures the highest good attainable?'

### 'Birr' or Righteousness

Among all the ethical terms used in the Quran such as '*Ihsan*', '*Sidq*', '*Adl*', '*Khair*', '*Ma'ruf*', the most comprehensive and perhaps the most representative of an ideal moral action is the term *Birr*, which will be discussed here not so much in its semantic meaning but in its broader sense in which it is used in the Quran as the definition of ethical virtue and moral righteousness. Let me quote the English translation of the verse 177 of Surah al-Baqarah in which this is explicated at length :

"It is not righteousness (*Birr*) that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is he who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him, to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and sets slaves free and keeps up prayer and pays the alms (*Zakat*) ; and those who honour or fulfil their contracts when they make a contract, and remain patient in distress and affliction and in the time of panic and conflict. These are they who are truthful and these are they who are God-fearing".

In the first part of this verse a particular view of moral rectitude and righteousness has been negated, that of pure formalism and ritualism. Some devoutly religious persons exhibit this attitude when they assign utmost importance to outward appearance of moral and religious observances to the total neglect of their inner spirit and meaning. Quite understandably many people, as a reaction to the ritualistic soulless moralism of



Creator but towards himself and towards his fellow-beings. It offers a complete coordination of the spiritual and material aspects of human life, lays down a practical code and demands a righteousness well within the realm of practicability. It does not subscribe to materialistic trends but rouses in man a consciousness of moral responsibility in everything he does. There is no sphere of life, no conscious activity of man, which may be outside the pale of Islamic morality. If it falls in line with the divine prescriptions and the ethical code, almost every temporal act is given a spiritual touch and raised to the status of worship (*Ibadat*), attracting rewards and the pleasure of God. Good morals in Islam are divine attributes and it is demanded of us to recreate them in ourselves as far as our humanity allows. A tradition of the Prophet says:

"Let the virtues of God be your virtues". (al-Bukhari)

- (j) From the concept of normative or exemplary conduct there follows the concept of standard or correct conduct as a necessary complement. Righteous behaviour, in Islam, is formalized by the Prophet's example, his '*Sunnah*'.

In the behavioural pattern of the Prophet (peace be upon him) righteousness and virtue appears in an embodied form. An abstract passion for piety and righteousness may assume devilish form and proportion and eventually end up in something vicious and degenerate. The sense in which *sunnah* is a straight path without any deviation to the right or to the left also gives the meaning of a 'mean between extremes' or the 'middle way'. The Prophet's life provides perfect answers to the questions: 'What are the undesirable extremes in

improvement in the behaviour of man and his control over natural forces, is neither pessimism nor optimism and is animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over evil.<sup>4</sup> Earthly life is of tremendous value; but it is of a purely instrumental value. In Islam there is no room for the materialistic optimism of the modern West which says : 'My kingdom is of this world alone'. The Quran teaches us to pray :

"Our Lord! give us the good in this world and the good in the Hereafter". (2 : 201)

Thus the full appreciation of this world and its goods is in no way a handicap for our religio-moral endeavours. Material prosperity is desirable, though it is not a good in itself.

(h) *Morality*, culture and religion, according to some influential theological ethical philosophers who agree with the Quranic approach, are the three functions of the human spirit.<sup>5</sup> None of these functions of the spirit ever appears in isolation from the other two. The moral imperative, in so far as it has an unconditional and self-transcending character, assumes a religious dimension. A decision or action is moral only when it spring from the 'pure ought to be' of the moral imperative. In this way not only the content but also the unconditional character of the moral imperative would have to be sanctioned by a divine command.

(i) Islam is not only a spiritual attitude of mind or a code of sublime precepts but a self-sufficing orbit of culture and a social system of well-defined features. In fact, it is an all-embracing code of life establishing, on a systematic and positive base, the fundamental principles of morality and precisely formulating the duties of man not only towards his

moral righteousness or piety is inalienable from human life. On deeper analysis it would become clear that even socially undesirable elements have a sense of righteousness and observe a code of ethics to gratify it. *Pace* Durkheim, a minimal sense of ethics (good, virtue) is unavoidable, and hence his notion of 'anomie' or a state of normlessness is a pure fiction.<sup>2</sup>

- (f) The ultimate justification of morals depends on the idea of man's intrinsic aim, the *telos* for which he is created. If the aim implies something above finitude and transitoriness, the fulfilment of this aim is infinitely significant. When Plato said that the *telos* of man is 'to become as much as possible similar to the God', such a *telos* gives utmost depth to the moral imperative. Again, if the object of our life as a whole is the worship of God, then we necessarily must regard this life, in the totality of all its aspects, as one complex moral responsibility. Thus all our actions, even the seemingly trivial ones, must be performed as acts of worship.
- (g) Disgusted with the Buddhist or 'Tayag' doctrine of pessimism that this world is full of evil and consequently no good can come out of it, some thinkers have taken refuge in the opposite extreme of optimism. The Quran, on the other hand, advocates neither the one nor the other.<sup>3</sup>

"To the optimist Browning", writes Allama Iqbal in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, "all is well with the world ; to the pessimist Schopenhauer the world is one perpetual winter wherein a blind will expresses itself in an infinite variety of living things which bemoan their emergence for a moment and then disappear for ever . . . The teaching of the Quran, which stands for the possibility of

that nature, the human soul, is not a biological entity. Ethical matters, accordingly, are part of an ontology and not part of a sociology or 'social engineering'.

- (c) Islam, being based on transcendental conceptions, regards the existence of a soul as a reality beyond any discussion. Though certainly not opposed to each other, material and spiritual progress are, according to the Quran, two distinctly different aspects of human life. They may exist side by side, and again they may not. While clearly admitting the possibility, and even desirability of material progress of believers, Islam clearly denies the possibility of moral and spiritual improvement of humanity by means of its collective material achievements.
- (d) In Islam, the first and foremost goal is the inner, moral progress of man, and therefore the ethical considerations overrule the purely utilitarian. In the contemporary world the situation is unfortunately just the opposite. The consideration of material utility and physical comfort dominates all manifestations of human activity, and ethics are being relegated to an obscure background of life and condemned to merely a theoretical position without the slightest power of influencing the human community.<sup>1</sup>
- (e) Ethics constitutes an essential aspect of man's intrinsic nature : it is part of his ontological substance. The sense of right and wrong fulfils a psychical demand emanating from a man's inner being, just as water and air fulfil our basic needs for physical existence. The inner non-corporeal component of man—the spiritual core or soul—requires nourishment through gratification of its moral demands. In this sense, some conception of